

TOWN Reminder

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Sea to Shore cleanup a success



Turley photos by Ben Hernandez
UMass Five's Jim Wage and Kelley Jewell pose with their team.

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – The annual Sea to Shore cleanup took place at the Beachgrounds Park on Sept. 18. Volunteers of all ages flocked to the riverside to aid in trash cleanup and to ensure the Connecticut River region was available for generations to come.

“It’s a river cleanup that happens all throughout the Connecticut River watershed,” said Connecticut River Conservancy Events and Outreach Coordinator Amanda Major. “All 310 miles plus tributaries. We have over 140 groups going out, lead by group leaders who are volunteers, and this is one of our

140 events this year.” Major mentioned this event marked the 30th year of the event, which was facilitated by efforts from the the Town of South Hadley. The event mobilized South Hadley High School students, UMass Five College Credit Union representatives and town administrative staff to unite with the purpose of removing trash from the area.

“They’re really excited to be part of something greater than themselves,” Major said as she referenced the throngs of high school students behind her. “We’re cleaning our river, making our waters healthier so that we have beauty and kind of healthy

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Connecticut River Conservancy Events and Outreach Coordinator Amanda Major and Town of South Hadley Conservation Administrator Rebekah Cornell.

Chamber hosts ‘Meet and Greet’ for representative

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – The Boathouse Restaurant in South Hadley was host to a meet and greet which recognized local officials, celebrated community partnerships and championed Representative Homar Gomez’s accomplishments in office. Catering provided by the restaurant included glazed meat skewers, fried mac and cheese bites, spring rolls and bruschetta.

President of the South Hadley and Granby Chamber of Commerce Steven Laplante introduced the state representatives State Senator Jake Oliveira, Second Hampden District State Representative Brian Ashe and Representative Homar Gomez. Notable

elected officials also in attendance included South Hadley Selectboard Clerk Priscilla Marion, Regional Director of Office of US Senator Ed Markey Jesse Lederman, Easthampton Mayor Salem Derby and Granby Select Board member Mark Bail. Easthampton City Council members were also present to show their support.

During his speech, Senator Oliveira took a moment to recognize the Boathouse Restaurant staff members and called the restaurant “a great place to have dinner” as well as a “great place to grab a drink.” Prior to introducing Representative Gomez, he took a moment to acknowledge elected officials who were in the room.

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Submitted photo
Representative Homar Gomez and State Senator Jake Oliveira.

Granby COA receives new director



Submitted photos
Front shot of the Granby Senior Center, which is also the Council on Aging building.

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

GRANBY – The Granby Council on Aging has a new director. An experienced outreach coordinator in Older Adult Services with a long history in case management, Lauren Hannigan took the position because she loved Granby’s “small-town community feel.”

“I spent the last eight years in Hadley,” Hannigan said. “I also really loved what I did with seniors, or older adults, and it was important to me that I could continue. Granby seemed like a really great community, so that’s why I chose it.”

Hannigan stated Granby really loves and appreciates

their senior center, while also wanting the building to be a “vibrant place.” Older adults, Hannigan stated, brought a vast array of knowledge to the community.

“It’s really important that the space is theirs, that they are able to come here for socialization, for programming and for meals,” Hannigan said. “It’s just a really great place.”

Just a month into the position, Hannigan has already hit the floor running. She’s in the works of planning an upcoming Oktoberfest, complete with music and food, as



Lauren Hannigan

well as a vaccine clinic scheduled for October. She also has a hand in the local senior center newsletter, which is slated for an October release as well.

“This is my first time acting as a director,” Hannigan said. “So I feel like I’m going to learn as I go.”

This is not to say she doesn’t have extensive experience in executive administration. A seasoned outreach and transportation coordinator in Hadley, she was re-

Please see **DIRECTOR**, page 5

Friends of Granby’s Elderly host annual fall picnic

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

GRANBY – The annual Friends of Granby’s Elderly Picnic was held at Duffresne Park on Sept. 17. The event served box lunches complete with a ham or turkey sandwich, a bag of chips, potato salad and a brownie. Additional refreshments served were canned soda, bottled water, watermelon slices and an assortment of cookies for

dessert.

“We work hand in hand with the Council on Aging to do events like this picnic and the concert series in the summer,” said Friends of Granby’s Elderly Vice-Chairman Don Lindsay. “We are dedicated to serving the senior citizens of Granby.”

Don became aware of the organization, which is separate from the Granby Council on Aging, due to his affiliation with the senior center.

He began as a volunteer helping once a week with lunch service and calling bingo twice a month. To him, being a part of FOGE means to be a part of something greater.

“It means community, outreach,” Don said. “It means taking care of people my same age. Having a place to socialize, having meetings, having things like this.”

The picnic marks one of the last events hosted by his organization for the year. The last event involves sending Christmas cards to every senior citizen in town, an initiative which remains another proud tradition within the organization’s over 40 year history.

“We had our 40th anniversary three to four years ago,” Don said. “So I’d like to get another 40 in.”

“We get a nice turnout,” said FOGE Chairman Ron Richard. “It’s nice to do something for the people of Granby, for the seniors.”

The recent president took the reins from former president Gloria Vivier, who stepped down voluntarily, citing age as her reason for resignation. The organization, according to Ron, was founded back around 1982 as a nonprofit. The organization

Please see **PICNIC**, page 3



Flowers from the Chinese Raffle. Turley photos by Ben Hernandez

Quabbin Visitor Center lists upcoming programs

BELCHERTOWN – The Les and Terry Campbell Quabbin Visitor Center, 100 Winsor Dam Road, announces the schedule for upcoming programs.

All ages are welcome. All programs are free, but registration is required; outdoor programs are limited to 25 people.

Please dress appropriately for the weather and bring water and snacks. Please wear appropriate footwear and protect yourself against ticks.

Dogs are not allowed anywhere at the Quabbin Reservoir.

Follow link to register or visit <https://www.mass.gov/locations/quabbin-reservoir/events>

Exploring Dana Common

Explore the Road to Dana Common on Sunday, Sept. 26 from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at Gate 40 (Route 32A).

The old foundations, stone walls, and shade trees of Dana Common will transport you to the past as you explore Quabbin’s unique history. This 3.6 mile moderate round-trip hike will introduce you to some of the notable residents of Dana as you discover what life was like in the Swift River Valley over a hundred years ago. Photos illustrating Quabbin’s past will bring Dana to life before your eyes.

Ware River Bridge Series: South

The Ware River Bridge Series: Rail Trail South, will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 29 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m., with parking at the Ware River Rail Trail, 300 Granger Road Barre, then carpooling to starting point for a 1.8 mile easy hike.

There are many old bridge sites in the Ware River watershed. Most no longer have the actual bridges, but you can still see the shape of the land that supported the bridge, and often also stonework from the bridge abutments.

This walk will begin at one such site and travel to another, both on the beautiful Burnshirt River. The hike passes the historic Riverside Cemetery.

Soapstone Mountain Hike

This scenic Soapstone Mountain hike will begin at Gate 37 (from Route 122 in New Salem take Monson Turnpike Road) and follow an easy woodland road before branching off to a short but very steep hike up the mountain on Thursday, Oct. 8 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. This 2.7 mile hike is challenging and has points which require climbing over large rocks, however the summit is one of the best views of Quabbin Reservoir

Quabbin Park

Explore Quabbin Park via the Combination Shoreline/Enfield Lookout/Webster Road Loop on Saturday, Oct. 10 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Join DCR staff for a 3.6-mile looped hike in Quabbin Park. Participants will begin at the Observation Tower parking area located at Quabbin Hill and travel to Hank’s Meadow and down to the water, dropping roughly 350 feet in elevation.

