

Pine Valley celebrates INDEPENDENCE DAY

By Paula Ouimette
pouimette@turley.com

BELCHERTOWN – Residents at Pine Valley Plantation on Chauncey Walker Street celebrated the nation's 250th birthday with a star-spangled 4th of July parade and picnic this past Saturday.

"They love this," said Richard Kelleher, president of the Board of Directors at the mobile home park.

Over a dozen participants joined in the parade, including red, white and blue decorated golf carts, a float made by Wayne LaPierre and cars.

The parade traveled the 5.5 miles of roadway through the mobile home park, giving each resident the opportunity to celebrate the nation's independence.

Many of the parade participants were

Please see **PARADE**, page 7

Board of Director's President Richard Kelleher led the parade on a golf cart with Donna LaPierre and his wife, Barbara Kelleher (Board Treasurer and Activities Director) riding on the back.



Master Sergeant Richard W. Cuthbertson enjoyed watching the parade.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA OUIMETTE

Acts of Glory Clothing wears faith on sleeve

By Ben Hernandez
bhernandez@turley.com

BELCHERTOWN – Acts of Glory Clothing, a faith-based clothing line developed by co-founders Aiden and Oliver Good. Described on their website as "Christian symbolism mixed with modern street-ware style," the two combined their shared beliefs to both spread their message and fashion ideas.

"It was just a passion I had," said Aiden. "I used to work as a detailer. So, I decided just to merge those two passions into one, but also make it more affordable."

The company opened their digital doors in February of this year. As they celebrate their first four months, the two stated the new business has been "a learning curve" but has been a process which has helped them "grow as children of God." The brand has grown into the

Please see **ACTS OF GLORY**, page 2

Cindy's Drive-In hosts first-ever Vendor Fair

By Ben Hernandez
bhernandez@turley.com

GRANBY – The first-ever fair hosted by Cindy's Drive-In attracted a myriad of different businesses, who gathered in the green behind the iconic Granby ice cream and hamburger joint to showcase their wares and connect with fellow entrepreneurs. The assortment of different backgrounds provided a unique perspective on the town's economy, each with different stories.

"We saw Cindy's Drive-In post on the Facebook page and we signed up to be a vendor," said Kyle Gordon of Agawam based Junk Hog Junk Removal, which has been in operation for about six months. He stated vendor fairs like these were "very important" to local startups and were essential to getting the word out.

"Any time we do an event like this, we generally get a good surge of business for the following few weeks to a month," Gordon said. "It's definitely a good way to get the word out there and meet the community."

Serial entrepreneur

Robyn Miller, who represented event rental company Ladybug Party Rentals at the event, stated the fair was a great way to meet new people. With a background in molecular biology and biochemistry, Miller's current day job as the head of a digital marketing company illustrated how the fair attracted so many people from different walks of life.

Miller stated the company was entering its "third season" and provided a myriad of different services. From bounce houses, water slides and onsite coordinated children activities, such as canvas paintings, Ladybug Party Rentals is what Miller described as a "labor of love."

"I love science," Miller said as she held up a bottle of essential oils for emphasis. "This is the closest thing that I can get to sharing my molecular background."

Miller reported vendor fairs were a "vital" aspect of their marketing as a small business. She mentioned marketing and net-

Please see **FAIR**, page 5



Lucy Cincotta received a certificate naming her the town's Boston Post Cane recipient.



101-year-old Lucy Cincotta was named Belchertown's Boston Post Cane recipient.

Cincotta receives **Boston Post Cane** award

By Paula Ouimette
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BELCHERTOWN – Lucy Cincotta celebrated her 101st birthday on June 2, making her the town's oldest living resident.

At a June 23 ceremony held at her home at Christopher Heights, Cincotta was honored by the town for this milestone, and awarded the Boston Post Cane award by Town Manager Steve Williams and Select Board Clerk Jon Ritter.

"We're here today to honor Lucy Cincotta for the achievement of being 101 years old," Williams said. "Which equates to being the oldest town resident that we have in Belchertown."

