

TOWN Reminder

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Ancient tablet weaving held at Gaylord Memorial Library

By Abigail McCoy
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SOUTH HADLEY – The Gaylord Memorial Library in South Hadley welcomed visitors for a hands-on journey into the past on Thursday, Dec. 11, hosting a special program on tablet weaving led by Castle Nitor, a historical education group focused on experiential learning. Offered as an opportunity to “learn one of the most unique weaving techniques from the past,” the program invited participants to try their hand at tablet weaving, an ancient textile technique documented in archaeological finds dating

Please see **WEAVING**, page 11



Above: Allison Pettengill, owner and visionary behind Castle Nitor joins patrons in the Gaylord Memorial Library.



Left: Pettengill brought different pre-set looms with different colors for people's projects

Turley photos by Abigail McCoy

Budget Task Force hosts listening session on budget concerns

By Emily-Rose Pappas
Staff Writer
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SOUTH HADLEY – With the reality of the budget looking bleak, the town created the Budget Task Force to look at all feasible ways the town can look at and work on a budget to benefit the town and its needs in the best way possible.

“We have a pretty significant cost increase and a decrease in revenue,” said Kevin McAllister, Co-Chair of the Budget Task Force. “It’s not exactly a good situation to find ourselves in. What we’ve seen is a rise in spending.”

The Task Force hosted a listening session with the community last week in order to look at the reality of the situation and allow people to ask questions about what the Task Force is doing and what can be done.

The Budget Task Force has worked to take a diligent approach to the problem and has worked to review the budget and revenue sources, held departmental discussions, and considered the state and federal impacts.

The rises in health insurance, utilities, and special education costs are very complex, and the town is facing a \$3 million gap for fiscal year 2027 already, with an expected increase of \$2 million in the deficit per year.

“There are some long-term structural changes that are needed... those long-term decisions and choices aren’t happening soon, so we have to figure out something soon,” said McAllister. “We’re at a point where we don’t have a lot of wiggle room.”



WE’RE AT A POINT WHERE WE DON’T HAVE A LOT OF WIGGLE ROOM.”

KEVIN MCALLISTER
CO-CHAIR BUDGET TASK FORCE

The Task Force has targeted that the town’s value is being able to have safe neighborhoods, strong schools to support the

next generations, provide reliable and safe roads and infrastructure, provide essential human services for seniors, veterans, low-income, and others, have committed staff, well-taken-care-of libraries, and more.

On top of these vital services the town offers, there was an additional 20% increase in the health insurance costs for the Trust that ser-

Please see **BUDGET**, page 8

Town Administrator Lisa Wong is looking forward to the New Year

By Tina Lesniak
Correspondent

SOUTH HADLEY - As South Hadley looks ahead to another year shaped by financial pressure and community change, Town Administrator Lisa Wong says her focus remains grounded in people—how they connect, how they are supported, and how the town can move forward together.

For Wong, the coming year is as much about leadership development as it is about balance sheets. “I would like to engage in more mentoring,” she said, noting that she has spent nearly three decades involved in both formal and informal mentoring programs. “Person-to-person communication is needed more and more, and it is critical to the success of people and of communities. We all need each other, especially in times of limited resources and a lot of uncertainty.” That emphasis, she said, aligns directly with the direction she hopes South Hadley will take: collaborative, resilient, and rooted in shared responsibility.

Fiscal concerns remain front and center for residents, but Wong is quick to point out that finances are only one piece of a larger picture. In the next budget cycle, the town is launching



Lisa Wong

a year-long community needs assessment made possible through a grant and guided by a consultant. The process will include surveys, forums, and focus groups. “Public officials want to make sure that our decisions are rooted in community needs, priorities, and ability to make an impact,” Wong said. “We want to ensure we keep delivering quality services and this process will only help us do better.”

When it comes to the town’s most significant financial challenge, Wong is direct. “The biggest financial challenge to the town is health care costs,” she said, explaining that they account for more than half of current budget shortfalls. While acknowledging that the issue is complex and largely beyond local control, she said officials are focused on education and preparation. More detailed data expected in early 2026 will help inform decisions for the following fiscal year.

To address cost pressures while protecting essential services, South Hadley has expanded public involvement in unprecedented ways. An 11-member volunteer Budget Task Force now works alongside town and school officials. The group has already

Please see **ADMINISTRATOR**, page 8

Building Committee seeks upgrades at Mosier

By Emily-Rose Pappas
Staff Writer
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SOUTH HADLEY – The town has been looking to update Mosier Elementary, and the Elementary School Building Project Committee has been meeting to create a new design to the public and hosted a community meeting to present the project and take comments and input.

“This is a wonderful school. It was built in 1966, but it is showing its age,” said Chair of the Building Committee, Diane Supczak-Mulvaney.

The Massachusetts School Building Authority, or MSBA, has strict requirements for who needs to be on the committee, and members include people from school admin, the community, and educators so that “...we have a good representation of people on the committee so that we have all of the thoughts and concerns and opinions brought to the committee at any point in time,” said Supczak-Mulvaney.

The architect on the project is the Mount Vernon Group, and the Owner’s Project Manager is Skanska, and members of both orga-

nizations were present at the meeting to answer questions.

Nick Lobik and Craig Spice, Project Managers, presented the role the MSBA has in helping cities and towns design and build modern, cost-effective, and energy-efficient public schools, and funds a portion of the school construction through the state sales tax.

Mosier was one of only 19 schools across the state that were invited into the MSBA program in 2024 because of its urgent needs, and it will provide South Hadley with substantial state reimbursement in order to complete the

project.

The Committee began by conducting a Feasibility Study, set to be completed by the end of December, and by April 2026, have the Preferred Schematic Report finished, and by June 2026, receive MSBA approval of their preferred designs. For the rest of the year, the Committee plans to create the final schematic design, come up with final project costs factored in with MSBA and local tax contributions.

The Committee will then bring it to a Special Town

Please see **MOSIER**, page 11

Library overflows for annual puzzle swap



The line wrapped around both sides of the hallway as people eagerly awaited the puzzles to swap with neighbors. See more photos on page 9.

Compromise guides ADU approval

By **Walter Hamilton**
Correspondent

SOUTH HADLEY - A contentious debate between a property developer and the Planning Board was resolved with a compromise suggested by a top state fire marshal that led to approval of a pair of duplex dwellings, each with a detached accessory dwelling behind them, at 27 Ludlow Road.

The matter suggested the potential for more such disputes as builders and property owners explore the implications of the 2024 state law allowing protected status for accessory dwellings in all residential zones in the state.

The board on Dec. 8 approved the project with the condition that easements, or permanent deed restrictions, be added to both building lots. That condition allowed the developer to permanently "borrow" a small amount of land from its next-door neighbor.

If the deal had not been struck, the developer would be required to install costly sprinkler systems inside the ADU on the smaller parcel.

Agawam developer Steve Aube complained that planning staff had not adequately considered his position that the town has placed undue burdens on his efforts to provide more affordable housing in town. His remarks drew a sharp rebuke from Chair Diane Mulvaney, who countered that the board was following its mandate to obey town bylaw regulations.

In addition to the fire safety issue, the board also cited a requirement for site plan reviews, mandated by town bylaws, that curb cuts should not exceed one per dwelling. The road to the ADUs would add

one more curb cut to the four others in front of the duplexes.

Aube plans to build the dwellings at the site of a now-demolished single-family house on a one-third-acre lot at 27 Ludlow Road and on an adjacent vacant one-quarter-acre lot. Together they measure about 10 percent more than a half-acre.

Aube's plan specified that each duplex apartment would have two off-street parking spaces. A 20-foot-wide road between the duplexes would lead to the ADUs, where residents could park. The curb cut for the proposed road also triggered debate because of the one-cut-per-unit limit.

Planning Director Anne Capra, following a Nov. 24 public hearing that also triggered strong debate about the project, met with state fire code enforcement officers, local fire district personnel and the town building commissioner.

Jacob Nunnenmacher, fire protection engineer for the state Fire Marshall's office, advised that no sprinklers would be needed for the ADU behind the duplex on the larger parcel, based on its frontage on Ludlow Road.

But either a 20-foot-wide access road to the ADU, or sprinklers, would be required for the smaller parcel because it lacked required frontage and thus did not provide safe access to the ADU.

Nunnenmacher suggested that the 20-foot-wide access road would not be required if easements on both parcels allowed safe access. Fire District 1 agreed to that condition. Aube told the board that he planned to build a 12-foot-wide paved driveway between the duplexes, bordered with four-foot-wide crushed stone areas on each side.

Town Fire District 1 agreed to accept the state official's advice.

In debate over the additional one curb cut for the ADU driveway, the board cited a provision of town ADU bylaws that states:

"Curb cuts shall be minimized to the extent practical. Sites should be limited to one curb cut, unless safe and effective traffic management requires multiple curb cuts or unusual hardship exists. Curb cuts shall be located so as to minimize hazardous entrances and exits and turning movements."

