



TURLEY PHOTOS BY BEN HERNANDEZ
Volunteer garden manager Holly Field instructs Pathfinder Tech students on how to grow chard.

Garden seeks aid through summer

By Ben Hernandez
bhernandez@turley.com

BELCHERTOWN – The next volunteer session for the Belchertown School Garden began on June 28. Located in front of Swift River Elementary, the gardens have been a community staple for school youths since the early 1990s.

“The school garden has been around for quite a while now,” said Volunteer Garden

Manager Holly Field. “I’m just the current caretaker of the garden. But it was started by some teachers who wanted to get the children outside learning in a hands-on environment.”

According to documentation provided by Field, the garden was originally created by local third grade school teacher Carol Wagner in the early 1990s, the garden project was handed off to several volunteers throughout the

course of its near 40 years of existence. These transitions had the garden go through several different transformations; which included a season of cultivated potatoes, a rock garden, a pollinator garden and the addition of flower beds.

The current garden now serves as a key element of the Life on Earth elective course for students in grades 10 to 12, a class which teaches about biodiversity and

how ecosystems work in the local environment. Since the incorporation of the gardening planning group Parent Teacher Garden Organization in 2015, the gardens have enjoyed support from both the school and wider community support. However, this town integration didn’t come without its share of pitfalls.

Please see **GARDEN**,
page 8

School Com weighs stadium shutdown

Drought leaves field ‘not safe’

By Melina Bourdeau
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN — The high school stadium field may sit idle for at least the coming fall, and possibly a full school year, after district officials warned the drought-stricken grass surface is no longer safe for student athletes.

“We’ve been under a water ban since September...”

– Eric Lebeau

During the School Committee’s June 23 meeting, administrators and facilities staff detailed how prolonged water restrictions, failed wells and herbicide treatments have left the field bare and uneven, prompting a push to move football, soccer and some field hockey games to alternate sites while the surface recovers.

“The field’s in rough shape right now, it is not safe,” Belchertown High School Principal Christine Vigneux said after walking the surface with facilities staff. “There are areas of the field that are not safe, especially in the middle... it’s bare.”

The committee did not take a formal vote, but there was clear consensus to plan for moving fall home games off the high school stadium while the district completes a long-delayed irrigation project and undertakes aggressive renovations. Officials said that means shifting dozens of soccer,

football and field hockey contests to other local or regional fields, arranging additional busing, and possibly renting lights — all while trying to preserve traditional “Friday night” experiences for seniors.

Director of Buildings and Grounds Eric Lebeau told the committee the stadium’s condition is largely the result of a townwide water ban that began around last September and a failed attempt to solve the issue with on-site wells.

“We’ve been under a water ban since... September. Obviously, we can’t water any of our fields right now. That’s a Belchertown Water District decision, not a decision we can make,” Lebeau said. “The water has been shut off at the street, so even if I wanted to go and water a field, I couldn’t do it anyways.”

The district drilled two wells at the stadium, but a geological study found the site could not support a productive third well. The two existing wells produce only about 15 gallons per minute at a sustainable draw, far short of the 112 gallons per minute required by the largest irrigation zone.

“We’re nowhere near... Our irrigation system, the largest zone, requires 112 gallons per minute,” Lebeau said. “So, basically, what will happen is there’ll be two very large water storage tanks on site... the wells will pump and fill those tanks during the day... to be used overnight and in the early morning.”

The Community Preservation Committee pre-

Please see **STADIUM**,
page 3

Granby BOH raises concerns over compliance issues

By Melina Bourdeau
Correspondent

GRANBY – Health officials raised concerns over food-waste composting and small-scale food operations last week, pressing Red Fire Farm and the Chateau Harmony Food Shed to meet state wastewater, sanitation and nuisance standards amid complaints of odors, rodents and regulatory gray areas.

Members wrestled with how to support local agriculture and grassroots food businesses while enforcing state public health codes. Red Fire Farm’s partnership with a commercial banana composting venture and its unfinished market building on Taylor Street drew extended scrutiny, as did the Chateau Harmony Food Shed’s effort to operate a stationary food stand at 185

West State Street. Officials signaled they are open to creative uses but said wastewater, plumbing and food safety rules leave little room for compromise.

“State of Massachusetts has several minimal codes, which have to be abided by... there’s no room for the town of Granby or any other town to circumvent state minimum codes.”

– Lee Lelonde

Red Fire Farm’s hosting of Banana Compost, a private food-scrap hauler that builds large compost windrows on the farm’s Taylor Street land, dominated one of the meeting’s longest segments. Board members described a balancing act

between diverting organics from landfills and responding to residents’ complaints about odor and rats.

Board of Health member Mael Walkowiak reported visiting the piles from the street, where they were actively decomposing. He said the first time he went out, the rows “were steaming and working real hard. It smelled, the way I would describe it’s ketonic, kind of like ammonia, like people that have bad diabetes, and they go into decay.”

After the Department of Environmental Protection

Please see **BOH**, page 5

Neighboring town adds to pickleball rise

By Ben Hernandez
Correspondent

SOUTH HADLEY – The renovated pickleball courts at Buttery Brook Park are completed. The addition of four new courts marked the end of an ongoing project in development since 2019.

“It’s free,” said Friends of Buttery Brook Park President Kim Prough, a non-profit volunteer organization designed to both add and support new features to the public park. The additional courts mark the end of an ongoing project in the works since 2019.

Prough stated the upcoming grand opening was a way to both welcome new prospective players to the sport and to honor the legacy of Ron Bullock, a longtime high school physical educa-



TURLEY PHOTO BY BEN HERNANDEZ

Residents enjoy the public park courts offered by the Friends of Buttery Brook Park.

tion teacher and early advocate for the growing sport. Bullock performed the ceremonial first serve at the court on Sunday.

Prough mentioned the cre-

ation of the pickleball courts were one of the main reasons why she joined the organi-

Please see **PICKLEBALL**,
page 4



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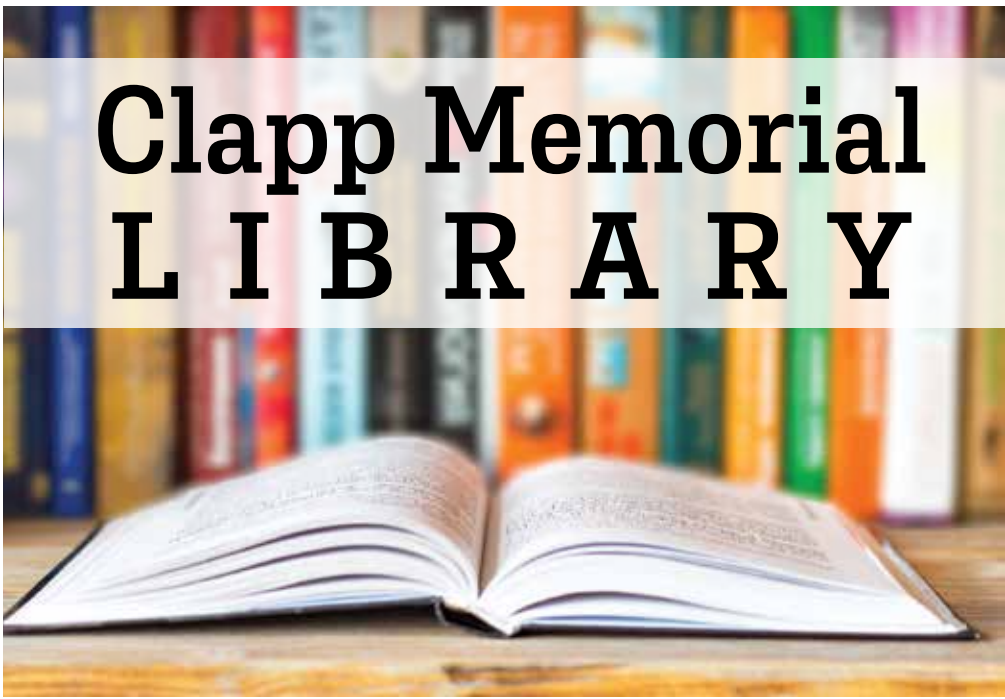
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COMMUNITY

What’s going on at the Library? Check it out!

For General Audiences:
The Clapp Memorial Library’s Summer Reading Programs are going on now through August 15th! This year’s theme is “Plant a Seed...Read!” We have programs for kids ages 0-12, teens ages 12-18, and adults ages 18 and up. Keep track of what you read, take part in exciting challenges, attend special summer programs, and earn chances to win great prizes! For more information about all of our summer reading programs, stop by the library or visit our website: clapplibrary.org/summer-reading-programs. Thank you to the following organizations for sponsoring this program: Belchertown Family Center Committee, Friends of Clapp Memorial Library, Window World of Western Massachusetts, bankESB, Bell & Hudson Insurance Agency, Inc., CountryBank, Florence Bank, Roberts Roofs Co., A Healing Touch Therapeutic Massage, Inc., Greenfield Savings Bank, Liberty Blues Landscaping, North Brookfield Savings Bank, Westover Auto Salvage, Antonio’s Pizza, Pelham Industrial Group LTD, Tilton Automotive, Alix & Sons Computer Center, Cindy’s Drive-In, Claymates, and Station 5 Salon.

Pickleball and Disc Golf Kits
Available to Check Out Now
We’ve added two new kits to our Library of Things!
Pickleball Kits contain 4 Pickleball paddles, 2 balls, a carrying case, and playing instructions. Thank you to our community members for their donations for these kits! Belchertown has 2 Pickleball Courts: One at Chestnut Hill School, 59 State St, and one at Jabish Brook School, 61 Springfield Rd. Disc Golf Kits contain 2 Fairway Driver



discs, 1 Distance Driver disc, 1 Mid Range disc, 1 Putt & Approach disc, 1 Mini-Marker disc, playing instructions, and a carrying case. Thank you to the Belchertown Recreation Department for donating the disc golf kits! Belchertown’s Cold Spring Disc Golf Course at Constantino Field is located at 111 Sargent St.