The trail then travels along the water before participants will ascend uphill back to where they began. Along the way they will stop at the Enfield Lookout which offers the best view of the reservoir in Quabbin Park.

Exploring the Road to Millington

This 3-mile round trip hike will introduce you to some of the residents of the lost village of Millington as you learn what daily life was like in the years leading up to the Quabbin Reservoir project on Saturday, Oct. 11 from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Meet at Quabbin Gate 29 on Elm Street and Route 202 in New Salem.

Participants will stop to see the Keystone Bridge along the way.

Ware River Bridge Series: North

The Ware River Bridge Series: Rail Trail North will be held on Sunday, Oct. 25 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Parking is at the kayak/canoe launch on Worcester Road (Route 122), Barre.

This long, leisurely hike begins at the parking lot and travels down a densely vegetated trail past an old timber harvest, ending at the site of a former covered bridge. The bridge is no longer there, but the view of the river is as picturesque as it gets and well worth the visit.

The hike is 4 miles round trip and passes the historic Riverside Cemetery.

Rutland Prison Camp

On Thursday, Nov. 5 from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. explore the Rutland Prison Camp, 299 Intervale Road, Rutland for an approximately 1.25 mile easy hike. There is uneven ground.

Join DCR staff as they explore the remains of this surprisingly successful social experiment. Ticks are still active so protection is advised, as is wearing orange during hunting season.

Group hike near Muddy Pond

Explore the Ware River Watershed for a group hike near Muddy Pond on Saturday, Nov. 7 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Join DCR staff for a 4.1-mile looped hike in the Ware River Watershed. The route climbs/descends roughly 140 feet in elevation.

The foot path participants will travel on is non-technical. The last mile of the hike is on a scenic section of the Mass Central Rail Trail.

Participants will meet at the Route 122 rest area parking lot in the town of Oakham. The rest area is in the shape of a banana with grass and picnic tables.

The hike begins and ends north of Muddy Pond.

Aquarium offering discounted tickets for homeschooling families

Special ticket prices available every Tuesday through Dec. 22

BOSTON – The New England Aquarium is offering discounted admission this fall for homeschooling families to experience its educational programs and exhibits.

Every Tuesday through December 22, 2026, homeschool families have access to special ticket prices: \$12 for children and \$21 for adults. Tickets can be purchased by calling the Aquarium’s Reservations Department at 617-973-5206 daily between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. More information is available on neaq.org.

Included in admission, the Aquarium offers a variety of

programs, presentations, and feedings each day:

Guests can stop by an interactive educational space on the third floor called the Exploration Station, which offers both guided and self-led themed activities. Families can engage with sensory activities, pretend to be an Aquarium veterinarian, and spend some down time reading books.

Join an educator along the exhibit path for an up-close experience with one of the Aquarium’s animal ambassadors. Learn more about jellies, local turtle species, or axolotls during animal encounters happening daily at 10:45 a.m. and 3:15 p.m.

Aquarium guests can enjoy daily presentations with the penguins, sea lions, harbor seals, and residents of the Giant Ocean Tank, including Myrtle the green sea turtle.

Full schedule available here.

The Aquarium also has a host of fun and educational activities on its website that can engage young learners before or after a trip to the Aquarium. The activities help visitors explore the Aquarium more deeply, encourage content learning, and improve science skills as well as support math and literacy development.

ABOUT THE NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM: The New England Aquarium is a nonprofit research and conservation organization that has protected and cared for our ocean and marine animals for more than 55 years. We provide science-based solutions and help shape policies that create measurable change to address threats the ocean faces. We inspire action through discovery and help create engaged, resilient communities

October happenings available at Granby Free Public Library

Sci-Fi and Fantasy Book Club

Thursday, Oct. 1 at 5 p.m. Join our discussions on the first Thursday of every month! Red City by Marie Liu for October.

Vincent van Gogh’s Iris:

Learn to Pastel Paint with Gregory Maichack Saturday, Oct. 3 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. No experience required! Learn to pastel paint with us. Space is limited – Sign-up!

Adult Book Group

Thursday, Oct. 8 at 6 p.m. The book group will be discussing The Borrowed Life of Frederick Fife by Anna Johnston.

Tabletop Games Club

Thursday, Oct. 8 at 5 p.m. and Saturday, Oct. 17 at 10:30 a.m. Players of all ages 8 and up to are invited gather and enjoy a variety of board, card, dice, tile, and other in-person tabletop games with us!

The Trial of Lizzie Borden

Thursday, Oct. 15 at 5:30p.m. Join Honorable Dennis J. Curran, Justice, Massachusetts Superior Court (Ret.) to discuss the famous case of Lizzie Borden! Space is limited – Sign-up!

Knitting Group

Every Wednesday afternoon at 2 p.m. Bring your latest project and

join us for conversation, tips and tricks.

Halloween Family Book Bingo

Thursday, Oct. 22 at 6 p.m. All ages are welcome! Come play bingo to win free books and enjoy some spooky treats.

Sourdough Starter Workshop with Sourdough Brandon

Thursday, Oct. 29 at 6 p.m. Space is limited – Sign-Up! Friends of the Granby Library Meeting Thursday, Oct. 22 at 4:30 p.m. Visit our website for more information and to sign up for our programs! www.granby-library.org

Granby Free Public Library offers new afternoon book club

GRANBY – Join the Granby Free Public Library for a friendly, relaxed, afternoon book club.

The group will meet monthly, every third Tuesday of the month at 2 p.m. to discuss various genres of fiction.

Group members will vote on titles they would like to read in advance.

Upcoming books are made available at the library in multiple formats - regular print, large print and audio-book.

For the Oct. 20 meeting, the book choice is “The Briar Club” by Kate Quinn, stop by the library for a copy.

Afternoon book groups combine the joy of reading

with the benefits of conversation, community, and personal enrichment, making them a rewarding way to spend time and connect with others.

The Granby Free Public Library is located at 297 E State St. in Granby, MA 01033.

Visit www.granbylibrary.org for more information.

Corvette Club hosts annual All Makes & Models Car Show

CHICOPEE – The annual All Makes & Models Car Show will be presented by the Corvette Club of Western MA on Saturday, Oct. 3 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Chicopee Moose Club, 244 Fuller Road.

There will be food, beverages, raffles, trophies and live music provided by The Blue Groove Band. There is a \$20 car entry fee and spectators are free.

Craft fair set for Oct. 12

GRANBY – Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Granby, Mass. is having a Craft Fair on Monday, Oct. 12 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

In addition to over 50 vendors, there will be basket raffles, a Lottery Tree Raffle, as well as breakfast & lunch available.

Stop in, say hello & support small local businesses, and get some Christmas shopping done. Immaculate Heart of Mary is located at 256 State St. in Granby, Mass.

2026 Fall Yard Waste Curbside Collection

SOUTH HADLEY – The 2026 Fall Yard Waste Curbside Collection begins Monday, Nov. 2 and will run through Saturday, Nov. 28.

Place paper bags or open top containers curbside by 7 a.m. on your trash collection day.

Each Route will have two collections.

Brush must be tied in bundles (no metal) of not more than four-foot lengths. No plastic bags.

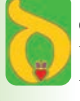
Inspirational afternoon with Ruth Bader Ginsburg Sept. 27

SOUTH HADLEY– Join the sisters of PEO Chapter AG for an inspirational afternoon with Ruth Bader Ginsburg on Sunday, Sept. 27 at 3 p.m. Sheryl Faye is bringing her one woman show to the Center Church located at 1 Church Street, South Hadley, Mass. All proceeds from the event go toward PEO scholarships that support women’s education. There is handicapped parking and the venue is handicapped accessible.