Ritter read a proclamation,

and presented Cincotta with the Boston Post Cane to hold for photos. The cane later returned to the Town Hall, where it remains on display.

"We're here today to honor Lucy Cincotta for the achievement of being 101 years old."

– Steven Williams

"On behalf of the town of Belchertown, Select Board and its residents, it's my honor to recognize a very special resident today," Ritter said. "The Boston Post Cane award has a long and meaningful history."

The Boston Post Cane has been awarded to a town's

oldest resident since it was started by Edwin A. Grozier, publisher of the Boston Post newspaper in 1909. Grozier sent 700 gold-headed ebony canes manufactured by J.F. Fradley and Co. to the boards of selectmen in towns across New England.

The cane was presented to the oldest male resident of each town until his passing, when it would then be presented to the next oldest male. In 1930, women become eligible to receive the cane.

Many of the original Boston Post Canes have been lost or destroyed, and towns have opted to give lapel pins, or replica canes to recipients.

Cincotta received a certificate and a lapel pin from Williams, which her daughter Nancy Holmes pinned on her. "You'll get to wear that with honor and pride," Williams said to Cincotta.

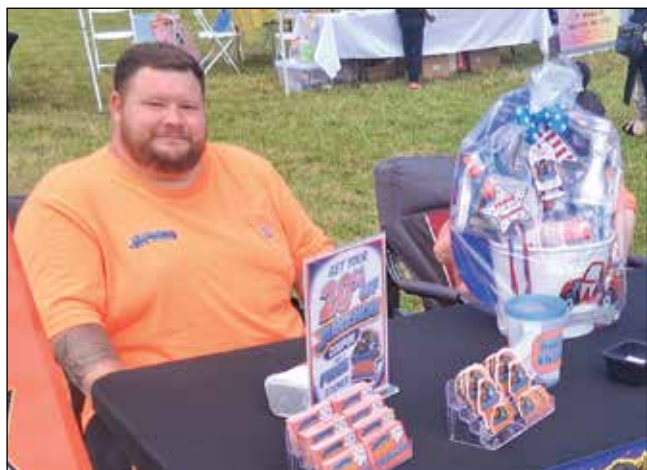
The certificate stated Cincotta received the award "in recognition of a remarkable life spanning more than a century, and with gratitude for the wisdom, resilience and history represented through her years."

Cincotta said her secret to long life is "working hard."

Born in Agawam in 1925, she grew up on her family's vegetable farm, where she worked with her parents and siblings.

"We were seven children

Please see **BOSTON POST CANE**, page 3



TURLEY PHOTO BY BEN HERNANDEZ

Kyle Gordon advertises his company, Junk Hog Junk Removal.

COMMUNITY

Town accepting RFPs for cultural manager

BELCHERTOWN — The Town of Belchertown is accepting proposals for a Cultural District Manager, a part-time consultant who will help lead the designation and ongoing management of a local Cultural District celebrating the community’s arts, history, heritage, and creative economy.

The Cultural District Manager will take a lead role in preparing and submitting the state Cultural District designation application. If the district is approved, the manager will provide administrative support for its operations and for the Creative Economy Committee that oversees it. The role also includes marketing and communications, event coordination, fundraising, and partnership-building with town departments and community organizations. The consultant will work with guidance from the Community and Economic Development Planner and will convene regularly with town leadership, the Creative Economy Committee, and other stakeholders.

The proposed Cultural District aims to strengthen economic vitality by supporting arts and cultural programming, increasing visitation, promoting local businesses, and fostering partnerships among artists, residents, organizations, and municipal departments.

“A designated Cultural District would give Belchertown a powerful new way to celebrate our identity, support our local businesses, and draw visitors to everything our community has to offer,” said Town Manager Steven Williams. “We’re looking for a skilled partner to help us bring that vision to life.”

The Town seeks candidates with experience in areas such as arts and cultural management, community engagement, event planning, project management, grant writing, and marketing and communications. Experience working with Massachusetts municipalities, nonprofits, or designated Cultural Districts is preferred.