Puzzle Competitions
Wednesday, July 8th, 4:00 - 6:00 pm
Wednesday, July 22nd, 4:00 - 6:00 pm
Are you ready to puzzle? Sign up in a team of two for a speed puzzling competition where pairs of contestants race to finish a 500 piece puzzle. The 1st place finishers receive a puzzle. Choose from 2 dates. Register online at clapplibrary.org or call 413-323-0417. The puzzles for this program were generously donated by Ravensburger.

For Adults:
Zen Coloring with Crayons
Monday, July 6, 6:00 - 7:30 pm
Create your own zen masterpiece with crayons! Artist Marie Tucker will help you make your own beautiful work of art. Register online at clapplibrary.org or call

413-323-0417. This program is for adults 18 years old and up. Please register in advance as space is limited. All supplies will be provided and all experience levels are welcome! Sponsored by the Friends of Clapp Memorial Library.

Author Talk with Michael Parzymieso
Wednesday, July 8th, 7:00 - 8:30 pm
Join author Michael Parzymieso on July 8th for a discussion of the places and people around Belchertown and the Quabbin that inspired the supernatural thriller, *The Dale*. This year, he will be doing a reading of the sequel, *Afterglow*, set five years after the events of *The Dale*, which will be published in April 2027. Book signing afterward. Books are available online or at the event.

What “YA” Readin’? Book Group
Thursday, July 9th, 7:00 - 8:00 pm
Select Board Meeting room at the Town Hall
The library’s What “YA” Readin’? Book Group, a group for adults who read Young Adult books, will meet Thursday, July 9th in the Select Board Meeting room at the Town Hall to discuss

The Wilderness of Girls by Madeline Claire Franklin. Copies of the book are available for checkout at the circulation desk. New members are welcome!

For Teens: Big Prize Bingo
Friday, July 10th, 3:00 - 4:30 pm
Town Hall Auditorium
Teens ages 12-18 are invited to the library’s Fifth Annual Summer Reading Bingo program on Friday, July 10th, in the Town Hall Auditorium. Teens will play bingo for the chance to win big prizes like gift cards, signed books and swag, puzzles, and more! All attendees will earn a raffle ticket for the Teen Summer Reading Program. Teens can sign up for the program at the library or by emailing clapplibrarytab@gmail.com. Teens must be registered for the Teen Summer Reading Program to attend. A HUGE thank-you to Tower Theaters, McCray’s Farm, Central Rock Gym, and Spirit of Springfield for your generous donations to our Big Prize Bingo program!

Teen Book Club
Wednesday, July 29th, 3:00 - 4:00 pm
The Clapp Memorial Library has a book club

for teens in grades 7-12! This Teen Book Club is in conjunction with the MA Teen Choice Book Awards (MTCBA), the only book award in the state selected by teens. Each month teens will read and meet to discuss one book from the 2026 Nominee List. On Wednesday, July 29th, teens will meet to discuss *Into the Sunken City* by Dinesh Thiru. Copies of the book are available for checkout at the library’s circulation desk and on the Libby and hoopla apps. Snacks will be provided at the meeting. Email clapplibrarytab@gmail.com with any questions.

For Children:
The Curious Giraffe Show
Wednesday, July 8th, 6:00 - 7:00 pm
Town Hall Auditorium
Join author and educator Dorothy Cresswell for an interactive show with stories and songs to learn about animals and how they represent wonder in the world. Part of our Summer Reading Program! Geared towards ages 3 to 9. No separate registration is required, but children must be registered for our Summer Reading Program to attend.

Aquatic Macroinvertebrate Program
Saturday, July 11th, 9:00 - 10:00 am
Lake Wallace, Belchertown
Join us to investigate fascinating creatures and critters in Lake Wallace. Local biologists/parents, Caralyn Zehnder and Will Duncan, will show us the life cycles of aquatic macroinvertebrates like dragonflies and damselflies. Lake Wallace is located behind the police station next to Foley Field. Geared towards children ages 4 - 11. Part of our Summer Reading Program! Specific event registration is required, register online at clapplibrary.org or call 413-323-0417. Children must also be registered for the Summer Reading Program to attend.

Magic: the Gathering
Saturdays: July 11th, 18th & 25th, August 1st, 10:30 am to 1:30 pm
Join us for Magic the Gathering in the Activity Room. Bring your own deck or use one of our learning decks. Everyone is welcome, however players must be fluent readers. Players under the age of 10 must have a caregiver who is at least 14 years old on the Library premises. Join us for every session or just one - it’s up to you! We will have two instructors to help get games started and assist with the rules of the game. No registration is required. Join the email list so if the group needs to be postponed, we can notify you, by sending an email to Jennifer at jwhitehead@cwmar.org. We will not be meeting on July 4th.

Two Dinosaurs Are Better Than One
Wednesday, July 15th, 6:00 - 7:00 pm
Talking Hands Theatre presents this musical tabletop show featuring different kinds of dinosaurs from the Jurassic Era! Find out what the dinosaurs plan to do about that big carnivore, Allosaurus, who is pushing everyone around! No separate registration is required, but children must be registered for our Summer Reading Program to attend. This event will take place on the Library lawn. Bring chairs, blankets, water, and bug spray. Funded in part by The Belchertown Cultural Council, a local agency funded by Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

Clapp Memorial Library Hours:
Monday 9:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
Tuesday 9:30 a.m.-7 p.m.
Wednesday 9:30 a.m.-7 p.m.
Thursday 9:30 a.m.-7 p.m.
Friday 9:30 a.m.-6 p.m.*
Saturday 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m.*
**The library will be closed on Friday, July 3rd and Saturday, July 4th for Independence Day.*

Planning for Quabbin Days 2026 now 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 organiza-

tions 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 organiza-

tions 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 exist-

ing 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.

STADIUM from page 1
viously approved a change to the district’s grant so that money originally earmarked for rerurfing and a well could instead be used to install two large water storage tanks, along with pumps and controls. District engineers from Fuss & O’Neill are finalizing bid specifications.
Lebeau said the project is expected to go out to bid within weeks, with a bid award anticipated by mid-July and a possible installation by the end of August if materials arrive on time. Until

that system is operational, he said, major field work such as aeration, topdressing and slit-seeding would be risky and potentially wasted.
“There’s things we could do to the field, but... doesn’t make sense putting the cart before the horse,” he told the committee. “I can bring in a contractor to do some work on the fields, but if I can’t water it, it really doesn’t make any sense to spend money on that right now.”
In recent weeks, the district has applied herbicide to kill off weeds and attempted to reseed parts of the stadium,

but those efforts stalled without irrigation.
Superintendent Brian Cameron backed assessments, warning the committee he is concerned about serious injuries if play continues the stadium this fall.
Committee member Ruby Bansal argued that if the district invests in restoring the turf, it should resist the temptation to rush back onto the field at the first sign of green.
Lebeau said that if unlimited water were available immediately, he could probably make the field technically playable by fall, but that

would come at the cost of longer-term recovery.
The emerging consensus, echoed by Cameron, Vigneux and Bansal, was to plan for closing the stadium field for at least the fall 2026 season, and potentially for the entire 2026–27 school year, to allow a full cycle of renovation and establishment.
“If we’re going to move forward with closing the field in the fall, then we might as well do it in the spring, give it the best chance we have... spend a whole year just working the field,” Lebeau said.

The district is exploring a renovated town recreation field, as a home venue for afternoon soccer and some field hockey. That site has no lights, meaning games would need to be scheduled earlier in the day.
For football, Vigneux said, the most realistic option may be using the turf field in Palmer, through Pathfinder, which does have lights but would require busing players — and potentially the marching band — to an out-of-town “home” field.
Committee member Hope Gaurdenier pressed admin-

istrators to consider whether renting temporary lights for the other might be cheaper than transporting teams to Palmer, especially for seniors looking forward to a final home-field experience.
Cameron said the administration will conduct a cost-benefit analysis of busing versus lights and will bring back options. Athletic Director Kevin McNeil, who was listening remotely while on vacation, has been asked to attend a future meeting to detail scheduling scenarios and costs.



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Belchertown Police Log

4:31 p.m. – A person brought in a bluetooth speaker found at Foley Field. The

10:47 a.m. - The Belchertown Fire Department responded to a medical call at a Brenda Lane home. On arrival, paramedics found an adult male deceased at the scene. Based on their observations inside the residence, Chief John Ingram requested a state hazmat team to determine

12:05 p.m. — An officer took a report of fraud. A

9:08 p.m. – An officer took a report of fireworks being shot into their yard by a neighbor. Debris was found in the neighbor's yard. Saw person by the garage holding the empty firework tools and said did fire them but not aiming in that direction. They denied there were more, but the officer observed there were in fact more fireworks. The officer advised they were illegal in Massachusetts. The person eventually turned over the fireworks. The fireworks were brought to Belchertown Fire Department to have them destroyed.

6:49 a.m. — An officer con-

7:56 p.m. — An officer responded to an accident on Turkey Hill Road. A vehicle was parked and when the owner came out of a business, they observed damage to the left rear corner and tailgate. It appeared a vehicle backed into their vehicle. There was no way to identify the second vehicle.

1:26 p.m. – A resident reported receiving a text message stating that that they have to appear in district court tomorrow. The message didn't say what court. They were advised it is a scam and to delete and block.

10:39 a.m. — A motorist reported striking a deer. There were no injuries. leaking.

9:34 a.m. — A motorist reported a two-car accident with no injuries.

3:44 p.m. – Several callers reported a 2-car accident. Granby Police and Fire responded. Belchertown Fire and South Hadley Fire were called for mutual aid. Five people were transported to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

WARE – Ware Grange's next gardening workshop, "Composting," will be held on Monday, July 13 at 7 p.m. at the Grange Hall at 297 Belchertown Road in Ware. Our presenter will be Rubén Parrilla, Education Director for the Northeast Organic Farming Association. In this workshop, participants will learn how to transform yard waste and some kitchen scraps into nutrients to keep garden soil healthy, how to manage a compost pile, how to compost if you have limited space, and when to use the compost in your garden. Visit Ware Grange on Facebook or at waregrange.org for more information.



“The greatest thing about pickleball is really the community,” Prough said. “You can just show up. There

The new courts opened to the public on June 28.