Before and after the performance there will be time to talk with PEO members about scholarships and loans for education. Plan for an afternoon out with friends and have an early dinner at one of the restaurants in the Town Commons. Tickets are \$38 and include the performance and post-performance question and answer session with Sheryl Faye. Purchase tickets on event bright, Ticketing fees apply.

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Saturday, Sept. 26 The Corner Boys 6-9pm	Tuesday, Sept. 29 Musical Bingo 6:30-8:30pm	Friday, Oct. 2 Eagle Eyes 6-9pm
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17th of Every Month - Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinners

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ALL MAKES & MODELS CAR SHOW
Oct 3, 2026 from 10am to 2pm
Chicopee Moose Club
244 Fuller Road, Chicopee
Come on out and bring your classic to the annual All Makes & Models Car Show presented by the Corvette Club of Western Mass.
Food, beverages, raffles, trophies and live music provided by The Blue Groove Band.
★★★ \$20 car entry fee & Spectators are FREE! ★★★





The O-Tones Band played during the picnic.

PICNIC from page 1

funds yearly events such as summer concerts and the annual picnic in Dufrense Park. Recently, the organization donated to help veterans secure funding for a pavilion at the local veteran’s park.

“It’s fun to help people,” Ron said when asked what got him involved. “It’s just nice.”

The picnic included two raffles; a more traditional ticket raffle and a Chinese raffle with prizes donated by the community. Prizes included beaded artwork, gift cards to the Pizza Palace of Granby, a “after hours basket” filled with various alcohol bottles and a giant commemorative poster for a Barnum and Bailey’s circus performance celebrating the country’s bicentennial.

“I’m at the point in my life where I just want to do good, you know,” Ron said. “It’s not a paying job, so I have no ulterior motives. We just want people to get along and help each other.”

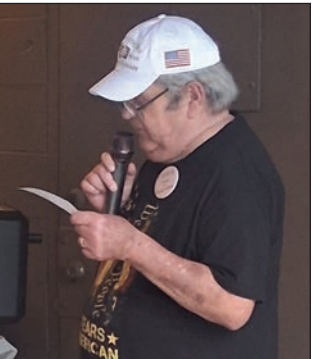
Christine Lindsay stated the picnic always gets an impressive turnout. She expressed gratitude for the tight-knit community and stated she knew most of the

people in attendance from bingo games at the senior center.

“I love them all,” Christine said. “They’re good people. We have a good time.”

The picnic concluded with a live performance from the band the O-Tones, a Motown and swing cover band based out of Northampton. The group played inside the pavilion due to the inclement weather forecast as attendees enjoyed dessert under the wooden roof. The day’s festivities were best summarized by FOGE Director Robbin LaMorder.

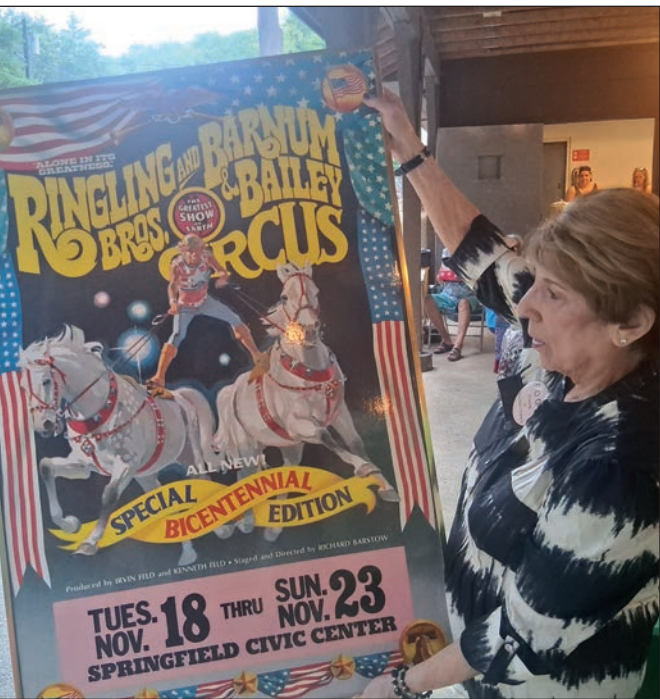
“Old people do not go to the senior center, drool and just play bingo,” Robbin said. “It’s a social place.”



Friends of Granby’s Elderly Vice-Chairman Don Lindsay provides announcements for the raffle.



Cookies offered during the picnic.



Christine Lindsay presents the Barnum and Bailey Circus poster given away during the Chinese raffle.



FOGE Chairman Ron Richard.

2026 Community Needs Assessment survey

SOUTH HADLEY – The Town of South Hadley is conducting a Community Needs Assessment to identify key needs among residents.

This anonymous, 15-minute survey will help us better understand experiences, strengths, and challenges related to health and well-being and how to make improvements for everyone in the South Hadley community.

If you have any ques-

tions, please contact mful-tonblack@bmestrategies.com and kjacobs@bmestrategies.com.

Take the survey by Friday, Oct. 9, use your phone to scan the QR code or complete the survey online at: bit.ly/SH_CNA

Paper copies also available at the South Hadley Council on Aging, Town Clerk’s Office, and Library South Hadley residents, they want to hear from you

South Hadley Chorale to begin rehearsals

SOUTH HADLEY – The South Hadley Chorale will begin rehearsals for its 41st season on Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2026, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at All Saints’ Episcopal Church, 7 Woodbridge Street IN South Hadley.

The program will feature Joseph Haydn’s Mass in Time of War (Paukenmesse) and pieces by women composers including Alice Parker and Dolly Parton. Subsequent rehearsals will be held on Wednesday evenings. They will continue through November 18 and will resume on Jan. 6, 2027 until the concert on March 21, 2027. The concert will be dedicated to Barbara (“Bobbie”) Ayers who served as president of the SHC board of directors since its founding in 1985. Ms. Ayers passed away in July at

the age of 91.

The Chorale is pleased to welcome back Anita Anderson Cooper for her third year as musical director and conductor. Ms. Anderson Cooper is a member of the faculty of the Paul Baird Middle School in Ludlow and directs the Smith College Handbell Choir. She is also a composer and a frequent soloist and guest conductor both locally and throughout the East Coast.

The South Hadley Chorale is made up of 70 singers from 17 communities. All interested singers are invited to join. There are no auditions. Most singers, however, have had some choral experience. For more information, please visit www.southhadleychorale.org or send an email to mail@southhadleychorale.org.

Read the Town Reminder online at www.townreminder.turley.com



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SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor

I'm eevaluating my retirement plan; what are my options?

Dear Rusty:
I am 69 1/2 years old now and applied for Social Security at the end of June.
I am still working and was planning to begin my retirement in September. A couple of factors arose for me to question if I made a hasty decision by applying for SS.
The employer I have been working for the last 29 years has asked if I would stay on a little longer, which would be good because we have some debt I want to lose before I retire.
I was reading about suspending Social Security and continuing to work. If I understand it right, if I suspend my SS, no payback will be required, and I can continue to work until I'm ready to retire. No spousal benefits taken yet.
Signed: Reevaluating my Retirement

Dear Reevaluating Retirement:
I'm assuming you asked for your Social Security benefits to start in September (when you originally planned to retire), but that you won't be 70 years old until March 2027.
If that is correct, be aware that you will not immediately get all of your earned Delayed Retirement Credits when your benefits start in September – you will only initially get the DRCs you have earned through the end of 2025.
That's because Social Security usually applies DRCs in January of each year. So, what will happen is that your September benefit amount will lack the 5.3% DRCs you earned in 2026, until January 2027 when they will apply the DRCs earned in 2026 to your monthly payment amount.
Said simply, your initial September benefit will not include your full age 69.5 entitlement because it won't include the 5.3% extra you earned in 2026. That extra monthly

amount will be awarded in January 2027.
FYI, if you were to, instead, claim for your SS benefits to start in the month you turn 70 (March 2027), you would get your full age 70 amount immediately (SS awards all earned DRCs if benefits are claimed to start in the month you turn 70).
Now, on to your question: Yes, if you take your benefits effective with September 2026 you can suspend your benefits, but you can only suspend them until the month you turn 70. And if you are suspending your benefits, you will not need to repay Social Security for any benefits you happen to receive before you suspend.
As is obvious, you will not receive any SS payments while your benefits are suspended, and you will earn DRCs for the months your benefits are suspended, resulting in a higher monthly amount at age 70. Also, since you have already passed your SS Full Retirement Age, you can work and earn as much as you like, without your Social Security benefits being negatively affected.

