

TOWN Reminder

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Selectboard reviews budgets, quarterly financial report

By Emily-Rose Pappas
Staff Writer
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SOUTH HADLEY – Members of the Selectboard held a meeting last week to discuss more of the FY26 Budget, as well as hearing the quarterly financial report from the town accountant.

The February 4 meeting was

held by Vice Chair Jeff Cyr, and was accompanied by members Nicole Casolari and Renee Sweeney, and Town Administrator Lisa Wong. Chair Andrea Miles and Clerk Carol Constant were absent.

FY26 Report for Projected Expenses

“This is going to be a tough year for a number of reasons,” said Lisa Wong.

According to Wong’s presentation, FY2026 has a projected operating budget for revenues to be just over \$58 million, which is a 3% increase over the FY2025 budget which was \$56.8 million.

The tax level is now 2.5%, and there is new growth of \$150k, and has an estimated total of \$1 million.

The local estimated receipts are to be determined, but are projected

to have a small increase, if any. The Cherry sheet is almost level funded, and the available funds are still to be determined.

For the FY2026 operating budget for expenses, there is a Level Service Budget that will yield in a budget deficit of \$3.4 to \$4 million, or an 8% increase.

“Most department budgets will aim for a max of 2% growth with

most at Level Spending (0%), which means cutback.”

The expenses budget includes the school, general government, public safety, public works, and human services that are all level funded, meaning cutbacks due to inflation and contractual increases.

Health insurance is seeing a 19% increase of \$1 million; retirement is

Please see **BUDGET**, page 3

THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION:

Honoring Service, Preserving History

By Tina Lesniak
Correspondent

SOUTH HADLEY—For years, the South Hadley Sons of the American Legion Squadron 260 has played an integral role in honoring veterans and preserving the rich history of military service in the community. With a steadfast commitment to patriotic ceremonies and military tributes, the Sons continue to exemplify the values of service, respect, and remembrance.

Throughout the years, members of the Sons have been key participants in veteran-related activities, particularly as part of the South Hadley Honor Guard. “The most impactful way the Sons support the post is as part of our South Hadley Honor Guard,” said Brian Willette, a veteran and key figure in the local American Legion community. “It shows a dedication these sons of veterans have in honoring our flag, nation, and the family members who served in uniform.”

One of the younger Sons members actively contributes by sounding Taps with a ceremonial bugle at funerals, paying solemn tribute to fallen veterans. In the past, the Sons led the way as a firing detail at veteran funerals, ensuring those



“Proud possessors of a priceless heritage, we male descendants of Veterans of all wars associate ourselves together as ‘Sons of the American Legion’.”

— Brian Willette

Josh Willette, Zach Willette and Kaulin Zaleski march in to honor local veterans.

Submitted photo by Brian Willette

Please see **SONS**, page 12

School committee addresses FY26 budget, renames Plains

By Emily-Rose Pappas
Staff Writer
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SOUTH HADLEY – The school committee discussed the preliminary FY26 School District Budget, and many concerns with level spending, as well as moving to change the name of Plains Elementary School.

The February 6 meeting was held by Chair Eric Friesner, and also in attendance were Vice Chair Danielle Cooke, members Jackson Matos, Jack Witkowski, and Daniel View.

Also in attendance were Student Representative Peyton Leclair, Interim Superintendent Jennifer Voyik, and Superintendent Mark McLaughlin.

Preliminary FY26 School District Budget

Mark McLaughlin shared with the board a presentation of the Preliminary Discussion and Summary of challenges, and the goals to show the community the changes coming to the district’s budget.

Jenn Voyik shared a summary of Chapter 70, which provides state aid to public schools, budgeted funds to be a total of \$11,002,049.

“We’re looking at pretty much breaking even as far as state revenues,” said Voyik.

Town Administrator Lisa Wong shared in a presentation to the Selectboard that all of the School, General Government, Public Safety, Public Works, and Human Services will be level funded, which will mean cutbacks due to inflation and contractual increases.

“What is being proposed is a level spending budget,” said Voyik. “And so basically what that means is if you had a thousand dollars last year, you have a thousand dollars this year for your total budget. And while services and costs and things like that rise, you have the same amount of funds to spend for each department’s budget.”

The town is looking at a level spending plan because the health insurance plans will be going up by 19%, which will add \$1 million to the town’s budget.

Retirement is going up 10.3% for an additional \$500k. General Liability is seeing a 15% increase or \$70k to the budget, and for enterprise, landfill is seeing 0%, Ledges Golf Course 2%, and Wastewater 2%.

“All of these expenses are increasing, but the town’s not seeing a rise in state aid in order to offset these very large increases in expenses,” said Voyik.

Please see **SCHOOL**, page 6



Turley Photo by Emily-Rose Pappas

Waubgeshig Rice with host Brandon Adler during an Author Talk live stream from the Library Speakers Consortium discussing his story and new book.

Author reflects on the dystopian with indigenous lens

By Emily-Rose Pappas
Staff Writer
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SOUTH HADLEY – The realm of dystopian literature is one many of us are interested in, reading about the new and scary possibilities of the unknown future through the means of science fiction.

Waubgeshig Rice, an author and journalist of the Wasauksing First Nation, has published several books that include the Independent Publishers Book Award-winning short story collection *Midnight Sweat-lodge*, and the bestselling novel *Moon on the Crusted Snow*.

The library provided a link to a virtual Author Talk with Rice where he read a snippet of the sequel to *Moon on the Crusted Snow*, *Moon*

of the Falling Leaves.

Brandon Adler from Library hosted the talk, from the Library Speakers Consortium, which hosts live videos of authors to be able to ask questions of authors and partners with local libraries in the United States, Canada, and New Zealand.

“Moon of the Turning Leaves takes place ten years later,” said Rice.

The second book takes place following the tribe from book one which has been displaced, and they return to find out if the world has ended.

“A few characters go on a journey... and encounter some wild and wacky things on this journey,” said Rice.

Please see **AUTHOR**, page 6

Planning Board considers ADU bylaw changes

By Walter Hamilton
Correspondent

SOUTH HADLEY – The Planning Board has begun efforts to revise the town’s Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) bylaws to comply with new state regulations that require Massachusetts towns and cities to permit such housing units in all single family zoning districts.

“An abutter (to a detached ADU) could go from privacy to right up against a 35-foot (high) building.”

— Joanna Brown

The local board on Feb. 10 reviewed provisions of Chapter 255-50 of the town’s Zoning Bylaws to reconcile local laws with requirements of state regulations that are based on the Affordable Homes Act that was passed by the state legislature and signed by Gov. Maura Healey in August 2024.

Proposed changes to the local law, that was approved by Town Meeting in May 2024 in light of pending state laws, include:

Delete a series of rules based on a requirement that, “The owners of the residence in which the accessory dwelling unit is created must continue to occupy at least

one of the dwelling units (principal or accessory) as their primary residence.”

Delete a local requirement that “an accessory dwelling unit shall not be occupied by more than three people nor have more than two bedrooms.”

Replace a local requirement that states: “Off street parking spaces shall be available for use by the owner occupant(s) and tenants” with a proposed new regulation that complies with state law language that more specifically details parking as follows:

“No more than one additional on-street or off-street parking space shall be required for an ADU if the lot subject to the ADU is located outside of a 0.5-mile (half-mile) radius of a Transit Station as defined (in the state regulations)” or

“No additional on-street or off-street parking space shall be required for an ADU if any portion of the lot subject to the ADU is located within a 0.5-mile (half-mile) radius of a Transit Station as defined (in the state regulations).”

Replace a local regulation with a mandate that “Building setbacks for detached units must ...comply with that for the accessory” (rather

Please see **BYLAW**, page 6

Community

Love is in the air at local author talk

By Emily-Rose Pappas
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SOUTH HADLEY – Romance isn't a genre of choice for many, but it is a fun and cozy genre that breaks apart the shadows and hatred around us, and shows us a wonderful story of love, and overcoming anything.



Local author Liz Alden

Local author Liz Alden has self-published fifteen romance novels, ranging through different topics and couples, sharing their stories through romcoms that will make you smile and laugh out loud as you read them.

"I enjoy having creative control over my books and marketing, and as a former small business owner, I love the challenge of being responsible for my own success," said Alden.

She got her degree in Mechanical Engineering but found a love for reading after finding great joy in the romance genre, and was able to take courses from Sarah MacLean, Theodora Taylor, and Sarra Cannon online about writing.

"I write contemporary romcoms - my books are set in the real world and are light hearted and funny. One is a small town romance, but most are inspired by my own travels. They are all steamy romances, where intimacy happens on page," said Alden.

She grew up reading books by Tamora Pierce, Louisa May Alcott, and Melanie Rawn, but found herself "wishing that there was more romance in it", until she discovered 50 Shades of Grey, and discovered a whole new genre.

"At the time, I was living aboard a sailboat with my husband. We circumnavigated the globe, and I had so many stories to tell. I could have written a memoir, but I still loved the romance genre," said Alden.

"So, the month after we finished our circumnavigation, when we were in Covid lockdown, I started a new project. I told these travel adventures through the lens of a romance novel. Visiting new places and meeting new people is such great fodder for romance."

She has even branched out away from the places she has been, to including the ones she has yet to visit, as well as a few fictional small towns.

"When you get into a great flow with your words and don't want to stop," Alden said. "It's rare, but it's an amazing feeling."

"Sometimes I have a particular character who talks very loudly in my head - like Kit, a side character in Butter You Up. He was so fun to write I ended up putting him as a side character again in Ghost of Ex-mas Past and he'll get his own book in my next series."

Throughout all of her books, she creates an experience for her readers she affectionately calls "armchair travel", where through the stories she writes, wants them to feel as though they are really there, in those places, and exploring the world around them.

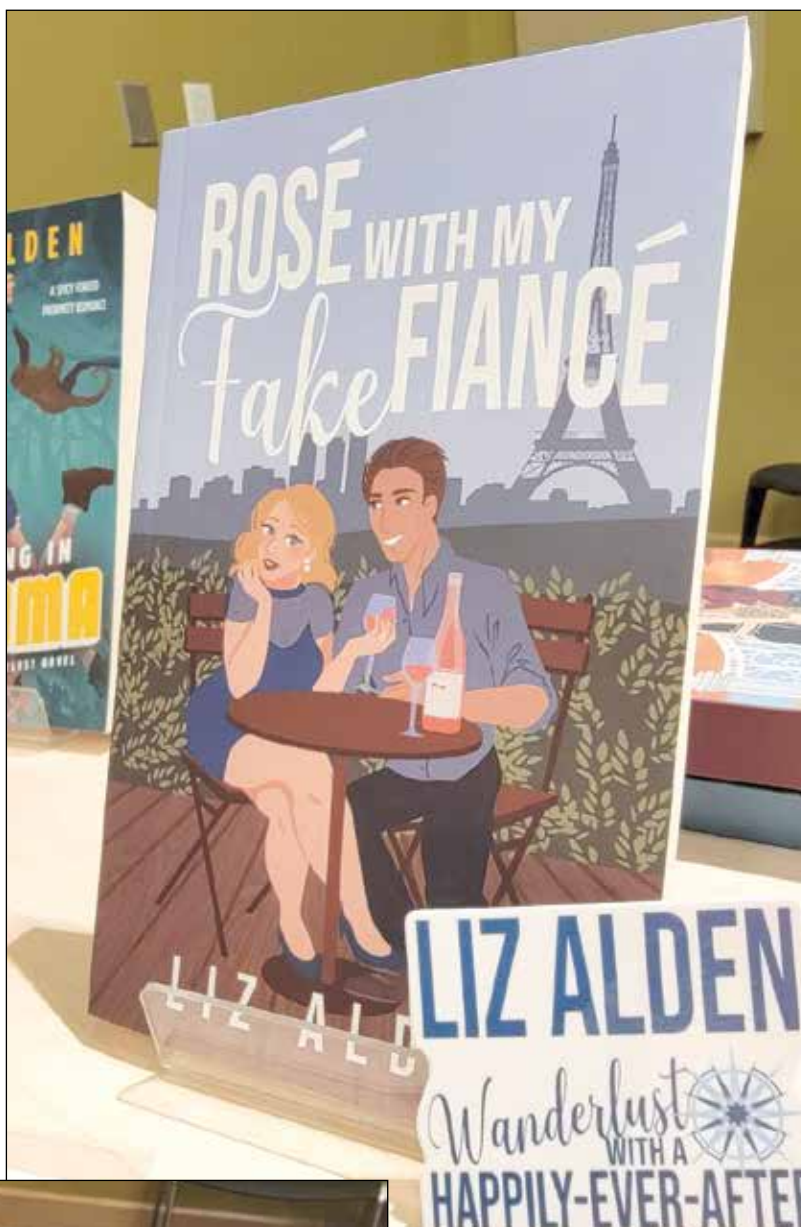
"Through my stories, they can transit the Panama Canal on a boat in The Fling in Panama or have a romantic escape in the countryside of Italy in Prosecco with My Professor," said Alden.