The quick drop in and out nature of pickleball combined with its ability to foster a strong community are factors which Prough believes are reasons for the sport's recent surge in popularity. The average game, Prough reported, lasts

The first four courts were completed in 2022, a milestone Prough reflected upon as the grand opening for the second set of courts draws

mean, I knew it was big, but we have nearly 2000 people on our Team Reach, which is an app that's used to connect our community."

Belchertown and Agawam are also huge hubs for pickleball with many courts as well as multiple groups

and leagues playing in those communities. Pickleball has gained popularity all throughout the region.

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between twelve to fifteen minutes long. She said it was the short duration, compounded with the rest breaks, which offer opportunities to strengthen bonds between

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COMMUNITY

Former resident and author to speak at CML

BELCHERTOWN – Author and former Belchertown resident Michael Parzymieso will return to Clapp Memorial Library on July 8 at 7 p.m.

This appearance is part of the New England leg of his book tour in support of his supernatural thriller, *The Dale*.

The event will center around a discussion of the places and people around Belchertown and the Quabbin that inspired the novel. He will then read a passage from his new novel, *Afterglow*, which takes place five years after the events of *The Dale*.



Michael Parzymieso

He is also encouraging anyone who has thought about publishing to attend the event and ask questions about the process of publishing a novel, building a good story, and promoting novels in the digital age.

After the reading and Q & A, Parzymieso will sign copies already purchased and copies purchased at the event.

The *Dale* is set in Belchertown in the eighties and early nineties.

When asked about the biggest challenges he faced and what he learned over the past year since publication he said, “The biggest challenges were learning how to get the novel in front of as many

eyes as possible. You have to navigate the digital element of marketing, I had to find time to write my third novel, and plan tour events. It’s all a challenge; but I believe that you must have the same faith in your novel that your publisher and editor do. If you do, good things will happen.”

In the year since publication, he has toured extensively in the Northeast, and this year heads to the Midwest.

The *Dale* follows Caroline Sullivan as she races to discover whether she is losing her mind as her psychiatrist suspects or losing her soul as her priest fears.

“It’s about the power of faith and friendship in the face of evil. About finding hope in even the darkest times,” he said.

This setting and story were inspired by his teenage

years roaming the Quabbin and Belchertown. Parzymieso lived in town and attended Belchertown High and Middle School in the 80’s.

Michael Parzymieso has written for local, regional, and national magazines.

He is the Queset House Author in Residence for July. His novel, *The Dale*, has been the subject of newspaper articles, radio, and podcasts in New York and Massachusetts as well as featured on Steve Harper, and NPR’s *The Fabulous 413*. In addition to the New England leg of the summer tour, he will be visiting Detroit, Toronto, Hamilton, Pittsburg, Boston, Buffalo, and traveling throughout New York.

This is a free event, and all are welcome.

Scholarship winners announced

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown Scholarship Fund is proud to announce the recipients of its 2026-2027 scholarships. These scholarships are awarded to deserving Belchertown residents who wish to pursue post-secondary education. The recipients are selected from a pool of applicants from Belchertown High School, Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School, and homeschooled students.

The Town of Belchertown Scholarship Committee sincerely thanks all current and past supporters. Your financial contributions make a real difference, supporting the education of our town’s children. We are deeply grateful for your ongoing support and belief in education.

This year, the Belchertown Scholarship Fund awarded a total of three \$1,500 scholarships to students who demonstrated academic excellence, community involvement, and financial need.

The recipients of the 2026-2027 scholarships are:

Abigail Almeida graduated from Belchertown High School and plans to study at Baypath University in the Fall.

Edith Audette graduated from Belchertown High School and plans to study Franklin Pierce University in the Fall.

Natalie Krawczyk graduated from Belchertown High School and plans to study at Elms College in the Fall.

BOH from page 1

inspection and corrective work, including more wood chips and turning, Walkowiak told colleagues the material smelled “like fresh mulch” and that he could not find burrows around the piles.

DEP’s Western Massachusetts solid waste chief, Dan Hall, had already ordered changes. Reading from the agency’s directive, Board Chair William Shaheen said Red Fire Farm must “retain a qualified pest control consultant to inspect the facility and take those steps that are necessary to ensure the successful management of vectors.”

Board members questioned how any rodent-control program might affect both finished compost and groundwater.

Member Lee Lelonde warned that if rodenticide is used, “that chemical is going to be directly introduced into the compost that is going to preclude any type of organic compost being used from that product going forward.” He added that leaching could “end up poisoning the nearby streams and kill the fish.”

Animal Control Officer Kim Bernier-Goldsmith suggested some farms avoid chemicals by using trained dogs. “A lot of farms will hire people that have dogs to come in and kill the rats... so it’s no chemicals on the property,” she said.

The board also probed whether a commercial composting business taking residential scrap buckets, including meat, dairy and fish, is a “normal agricultural operation” protected under state law or a distinct commercial use that can be regulated as a potential public nuisance.

Shaheen said the town may need new rules, even if they prove unpopular. “We’re here to serve the public and the public good, and we’re kind of commanded by our position to do this, which we don’t like to do,” he said.

He said he would consult town counsel, Brian O’Toole, about drafting possible setback regulations for commercial food-waste composting and likely hold a public hearing involving Red Fire Farm, Banana Compost and neighbors.

Building Commissioner Tom Quinlan added that, in a separate conversation, a Red Fire representative indicated the relationship with Banana Compost may be ending. He said the farm “were going to ask them to leave the property, not do it anymore,” and promised to “reach out to her and, and see... if that’s actually going to be the case.”

Red Fire Farm’s partially finished market building on Taylor Street also returned to the agenda. The farm has been operating an outdoor stand since a prior building burned and asked if customers could begin using the new structure before full build-out.

Quinlan said the building code and plumbing requirements mean the public cannot yet be allowed inside. He told the board the farm should “have it on the outside under the porch, pull a tent permit, have a tent, kind of like they’ve been running for years... since they’ve lost the building.”

The Board of Health agreed to maintain an outside-only restriction until toilets, septic and other code items are resolved.

On West State Street, the owners of the Chateau Harmony Food Shed, Marilyn and Jamie Iannaccone, confronted a different kind of regulatory barrier. After a site visit, the board, Quinlan and the fire department concluded their stationary food stand must meet full restaurant-level standards if it is to serve prepared food.

Jamie Iannaccone told the board, “The Board of Health, Tom Quinlan and the plumbing inspector have made it outrageously difficult, if not impossible, to comply with

all of the regulations that...I can’t even begin to add up how much it would cost us.”

The central issue was how to dispose of wastewater. Jamie Iannaccone proposed catching sink water in containers and carrying it by hand into the Chateau building to dump in a toilet.

Shaheen rejected that outright. “You would propose to collect the wastewater from under the sink, hand carry it across the parking lot into the Chateau... That’s unacceptable. You cannot deal with wastewater that way in this day and age, in the year 2026 unfortunately,” he said.

Officials said the stand would need, at minimum, an under-sink grease trap, an exterior concrete grease trap and a piped connection to the property’s septic tank, plus a sink large enough for the largest pot and a separate slop sink.

Lelonde emphasized that these are state requirements, not local preferences. “State of Massachusetts has several minimal codes, which have to be abided by... there’s no room for the town of Granby or any other town to circumvent state minimum codes,” he said.

Marilyn Iannaccone said the couple did not anticipate such extensive upgrades because the unit had already operated elsewhere. “When we purchased this unit exactly as it was, it was operating outside in another town in Massachusetts, fully permitted, so we never considered that there would be anything more necessary,” she told the board.

Shaheen urged them to consult Health Inspector Lynn Diniz about lower-impact options such as cold drinks and packaged snacks, that might fit the existing setup, and to use the 2013 Food Code as their “guidebook going forward.”

Both Red Fire Farm and Chateau Harmony left the meeting without final approvals but with clearer direction.

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OPINION

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor

When should my wife claim Social Security?

Dear Rusty:

We could use guidance on optimum dates for my spouse to begin taking Social Security.

She doesn't have enough work credits on her own, so she will be using mine for spousal benefits. I was born in 1955, and I now get \$3,886 in monthly SS benefits.

My wife was born in 1961. We currently receive about \$50,000 per year in royalties and VA disability payments that will stop upon my death.

So, with that in mind, can you suggest optimum dates for my wife to claim, based on my projected death in early 2027 or early 2030? My wife is very healthy and will likely live beyond 2040.

Of course no one can predict their own passing; these are just random dates I came up with based on probabilities with my health issues.

Signed: Planning Ahead

Dear Planning Ahead:

Life expectancy and financial need are primary factors for your wife to consider at this point, plus whether she is now working. Her Full Retirement Age for Social Security purposes is age 67 and, if she takes her spouse benefit before that, the monthly amount will be reduced by about 8.3% for each year early, and she will also be subject to Social Security's Annual Earning Test, which limits how much she can earn from working prior to reaching her FRA.

Statistically, your wife's life expectancy is about 87 that's average longevity for a woman your wife's current age. Even though she isn't eligible for her own SS retirement benefits, she can still get a spousal benefit while you are both living and will get an even higher surviving spouse benefit when you die.

That's because her spousal benefit while both living will be based on 50% of your Full Retirement Age entitlement, but your wife's surviving spouse benefits when you die will be based upon 100% of the benefit you were receiving at your death.

Generally, if you believe you will pass within the next few years and your wife isn't working, her best option would be to claim her regular spousal benefit now.

Although she will initially get less than 50% of your FRA entitlement, that amount will be replaced automatically by her higher survivor benefit when you pass. Depending on her age when you pass, she will get the full \$3,886 monthly amount you are receiving at your death plus any COLA yet to be awarded.

If that happens before she reaches her full retirement age, her monthly survivor amount will be actuarially reduced based upon how far before her FRA it is claimed. Generally, the survivor benefit reduction will be about 4.75% for each full year claimed early about .396% for each month early.

