

TOWN Reminder

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COA celebrates country's anniversary with luncheon

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – The Council on Aging celebrated the country's 250th anniversary with a summer luncheon on campus at their senior center on 45 Dayton Street. Attendees piled into the building to enjoy a meal of barbecue chicken, baked beans, coleslaw and cornbread complete with musical entertainment supplied by "The Dancing Machine" DJ Louie. Every

part of the meal served during the event was made by on-site staff, credited by Dumas to be the work of building chef Harold "right down to the apple pie dessert."

"Our travel club has been gracious to sponsor our summer concert series," Dumas said. "We came up with the idea of making the one in July here our 250th themed event."

Dumas stated he began his position back in November 2205, where was informed about the traditional summer concert series. With a proud tradition of hosting "different

bands and events," the program coordinator stated the events were a way to offer a fun way to shake things up during the season.

"This is a way for folks to come in and enjoy themselves and do something a little different," Dumas said. "We have two more concerts. We have one in August and one in September. Those will both have full bands as well."

The program coordinator mentioned the musical talent during the event was a beloved act by the locals highly received by "most of the se-

niors." He praised the DJ and said the residents "love dancing to his music."

"He played for us back about two months ago at Buttery Brook Park when we had a grand reopening of the park after some rehabilitation to it," Dumas said. "He did a great job...the crowds just love him. He's just a really great time."

The series is a way to uphold a diverse amount of different events and program-

Please see **LUNCHEON**, page 11



Meals were served with a smile on-site.



The populated event welcomed participants with a hearty barbecue meal provided by on-site staff.

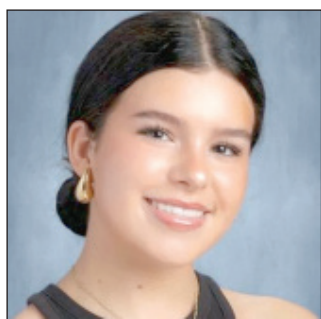
Turley photos by Ben Hernandez

Sinnot Scholarship awarded to SHHS students

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – The Better Business Bureau awarded the Barbara J. Sinnott Scholarship to South Hadley High School student Isabella Sotiropoulos. CEO and President Lisa Swanson described her late predecessor, Sinnott, as an "ethical leader" and the scholarship as a way to "inspire the next generation of ethical leaders."

"Each selected student demonstrates a remarkable commitment to ethical behavior, strong leadership and community engagement qualities that really reflect the BBB's mission of advancing trust in the marketplace and beyond," Swanson said.



Submitted photos

Isabella Sotiropoulos was among a handful of scholarship recipients awarded by the Better Business Bureau.

Swanson stated the student applicants were judged on their integrity, character, community service, as well as a submitted essay and a letter of recommendation. Sotiropoulos' winning essay covered leadership and



The scholarship is awarded in memory of late Better Business Bureau CEO Barbara J. Sinnott, a former Worcester City Councilor and Vice Mayor.

community service as she recounted her history.

Born in Costa Rica and raised in Massachusetts, Sotiropoulos described how important her connection is to her Costa Rican and Greek heritage, as well as how this

cultural navigation informed her ability to "adapt, listen and appreciate perspectives beyond her own."

"Her mother had left the country she loved to build a life here in the United States," Swanson said. "That taught her resilience is not really just enduring hardship but continuing to move forward with strength, sacrifice and care for others."

Soteropoulos' community work was also a deciding factor. As an officer with non-profit organization Best Buddies, she works with students with intellectual and developmental disabilities to ensure they feel "included, celebrated and genuinely supported."

Please see **SCHOLARSHIP**, page 11

First phase of West Street Building's renovations underway

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

GRANBY – West Street School renovations are underway. As the elementary school gets new life as a "one-stop" municipal building for local government services, Town Administrator Ron Aponte commented on the project's status.

"They're making some good programs," Aponte said. "Of course, with any large construction renovation project, there's some glitches and surprises but we think, for the most part, the bigger surprises are behind us."

The town administrator

discussed how "receptive" the construction company was in addressing concerns and stated the renovation was "pretty much" still on schedule and on budget. The goal is to finish preliminary work in time for a target opening date in December.

Currently, the building is still under construction. Aponte reported the location is still concerned a hard-hat area, complete with a list of strict requirements for permitted entry. The site is still off limits to the general public, a policy reinforced by large industrial No Trespass-

Please see **PHASE**, page 12

Rep. Seth Markey, Sen. Ed Moulton campaign for U.S. Senate seat



Incumbent Sen. Ed Markey's supporters standing in unison holding signs as cars drive by as well.

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

CHICOPEE – The race for the Senate is on, and last Wednesday, July 8, 79-year-old incumbent Sen. Ed Markey (D) took the stage in the first televised debate against challenger 47-year-old Rep. Seth Moulton (D-MA-06), right here in Western Mass.

This was the 1st official debate between the candidates, as the state primary election fast approaches, on Sept. 1, with early voting beginning on Aug. 22.

The debate was included panelist from multiple local media outlets.

Markey, the incumbent, is seeking another six-year term. He was first elected to

the House of Representatives in 1976 and has served in the Senate since 2013. If victorious, Markey confessed this would be his last year running for re-election.

"I need one more term to finish the agenda, this progressive agenda," Markey stated. "And then I will step down. But we need to complete the agenda. We need Medicare For All, we need a green new deal, we need to make sure that we are fighting for every family who is out there who justifiably feels that they have been left behind."

Moulton argued it's time for a new generation of Democratic leadership.

Please see **SENATE**, page 6



Moulton supporters standing in unison holding signs as cars drive by.

Turley Photos by Brendan Rooney

Keeping seniors safe in the heat

By Quinn Suomala
Correspondent

With summer time in full swing, already communities have been facing record temperatures. It is important to keep in mind key safety tips to keep seniors safe in the heat.

High temperatures lead to an increased risk for conditions like heat stroke and heat exhaustion.

Seniors are especially at risk for heat stroke due to a decrease in the body’s ability to regulate temperature as they age.

Signs to watch out for for heat stroke include: a body temperature of 104 degrees Fahrenheit, a change in mental state (including confusion, delirium, or irritability), a change in sweating pattern, nausea, flushed skin, rapid heart rate or breathing, and a headache.

If you notice any of these signs, call for medical assistance and then get the person inside or into shade, remove excess clothes and take action to cool them down immediately.

Senior centers do their best to remind elders of steps

to take for prevention. “We encourage them to turn their air conditioners on, even despite the costs, and to drink lots of water,” Executive Director of the Agawam Senior Center Cynthia Sullivan said.

Senior centers like Agawam’s also have people on staff who keep an eye on seniors who are visiting.

“We’re always checking up on people to see how they’re doing,” Sullivan said. “We see many of the people here quite often, so we know when they don’t look okay.”

If people do want to get outside in the heat, it is best they do so in the early morning or later in the evening, when the sun is not at its peak. Also, activities should be kept to low impact to prevent over exertion.

Additionally, many senior centers are open as cooling centers for the public during heat waves. The Agawam Senior Center, the Holyoke Senior Center, the RiverMills Senior Center and the Wilbraham Senior Center are just some of the options available.

These senior centers also offer a variety of activities to

help keep seniors entertained while also beating the heat.

The Agawam Senior Center, for example, has a performance by the band Solar Eclipse on July 14 at 5:30 p.m. (with free ice cream included) and Bunko (a dice game) on July 21.

The Holyoke Senior Center is offering Tai Chi lessons on Thursdays from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. from now through Sept. 3.

For those interested, the RiverMills Senior Center is also offering an ice cream social on July 17 at 1:30p.m. They also have a visit from Paul Revere on July 28 at 2 p.m.

In addition to these activities, the senior centers also offer meals for people to come in, purchase and enjoy.

“Come in and eat, our meals are \$4,” Sullivan said. “There is no need to turn on your stove or oven and make your house warmer.”

The senior centers always welcome people to come by while they are open and take advantage of their activities and air conditioning. Utilizing them is a great way to beat the heat and have some fun.

Fireworks display kicks off fair

BELCHERTOWN – A beloved community tradition is coming back. The Belchertown Recreation Department, with support from other town departments, will bring fireworks back to town on Thursday, Sept. 24, at the Chestnut Hill Community School Recreation Area. The event will kick off Fair Weekend and celebrate America’s 250th anniversary.

The evening will bring the community together for food trucks, family activities, and a fireworks show to close out the night. Residents and neighbors from surrounding communities are invited to attend. The celebration is planned in conjunction with the nationwide Semi-quincentennial commemoration

marking 250 years of American independence.

The fireworks display returns after many years without one, reviving a September tradition that longtime residents will remember.

“We’re thrilled to bring this celebration back to the community,” said Kyle Thibeault, Director of the Belchertown Recreation Department. “This is an event built by the community, for the community, and we can’t make it happen without the support of our residents and local businesses.”

The event is funded entirely through donations and sponsorships from local businesses and community members. Fundraising is already well under way, and

the Recreation Department is continuing to seek support to bring the celebration to life.

How to help: Residents may donate any amount, and businesses interested in sponsorship opportunities can find full details, including sponsorship levels and benefits, on the town website at www.belchertown.org/fireworks.

Sponsorship levels range from Bronze (\$500–\$999) through Platinum (\$5,000+), with benefits including banner placement, website recognition, and social media spotlights. Businesses interested in a customized sponsorship opportunity are encouraged to reach out through the contact information provided on the town website.

Cooper’s Gifts, Apparel, Home accepting school supply, food donations

AGAWAM – For a limited time, Cooper’s Gifts, Apparel, Home of Agawam, Mass., is accepting non-perishable food and school supplies donations for the Westover Galaxy Community Council.