Regarding your comment "No Spousal benefits taken yet." FYI, you cannot get spousal benefits while your benefits are suspended, nor can your wife get spousal benefits from you while you SS retirement benefits are suspended.
To be clear, spouse benefits are only paid when one spouse's benefit at their FRA is less than 50% of the other spouse's FRA benefit. Spouse benefits are always based upon FRA entitlements, not on the larger amounts which will result from waiting longer to claim.
In other words, your wife would only be eligible for a spousal benefit from you if her FRA entitlement was less than 50% of your FRA enti-

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Raised beds? Why not!

I have to say that today I am having a hard time thinking of something to write about.
As I scan my mind of all the seasonal gardening topics, I come up blank. Winter squash? Done it. Mums? Ditto. Seed saving. Yup.
So, on this rainy Sunday, I give you all the luck of the draw. I will grab a gardening book off of my shelf, twirl the pages, and where my finger lands, I will expound on the subject. It may not be autumnal, but it will be interesting, I guarantee that.
Here we go...
The book I grabbed from the shelf was "The Dirt Cheap Green Thumb," by Rhonda Massingham Hart. My finger landed on page 189, with the heading "Raise Your Beds, Not Your Expenses."
I have some experience with raised beds. In my home garden I have four rock-edged beds. Prior to that I had beds edged in pine slabs.
My friend uses hemlock edged beds and is happy with them. I envy how neat and orderly they are. Another friend is using galvanized metal beds this year. They seem to be all the rage.
Her tomatoes and peppers continue to produce like gangbusters even late in the season. She has just gotten back into gardening after a two year hiatus and I am proud of her and happy she has been so successful.
Let's begin our chat with some of the advantages of raised bed gardening.

The first one that comes to mind is that you can be selective about the soil you fill it with. I've enjoyed using the Coast of Maine Raised Bed Mix.

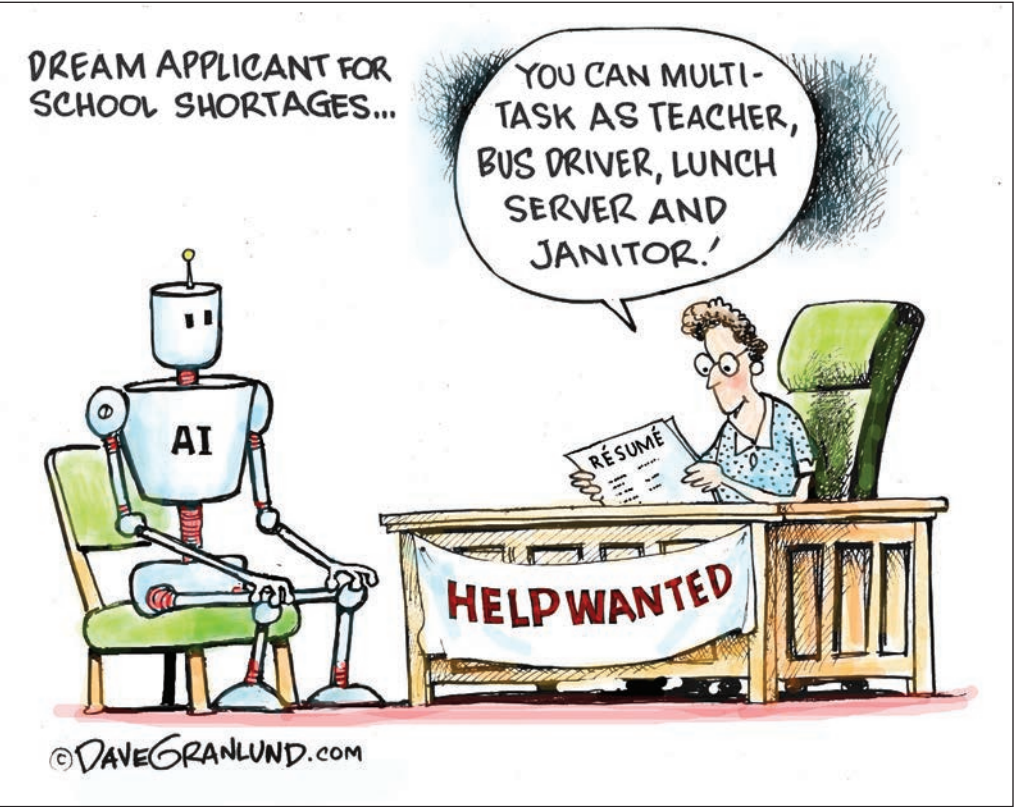


Submitted Photo by Dawn Rudnansky

Blending loam and aged manure or compost at a 2 to 1 ratio is another option. Additionally, raised beds make it easy to concentrate fertilizers where they are needed.
In large garden plots we often broadcast fertilizers and other amendments throughout the bed. Some inevitably gets wasted in walkways or around hills of plants.
Raised beds can be constructed to suit your needs. I wanted to be able to reach into the middle of my beds from either side, so they are

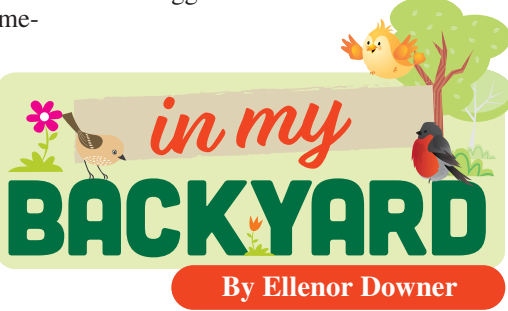
about four feet wide.
Some gardeners construct them 36 inches wide so there is less of a stretch.
In my four beds, I have a pretty good crop rotation system going. Each crop does a slide to the next bed each year. That way it is four years before onions are grown in the same space.
Another interesting thing I have set up is that onions, for example, follow melons in my rotation. I grow the melons on black plastic. All season long the black plastic is limiting weeds from germinating, so that hopefully next year, the onions, who hate weeds, will see less weed pressure.
Raised beds warm up quicker in the spring, and stay warmer later into the fall. Sometimes the edging material helps with that.
My rock beds, for example, hold heat. So does the metal to some degree.
In mid spring, prior to the frost-free date, raised beds can be easily fitted with hoops on which plastic or polyester row covers can be draped to offer even more frost protection. They can also be covered with the black plastic I mentioned to grow crops like melons or peppers, who appreciate the heat.
With raised beds you will likely never need your rototiller. Beds can effortlessly be turned over by hand from either side. Typically, unless you walk all over them, the soil in the raised beds stays nice and friable, as well.