"Through travel, we can experience cultures that are different from our own, and I think it's important for everyone to understand as much of the world as possible to garner empathy and a sense of connectivity."

She also shares a deep desire for readers to find books with positive representations of relationships in all levels of intimacy.

"I want the people to be realistic and flawed, while still having healthy relationships and growing. Outside of the romantic relationship, I want my characters to also have other healthy relationships."

In her series, Aged Like Fine Wine, she represents this idea through the story of four female best friends in their forties and the dynamics between them.



Submitted photo

Liz Alden's book, Rosé With my Fiancé on display.

from my talk and picks up their first romance novel, I'm thrilled."

She finds joy in these author talks like the one at the South Hadley Public Library to connect with other romance readers and writers, loving to spend her time talking about reading, her favorite thing to do, and joined several book clubs at the library and in the community.

"Since I've been nomadic for almost ten years, finding meaningful, in-person connections is more important than ever. I'm sure everyone who went through Covid lockdowns and still works from home can relate," said Alden.

You can find her books for sale on her website, www.lizalden.com, and on most social medias as @lizaldenwriter. You can find her books on Amazon, Kobo, Barnes and Noble, and take them out at the South Hadley Public Library.

The best way to take a break and unwind from the stressors of the real world is to fall into a story, and during a season where we reflect on love, why not a love story.



Alden's books and posters of her other books ready for signing.

"I'm a passionate advocate for the genre - often thought of as "trashy" or "smut," these stories are

about hope and optimism, especially when we talk about women-, BI-POC-, or queer-centric stories," said Alden. "If one person walks away

Upcoming South Hadley meetings

SELECTBOARD, 7 p.m.
Hybrid at Senior Center

Tuesday, February 18
Tuesday, March 4
Tuesday, March 18
Saturday, March 1 at 10 a.m.

View all agendas: www.southhadley.org/agendacenter

Consider running for local office

Nomination Procedures:

SOUTH HADLEY—Nomination papers are available in the Town Clerk's Office at Town Hall (116 Main St, South Hadley, MA) beginning the first week of December for the offices listed below. The Annual Town Election is scheduled for Tuesday, April 8, 2025.

Candidates must be 18 years old or older and a registered voter in South Hadley.

Town-wide candidates need to obtain 50 certified signatures.

Town meeting candidates need to obtain 10 signatures from their precinct.

Candidates are encouraged to obtain additional signatures. All signatures must be returned to the Town Clerk's Office for certification. If the candidate does not obtain the correct amount of signatures, they cannot appear on the ballot.

Important Deadlines:

Last day to obtain nomination Papers: Thursday, Feb. 13, 2025, at 5 p.m.

Last day to submit nomination papers to the Clerk's office: Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2025, at 5 p.m.

All questions, comments, or concerns should be directed to the Town Clerk's office by phone at 413-538-5030, ext. 6183, or by email at elections@southhadley.ma.gov.

Free Trees for South Hadley Kids

SOUTH HADLEY—Free trees for kids! The South Hadley Library has partnered with Neighborhood Forest to give free trees to any youth Grade 12 or under who lives in or goes to school in town. Parents/Guardians/Caregivers can register using the link below before March 15 to receive their free tree the week of Earth Day, April 22-30.

The tree will be the White Pine, Pinus strobus, a fast growing evergreen tree native to New England. Trees beautify your neighborhood, reduce your carbon footprint, and instill a sense of love for our planet. Register at <https://www.neighborhoodforest.org/parent-registration/?school=105699>



Birds visit Notch Visitor Center

AMHERST—Birds on the Range will be at The Notch Visitor Center at 1 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 15.

At this free event you will get a close-up look at owls and other birds of prey with Tom Ricardi, a licensed rehabilitator and wildlife biologist, and learn about the great work being

done at the Massachusetts Birds of Prey Rehabilitation Center, which cares for injured birds. What birds can be found here on the Range? Come and see!

Sponsored by The Friends of the Mount Holyoke Range, for more information call DCR: 413-253-2883

Nonprofit offers \$1,000 scholarship to two high school seniors

BELCHERTOWN/GRANBY – Local charitable organization Nick's Waves of Change is holding a special scholarship program of \$1,000 towards college for two students.

Nick's Waves of Change was created for Nicholas R. Boileau who passed away from acute myeloid leukemia in 2021, and in his memory, the organization strives to create "waves of

change" throughout the community.

One student from Nick's alma mater, Belchertown High School, and one to another high school senior in Western Massachusetts that matches the qualifications will receive the scholarship.

The application can be found on their website, www.nickswavesofchange.org under the "Scholarship Opportunities" tab, as well as requirements for the grant award. Applications are due to be completed by April 17, 2025.

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<p>Friday, February 21st Kilashandra</p>	<p>Saturday, February 22nd Dee Reilly</p>

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Sun. 12pm - 8pm; Mon.-Thurs. 11:30am-9:30pm; Fri. & Sat. 11:30am - 11:30pm

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Eagle Scout Sako Lively: Dedication and Community Service in Action

By Tina Lesniak
Correspondent

This is the first in a three-part series of newly recognized Eagle Scouts in South Hadley.

SOUTH HADLEY - For many, achieving the rank of Eagle Scout is a milestone that marks years of dedication, personal growth, and a strong commitment to community service. Sako Lively, a dedicated scout, has embodied these principles through a project that not only improved accessibility at his former elementary school but also enriched the local environment for both students and wildlife.

Lively's Eagle Scout project involved the construction of two six-foot-long ramps and four birdhouses for his former elementary school RK Finn Ryan Road School in Northampton. The idea stemmed from a visit to the school, where he discussed potential projects with an the Karen Albano, the principal at the time. During their walk through the school's courtyards, she pointed out that two areas lacked wheelchair accessibility. Additionally, they noted the vibrant presence of Black-Capped Chickadees on the school grounds. Inspired to address both issues, Lively developed a project that would benefit students and staff alike.

"My project benefits the students and staff of my elementary school because wheelchair users may now access the entire campus and may observe and even study the local Black-Capped Chickadees in a new way," Lively explained.

The execution of the project required extensive planning and teamwork. Over the course of three days, Lively and a team of dedicated volunteers worked tirelessly to bring his vision to life. The first day involved a group of ten youth and four adult volunteers constructing and painting the ramps and birdhouses. On the second day, a fellow scout assisted Lively in installing three birdhouses



Lively and fellow scout Matthew Brown finish up another birdhouse.

Photos submitted

es and both ramps. Finally, due to the school's limited summer hours, Lively and his grandmother installed the last birdhouse on a separate occasion.

"The volunteers were essential to the project's execution, specifically my father, David Lively, and Charlie Brown, who cut wood with power tools since youth weren't allowed to use them," Lively noted. "My father also drove me to procure the wood for my project and provided his truck as a means of transporting the constructs."

Additionally, Lively received in-

valuable guidance and support from his scout leaders, including Scoutmaster Jeffrey Holmes, the troop's committee chair Bill Hoefler, and his project advisor, Brian Regan, who helped him navigate each step of the process.

The completion of this project marked a significant milestone in Lively's journey to becoming an Eagle Scout, a goal he had set for himself since joining Cub Scouts in second grade. He credits his father for encouraging him to continue during challenging times, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic,



Sako Lively and Karen Albano are all smiles at the completion of his Eagle Scout project.

when he transitioned to a new troop. "I hope people see that achieving Eagle Scout took years of dedication to scouting and thoughtful preparation and execution of a community service project as well as tens of hours of service to my community," Lively said. "I want them to see this to understand that I am a diligent worker and I care about raising other people up."

Looking ahead, Lively plans to attend college next year, with a likely focus on computer science. He aspires to work for a company or governmental agency that has a meaningful and positive impact on society. Beyond his professional aspirations, he remains committed to volunteering and helping to organize community events whenever

possible.

Reflecting on his scouting journey, Lively fondly recalls his favorite experiences, particularly camps at Maine High Adventure and Philmont. "I loved the immersion in nature and disconnect from the internet that both experiences provided and the joy of spending time with my friends and father," he shared. "Every time that I spend time in the woods, I am grateful to have a taste of this same calm and joy."

Sako Lively's story is one of dedication, perseverance, and service. His hard work has left a lasting impact on his community, and as he embarks on the next chapter of his journey, his commitment to making a difference remains steadfast.

BUDGET from page 1

seeing a 10.3% increase or \$500k, general liability a 15% increase or \$70k, enterprise in the areas of landfill, 0%, Ledges Golf Course, 2%, and Wastewater, 2%, and the stabilization fund is yet to be determined. The debt of the town is listed as level.

Wong is working towards finding a balanced budget by evaluating funding levels for each department in order to explore savings.

"I just want to make sure we understand the macro picture and the strategy we are looking at," said Wong.

"It's not going to be easy," said Cyr.

"We have really great staff, and we have built really great teams, and we have quality services that we want to maintain," said Wong. "So, we're going to continue our fight for that. There's always things happening because we have quality staff and quality teams."

"It's going to be a really tough year, and we're going to have to figure out how we can figure out how we can all work together on this,"

said Wong.

Casolari encouraged people to attend these meetings, and meetings of other committees, in order to ask about this level of funding, and what changes that will bring to the community in the coming months.

On February 18, the Selectboard will be holding a line item budget discussion, and on February 20 there will be a joint meeting with Appropriations about the initial budget.

On March 1 there will be a Community budget meeting, on March 4, there will be a Budget Public Hearing for the Selectboard, and on March 11 a Budget Public Hearing for the School Committee.

On March 18, the Selectboard will have their budget vote, and School Committee will have theirs on March 20. You can find more information and agendas for these meetings at www.southhadley.org/calendar.

Quarterly Financial Report

Town Accountant William Sutton came on the meeting virtually to give the quarterly financial report

for the town, which represents half-way through the fiscal year.

"It's a good mid-term report of how the year is going," said Sutton.

For the general year, "everything is tracking well," across the revenues and expenditures, with an average of 50% of the budget used.

The past budgets are similar to this one's, to see a rise in some taxes and other areas as opposed to last fiscal year's.

Th report overviews the different areas the town is spending money in, and earning money, from the departments like Selectboard, IT, elections, public safety in weights and measures, the snow and ice maintenance under DPW, as well as employee benefits and other areas.

Cyr thanked Sutton for his time, and the work he has put in to follow the budget.

Conservation Commission member moved to Full Time

The Selectboard unanimously approved to appoint Conservation Commission member Jill Pietrantonio from an associate position to a full-time position.

2025 Town Census forms have been mailed

What is the Census?

Why should I return it?

SOUTH HADLEY—The Annual Town Census/Street Listing is an important legal document mandated by Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. ch. 51 § 4). Returning the Census ensures that all voters in your household remain on the active voter list. The Census is also important for non-voters as it may provide proof of residency (which may be used to receive veteran's benefits, in-state tuition at state schools, and more).

How do I return the Census?

There are several ways to return your Annual Census to the Clerk's office:

Mail: using the enclosed envelope

In-person: in the Clerk's office at 116 Main St during office hours

Dropbox: leave forms in the secure dropbox labeled "Treasurer/Collector" located behind South Hadley Police Station

Email: send a scanned copy of the completed form to the Clerk's office at townclerk@southhadley-ma.gov.

Registering to Vote

You cannot use the Census form to register to vote or to update an existing voter registration.

Dog Licensing

All dogs six months or older must be licensed annually in Massachusetts (M.G.L. Ch. 140, s 137 - s 139). Dogs may be registered by mail or in person using the tear-off form at the bottom of the census. If returning by mail or in person, please bring or include a current copy of your dog's rabies vaccination certificate.

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Opinion

in the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid

Roses or carnations, you choose!

With St. Valentine's Day coming up, my thoughts turn to flowers.

I am not a "rose girl" so to speak. It is probably because I am frugal and roses cost an arm and a leg this time of year.

Get me a carnation and I am happy. They don't bend at the neck or pick you with thorns. They even smell nice, to me the fragrance is that of cloves.

So this will be a combo column. First, it will give our rose lovers out there the best chance of keeping their admirer's big investment healthy for the longest possible time. Then, I will do the same for the humble carnation.