Interested consultants should submit a proposal that includes a cover letter detailing relevant experience, up to three past work examples, references, and a cost proposal. The contract amount will not exceed \$13,000, with an anticipated term of August 1 through December 31, 2026, and the option to extend based on funding and performance.

Questions about the Request for Proposals are due Tuesday, July 14 at 5 p.m. Proposals are due Monday, July 20 at 4 p.m.. One electronic PDF proposal should be submitted to Town Manager Steven Williams at SWilliams@belchertown.org.

The full Request for Proposals is attached to this release as a PDF and is also posted at <https://www.belchertown.org/Bids.aspx-BidID=12>

Fireworks display revives tradition on fair weekend

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

The evening will bring the community together for food trucks, family activities, and a fireworks show to close out the night. Residents and neighbors from surrounding communities are invited to attend. The celebration is planned in conjunction with the nationwide Semi-quincentennial commemoration marking 250 years of American independence.

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

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

The event is funded entirely through donations and sponsorships from local businesses and community members. Fundraising is already well under way, and the Recreation Department is continuing to seek support to bring the celebration to life.

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

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

St. Francis seeks donations for upcoming tag sale

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

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

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

hangers, medical equipment, bed pillows, and any large furniture items.

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

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

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



ACTS OF GLORY from page 1

social media space, now having presences on Facebook, Instagram, Youtube and Tik Tok. The two post regular videos showcasing their wares in short videos they referred to as clothing “lay flats.”

“We’ve known each other for our whole lives, pretty much,” Aiden said as he discussed his history with the co-owner. The two met up during primary school and bonded over their shared interests in faith and fashion. The idea came when the two identified a lack of Christian based clothing in the market, which inspired them to go into business for themselves. Though the brand focuses on urban street wear, the two expressed an interest into branching into active wear.

“It’s unique,” Aiden said when asked why they chose this particular demographic. “A lot of Christian clothing, it’s just one t-shirt or just a pair of shorts. So, we kind of break that...we just want to do something different, make it unique to Acts of Glory.”

All the logos and designs are made in house without the use of AI or outside help. The two mentioned a background in graphic design supplemented by watching “a lot of Youtube.” The two also mentioned the primary goal for the business wasn’t just to raise a profit but to also give back to the community.

“So, one of our main goals is to give at least a third or more to charity every month,” Aiden said. “Our main goal is just to support other fundraisers or anything like that.”

The two identified one of their main target charities is the Global Christian Relief in Nigeria, an organization dedicated to helping Christians,



Co-founders Aiden and Oliver have known each other since school and aim to bring their entrepreneurial spirit to the Belchertown community.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS Co-founder Aiden strikes a dynamic pose.



Co-founder Oliver Good showcases one of their featured t-shirts.

a region the two described as being heavily persecutive towards their faith. They also mentioned a plan to serve free meals in Northampton to the needy was in the works.

Though the business is currently online only, there are plans in effect to bring their clothing to physical markets. Aiden mentioned a partner who has been “very helpful”

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COMMUNITY



Lucy Cincotta is shown seated with her daughters Nancy Holmes and Gloria Grace, and town officials.

BOSTON POST CANE

from page 1

and we all worked on the farm,” Cincotta said.

Cincotta graduated from Agawam High School in 1943, and married her sweetheart Louis Cincotta Jr. in 1946.

The two met each other when they were in the first grade, and they enjoyed 59 years of marriage before his passing in 2005. Together they raised two daughters, Gloria Grace of Belchertown and Nancy Holmes of Maine.

The couple built their first home in Agawam and later moved to Belchertown in 1986.

Cincotta worked a variety of jobs, including at New England Telephone and MassMutual, where she spent 27 years before retiring at the age of 59.

Cincotta and her husband enjoyed spending their winters in Florida, and visiting their daughter and family in Maine.