The Westover Galaxy Community Council (WGCC) needs non-perishable food and educational items for back-to-school season, to help the families of Westover. Items will be collected at Cooper’s now through July 31. Each item donated earns donors one raffle ticket to be used on any of the prizes featured in Cooper’s display of a dozen United States-made items.

“We will swap you a raffle entry for every item that you donate!” said Kate Gourde, owner of Cooper’s Gifts, Apparel, Home. “Many of our favorite vendors have been very generous in supplying some fantastic prizes, all made right here in the USA,” said Gourde. “If customers would like to purchase entries for the raffle, tickets are \$1 each, or 6 tickets for \$5.

All donations and ticket sales go directly to the charity.”

“We are thrilled to offer the WGCC prize, too, which was kindly provided by their organization” continued Gourde. “It’s two tickets to the 2027 Great New England Air Show with a VIP experience! Enjoy shaded seating with premium views, which is guaranteed to be an unforgettable day, with up-close, exclusive looks at remarkable aircrafts.”

The WGCC is comprised of veterans, local businesspeople and other citizens who want to support the men, women and mission of Westover Air Reserve Base (WARB), a 501(c)(3) charitable organization formed in 1989 and run 100% by volunteers.

“We have held this raffle for years; our customers are very supportive and like to take care of our local heroes and their families,” explained Gourde. “Especially for people west of the river, it’s easier to bring donations here, and we are open seven days

of the week,” said Gourde.

Items may be brought to the shop anytime during the month of July. Cooper’s is located at 161 Main St., Agawam, Mass., and is open daily 10am-5pm, Saturdays 10am-4pm and Sundays 12-4pm.

“This WGCC is also our July Round-Up charity, so it’s the perfect time to spread the word about their mission and really help them out,” reaffirmed Gourde.

Each month Gourde selects a local charity to receive the profits of the store’s Round-Up Program, through which customers are invited to round up their purchase total to the nearest dollar amount. Gourde will then match 50% of the total collected. The program has donated more than \$68,000 to local organizations since its inception in 2014. More information on the Round Up program and how to nominate a charity may be found on Cooper’s website www.coopersgifts.com/round-up/.

Planning for Quabbin Days underway

BELCHERTOWN – The Friends of Quabbin are encouraging municipalities, historical societies, museums, libraries, conservation organizations, arts groups, farms, businesses, and community organizations throughout the Quabbin Region to begin planning for Quabbin Days 2026 scheduled for Oct. 9 to 12 (www.QuabbinDays.org).

Quabbin Days is a regional initiative, coordinated by the Friends, to encourage residents and visitors to explore the twelve communities of the Quabbin Region through a variety of local events, programs, exhibits, tours, performances, outdoor activities, and community gatherings.

“We know that many or-

ganizations begin planning their fall schedules months in advance,” said Ed Comeau of the Friends of Quabbin. “We want to give everyone enough lead time to consider how they would like to participate and to explore opportunities to work together.”

The inaugural Quabbin Days celebration in 2025 brought together organizations from across the region and demonstrated the value of a shared regional effort through historical programs, museum exhibits, art shows, living-history demonstrations, and much more.

Participation can take many forms. Organizations may create new programs specifically for Quabbin Days

or designate existing activities taking place during the October holiday weekend as part of the celebration. Event information will be added to the Quabbin Days website as plans are finalized, and events can be submitted for the calendar at www.QuabbinDays.org/contact.

A key component of the initiative is the Quabbin Trail, a self-guided route connecting the twelve watershed communities.

By linking attractions, historic sites, museums, natural areas, farms, and local businesses, the trail encourages visitors to explore the region while supporting individual communities and organizations.

Granby Library hosting photograph event

GRANBY – On Thursday, July 30 from 5 to 7 p.m. Granby Free Public Library will host “Photographing and Capturing the Beauty of Flowers and Gardens.”

If you love flowers, plants, and gardens, chances are you love taking pictures of them too.

How do you elevate your flower and plant photos from nice snapshots to gorgeous

images that you’ll treasure for years to come? Come learn a set of simple techniques for taking stunning flower and garden photos.

All cameras, phones, and experience levels are welcome! You’ll have a chance to try your new skills as we photograph real flowers and experiment with backgrounds, small lights, reflectors, diffusers, Lensball,

special effect attachments for your phone, and more. You’ll be amazed at the beautiful images you can create!

This workshop is led by Massachusetts-based event, lifestyle, and branding photographer, Joan Celebi. Space is limited, so please contact the library to sign up. Sponsored by the Friends of the Granby Free Public Library.

Please fill out survey for Cultural Council

SOUTH HADLEY – The South Hadley Cultural Council wants to hear from residents. The council seeks input to develop community priorities. Your response will influence guideline for grants for future local cultural programs. To take the survey, go to <https://tinyurl.com/shcc-survey>.

Mail voting postcards available

SOUTH HADLEY – Vote early by mail in all 2026 elections. No excuse is required. Applications will be mailed 45 days before each statewide election. Sign it and mail it back. Choosing “all elections” covers you for all of 2026. Primaries: Choose your party ballot if unenrolled. The deadline for the state primary/special town election is Aug. 25 at 5 p.m.

Last call for yard sale registrations

BELCHERTOWN – The Third Annual Belchertown Community Yard Sale returns Friday, July 31 through Sunday, Aug. 2, bringing one of the Pioneer Valley’s biggest summer weekends back to Belchertown.

Organizers are inviting vendors, small businesses, crafters, artists, collectors, makers, hobbyists, and local sellers to join the event at the Town Fields, located at 60 State Street in Belchertown. The Town Fields will serve as the central hub for the weekend, welcoming shoppers from across the region while yard sales take place throughout town.

This is an opportunity for local vendors and sellers to get in front of thousands

of shoppers, make money, connect with the community, and be part of a growing regional event that supports a meaningful cause.

Household registration is also entering its final stretch. Residents who would like to host a yard sale at their home must register by July 24 to be included on the official event map.

The Belchertown Community Yard Sale has grown into a major summer tradition, drawing shoppers from Belchertown and surrounding communities throughout the Pioneer Valley. This year’s event will once again combine treasure hunting, local shopping, community connection, and nonprofit support.

Proceeds from the event will benefit this year’s nonprofit beneficiary, the Clapp Memorial Library. By participating, vendors, households, and shoppers are helping support one of Belchertown’s most important community resources.

Whether you are cleaning out your garage, selling handmade goods, promoting your small business, or looking to reach new customers, this is a weekend to be part of.

Vendor spaces at the Town Fields are available now. Household registrations close July 24.

For registration information, event updates, and details, visit: BelchertownYardSale.com

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Getting your photos off your hard drive and into the world

BELCHERTOWN – Many photographers have thousands of images stored on hard drives that are rarely seen beyond a computer screen. Yet a photograph often reaches its full potential when it is printed, framed, displayed, or shared with others.

The Quabbin Photo Group (QPG) will present “Getting Your Photos Off Your Hard Drive and Into the World” on Monday, July 27, at 7 p.m. at the Belchertown Recreation Department, 66 State Street, Belchertown. The program is free and open to photographers of all experience levels.

The evening’s presenter, Kelly Ackerman, Vice President of Strategic Growth & Development for Frame It Easy, will discuss practical considerations for presenting photography. Drawing on more than 20 years of experience in the custom framing industry, Ackerman will share ideas and techniques to help photographers showcase their work, whether for their homes, exhibitions, gifts, galleries, or sales.

Topics will include select-

ing print materials, choosing framing and matting options, understanding paper choices, planning single- and multi-image displays, and preparing photographs for presentation. Ackerman will also discuss considerations for photographers who exhibit or sell their work, along with ways to simplify the printing, framing, and fulfillment process.

“For many photographers, the joy is in taking the photo, said QPG Program Chair Ed Comeau. “Whether it is planning for the shoot, the experience of being out in nature, or the post-production editing that go into an image. Printing a well-crafted nature photograph, whether is wildlife or landscape, provides an opportunity to share nature’s beauty as seen by the photographer through the lens of a camera.”

Before joining Frame It Easy, Ackerman spent more than two decades working in her family’s picture framing business in Cincinnati, Ohio. Her experience spans both traditional custom framing and modern online printing and framing services, providing

photographers with practical insights into today’s display options.

Whether you’re looking to decorate your home, prepare for your first exhibit, or begin selling your photography, this presentation offers practical guidance for turning digital images into finished pieces that can be enjoyed and shared.

The Quabbin Photo Group welcomes photographers of all skill levels and interests. Meetings are open to the public, and new members and guests are always welcome.

The Quabbin Photo Group (QuabbinPhotoGroup.com) is a community of photographers based in Belchertown with a shared interest in nature, wildlife, and landscape photography, particularly within the Quabbin Reservoir region. The group hosts regular meetings, guest speakers, and workshops designed to help photographers of all experience levels improve their skills, share their work, and connect with others who appreciate the natural environment.

Lions Club holding meatball sub sale

BELCHERTOWN – Skip the prep and skip the clean-up. Let us prepare lunch for you this coming Saturday, when the Belchertown Lions Club holds its July Sub Sale.

As always, we will be set up on the grounds of the Belchertown United Church of Christ on Park St. and will begin serving 12-inch meatball subs with sauce and mozzarella, a bag of chips, and a beverage shortly after 10 a.m., all for the same low price of \$10.

Come on out and support our Lions Club’s fundraising efforts—knowing that all proceeds will support our charities close to home.



St. Francis seeks donations for upcoming tag sale

BELCHERTOWN – The St Francis Parish Giant Tag Sale team invites the community to make donations to this annual event on Aug. 22. The team will gratefully accept most donated items.