Perhaps you will be the lucky recipient of roses on Friday. I have a couple tricks up my sleeve to help you increase their vase-life. First, remove the roses from their box and give each one a fresh cut on a forty-five degree angle.

If you can do this under water, all the better to prevent what I call "bent head" or "limp neck" syndrome- an air bubble clogging the stem.

You should also remove any foliage that will be underwater - it will rot and make the water stinky and full of bacteria. Leaves on the top third of the stem can remain as long as they look pretty; unbeknownst to me, these will continue to photosynthesize, making food to help the rose color up to its full potential.

We all have had a few "bent heads" or "limp necks" in our day - a shame, considering how expensive roses are, especially when purchased on a holiday. If you catch this situation early there is a way to remedy it: recut the stem of the rose or roses in question and soak them horizontally, under water for a half-hour or so.

This technique is contrary to what one might think is good for a many-petaled flower. I would argue that water trapped within the petals would breed fungi and shorten vase-life, but I guess if the rose is doomed to the fate of a bent head, it's worth a shot. Regular folks have tried it in the bathtub and have been successful.

How about those carnations? They aren't as fussy as their more expensive counterparts, but here are a few helpful hints. Recut their stems to just above a node (the bump where leaves come from) and place in floral preservative.

If you don't have floral preservative, you can make your own. Here is a recipe that, just like the professional blends, contain the three necessary components for fresh flower health and longevity: carbohydrates, a biocide and pH adjuster.

1t sugar
1t bleach
2t lemon or lime juice (strained)
1 quart water

Alternate version:

1-12 ounce can decaf lemon/lime soda
3 cans water
1T bleach
Mix and stir to flatten

Each of these preservatives should be stored in the refrigerator with contents labeled.

Sometimes, carnations come very tightly budded. If you want them to open quickly, without waiting days, you can up the sugar content in the preservative to force bloom.

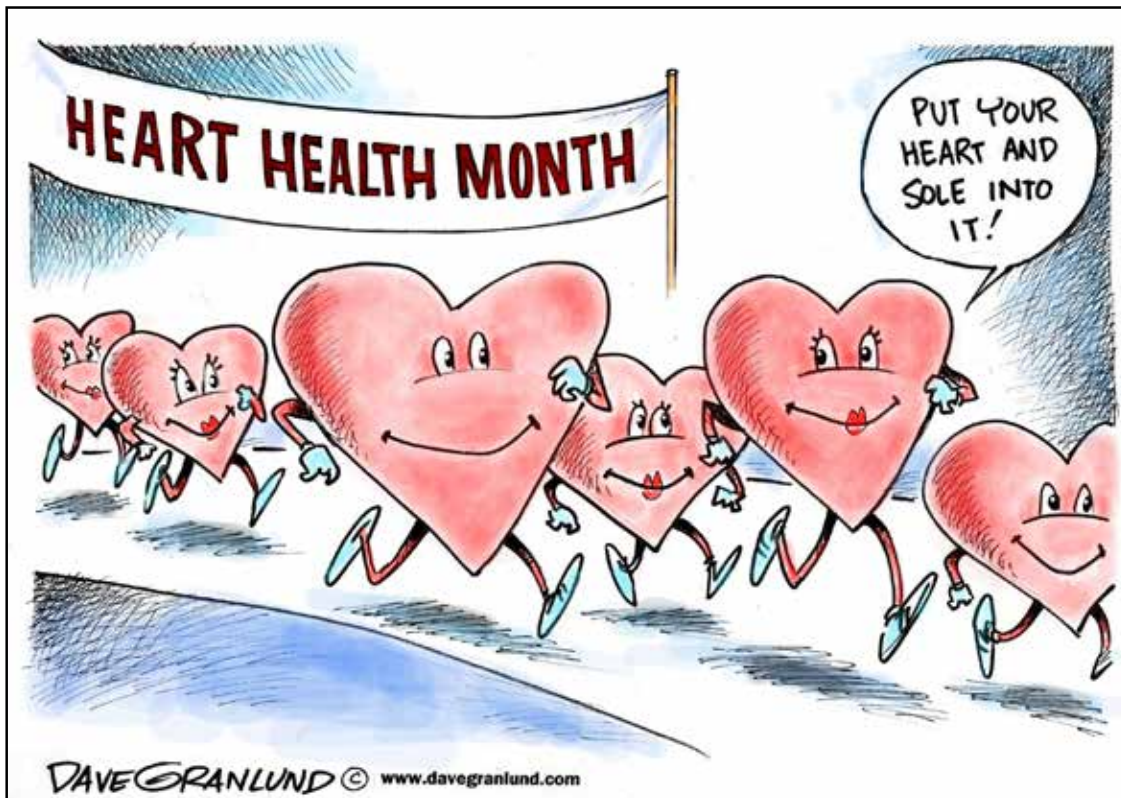
Do expect that you won't get to enjoy them as long in the vase if you do this, though, since their energy will be spent.

Cut flowers are sensitive to ethylene gas, and carnations are especially sensitive. Rotting foliage, ripening fruit, cigarette smoke and exhaust all release ethylene gas, which acts like a hormone that triggers maturation and death. For that reason we avoid storing flowers in the household fridge.

I had my own firsthand experience. I had arrangements to make at work, but had jury duty the day they were needed. I made them a day early and cleared out one of the coolers. Wouldn't you know it that someone put an apple inside without my knowing. Sure enough everything was ruined.

Whether you are a rose lover or a carnation lover, or enjoy any flower in between, I hope that you either treat yourself, or are treated by someone else, either on St. Valentine's Day or sometime soon!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Don't Poke Your Neighbor's Eye Out

Letter to the editor:

While it may seem too cold to work outside right now, many people are still walking or running in your neighborhoods. Before spring buds appear, this would be a good time to trim back those bushes/trees that are overhanging the sidewalks or roadways. You know you have been meaning to take care of them, but one thing or another got in the way (besides it is SOOOO cold out!). However, those intrepid walkers/runners don't see it that way and they are trying to stay healthy. The problem is that they are bundled up so much they don't always see

what is right in front of them at eye level until ZAP they get hit in the face. Be nice to your neighbors and take the 10 minutes to trim those bushes and trees. We all will thank you!

Your South Hadley Tree Committee & Tree Stewards

Jim Canning, Marion Canning,
Austin Ford, Daniel Hamel, Mike Lamontagne,
Linda Sachs, Bobbie Salthouse,
Dennis Swartwout, Patrick Tracey,
Genevieve Van de Merghel, Linda Young

along the coast.

Ludlow birds

On Saturday, Jan. 25 a Ludlow resident emailed about the birds in her backyard. She said, "The usual visitors are purple finches, white-throated sparrows, juncos, titmice, nuthatches, bluejays, mourning doves, cardinals and red bellied woodpeckers. Yesterday Jan. 24, we had a cowbird at the feeder. We haven't had any visit us in the five years we've fed the birds in winter. Just wondering if others in the area have seen a cowbird this early."

Bluebirds and northern flicker

I received an email on Sunday, Jan 26 from a North Brookfield resident, She said, "I live in North Brookfield, down on Lake Lashaway. I had five blue birds and a northern flicker on my feeders this morning along with the usual birds. Early Spring?"

Brimfield birds

I received an email from a Brimfield resident on Jan. 21. He said, "Today in the yard all the usual birds were about however the junco flock has increased to about 65 birds. Other not so commonly seen birds were a Carolina wren, and a white-throated and a tree sparrows."

In another email he wrote, "Yes the blue jays sure do like the peanuts. The titmice also get their share. And once in awhile a red-bellied woodpecker with show up and take a peanut. When I walk around the yard there are a couple of places under a tree or shrub where the ground is littered with empty peanut shells."

Birds in my yard

I continue to have the usual birds at my feeders and suet feeder such as black capped chickadees, titmice, white breasted nuthatches, downy woodpeckers, mourning doves and blue jays. Now that it is February, I expect to see male red-winged black-birds.

I received a state of the art bird feeder equipped with a camera for my birthday. I have not set it up yet. I will take it down once bears come out of hibernation because I would not want it destroyed.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing my-backyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.



Male and female hooded merganser

My daughter saw a pair of hooded mergansers on the Ware River on two different occasions.

She said, "They were riding those rapids to the bridge and looked like they were having a blast. Then they just hung out under the bridge."

The hooded merganser is the smallest of the mergansers at 18 inches long. It has a short thin bill and crested head. The male has a black head, white fan shaped patch within the crest, which is only visible when the crest is raised. The flanks are brown and the back black. It also has black vertical lines on its white breast. The female is plain brown with a darker back and red brown crest. The immature female looks like the adult female and the immature male similar to the female, but they some white in the crest.

Hooded mergansers dive underwater and eat small fish, frogs, crustaceans, mollusks and aquatic insects. Courtship begins in mid winter. Females do head bobbing and pumping. Most male displays involve crest raising. The male makes a frog like note and the female makes a hoarse "gak."

The female lays six to eight white eggs in a nest of grasses and down placed in a tree cavity or nest box. Mergansers summer on wooded rivers and lakes and winters on similar locations as well as



Why was Social Security money moved to the General Treasury?

Dear Rusty:

Why were the Social Security funds moved from the Social Security account to the General Fund with the government?

Is it not then called a tax making it an entitlement? That then gives the government control of our retirement. Most of us feel that someone should be in charge and use the Social Security fund with in-

vestments that grow our savings.

I invested my 401,000 and savings and the original amount made me money during the Trump years and I'm now trying to catch up. I make this statement because I draw more from my investments than I receive from Social Security.

Signed: Questioning Senior Citizen

Dear Questioning Senior:

I'm afraid I must inform you that no Social Security funds have ever been moved from the Social Security account to the government's General Fund; this is a pervasive myth which we have refuted many times over the years. For information, here is one of many articles I have published on this topic, which I hope you find interesting: <https://socialsecurityreport.org/ask-rusty-about-repaying-social-security>

Please see **SOCIAL SECURITY**, page 5

OPINION PAGE/ LETTERS POLICY

Letters to the Editor have a maximum of 350 words. We require writers to include their name, address and phone number in order for our office to authenticate authorship prior to publication. Addresses and phone numbers are not published.

Unsigned or anonymous letters will NOT be published.

We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions. Libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks or defamation of character are not allowed. Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon.

Please email (preferred) letters to townreminder@turley.com. Mailed letters can be sent to Town Reminder, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

Turley Election Policy

This newspaper will print free self-submitted statements of candidacy only four weeks or more out from the election. All candidates running in both contested and uncontested races are asked to submit their statements to the editor to include only biographical and campaign platform details. Total word count for statements is limited to between 300-500 words maximum. Please include a photo. We will not publish any statements of candidacy inside the four weeks from election threshold. To publish any other campaign publicity during the race, please contact our advertising representatives. We also do not allow personal attacks against other candidates or political parties in statements of candidacy, nor do we publish for free any information about key endorsements or political fundraisers.

Letters to the editor of no more than 250 words from supporters endorsing specific candidates or discussing campaign issues are limited to three total per author during the election season. No election letters will appear in the final edition before the election. We reserve the right to edit all statements of candidacy and letters to the editor to meet our guidelines.

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'The Big Broadcast!' celebrates 20th Anniversary

Mount Holyoke Students Recreate 1940s Radio Show

SOUTH HADLEY – “The Big Broadcast!,” a popular musical tradition and signature Mount Holyoke College event, celebrates its 20th anniversary concert Saturday, March 8 in Chapin Auditorium on the college’s campus. There will be two performances - 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Snow date is March 9.

“The Big Broadcast!” is a unique recreation of a 1940s-style radio show, complete with news, commercials, popular songs, and a radio play in the old soap-opera serial style.

Sponsors are Mount Holyoke College, PeoplesBank, 22News, Loomis Communities, NEPM, Reminder Publications, The Republican and MassLive.

22News meteorologist Brian Lapis returns to “The Big Broadcast!” in his role as the show’s host, Fred Kelley. Mark Gionfriddo, director of the Mount Holyoke College Jazz Ensembles, is the

show’s creative director. “The Big Broadcast” is a production of the Mount Holyoke College Big Band, Jazz Vocal, and Chamber Jazz ensembles.

“There’s really nothing else like it,” Gionfriddo said. Part concert, part theater, the show is produced by students with Gionfriddo playing the role of band leader Matt Morgan.

Some of this year’s musical selections include Glenn Miller’s “Little Brown Jug” and “Pennsylvania 6-5000;” “I Get a Kick Out of You” by Cole Porter; “On the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe,” made famous by Rosemary Clooney and Harry James; and “Straighten Up And Fly Right” from The Andrews Sisters.