Aube argued that the word "should" implied discretion in the board's ruling. If the word instead were "shall," the extra curb cut would not be allowed.

The board subsequently approved the project.

In other business, the board returned to its consideration of an upgrade to revisions of the town's sign bylaw. Discussions on the issue were paused on Sept. 22, when the board agreed that more research was needed before discussions could continue. Discussions are planned for upcoming meetings.

At the center of the issue was a 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision that forbade content-based sign laws that regulate speech because of the topic discussed or the idea or message expressed.

The decision also provided municipalities with options to address safety and aesthetic concerns that have nothing to do with the message of the signs. Those concerns include sign size, safety, materials of construction, lighting, moving parts, location, time restrictions on one-time event advertising, and portability.

Tailgate Picnic Deli to close after 37 years in South Hadley's Village Commons

SOUTH HADLEY - After 37 years as a fixture in The Village Commons, Tailgate Picnic will be closing its doors, marking the end of a long-standing local deli and market that has served generations of South Hadley residents.

Founded in 1988 by Jack and Alicia Magri, Tailgate Picnic quickly became a town hub, known for its loyal customers and everyday connections. The Magris successfully operated the deli for more than three decades before Dawn Morey took ownership in 2022, carrying forward the community spirit, homemade breakfast and lunch menu, and

unique market offerings.

"I was honored to continue the Tailgate legacy," says Morey. "Tailgate has always been about people-our customers, our neighbors, and the relationships built over time. The decision to close was incredibly difficult, but I'm deeply grateful for the support and kindness shown to me over the past few years."

Like many small independent businesses, Tailgate Picnic has faced increasing challenges in today's economic climate, contributing to this unexpected and emotional decision.

"Tailgate Picnic has been an important part of The Vil-

lage Commons and the broader South Hadley community for nearly four decades," says Jeff Labrecque, President and CEO of The Village Commons. "We're thankful for the Magri family's legacy, for Dawn's dedication in continuing it, and for the role Tailgate played in shaping the character of The Commons."

Both Tailgate Picnic and The Village Commons expressed sincere gratitude to loyal patrons, neighboring businesses, and the community for their longstanding support. The deli and market will close its doors at the end of 2025.

Getting cozy this holiday season at the libraries

SOUTH HADLEY - Winter weather and a good book just seem to go together. As we move into December, we invite you to visit the South Hadley Public and Gaylord Memorial libraries to pick up a bestseller, discover a new author, or reconnect with a classic. You can find the most recent additions to the collection by clicking here. The page is updated weekly, and you can even sign up for email alerts for new materials. And we're much more than books...

Online Author Programs (click each program for more information)

The Creative and Compassionate Art of Seeing Others Deeply with David Brooks, Leading Cultural and Political Commentator and Bestselling Author of *The Road to Character*: Tuesday, January 13 at 2 p.m.

Children's Programs at SHPL

This month we celebrate the shortest day of the year, followed by New Year's Eve. Join us as we count down to «noon year» with a **comedy magic show on December 31 at 10:30 a.m.!**

But wait, there's more: **Japanese Story Time with Kanae on Saturday, December 13 at 10:30 a.m.**, and **music with Mr. Liam on Saturday, December 20 at 10:30 a.m.** And during school vacation, try out our new I Spy board, come

play **Book Bingo on Tuesday, December 23 at 2 p.m.**, and make a **paper snowflake craft on Tuesday, December 30 between 2 to 4 p.m.** (drop in).

Need some reading suggestions? Request a Book Bundle (these can work as gift guides as well! Books make great gifts!).

All our regular programs continue as usual while the library is open: Pajama Storytime, Lego & Games, Rhyme Time, Story Time, CFCE Playgroup, Baby Lapsit Storytime, and Pride Club. See the whole calendar here, and email Jenny if you have any questions.

Teen Programs at SHPL

Night Craft will be happening on **Tuesday, December 30, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.** We will be crafting Glue Snowflakes. None of these programs requires signing up unless you would like an email reminder.

Our monthly **Teen Takeaways** continue to be available. This month features Silhouette Pom Pom Painting. Sign up once and get a new Teen Takeaway every month. We also have our latest **Booktrovert** pick: *Conceal, Don't Feel* by Jen Calonita. There are no in-person meet ups, just enjoy the book on your own time. Copies are available in the Teen Room for check out.

December introduces our

brand new Teen Book Club! The **Read Whatever Book Club**. Come and talk about whatever you're reading with other teens! Hot cocoa and popcorn provided. This program takes place on **Monday, December 22, from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.**, and no sign-up is needed unless you want an email reminder.

Finally, during school vacation week, there is **Drip Sculpture** with day 1 taking place **Monday, December 29, from 3 to 4 p.m.** and day 2 taking place **Tuesday, December 30, from 3 to 4 p.m.** We will also have **Open Gaming on Wednesday, December 31 from 3 to 5 p.m.** Gaming consoles and board games will be available for teens to play. Please email Bethany with any questions.

Gaylord Memorial Library Programs

Families can also join us on **Saturday, December 27, at 10:15 a.m.** for **Trains-n-Tracks**.

December Holidays

Happy Holidays! Our schedule has some adjustments this month:

Wednesday, December 24, closing at 1 p.m.

Thursday, December 25, both libraries are closed

Friday, December 26, open normal hours at SHPL and GML

Wednesday, December 31, closing at 6 p.m.

Residents: Take the Budget Task Force Survey

SOUTH HADLEY - You are invited to participate in a research study for the Town of South Hadley. This project is being conducted under the direction of Dr. Melinda Tarsi-Goldfien, Department of Political Science, Bridgewater State University, in collaboration with the South

Hadley Budget Task Force. The purpose of this study is to collect feedback from residents on the town's finances. The study is voluntary and confidential. The survey responses are collected and compiled by Bridgewater State University under the direction of Dr. Tar-

si-Goldfien. The survey results will be reported to the Budget Task Force and residents upon completion. Take the survey at https://bridgew.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3UleV5odmqmw4K.

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Friday, Dec. 19th Corner Boys	Saturday, Dec. 20th The Healys	Saturday, Dec. 27th Nine Volt Radio
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HOLIDAY HOURS: CLOSED Christmas Eve & Christmas Day
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Town warns residents of fraud scam

SOUTH HADLEY - The Town of South Hadley is among many towns across the country affected by FAKE requests for planning application fee payments. These emails and invoices are NOT from the Town of South Hadley. All application fees are handled in person at Town Hall. Do not pay any invoices or respond to these fraudulent emails. Contact the Planning Department/Town directly.

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USDA INSP. HILLSHIRE FARMS POLSKA KIELBASA TURKEY 13 OZ or REGULAR 14 OZ \$2⁹⁹ lb	USDA INSP. FRESH AMERICAN LEG LAMB \$6⁶⁹ lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN PIGS IN A BLANKET 24 PC BOX... \$3⁹⁹ ea
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Turley Publications, Inc.

Animal Control provides info about Ollie's Law

BELCHERTOWN – Thank you to our friends at Dedham Animal Control for this great explanation of Ollie's Law and our responsibilities to the community in keeping our four-legged friends safe.

As we near the start of the holiday season, we are already seeing an increase via social media of inquiries for, and responses to dog owners and service offerings for dog boarding/keeping within caretaker's homes.

Please be reminded that you cannot keep for the day or overnight, in your home or on your property, if you are, then you are operating as a business without a kennel license-even for just one dog.

Those who are offering dog boarding or dog care services out of their homes, under app-based companies, which are designed 'to connect' dog owners with dog care providers, such as Rover, Wag, PetSitter.com, Care.com, etc., are NOT exempt from needing a kennel license.

Rover, Wag, PetSitter.com, Care.com, etc. are NOT employers of these pet caretakers – Rover, Wag, PetSitter.com, Care.com, etc. are platform applications, and those who use these apps to offer dog care services are independent contractors, running their OWN dog care businesses. These caretakers determine their own fees, schedules and are responsible for being familiar with and adhering to their local laws.

This means the platforms, such as Rover, Wag, PetSitter.com, Care.com, etc., do NOT provide their app users with insurance for any potential harm to pets, peo-

ple, or property, nor do these platforms provide training, ensure qualifications, oversee concepts, visit the properties, contact community officials, or assume liability.

And while these platforms may conduct some form of background check and/or vetting process for their platform users, these are simply screening measures.

If we see or have verified that unlawful dog care services are being offered and/or provided out of a caretaker's home, we will take action.

Kennel license requirements, regardless of which community you reside in, fall under the Massachusetts General Laws. Service providers may be heavily fined, and/or issued cease & desist orders, under the municipality, which may not only bring existing dog boarding/keeping services to a halt, but such action may also result in dog owners needing to return from their trips to pick up their pets, if alternative 'keeping' arrangements are not able to be accommodated over the phone.