Please see **GARDEN**, page 9



Someone reported hearing as sandhill crane calling in New Braintree, but did not see it. Recently, someone saw a pair of sandhill cranes in a field on Pleasant Street in Barre. The cranes stayed about a week and then left.
S a n d h i l l
Cranes are large open birds that live in open habitats, so they're fairly easy to spot. They are gray overall, have red foreheads, white cheeks, a long dark bill and dark legs.
Immature birds have reddish-brown upper parts and gray underparts and lack the red foreheads. This makes it easy to pick out the parents from the youngsters even when they are the same height.
Sandhill cranes make a loud trumpeting call that can be heard for long distances. They are mainly herbivores, but feed on other foods depending on availability. They will feed on berries, small mammals, insects, snails, reptiles and amphibians.
These cranes raise one

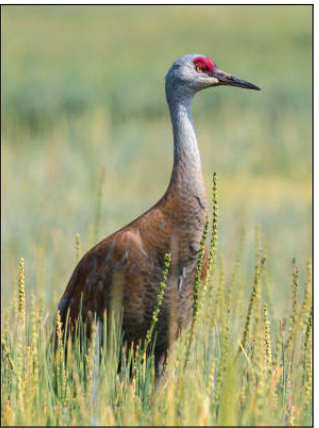
brood per year. The female lays one to three brownish eggs. Both sexes



By Ellenor Downer

build the nest using plant material and both incubate and feed the young.
In summer cranes are often seen in small bogs, marshes and prairies across northern North America and the southeastern United States. In winter they form immense flocks in places like Bosque del Apache, New Mexico and Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge, Texas.
Sandhill crane's call is a loud, rolling, trumpeting sound whose unique tone is a product of anatomy. They have long tracheas that coil into the sternum and help the sound develop a lower pitch and harmonics that add richness.

Sandhill cranes are also known for their dancing skills. Courting cranes stretch their wings, pump their heads, bow, and leap into the air in a graceful and energetic dance.
Many years ago, a Barre resident saw a pair dancing in a field. He said it was a "sight to behold."
Although some start breeding at two years of age, Sandhill cranes may reach the age of seven before breeding. They mate for life, which can mean two decades or more and stay with their mates year-round. Juveniles stick close by their parents for nine or ten months after hatching.
Sandhill crane chicks can leave the nest within 8 hours of hatching and are even capable of swimming.
The oldest sandhill crane on record was at least 37 years, 3 months old. Originally banded in Florida in 1982, it was found in Wisconsin in 2019.
Scarcity of birds
I received an email from a woman who lives on Lake Lashaway.



Sandhill crane

She said, "Since Sunday, Aug. 30, they had most days without birds...any type, large or small at our feeders or just in the shrubs or anywhere. All my neighbors have noticed their feeders are full too." One neighbor said he has seen a falcon. She wonders if the falcon has anything to do with the lack of birds.
Several people at the Oakham Senior Center reported, they see only a few birds and the feeders remain full of seeds.
Massachusetts Audubon sighting
This report to the Massachusetts Audubon Society supports the lack of birds. Someone stated, "On Sept. 11

we birded around Hardwick and on Sept. 12 we birded around Warren. Both days were very poor for passerine migration." They also stated, "On both days we only saw 1 species of warbler: common yellowthroat. In general, song birds were in very low numbers and poor variety. And we went to spots that had proven good for migrants in years past. We really worked hard to turn up migrant warblers, and it just was not happening, at least where we were."
Migrating hawks
The Massachusetts Audubon Society listed migrating hawks spotted on Friday, Sept. 11 at Mt. Watatic in Ashburnham. They included 3 osprey, seven bald eagles, ten sharp-shinned hawks, 131 broad-winged hawks and one merlin.
Canada geese
On Friday, Sept. 4, I saw a large flock of over fifty Canada geese in a field in Spencer. On the same day, I also saw a small flock of wild turkeys and about six Canada geese in field in Barre.
People may report a bird sighting by emailing edowner@turley.com or calling or texting 774-262-5882.

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.

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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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CLEAN UP from page 1

habitats.”

Major called the Connecticut River the “connector” for New England. Growing up on the road near Fairview Elementary School as a Chicopee native, Major described her initial interactions as a driving milestone, having spent her life “driving alongside or over it.” After choosing an outdoor recreation career, the coordinator now realizes how important the river is to the region.

“I’m leading events throughout the watershed and am seeing how revitalization time with our river can be,” Major said. “I just love having people out here and connecting to it and celebrating it and making sure that we can make it clean for today, tomorrow and years to come.”

UMass Five’s Vice President of Retail Services Jim Wage and Community Engagement Coordinator Kelley Jewell shared Major’s passion for the mission. Wage said it was his 10th year helping out as a volunteer and stated he wouldn’t miss out on the opportunity to help the greater community. Jewell mirrored Wage’s enthusiasm.

“We always make it a point to get out here and do it,” Jewell said. “It’s a great feeling to be able to clean up our local spaces.”

“Hopes and dreams is a cleaner environment, a cleaner river and a cleaner community,” Wage said when asked what he hoped for the program’s future. “That’s it. Easy objective, right?”

Major echoed Wage’s sentiments and stated she hoped there would be a day when the program wasn’t necessary because the entire region was far too clean to require attention. She mentioned program volunteers had removed over 1,182 tons of trash since the program’s inception 30 years ago, a figure she equated to the weight of “six large blue whales.”

“If you stack up all the tires that we’ve cleaned



Smiles collected at the base of operations.



A volunteer poses next to the day’s efforts.

throughout the 30 years, it would probably reach over two miles high,” Major said. “Which is incredible when you think about it.”

Major encouraged anyone interested in helping out local initiatives to register through the Connecticut River Conservancy’s website at <https://ctriver.org>. She stressed how important it was to get involved and stated cleanup programs required a “lot of volunteers” to be successful.

“When you engage in the process, you feel more connected with the land,” Major said. “And more present with it. So, join us. It’s good fun.”

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SECURITY from page 4

tlement (not your age 70 SS entitlement). And she cannot get a spousal benefit while your benefits are suspended.

To recap: Yes, you can suspend receipt of your SS retirement benefits until the month you turn 70 and get credit for that delay (resulting in a higher benefit). And, yes, you can continue working as long as you wish and your benefits will not be negatively affected.

And just for added information, you can also ask Social Security to withdraw your current application for SS benefits and then reapply in January 2027 for your benefits to start in March 2027, the month you turn 70. You have both options.

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Turley photos by Ben Hernandez

A volunteer showcases his findings.



South Hadley High School student volunteers.

DIRECTOR from page 1

sponsible in tackling difficult responsibilities, such as navigating supplemental food services and handling transportation logistics.

“I did a lot with Mass Health, SNAP, which is what we now call Food Stamps,” Hannigan said. “I worked with a couple of different food programs and a lot of housing concerns.”

Hannigan has always worked in social services. She’s been a Massachusetts since 2018 and is a University of Massachusetts graduate. With a spouse from Western Massachusetts, the new director reported she always had ties with the local community.

“I really want to be available to the Granby Senior Center community,” Hannigan said. “I want people

to feel like their voices are heard and that they will get support with their needs. Social services have always been important to me because I am a firm believer in aging in place.”

She intends to be a support system for older adults, as well as serving to make the Council on Aging an invaluable service to those wishing to age in place. Hannigan also took the opportunity to mention a number of classes provided by the CoA designed to promote healthy advanced aging. She also mentioned there were Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone program resources available at the senior center.

“There are social events like quilting, Canasta, cross-stitching; places for the 60 and over community to come in and be a part of,” Hannigan said. “We have a

SHINE and outreach counselor here who helps with things like health insurance and guides people through processes that might be new and challenging to them.”

Her long-term goals are to foster a comfortable and welcoming environment which allows residents to feel they can reach for help. In addition, she wants to further education of available resources and to ensure those resources are available for those who need them.