The Vocal Jazz Ensemble will premiere a new arrangement by Gionfriddo of a classic Johnny Anz ballad, “A Cottage and A Prayer.” The song, which Gionfriddo calls a little-known gem, has a local connection: Anz’s son John is a music promoter and radio host from South Hadley.

Tickets are available at the Odyssey Bookshop in South Hadley and online at mhc.ludus.com.

NEWSBRIEFS

Seven Sisters Trail Race

The countdown is on for the 2025 7 Sisters Trail race on Saturday, May 3. The Seven Sisters Trail Race is an event that could not take place without the hard work of many volunteers like you.

The race was started in 1991 and has always donated all net proceeds to the Friends of the Mount Holyoke Range, a nonprofit organization that helps the State of Massachusetts to purchase and preserve land surrounding the Mt. Holyoke Range State Park. Since the start of the 7 Sisters Trail Race, more than \$100,000 has been donated to the Friends.

Volunteering at the 7 Sisters Trail Race is a unique experience,

and that experience draws people back year after year. It is our aim to make sure volunteers continue to have fun, build friendships, and see the difference that their work makes during this amazing day. Race volunteers help in a number of ways:

- Water Stations
- Registration Table
- Halfway Turnaround
- Parking
- Set-up/Takedown
- Finish Line
- Medical Attention

Please spread the word. You can sign up to run from the town of South Hadley website.

Relay for Life looking for participants

BELCHERTOWN—Relay for Life Kick Off event from 1-3 p.m. on Feb.23 at Hope Church on Main Street in Belchertown. This is a fun and educational gathering. Information will be given out regarding our Relay for Life event.

Quaboag Valley Relay for Life is on May 31 on the Belchertown Common from 10 a.m. - 10 p.m. Everyone has been effected with Cancer so now is the time to form a few friends and family so you can fundraise and spread aware-

ness of this dreaded disease. You do not have to have a large team or lots of money collected. A few new teams getting some in donations is a big help to the American Cancer Society. After we are done doing all our fundraising, the Relay is a way to unwind and celebrate our accomplishments.

If you are thinking about starting a team or joining a team, this gathering can help you. For additional info please email ctellie@juno.com.

Saint Patrick Novena

HOLYOKE— Saint Jerome Parish located at 169 Hampden Street in Holyoke is once again hosting a Novena to Saint Patrick beginning on Sunday, March 9 and concluding on Monday, March 17. Nine priests from throughout the

Diocese will be serving as the celebrants of the Novena Masses. All are invited to attend. Information about Mass times and celebrants may be obtained by contacting the Parish Office at 413-532-6381.

COLLEGE NEWS

Elms College announces Dean's List for fall 2024

CHICOPEE—The College of Our Lady of the Elms has named the following students to the dean's list for the fall 2024 semester. Congratulations to all the students who are named to the list:

GRANBY
Simon Abbott, Dylan Holubowich, Briana Sosa, Noel Summlin

SOUTH HADLEY
W. Henry Fidler, Kaitlyn Lynes, Abbie Sierzego, Alina Stefoglo, Haley Dusseault, Jadyn Christie, Alexandra Plotniak, Alexis Neill, Samuel Ackah-Yensu, Carly Goldenberg, Deirdre McDaniel, Alicia D'Amour, Autumn Lewinski, Elise Brumer, Tiana Belton, Meghan Parenteau

Stears named to the Champlain College President's List

BURLINGTON, VT – Jesse Stears of Granby, MA, was named to the Champlain College President's List for the Fall 2024 semester.

Students on the President's List have achieved a grade point average of 4.0 or higher during the semester. Stears is majoring in Computer Forensics & Digital Investigations.

Making the President's List is a tremendous achievement. Many of the high achievers balance their career-focused classes with jobs, internships, clubs, and volunteering. We congratulate them on this great accomplishment and honor

University of Alabama fall 2024 deans list

TUSCALOOSA, AL— Jocelynn Bouyea was named to The University of Alabama deans list for fall semester 2024.

Univ. Hartford students named to Dean's and President's Lists

WEST HARTFORD, CT — The University of Hartford is pleased to announce that 2,291 students have been named to the Dean's List and President's List for the fall 2024 semester.

The Dean's List recognizes students achieving superior academic standing. The requirement, with some exceptions, is a grade point average of at least 3.0 and no grade below C.

The President's List recognizes a select group of students reaching the highest level of academic standing. To be placed on the President's List, students must maintain a GPA of at least a 3.75 and receive grades of C or better.

Please join us in congratulating:
Owen Strand of South Hadley - Dean's List and President's List
Samantha Grabherr of Granby - Dean's List
Sam Keser of Granby - Dean's List
Kristen Trembley of Granby - Dean's List

Resident named to Clark University's Fall Dean's List

WORCESTER, MA – Henry R. Strand, of South Hadley, Mass., was named to first honors on the Clark University Dean's List. This selection marks outstanding academic achievement during the Fall 2024 semester.

Students must have a GPA of 3.8 or above for first honors or a GPA between 3.50 and 3.79 for second honors.

WPI fall 2024 dean's list

WORCESTER— A total of 2,393 undergraduate students at Worcester Polytechnic Institute were named to the university's fall 2024 dean's list.

The following students were named to the dean's list for fall 2024:

Griffin Brown of South Hadley, class of 2026, majoring in Computer Science.
Brady Currier of South Hadley, class of 2028, majoring in Data Science.
Evan Piquette of South Hadley, class of 2026, majoring in Mechanical Engineering.

Elms College December 2024 graduates

CHICOPEE — College of Our Lady of the Elms congratulates 79 students who graduated in December 2024.

Cassandra Duchesne of South Hadley received a Master of Arts in Teaching from Elms College.

W. Henry Fidler of South Hadley received a Bachelor of Arts from Elms College.

James Madison University dean's list

HARRISONBURG, VA— South Hadley resident **Alexis Stratton** has been named to the dean's list at James Madison University for the fall 2024 semester. Students who earn dean's list honors must carry at least 12 graded credit hours and earn a GPA of between 3.5 and 3.899. Stratton is majoring in Biology - BS.



SOCIAL SECURITY from page 4

ty-money-taken-by-politicians/.

Someone actually is charged with monitoring our Social Security funds, a board of Social Security Trustees consisting of the Secretaries of Treasury, Labor, and Health and Human Services, as well as the Commissioner of Social Security plus two Public Trustees. Each year the Social Security Trustees do a complete analysis of the Social Security program, especially its financial status and outlook for the future. If you have interest in the Trustee's latest annual report, here is a link to the 2024 analysis: <https://socialsecurityreport.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/tr24summary.pdf>.

What you will find in the Trustees' report is that Social Security will run out of reserved funds in about 2033,

necessitating an across the board cut of about 21% for everyone, unless Congress acts soon to reform the program and restore it to fiscal solvency. The Trustees have warned Congress about this problem for many years, but Congress has yet to find the bipartisan cooperation needed to fix the problem.

Association of Mature American Citizens has steadfastly offered proposals to Congress, which would restore Social Security to solvency and will continue to do so with the new 119th Congress, which convened on Jan. 3, 2025.

Please know that we appreciate your feedback and commend you for the wise use of your 401k investments, something that many of our members find necessary to supplement their Social Security. Remember, Social Security was never in-

tended to provide all your retirement income, so earlier saving to supplement your retirement financial needs was a very wise move on your part.

The Association Mature Citizens Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. This article is intended for information purposes and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

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USDA INSP. FRESH PORK SIRLOIN CUTLETS.....	\$2.22 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN BEEF SHORT RIBS	\$8.99 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS 10 LB BAG	77c lb
USDA INSP. FROZEN BONE-IN PORK LOIN END CHOPS	\$1.79 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN BEEF SHORT RIBS	\$8.99 lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN CHICKEN WINGS TRAY PAK.....	\$1.88 lb
USDA INSP. SLICED IN OUR DELI TURKEY BREAST.....	\$3.99 lb	USDA INSP. GROUND FRESH DAILY DIET LEAN GROUND BEEF	\$4.99 5 LB BAG	USDA INSP. FROZEN HANDMADE CHICKEN EMPANADAS FULLY COOKED	\$2.99 lb
USDA INSP. SLICED IN OUR DELI MONTEREY JACK CHEESE	\$4.44 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN BEEF SHANK.....	\$3.99 lb	USDA INSP. IQF FROZEN RAW SHRIMP EASY PEELED 31/40 COUNT 2 LB BAG.....	\$9.99 ea
USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN BEEF SHANK.....	\$3.99 lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN GOAT MEAT.....	\$6.99 lb	90 Meat Outlet 90 Avocado St. Springfield 413-737-1288 www.90meat.com We reserve the right to limit quantities.	

SALE DATES: 2/13/25-2/19/25 BUY DIRECT FOR SAVINGS • SELECTION • SERVICE

HOURS: Mon. - Wed. 8-4 Thurs. 8-6 • Fri. 8-6 • Sat. 8-3

South Hadley Council on Aging

45 Dayton Street, South Hadley • 413-538-5030 • www.southhadley.org/324/Council-on-Aging

SOUTH HADLEY—Don't forget to come meet our new Representative – Homar Gomez. He will be at the COA at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 18.

Luncheon Outing at the Tiger's Den Restaurant

Join us at 11 a.m. *Wednesday, Feb. 19* for a delicious lunch at the South Hadley High School and support their culinary students. Menu choices are available when you get your ticket at the SH COA Welcome Desk. Tickets are \$12 per person.

Trivia Pizza Night

Thursday, Feb. 20 4:30-6:30 p.m.
Join us for our 2nd annual Trivia Night, have a choice of pizza prepared by Family Pizza in South Hadley, with soda or water. Tickets are \$8.00 per person. The Travel Club will donate a Big Y Gift Certificate and Travel certificates to the winning teams. For reservations, please call Huguette at 413-530-6162.

Gentlemen's Breakfast

Friday, Feb. 21 at 8:30 a.m.
Gents! Come savor a delicious meal prepared by the talented Chef Dakota. We thank Steven Laplante and Jameson Glanville of ERA M. Connie Laplante Real Estate for hosting this morning meal. The meal is free – donations are happily accepted. Please register with the Welcome Desk.

Black History Month

Tuesday, Feb. 25 at 2 p.m.
Join us as we wrap up our celebration of Black History Month with a presentation by Kijua Sanders-McMurtry, Ph.D. Dr. McMurtry is the VP for Equity and Inclusion at Mt. Holyoke College. This presentation will be a presentation and discussion of the role and experiences of Black Americans in the Northeast, South Hadley and the information available at Mt. Holyoke College.

Hip Hop Line Dance with Rondae

Wednesday, Feb. 26 at 1 p.m.
Rondae Drafts, PhD., from Music Dance

in Randolph, MA will lead a FREE line dance class featuring smooth R&B and Hip Hop music. This well attended class is our 2nd year with Rondae and generously sponsored by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Please register at the Welcome Desk.

Women's Network

Wednesday, Feb. 26 at 2:20 p.m.
Join us for our monthly social program for women, featuring guest speaker Jan Lucier, Holistic nurse and Shamanic Practitioner. Refreshments will be provided, sponsored by the Friends of the South Hadley Seniors.

February Birthday and Anniversary Party

Thursday, Feb. 27 at 5 p.m.
Celebrate with us at our monthly Birthday and Anniversary party featuring entertainment by Soular Eclipse. If it's your birthday or anniversary in February, don't forget to enter our monthly raffle. Sponsored by the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Friends of the South Hadley Seniors.

Granby Lions Club 'Groundhog Fuel Assistance Fund' 2025

GRANBY—Once again this winter heating season, the Granby Lions Club has established an Emergency Fuel Assistance Fund for Granby residents. This fund, titled the "Groundhog Fund," will enable residents of Granby to obtain needed assistance for fuel to help them through the next six weeks of winter.

The Lions Club Groundhog Fund will help residents through March 16.

Residents who would like to apply for needed assistance are asked to complete an application and these applications are available in the Senior Center/Council of Aging Office at 10 West State St. in Granby from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The Granby Lions Club appreciates the continuing support that the community of Granby gives to their projects and activities.

BYLAW from page 1

than principal) use structure, as identified in the local dimensional schedule for the zoning district where the accessory dwelling unit is to be located."

Replace a local regulation that limits the height of accessory dwelling units to One-and-one-half stories to a height "no greater than that allowed for principal single-family dwellings."

The board on Feb. 10, at its regular bi-monthly meeting, debated the definition of "transit station" as opposed to "bus stop." The town has bus stops, but no transit stations.

Member Joanna Brown expressed concerns that when applying current setback dimensions, such as the distance between a building and property line, to accessory buildings, such as garages, those rules could place an ADU as close as 10 feet away from a neighbor's yard.