Unlawful boarding, keeping, daycare, and dog training services have been a major focus for Massachusetts state officials, Animal Control Officers, and Town/City Clerks, since the passing of Ollie's Law in 2024. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/ollies-law-information>

Belchertown has our own bylaws regulating doggy daycare with parameters that must be met. Dog owners – please know that Ollie's Law legislation's introduction stemmed from numerous incidents of dogs becoming injured, lost, and even killed, while being 'kept' by (even

legitimate) pet service providers, as a result of unsafe properties and conditions, untrained staff/caretakers, insufficient or absent emergency plans, incident reporting, and accountability.

Ollie's Law was enacted to provide oversight to increase safety in pet boarding and pet daycare services, by establishing statewide regulations, ensuring all home boarding/residential and commercial kennels are licensed and inspected, requiring injury reporting, and creating a pathway for developing future kennel standards.'

[In Massachusetts, a kennel is defined as a collection of dogs on a single property for commercial boarding, breeding, training, or a private collection of a certain number of dogs...]

[Commercial boarding is the business of providing temporary lodging, meals, and care for pets for profit]

Dog care providers – please know that while we appreciate your desire to provide dog care services out of your homes, amidst an explosive, ceaseless, and lucrative pet care industry, we have little tolerance, nor does the state provide margins, when these practices are being conducted unlawfully.

If you are providing or considering providing such services **out of your home or establishing a business**, we advise you to contact your local officials to ascertain the requirements, inspections, and licenses needed to provide such services -before offering them to anyone.

[Dog service providers are free to care for other people's dogs in the homes

in which the dog(s) reside, without kennel licenses.]

Dog owners - please know that while your dog walker may be running a legitimate and trustworthy dog walking business, and our communities have plenty of these wonderful dog walkers, just remember that dog walking does not roll over to include dog overnight care.

Dog owners -please also know that Belchertown has only four (4) lawful dog boarding options –Belchertown Boarding Kennel, Shady Glen Boarding Kennel, Panarico Farm, and Barking Bubbles. Belchertown has only 1 doggy daycare facility, Panarico Farm.

Belchertown does NOT have ANY licensed in-home dog care providers at this time. Please advise us if such a service is offered to you.

We view pets as just as much a member of your families as you do, and the fact that we oversee and inspect lawful and lawfully-pursued service provision properties, to ensure they are humanely sound, safe, secured, sanitary, licensed, and prepared to 'keep' your pets -should be of great value to you.

This should also be of great value to pet care providers, as we want to work with you so that your business interests are protected and lawful, and so that we can be a positive resource for you, if you need one, while caring for other people's pets.

Folks who care for a family or friends' pet(s) are not required to get a kennel license as long as there is no exchange of money for the provision of services, as in a business of caring for people's dogs and charging fees.

Second Chance urges community to help Loki find a home before his third Christmas in a shelter

EAST BROOKFIELD – Loki has been waiting far too long. If he is not adopted by Monday, he will mark two full years at Second Chance Animal Services and will face his third Christmas inside a shelter. He has been with the organization for so long that he believes this is his home, and staff are hoping the public can help change his story.



Loki enjoying the first snowfall of the season.

Loki first came to Second Chance in 2017 from Mississippi and was adopted quickly. He was returned in December 2023 when his family could no longer keep him and he has been waiting ever since, despite his loyal heart and adventurous spirit. Loki loves car rides, fenced yards, walks, and showing off his many tricks. When he bonds with someone, he becomes a devoted companion who greets his favorite people with happy barks and howls.

Second Chance is committed to every pet in its care and hopes the community will help Loki finally find the home he deserves.

Could you or someone you know be the person Loki has been waiting for? Visit www.secondchanceanimals.org/adoptable-dogs/ or call 508-867-5525 for more information.

and in a home without small children. His adoption fee has already been paid by one of his biggest supporters to help him find the right match.

Second Chance is committed to every pet in its care and hopes the community will help Loki finally find the home he deserves.

Could you or someone you know be the person Loki has been waiting for? Visit www.secondchanceanimals.org/adoptable-dogs/ or call 508-867-5525 for more information.



Loki laughing at his new Christmas sweater.



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Opinion

SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor

About remarrying and benefits from an ex-spouse

Dear Rusty:

I am almost 57, divorced after a 14-year marriage. My former spouse is 15 years older than I and made significantly more money than me. I am required to retire from my job at age 60 but expect to keep working in some capacity.

I have a girlfriend of a similar age to me. She did not earn as much as her former husband as she mainly raised their children. She is also divorced from an older spouse who made more money than she did. I am trying to figure out if we will be penalized if we marry or if it matters if we wait until after we reach 60 years of age. Can I claim my own benefits when I become eligible at 62, then claim survivor benefits later, whenever my former spouse passes? Is that affected if, or when, I remarry? I do not want to give up my potential survivor benefits from my ex-spouse. Are those affected if I remarry?

If I understand correctly, if I remarry even after 60, we would both forfeit divorced spousal benefits, is that right? Given that my girlfriend's former spouse probably made more money than I, would she be forfeiting her former spousal benefits if we were to marry, even after age 60?

Lastly, I am considering retiring abroad as an expat. Any suggestions about how that would affect our Social Security benefits?

Signed: Starting Over

Dear Starting Over:

With certain exceptions, benefits from a living ex-spouse cannot be collected if you remarry (regardless of your age when you remarry). So, from what you've shared,

whenever you remarry both you and your new wife will forfeit eligibility for benefits from your respective ex-spouses while they are living (FYI, there are exceptions for those who are disabled).

However, the rules are different for a surviving ex-spouse: if you remarry before age 60, you will forfeit your surviving ex-spouse benefit. But if you remarry after age 60, you retain eligibility to collect survivor benefits from a deceased former spouse. So, if you and your girlfriend remarry after you are both age 60, you will both still be able to claim survivor benefits based on your former spouses' records.

And, yes, it is possible for you to initially claim your own SS retirement benefit at 62 and claim your surviving ex-spouse benefit later after your former spouse dies. Provided you remarry after age 60 you do not lose that option, but if you were to claim a surviving ex-spouse benefit before reaching your Full Retirement Age, the monthly payment amount would be reduced, all SS benefits taken before FRA are reduced.

Note too, that if you plan to continue working after you are first eligible for SS benefits, Social Security has an "earnings test" which limits how much you can earn from working while collecting early benefits. The limit changes yearly for 2025 it is \$23,400 and if exceeded, SS will take back \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the limit. And, as you likely know, claiming at age 62 will also mean a benefit payment of about 30% less than available at your FRA of 67. So, if you plan to work after age

Please see **SECURITY**, page 5

Two holiday plants suited for gift giving

Are you in need of a plant for a hostess gift this holiday season but poinsettias aren't your cup of tea? Look no further! I will give you my top two non-poinsettia picks, and share my experiences growing these plants.

Hopefully you will find the perfect gift for someone on your list.

Florist Cyclamen (Cyclamen persicum) is a delightful indoor plant that flowers during the winter months and is available at local nurseries and box stores. Its quarter-sized blooms in red, pink and white are unique in that the petals are bent back and held above pretty, heart-shaped, silver-margined leaves.

There are varying types available with fancy flowers and intricately patterned foliage.

The cyclamen plant is tuberous and unfortunately is best propagated by seed or by division of its fibrous roots. Usually this task is left to the experts who are best able to deal with erratic germination and roots that are susceptible to rot.

A few years back I became the owner of my very first cyclamen (thanks, Mom!). I had a little trouble after awhile.

During the spring its leaves yellowed and fell off so I threw it out. Little did I know that leaf loss was supposed to happen! It was going dormant.

With the cyclamen's bloom time during the winter,

it has a period of dormancy mid spring through the end of summer when it's leaves will yellow and shed and it will demand next to no water. This time frame is opposite of what we are used to with our

of cold in order to bloom like outdoor narcissus do.

In just about four weeks after planting you'll be delighted with flowers galore!

Decide for yourself if you like the fragrance or you find it a little overpowering. Prevent leaves and stems from stretching by placing your container in a cool spot in your home during the night and enjoy the flowers in your living spaces during the day.

After flowering is done, throw the bulbs out free of guilt; they won't bloom again consistently. One year you may remember that I did try to regrow the bulbs by allowing them to dry out within the container I had first grown them in. Of the four bulbs, two had life left in them a year later.

I watered and waited and leaves did grow, but no flowers ever came. I ended up chalking it up to an experience and starting over with new bulbs the following winter.

Have fun experimenting with these plants or any number of beauties worthy of a good home for the holidays.

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.



perennial flowers that bloom during the summer and go dormant during the winter.

In late August, we can begin watering again and leaves will sprout anew before the blooming cycle begins during the fall.

Another favorite holiday plant by the name of Paperwhites start out as a bulb. The bulbs are available now by mail and from local nurseries and garden centers.