“I would like the Granby Council on Aging to continue to be a welcoming place where people 60 and over can come to get the services they need. I want them to feel like their voices are heard,” Hannigan said. “If there are people who have never been to our building, I would love for them to check it out, stop by and say hi.”

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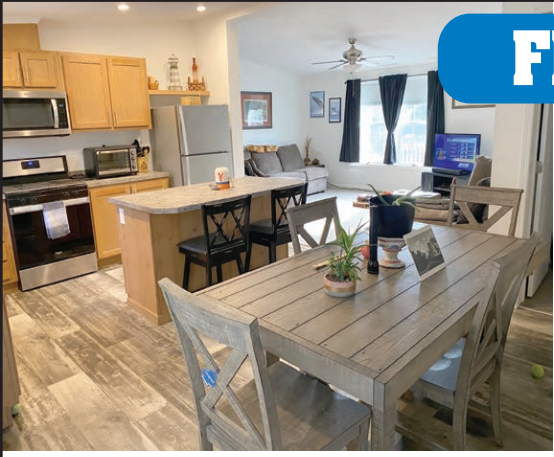
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Town Reminder ~ November 5, 2026

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Please submit a photo of your veteran with his or her name, rank, branch of military and hometown by email to jamie@turley.com or drop off a photo to

Town Reminder,
24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069
All photos will be returned.

Please submit your photo no later than Monday, October 27, 2026.

*There is no cost to submit a photo.
No photos will be accepted after deadline.*

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Tigers out to 2-1 start



Ella Haber lunges after the ball.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

BELCHERTOWN – Last Friday afternoon, the South Hadley High School field hockey team suffered its first loss of the season with a 3-1 defeat at Belchertown. Prior to that, the Tigers had two shutout wins over Smith Academy and Mohawk Trail. The Tigers are now 2-1 with a matchup against Southwick that was set for Sept. 24. Coming up, the Tigers host Amherst Regional at 6 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 28.



Sam Harrison sends a shot on goal during a penalty corner.



Amanda Stevenson guides the ball up the field.



Logan Muskus fights for possession.



Nora Vaughn looks to get the ball in the circle.

Tigers score blowout win over Comp

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

SOUTH HADLEY – As a freshman member of the South Hadley girls' varsity soccer team, Hannah Haesaert recorded her first career hat-trick during the Division 4 state tournament. Haesaert accomplished the milestone for the second time in last year's Western Mass. Class B quarterfinal match, which was a 4-0 shutout victory over Frontier Regional. The junior forward didn't have to wait until the postseason tournament to record another hat-trick.



Jenna Sabourin nearly collides with an opponent going after a loose ball.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli



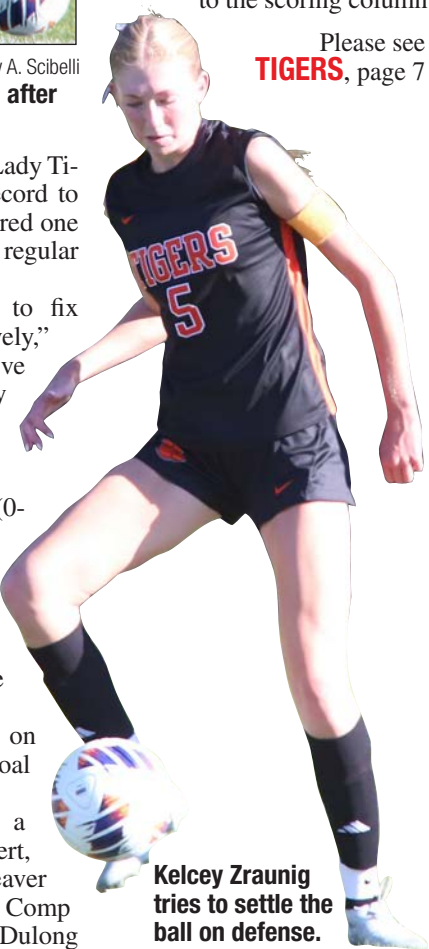
Hannah Haesaert takes control of the ball near midfield.

After scoring two first half goals, Haesaert netted a breakaway goal in the middle of the second half, as the Lady Tigers cruised to a 9-0 home victory over Kurty/Fielding Division rival Chicopee Comp, last Tuesday afternoon (Sept.15). "This is my third year playing for the varsity soccer team and it's my third hat-trick," said Haesaert, who has scored a total of 25 goals as a varsity soccer player. "I'm hoping to get a few more hat-tricks this season. My teammates have been very supportive of me." While the shutout

victory improved the Lady Tigers overall season record to 2-1, they had only scored one goal in their first two regular season matches. "We just needed to fix some things offensively," Haesaert added. "We've been working very hard and it feels very good to finally score some goals." The Lady Colts (0-3) didn't score a goal in their first three games. They also haven't defeated the Lady Tigers on the soccer pitch in more than seven years. Haesaert assisted on the Lady Tigers first goal of the contest. After receiving a pass from Haesaert, senior Mikayla Weaver bounced a shot past Comp junior goalie Annie Dulong

(10 saves) into the left corner of the net. It was Weaver's first goal of the season. Then Haesaert scored a pair of goals in a span of five minutes. "I thought Hannah played very well in today's game," said South Hadley first-year head coach Molly Foley. "I'm hoping that she's one of our leading goal scorers this season." Both of Haesaert's first half goals were assisted by junior Kelcey Zraunig. The Lady Tigers had several other scoring chances during the final ten minutes of the first half, but the score was 3-0 at halftime. Zraunig added her name to the scoring column

Please see **TIGERS**, page 7



Kelcey Zraunig tries to settle the ball on defense.

Rams coast to win over rival Amherst

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

GRANBY – Granby senior tri-captain Kalli White entered the 2026 high school soccer season with 90 career goals and 21 career assists for a total of 111 points. After being kept off the scoresheet in the first two regular-season matches, White netted a pair of goals in a non-league matchup against Pittsfield. Freshman Sophia Wright also contributed with two second half goals as the Lady Rams coasted to a 5-0 home victory over the Generals, last Monday afternoon (Sept.14). "I didn't score any goals in our first two games of the regular season. After scoring my first goal in today's game, I gained a lot of confidence," White said. "We tied Pittsfield last year and it feels very good beating them." When the two squads faced each other at Kirvin Park in Pittsfield last October, the match, which was played on a rainy and cold afternoon, ended in a scoreless draw. "It poured the entire game when we played at Pittsfield last October. It wasn't a very good day," said Granby head coach Bob Weaver. "The weather was a lot better today, but it did take us a little while to get going in the first half."

The Lady Rams had a total of 18 shot attempts during the first 40 minutes against the Generals. The match was still scoreless late in the first half when White fired a left foot shot into the right corner of the net past senior goalie Ella Kroboth (16 saves) for an unassisted goal. "I normally take most of my shots with my right foot, but I've been getting better taking shots with my left foot," White said. "I just shot the ball without really thinking about it very much. When I do think about it, I usually miss." Granby, who are the two-time defending Western Mass. Class D champions, took a 2-0 lead less than five minutes into the second half when sophomore Marcela Tapia scored a corner kick goal. Senior McKenna Zumbuski was credited with the assist. During the 52nd minute, Granby freshman Margo Healy sent a pass into the box from the right side. The ball deflected off White's body and went into the back of the net giving the home team a comfortable 3-0 advantage. "Margo did a very good job of crossing me the ball," White said. "The ball deflected into the net off my body." While White is approaching 100 career goals, Wright netted her first varsity goal with a little more than twenty minutes remaining in regulation. A minute later, Wright fired another shot into the left corner of the net past Kroboth.