"An abutter (to a detached ADU) could go from privacy to right up against a 35-foot (high) building," she said.

Planning Director Anne Capra responded to Brown's concerns by pledging to take them up with the New Bedford law firm, Mead, Talermin & Costa, that represents the town. That law firm had already addressed some noteworthy items and concerns raised by the new regulations by the local board as follows:

"A municipality may still impose a site plan review requirement for ADUs falling within the protections of the Dover Amendment (a 1950 state law that exempts agricultural, religious, and educational uses from certain zoning restrictions). The amendments

provide that "the use of land or structures for such accessory dwelling unit under this paragraph [dealing with single ADU's in single-family residential zones] may be subject to reasonable regulations, including, but not limited to, ... site plan review, regulations concerning dimensional setbacks and the bulk and height of structures and may be subject to restrictions and prohibitions on short-term rentals."

The existing local bylaws already prohibit short-term rentals of ADUs.

The law firm also noted a change in the state law that municipalities may "no longer treat adjacent non-conforming lots under common ownership in single-family residential zoning districts as having merged if the lots, at the time of recording or endorsement, were conforming as to area, frontage, width, yard and depth, subject to certain qualifications. To be entitled to the protections of this provision, these lots must contain not less than 10,000 square feet of area and have at least 75 feet of frontage. Furthermore, any single-family residential structure to be built upon such a lot cannot exceed 1,850 square feet of heated living area, shall contain at least 3 bedrooms, and cannot be used as a seasonal home or short-term rental."

The law firm also noted changes to the zoning appeals process that are designed to "dissuade dilatory (delaying) or "NIMBY" (Not in My Back Yard) by giving courts the power to force a complainant to post a bond that would pay "costs and attorneys' fees by the court upon a finding of bad faith or malice" by a complaining party.

1 Million meals donated to food banks

SPRINGFIELD— Big Y's annual Sack Hunger campaign provides funds for the four food banks within their two-state marketing area. In turn, these food banks support local soup kitchens, food pantries, senior food programs, daycare centers and many others of the 2,100-member agencies that they help every day. Their goal is to maximize access to nutritious food and other resources that support food security for those at risk of hunger.

Throughout this past holiday season, customers and employees generously supported Sack Hunger at Big Y supermarkets or Table & Vine Fine Wines and Liquors. Every \$5 donation brought 10 meals to those in need of support. Additionally, Big Y added even more ways to boost their efforts with specific proceeds from Produce, Floral and Meat departments, along with a portion of every one of Big Y's family of private label brands.

Big Y's Sack Hunger campaign started in 2010 where 740 meals were donated. With this year's 1 million meals, the program continues to expand its efforts to support those in need. Big Y's Sack Hunger donation is part of their ongoing support throughout the year in-



cluding almost daily donations of meat, fresh produce and bakery along with grocery, frozen food and dairy items. The four regional food banks are The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, Worcester County Food Bank, The Greater Boston Food Bank and Connecticut Foodshare.

"Each year, our customers and employees come together to support families across Massachusetts and Connecticut impacted by food insecurity during the holiday season. We are thankful for the opportunity to make a meaningful impact in the lives of those in need, and we appreciate everyone involved in spreading hope throughout our communities," according to Michael P. D'Amour, president and CEO.

AUTHOR from page 1

"It was a really character-building process for me as a writer for sure," said Rice about his journey in writing a kind of thriller story for the first time.

As for the order of which book to read first, Rice said that you can experience a similar feeling of enjoyment because of the time difference between the stories.

"The original inspiration for the story was an actual blackout that happened in 2003," said Rice. "I was in my home community in Toronto, but being in my home community in that moment, we legitimately thought it was the end of the world."

Rice noted that many indigenous stories go hand-in-hand with dystopian literature, sharing that it comes down to the lived experiences of these people and their history and experience of being forcibly detached from their land.

"There's an underlying narrative of healing and moving towards finding their language and culture," said Rice. "We are still enduring the generational trauma of our ancestors, and having that understanding is really important."

"What I like to say is that we want to open up about our real history, and this is how we build our stories and remember our histories and speak our truths."

Rice shared that he wanted his story to be read and shared not only in the book, but also

through oral storytelling, and wanted to make the story as conversational as possible.

"I really enjoy public readings and going out and sharing the books," said Rice. "I think that helps the stories sort of intersect between these oral and written realms."

Rice shared that the majority of his cultural and spiritual knowledge from his tribe comes from his father, and he would spend time consulting with him about different parts of his books that would be sensitive and appropriate to put in the books.

He shared that he appreciated the people in his home community for sharing these stories and having a large impact on him and his writing, sharing that storytelling has always been a huge part of his life.

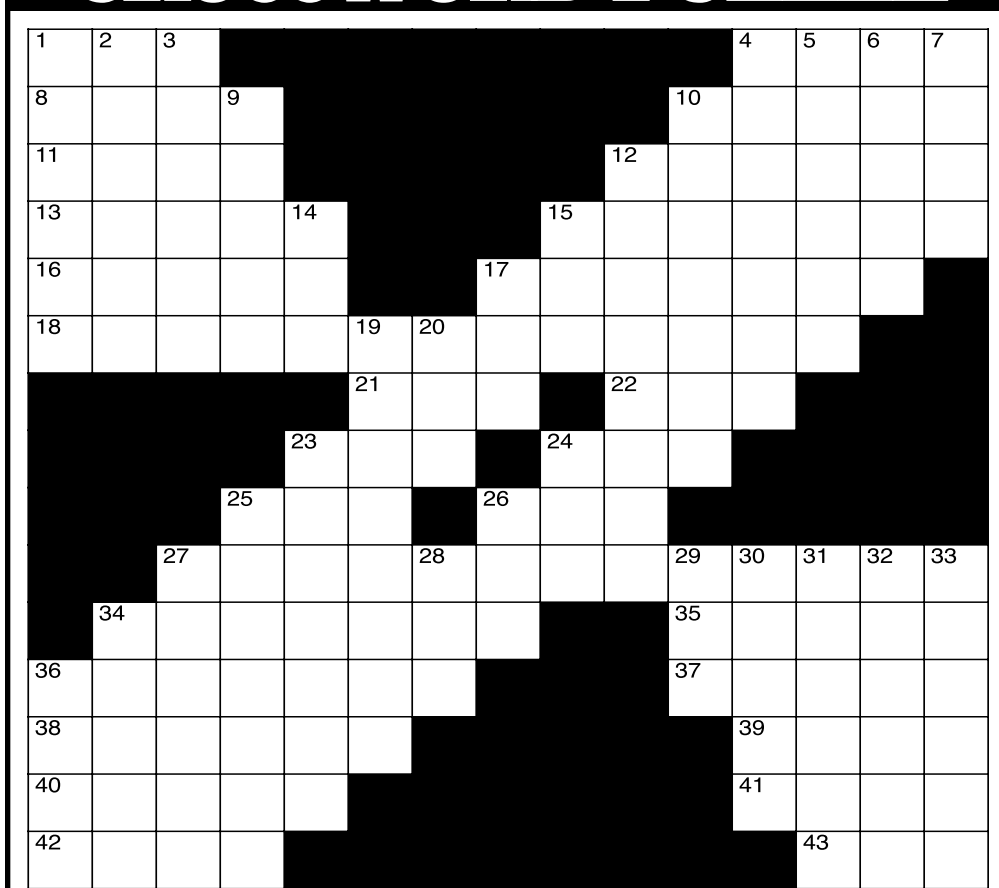
It was during high school that he truly became immersed in the writing world and had a desire to see himself represented in the literature he was reading, which he didn't have while in high school.

He began to read indigenous authors as a teen, and it made a huge impact on him.

"When I was working as a journalist, I got to meet a lot of indigenous artists, and the first grant I got was from the Canadian Council of Arts," Rice said, and his short story collection was then published in 2011.

Rice's books are a story highlighting his stories, and his culture, and share the importance of sharing your stories, and letting your voices be heard no matter what.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



CLUES ACROSS

1. Racquet sport group (abbr.)
4. Norse god of thunder
8. Russian industrial city
10. What's good for the ___
11. Round-ish shape
12. Baltimore MLBer
13. French modernist painter
15. Burned with water
16. Intestinal issue
17. Take the lead
18. Prove oneself worthy
21. Norse
22. Tax collector
23. Swiss river
24. Gymnast Raisman
25. Baby's dining accessory
26. Canadian beer distributor
27. Iconic American tourist destination
34. More expansive
35. Alert
36. Popular boots
37. Showings
38. Conclusion
39. Share a common boundary
40. Shooting sport
41. Popular side dish
42. Global energy firm
43. Chronicles (abbr.)

CLUES DOWN

1. Type of bomb
2. Polynesian island country
3. Heavenly body
4. Hard workers
5. Covered
6. Johns Hopkins Hospital founder
7. Plant of the grass family
9. Island person of the Bering Sea
10. Storehouse
12. Scarlet-flowered desert shrub
14. A pituitary hormone
15. Female sibling
17. Monetary unit of Afghanistan
19. Empowering
20. Space station
23. Disorder
24. State of fuss
25. Footwear for babies
26. Nuclear reactor (abbr.)
27. Doves
28. Affirmative
29. Male parent
30. Utter obscenities
31. Type of verse
32. Unpleasant person
33. One who settles down
34. Founder of source-based history
36. A way to snarl

SCHOOLS from page 1

Budget drivers include a \$279,450 increase, a 5.5% increase in Yellow Bus Transportation, and a 125% increase in Special Education Transportation, which is composed of a 5-10% contractual increase, and additional routes in-district and out of district added during FY25.

All utility costs will see an increase of 7.5%, because of the cost rising in the transportation of natural gas, "and I think it speaks to the types of things that seeing increases", said Voyik.

Salaries, which are a budget driver every year, go off of salary scales based off of unions and a cost of living adjustment.

Other special education costs include a rising population in summer school, contracted services, and trying to contract two full-time school psychologists for next year.

In total, in order to maintain all of the above budget drivers and to have a level service budget for FY26, there would have to be an increase of \$2,162,450.

Under federal funding, there is entitlement funding which includes title grants and special educational grants to be \$1 million, Medicaid reimbursements of \$115,000, and school breakfast and lunch reimbursements of

\$200,000.

"We are working very, very hard to investigate a lot of different avenues to address the challenges that you see," said McLaughlin.

Things that could be majorly affected and in need of addressing include yellow bus and special education transportation, clubs and activities, class size, services, personnel, and school start and end times.

"Some things are going to be lost," said Voyik. "I think that's a reality that we have to understand right now, unless there can be something that happens to help increase the school's budget this year, and we have to be really honest as we're going through these situations."

Board votes for renaming Plains Elementary School

Friesner led the committee in a vote for the renaming of Plains Elementary School, and after receiving no additional community outreach, moved forward.

Cooke still looked towards renaming the school to honor late principal Henry Skala, by renaming it to be the Henry J. Skala School.

The School Committee moved to unanimously approve the renaming of Plains Elementary School with special thanks that it has been funded by the Plains PTO, which will now be the Henry J. Skala PTO.

SPORTS

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Tigers ready for tournament season



Darius Gelinas wrestles in a meet this season at 215 pounds.

SOUTH HADLEY – The South Hadley High School wrestling team has completed all of its dual meets for the regular season as of this week and now look toward the sectional and state tournaments coming up in the next few week-ends.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Zack Willette tries to sit out of a hold.



Jackson Erali holds an advantage in his match.



PJ Lavelle goes after a pin.



Brenna Moreno sends a pass away.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Kaitlyn Curran heads down the court.

Rams defeated by Southwick

SOUTHWICK – Last Monday night, Granby High School girls basketball had their offense stifled by Southwick Regional School 63-28. Kalli White had 14 points for the Rams in the defeat. The Rams are 9-9 and will make the tournament this year. Granby was also holding a firm spot in the top 32 in the state Division 5 Power Rankings.