Sometimes you can "fill a bag" with the exact number you want, which is really neat. Upon inspection of the bulb and the picture on the label, you'll note that Paperwhites look very much like our outdoor daffodils.

Paperwhites are cousins to these spring harbingers and bloom easily inside with little more than light, something to anchor the developing roots (soil or rocks) and water to get them growing. They don't need to go through a period



An Oakham resident saw a purple finch in her yard recently.

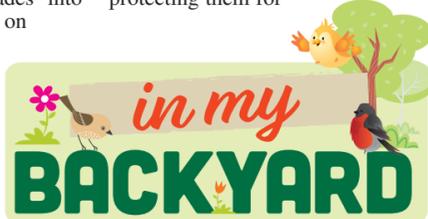
The purple finch is about six inches long. It has a sturdy body, short tail and a conical bill designed to crack seed. The male has raspberry red covering its head, chest and back. The color fades into a lighter pink tone on the belly. The wings and tail are brown with red highlights. The female has no red coloring and is brown and white with heavy streaking. It has a white eye-brow stripe.

The purple finch and house finch are often confused. The purple finch as a more uniform raspberry color and the house finch is more orange red color. The house finches color is limited to the head and upper chest. The purple finch also has notch at the base of its tail and is larger.

Purple finches breed primarily in Canada and the northeastern United States including New England and the Great Lakes region. The purple finch is the state bird of New Hampshire.

A typical clutch consists of four or five pale blue eggs with small dark speckles. The female incubates the eggs for about 12-14 days

while the male provides food. Once hatched, both parents feed the nestlings a mixture of regurgitated seeds and insects to ensure proper nutrition. The fledglings leave the nest roughly two weeks after hatching, though parents continue feeding and protecting them for



another week or two.

They are fond of black oil sunflower seeds, safflower seeds, and millet offered in tube or platform feeders. In summer they supplement their diet with insects and caterpillars as well as blackberries and cherries.

Birds during snow storm
A Brimfield resident emailed, "During the recent snow storm (Tuesday, Dec. 2) there were 30 plus dark-eyed juncos in the yard and one white-throated sparrow."

Bird bath visitors
The Brimfield resident said he went looking for his bird bath heater and could not find it.

He said, "Eventually I

did find it, in the bird bath. It wasn't connected and grass had grown over the cord so I couldn't see it, but dug around and eventually found the cord, got it plugged in and now the bath isn't freezing."

He has a trail camera near the bird bath. Lots of birds are using the bird bath, mostly to get a drink. Birds coming to the bird bath include blue jay, Carolina wren, cardinal, cedar waxwing (six), chickadee, goldfinch, mourning dove, robin (three), titmouse and white-throated sparrow.

He said, "Robins took a bath but when it was warmer, temperature in the upper 40s. Junco are the only cold weather bathers." Mammals seen at the bird bath are opossum, raccoon, mouse at least two and a mole.

He thinks the tub he uses for the bird bath has a leak because the water level goes down and he has to refill it ever couple of day. He said, "The local pond are now frozen. We did a few trips around the area and never saw any migrating ducks, just mallards and Canada geese."

Helping birds
Birds are attracted to water during winter months. They do not bath when temperatures are below freezing, but they do take a drink. A



Purple finch

source of unfrozen water will attract birds.

Providing wild birds with clean drinking water is helpful. However, providing a roomy bathing area that stays thawed even in severely-cold weather can be harmful in some cases. Before heating devices kept birdbaths ice free, birds could bathe in naturally-melted water and be able to fly off without their feathers freezing. According to the blog Cool Green Science-Stories of The Nature Conservancy, birds bathing while air temperatures are frigid risk harm due to frozen feathers: <https://blog.nature.org/2022/01/31/should-you-provide-birds-water-in-winter/>.

The article suggests modifying heated birdbaths so that birds can safely drink, but not bathe. A metal heating ele-

ment that keeps a small section of the birdbath thawed works well. People, who have bird feeders or simple feeding stations may add shallow unbreakable container around the area. Yes, it can be labor-intensive, but they can easily pour water into them (hot water when it's below

freezing) and provide fresh water for at least a short period of time. As a source of drinking water, the containers can be filled with pebbles that will form small pockets of water where birds can get a drink of water.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.

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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DPW announces sidewalk clearing announcement

SOUTH HADLEY – The Town of South Hadley is reminding residents of snow removal responsibilities, described in Bylaw 315-2.3, involving sidewalks adjacent to Town roads and private property:

Town Bylaw: 315-2.3

All property owners are responsible for snow removal on all public sidewalks that abut their property. The Selectboard approves a list of sidewalks where snow is removed by the DPW. However, these sidewalks are typically done after the Town roads are plowed. Property owners that abut sidewalks that are on the DPW sidewalk list are not absolved of their responsibility for sidewalk maintenance. The

Town’s snow and ice policies are shown in Appendix B. Recently, the South Hadley Police Department began issuing Bylaw Violations to residents who failed to properly maintain the sidewalk adjacent to their property, that they are responsible for maintaining. The Department of Public Works has a Selectboard-approved list of sidewalks that they must plow, starting “within 24 hours AFTER the end of snowfall”. The DPW responsibilities during winter weather events, by priority are: (1) Roads, (2) municipal lots, (3) school lots, (4) sidewalks.

Your attention to sidewalk maintenance is appreciated by the walking public.

SECURITY from page 4

62 and plan to claim early SS, you should take the “earnings test” into consideration. FYI, the earning test no longer applies after you reach your Full Retirement Age.

Now, regarding retiring overseas, be aware that Social Security has limits on where you can collect U.S. Social Security benefits. I suggest you use Social Security’s Payments Abroad Screening Tool to find out if benefits are payable wherever you plan to retire abroad. That SSA tool can be found here:

https://www.ssa.gov/international/payments_outside-US.html.

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 ssadviser@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

Second Chance surpasses record, helping more than 59,000 pets in 2025

Nonprofit appeals for support as demand for services continues to rise

EAST BROOKFIELD – Second Chance Animal Services has already helped more than 59,000 pets in 2025 with one month remaining in the year. This milestone surpasses last year’s record of 56,000 pets helped and highlights both the expanding reach of the organization and the escalating crisis facing pet owners and shelters across the region.

“This year has brought an extraordinary number of pets through our doors. To have already helped over 59,000 pets is remarkable, but it is also deeply troubling how many families and shelters are struggling,” said CEO and founder Sheryl Blancato. “We are privileged to make such an impact, but the challenges continue to grow as more pet owners face financial hardships and more shelters operate at capacity.”

Second Chance’s four community veterinary hospitals are experiencing unprecedented demand from pet owners who rely on affordable care to keep their companion animals healthy and at home. At the same time, the organization’s pet food pantry program has seen dramatic growth as well. Through this program, Second Chance distributes pet food to local human food pantries, so fam-



Submitted photos
Five-year-old Sylvester is a big lovable sweetheart still waiting for a home at the Second Chance Adoption Center.



Once weak and skinny with a life-threatening condition, one-year-old Gwinnie is now healthy and loved. She is just one of the more than 59,000 pets Second Chance helped this year.

ilies do not have to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their pets. Even with this support and with all the programs Second Chance offers, some local pet owners still find themselves unable to keep their pets due to financial constraints. Blancato noted that these situations are heartbreaking for families and for the staff who work to keep pets and their people together whenever possible.

Shelters across the country continue to face severe overcrowding. Second Chance is taking in as many pets as possible while also providing the resources and care that prevent unnecessary surrenders. The need, however, continues to outpace available resources.

Medical Association Merit Award for her dedication to advancing veterinary care and improving the lives of pets in need.

“These honors reflect the commitment of our entire team and the generosity of our supporters,” Blancato said. “They remind us that behind every award is a pet whose life was changed for the better.”

Despite expanding programs to meet the rising demand, the nonprofit faces significant financial pressure. Blancato is urging supporters to help ensure that lifesaving services remain available to every pet that needs them.

“Every gift makes a direct difference. Whether it keeps a beloved pet with their family or provides critical medical care for a pet in crisis, support from the community is the reason we can keep saying yes,” Blancato said.

The organization welcomes support of any kind and is encouraging donors to consider becoming Monthly Pet Pal Champions by enrolling in recurring giving. Blancato noted that monthly support provides vital stability and helps Second Chance respond to emergencies and plan ahead with confidence, but added that every gift, whether one time or monthly, plays an essential role in helping pets in need.

Donations and monthly enrollments can be made at www.secondchanceanimals.org or by mail to Second Chance, PO Box 136, East Brookfield, MA 01515.

PLEASE RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

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Country Bank announces four new promotions

REGION - Mary McGovern, President and CEO of Country Bank is pleased to announce recent promotions that reflect the Bank's ongoing commitment to exceptional service, operational excellence, and community impact. These promotions recognize the outstanding work, expertise, and dedication demonstrated by Clare Ladue, Lucy Sanchez, Audra Chartier, and Nick Thompson.