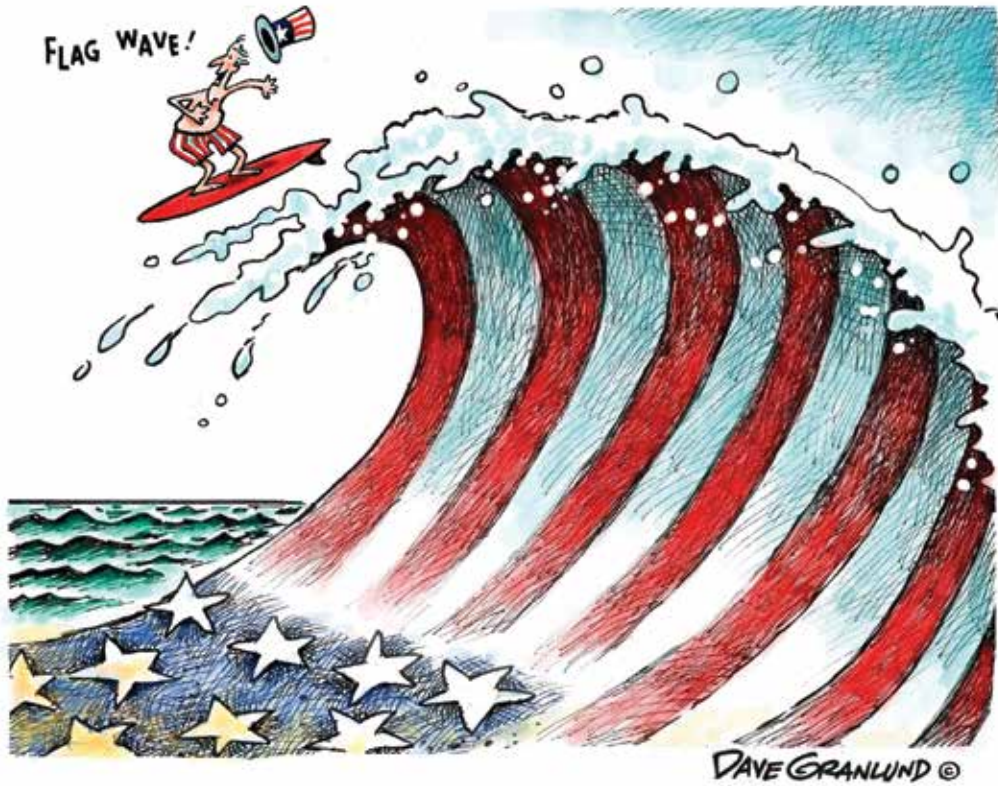
So, to a large degree, your wife's options for spouse and survivor benefits are based on your expected longevity. If you have reason to believe you will pass within the next few years, then your wife should probably claim her spousal benefit now while you are both living.

Because she is a bit shy of 65 years old, her initial SS spouse benefit will be reduced she'll get about 42% of your FRA benefit amount, instead of the 50% she would get if she claimed at age 67.

She can collect that amount until you die, at which time she will receive her survivor's benefit as your widow. If she has reached age 67 when that happens, your wife's benefit will become the same as yours was when you died, the \$3,986, plus any COLA since awarded. And she will collect that higher SS survivor benefit for the remainder of her life which, from what you've shared, would likely be about 20+ years. Assuming her life expectancy is at least average, that is how your wife would get the most cumulative Social Security benefits over her lifetime.

As you have said, no one can predict how long they will live, but from the information you've provided, I expect that the above would likely be your wife's best Social Security strategy. And, for the record, I admire you exploring your wife's options in advance. I hope this answers your question, but rest assured we are always here if you need any further information.

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



Reminiscing brings butterflies to mind

My husband and I were sitting on the porch reminiscing.

To be honest I felt a bit melancholy. Where has time gone?

With empty nesting feeling like it's right around the corner, it's easy to drift back in time and wish just for a moment that the kids were little again.

Boy, did we read lots of books. I remember one of the girls' favorites was "Butterfly Count" by Sneed B. Collard III.

In honor of "days gone by," enjoy this column right out of the archives

The basic premise of the book highlights the North American Butterfly Association's Fourth of July butterfly count with a simple story of a mother and daughter counting butterflies at a prairie restoration site named after the girl's great great-grandmother Nora Belle.

When Nora traveled west as a child, "regal fritillaries by the thousands danced over the bluestem grasses, setting the prairie afire with butterfly wings" yet today they are gone, "their prairie homes are farms and houses now." The story ends with mother and daughter finding the rare butterfly in an undisturbed area of the preserve, the tiny cemetery in which her great great-grandparents are buried.

Reading the book got me thinking about what we could do as gardeners to encourage healthy butterfly populations. According to the North American Butterfly Association it isn't enough to simply choose specific flowering "nectar" plants to attract butterflies, we must also choose plants that will feed caterpillars—that way we are providing

for the entire life cycle of the insect.

Some of the best nectar plants for our area include boneset, Joe-pye-weed, milkweed, black-eyed Susan and purple coneflower.



Other common wildflowers like hawkweed, ox-eye daisy and Queen Anne's Lace make good nectar plants as well.

Top caterpillar food plants for our region include carrot, dill, parsley, fennel, milkweed, nasturtium and verbeena.

The largest number of butterfly species will be drawn to our yards if we imitate how plants grow in the wild. To do so, we should install a diverse mixture of trees, shrubs, perennial and annual flowers and herbs that bloom throughout the growing season.

Trees such as aspens, willows, poplars, and wild cherry make great host plants for caterpillars. In addition, they give butterflies shelter from the wind, protection from predators and spots to roost at night.

A good habitat should also include some form of water source that will provide butterflies with additional moisture when dew and rain are scarce. "The Family Butterfly Book" by Rick Mikula (Storey Publishing, \$29.95) offers a fun project to make with your kids called a waterless pond.

Line a shallow hole in the

garden with a trash bag, fill it with stones and add water. Dew will collect on the rocks in the morning and slide down the cracks.

Butterflies can land on the rocks and sip water from the crevices. Put a narrow band of sand around your pond and this area will serve double-duty as a "puddling station," a place for male butterflies to imbibe salts and minerals in preparation for mating.

Another important feature in a butterfly garden is a basking station. To be able to fly, these solar powered creatures must warm up.

In fact, Mikula reports that their flight muscles must achieve 83 degrees before lift-off!

Light colored stepping stones placed about the garden will reflect the sun, allowing the insects upper and lower wing surfaces to heat up at the same time.

After researching this article I realize just how little I know about butterflies. Luckily, some of the plants mentioned above already grow on my property, and butterflies often frequent the premises.

For more information on or to participate in the North American Butterfly Association's butterfly count consult their website at www.naba.org.

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.

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Northern yellow warbler

John Kunhardt of Belchertown took this photo of a northern yellow warbler near Lake Wallace in Belchertown.

Northern yellow warblers are small, evenly proportioned songbirds with medium-length tails and rounded heads. They are 4.7 to 5.1 inches long. For a warbler, the straight, thin bill is relatively large.

Northern yellow warblers are uniformly yellow birds. Males are a bright, egg-yolk yellow with reddish streaks on the underparts. Females are also yellow but appear

slightly duller.

Both sexes flash yellow patches in the tail. The face is unmarked, accentuating the large black eye.

People may look for these warblers near the tops of tall shrubs and small trees.

They forage restlessly, with quick hops along small branches and twigs to glean caterpillars and other insects.

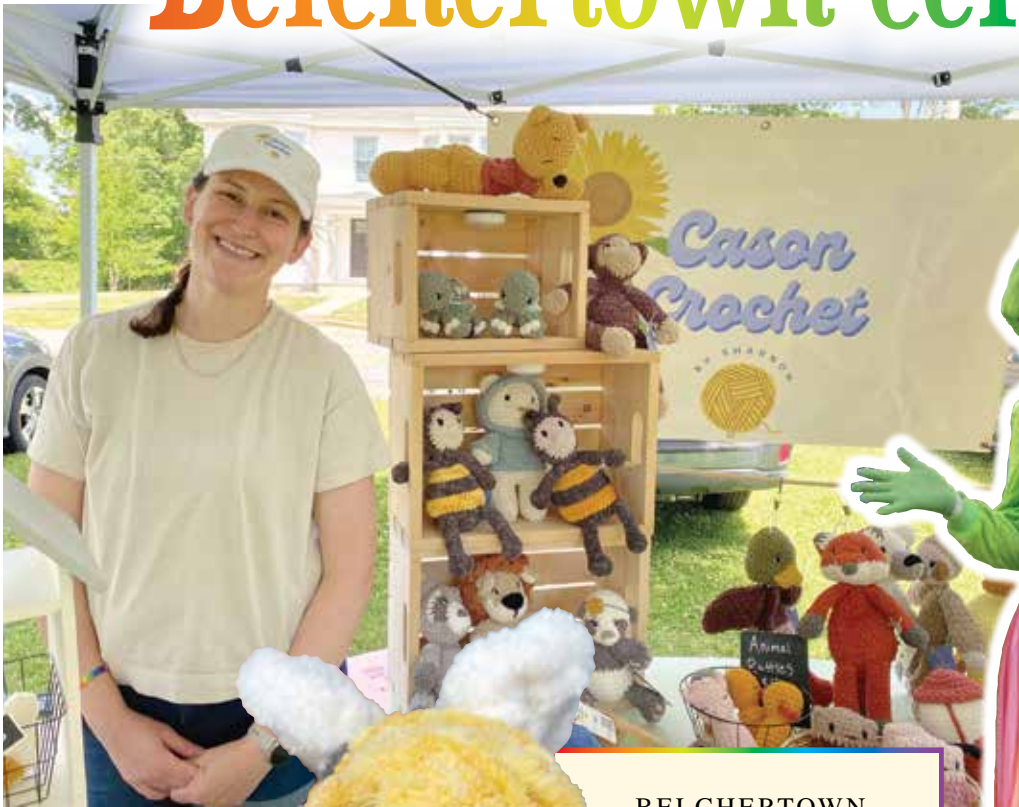
Males sing their sweet, whistled songs from high perches.

Northern yellow warblers breed in shrubby thickets and woods, particularly along watercourses and in wetlands. Common trees include willows, alders and cottonwoods across North America

Please see **BACKYARD**, page 7

WE ♥ OUR READERS

Belchertown celebrates PRIDE



Shannon Brown from Cason Crochet located in Hadley sells hand-made crochet cuddly creations for sale.