As you begin sorting, please be aware that the following donated items will be appreciated: bed and table linens, new dust-free candles, craft items, hardware, kitchenware, luggage, backpacks, handbags, children’s clothes up to size 2T only, children’s books, small working appliances, working lamps, toys, pictures, frames, holiday decorations, hand tools, yard tools, jewelry, shoes, boots, sporting goods, baby gear, small but not-upholstered furniture, knick-knacks, and collectibles. The team politely requests that donors clear all donated items of storage dust, bugs, mold, and critter residue.

Unfortunately, the following items cannot be accepted: partially used dusty candles, any clothing larger than size 2T, cookbooks or non-children books, bed pillows, baby cribs, car seats, computers, monitors, 8-track or cassette or VHS tapes, skis, exercise bikes, treadmills, gas grills, propane tanks, hazardous materials, mattresses, clothes hangers, medical equipment, bed pillows, and any large furniture items.

The proceeds from this annual effort are earmarked for the parish’s Living Our Faith, Building Our Future Capital Campaign in support of the much-needed building of the proposed St. Francis of Assisi Parish Center on the grounds of the Jabish Street campus.

This year, the Tag Sale Team will only accept donations for a ten-day period – Aug. 7 to 16 only. Donations will be accepted Monday to Saturday from 9 am to 7 pm with Sunday donations only accepted noon to 5 p.m. Please do not leave donations outside the Pine Room door when a team member is not there to receive them.

The team is grateful for the continuing, generous support of our Belchertown community.



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SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor

Should I Claim Spouse Benefits Now, or my Own SS Benefit?

Dear Rusty:
I am writing to get advice on the optimal time to sign up for Social Security benefits.
I am a 64-year-old female and my birthdate is August 1961. My husband is already taking his SS benefits, so I have also wondered if it be advisable to take spousal benefits or full benefits.

Signed:
Wondering Spouse

Dear Wondering:
If you take your Social Security benefits at age 64, they will be permanently reduced.
And, for information, you cannot take only your spousal benefit; you must take your own SS retirement benefit whenever you claim and, if you are entitled to more as your husband's spouse, you will also get a "spousal boost" to bring your monthly payment up to what you are entitled to as a spouse.
If you claim at any time before your SS Full Retirement Age of 67, both your own SS retirement amount and your spousal boost amount will be actuarially reduced for claiming early.
All of which means that claiming before your FRA (e.g., at 64) will mean your monthly benefit will be less than 50% of your husband's monthly FRA amount.
Now, for clarity, it's important to know how spouse benefits are calculated: if your FRA entitlement is less than 50% of your husband's FRA entitlement, then you will get a "spousal boost" added to your own SS retirement amount.
Note that FRA amounts are always used to calculate spousal amounts, regardless of the age at which benefits are claimed. If your husband waited until age 70 to get a higher monthly benefit or even if he claimed before his FRA, your

spousal amount would still be based on his FRA entitlement. If your FRA benefit is less than half of his FRA entitlement, you will get a spousal boost. If not, you won't.

Assuming you will be entitled to a "spousal boost," the decision you must make is whether to claim early (e.g., now at 64) or wait until you are 67 to get your maximum amount as your husband's spouse. The factors to consider are these:

Are you still working? If so, claiming before FRA means you will be subject to an annual earnings limit until you reach FRA. The earnings limit for early filers in 2026 is \$24,480 and, if that is exceeded, SS will take away benefits of \$1 for every \$2 you are over the limit (the limit increases a bit yearly).

If you substantially exceed the earnings limit by working, you may even be temporarily ineligible for SS benefits until you either reach your FRA or stop working full time.

Do you expect your husband to predecease you? If so, then your benefit as a widow will be 100% of the larger amount he is collecting when he passes provided when that occurs you've reached your FRA and your own SS retirement is less.

Depending on timing, that may mean that taking a reduced spouse benefit now, which will be replaced by your larger widow benefit later, is a logical choice.

What is your own life expectancy? If you have health issues or have other reasons to believe you will not achieve "average" life expectancy average is about 87 for a woman your current age, then claiming your Social Security benefits early is

Please see **SECURITY**, page 5

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

New override headed for voters

Dear Editor:
On July 14, the South Hadley Selectboard voted 4-1 to put a question on the September 1st ballot asking Town voters to approve a \$3.5 million override. The one "No" vote was Kevin Hennessey who ran for office saying he didn't support an override. Priscilla Marion, on the other hand, who ran for office stating publicly that she was not in favor of an override; voted "Yes." Talk about "bait and switch". In the last election, 2,991 South Hadley voters, including my wife and I voted for her because she was against an override. What a disappointment. The selectboard appears to be "doing their own thing" and ignoring the will of the voters. Maybe when these selectboard members come up for reelection, they will be voted out of office. Some members of the selectboard have expressed "regrets" for pushing for the \$6 million and \$9 million overrides in the past,

both of which were voted down. That's just a little too late as the selectboard, in my opinion, has lost a lot of credibility with the voters. More cuts are needed to balance the budget for the next three years. With an average shortfall of \$1.2 million over the next 3 years, the Town needs to cut spending. A good place to start is with the School Department which has proposed spending \$300,000 to add 4 additional staff positions. These positions should not be filled. It just adds to the general overhead of the School Department. I don't know if the Town will resurrect the "override calculator" reflecting the \$3.5 million override, but I hope they do. This way, each property owner will be able to see the impact of this proposed override on their tax bills. I am a "No" vote for this override, and I urge all taxpayers, especially seniors, to vote this override down.
Michael J. Wozniak

An endless supply of flowers for the windowsill

I must admit that I feel unmotivated in the flower garden this summer. It took me forever to sow my seeds, and even longer to install the resulting plants.

The seedlings finally went into the ground a good two weeks after Memorial Day (gasp!) but they are making up for lost time despite my bad attitude! Just last week the first bouquet graced the kitchen windowsill.

In a few weeks I will have a collection of different vases filled with flowers in that very spot; it's something I look forward to doing every summer. But if I am going to have flowers to fill the vases, I have to keep up with maintenance. It's not enough to sit back and watch them grow.

Here is some great advice worth repeating that will help to keep summer annuals looking their best.

Deadhead

Most annuals will continue to bloom abundantly if they are deadheaded on a regular basis. Deadheading is an entertaining term used to define the removal of spent flowers.

You see, a plant produces flowers for one purpose: to survive. Once a flower has been pollinated it will produce seed, seed that will grow future plants.

If a plant has produced enough flowers that have gone to seed it will consider its job to be done, flower production will cease and it will begin to decline.

By deadheading, we keep the plant in reproductive mode, in other words, in flower! When you remove dying blossoms, make sure to pinch off the entire flower, not just the petals, or it will do

that are well fertilized at planting time begin to have issues. If foliage is pale and flower production is nil, pull back the bark mulch and sprinkle some organic fertilizer granules at the base of each plant.

Cultivate gently and water in.

You can also use a water soluble liquid fertilizer every couple of weeks.

If going natural is your cup of tea, make some!

Compost or manure tea has long been used to keep growth lush. Steep a burlap bag of either compost or aged manure in a large trash bucket filled with water and use as needed. Smaller batches can be made right in a watering can.

Likewise, there are numerous blends of seaweed and fish emulsion on the market that can be watered in or used as a foliar feed.

Water, water, water

If Mother Nature fails to provide at least an inch of rain each week, then unfortunately we must make up the difference. It is so easy to forget to perform this very obvious maintenance task, especially when we are busy doing other things.

If we are negligent often enough, however, our plants will suffer.

Sometimes pale green foliage is a nitrogen deficiency from simply a lack of water. When you water the garden, remember to do so in the early morning, if possible, to avoid evaporation.

Please see **GARDEN**, page 5



no good. Include the stem as well to keep the plant tidy.

Petunias, marigolds, zinnias and salvia, among others, are examples of plants that require regular deadheading to look their best throughout the growing season.

Shear them back to encourage new growth

Some annuals start to get a leggy appearance about now. Others may have brown tips. These plants require more drastic measures to bring back their youthful good looks.

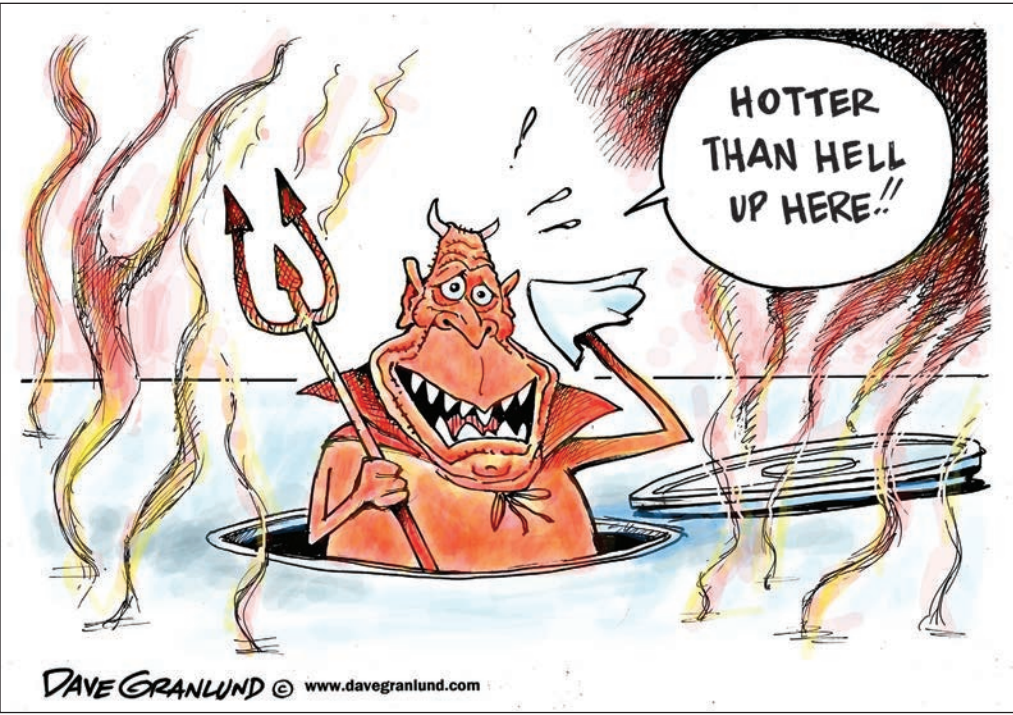
Give them a good haircut. Simply look within the plant and find healthy, green growth. Cut calendulas, pansies and snapdragon back to that point.