Clare Ladue, Vice President, Customer Care Center

With more than 30 years of banking experience, Clare has consistently excelled in elevating customer experience, driving operational performance, and building collaborative team cultures. She joined Country Bank two years ago to lead the Customer Care Center and immediately began reshaping service standards and operational efficiency.

Clare received her Mass Bankers Financial Certificate from the New England School of Financial Studies and remains passionate about professional development.

Lucy Sanchez, Assistant

Vice President, Mortgage & Community Development Officer

Lucy joined Country Bank in 2024, bringing 13 years of expertise in mortgage lending and branch management. Since joining, she has significantly expanded the Bank's presence and impact in Springfield, strengthening community partnerships and leading inclusive outreach efforts.

In addition to originating mortgages, Lucy is transforming access, visibility, and trust with new and diverse communities.

Audra Chartier, Assistant Vice President, Retail Operations

Audra has been with Country Bank for 12 years, bringing 17 years of banking experience spanning retail, operations, sales, service, and customer experience. In her current role, she supports retail operational excellence across the bank and serves as a trusted subject-matter expert. She is a recipient of a 2024 Gold Star Award, a continuous learner, holding several CFT diplomas and a Mass Bankers Financial Certificate from the New England

School of Financial Studies. Nick Thompson, Compliance Officer

Nick has been with the bank for nine years and transitioned to the Compliance Department three years ago. His strong analytical mindset, collaborative approach, and sound decision-making have made him a valued internal partner. Nick's excellence in service and teamwork earned him the prestigious President's Platinum Award in 2020. He is currently pursuing a Certified Regulatory Compliance Manager (CRCM) designation.

"We are excited to announce these promotions, not just in recognition of these team member's contributions to the Bank's success, but also because each individual's history with the Bank is a demonstration of the various career path opportunities available in community banking. As an organization, we are committed to helping each team member identify their career goals and work with them to reach those objectives. Their actions, along with so many others, contribute the Bank's overall success and we're pleased to be able

to promote these individuals for their dedication to the organization," said Miriam Siegel, Chief Culture & Development Officer.

About Country Bank:

Established in 1850, Country Bank has a rich history of supporting personal and business banking customers through financial solutions with FDIC and DIF insurance for added security. Country Bank is a full-service \$2B mutual community bank serving Central and Western Massachusetts with 15 banking centers and 2 business offices in Ware, Palmer, West Brookfield, Brimfield, Belchertown, Wilbraham, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Leicester, Paxton, Charlton, Springfield, Uxbridge, and Worcester. With a commitment to personalized service and community involvement, Country Bank offers individuals, businesses, and municipalities a comprehensive range of banking products and services. Country Bank is a member of FDIC, DIF, and the SUM network. Country Bank can be reached at 800-322-8233 or online at countrybank.com.



Submitted photos
Clare Ladue, VP, Customer Care Center.



Lucy Sanchez, AVP Mortgage and Community Development.



Audra Chartier, AVP, Retail Operations.



Nick Thompson, Compliance Officer.

bankESB Raises \$42,000 for Local Food Pantries

REGION - Matthew S. Sosik, president and CEO of bankESB, announced that the bank's fifth annual Neighbors Helping Neighbors fundraising drive raised \$42,000 for local food pantries. This brings the program's five-year total to \$161,734.92.

The appeal is part of bankESB's charitable giving program, The Giving Tree, which reflects the bank's commitment to making a difference in the neighborhoods it serves. Throughout October, the bank invited customers, employees, and members

of the community to donate at bankESB branches. All donations received were matched, dollar for dollar, by bankESB and the total divided among food pantries in Western Massachusetts communities the bank serves.

Each of these participating food pantries received \$3,000:

- The Best Life Food Ministry, Agawam
- BUCC Helping Hands Cupboard Food Pantry, Belchertown
- Easthampton Community Center Food Pantry
- Easthampton Congrega-

tional Church Food Cupboard & Oasis Kitchen

- The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, Chicopee
- The Hadley Food Pantry
- Hilltown Food Pantry, Goshen
- Lorraine's Soup Kitchen
- Margaret's Pantry, Holyoke
- Neighbors Helping Neighbors, Inc., South Hadley
- Northampton Survival Center
- Not Bread Alone, Amherst
- Southampton Community Cupboard
- Westfield Food Pantry

"On behalf of bankESB, I'd like to thank all those who generously donated to our

Neighbors Helping Neighbors fundraiser to help fight food insecurity in our communities," said Sosik. "We're pleased to host this annual appeal and that so much was raised to help families in need this holiday season and into this new year."

About bankESB

Founded in 1869 as Easthampton Savings Bank, bankESB is headquartered in Easthampton, Massachusetts. We have \$1.9 billion in assets and offer a complete line of consumer and business deposit and lending products and services through 11 locations throughout Western Massachusetts. We're proud to fulfill our community banking mission—providing

individualized financial support, comprehensive products and services, and smart banking technology—to ensure our customers can unlock their potential and build a successful future. Through our charitable giving program, The Giving Tree, we support non-profit organizations and causes throughout Hampden and Hampshire counties. In 2024 alone, The Giving Tree donated nearly \$515,000 and over the past decade has donated \$4 million. bankESB was named a Corporate Citizenship Award winner for the past 11 years by the Boston Business Journal, reaffirming our status as one of Massachusetts' most charitable companies. For more information, visit bankESB.com.

bankESB is a member of the Hometown Financial Group, a \$6.9 billion multibank mutual holding company headquartered in Easthampton, Massachusetts, and the parent company of bankESB, bankHometown, North Shore Bank, Hometown Mortgage, and North Shore Bank's Abington Bank and Colonial Federal Savings Bank divisions. Hometown Financial and our banks were recognized nationally as one of Forbes' "America's Best-in-State Banks," a three-time USA TODAY Top Workplace award winner, and a top place to work by The Boston Globe and Hartford Courant. For more information, visit bankHFG.com.

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Wednesday Night 6:30pm
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Thursday Night 7-10 pm
Karaoke by
New England Disc Jockeys

Friday Night starts at 7:30 pm
Trivia Night \$5 per person

Saturday Night 5-7 pm
Spaghetti Dinner

7 Days A Week
Queen of Hearts Raffle
\$1 per ticket - unlimited tickets
Drawing Wednesdays at 5 pm

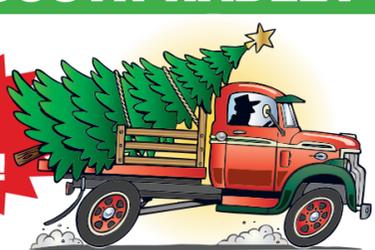
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*South Hadley location does not offer beer and wine.

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Offense shines in win for girls basketball

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

AMHERST — The South Hadley girls' basketball team has played in the last two Division 4 state finals at Tsongas Center located on the UMass-Lowell campus.

With only one senior listed on their roster, South Hadley is hoping to make another trip to Lowell in the middle of March.

The Lady Tigers began their 2025-26 journey with a 64-30 victory over the Belchertown Lady Orioles at the annual Pioneer Valley Tip-Off, which was held inside the Mullins Center located on the UMass-Amherst campus, last Friday night.

"This was our first game of the season, and we played a

great first half," said South Hadley head coach Paul Dubuc. "The girls played very hard and it was an outstanding all around team effort."

Junior guard Cara Dean led the way offensively for the Lady Tigers with a game-high 18 points. She also pulled down seven rebounds and was credited with four assists.

"We got off to a quick start in tonight's game, which was great" said Dean, who was selected as the Player of the Game. "We're looking forward to seeing what we can do during the rest of the season."

Dean made eight field goals, including a 3-pointer, and a foul shot in the season opening victory.

South Hadley sophomore guard Olivia Athas, who made her first varsity start, finished with 15 points with the help of two 3-pointers. Junior forward Kate Phillips posted a double-double with 11 points and 12 rebounds. Junior guard Taylor Bullough chipped in with 9 points and junior forward Ryley McMahon added 8 points. Bullough also

made a pair of 3-pointers.

The only South Hadley senior is Sofie Quinn, who's a forward.

Things will probably be a lot more difficult this winter for South Hadley, who were moved from the Suburban League into the Valley League during the off-season.

The Lady Tigers, who have lost to Cathedral High School of Boston in the state finals the past two seasons, are the only Division 4 team in the Valley League. Their other new league opponents are Springfield Central, who's a Division 1 team, Minnechaug Regional, Northampton, Longmeadow, and Pittsfield.

The Lady Tigers also defeated Granby in the 2022 Pioneer Valley Tip-Off.