Ultraviolet rocked the stage singing power ballads. Lily Voisine, Jake Demento, John Demento and Wesley Hill are Belchertown High School students who cover songs from Greenday, Paramore, Pat Benatar, to Blink 182 and more.



Felicity V. Lay entertained the crowd singing and dancing.



It's not easy being green, so Kermit decided to wear a rainbow tutu.



Ariel Mehler from Brodester's Pet Boutique located in Amherst specializes in customizable collars, bandannas, leashes, bowties, and other pet items.

BACKYARD from page 6

In winter these warblers inhabit a variety of wooded habitats including mangroves, deciduous forests and tropical evergreen forests, as well as gardens, town plazas, second growth, brushy pastures, hedgerows, agricultural lands and plantations.

Their song sounds like "sweet-sweet-sweet, I'm so sweet."

Yellow warblers usually build their nests in shrubs or small trees, typically 3 to 10 feet above the ground. The nest is often placed in dense foliage, making it difficult for predators to spot.

They commonly select willows, alders or other shrubs near water. The surrounding leaves provide camouflage and protection from harsh weather.

A typical yellow warbler clutch contains about three to five pale greenish or bluish white eggs with small brown or gray speckles.

The female incubates the eggs for roughly 11 to 12 days, rarely leaving the nest except to feed. Once the chicks hatch, both parents help feed them.

Feeding mealworms

After seeing a pair of bluebirds, I started putting out mealworms on the picnic table every day. I figured black bears would not bother with mealworms.

I was right and the birds ate them up quickly. Yes, the bluebirds came for the mealworms, but so did two catbirds and a male robin.

The other day the pair of catbirds landed on the table as I spread out the mealworms. I've noticed them check the table for mealworms before I put them out.

Red-shouldered hawk

A woman in Montgomer reported a red-shouldered hawk in her yard. It's one of the most distinctively marked common hawks with barred reddish-peachy underparts and a strongly banded tail.

Wild turkey encounter

My daughter, Paula, was walking her dog, JoJo on the rail trail in Gilbertville along the river. A hen turkey was hidden on the side of the trail. She states, "When JoJo and I ran by, she flew up. One of the babies panicked and started running after mom flew off, which caused mom to charge at us making a bunch of noise."

She states, "JoJo and I sprinted a good 20 feet before she decided we weren't a threat anymore."

She continues, "But this was definitely the closes encounter we've ever had. JoJo now ranks turkeys in the 'scary' category along with Canada geese."

Brimfield birds

A Brimfield resident emailed, "A pair of yellow-bellied sapsuckers spent a few days visiting a native dogwood tree in the yard awhile back. And we have seen a few warblers, a common yellowthroat checked me out when I was working in the garden yesterday. We have at least two male hummingbirds visiting the yard and feeders and at least one female."

He stated, "I saw a female rose-breasted grosbeak collecting nesting material so I'm going to look for a nest. Several years ago I found a grosbeak nest near our shed."

Osprey

The Brimfield resident stated in his email, "The

Osprey nest in Warren looks like the chicks have hatched based on the behavior of an adult at the nest yesterday. In the past it is usually mid June before I see chicks in the nest. When they are very young osprey chicks mostly lay down in the nest waiting to be fed."

He reported four great blue heron nests at the pond I visit in Warren where the Ospreys nest.

Bird count

The Brimfield resident also stated, "The Allen Bird Club of Springfield does a spring bird count each year in mid May. We use the Christmas Bird Count count circle, I have covered Ludlow since 1989. I only managed 50 species this year, partly because my hearing isn't what it use to be."

He stated, "I did man-

age to find a Tennessee and Parula warbler, about a dozen yellow-rumped warblers, two common loons, one each solitary and spotted sandpiper and a black-billed cuckoo. I

hadn't seen a cuckoo in a

few years."

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edown-er@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box

448, Barre, MA 01005. The Palmer office has a new phone system and I will be getting an extension where messages may be left. I will publish the number as soon as it is set up.



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Seeking 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.

Seniors need to pick up senior packets

BELCHERTOWN – Graduating seniors who were previously on an IEP are encouraged to pick up their senior packets at Central Office. Packets include; most recent IEP and testing along with a summary of performance. If you wish to obtain your records, please come to Central Office, 14 Maple

Street with picture identification, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday-Friday, excluding holidays. High School transcripts that contain course titles, and grades received will continue to be stored at the BHS Counseling Office for sixty (60) years after graduation.



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CLUES ACROSS

1. __ chat

5. Statue near the Pyramids

11. A process to change the look

14. Herb

15. Think about excessively

18. Bass vocal part

19. Supreme Allied Cmdr. of NATO

21. A major division of geological time

23. New Zealand parrot

24. Cognitive contents

28. Lump of yarn

29. Atomic #109

30. Let go of

32. Indian title of respect

33. Whereabouts unknown

35. Electronic data processing

36. Drivers' licenses count

39. Snakelike fishes

41. They precede C

42. Popular personal computers

44. Intermediate community stage in ecological succession

46. Wings

47. Indicates position

49. Pleasantly smooth or soft

52. Jeweled headdress

56. In slow tempo

58. __ Falls

60. Reassertions

62. Eras

63. Hyphen

CLUES DOWN

1. Corporate executive

2. A plant used for flavoring food

3. Opinion or belief

4. Sheep in their second year

5. Intensities of sound

6. Indicates support for

7. Expression of laughter

8. OJ trial judge

9. Pointed ends of pens

10. True bugs genus

12. Lawyers argue theirs

13. Body parts

16. Closes tightly

17. World Heritage site in Nigeria

20. Islamic calendar month

22. Commercial

25. "Westworld" actor Harris

26. They __

27. Religious guilds

29. Woman (French)

31. Parts per billion (abbr.)

34. Brew

36. Spiritual leader

37. Indigo bush

38. Burn with a hot liquid

40. Older citizen

43. Scad fish genus

45. Morning

48. Line passing through the center (abbr.)

50. Double S-shaped curve

51. Small, thin person

53. Older

54. Mars crater

55. Humanities

57. Word element meaning ear

58. To the __ degree

59. Residue

61. It cools your home



The garden contains multiple beds of local vegetation cultivated by students and town residents.

GARDEN from page 1

“When Covid hit, it put a damper on the whole gardening experience,” Field said. “We’ve been rebuilding the volunteer base, the teacher engagement and the student engagement since coming back from Covid.”

Field has volunteered for “about five years.” Her contributions began when she heard several teachers retired, which created a need for someone to step in. Utilizing available students in the fall to help cultivate the gardens, Field stressed the need for consistent manpower throughout to help keep the gardens running.

“We look for volunteers to come up and keep the garden running over the summer, so when they come back in the fall, it’s still a functional garden.” Field said.

Field is looking for people to help weed, water the gardens weekly and harvest as needed. She mentioned the harvests are usually donated to the local senior center, though Field also commented the proceeds were also given to the Summer Eats program in the past. For those without a green thumb, there are still opportunities to help contribute to the cause. Field mentioned she needed help with further public outreach, as well as a website to organize the initiative.

“It would be wonderful to



have a website,” Field said. “So, anyone who has a desire to either learn how to make a website or has experience with making a website, building us a basic website would be wonderful.”

Those interested in contributing towards the gardens may email btowngarden@gmail.com for further information.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY
BEN HERNANDEZ

The Belchertown School Garden is located on the hill opposite Chestnut Hill Community School.



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BY DAVID HENRY
WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

WILBRAHAM – Last Thursday evening, Granby girls soccer, in B Division action, kept their perfect season going with a 4-2 win over the Wilbraham Falcons B. While Granby is now a perfect 6-0 on the season, the Falcons are right in the mix in fifth place with a 2-3-1 record overall this season. The two teams will be back in action following the Fourth of July break.

Brenna Moreno passes the ball ahead of pressure.



Eleanor Szlosek looks for a teammate up the field.

Jr. Legion teams battle it out

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN—Mark Zawistowski, normally one of the assistant baseball coaches for the Belchertown Senior Legion program, managed the Belchertown Orange Junior Legion team during last Tuesday's rivalry game against Belchertown Black.

Zawistowski, who was filling in for Bob Dziedzic, guided the Orange squad to a wild 13-12 walk-off victory over rival Belchertown Black at Parsons Field.

"I'm normally one of the coaches for the senior team, but I help out on the junior side whenever we're shorthanded," Zawistowski said. "We made plenty of mistakes tonight, but the kids kept battling in the last inning and earned themselves a walk-off win."

Belchertown Orange (3-2) earned an 11-6 victory in the first match-up of the regular season with Belchertown Black (0-4), which was held at Belchertown High School on June 9.

While most of the Belchertown Black players live in Belchertown, more than half of the Orange players are from Chicopee. They also have a couple of players from Minnechaug Regional and

Please see **LEGION**, page 11



McKenna Zumbruski makes a stop.



Kaelynn Slapski passes and runs.



Sophia Press watches a pass away.

Mutiny shut out by Vermont Green FC

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW— Even though the New England Mutiny had already been eliminated from the USL W playoffs, they still had a chance to influence the race for first place in the Northeast Division entering the regular-season finale.

Had the Mutiny pulled off an upset victory against Vermont Green FC, the Hudson Valley Crusaders would have finished at the top of the Northeast Division table.

However, it was Vermont Green FC players and their rowdy supporters doing all the celebrating following a 3-0 shutout win over the Mutiny at Lusitano Stadium last Saturday night.

"We wanted to play the spoiler role in today's match," said New England Mutiny midfielder Avery Klingensmith, who's from Belchertown. "We were hoping to make the playoffs in our first season playing in this league, but it's always a lot of fun trying to impact another team's season."

Vermont Green FC captured the inaugural USL W League Northeast title with a



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Trinity Clark collects a pass.

6-0-4 overall record.

They're scheduled to host the Eastern Conference playoffs this weekend

One of the Vermont Green's ties came at Lusitano Stadium against the Mutiny (1-1) on May 26.

Vermont Green squeaked out a 2-1 home win in the second meeting between the two squads at the beginning of June.

The Mutiny finished their season with a 2-6-2 overall

record.

"We lost a couple of close games this season," Klingensmith said. "We also had a lot of new players, and it was a rebuilding year for us. We always tried to do our best in every game."