Alyssum or lobelia can often be sheared to within inches of the ground.

Don't worry; they won't look bad for long! You can jump start regrowth with a bit of liquid fertilizer.

Feed your plants

Occasionally, even plants



My daughter, Paula, saw a black and white warbler and as the name implies it has black and white feathers.

The black and white warbler is easy to spot and easy to recognize. Its former name was the black and white creeper. Like the white-breasted and red-breasted nuthatches and the brown creeper, it climbs about on the trunks and major limbs of trees seeking insects in the bark crevices. It often feeds low, and nests even lower, usually on the ground.

This warbler inhabits forests, woodlands, shrubs, Savannas, and thickets from Alaska and the north, California, eastern Canada, Florida, Great Lakes, mid Atlantic, New England, northwest, Plains, Rocky Mountains, southeast, southwest, Texas and Western Canada.

Spring migration begins rather early and takes place mainly at night. Migration is spread over a lengthy period in both spring and fall.

The sexes are similar and are about 4.3 to 5.1 inches long. The black and white warbler feather pattern is stripes, white central crown stripe and black streaks on back and sides.

The adult male has black



Black and white warbler

throat and cheeks and the female and young paler or whitish there.

Their song is a thin, high-pitched, monotonous "weezy-weezy-weezy-weezy" like a squeaky wheelbarrow. The call is a chirp or chip.

The black and white warbler breeds in mature or second-growth forests, deciduous and mixed. Males arrive on breeding grounds in late April, before the females.

During courtship, a male chases female, with much

singing and fluttering. The female lays five creamy white eggs flecked with brown in a cup shaped nest on the ground or less than two feet above under dead leaves or limbs or against a shrub or tree. They are commonly parasitized by cowbirds.

Both parents feed the young and the young leave the nest in eight to 12 days after hatching. The young are able to fly well.

Adapted to creeping along limbs and on tree trunks to feed, they forage on dormant insects from tree trunks and branches in early spring. They switch body from side to side at each hop while foraging. Sometimes, they fly out after insects in the air.

They eats primarily insects. It feeds on a wide variety of caterpillars including those of spongy moth, beetles including bark beetles, click beetles, and wood borers, ants, flies, bugs, leafhoppers, aphids and other insects, spiders and daddy longlegs.

Massachusetts Audubon sightings

Unusual bird sightings reported in late June to the

Please see **BACKYARD**, 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.

TOWN Reminder

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Tykes Tuesday program returns to Holyoke Mall

HOLYOKE – Summer is just around the corner and that means Tykes Tuesday is back for free family fun at Holyoke Mall Tuesday mornings from July 7 through Aug. 18.

Tykes Tuesday features seven weeks of free family activities and exclusive discounts on Tuesdays starting at 11 a.m. on the lower level in Macy’s Court. The kids’ program is free, open to the public, and is best suited for children ages 12 and under.

Tykes Tuesday Schedule:
July 7: The Science of Suds with CT Science Center
July 14: Piti Theatre’s Story Wizards (3:00pm-4:00pm)
July 21: Celebrate Christmas in July with Mrs. Claus, Face Painting and More
July 27: Sing and Learn with Something Royal Party Co. & Pickleball 101 Class for Kids 7+ (at Pickleball

Kingdom)
August 4: Wildlife on Wheels with Forest Park Zoo
August 11: Kimberly’s Pocket Circus
August 18: Nature Time with Mass Audubon and Face Painting with Clowntique

Please note the time change for the event on July 14. Families are encouraged to pre-register at <https://www.holyokemall.com/tykes-tuesday-2026/>. Registration is required for the Pickleball 101 class and is for children 7 and older. The event that week will be held inside and in the common area outside of Pickleball Kingdom, on the lower level, near JCPenney.

More information about Holyoke Mall stores, restaurants, and entertainment venues, can be found at [Holyoke-mall.com](https://www.holyokemall.com). Follow and share your stories at the center on Facebook and Instagram.

BACKYARD from page 4

Massachusetts Audubon Society included swallow-tailed kites in Mashpee, a Mississippi kite in Harwich and a Franklin’s gull and two royal terns in Provincetown.

Central Massachusetts sightings in the Ware River watershed included: a great blue heron, belted kingfisher, yellow-bellied sapsucker, two northern flickers, two eastern wood pewees, two alder flycatchers, two least flycatchers, three eastern Phoebe’s, four great crested flycatchers and two eastern kingbirds, a yellow-throated vireo, a blue-headed vireo, six warbling vireos, 110 red-eyed vireos, a common raven, two red-breasted nuthatches, two house wrens an eastern bluebird, 43 veery, a

hermit thrush, a wood thrush, 34 gray catbirds and four cedar waxwings.

Also reported were a blue-winged warbler, four yellow warblers, seven chestnut sided warblers,, three black-throated warblers, three green warblers, a Blackburnian warbler, seven pine warbles, on prairie warbler, three black and white warblers; two redstarts, 56 ovenbirds, 28 yellow-throated warblers, a Canada warbler, nine scarlet tanagers, six eastern towhees, a field sparrow, three swamp sparrow, a rose-breasted grosbeak, four indigo buntings, two bobolinks and three red crossbills..

People may report a bird sighting by emailing edowne@turley.com or calling or texting 774-262-5882.

GARDEN from page 4

Early evening is another good option, but try to get the job done with enough time for the foliage to dry before darkness sets in.

Deep waterings twice a week are far better than numerous quick showers. The former will promote deep, penetrating roots and future drought tolerance.

Well-watered, well-fed and well-groomed annuals will reward you with beautiful bountiful blossoms for another two months or more

– well worth the effort for vases of flowers on the windowsill!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 34 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.

SECURITY from page 4

likely a prudent choice.
So, as you can see, you must evaluate your personal circumstances to make this decision. Although we aren’t able to say exactly when you should claim your SS benefits, I hope this provides the information you need to make an informed decision.

The Association Mature Citizens Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental en-

tity. 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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Lions Club seeks sponsorship for car show event

BELCHERTOWN – In an effort to defray the costs (trophies, permits, entertainment, flyer printing, and distribution, etc.), the Belchertown Lions Club is appealing to our local businesses to have an 18” x 24” weather-resistant sign with ground stake custom-printed and prominently displayed on the Town Common during the event on Aug. 8. We will handle the set-up design and printing for a donation of \$100. All proceeds from this year’s car show will stay locally as we support our

Senior Center, Fuel Assistance Programs, Veterans’ Organizations, Scouting America, Girl Scouts, Relay For Life, Aaron’s Day, local Food Pantries, Belchertown Little League, College and Continuing Ed. Scholarships for seniors at BHS and Pathfinder, as well as emergency requests regarding sight and hearing concerns.

Alternately, or in addition to the sponsor sign, businesses can opt to submit an item or gift certificate in any amount to be displayed for a Pick-A-

Prize raffle -- where attendees can purchase a sheet of 25 tickets...and place as many of their tickets into whichever gift bags they desire.

If you are the owner or representative of a local business and would like to sponsor a ground sign, kindly email Lion Mike Mathras at mmathras@charter.net, and you will promptly receive the necessary information to do so.

If you would like to donate a gift certificate or prize for our raffle table, please get in touch with Barb Greene at

br123199@charter.net

As you consider your donation, please keep in mind that all profits from the sale of food, raffle tickets, and sponsor signage at this event will go directly to the local charities mentioned above.

Stay tuned for upcoming information regarding the “Cruisin’ the Common” Car Show in the Sentinel, by visiting our website at www.belchertownlionsclub.com, or by checking out our Facebook page: Belchertown Lions Club.

Agawam Community Artists and Artisans ‘Call for Art’

AGAWAM – Agawam Community Artists and Artisans (ACAA) is inviting artists and artisans to participate in its Sixth Annual Pioneer Valley Art Festival.

The Art Festival will be held on Friday, Aug. 21, and Saturday, Aug. 22 at the Polish American Club in Feeding Hills. Show hours are from 2 to 8 p.m. on Friday, and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday.

The ACAA is encourag-

ing artists, artisans, and writers to submit their work for review. Among the artistic mediums included are watercolor, acrylic, oil, mixed media, sculpture, photography, ceramic, stained glass, wood, fashion, textile, and jewelry.

All work must be original and handmade by the artist or artisan, of professional quality. Prints and giclees will be accepted. No kits, food, soap, candles, or AI-generated

work will be accepted.

Tent space is available on the paved parking lot for \$50.

Students from any area high school are accepted free of charge, and must have a tent set up.

The Pioneer Valley Art Festival is highly promoted through local TV stations; Agawam Media Channel 15 and 1074HD; Agawam Cultural Council website; newspapers; town forums;

Mailchimp; the ACAA website, www.agawamarts.com; and the ACAA Facebook page, that has over 850 followers.

The week before the festival, there will be over 20 street signs placed around Agawam.

Further information, including registration forms, can be obtained by contacting Ceil Rossi at email: tocare-free2@hotmail.com.

Duglass exhibit on display through July 23

HOLYOKE – Frederick Douglass: Advocate for Equality, is now available for view at the Holyoke Public Library through Thursday, July 23.