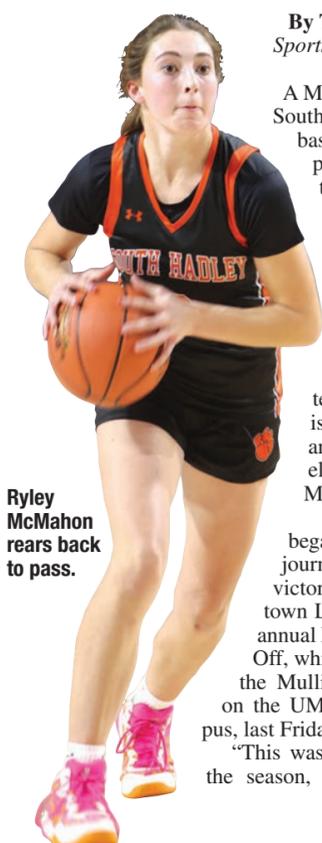
It was the Lady Orioles first appearance in the season opening event.

"We're a young team and the outcome of this game won't define our season," said Belchertown head coach Jay Woodcock. "We haven't played here before and I thought the girls were a lit-



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Olivia Athas watches as she follows through on a pass.



Ryley McMahon rears back to pass.

Please see **BASKETBALL**, page 8

Rams finish strong, beat Greenfield in opener



Rowan Cook makes a three-point shot.

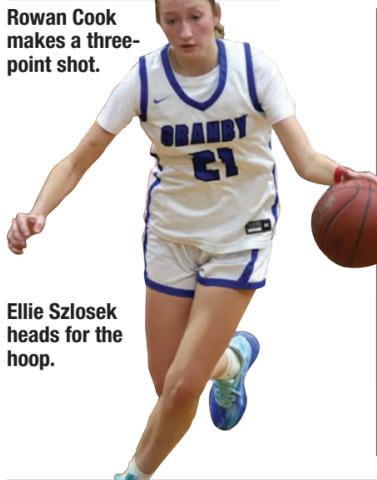


Brenna Moreno passes on the run.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli



Kalli White makes her way down the court.



Ellie Szlosek heads for the hoop.



Ari Milsak receives the ball near the free throw line.



Kaitlyn Curran is pursued by the opposition.

Tigers fall in opening matchup



Noah Hambley speeds down the court after a defensive rebound.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli



Noah Rivera crosses midcourt for the Tigers.

SOUTH HADLEY — Last Thursday night, South Hadley High School boys basketball lost its season opener to Amherst Regional 71-51. Despite some good runs during the game, Amherst had the advantage on offense. South Hadley had some scoring struggles in the middle of the game, but did finish strong with 21 points in the final frame. Isiah James led the Tigers with 14 points. Tim Loughrey turned in 13 points, and Noah Hambley had 12 points. South Hadley faced Chicopee High earlier this week and the Tigers will host Northampton on Friday, Dec. 19 at 7 p.m.



Tim Loughrey tries to get control of the loose ball.



Isiah James makes his way down the court.



Jaxon Puescher surveys the other end of the court.

T-Birds get big win over Providence Bruins

PROVIDENCE, R.I. - The Springfield Thunderbirds (6-11-3-2) rode an otherworldly performance from their goalie to a 3-1 win over the Providence Bruins (17-5-0-0) on Sunday inside Amica Mutual Pavilion.

Vadim Zherenko had the busiest first period of anybody in the building, as the T-Birds goaltender was subjected to 15 attempts in a furious first-period push by the Bruins. Zherenko stood his ground, relenting only a power-play one-timer to Georgii Merkulov.

However, before Merkulov broke through, the T-Birds used their first shot on net of the day to get a fortuitous bounce and a 1-0 lead as Matthew Peca threw

a puck off the legs of Hunter Skinner and through Michael DiPietro at 6:20 of the first period.

Providence wound up outshooting Springfield by a 15-2 margin in the opening frame, but the T-Birds responded with a great start to the second, as Chris Wagner found open space in the low slot and wired a perfect wrist shot over DiPietro's glove at 2:04, off a great find from Nikita Susuev.

The T-Birds played a much more balanced second period, limiting Providence's high-danger chances and allowing Zherenko clear sight lines to deny all 11 Bruins shots that did reach the net.

The pressure only intensified in the final 20 minutes

for Zherenko, as the Providence attack emptied the tank on the Springfield goal mouth with 20 shots on net in the final period, but "Big Z" had responses every single time, including a highlight-reel denial of Christian Wolanin on a one-timer from the right-wing circle in the closing minutes.

Sam Stange eventually gave the T-Birds a breath with an empty-netter with less than 30 seconds to play to usher the visitors to a victory. Zherenko completed his masterpiece with 45 stops.

The T-Birds are back on the ice next Saturday, Dec. 13, as they pay a visit to Utica to take on the Comets; puck drop is set for 7:00 p.m. at Adirondack Bank Center.

Railers score win over Pirates

PORTLAND, ME - The Portland Pirates ruined a lot of nights for the Worcester IceCats and Sharks through the decades.

The Railers got some revenge here Saturday evening by beating the Pirates, 4-2, in front of 4,803 fans as the Maine Mariners did a nostalgia game playing as the old AHL team.

The game went down to the final minutes with Worcester clinching it on Drew Callin's empty net goal with 26 seconds left in the third period. It was a 2-2 game with less than 10 minutes to go in the third, then Ryan Miotto broke the tie with a great wrist shot from the left circle at 10:25.

Cole Donhauser and Matt DeMelis had the other Railers goals. Max Andreev and Robert Cronin scored for the Pirates. Once again Worcester got splendid goaltending from Parker Gahagen who stopped 32 of 34 shots.

It was an outcome that could easily have been reversed except that Worcester refused to give in.

"I think we stuck with a lot of our game plan," coach

Nick Tuzzolino said. "We got put back on our heels a little bit at the start of the second period after a pretty good first period but I thought we responded well."

The victory allowed the Railers to finish a seven-game road trip with a 4-2-1 record. They earned nine of a possible 14 points, a .643 pace. Worcester is 9-3-1 in its last 13 games.

The first period was played at a yellow light pace and ended 0-0 although Worcester outshot the home team, 13-7. Things quickened in the second and intensified just before the clock hit the game's midway point.

The Railers were a man short when they developed a 3 on 1. They crashed the Maine zone but probably got in too deep. Ross Mitton was the last man to touch the puck but had no room to beat goalie Brad Arvanitis.

On cue, the Mariners came back with an odd-man rush of their own. They finished this one well with Andreev firing 20-footer under the crossbar from the left circle.

Worcester did not trail for long.

Donhauser stole the puck at center ice and outskated a pair of defenders. He made a little move between the circles and as Arvanitis reacted, Donhauser put a short shot between his pads.

DeMelis gave the Railers a 2-1 lead at 5:41 of the third period, scoring from in close. Cronin tied it on a power play at 9:12. Once again Worcester responded quickly as Miotto hit the top far corner from the left circle at 10:25.

The home team pressed but Gahegan shut them down until the buzzer sounded.

The two Worcester AHL teams had played the Pirates many times through the years and it was a very intense rivalry. Including playoff games, they battled 206 times. Worcester's record was 91-86-29. The IceCats were 43-45-16, the Sharks 44-37-13.

The city's AHL teams were 36-45-18 in what is currently called Cross Arena.

The American Hockey League won't put this one in the standings, but the Railers were very happy to issue some payback for their predecessors.

HCC wraps up first part of schedule with win

HOLYOKE - Women's basketball wrapped up the fall semester portion of their season on Saturday afternoon, winning a third straight game. The Lady Cougars racked up a season-high in points, thrashing local rival Springfield Technical CC 98-40. The home win extends Holyoke's perfect home record to 4-0.

Vivian Timmons (West Springfield, MA / Guilderland HS) and Annastacia Dixon (Keene, NH / Keene

HS) led the charge for the Cougars, each registering a double-double in the contest while scoring a season-high in points. Timmons led Holyoke in points for the third straight game, scoring 36 in the win to go along with ten rebounds. Dixon tallied 29 points and grabbed 15 rebounds for her double-double while also leading the Lady Cougars in steals with seven. Tatiyana Zuniga (Westfield, MA / Westfield HS) led the way in assists with ten and

had six steals.

Women's basketball finishes the fall half of their campaign with a 6-2 regional record and a 7-4 overall record. Their scheduled Sunday, December 14th game has been postponed. Holyoke will enjoy some time off during the season hiatus, resuming with games on Jan. 10. They play their next home game on Thursday, Jan. 15 at 5:30 p.m.

low and share with your friends and loved ones. We will be featuring photos from all 11 of our sports sections, but as always, you can see all the photos that appear by subscribing to your local paper or picking up a copy in your community.

Follow Turley Sports on Instagram

Turley Publications sports department has recently joined Instagram. You can find our account by searching "turleysports." We will regularly feature samples of photos that you will see in our publications on a weekly basis. Please fol-



BASKETBALL from page 7

ble bit nervous in the first half. We played a lot better in the second half."