Kate Howarth and Megan Cunningham made their first starts of the season in last Saturday's match.

Please see **MUTINY**, page 10

Playoffs hopes still alive after Pioneers shutout

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—Had the Western Mass. Pioneers failed to secure a victory in last Friday night's match against AC Connecticut, their playoff hopes would have vanished for the first time since they entered USL League Two in 2019.

The Pioneers kept their postseason dreams alive a little bit longer thanks to a hard-earned 1-0 shutout win at Lusitano Stadium.

"We didn't get the result that we wanted in our last match on Tuesday night, and we had a tie here last week," said Pioneers assistant coach Tomas Duben. "It was very important for

us to get the three points and the win in tonight's game. We're still battling for a postseason berth."

Duben took over the head coaching duties from longtime Pioneers head coach Federico Molinari, who spent last weekend coaching a Western United Pioneers

Please see **PIONEERS**, page 11

Matiwos Rumley goes to meet the ball.



Alfred Baafi makes a backwards pass.

SPORTS

Blue Sox drop third straight game, falling to Danbury

HOLYOKE – The Valley Blue Sox dropped their third consecutive game after suffering a 5-2 loss to the Danbury Westerners on Saturday night. The Blue Sox had won their two previous matchups against Danbury but struggled to get on base early in tonight’s game, which contributed to the outcome.

The top of the first inning came and went for the Blue Sox as Danbury’s starting pitcher, Cole Gibson, retired the batters in order, giving the Westerners a chance to set the tone. For Valley, Andrew Oppenheimer made his season debut, joining the team due to personnel changes in the Blue Sox’s bullpen.

Postgame, head coach John Raiola touched on having players come onto the team in the middle of the season, but made it clear that he has to rely on those who have been here from the beginning.

“It does take some guys here and there to come in and replace some guys that we lost,” said Raiola. “Our core is our core [and] they are all here for a reason... they know what it takes to be successful at this level.”

Oppenheimer began the bottom of the inning by



walking the lead-off hitter, Jack Lutte, who advanced to second when Kyle Garbowski grounded out. Collin Mowry then hit an RBI double with Lutte in scoring position, giving Danbury an early 1-0 lead.

Gibson continued his impressive start in the second by retiring the batters in order once again, but this time Oppenheimer followed suit, quickly regrouping from his first inning.

Valley still had trouble finding a way on base in the third, and Danbury kept capitalizing on the Blue Sox’s shortcomings as Noel Rivera got walked, advanced to second, and scored on a wild pitch, putting Valley behind 2-0.

The fifth inning had Valley getting two men on base when Eddison Esquivel hit a single out to center field, and Nick Tomasetto was walked. Unfortunately, the next three hitters were retired by Gibson, ending Valley’s chance at a scoring opportunity.

Danbury did not waste any time starting the bottom of the frame as Peter Link hit a long homer out to center field, extending the deficit to 3-0. However, Anthony Grabau responded with a home run of his own

during the sixth, leading the team in the home run category and getting Valley their first tally of the game.

The Blue Sox finally got the momentum on their side with Trevor Harmon getting walked and moving to second off another Esquivel single. Nick Tomasetto hit a single of his own and sent Harmon home, bringing Valley within one run of a tie game.

Owen Basso replaced Oppenheimer in the bottom of the sixth and ended up loading the bases after hitting Ronan Donohue with a pitch and walking Michael Delph and Gavin Donohue. Basso then threw a wild pitch that allowed Ronan Donohue to score Danbury’s fourth run.

There were no runs scored in the seventh, and unlike Danbury, Valley was not able to get on the board in the eighth. The final run of the game was another home run from the Westerners as Gavin Donohue hit the ball out of Rogers Park, putting a late Blue Sox comeback out of reach.

Valley’s focus now shifts to their next game, and Coach Raiola spoke about what he hopes to see from his team when they play the Sharks.

“More compete, more fight, more energy,” said Raiola. “Tomorrow’s a new day...and [an] opportunity to put together a more complete game.”

Silk picks up win in modifieds event

THOMPSON, CT — A beautiful afternoon greeted the new and returning fans, teams and supporters at Thompson Speedway Wednesday night. Rookie Charles Beal led the start of the Street Stock main event with outside polesitter Mike Viens going around on lap one. Back under green, Jarrod Soucy stole the lead as Al Stone III and Ryan Lineham joined the picture up front. Veterans Stone and Lineham motored under Soucy by lap six with Ryan Lineham taking the win over Al Stone III and Soucy holding on for third.

Rookies Mikey Flynn and Andrew Brousseau brought the Thompson Sunoco Modifieds to green before Rob Schultz made contact with the backstretch wall to call out the early caution on lap two. Brousseau battled hard with Keith Rocco from then on with the rookie facing the multi-time track championship veteran. Rocco and defending champion Todd Owen made the move under Brousseau before the halfway point and that is how they ran under the twin checkered flags at the end of 35-laps.

The Late Models were next to take the track with Jared Meteras and Travis Hydar putting on a show out front. The two went toe-to-toe as defending champ Jake Johnson and Icebreaker winner Matt Lowinski-Loh joined in for a four-way battle. Hydar and Johnson were

next to scuffle with Johnson powering under the rookie but the Stafford champion was far from finished. Hydar kept glued to his tail, making a move to the inside as he tried to lead lap twenty until losing it in turn three. Hydar held on and kept going but left Jake Johnson to take the Wednesday night win over sophomore Late Model racer Jared Roy and veteran Jared Materas.

The Pro Truck Challenge returned to Wednesday Night Racing action at Thompson Speedway with Randy Burr quickly taking control at the front of the field. Through a pair of quick-spin cautions, Burr proved to be the better restarter in the field, launching away each restart all the way to the 35-lap win over Adrien Paradis and Tyler Chapman.

The SK Light Modifieds got off to a shaky start before Todd Douillard and Daltin McCarthy kept things under green out front. Before too long, John O’Sullivan and Kevin Davis entered the picture under Douillard and began to chase down McCarthy. While the chase continued, Douillard’s day ended off turn two with a spin into Danny Gamache to end their nights on lap 10. In the final restart O’Sullivan pulled away but Davis came back with a vengeance to take the win ahead of O’Sullivan and RJ Marcotte at the line.

Please see **SILK**, page 13

Blues to partner with Worcester Railers

ST. LOUIS, MO - The St. Louis Blues and the Worcester Railers of the ECHL today announced an affiliation agreement through the 2030-31 season.

Starting with the upcoming 2026-27 campaign, the Railers will serve as the secondary affiliate for the Blues and their primary developmental affiliate, the Springfield Thunderbirds of the American Hockey League (AHL).

St. Louis’ affiliation agreement with Springfield began in 2021 and was extended in 2024 to last through the 2030-31 season.

“For the development of St. Louis Blues prospects, Worcester truly is an ideal location for our ECHL affiliate and we look forward to launching this partnership with their organization and community,” said Tim Taylor, St. Louis Blues Assistant General Manager and Co-General Manager of the Springfield Thunderbirds. “Having Springfield and Worcester located within 50 miles of each other will maximize the competitive opportunities for our young players and introduce some unique efficiencies for our player development and pro scouting teams.”

The ECHL affiliate for the Blues over the previous two seasons was the Florida Everblades. The team just completed a run to win the ECHL’s Kelly Cup for the fourth time in five seasons.

The addition of Worcester as the Blues new ECHL affiliate enhances the organizational development pyramid based on geography and alignment between management teams. Recently named by The Athletic as having the 10th-best prospect pool in the NHL, the Blues head into the 2026 NHL Draft with 12 total selections, including three in the first round. Prospects already in the Blues system with Springfield recently completed an inspiring playoff run to the AHL’s Atlantic Division Finals under the leadership of first-year head coach Steve Ott, establishing a record for the biggest upset in AHL playoff history in the process.

“When we were assessing affiliation opportunities, we looked at a number of factors,” said Michael Myers, Worcester Railers Chief Operating Officer “We took into account proximity, resources, and track record. Seeing what the Blues and their affiliates have done in recent history, excites us as an

Please see **BLUES**, page 13

MUTINY from page 9

“I played with both of them in the past and it was a lot of fun having them back on the field again today,” Klingensmith said. “They’re a big part of this organization.”

Howarth, who also played for the Orlando Pride of the National Women’s Soccer League, is the Mutiny’s all-time leading goalscorer and point-scorer.

Klingensmith is also one of the Mutiny’s veteran players. She joined the squad after graduating from Belchertown High School in 2022.

“It has been a great journey playing for this team,” said Klingensmith, who graduated from American University in May. “I only live about 15 minutes away and this place is very special to me. I’m hoping to play for this soccer team again next year.”

Klingensmith is planning to play for a professional soccer team in Greece beginning in August.

The other players from Western Mass. listed on the Mutiny roster are Mila Dillard (Chicopee), Hope Santiniello (Agawam), and Tennessee Murphy (Monson). None of those players played in the final match of the regular season.

During the opening half of last Saturday’s match, the Mutiny had two free kicks, but both attempts were saved by Vermont Green goalie

Olivia Shippee.

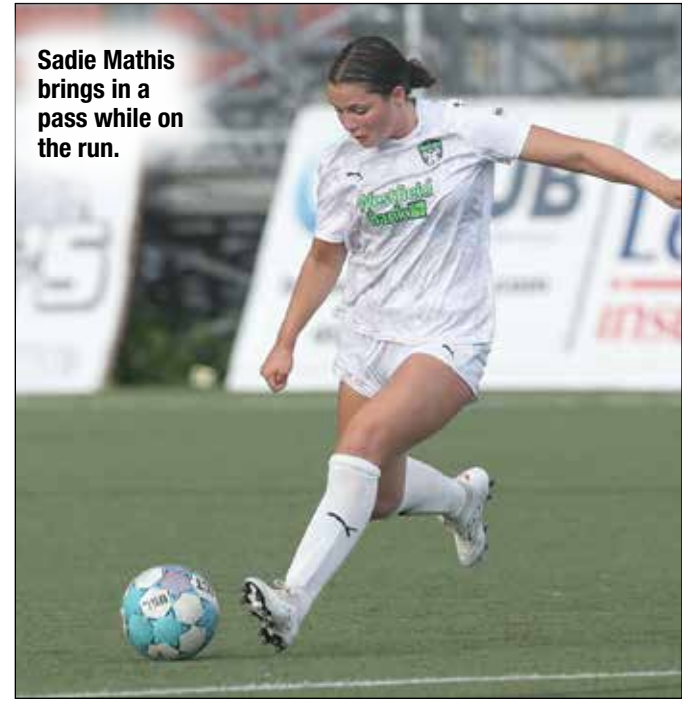
The visitors from Burlington took a 1-0 lead during the 28th minute following a goal from Georgina Clark.