This 6-panel exhibition from the Gilder Lehrman Institute explores Douglass’s epic life from 1818 to 1895, examining his escape from slavery, his work as an abolitionist, and his relentless fight for equality for all individuals during the Jim Crow era.

Groups and individuals welcome to view during all Library hours

Presented in recognition of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and its ongoing promise.

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Holyoke Elks launch community fundraising initiative

HOLYOKE – Elks Lodge member Sal Canata issued the following press release/ statement regarding the initiative to raise money for the Elks Lodge:

If you’ve lived in the Greater Holyoke area for any length of time, chances are the Holyoke Elks Lodge has been part of your life.

Perhaps you attended a wedding, celebrated a retirement, enjoyed a birthday party, gathered with family following a funeral, attended a Jack and Jill, or participated in one of the many charitable fundraisers hosted at the Lodge. Maybe you’ve enjoyed live music, played BINGO, tested your knowledge at trivia night, joined us for Burger Night, used the golf simulators, or attended one of the many community events held throughout the year.

If you’re a soccer parent, your child may have played on the Elks soccer field, which the Lodge has proudly made available to local

soccer clubs for years. Community organizations such as the Holyoke St. Patrick’s Parade Committee and Alcoholics Anonymous have used the Lodge as a meeting and event space. Organizations including Magic For Maddie have also used our facility as a gathering place before sponsoring road races, charity walks, and fundraising events at the Ashley Reservoir.

And if you’ve ever enjoyed a walk around the Ashley Reservoir, there is a good chance you’ve parked in the Holyoke Elks parking lot.

For generations, the Holyoke Elks Lodge has quietly served the Greater Holyoke community in ways that extend far beyond our membership. Today, we are asking the community to help us continue that tradition.

Several years ago, the City of Holyoke closed the former public access point to the Ashley Reservoir, directing visitors to the Holyoke Elks parking lot. Since then,

our lot has become the primary parking area for thousands of walkers, runners, cyclists, families, and outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy one of Holyoke’s most treasured recreational destinations.

What many people may not realize is that this parking lot is privately owned and maintained by the Holyoke Elks Lodge — not the City of Holyoke.

The Lodge is responsible for all costs associated with this property, including paving, repairs, lighting, landscaping, snow removal, insurance, utilities, taxes, and ongoing maintenance. As usage has increased, so have challenges including vandalism, property damage, vagrancy concerns, and significant amounts of trash left behind.

Several years ago, we created a voluntary parking donation program with a QR code and donation information near the entrance to the back lot. Visitors are encouraged to make a suggested \$3

donation to help offset these ongoing expenses. Today, we are renewing and expanding that effort.

This initiative is not about charging for parking. It is about preserving a community resource.

We are sincerely grateful for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding that allowed us to complete much-needed paving of our back parking lot. Those funds helped address an important one-time capital improvement, but maintaining a busy community facility requires continued investment.

Our lodge building, grounds, and front parking lot are now more than 50 years old. Like any facility that welcomes thousands of guests each year, they require regular maintenance, repairs, and improvements to remain safe, welcoming, and available to the public.

Every dollar contributed through this parking lot fundraising initiative stays right here at the Holyoke Elks

Lodge. These donations help maintain the parking area, preserve our facility, improve our grounds, and ensure that we can continue opening our doors to the community.

The Holyoke Elks is much more than a building. It is a place where families celebrate life’s milestones, where friends gather, where local musicians perform, where organizations meet, and where neighbors come together throughout the year.

It is also a place that gives back.

Through scholarships, charitable donations, veterans’ programs, youth activities, community partnerships, and the use of our facilities and grounds for public benefit, the Holyoke Elks has remained committed to serving the Greater Holyoke community for well over a century.

In many ways, the Lodge belongs to the community it serves.

That is why we are asking for your help.

The next time you park in our lot to enjoy the Ashley Reservoir, please consider making a suggested \$3 parking donation by scanning the QR code on one of our signs or using the donation box.

Three dollars may seem small, but when thousands of visitors contribute a few dollars, together we can preserve a place that has been serving Holyoke for generations.

You’ve celebrated with us. You’ve gathered with us. You’ve parked with us.

Now, help us preserve the Holyoke Elks for the next generation.

Suggested Parking Donation: \$3

“The Holyoke Elks Lodge has never been just a building. It is a place where our community comes together—to celebrate, to support one another, and to create lasting memories. We are simply asking those who benefit from this special place to help us preserve it for future generations.”

SENATE from page 1

“A lot of people in Massachusetts feel like they don’t have a voice in politics, and they’re struggling to afford basic needs, and we need a fighter,” Moulton said. “We need someone who’s going to change the playbook, invest in a new generation of the years, and start making Democrats win again.”

Rallies for both candidates took place prior to the debate.

Moulton first arrived and revealed that this is the 6th time he has been in Western Mass, reinforcing the congressman’s emphasis on the region’s importance throughout the commonwealth as the race continues to tighten.

“Being here in Western Mass is huge, it’s where my uncle [Andy] grew up, it’s where my chief of staff went to school, my district director grew up here, so as you can see Western Mass has been always close to my heart,” Moulton said. He then pivoted to share how he feels that the region has been “left behind” by politicians in Washington and Boston alike.

“I’m here and have been because you deserve a senator who shows up, and I will continue to show up; that’s why I’m hosting a town hall/watch party in Chicopee tonight,” he said.

It was later revealed that the Moulton campaign took a stake in the city as the Rumbleseat Bar & Grille, which hosted the congressman and his supporters to field additional questions and watch and react to the debate live, which was his 50th town hall across the state.

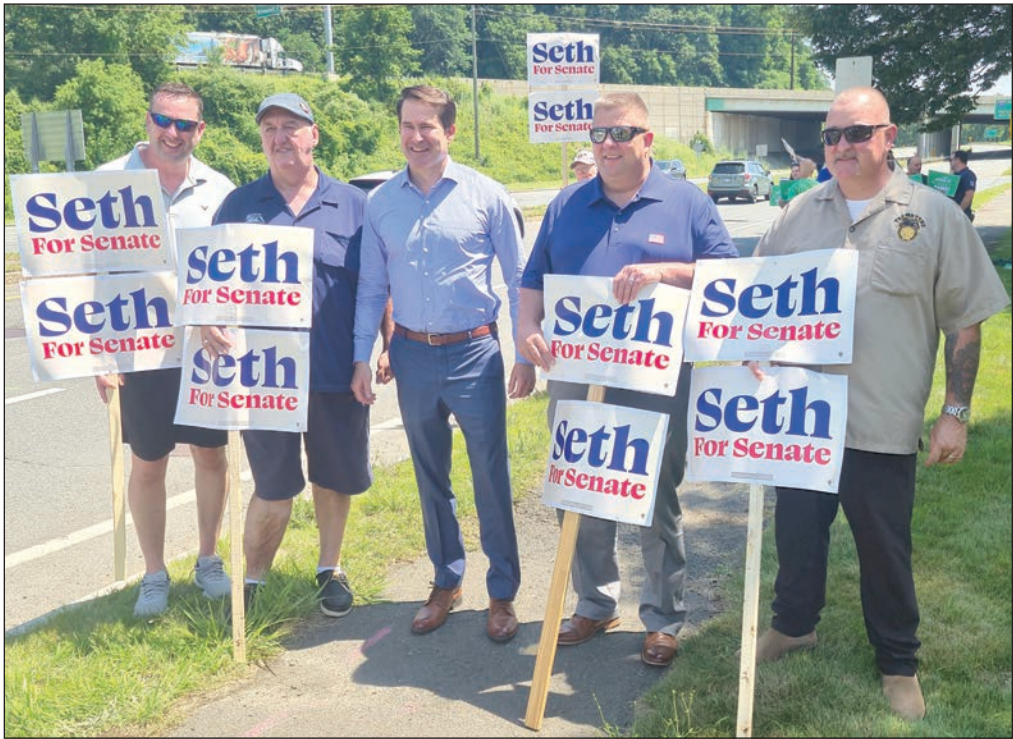
Markey showed up, citing the list of local endorsements he has garnered, by revealing a few such as Holyoke Mayor Joshua Garcia, Chicopee Mayor John Vieau, and countless others, citing, “I have consistently delivered for Western Massachusetts, and I’m looking forward to being able to tell that story,” Markey said.

Its Showtime

The highly-contested Democratic Primary debate featured a plethora of national issues, as well as a variety of local topics, such as the recent influx of local hospitals struggling, including Baystate, and funding for the West-East Rail project.

Markey kicked off the discussion by revealing that if he returns to the Senate, he would be the chairman of the subcommittee on health if the Democrats can win back the House and the Senate in the midterm elections. He then acknowledged that if that does come to term, then he would restore the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

“We’re going to restore the \$300 billion from the Affordable Care Act, which was cut, that went to people out



Rep. Seth Moulton poses for a photo with his supporters.

here in western Massachusetts to ensure that there was solvency, and then we have to go beyond that,” Markey said. “We have to double funding for community health centers. We have to double the funding for NIH research on Alzheimer’s, Diabetes, Parkinson’s, Heart Disease, and all of those other diseases that run right through every single family. That has to be the goal. And in Western Massachusetts, I have stood up, and I’ve fought for this cause; I’ve met with all the hospital leaders out here, and we are going to deliver next January.”

He then added that if funding isn’t expanded and private equity isn’t weeded out, Western Mass hospitals will be in crisis.

“You have to make sure on a permanent basis these hospitals in Western Massachusetts are not weighted by private equity, rooted in emergency rooms and our eyes, otherwise our communities are just shut down; that’s what happened in Easthampton,” Markey said.

Moulton shared that he isn’t against universal healthcare, but believes that people should keep the health plan they prefer and those that unions fought for in contract negotiations.