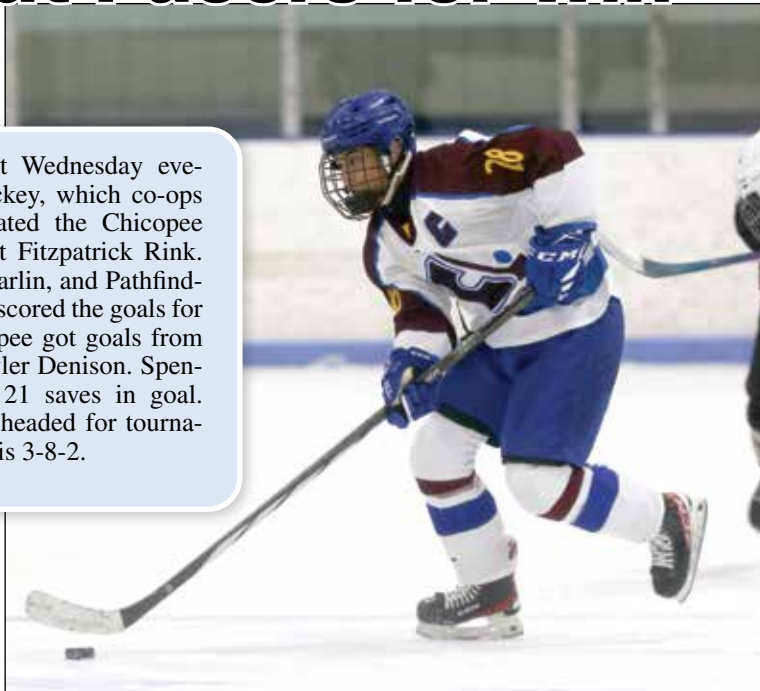
Autumn Sicard goes for an off-balance shot.

Hurricanes edge out Pacers for win



Nate Robitaille grabs the loose puck.

HOLYOKE – Last Wednesday evening, Amherst ice hockey, which co-ops with Pathfinder, defeated the Chicopee five-team co-op 3-2 at Fitzpatrick Rink. Nate Desbien, Alex Marlin, and Pathfinder's Ethan Mooney all scored the goals for the Hurricanes. Chicopee got goals from Nate Robitaille and Tyler Denison. Spencer McDonald made 21 saves in goal. Amherst 9-4-1 and is headed for tournament, while Chicopee is 3-8-2.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Chris Walczak nears the opposing goal.



Mason Peters circles around and heads up the ice.



Jake Fournier readies a wrist shot.



Braydon LaDuke, of Granby, hustles into the offensive zone.



Kalli White gets an open shot.

Sports

Hall of Fame unveils schedule for 2025 enshrinement

SPRINGFIELD – The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame has unveiled its Enshrinement Weekend schedule for the Class of 2025. The celebratory weekend will culminate with the Enshrinement Ceremony on Saturday, Sept. 6, in Springfield—the Birthplace of Basketball. Finalists, as well as select award winners, will be announced on Friday, Feb. 14, during NBA All-Star Weekend in San Francisco, and the Class of 2025 will be revealed on Saturday, April 5, at the Final Four in San Antonio.

Enshrinement Weekend will begin at Mohegan Sun on Friday, Sept. 5, with the Tip-Off Celebration and Awards Gala. The Class of 2025 and returning Hall of Famers will then travel to Springfield, Mass., where they will participate in the weekend's traditional events taking place at the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame and Springfield's Symphony Hall.

First-time candidates for the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame Class of 2025 include **Carmelo Anthony, Sue Bird, Maya Moore, Dwight Howard, Doc Rivers, Billy Donovan, Sylvia Fowles, Chamique Holdscaw, Mark Few, Lisa Bluder, Marc Gasol, and Micky Arison.**

A limited number of VIP Packages for the 2025 Enshrinement Ceremony will go on sale on Friday, Feb. 14, at 6 p.m. at hoophall.com on the Hall of Fame's Enshrinement Ticket page or by calling the Basketball Hall of Fame at (413) 231-5513.

Individual tickets for the events will go on sale tentatively on Saturday, April 5, at 12 noon.

Details of the current schedule of events for Enshrinement 2025 are as follows:

Friday, September 5, at Mohegan Sun (Uncasville, Conn.)

Enshrinement 2025 Autograph Session

An opportunity to meet the Class of 2025 at their first public Enshrinement Weekend event. A ticket to this event will give fans the opportunity to receive one autograph per class member.

Enshrinement 2025 Press Conference

The official media availability for the Hall of Fame Class of 2025. This availability is only open to credentialed members of the media, along with VIP Package ticket holders, and will be held at Mohegan Sun. The media credential application will open on Monday, July 21, at hoophall.com/media.

Enshrinement Tip-Off Celebration and Awards Gala

The Class of 2025, along with the Hall's prestigious annual award winners, will be celebrated at this televised Enshrinement event at Mohegan Sun. During the event, the Class of 2025 will receive their Hall of Fame rings, courtesy of Baron Championship Rings, and their official Hall of Fame jackets, provided by Reveal Suits. The program will additionally highlight the presentation of the Hall's annual John Bunn Lifetime Achievement Award and the Curt Gowdy Media Awards.

Saturday, Sept. 6, in Springfield, Mass.

Enshrinement Ceremony VIP Reception at Springfield Marriott

Toast the incoming Hall of Fame Class of 2025 at the official VIP Reception prior to the sport's ultimate recognition. The party is limited to select ticket holders for the Enshrinement Ceremony. Shuttle service between the host location and Symphony Hall will be provided if needed. This exclusive party will set the stage for a memorable night on the Red Carpet and at the Ceremony.

Enshrinement Ceremony Red Carpet Show at Symphony Hall

The Class of 2025, legendary Hall of Famers, and some of basketball's biggest icons take center stage on the red carpet in a live TV broadcast outside Symphony Hall.

Enshrinement Ceremony at Symphony Hall

One of the most elite nights on the basketball calendar each year, the Hall of Fame Class of 2025 will be formally enshrined into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame in a nationally televised ceremony.

'Ice-O-Topes' score win over Bruins

SPRINGFIELD — The Springfield Ice-O-Topes, née Thunderbirds, (22-17-2-3) rode a four-goal flourish in the final period to a 5-2 victory on Saturday night over the Providence Bruins (25-15-4-1) before a sellout crowd of 6,793 inside the MassMutual Center. Springfield has still never lost as the Ice-O-Topes, improving to a perfect 5-0 record as their alter ego, while the team also extended its point streak to seven straight games.

It became evident in the early stages that goals would be scarce on this night, as Bruins All-Star netminder Michael DiPietro and Springfield stalwart Colten Ellis showed no signs of blinking in the opening 20 minutes. Matt Luff had two of the better chances for Springfield, but the iron rang on the veteran winger on one attempt, while DiPietro flashed terrific lateral agility to stonewall the Ice-O-Topes forward on another offering.

Not to be outdone, Ellis was timely in his own right, making his brightest save of the frame when he denied a breakaway backhand attempt from Max Jones.

The first three power plays of the night proved unsuccessful, but on their second attempt in the closing minutes of the middle period, the Bruins finally solved Ellis as

Jones hit Riley Tufte on a slap feed in the right circle, where the big centerman lifted a shot under the crossbar to make it 1-0 Providence at 18:14 of period two.

In desperate need of a response, the 'Topes got just that in the final seconds of the stanza, as MacKenzie MacEachern and Dalibor Dvorsky combined to work the puck to the edge of the blue paint on a 3-on-2 rush, with Nikita Alexandrov cashing in with just eight seconds separating the teams from the dressing room.

Alexandrov was far from finished, and at 4:01 of the third, with Leo Loof holding the puck at the left point, Alexandrov dashed to the blue paint, where he deflected Loof's pass in behind DiPietro to hand Springfield the 2-1 lead.

Just 1:41 later, the lead got a boost as Otto Stenberg filled the center lane, receiving a pass from Luff and firing it through DiPietro to make it a 3-1 game at 5:42. The tally snapped Stenberg's eight-game goal drought and also doubled as his first goal on home ice.

The Bruins would not go down easily, and Vinni Lettieri stepped in front from behind the goal line to lift a backhander home before Ellis could get



across, shrinking the 'Topes' lead to 3-2 at 7:45.

Unlike the night before, the T-Birds would not let the Bruins get even this time around, killing off a Providence power play before adding onto their lead once again at 17:48 when Alexandrov fielded a pass out of his feed at the bottom of the right circle before slipping it into the blue paint. Before DiPietro could smother it, Matthew Peca arrived to jam it across the line for his team-leading 17th of the season, giving Springfield a 4-2 advantage.

Dvorsky joined Alexandrov with three-point nights when he threw a puck from center ice into an empty net with 1:29 to polish off a four-goal final period and earn Springfield three of a possible four points on the weekend.

Railers drop finale to Atlanta Gladiators

WORCESTER – The Worcester Railers HC (20-20-2-4 46pts) lost to the Atlanta Gladiators (20-22-4-2, 46pts), on Saturday night by the final score of 4-2 in front of a crowd of 7,094 at the DCU Center. The Railers are back on the ice next at the Credit Union of Texas Event Center taking on the Allen Americans on Friday, February 14th at 8:10 p.m. EST.

It was Atlanta who scored first tonight as Cody Sylvester (2-0-2) put the Gladiators up 1-0 19:26 into the first period. Just 31 seconds later Andrew Jarvis extended the Atlanta lead to 2-0 heading into the second period. Worcester got their first on the night off the stick of Matias Rajaniemi (1-0-1) 2:34 into the third period. Atlanta scored back-to-back empty-net goals in

the third period from Cody Sylvester and Ryan Cranford (1-0-1). The Railers then made it 4-2 with a goal from Matt Ustaski (1-0-1) 18:41 into the third to finish off the night's scoring.

It took nearly the entire first period for either team to score until Atlanta took the 1-0 lead. It was Cody Sylvester (17th) who put the Gladiators up 1-0. With just three seconds remaining in the first period Andrew Jarvis (4th) extended the Atlanta lead to 2-0 with a low slap shot to beat Bullion down low. Shots favored Worcester 12-10 in the first period.

Despite power play chances for both sides neither team was able to net one in the second period. The Railers went to the power play twice in the period, first at the 10:02 mark

into the second followed by another chance at the 13:38 mark. Atlanta got their power play opportunity 16:17 into second frame, but the Worcester penalty kill held strong keeping Atlanta from jumping out to a three-goal lead. Shots favored Worcester 14-7 in the second.

Worcester made it a 2-1 game early in the third following a goal from Matias Rajaniemi (3rd) 2:34 into the third period. The Railers went to the empty net in an effort to tie the game late, but Atlanta scored twice on the empty net, the first was Cody Sylvester (18th) followed by Ryan Cranford (9th). The Railers then got one back scored by Matt Ustaski (3rd) leading to a 4-2 final. Shots favored Worcester 15-5 in the third and 41-22 in the game.

Annual Dobbin Tartan party

HOLYOKE— Kick off the start of March and Parade Season by getting decked out in your favorite Holyoke tartan. This seventh-annual event celebrates the retirement of Dobbin, the horse from the Yankee Pedlar to the Holyoke Merry-Go-Round. All funds raised at the event go to support the St. Patrick's Committee of Holyoke and their annual Parade Weekend. Come pick up new and favorite tartan items at this exclusive event.

Tickets for this event will only be sold at the door. They are \$5 per person or \$10 per family, cash or check only. Admission includes unlimited rides on the merry-go-round, face painting, hair braiding, glitter designs, crafts, and a photo booth. There will also be a raffle, the White Hut food truck, and beer and wine will be available for purchase.

For more information, please visit our website at www.holyokestpatricksparade.com. The 72nd Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade will be held on Sunday, March 23, and the 48th Holyoke St. Patrick's Road Race on Saturday, March 22.

Outbreak of viruses and 'bugs' spreading through schools, offices and homes

Symptoms to watch out for and tips for prevention of norovirus and flu

SPRINGFIELD – It's a stomach bug known for moving fast and furiously, and this year norovirus is putting a damper on people's spirits just as they were hoping to get a fresh start on the new year. It's also keeping medical providers busy at American Family Care in Massachusetts.

"There are a lot of different illnesses hitting people especially hard this month," said Dr. Andrew Koslow, associate director of AFC. "And holiday gatherings, unfortunately, mean increased exposure to these illnesses."

Norovirus is a highly contagious gastrointestinal illness known to show up during winter months. This year, the Centers for Dis-

ease Control reports the number of outbreaks has jumped significantly. This virus causes inflammation of the stomach and intestines leading to vomiting, diarrhea and stomach cramps.

To make matters worse, influenza is also spreading through New England, along with other respiratory illnesses causing fever, cough, sore throat and other flu-like symptoms.

AFC healthcare providers advise people to seek treatment if they experience symptoms and follow preventative steps:

- Wash hands
- Wash and cook food thoroughly
- Disinfect contaminated surfaces
- Wash laundry in hot water
- Stay home for 48 hours after symptoms stop
- Stay hydrated

"Often people don't realize how contagious they might be, even for a period of time after symptoms end," said Dr. Koslow. "That's one reason why these illnesses are spreading so fast. It's also why it's so important to stay home when you're sick."