Emily Mara, who assisted on Clark’s goal, booted the ball into the net three minutes later.

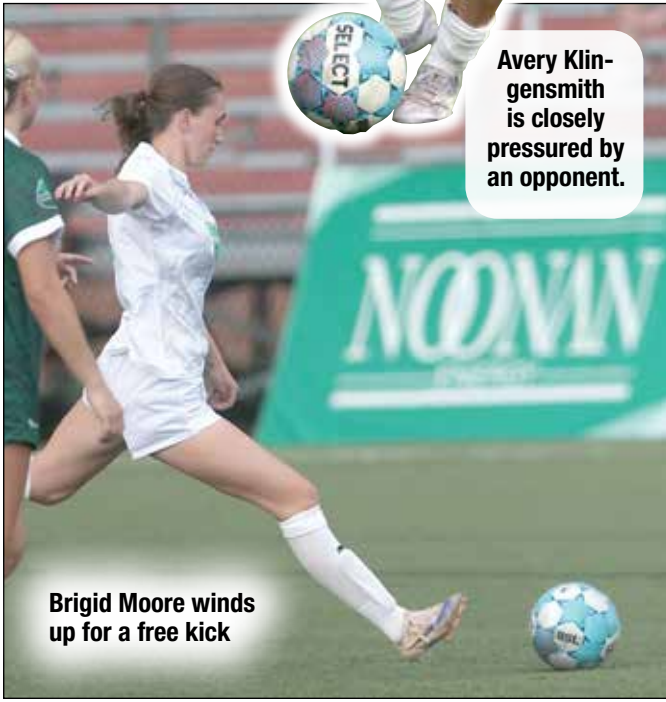
The score remained 2-0 until the 73rd minute when Lauren DeGroot netted another goal for Vermont Green.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY
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RIGHT: Goalie Chloe Lazier sends a free kick away.



Sadie Mathis brings in a pass while on the run.



Avery Klingensmith is closely pressured by an opponent.

Brigid Moore winds up for a free kick

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NEWS & FEATURES

As a paper of record, we attempt to cover all general news, personality profiles, and community features that we know about. This includes all selectmen and school committee meetings as well as spot planning board, board of health, finance, and other town meetings determined by the issue’s relevance to our readers. There are the annual major community event features that we should always cover, but we are more than open to suggestions of other features to celebrate the fabric of our communities and their many interesting occupants. Our loyal advertisers provide funding for this paid staff coverage.

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PIONEERS from page 9

U-16 girls’ team at a tournament in Virginia.

Since 2024, Duben has a 3-0-1 record as the Pioneers interim head coach.

“My playing career ended a couple of years ago because of a knee injury,” he said. “I really enjoyed playing for this soccer team. I’m very grateful that Federico gave me this coaching opportunity and I’m still learning.”

The Pioneers improved to 6-2-2 (20 points) following the home shutout victory, solidifying their hold on third place in the Northeast Division. They trail first place Vermont Green FC (10-0-1, 31 points) and second place NEC (10-1-1, 30 points). Only the top two teams in the Northeast Division qualify for the league playoffs.

Western Mass. finished at the top of the Northeast table in both 2019 and 2021. They made it all the way to the National Semifinals in 2021. They’ve finished in second place during the past four seasons.

Between 2010 and 2018, the Pioneers only qualified for the USL PDL playoffs once.

AC Connecticut (1-10-0) had several scoring chances during the first twenty five minutes of the opening half, but Pioneers goalie Ben Alexander made the saves which kept the match scoreless.

“Ben played very well in tonight’s match,” Duben said. “The defense also gave him a lot of support back there.”

Alexander returned to action after missing a couple of games due to an injury.

It was the Pioneers’ fourth 1-0 win of the regular season. They also played a scoreless draw in a road match against Black Rock FC at the beginning of June.

The Pioneers, who have



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Riley Priddy makes a quick pass.

a 3-1-1 home record, took advantage of a mistake made by AC Connecticut goalie Asger Hemmer-Hansen to take a 1-0 late in the first half.

Alfred Baafi put a shot into the back of the net giving the Pioneers a 1-0 lead at the end of the first half.

“The goalie attempted to clear the ball, but I stole it away from him,” said Baafi, who scored his third goal of the season. “Then I put a shot into the wide open net, which felt really good. We’re still hoping to make the playoffs”

Baafi, who’s from Techiman, Ghana, is a first-year member of the Pioneers.

“The atmosphere at this stadium is always outstanding,” he said. “We get plenty of support at our home

games.”

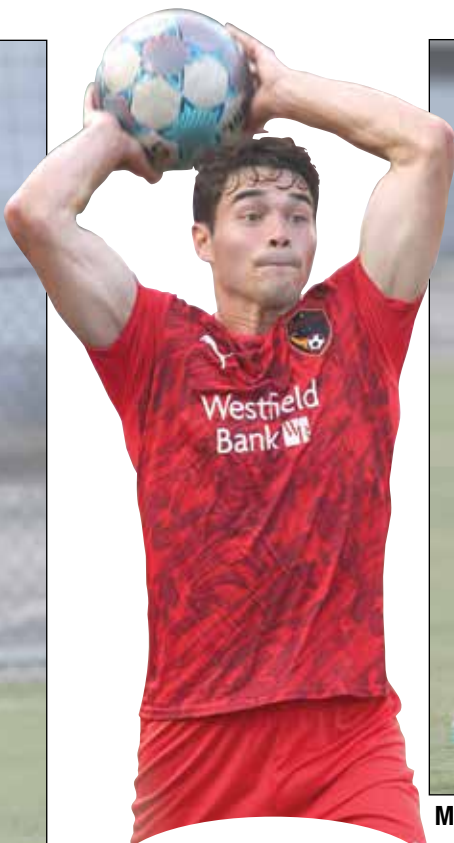
Baafi is also a member of the men’s soccer team at High Point University in High Point, North Carolina.

Two years ago, Baafi was a member of the Seacoast United Phantoms, which captured the USL-League Two National Championship title.

“It was an amazing feeling after my team won the championship game two years ago,” said Baafi, who’s going to be a senior in the fall. “I just needed a change and decided to play for the Pioneers this year. I’m also hoping to be drafted by a MLS team.”

The Pioneers had an opportunity to score another goal at the start of the second half.

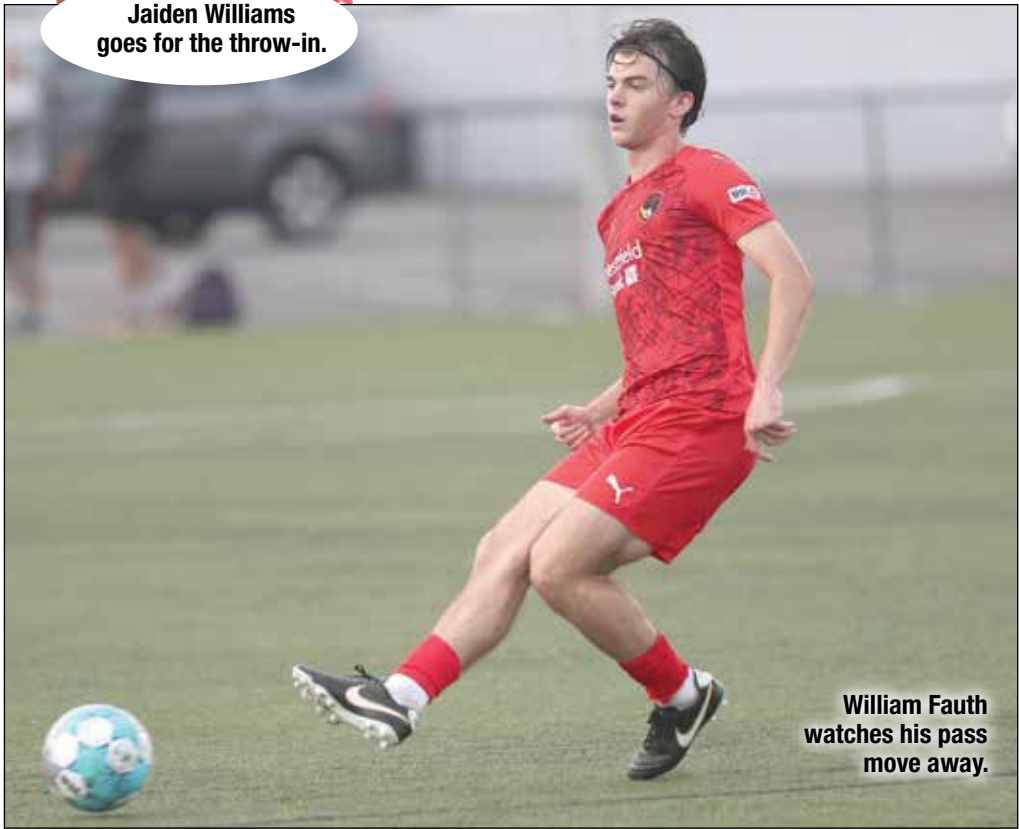
Martin Echarren sent a



Jaiden Williams goes for the throw-in.



Martin Echarren looks up the field.



William Fauth watches his pass move away.

pass into the box to Juan Galindrez, whose shot attempt skipped wide of the goal.

The Western Mass. squad also had several more chances to score, but the score remained 1-0.

The Pioneers are scheduled to host Black Rock FC at 7:30pm on Friday night.

LEGION from page 9

South Hadley High School.

“It really wasn’t a very close game the first time that we played against the Black team,” Zawistowski said. “They’ve improved a lot and showed a lot of heart in tonight’s game. It was a very competitive game.”