“Look, I stand with President [Obama] and say we should have Medicare for all, but you should also be able to keep the health care plan you prefer if that’s what you want,” Moulton said.

He then shared that, as an Iraq war veteran, he chose to use Veterans Affairs benefits for healthcare in part to ensure problems with that system are improved. Markey responded, saying VA benefits are a single-payer system and that many people would appreciate the chance to receive those benefits.

Moulton responded by declaring that universal healthcare, housing, and education should be human rights.

The conversation then pivoted to the ongoing development of the West-East Rail project, a proposed concept to bring high-speed rail service from Boston to Pittsfield and Springfield. Markey revealed that he and U.S. Congressman Richard E. Neal, of Springfield, have secured \$157 million for the region to fund the long-overdue project.

“We were able to secure the funding for the project because it is absolutely essential that we connect the Western Mass economy to the rest of the commonwealth. I understand it’s been long overdue, and that’s why I worked so hard on the infrastructure bill of 2022 to ensure we get that funding,” Markey said. “However, we also acknowledge that we needed the funding for Springfield for this asthma crisis, which had happened, and now it is absolutely indispensable that that funding be made available, and it is there, and we are working to ensure that it gets built on in cooperation with Governor Healey as quickly as possible.”

Moulton argued that the amount Markey noted will only fund up to 10 miles of rails, which isn’t up to par.

“\$152 million will be for about 10 miles of rail; that’s not enough to get to Boston, and I want to add that no one is going to ride your train because it is too slow,” he said.

He then discussed the prospect of linking the state together if the project was correctly funded, as he drew a comparison to the \$2 billion he delivered to the city of Lynn for infrastructure, and the possibility of what \$2 billion could do for the project instead of the \$152 million Markey and Neal raised.

“Imagine what \$2 billion would do for so many cities out here in Western Massachusetts,” Moulton said. “Imagine what that would do for job opportunities. Imagine what that would do to knit our

state together. That’s why I think we need high-speed rail transportation, because not only do I think it would be transformative for the state, but I feel Americans in Massachusetts should be traveling the same speed as the rest of the world, and I’m going to continue fighting to get it done.”

Post-Debate Questions

After the debate, we then talked to both candidates, where we had an additional chance to inquire about the recent influx of Combined Sewage Overflow (CSO) issues that stem from Holyoke, Chicopee, and Springfield dumping into the Connecticut River.

Markey told us he’s aware of the situation and shared a quick comment on how to solve the issue.

“Well, I’m going to be senior on the infrastructure committee in the Senate and we need a trillion-dollar infrastructure bill beginning in January of this year coming up to make sure the funding is there for CSO making sure the funding is there for communities who absolutely cannot pay for it by themselves. They’re going to need help. They’re going to need federal help, and I will be there to make sure that help is present,” Markey said.

Moulton opened his thoughts by sharing, “It’s just absolutely appalling that this has happened,” he said. “And it’s also happened across the commonwealth, in Haverhill, which has dumped into the Merrimack River, which flows through my district; it has closed a lot of beaches right over the holiday weekend, and this is why we need Democrats to win so that we can deliver infrastructure back here. And when the senator says he supports all these great ideas, the reality is that those great ideas cannot come to fruition if Trump and the MAGA Republicans are still in charge.”



Turley Photos ny Brendan Rooney

Incumbent Sen. Ed Markey takes time to talk to his supporters, sharing his campaign goals and values.



Rep. Seth Moulton has a conversation with one of his supporters outlining his vision and values ahead of the debate.

Zonta Club of QV offering fun golf day

BELCHERTOWN – Join members of the Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley on Sept. 12 for a fun day on the links at Cold Spring Country Club in Belchertown and be a champion for women and girls. The \$120 registration includes golf, cart, pastries/coffee, snacks, box lunch, beverages, prizes and more. If you aren’t a golfer, you can donate a raffle prize or sponsor a hole.

Registration starts at 7:30 a.m., with a shotgun starts at 8:30 a.m. Registration

form and link are at www.ZontaQV.org/golf. Questions can be directed to Mary Knight at 413-219-8260. Your support directly funds scholarships and grants that empower women and girls to overcome challenges and achieve their full potential. We’re working to end child marriage, domestic violence, and human trafficking, while also supporting climate justice, education equality, and women in decision-making positions.

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Brownies, Tigers end in scoreless draw



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Simone Quinn sends a pass away.



Annelise Dixon sends a pass toward midfield.



Willia Camp plays the ball off her hip.



Jenna Sobourin presents the ball from going out of bounds.

Here for Beer shuts out Monson Mustangs



Rachel McKenna rushes for the ball.



Cassie Ashwell sends a pass away.



Martine Worrall-Turgeon eyes a teammate up the field.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Gwen Duggan makes a pass toward midfield.



Shean Smith socks a free kick away.



Taryn Cariveau turns play around after taking possession.

St. Joe's grabs win over PeoplesBank

By **Tim Peterson**
Sports Correspondent

HOLYOKE— Since 1995, the PeoplesBank baseball team has built a dynasty in the Tri-County League, capturing 21 championship titles, including each of the last 13 seasons.

The St. Joseph's Saints, who are looking to win the TCL championship title for the first time in two decades, are determined to knock PeoplesBank from its perch this summer.

In a span of 48 hours last week, the Saints celebrated two victories in the rivalry series.

St. Joseph's traveled to Mackenzie Stadium in Holyoke last Wednesday night and defeated PeoplesBank, 10-5, which kept them in first place in the league standings.

"We've faced Peoples in the championship series the past couple of years, and they've gotten the best of



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Cam MacDonald sends a throw across the diamond.

Please see **PEOPLES-BANK**, page 8

Vermont Green hands Pioneers defeat

By **Tim Peterson**
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—The members of the Western Mass. Pioneers gathered for a team photo before kicking off their regular-season finale against rival Vermont Green FC last Friday night.

Having been eliminated from the USL League 2 playoffs for the first time since 2018, the Pioneers were hoping to end Vermont Green's long unbeaten streak.

The Pioneers overcame a 2-0 halftime deficit to tie the score early in the second half, but Vermont Green stretched their unbeaten streak to 37 matches following a 4-2 victory before a large crowd at Lusitano Stadium.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Santiago Blasco hustles with the ball.

Please see **PIONEERS**, page 9

Springfield Thunderbirds unveil 2026-2027 regular season schedule

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds, the proud American Hockey League affiliate of the St. Louis Blues, released their full schedule for their 2026-27 regular season on Thursday in conjunction with the AHL. The T-Birds will be celebrating their 10th playing season as an AHL member club, as well as their sixth playing season in affiliation with the Blues. Springfield has qualified for the Calder

Cup Playoffs in four of its past five seasons, coming off a run to within one win of the Eastern Conference Finals. For the first time in seven seasons, the Thunderbirds will begin their regular season on the road, on Saturday, Oct. 3, in Wilkes-Barre against the Penguins in a rematch of the Atlantic Division Finals. The T-Birds will kick off their home ice season at the Thunderdome against the Laval Rocket on Saturday, Oct. 10

on Opening Night. Puck drop is set for 6:05 p.m. Fans are advised that, for a second straight season, all Saturday games at the MassMutual Center will start at 6:05 p.m. The Thunderbirds will face every Eastern Conference team at least twice during the 2026-27 regular season, except for the Cleveland Monsters and Toronto Marlies. Once again, the AHL season will consist of all 32

clubs playing 72 games (36 home, 36 away). Springfield will play 52 games against Atlantic Division opponents, including 26 at the MassMutual Center. Their most frequent opponents are the Providence Bruins, who will visit the Thunderdome seven times. The first meeting between the longtime foes will be on Friday, Oct. 30 at 7:05 p.m., with other home-ice meetings scheduled for Friday, Dec. 4

(7:05 p.m.), Wednesday, Dec. 16 (7:05 p.m.), Sunday, Dec. 27 (3:05 p.m.), Saturday, Jan. 2 (6:05 p.m.), Wednesday, Jan. 13 (7:05 p.m.), and Saturday, March 6 (6:05 p.m.). The home-ice portion of the I-91 rivalry series against the Hartford Wolf Pack begins on Sunday, Nov. 1 at 3:05 p.m. at the Thunderdome. It marks the first of six meetings in Springfield, as the familiar rivals will also meet at the MassMutual Center

on Tuesday, Nov. 10 (10:35 a.m.), Wednesday, Dec. 30 (7:05 p.m.), Saturday, Jan. 16 (6:05 p.m.), Wednesday, Feb. 17 (7:05 p.m.), and Saturday, April 3 (6:05 p.m.). With the Atlantic Division trimmed to seven teams for the 2026-27 season, the Thunderbirds will see each of their division opponents from Pennsylvania six times in the regular season, including three head-to-head matchups each at the Thunderdome.

PEOPLESBANK

from page 7 us,” said St. Joe’s shortstop Devin Slattery, who had a base hit and scored three runs in last Wednesday’s game. “We beat them in a regular season game last year and they’re a great team. We’re also outstanding team this year and we’re trying to win the championship title.”

St. Joe’s entered this week’s action with a 13-3 overall record, while Peoples had an 11-3-1 mark.

“We made a couple of mental errors in tonight’s game,” said Peoples player/manager Joe Ferry. “We out hit them, but we left too many runners on base. It’s a frustrating loss.

Peoples, who fired a 6–0 shutout victory in the first meeting of the regular season between the teams, never held the lead in last Wednesday’s game.

The visitors took a 3-0 lead against lefty James Flahive in the top of the second inning.

After loading the bases with no outs, St. Joe’s second baseman Greg Vourros, who’s the Athletic Director at Westfield High School, grounded into a double play plating the game’s first run. First baseman Dillon

Slattery, who singled to center, and his older brother, Devin, (walk) both crossed the plate on an errant throw by the catcher that bounced into left field.