The duo of sophomore guard Kina Roy (11 points) and junior guard Morghan Litz (9 points) combined to score 20 points. Sophomore forward Aubrey Klingensmith added 5 points.

A little more than three minutes into the opening quarter, Roy buried a 3-pointer, which tied the score at 5-5.

The Lady Tigers then finished the first quarter with an impressive 16-3 run.

Dean scored half of those points on lay-ups.

South Hadley, who outscored Belchertown 20-8 in the second quarter, held a commanding 41-16 halftime lead. Phillips scored eight of her points during the second stanza.

Both teams scored eleven points in the third quarter before the Lady Tigers put together a 12-3 run over the final eight minutes of the contest.

It was the only meeting of the regular season between the two squads.



Cara Dean motions to her teammates for a play as she dribbles down the court.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Kate Phillips goes for the hoop.

BUDGET from page 1

vices the county after the previous increase approved of in May at Town Meeting.

"The health insurance... has been our biggest driver," said McAllister. "We don't have direct control of these costs, and the Trust is our best option moving forward."

The increases in costs were unexpected, and the town was unprepared, causing the town to create the Task Force to try and address the issues and how to pay for the upcoming expenses the town will be facing.

The schools have mandated services, and a choice neg-

ative situation, which means the system has more students choosing out of the school system than choosing in, and the town's departments are smaller than its neighbors, and are not growing.

Solutions being explored-service reduction, staff reduction, debt exclusion, override.

"We need to hear from you and what you think is important," said McAllister. "Part of our strategy needs to be a recommendation not just for this year, but for future years."

The Task Force is offering ideas and strategies, and does not have everything figured

out completely, or sharing a definite solution.

Town Administrator Lisa Wong shared a survey going out to the public to take in order to get the citizens involved in the costs and what steps to take in the future.

The survey asks the community to rate the services the town provides by importance to them, ranging from services to the libraries.

"If there is no override, we will have to look at severe cuts," said Lisa Wong.

You can find more information, as well as the survey to take, on the town website as well as Facebook pages.

ADMINISTRATOR from page 1

hosted a listening session, launched a survey on Dec. 8, and will hold another public forum on Jan. 22 at 7 p.m. at the Senior Center.

Looking long-term, Wong's vision centers on reducing reliance on residential taxes while fostering sustainable growth. "We need to encourage small businesses to start and thrive here and ensure a stable commercial industrial environment," she said. She also pointed to proactive strategies such as creating more affordable housing and redeveloping underutilized spaces, while continuing to pursue state and federal funding to advance projects that cannot be supported through the regular town budget alone.

Transparency, Wong said, is essential during un-

certain times. Her office has revamped budget documentation and processes, and the resident-led task force has brought more financial discussions into public view. "Many of the problems and brainstorming that might happen during the workday are now also being done in a recorded meeting," she said. "It has been a great source of inspiration and support for myself and the municipal team to see our partnerships with the community more in the open."

Wong's path to town administration began early. She has worked in local government since her 20s and says South Hadley feels like home.

"I take a 'think globally, act locally' approach," explained Wong. "Having taught college courses like

Global Economics and Business and the Economy, I feel like a practitioner who uses best practices from academics and real life." Her background in global economics, combined with firsthand experience growing up in a family restaurant, informs her approach. However, she is determined to collaborate with the community during this current budget crisis.

"Please share concerns with town officials and your neighbors, too," noted Wong. "We have an initial survey that is available on the town website and in paper form in town buildings. We have a community that we love with services that are critical to the overall well-being that we want to preserve, but that are also open to feedback and need to be flexible."

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Library overflows for annual puzzle swap



Setting up the room for the annual puzzle swap.



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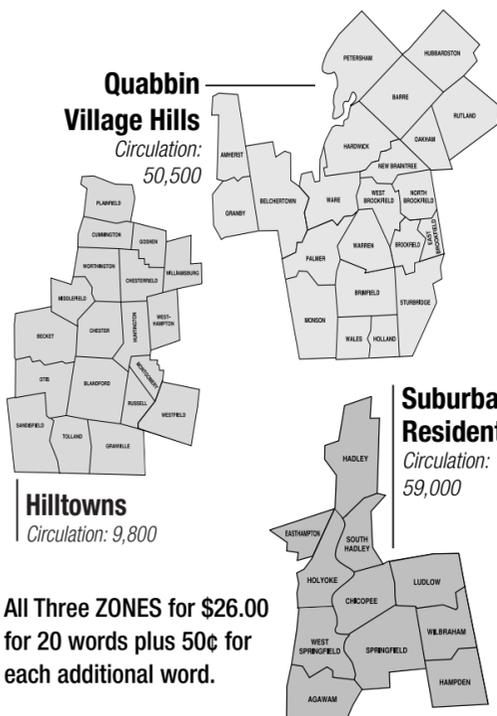
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GRANBY PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Granby Planning Board will conduct a Public Hearing on **January 5, 2026 at 5:35 P.M.** in the Old Carnegie Library (Top Floor Meeting Room), 1 Library Lane, Granby, MA, to consider an application submitted by Dan's Construction, 715 West Street, Ludlow, MA 01056, for approval of a Definitive Subdivision Plan entitled **MUNSING ESTATES**, a proposed subdivision of seventy-six (76) residential lots located on approximately 157 acres Zoned Single Family Residence (RS) located generally on the northerly side of Carver Street at the Belchertown town line (also identified as Assessor's Map 17, Block B, Lots 15.4 & 16).

The complete applications and plans are available for public inspection during regular business hours (8:00AM – 12:00 PM, Tuesday-Thursday) at the 1 Library Lane (top floor), Granby, MA 01033. and at the fol-

lowing website: <https://www.granby-ma.gov/planning-board/pages/public-hearing-notice>

Anyone wishing information and/or to be heard on this matter should appear at the time and place designated.

James Trompke, Chair
Granby Planning Board
12/12, 12/19/25

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Probate and Family Court
Hampshire Division
Docket No. HS25P0662EA
Estate of:
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Also Known As:
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Date of Death:
August 25, 2025
FORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Carly R. Brunault of South Hadley,**

MA.
Carly R. Brunault of South Hadley, MA has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner. **12/19/2025**

MOSIER from page 1

Vote in the winter of 2027, where, if passed, they will continue on to the detailed design, and begin construction bidding between spring to winter of 2028, with the goal of construction and opening the school complete for fall of 2030.

"The School Building Committee was asked, 'What are you looking for in a potential elementary building project?' And so, members of [the committee] answered with [words] like efficient, functional, educational needs, fiscally responsible, pride care, compassion, and safe," said Superintendent Jennifer Voyik.

Mosier serves grades two through four, with a potential reconfiguration of grades one through five, addressing the diverse and growing students' needs.

Mosier also emphasizes social-emotional learning and having a strong foundation in literacy, math, science, and integrated arts, as well as programming that includes special education services, counseling, OT/PT, ELL, and intervention supports.

With an added emphasis on these services and ideas, there is a need for more

space to provide programs in small group rooms, specialized spaces, and sensory support that follow the above, as well as accounting for the increased demand for STEM/STEAM, and hands-on learning.

Right now, the existing building and systems need to be reviewed, and there needs to be a survey update and testing for has been reviewing options.

"The first option is just to code upgrade and repairs, then there are two options that talk about addition and renovation," said Voyik. Other options include new construction on the existing site or new construction on the middle school.

The first option would mean the original building would remain the same, but necessary fixes and code repairs would be made.

The second option would have additions and renovations on the existing site, with conditions to change depending on whether there is a reconfiguration of grades.

For the total costs, the code upgrades and basic repairs cost \$40-\$50 million for construction costs, and in total project costs are \$50-\$55 million. For the addition/renovations at the Mosier site, it is estimated to be \$66-

\$90 million for construction costs, and \$80-\$115 million for total project costs.

For new construction at Mosier, the construction costs are estimated \$75-\$105 million, and the total project costs are \$90-\$124 million. For new construction at Michael E. Smith Middle School, construction costs are estimated to be \$77-\$100 million, with total project costs being \$92-\$120 million.

"Remember, we're in a program with MSBA, there is reimbursement, so that is not the total cost to the town, but the total cost of the project," said Voyik. "And these estimates will get closer and more fine-tuned as we go throughout the process."

As the project moves forward over the next six months, there will be community forums for the town to gather for updated information and time to ask questions before the official Special Town Meeting vote in the winter of 2027.

You can find more information on their website for more updates, and you can also email them with questions or to be added to their emailing list by contacting sbuidls@shschools.com, and you can follow them on Facebook, @SouthHadley-Schools.

WEAVING from page 1

back to the Viking Age. Attendees were guided through the process step by step and left with a small woven piece of their own creation, turning historical study into a tangible takeaway.