With the sun setting very quickly in the Western sky, Belchertown Orange entered the bottom of the sixth inning trailing by four runs (12-8).

Orange centerfielder Brayden Klett walked leading off the bottom of the sixth inning. He advanced to second and third on wild pitches before scoring on another wild pitch. Then walks by Austin LaPointe, Cole Wojnar, and Eaven Torrulella loaded the bases.

Owen Buchanon also drew a bases loaded walk, which sliced

the Belchertown Orange deficit to 12-10.

Then Stephen Wool drew the sixth walk in the bottom of the sixth inning. After the next batter struck out, Damien Stroka, who attends Chicopee High School, stepped into the batter’s box and ended the game an inning early by hitting a two-run single into right field.

“Damien played an outstanding game,” Zawistowski said. “He’s our starting catcher and was rock solid behind the plate.”

Before the sixth inning began, the umpires told both managers it would be the final inning due to darkness.

Belchertown Orange took a 1-0 lead with one-out in the first inning on a flyball double to right field by LaPointe scoring Klett, who also doubled to right.

The Black squad quickly took

the lead after scoring four runs in the second inning.

Joe Barrett, who was hit-by-a-pitch leading off the frame, scored the tying run on a fielding error by the left fielder.

Belchertown Orange committed a total of six errors.

Ryley Manseau was also hit-by-a-pitch with the bases loaded with two outs in the second inning giving Belchertown Black a 2-1 lead. Anthony Misiaszek, who was the eighth batter of the inning, knocked home two more runs with a fly-ball single to right field.

The Orange scored a pair of runs in the bottom half of the frame on a groundout by Cole Bryant and a Stroka sacrifice fly.

With one-out in the top of the third, Jackson Shaughnessy delivered an RBI single, and Zack Ritter (double) stole home

giving Belchertown Black a 6-3 advantage.

Wojnar had the second sacrifice fly for the Orange in the bottom of the third.

After Belchertown Black scored another run in the fourth, Belchertown Orange scored three runs without the benefit of a base hit.

Klett and Scott Holmes both walked before scoring on wild pitches. Ethan Davis (walk) also crossed the plate following a throwing error by the catcher tying the score for the first time at 7-7.

Belchertown Black answered right back by scoring five more runs with the help of two errors in the fifth inning.

The Black team entered the bottom of the fifth inning holding a 12-7 advantage and they would watch it all slip away from them.

Granby Lions Club sponsoring bus trip

GRANBY – The Granby Lions Club will be sponsoring a bus trip to Boston on Tuesday, July 14, 2026. The chartered bus will be leaving the East Meadow School Parking Lot at 8 a.m. and dropping us off in the Seaport District at approximately 10 a.m.

Come help us celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States at SailBoston 2026, an international maritime event that brings tall ships and naval vessels from around the world to Boston Harbor. You will be on your own to visit the ships and the bus will depart Boston at 4 p.m.

The cost per person is \$75. Please make your checks payable to the Granby Lions Club, and mail to Granby Lions Club, c/o Jim Pietras, 280 East State St, Granby, MA. 01033. Questions – email Jim at jpietras@comcast.net



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Women’s Fund of WMass Awards \$195,000 in Grants

SPRINGFIELD – The Women’s Fund of Western Massachusetts (The Fund) is pleased to announce \$195,000 in general cycle grant awards to 17 organizations serving women, girls, and gender-diverse people across Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire counties in June.

The Fund’s total fiscal-year grant cycle, between August 2025 and June 2026, awarded \$450,000 in community investment grants that were distributed throughout the 4-county region.

The Fund highlighted their 30-year anniversary of grant-making to reflect on decades-long partnerships throughout Western Massachusetts, while inviting new partners to expand its network. “This is an opportunity to reflect on 30 years of grantmaking,” says Kelley Bryant, Director of Grantmaking and Impact at the Fund. “The Community Investments committee, board, and staff sought to invest in close partners and new partners that sustain local communities and fuel gender equity in

Western Massachusetts.”

Julia Keosaian, Executive Director of Berkshire Nursing Families, adds, “This support strengthens our ability to provide free, compassionate perinatal and lactation care to families across our region during one of the most vulnerable and transformative times of their lives. Maternal and child health in the Berkshires depends on the kind of sustained, community-centered investment that the Women’s Fund has championed—and we’re proud to be partners in that work.”

Turmoil in the national funding landscape is causing instability for organizations providing direct support in the region. “This investment in our organization comes at a meaningful time...flexible funding such as this allows us to remain responsive, innovative, and grounded in our mission of supporting and uplifting our community,” says Jasarah Burgos, Executive Director, Enlace de Familias / Holyoke Family Network.

Grantees from this cycle

reflect The Fund’s focus areas of leadership, economic security, and freedom from gender-based violence. The awarded organizations include: Amherst Survival Center, Arise for Social Justice, Berkshire Nursing Families, Community Action Pioneer Valley, Enlace de Familias/Holyoke Family Network, Flying Cloud Institute, Gardening the Community, Girls Inc. of the Valley, Girls on the Run, Neighbor to Neighbor, Northampton Survival Center, Planned Parenthood - Western Massachusetts Health Center of Springfield, Rites of Passage and Empowerment, Salasin Project, The Care Center, The Heartwing Center, and Volunteers in Medicine Berkshires.

Grant funding is provided by donors and foundations that rely on The Fund’s knowledge of regional gender-equity challenges and expertise in identifying promising solutions. Support gender equity and become a donor at mywomensfund.org/give-now/.

SILK from page 10

The Monaco Modified Tri-Track Series rounded out Wednesday’s racing program at Thompson Speedway with Noah Korner and Mike Christopher Jr. fighting hard for the lead in the opening laps. Content to ride it out, veterans Ronnie Williams and Ron Silk followed the leaders before slowly picking them off with the turn three slingshot underneath. After blowing the engine in his primary car in practice, Jon McKennedy ran home to Chelmsford to grab the back-up car and just made the tail of the starting field.

By the lap 19 caution for a single-car spin in turn two, McKennedy sat tenth on the grid.

It continued to be the Ronnie and Ron show out front with Williams leading Silk around the 5/8-mile oval until the lap 39 caution sent the field pit-side for fresh Hoosier rubber. Patrick Emerling would use the superior pit stop to take the restart lead but Williams, McKennedy and Silk stayed nose-to-tail behind him. One final restart with 14 laps remaining left this talented gaggle of cars to fight it out to the end. Ultimately it was Ron Silk who took down the

\$10,000 win with Patrick Emerling across the line in second followed by Ronnie Williams, Austin Beers and Jon McKennedy to round out the top-five.

Thompson Speedway is back in action in just two weeks on Wednesday, July 8 with Twisted Tea Winged Wednesday! The lightning fast New England Supermodified Series (NESS) visits the Thompson highbanks alongside the Thompson Sunoco Modifieds, Late Models, SK Light Modifieds, Street Stocks and Thunderstock Crown Vics with a 6 p.m.

OBITUARY

Nancy Charron McConnell, 69

BELCHERTOWN – Nancy Charron McConnell, 69, of Belchertown, passed away peacefully after a lengthy illness. She was born on January 18, 1957, in Ithaca, New York, to the late Ernest and Anne (Harrington) Charron.



Nancy attended the University of Massachusetts Amherst and devoted her life to caring for and serving her community. Before beginning her nearly 30-year career as a librarian at the Clapp Memorial Library, she operated a home daycare, where she lovingly cared for many local children and became an important part of countless families’ lives.

A lifelong lover of books, reading, and learning, Nancy brought that same warmth and kindness to the library, where she was a familiar and welcoming presence to generations of patrons. She found great joy

in helping others discover the love of reading which meant so much to her.

Nancy was preceded in death by her parents; her first husband, Olin A. McConnell, in 2001; and her second husband, Norman Bronner, in 2018.

She will be deeply missed by her two sons, Joshua C. McConnell of Belchertown and Timothy O. McConnell of South Hadley; her siblings, Cindy Vogt, Andy Charron, and Joanne Lusita; her many beloved nieces and nephews; as well as her in-laws, extended family, and the many friends whose lives she touched.

A celebration of Nancy’s life will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation or to The Friends of The Clapp Memorial Library, www.friendsofclapplibrary.org/ in Nancy’s memory.

DEATH NOTICE

Nancy Charron McConnell
Died June 26, 2026
A celebration of life will be held at a later date.
Beers & Story Belchertown Funeral Home

The Sentinel OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

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

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph.

Death Notices & Paid Obituaries should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

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

Please check the accuracy of your legal notice prior to submission (i.e., date, time, spelling). Also, be sure the requested publication date coincides with the purpose of the notice, or as the law demands. Thank you.

BLUES from page 10

organization for what the future with St. Louis may hold. We look forward to welcoming St. Louis back into our Central Massachusetts hockey culture.”

The Worcester Railers were founded in 2016 and served as the ECHL affiliate for the New York Islanders since beginning play in the 2017-18 season. The Railers have posted a .500 or better record in seven of their eight seasons, including a 35-30-7 record during the 2025-26 season, their second-best record in franchise history. The head coach and general manager of the Railers is Nick Tuzzolino.

The Railers play in the ECHL’s North Division in the Eastern Conference and have seen five former players

make their NHL debut. A pillar of the Worcester, Massachusetts community, the Railers have received the ECHL’s league-wide Community Service Award five times in their eight seasons.

The Blues helped introduce minor league hockey to Worcester from 1994-2005 when the Worcester IceCats were the team’s top AHL affiliate. In addition to a series of successful play-off runs, the IceCats produced several players that went on to play prominent roles for the Blues, including Jim Campbell, Michal Handzus, Jamarl Mayers, Tyson Nash, Darren Rumble, and Blues Hall of Famer Barret Jackman. After the IceCats were sold and relocated to become the Peoria Rivermen in 2005, the Worcester Sharks served as the AHL affiliate of the San Jose Sharks until 2015.

NOTICES

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampshire Division
Docket No.
HS26P0398EA
Estate of:
Eileen Noel Praisner
Date of Death:
September 5, 2024
INFORMAL PROBATE
PUBLICATION NOTICE

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Scott Barry of Marlborough, MA**.

Scott Barry of Marlborough, MA has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.

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

07/02/2026

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