“I believe baseball games are won and loss on the bases,” said Devin Slattery, who played for Peoples for one season before moving to St. Joe’s. “We put some pressure on them in the second inning, and they made a throwing error.”

Dillon Slattery, who finished the game with two base

hits and scored three runs, and his older brother were teammates on the Ware varsity baseball team for a couple of years.

Peoples first baseman Cam Rivest, who’s the varsity baseball coach at Ludlow High School, led off the bottom of the second with a line-drive single into left field before scoring on a wild pitch.

With two outs in the top of the fourth inning, third baseman Joey DeMichele (3-for-4) delivered a two-run single into centerfield, which increased St.Joe’s lead to 5-1.

St. Joe’s scored five more runs in the following frame with the benefit of only one base hit.

Right fielder Brian Hayes, who was hit-by-a-pitch, and Dillon Slattery (Walk) both scored on wild pitches.

Centerfielder Jacob Hayes drove home another run with a sacrifice fly. Another sacrifice fly by leftfielder Mark Jodoin scored two more runs.

Peoples-Bank battled back against righty relief pitcher Jack Feltovic, who wound up as the winning pitcher, during the final three innings. Feltovic replaced lefty starter Jackson Hayes on the mound with two outs in the fourth inning. He allowed four runs on eight hits.

With two-outs in the bottom of the fifth, third baseman Cam McDonald drew a bases loaded walk cutting Peoples deficit to 10-2. After scoring another

er run in the sixth, Peoples catcher Pete Hogan knocked home two runs with two outs in the seventh.

The home team couldn’t get any closer than five runs, as Feltovic ended the game with a groundball out.

Fueled by a complete game performance from Monson’s Trey Yesu, St. Joe’s posted an 8-5 home victory in last Friday’s contest against the Bankers.

Yesu, who was the ace of the Bridgewater State University pitching staff the past couple of years, allowed five runs on 12 hits with eight strikeouts and just one walk. He threw 108 pitches.

The two rivals are scheduled to face each other again in a make-up game before the end of the regular season.



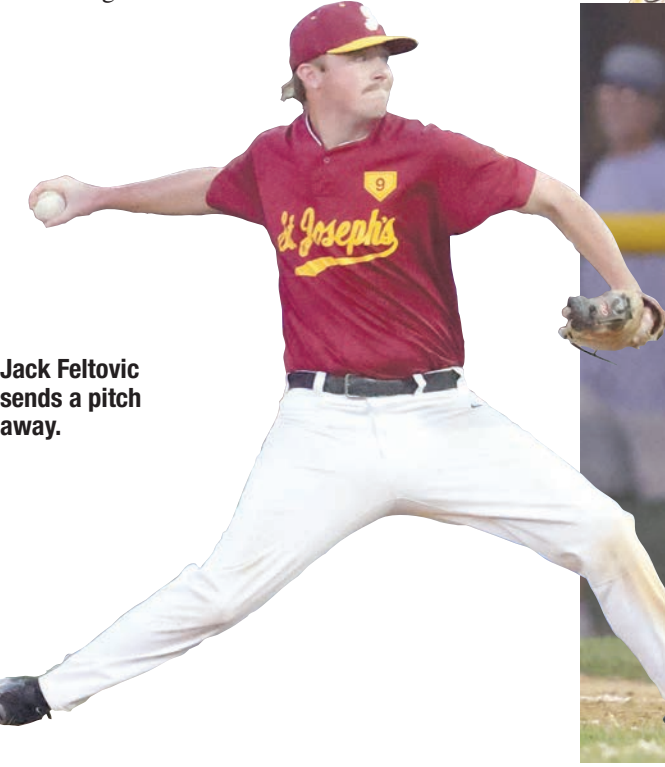
Greg Vourros fields a grounder.



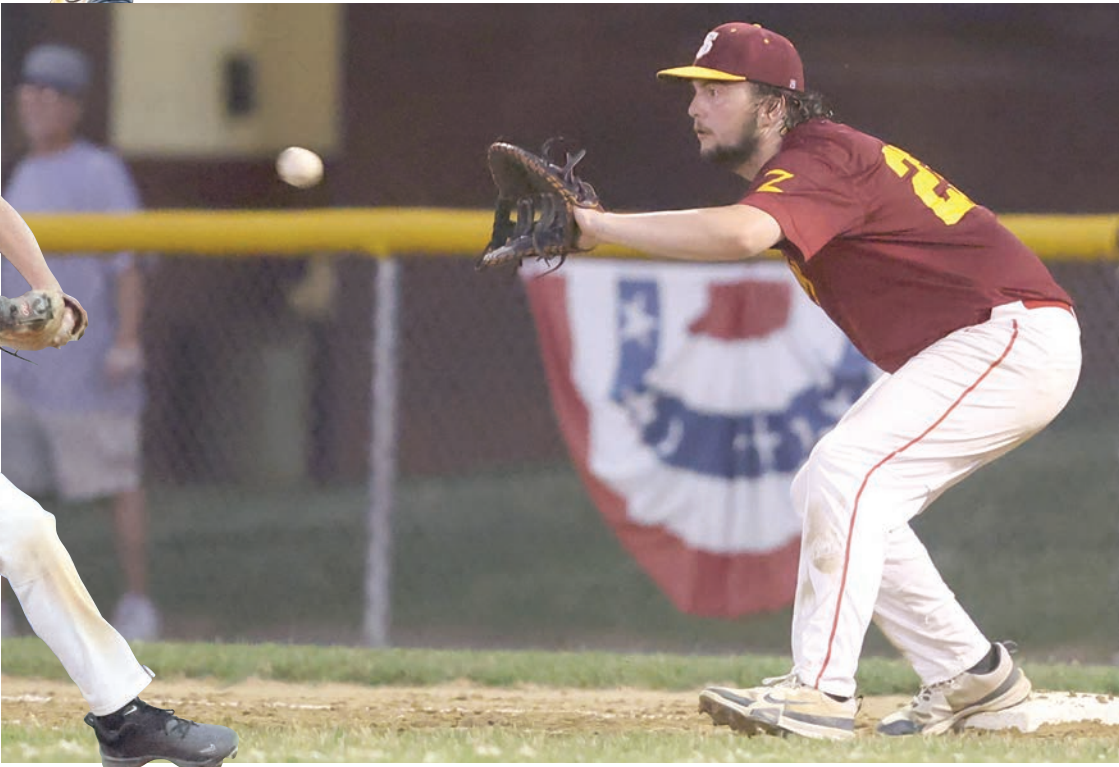
Johnny Gegestkas connects on a base hit.



James Flahive delivers a pitch for PeoplesBank



Jack Feltovic sends a pitch away.



Dillon Slattery makes the catch at first for an out.

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Valley Blue Sox get offense going in win over Keene Swampbats

KEENE, NH – The Valley Blue Sox (11-14-1) have hit an offensive stride in its past three games, and finally capitalized on it in a 7-6 win over the Keene Swampbats on July 11 at Alumni Field in Keene, NH. Throughout the three games, the same face has been the center of it all.

Blue Sox’s catcher Chris Cancel (UConn) does not normally see the letters “DH” written next to his name in the starting lineup. According to head coach John Raiola, the decision to keep Cancel in the lineup on a usual off-day came down to his swing path.

Raiola would know. He previously served on the SwampBats coaching staff in 2011, making him closely familiar with Alumni Field’s dimensions. The right-field foul pole is 354 feet from home plate and the center field fence is 352 feet from home plate. This creates an abnormally short right-center field gap.

“It’s the first time in the DH all year, because all he’s got to do was take his normal swing and hit a ball well to the right center, and it’s got a shot,” Raiola said.

That’s exactly what Cancel did, going three for four with four RBI. His biggest swing of the night was a second inning two-run home run to right-center field that cleared the wall with ease and put the Blue Sox up 2-0.

“My main approach is let the ball get deep, hit it backside,” Cancel said. “I honestly have a lot more juice that way. My swing does play very well for this field, that right center, short porch. And I think we saw that today.”

Cancel’s two other hits were singles. The first was a line drive to left field that scored one to tie the game at four in the sixth inning, the next a line drive off of the centerfield wall that extended Valley’s lead to 6-4 in the seventh inning.

Cancel’s three-hit day against Keene was the latest offensive success, and he’s currently riding a four-game hit streak and three-game RBI streak. His RBI streak began July 8 when he had a three hit game in a 12-9 loss to the Newport Gulls.

Cancel recorded one RBI in that game, a solo home run to the opposite field in the right-center field gap. After that game, Cancel said the reason for his tendency to hit the ball to the opposite field is rooted in his swing.

“I pretty much try and just be on time for the fastball,” Cancel said. “And then adjust to the off-speed, catch that more out in front. But yeah, work the middle of the field with the fastball.”

One of Cancel’s other two hits in the game was a double to the opposite field.

“They are all paying attention to who’s making the lineup,” Raiola said. “You got to be swinging it well in order to get yourself in there. ... There’s a couple really good swings today. A lot to do with the park, and how he’s been swinging it rewarded that decision.”

PIONEERS from page 7

“Our main goal was to make the playoffs, which we’ve been able to do every year since 2018,” said Pioneers head coach Federico Molinari. “We battled back in the second half, but it just wasn’t enough.”

Vermont Green (13-0-1), who are the defending USL League 2 champions, haven’t suffered a loss since a 3-0 setback against Seacoast United in the 2024 Eastern Conference semifinals.

Alfred Baafi, who completed his first season playing for the Pioneers, was a member of the Seacoast United squad, which wound up winning the National championship title, two years ago.

“We really wanted to beat our rivals in tonight’s game,” said Baafi, who led the Pioneers with four assists. “It was a great feeling after my Seacoast team beat them in the playoffs two years ago. I really enjoyed playing for the Pioneers this summer. My dream is to play for a professional soccer team.”