The program was led by Allison Pettengill of Castle Nitor, who founded the organization in 2021 with the goal of bringing history to life through interactive craft instruction. Pettengill explained that Castle Nitor's mission centers on helping people connect with the everyday lives of those who lived in the past, rather than focusing solely on major historical figures or events.

"Our goal is to get people more hands-on with history," Pettengill said. "We do a lot of library programs like this where we teach historical crafts in a concrete, hands-on way. People get to actually do the thing instead of just sitting and listening to a lecture, and that helps them connect with the past in a very real, physical way."

Tablet weaving, the evening's featured craft, is an intricate technique that uses small, flat tablets to twist and interlace threads into narrow woven bands. While archaeological evidence shows tablet weaving was commonly used as trim and decoration on garments, its full range of historical uses remains a subject of debate.

"There are examples of tablet weaving found in Viking graves," Pettengill said. "Historically, we can really only document it as trim and decoration. There's a lot of debate about whether it was used for garters, belts, or straps, because most of what we have left are tiny fragments sewn onto clothing... sometimes only two or three inches long."

According to Pettengill, the fragility of organic materials means that many practical uses of tablet weaving may have degraded over time, leaving modern researchers with only partial evidence. Recreating these techniques today, she noted, plays an im-



Turley photos by Abigail McCoy

The sign from the Castle Nitor Tablet Weaving.



The pre-set Castle Nitor looms that Pettengill brought to teach Tablet Weaving.

portant role in historical understanding.

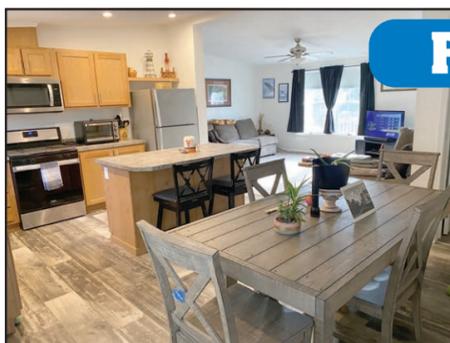
"By practicing this work, you're helping keep these crafts alive," she said. "It also helps archaeologists understand what they're looking at when they dig something up. Is this woven fabric? Is it tablet weaving? There are even tablet-woven edges and hems on fabric, so there's a lot more going on than people realize."

Although this marked the first tablet weaving workshop hosted at the Gaylord Memorial Library, Castle Nitor has previously offered a variety of hands-on history programs at the library. Past classes have included chain mail making, Viking wire weaving, longsword-related textile work, and drop spinning, an event Pettengill recalled fondly

for transforming the library space with yarn strung across the room.

Pettengill, who has been working with textile and historical crafts for most of her life, said her passion grew from childhood sewing projects and later involvement in Renaissance fairs, where she made clothing while her husband worked with chain mail. That lifelong interest eventually led to the formal creation of Castle Nitor.

Castle Nitor will return to the Gaylord Memorial Library with another program in January, though specific details were not immediately available. More information about upcoming classes and events can be found on the organization's website, castlenitor.com, as well as through library program listings.



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EARLY DEADLINES FOR ADS & LEGAL NOTICES

New Year's will bring early deadlines for all ads & legal notices to run in TURLEY PUBLICATIONS the week of Dec. 29, 2025 - Jan. 2, 2026:

Friday, December 26 at 2 PM for January 1 issue

- Country Journal • The Register • Wilbraham-Hampden Times • Agawam Advertiser News

Monday, December 29 at 2 PM for January 1 issue

- Sentinel • The Journal Register • Ware River News • Barre Gazette

Tuesday, December 30 at 2 PM for January 2 issue

- Quaboag Current • Town Reminder • The Holyoke Sun • Chicopee Register

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CLUES ACROSS

1. American automotive titan
4. Tire term
7. Two-year-old sheep
10. Indigenous people of Thailand
11. Anti-Soviet Cold War group
12. Actress de Armas
13. Not moving
15. Cool!
16. Plants of the arum family
19. Connected with touch
21. Pen stain
23. Monetary units
24. School kids' art project
25. Early Bell Canada executive
26. Sword
27. Hates
30. Fixed in one

place

34. Pie ___ mode
35. Moved swiftly on foot
36. Carrier on vehicle
41. A path to get through
45. "Rule, Britannia" composer
46. Spiritual leader
47. Flowing
50. Respectful compliments
54. Cure
55. Soft, lightweight fabric
56. Building material
57. Japanese delicacy
59. A way to cause to be swollen
60. One and only
61. You might get one in summer
62. Wreath

63. Thus far
64. They ___
65. Employee reference number

CLUES DOWN

1. Policemen (French)
2. Toy dog
3. Intestinal condition
4. Muscular weaknesses
5. Helps little firms
6. Alphabetical lists
7. Takes down
8. Facilitates
9. Ethnic people of Ethiopia
13. Engine additive
14. Explorers group
17. Written account
18. Consumed
20. Opposite of first
22. No (slang)
27. Government lawyers
28. NY Giants great

29. Small amount
31. A way to save for your future
32. Fall behind
33. Midway between northeast and east
37. Head pain
38. Wildly popular sport
39. "Princess Diaries" actress Hathaway
40. Boat race
41. About fish
42. Nursemaid
43. Able to be marketed
44. Not as large
47. Parts per billion (abbr.)
48. Paddle
49. Oneness
51. Bitter chemical
52. Not around
53. Very fast airplane
58. Main tributary of the Rhine

Polish National Alliance Lodge 711 hosts Christmas party



Turley Photos by Brendan Rooney

The kids got to do a group photo with Santa.

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

CHICOPEE - The Polish National Alliance Lodge 711 of Chicopee hosted a Children's Holiday Party at the Chicopee Falls Polish Home, comprised of families of all ages, on Dec. 7.

The party comprised attendees such as members of the PNA and their families—enjoying raffle prizes, arts and crafts, games, a hot cocoa station, making holiday cards for elders in nursing homes in Chicopee, along with a classic Polish dinner consisting of fresh kielbasa donated by Blue Seal Kielbasa, homemade kapusta courtesy of PNA Lodge 711 President

Joanne Cebula, and pierogies from an anonymous resident in the city, which garnered unanimous praise from everyone in attendance.

Also among the volunteers were members from the National Honor Society at Minnechaug Regional High School in Wilbraham, along with members of the Wilbraham PNA Lodge 3276, taking part in the festivities.

In addition to families from Chicopee and Wilbraham and Hampden, families from Ludlow and Belcher-town and other surrounding communities also were in attendance at the event.

Reflecting on the overall success of the gathering was Teresa Sherman, financial

secretary, treasurer, and sales representative for the PNA Lodge 711.

"This event is a great way of getting people together, and we look forward to having the party because I have been coming since I was three years old, and it's always been a great memory," Sherman said. "It's also heartwarming to see familiar faces such as my granddaughter, who continues to keep the Polish tradition alive, and it truly means a lot, and she just enjoys volunteering, and we're very happy to have the volunteers from all parts of the community."

Her granddaughter, Alexa, felt it was a full circle moment, as she explained

the times of her childhood, going to the party and helping her grandmother any way she could. Also, what this opportunity means to the Minnechaug kids.

"Being here and helping coordinate all elements showcases what the values of our school truly embody, which are challenge, honor, adapt, understanding and grow, and it's a great platform to help those in need, while keeping the Christmas Spirit alive," she said.

The biggest takeaway of the afternoon was when good ole St. Nick, Santa Claus, entered the room, to everyone in attendance singing "Jingle Bells," before all the children in attendance lined up for a

group photo, and waited patiently for their name to be called.

Mr. Claus then handed out presents, which warmed the hearts of all, before he made it clear he had to get back to the North Pole, as Christmas was only a few weeks away; however, before he left, he discussed the importance of these events along with shedding some light on what some kids are asking for this holiday season.

"They don't really request a whole lot, and the committee puts packages together for them, along with my elves' supervision, and I want to add that I have never met more polite and engaging young people, and it's just an honor

for me to come down from the North Pole every year to do this," he said. "I also want to add that this partnership all started with the Chicopee Rotary Club, and we were honored to give back, and I just want to note that being here gives me a feeling of self-worth."

The event was a resounding success, exemplifying what the true meaning of the holidays entails: a sense of community, giving back, and keeping societal and family traditions alive and well in an ever-changing reality.



Minnechaug NHS Students Alexa Sherman and Isabella Strand helping distribute food to those in attendance



The Christmas Tree setup.



From the left, Isabella Strand, Alexa Sherman, Alyssa Nogueira, Aezlin Rost, Teresa Sherman (Red, sitting) and PNA Lodge 711 President Joanne Cebula (white sweater) in a group photo.



The Minnechaug Regional High School NHS Students volunteered at the event. From the left, Allison Demetri, Caroline Maloni, Alexa Sherman and Tyler Jaslanek.



People gather and wait in line for the Polish delicacies.