The medical providers at AFC Springfield, AFC North Springfield and AFC West Springfield offer convenient, walk-in care seven days a week for patients of all ages, including flu vaccines and testing, diagnostic rapid tests and antigen tests for COVID-19, urgent care, physicals, stitches for cuts and lacerations and on-site x-rays.

Founded in 1982, AFC pioneered the concept of convenient and effective urgent care services, delivered through a nationwide network of nearly 400 walk-in clinics. Today, AFC is the nation's largest provider of urgent care, generating more than \$1 billion in system-wide sales annually, with 3,500 highly trained healthcare professionals treating over 4 million patients each year.

AFC continues to be a leader in accessible healthcare, providing treatments for flu, allergies, and everyday injuries, along with a comprehensive range of lab tests, x-rays, and occupational medicine services. Ranked #47 on the Entrepreneur Franchise 500, AFC is one of the most admired brands in urgent care and franchising. For more information, visit AmericanFamilyCare.com.



Team Mass Boys & Girls AAU Basketball Tryouts

Cost: \$30 Covers both tryouts (players get t-shirt)
AAU card \$25 (purchase on our website, we'll pull them)

Tryout # 1: February 22, 2025

Location: Tantasqua Jr High School (320 Brookfield Road, Fiskdale, MA)

- Boys Grades 4th-6th 8:30 a.m. - 9:40 a.m.
- Boys Grades 7th & 8th 9:45 a.m. - 10:55 a.m.
- Boys Grades 9th-12th 11 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.
- Girls Grades 4th-6th 12:15 p.m. - 1:25 p.m.
- Girls Grades 7th-8th 1:30 p.m. - 2:40 p.m.
- Girls Grades 9th-12th 2:45 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Tryout # 2: March 1, 2025

Location: Oxford High School (100 Caruncle Drive, Oxford, MA)

- Boys Grades & Girls Grades 4th-6th (9 a.m. - 10:25 a.m.)
- Boys & Girls Grades 7th & 8th (10:30 a.m. - 11:55 a.m.)
- Boys and Girls Grades 9th-12th (12 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.)

Pre Register/pay on website: teammassbasketball.com

Questions Email: teammassbasketball@gmail.com or call 413-539-1548
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Amherst's Fifth Annual Fire & Ice Festival + Luminaria

AMHERST—The Amherst Business Improvement District (BID) in collaboration with Amherst Recreation is excited to announce the Fifth Annual Fire & Ice Festival + Luminaria, scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 22, 2025, from 3 to 6 p.m. on the Amherst Common. This event marks the culmination of Amherst's week-long WinterFest and has become a highlight of the winter season, attracting over 2,000 attendees each year.

"The Fire & Ice Festival + Luminaria is a cherished tradition that brings our community of local families and residents, students, and seniors together to celebrate the beauty and excitement of the winter season," said Sarah Barr of Amherst College which presents the event. "We invite everyone to join us for an afternoon filled with art, performances, and delicious treats, all while supporting our local businesses."

Attendees can look forward to a variety of engaging activities, including:

- Hot Cocoa, S'mores, & Fire Pits: Warm up with complimentary hot cocoa and roast s'mores over open fire pits.
- Ice Sculptures: Marvel at ten intricate ice sculptures displayed throughout the Amherst Common.
- Winter Tie-Dye Crafting: Participate in creative winter-themed tie-dye projects with Amherst Recreation.
- Fire Arts Performance: Enjoy a captivating fire juggling performance by Matica Arts.
- Metal Sculptures Demonstration: Witness live metal sculpting by local artist and Hampshire College alum Kamil Peters.
- Wood Carving Demonstration: Observe Amherst resident Cody Stosz of Kodiak Carving showcase his wood carving skills.
- Special Menu Items: Savor delicious food and cocktail specials from the Inn on Boltwood.

Additionally, the Amherst Fire Department will be present with their fire truck, offering fire safety information and an opportunity to meet Spark the Fire Pup.

"This festival not only celebrates the winter season but also highlights the vibrant community spirit of Amherst," said John Page, Executive Director of the Amherst BID. "We encourage everyone to explore downtown Amherst's unique shops and restaurants before and after the event."

The Fire & Ice Festival + Luminaria is organized by Amherst Recreation and the Amherst Business Improvement District made possible by the generosity of many local businesses and community partners including presenting sponsor Amherst College, and supported by Summerlin Floors, Encharter Insurance, Amherst Innovative Living, and more! For more information and updates, please visit amherst-downtown.com and follow us on social media @amherst-downtown.

Tracey Lynn (Noble) Johnson

Tracey Lynn (Noble) Johnson, age 66, with Samantha Hodgman. They brought her years of enjoyment and laughter. She especially loved the days of the week she, Grammy, cared for her granddaughter, Josephine. She became known as Ma J to so many of her employees, especially to Christian, Derrick, Emma, and Matt. Tracey is survived by one brother Clark Noble, sister-in-law Kathy, and brother-in-law Ron Richard, numerous nieces and nephews and cousins. She was predeceased by her parents Robert and Harriet (Clark) Noble, her sister Sandra (Noble) Richard, and her brother Jerald Noble. Services were private per Tracey's wishes. In Lieu of flowers, a donation can be made in Tracey's honor to the American Lung Association @ lung.org.



Her greatest love was her family: husband Bill Johnson; son Robert with Jennifer Harris and granddaughter, Josephine; and son David

DEATH NOTICE

Tracey Lynn (Noble) Johnson
Died Feb. 3, 2025
Services were private

Town Reminder OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph.

Death Notices & Paid Obituaries

should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

Tim Drost and family launch Go Green Home Performance

BELCHERTOWN—Tim Drost, a seasoned industry veteran and owner of Window World of Western Massachusetts, is excited to announce the launch of Go Green Home Performance. This new venture is a natural extension of Drost's commitment to providing exceptional home improvement services to the Western Massachusetts community.

"Growing up in the home improvement industry, I've always had a passion for helping people," said Tim Drost. "With Go Green Home Performance, we're taking the next step in providing comprehensive home solutions. By focusing on energy efficiency and insulation, we can help homeowners save money and create more comfortable living spaces."

Tim and his family—Anna, Nick, Grace, and Lanea—are deeply involved in every aspect of the business. From initial consultations to final installations, they are dedicated to providing personalized service and ensuring customer satisfaction. Their hands-on approach and commitment to quality make Go Green

Home Performance a trusted name in the industry.

Go Green Home Performance offers a wide range of energy-efficient services, including:

- Spray Foam Insulation
- Fiberglass Insulation
- Mineral Wool Home Insulation
- Foamular XPS Insulation

The Drost family provides personalized service and high-quality workmanship. Its team of experienced professionals is committed to exceeding customer expectations.

About Go Green Home Performance

Go Green Home Performance is a family-owned and operated business dedicated to helping homeowners improve the energy efficiency and comfort of their homes. With a focus on sustainability and customer satisfaction, they offer a range of energy-saving solutions. For more information, GoGreenFoamInsulation.com.



Annual battle of the bars

HOLYOKE—The St. Patrick's Committee of Holyoke will hold the fifth annual Battle of the Bars bartending event at the Holyoke Knight of Columbus Council 90 to fundraise for the Committee to offset the costs of the bands and entertainment on Parade Weekend.

The event will be held Friday, Feb. 28, from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. The event will feature one bartender from each of the Bars listed below. They will battle each other to see who can raise the most tips for donations to the Parade. In addition to one final winner, each round will have a cash prize winner. This event information is as follows:

6 to 7:00 p.m.- Donovan's Irish Pub - with Trista Kasperowski and Pic's Pub & Pizzeria - with Matt Dulude.

7 to 8 p.m.- JP's Restaurant - with Mary Kate Glasheen and Halfway House Lounge - with Colleen Flanagan.

8 to 9 p.m.- Griffin's Cafe - with Ashleigh McNulty and Francie's Tavern - with Chy Clemens.

Event Chair Kelly McGivern says, "We are so excited to have these six amazing bartenders and establishments back again for another fun-filled year. With Holyoke and South Hadley a part of the Holyoke Regional Committee, we are beyond lucky for all of the support of everyone who comes out each here to kick off our green season and support us."

The event is open to the public and encourages them to support their favorite bar, bartender, and the Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade. The 2024 winner was Trista Kasperowski with Donovan's Irish Pub. The media is invited to attend. More information on the event can be found on the Committee website here: holyokestpatricksparade.com/events/2025-battle-of-the-bars.

The 72nd Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade will be held on Sunday, March 23, and the 48th Holyoke St. Patrick's Road Race will be held on Saturday, March 22.

Town of Granby Clerk reminders

GRANBY—Census information: A note of thanks to all the residents who responded to the 2025 Annual Town Census.

Second notices will be mailed out to those who have not responded starting in February. If you have not mailed in your census please do so, and if you did not receive a census form, please call the town clerk's office.

A reminder to all registered voters, General Laws of Massachusetts mandate that failure to respond to this mailing shall result in the removal from the Active voting list and may result in removal from the voter registration rolls.

Please take the time to answer this important mail, your cooperation is appreciated.

Dog Licenses: Don't Forget to License Your Dog (Bylaws of the Town of Granby CH XIV).

The cost is \$6 for spayed, neutered, Senior dogs (over 10 years), and puppies, all others are \$15. To avoid a \$25 late charge fee dogs should be licensed by May 1st.

To license your dog by mail please include a copy of the rabies vaccination or call the clerks office for verification, a self-addressed envelope with Two Stamps, a check made payable to the Town of Granby, and mail to Town Clerk, 215 B West State Street Granby, MA

To Note: For those residents who licensed their dogs through the Annual Town Census this mailing is still being processed,

if you have not received your tag, you should receive it no later than March 31.

Nomination Papers Available

Any person interested in seeking elected office in Granby must take out nomination papers from the Town Clerk no later than March 27 to be placed on the May 19 ballot.

Candidates must collect signatures of 40 or more registered voters and return the nomination papers to the Town Clerk's office by Monday, March 31, 2025.

Office Vacancies for Town Election, May 19, 2025

- Select Board: One for Three Years
- Board of Assessors: One for Three Years
- Board of Health: One for Three Years
- Town Clerk: One for Three Years
- Planning Board: One for Five Years
- School Committee: One for Three Years
- School Committee - Unexpired Term: One for Two Years
- School Committee - Unexpired Term: One for One Year
- Commissioner of Burial Grounds - One for Three Years
- Library Trustees: Three for Three Years

Town Hall public hours are Monday-Thurs, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Fridays 9 a.m. to noon.

The Town Clerks office is located at 215 B West State St. If you have any questions please call Kathy Kelly-Regan at 467-7178.

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TAG SALE

VALENTINE'S DAY GARAGE SALE.
February 14-16, 8am-3pm.
16 Paradise Lake Road, Monson.
No early birds please. Moving, everything must go.

Find archives of this local newspaper at www.newspapers.turley.com

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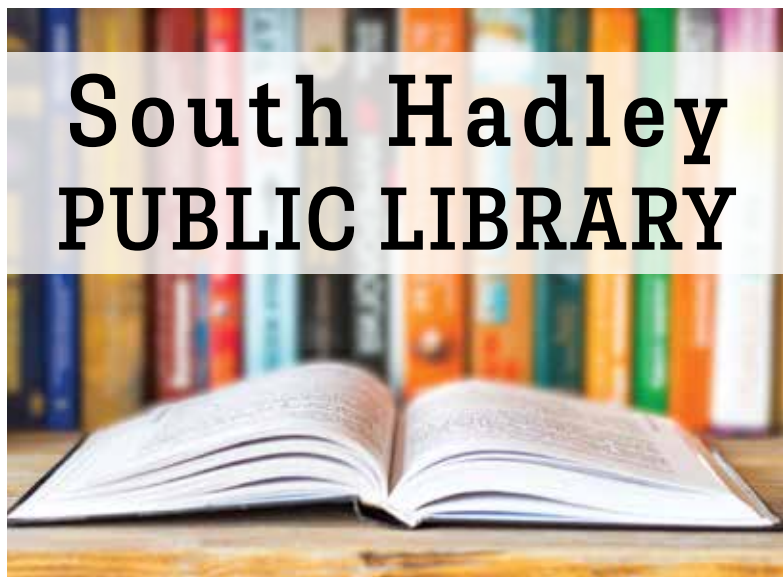
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South Hadley PUBLIC LIBRARY

Events at SHPL

Adult Programs at SHPL

This winter, please remember that the South Hadley Public Library is one of the town's Warming Centers and people are welcome to use the library as a place to stay warm and safe during cold weather (or any weather!). Other Warming Centers include the Senior Center and both fire stations.