One of the Pioneers veteran players is Santiago Blasco Gomez, who was the team captain.

“This is my third season playing for the Pioneers and I love this place,” Gomez said. “We’ve made the playoffs the past two years, which was an amazing experience. It’s disappointing not making it this year. I’m hoping to play here again next year.”

Gomez, who’s from Albarrache, Spain, was a graduate student on the Bryant University men’s soccer team a year ago.

The Pioneers, who finished their season with an 8-3-3 overall record, haven’t beaten their archrivals from Burlington since a 1-0 road win on June 17, 2023.

Vermont Green, who are hosting the first two rounds of the playoffs this weekend, now holds a 4-3-2 edge in the series against the Western Mass. squad.

Vermont Green took the lead when Samson Kpardeh sent a pass from the left side into the box where Jeremy Fancou fired a shot into the right corner past Western Mass. goalie Ben Alexander during the 24th minute of the opening half.

Fancou scored his second goal seven minutes later, which was assisted by Ryan Zellefrow.

The score was 2-0 at intermission.

Nine minutes into the second half, the Pioneers sliced their deficit in half following a corner kick goal.

Ronan O’Brien booted the ball into the box from the left corner. After the ball was headed by Dylan Hunston, Riley Priddy put another header into the left corner past Vermont Green back-up goalie Seth Wilson.

During the 59th minute, Martin Echarren booted a free kick into the right corner tying the score at 2-2. It was also his team leading seventh goal of the season.

Vermont Green retook the lead following a goal by Kpardeh during the 74th minute.

Another goal by William Sawin during stoppage time sent the Vermont Green rowdy supporters into a frenzy.

The Pioneers will be looking to qualify for the league playoffs, and they’ll also be looking to celebrate a victory against the Vermont Green during the summer of 2027.



Ronan O’Brien heads past midfield.



Shun Murasawa sends a free kick away.



Martin Echarren goes for the goal.



Alfred Baafi approaches the ball.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

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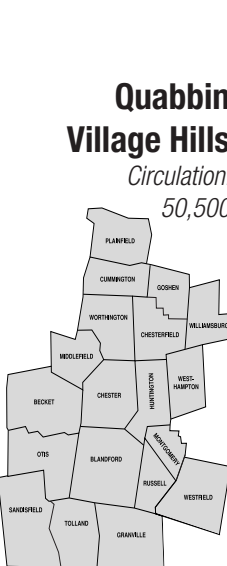
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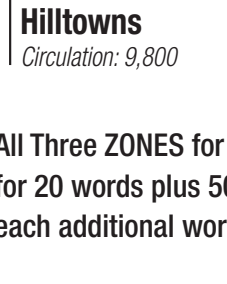
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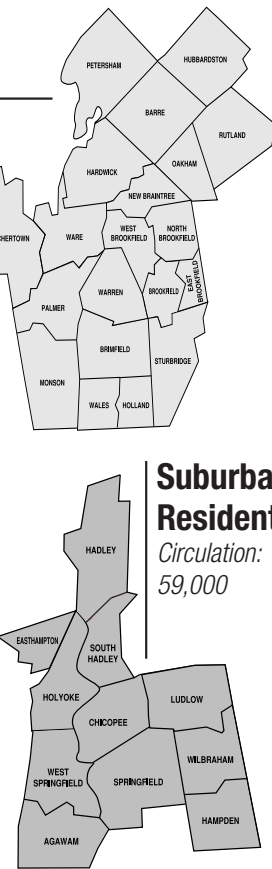
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LUNCHEON from page 1

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“A lot of folks, they like to come in for the evening dinners,” Dumas said when asked what inspired the patri-

otic luncheon. “So, this summer concert series is probably the most comparable because we’re creating an in-house meal. It’s a great way for folks to get out of their houses, come in and enjoy something a little different.”

The event was sponsored by the South Hadley Senior Travel Club, who have been doing so for “several years now.” The meal also included a raffle for two gift cards provided by the Club; one for

Big Y and one for the travel club itself. When asked for additional comment, Dumas thanked the Travel Club for their contributions, as well as one unexpected party.

“I want to thank our local paper for coming in and covering this event for us and all future and / or past events,” Dumas said. “It’s always a great time to see them there and we love seeing ourselves put out into the public.”



The meal included chicken, baked beans and coleslaw alongside a slice of cornbread.



Traveling entertainer DJ Luis shows off his stage presence prior to the day’s festivities.



Turley photos by Ben Hernandez

Attendees piled into the Council on Aging senior citizen center for the 250th anniversary celebration.



Program Coordinator Brandon Dumas puts himself on the front line distributing tickets to hungry attendees.



Energetic staff were ready to serve lunch to hungry participants.

SCHOLARSHIP from page 1

“She’s organized events, such as the Best Buddies Games,” Swanson said. “And that taught her that leadership is not about authority or recognition but about attentiveness, consistency and making others feel seen.”

Swanson reported students under Sotiropoulos’ tutelage became more confident and engaged in the program, a sign of “how meaningful even small acts

of encouragement can be.” The CEO also referred to the student’s volunteer work at Holyoke Medical Center and applauded her student representative status in the town’s environmental commission.

“I was very impressed,” Swanson said.

Hardship is not unfamiliar to Sotiropoulos. Forced to retire from soccer, which Swanson identified as “a major part of her identity,” due to an ACL injury, she breathed

new life into her team by becoming the team manager. The essay reflected on how the life-changing experience taught her adaptability, humility and how “purpose is not lost when circumstances change.”

“We felt that her essay together with her letter of recommendation really personified what we believe Barbara Sinnott would want to see in future leaders,” Swanson said.



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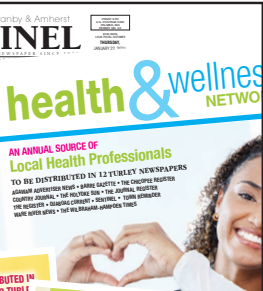
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CLUES ACROSS

- Tire pressure measurement
- Request
- Clairvoyance
- 007’s creator
- Adult male
- God of battle (Scandinavian)
- Cloths spread over a coffin
- Breeze through
- Ladyfish genus
- We all take them
- Earl’s jurisdiction
- Members of U.S. Navy
- Rummy-like card game
- Affected by injury
- Member of a Semitic people
- Withdrew from a union
- Woman’s cloak
- Spanish river

CLUES DOWN

- Prohibit
- Something you can take
- Dish soap brand
- Ottoman military commanders
- Ancient Italian-Greek colony
- Makes somber
- Discuss again
- A tool to inject
- Support
- Informal term for money
- Catch doing something wrong
- Prehistoric people
- Large African antelope
- Vehicle
- Georgia rockers
- High resolution microscope
- Pitching statistic
- Attempt

CLUES DOWN

- Indoor plant
- Marketable
- Rather
- Collected
- A bag-like structure in a plant or animal
- Irish hip-hop trio
- Ageless
- Course requirements
- Pokes at
- TV channel
- They __
- Cooking material
- Investment account
- Iron-containing compound
- Swiss river
- Small coin (French)
- Electronic countermeasures
- Taxi
- Helps little firms

CLUES DOWN

- Unhappy
- Midway between northeast and east
- Glowing
- Item to be addressed
- An informal body of friends
- Intrinsic nature of something
- Neural structures
- Brews
- A place for ships
- One who sings holiday songs
- Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
- Scottish town
- The most worthless parts
- Sticky
- Put to work
- Precursor to the EU
- Retrospective analysis (abbr.)

PHASE from page 1

ing signs.

“The concept is once we do receive our certificate of occupancy, then we will take the town hall,” Aponte said. “That consists of really the second floor of the senior center building, 108 West State Street.”

The first round migrations to the new building include the annex offices, which currently sit isolated from other municipal buildings. The priority is to move the Town Clerk, the Collector, Board of Assessors and “most of the town hall offices.”

“There are hopes that, for phase two, we would be able to consolidate the senior center and some of the Council on Aging programs and services down there as well,” Aponte said.

Current construction focuses center around adding wall studs, electrical conduits and some of the “IT infrastructure.” Though much of the foundational work is already underway, including re-walling necessary locations and restructuring the floor, Aponte stated there was still “a good ways to go.”

“To quote the project manager,” Aponte said. “The bones of

the school were still good. So, a lot of the infrastructure foundation, walls, things along those lines were still in very good shape.”

The concrete flooring was reported to be “less than expected” in terms of condition and a decision was made to re-carpet the entire office area as a result. Aponte stated the crew originally thought to polish up the flooring to save money, but the attempt “didn’t work out.”

“The good news, like I said, the walls and the foundation; those were all in pretty good shape,” Aponte said. “Certainly reusable. There was some additional insulation that was blown into the rafters in the ceiling prior to obviously them being closed up by the dropped ceiling. So, that should help in fire retardation as well as energy cost savings.”

Despite hardships, the town administrator mentioned how the entrance and parking lot foundations were in “pretty good shape,” a “nice little surprise” for the on-site workers. Though the project is far from completion, Aponte remains optimistic about the “one-stop” building’s future.

“Again, the bones are good,” Aponte said.



Submitted photos
The former West Street School is being renovated into consolidated municipal offices.



The site is still under construction and is prohibited to the public.

Committee holding bike ride to Cindy’s

SOUTH HADLEY – The South Hadley Bike/Walk Committee will hold a fun 30-minute leisurely ride from South Hadley Commons for an ice cream reward at Cindy’s Soft Serve Ice Cream on Rte. 202 in Granby. Bring your bicycle, helmet, and a water bottle. All levels of riders are encouraged to participate. This will take place on Saturday, July 18 at 1 p.m. Meet at the band stand at the South Hadley Commons.

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