Please see **RAMS**, page 7

WSU Owls football gets first win

WESTFIELD — Westfield State University football rolled up 463 yards of offense and got a pair of long TD receptions from electric first-year receiver Malachi Hymes (E. Hartford, Conn./East Hartford) as the Owls downed Dean College, 26-8 at Alumni Field on Westfield State’s Family and Champions Weekend.

Westfield improves its record to 1-2 overall and 1-1 in the Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference, while Dean is now 0-3 and 0-2 MASCAC.

Hymes finished with four catches for 166 yards and touchdowns of 61 and 46 yards. His day could have been bigger as a reverse that looked like a 89- yard score was called back by a penalty, and later he stepped out of bounds while avoiding a tackle on 53-yard reception that initially looked like a 73-yard score.

Westfield opened the scoring with a 1-yard TD plunge from QB Quinn Sumner (Dayville, Conn./Killingly),

who finished 6-11 passing for 180 yards and the two TD tosses to Hymes.

Hymes caught a go route down the left side for the 61 yarder, out sprinting the full defense, then out-leaped his defender around the five-yard line to with the ball on the 46-yard grab before waltzing into the endzone.

Westfield set up the big passing plays with the run as sophomore fullback Manny Mengata (Tewksbury, Mass.) battered the Bulldogs for 136 yards on 18 carries, and Cole Ingham (Agawam, Mass.) added 69 yards on five carries.

Westfield senior PK Andrew Currier (Attleboro, Mass./Foxboro HS) booted a pair of 33-yard field goals and a pair of extra points to account for the final score.

Dean’s lone TD of the game came midway through the second quarter on a 12-yard touchdown pass from Chris Donahue to Yasir Moses. The Bulldogs tried to feature a short passing attack with Donahue connecting

on 32 of 45 attempts for 186 yards with one TD and one INT. His longest completion of the day went for 12 yards.

The Bulldogs totaled just 33 yards rushing. Tay Scholtz finished with nine catches for 75 yards and seven catches for 62 yards.

Westfield’s defense bent but rarely broke, allowing 219 total yards on the day. The Owls sacked Donohue eight times for a loss of 61 yards.

LB Aydan Verba (Albany, NY/Colonie Central) led the Owls with eight tackles and 2.5 sacks. Tedi Hunt (Littleton, Mass.) made eight stops and had 2.5 TFLs. Eight different players had a hand in the sack column. First-year Caedan Burns (N. Grafton, Mass.) picked off the Bulldogs late to help seal the win. Colin Brady and Herman Esquivel Mendez led the Bulldogs with eight stops each.

Westfield State will travel to Worcester State for a conference matchup next Saturday, Sept. 26 with a 1 p.m. kickoff at Alumni Field.

Chaffee, Patnode get victories

WINCHESTER, NH - Todd Patnode won’t win his seventh track championship this season at Monadnock Speedway, but the Swanzeystar is going all out to leave his mark on the 2026 campaign.

Slowed by a sluggish start this summer and then sidelined by an injury, he has exploded back into his championship form, winning his second Modified feature in a row Saturday, Sept. 12, and setting himself up for a threepeat bid in next week’s season finale.

Patnode wasn’t the only big winner Saturday, as the speedway crowned 2026 Triple Crown champions in all divisions with the third and final leg of its three-race summer series. Ty LeClerc, a close second to Patnode in the Modified main event, celebrated his triple crown championship.

Other feature winners Saturday included Limited Late Model ace JD Stockwell,, Craig Chaffee, who won a thriller in the Mini Stocks, and Dylan Zullo, who scored his first win of the season aboard the CJ Johnson ride. Young Gun whiz Dylan Stati stayed undefeated on the season in events he entered.

Following a elaborate pre-race ceremony honoring the victims of the September 11 tragedy 25 years ago, a ceremony in which all of Saturday night’s drivers participated, it was Dylan Stati time again, as the Palmer, MA preteen rocketed to victory atop a six-car field in the Doug’s Auto Body youth division. Quinton Perkins raced to a career best in second, and Eli Elliott trophied in third.

Rookie Kyle Kenny and Ty LeClerc sat up front as the 50-lap All States Materials Group 604 Modified main event went green. LeClerc, a two-time winner a summer ago, was hungry for his first 2026 victory, and with Triple Crown points leader Eddie Gomarlo sidelined with engine issues, was in great position for that score too.

Andrew Brousseau and Todd Patnode had big plans of their own, leaning all over LeClerc in their bids for the top spot. Patnode charged into second on lap 16, but LeClerc held strong. They swapped the lead back and forth on laps 24-26, with Pat-

node then taking the top spot for good.

A Brousseau spin on lap 48 set up a classic in next week’s Modified season finale. With Tyler Leary third on the night, just ahead of Brian Chapin and Kenny, Leary and Brousseau - sixth under the checkers Saturday, will enter the Championship Night final event only 2 points ahead in the 2026 points parade.

JD Stockwell has been the man at the front for much of the Twin State Truck Services Limited Late Model 2026 season, and Saturday was no exception, as the youthful Bernardston, MA star blasted to his tenth win of the summer and, with it, won his division’s Triple Crown Series too. Hillary Renaud took charge on lap two and held the top spot until Stockwell lowlined to the top spot on lap 20. Renaud kept it close the rest of the way, but Stockwell prevailed. A lap-34 pass brought Daniel Petrowicz home third, just ahead of Hagar, and Zach Zilinski completed the top five.

Tim O’Shea and Kevin Clayton were front row dancing partners as Saturday’s Keene Towing and Recovery Mini Stock feature went green. Clayton led the first trip around the high banks but then Craig Chaffee - from row two - took the lead.

Chaffee, gunning for his second win of the summer, had lots of company at the front, with past champions Jon Fultz and Louie Maher glued to his bumper every inch of the way. Fultz, the 2025 Mini Stock king, blasted to the top spot on lap 21, but Chaffee wasn’t done yet.

Charging back to the front to lead lap 26 by a wheel, the second generation hot shoe then held strong to score the big Triple Crown Night win with Fultz at his bumper. Former Pure Stock champ Andrea St. Amour came on strong in the closing laps to earn her first Mini Stock trophy of the season in third, just ahead of Tim Paquette, who had a big night of his own.

Paquette didn’t have the fastest car on this night, but ran a smart race to come home fourth, just enough to win the Triple Crown championship. One-man gang Pat Houle was fifth under

the checkers in Saturday’s 30-lapper.

Dylan Zullo led a star-stacked field of 25 to the green for Saturday’s Brattleboro Towing and Recovery Pure Stock feature. The speedway’s 2025 Limited Late Model champ, Zullo had struggled through an uneven season in the Pure Stocks.

Saturday, though, the second-generation Claremont ace put it all together, leading all the way to score an easy win. Behind him, the battle was fast and furious, with both the Triple Crown and Weekly Racing Series points very much up for grabs.

Rookie rocketman Josh Brigham, heavily wrecked a week earlier, got up for second early but had nothing for the speedy Zullo. His strong runner-up finish, though, put him back solidly into the hunt for the 2026 track championship. Coupled with top points man Jimmy Zellman’s sixth-place finish Saturday, Brigham will enter the season finale only five markers shy of Zellman in their airtight battle for the Pure Stock title.

Kyle Begos, strong every week, finished third Saturday, just ahead of Maya Bell, who is surging in the final weeks of the season. Previous winner Linsey Wenzel impressed in fifth, holding off Zellman, who finished still atop the 2026 points parade but one spot shy of the Triple Crown championship.

Amherst, NH hot shoe Michael Yeaton - a six-time 2026 Pure Stock feature winner - entered Saturday’s Triple Crown 30-lapper five points atop Zellman. Firing from way back in row eight, Yeaton’s seventh place finish was all he needed to earn his first career Triple Crown title on the high banks.