Adult Programs

The Middle East Conflict has been continuing in the news since October of 2023. Mt. Holyoke Professor Sohil Hashmi, Chair of International Relations and Professor of International Relations and Politics on Wednesday, Feb. 19 at 6 p.m. will give a talk on Middle East Conflicts: What to Expect in 2025. This program is sure to clarify and help everyone understand the conflict better. Maybe by the middle of February the Middle East will experience more love than war.

The end of February will bring beautiful music. The chorus from the Cathedral of St. Michael the Archangel will present beautiful Gregorian Chants on Saturday, Feb. 22 at 11 a.m. Do you love the sounds of historical music of monasteries? Come listen to an amazing chorus of singers.

Children's Programs at SHPL

February is a triple threat: Black History Month, school vacation week, and Valentine's Day! We also welcome back Mr. Liam for Rhyme Time on Tuesday, Feb. 25 at 10:30, and introduce a new monthly baby lapsit program on Friday, Feb. 28 at 10 a.m.

School vacation week will be busy as usual, with our popular Toddler Dance Party on Tuesday, Feb. 18 at 10:30 a.m., followed by a Rock, Paper, Scissors tournament at 3:00. Wednesday we have our regular programs (Storytime and Lego & Games); on Thursday, February 20 at 1:00 there is an art workshop for kids in grades 3-5; and on Friday, Feb. 21 at 10 a.m., Buildwave will feature an hour of fun building challenges. (Registration required for Buildwave; space is limited.) Finally, "Be Our Guest" for a special storytime with the MESMS cast members of Beauty & the Beast on Saturday, Feb. 22 at 10:30 a.m.

Kids programs

Drop in for any of our weekly programs: Lego & Games on Mondays & Wednesdays from 3:00-4:45, Pajama Storytime on Mondays at 6:30, Rhyme Time on Tuesdays at 10:30, STEAM Time on Tuesday afternoons 3:45-4:45, Story Time on Wednesdays at 10:30, and CFCE Playgroup on Thursdays at 10:15 (there will also be Playgroup on Saturday, Feb. 15).

Looking for a reading challenge, or need recommendations?

Join the Massachusetts Center for the Book Reading Challenge (Student Edition)

Read and vote for Massachusetts Children's Book Award (MCBA) nominees (for kids in grades 4-6) Request a Book Bundle, personalized based on your reading preferences

Questions, comments, suggestions? Email Jenny or call 413-538-5045.

Teen Programs at SHPL

This month in Teens we continue with Crafternoon, Snackternoon and Xbox1.

Snackternoon Thursday, Feb. 27 at 4 will feature a Hot Cocoa Bar! Please sign up here. Thank you to the Friends of the South Hadley Public Library for sponsoring our Teen Snackternoon.

We have a different game selection for this month's Xbox1 session Wednesday, Feb. 19 at 3:30. Our Teen Takeaways continue this month with Felt Fortune Cookies. Sign up once and get a new Takeaway every month! We end the month with our Teen Night Craft Tuesday, Feb. 25 at 6:30 where we will make Alcohol and Sharpie Painting.

For our YA Book Tasting Program

This month features our brand new Switch Monday, Feb. 24 at 3:30. A new selection of games are available. Our Teen Book Club Booktroverts continues and this month features Love Radio by Ebony LaDelle. There is no in-person meet up. Enjoy the book on your own time. Copies are available in the Teen Room to check out.

During school vacation week there's exciting craft programs. Teen Ice Candles Tuesday, Feb. 18 at 4, and Invisible Ink Painting Thursday, Feb. 20 at 4. Please sign up for candle making as space is limited.

Any questions please email Bethany or call 413-538-5045.

Gaylord Memorial Library Programs

We also have Story Time every Friday at 10:30 with Miss Janet.

On Friday, Feb. 21 at 10:30 local author Dorka Fernández will be reading her book Daniel the Balloon Boy and teaching us how to breathe through our "big feelings."

We have Lego Club Thursday, Feb. 20 from 3-6 p.m. and Drop-In Crafts Thursdays, Feb. 13 and 27 from 3-6. Families can join us on Saturday, Feb. 22 at 10:15 a.m. for a weekend edition of Lego Club.

You can make a Deluxe Sock Puppet with Eric Weiss of Homeslice Puppetry on Thursday, Feb. 27 at 5:30. You'll learn to create a character, shape the puppet's head and mouth, and give it a unique look. Sign up online, or stop by or call the Gaylord branch. (Ages 12+)

Palmer location selected as site for East/West Compass Rail train stop

By Marcelo Gusmão
mgusmao@turley.com

PALMER – The Department of Transportation has announced its selection for the train stop for the East/West Passenger Rail, selecting the south side of Palmer Yard on South Main Street.

This site was determined to offer the amount of property needed for a platform to accommodate ADA needs and passenger train length, and is expected to have fewer permit requirements, making it the most affordable of the nine alternative sites that were considered. The location is estimated to be about half a mile from downtown, and was chosen after months of review, including feedback from stakeholders and community engagement events.

"We're thrilled to have reached another milestone for West-East Rail and our efforts to expand rail service across the state with the selection of a preferred site for Palmer Station. This is going to be a major boost for Western Mass and for our state's economy," said Governor Maura Healey. "We're grateful for all of the input we received from community members that helped us choose the best site for the station."

"Expanding rail capacity and connectivity in Massachusetts is essential if we want to remain economically competitive," said Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll. "We applaud the efforts that have culminated in the selection of a Palmer Station location and look forward to seeing this component of West-East Rail advance to completion."

"We are pleased to see that there is forward movement on a station in Palmer. I thank everyone on the steering committee and community members who gave feedback about this process," said Town Manager Brad Brothers. "We look forward to working with MassDOT on this next phase."

The next step is for the project team to create a conceptual design and coordinate with railway owner CSX, the site property owner, and the proposed service operator, Amtrak, on the feasibility of the construction.

"We are very pleased to see ongoing progress in the advancement of the Compass Rail program, which will give residents the passenger rail connectivity they need and deserve," said Transportation Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt. "Throughout the planning and design phase for Palmer Station, we have been committed to working with the community to make a site selection that reflects their needs in the decades ahead. We appreciate



Turley photo by Marcelo Gusmão

Palmer Yard, on South Main Street, has been selected as the site for the proposed train stop for the East/West Passenger Rail.

all the feedback and look forward to continuing this dialogue."

Compass Rail is made up of existing and proposed East/West and North/South services that intersect in Springfield at Union Station. The goal of this expansive vision for the commonwealth is to integrate existing DOT-supported services into a unified system that increases the public's access to comprehensive transportation.

"The South of Palmer Yard location has great potential as a future stop within the Compass Rail network, and the local stakeholders' feedback has been invaluable in helping us reach an informed decision," said Rail and Transit Administrator Meredith Slesinger. "The site's strategic location within Palmer and its cost-effective geography are significant benefits for the community both short- and long-term."

This rail stop will be able to connect to several services supported and managed by DOT, including the following Amtrak-operated routes: the Vermonter that services Washington, D.C. and St. Albans, VT with stops in Springfield, Holyoke, Northampton, and Greenfield; the Valley Flyer between Greenfield and New Haven, CT, with stops in Springfield, Holyoke, Northampton, and Greenfield; the Hartford Line and Northeast Regional between Springfield and New Haven, CT or Washington, D.C.; and the seasonal, pilot service, the Berkshire Flyer, which runs between Pittsfield and New York City.

In addition to these routes, the East/West Rail represents proposed new Compass Rail services that will improve connections between the eastern and western parts of the state, including an Inland Route to operate between Boston and New Haven, CT through Springfield

and a Boston and Albany Corridor through Pittsfield.

"After years of advocacy by the residents of Palmer, they are one step closer to realizing their goal of a Palmer train station," said Congressman Richard Neal. "This announcement follows a fair and thorough review by MassDOT, one that has been transparent throughout the decision-making process. Located just half a mile from the downtown area, this site will play a critical role in unlocking economic growth in the Town of Palmer and surrounding communities, while providing the space needed to accommodate the demand for increased passenger rail."

"We are fortunate to have two leaders in Governor Healey and Lieutenant Governor Driscoll who have been steadfast in their support of improving and expanding passenger rail service throughout the Commonwealth," Neal said. "With Massachusetts receiving more than \$9 billion in federal funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we have made substantial progress in advancing key rail projects, enhancing connectivity, and modernizing our transportation network. Today marks yet another significant milestone in making West-East Rail a reality."

"We are excited to see West-East Rail mark this milestone and move forward with the conceptual design of the project. We look forward to being a partner in helping to create more transportation options for residents here in Palmer and western Massachusetts," shared Kimberly Robinson, Executive Director of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

For more information on the development of Compass Rail, you can visit their website at Mass.gov/Compass-Rail.



A draft diagram of how the proposed train station will fit into the selected site on South Main Street.

Submitted photo

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Public notice deadlines are Friday at 3 p.m.

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THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION: *Honoring Service, Preserving History*



Josh Willette, Zach Willette and Kaulin Zaleski presenting the flag, honoring veterans and military service.

SONS from page 1

who served received the honors they deserved. More recently, younger members have taken up the responsibility of serving as the post's color guard, proudly presenting the American flag at numerous area ceremonies.

Despite being a smaller organization—boasting just 12 members compared to the American Legion Post 260's 45—the Sons of the American Legion remain a force of dedication and reverence. Their involvement extends beyond the honor guard, with members working alongside the American Legion in various commemorative events. "With our smaller post and squadron, we generally all work on the same projects, mostly ceremonies together," Willette noted.

A strong sense of family and heritage drives the Sons' mission. The organization's preamble underscores this connection: "Proud possessors of a priceless heritage, we male descendants of Veterans of all wars associate ourselves together as 'Sons of the American Legion.'" Willette emphasized that for many members, including those who joined later in life, the organization offers a way to honor their fathers and grandfathers. One such member, now serving as Squadron Chaplain, joined in his 60s in tribute to his father, a World War II veteran. He was inspired to join after witnessing younger members performing honor guard duties at Notre Dame Cemetery before the annual "Flags In South Hadley" event, during which volunteers place American flags at veteran graves.

Looking ahead, the Sons of the American Legion have ambitious plans to continue their mission of remembrance. They are preparing to conduct South Hadley's first Four Chaplains ceremony and will take part in the Yankee Divi-



Submitted photos by Brian Willette

Honoring veterans and the military at a recent hockey game.

sion's 'Apremont Day' to commemorate World War I and II sacrifices. Additionally, they will play a significant role in ceremonies marking the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, including V-E Day in May and V-J Day later in the summer. The Sons will also continue their annual commemoration of the B-24 crash on Mount Holyoke in late May, honoring the ten crewmen who perished in 1944.

For those with a family connection to a veteran, the Sons of the American Legion offer a meaningful way to honor that legacy. "If anyone who has that veteran connection in their family and wants to actively honor that service, the Sons of the American Legion is a great way to do it," Willette said. Those interested can visit their Facebook pages, "South Hadley Sons of the American Legion" and "South Hadley American Legion Post 260," to learn more and see the organization in action.

Through their dedication to military honors, historical remembrance, and community service, the Sons of the American Legion continue to uphold the principles of patriotism and respect. Their efforts ensure that the sacrifices of past generations are never forgotten and that future generations understand the true cost of freedom.

Friends put together library scholarship program

GRANBY – The Friends of the Granby Free Public Library is hosting a special scholarship program for high school students that are making their way towards higher education.

The awards are given to students who have demonstrated academic achievement and community service through volunteer work at the library, and eligible students are required to be high school seniors graduating this spring and wither reside in Granby or attend the Gran-

by Schools.

The minimum GPA required for consideration is a 2.5, and the student's community service record must also be included, with a minimum of 45 logged library volunteer hours completed during per each junior and senior year.

Students must submit their scholarship application and essay, which can be found on the library's website, www.granbylibrary.com, and must be submitted by the deadline of May 1, 2025.

Read to a dog at the Granby Library



GRANBY— Looking for a fun way to practice your reading skills? Want to snuggle a dog while reading to him? Sign up for a time slot to read to Gwen the Greyhound. She is a perfect listener as you work on your reading skills or as you practice reading out loud. Bring a book from home or pick one at the library before your time slot. Gwen loves every book.

Upcoming dates are: Thursdays between 3:30 to 5 p.m. Feb. 20, March 6 and 20, April 3 and 17

Visit the library or call to reserve your 20-minute slot.

Granby Library hours: T,W,F 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Thurs. 10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sat.10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Telephone 413- 467-3320

Visit granbylibrary.com and Granby Library Children's Room Page on Facebook.





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