In Saturday’s Senior Tour Auto Racers Modified feature, John Jalbert of Gardner, MA drove his 1973 Pinto-bodied entry to first place. Gary Moore was second, and Chris Jarrett, aboard a 1940 Buick Coupe open-wheeler was third. In the STAR Sportsman feature, Anthony Mendoza of Taunton, MA guided his 1936 Chevy Coupe to victory. John Mulcahy was second, and Ken Archambault raced home third.

TIGERS from page 6

with a goal four minutes into the second half, which was assisted by senior Cara Dean.

One of the few things that the Comp faithful supporters had to cheer for was a free kick taken from junior Kelsey Morrisette. Her line-drive shot taken from the top of the box was saved by junior goalie Olivia Athas (2 saves), who posted her second consecutive shut-out.

Haesaert capped off her memorable afternoon with an unassisted breakaway goal increasing the Lady Tigers lead to 5-0.

“I really wanted to get another hat-trick,” Haesaert said. “I just relaxed on the breakaway and put a shot past the goalie.”

A couple of minutes later, sophomore Regan Masse scored on a header following a corner kick.

Sophomore Violet Carillon, whose older brothers were outstanding athletes at South Hadley High School, was given the assist.

Five days earlier, Masse scored her team’s only goal in a 1-0 victory at Agawam.

The Lady Tigers final three goals were scored by freshman Adalyn Weaver, freshman Cadee Killian, and Athas, who was replaced in goal by Dean.

While Athas has four assists as a varsity player, it was her first varsity goal.

Adalyn Weaver and Killian also scored their first varsity goals.

“It was very special to see Adalyn and Cadee score their first varsity goals. It’s

something they’ll always remember,” Foley said. “I’m also very glad that we had several other goal scorers.”

Foley, who played soccer at Palmer High School, netted her first varsity goal in a game at Springfield Central as an eighth grader.

Prior to becoming an assistant varsity coach at South Hadley a year ago, Foley was the Lady Colts varsity coach for two seasons.

“A couple of the players that I coached are still playing for Comp,” Foley said. “Those kids always work very hard.”

While South Hadley ended last week with a scoreless draw against Northampton, the Chicopee Comp players celebrated a 3-2 victory over West Springfield at Ash Park in Chicopee, last Friday afternoon.



Grace Sherman heads for the left sideline.



Jillian Scott chases after the loose ball.



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Kierstyn Carmody goes after the ball.



Natalie Rios goes after the loose ball.

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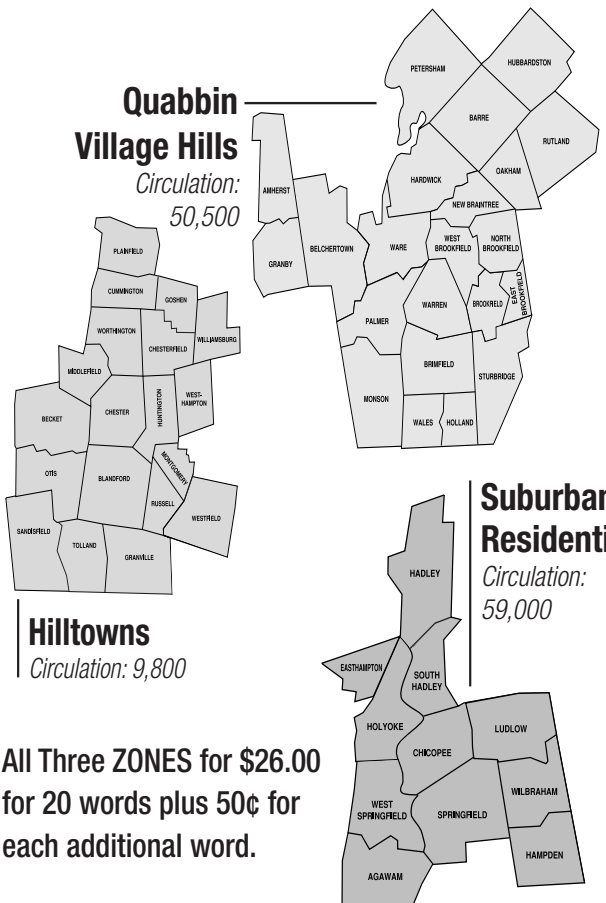
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MEET from page 1

“Our county elected officials are very important to us,” Oliveira said as he introduced county officials, which included Hampshire County Register of Probate and Family Court Mark Ames and Chicopee City Council At-Large Member Jessica Avery.

“The real reason we’re here tonight is this important individual that I’ve had the pleasure of knowing for a little close to two years now,” Oliveira said. “If anybody knows about legislating, it’s about building relationships. It’s about working together for the benefit of your community.”

Oliveira recalled how hesitant he was at first when Gomez became a state representative. The senator admitted he was someone who didn’t like change and his initial unfamiliarity with Gomez came with a bit of apprehension. However, as they began to see each other at “different events,” he reported he grew comfortable with the man and took the opportunity to vouch for his character.

“I think everybody, once they meet Homar, knows how comfortable you’re going to be when you meet him,” Oliveira said. “He puts you at ease. He understands. He cares. But here’s the most important thing for this line of work: he listens.”

Oliveira stated successful representatives needed to



Submitted photos

Representative Homar Gomez addressing the crowd.

have the patience and temperance of a social worker, as well as the ability to forge meaningful community connections. He argued state representatives needed to understand they serve a critical role as the last potential place to turn to when people had “nowhere else to turn.”

Described as the “dean” of the representative group by Senator Oliveira, Ashe took the stand and passionately argued for Gomez’s re-election to office. He stated how important it was to have the “support of your colleagues” and how much work it is to raise funds and to learn district nuances while also understanding how to navigate politics at the state house.

“It’s important, especially out here in Western Mass, for us to stick together,” Ashe said. “I came up here because

I know how important it is to support candidates and state reps like Homar Gomez.”

Representative Homar Gomez expressed gratitude for everyone in attendance and joked he was “still in recovery” from being a City Council member. He recalled how his friendship developed with Senator Oliveira and remembered the advice his “favorite senator” gave him when he took office.

“You need to create alliances with other reps,” Gomez said as he recounted the senator’s advice. “You need to be working with other senators and you have to do it right away. Do it now. I learned that because of him.”

Gomez reminisced on his time as a city councilor and stated he “learned so much stuff” while serving in the position. He referenced

fellow State Representative Carlos Gonzalez and called him a “friend” and a “leader.” Gomez also took time in his speech to praise Ashe and stated the representative was someone he could always turn to for advice.

During the meat of his speech, Gomez championed his primary causes to support micro-business and to ensure affordable high-quality food was available for all. He recounted how much his family relied on the local food pantry when they first came to the region.

“People should have good food on their table with good products; local products from our farms,” Gomez said. “That’s my priority.”

Micro-businesses, he argued, supported not only the local economy but local families. He described micro-businesses as family owned and operated businesses local to the region. He stated his priority last year was to help micro-business get money to help fund their endeavors, which would remain a focus his campaign this year.

“I’m available for you. That’s why, when you see my business card, my cell phone is there. And when it rings, it rings here,” Gomez said as he held up his phone to both illustrate his point to conclude his speech. “Not somebody in my office because I want to work for you. Thank you for being here.”



Board of Director President Steven Laplante, State Representative Homar Gomez, State Representative Brian Ashe, State Senator Jake Oliveira.



Representative Gomez poses with Easthampton Mayor Salem Derby.



A sample of the crowd in attendance.



Crowd shot taken during the speeches.



Representative Gomez posing with an attendee.



A shot of the crowd behind Representative Gomez.

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