Cincotta moved to



Nancy Holmes pinned the Boston Post Cane lapel pin on her mother, Lucy Cincotta. Cincotta was honored with the cane on June 23 as Belchertown’s oldest resident.

Christopher Heights in 2024 at the age of 99, and has enjoyed every memory made there since.

Cincotta admitted that she “had to be coaxed” to move out of her home, but that it was the best decision she



Select Board Clerk Jon Ritter read a proclamation to Lucy Cincotta.

could have made.

Now, she enjoys balloon volleyball to stay active, and being “Lucky Lucy” at bingo games. And also attending ice cream socials, of course.

Cincotta is well known for her gardening skills, maintaining a 40 by 70 foot garden each year, well into her 90s. She was always generous with the bounty she harvested, sharing with family, friends, neighbors and veterans at the VFW.

“We finally had to stop her when she was like 92,” Grace said.

Grace said her mother never ate anything out of a can growing up, and has passed on her green thumb to her nephew, who still grows a strain of cherry tomatoes grown by Cincotta’s father.

“She was the only one who kept it going,” Grace said of the tomatoes.

Cincotta said being 101 doesn’t feel any different than being 100, and that she was happy and surprised to receive the Boston Post Cane award.

Library announces July activities

GRANBY – Granby Free Public Library announced the following activities for the remainder of July and August:

Adult Summer Reading Plant a Seed, Read!

June 23 – Aug. 21
This year, we are asking you to Read it and Rate it! For every book you read this summer, fill out a form to be entered into a raffle for some great prizes!

Photographing and Capturing the Beauty of Flowers and Gardens

Thursday, July 30 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Learn how to elevate your garden and flower photos with a set of simple techniques. All cameras, phones, and experience levels welcome! You will have a chance to try out new skills and experiment with backgrounds, small lights, reflectors, diffusers, Lensball, and special effect attachments for your phone. Space is limited, please sign-up.

Adult Book Group

Thursday, July 9 at 6 p.m.

The book group will be discussing The Frozen River by Ariel Lawhon. Grab a copy and join us!

Tabletop Games Club

Saturday, July 18 from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
The Granby Library Tabletop Games Club invites players of all ages 8 and up to gather and enjoy a variety of board, card, dice, tile, and other in-person tabletop games in a welcoming, social environment.

Knitting Group

Every Wednesday afternoon at 2 p.m.
Bring your latest project and join us for conversation, tips and tricks. There will be no Knitting on July 22

Friends of the Granby Library Meeting

Thursday, July 16 at 4:30 p.m.

Did you know that the Friends sponsor our events? Join us for a meeting and see what’s new.

The Library will close at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 22 for Staff Development

Granby Lions sponsoring bus trip to SaleBoston 2026

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 jpietas@comcast.net

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Nominations sought for local awards

BELCHERTOWN - The Belchertown Select Board has reopened nominations for the Town's yearly awards, extending the submission period through August 1, 2026. The decision to reopen nominations provides additional opportunity for residents to recognize outstanding members of the community.

Award recipients will be honored for their contributions and invited to march in the Belchertown Fair Parade on Saturday, Sept. 26, as part of the 167th Belchertown Fair.

Nominations are being accepted in three categories:

Citizen of the Year honors any community member who has made a positive difference in Belchertown, whether through one defining moment or ongoing contributions to the community. Nominations can be submitted at <https://www.belchertown.org/FormCenter/Awards-14/>

Nomination-Form-Citizen-of-the-Year-80

Employee of the Year recognizes a Town employee who has gone above and beyond in service to residents. Nominations can be submitted at <https://www.belchertown.org/FormCenter/Awards-14/Nomination-Form-Employee-of-the-Year-78>

Volunteer of the Year honors a volunteer whose dedication has made a lasting difference in Belchertown. Nominations can be submitted at <https://www.belchertown.org/FormCenter/Awards-14/Nomination-Form-Volunteer-of-the-Year-79>

Or you may scan the QR codes to access the form.

The deadline for all submissions is Aug. 1. For questions, contact Melissa Shattuck in the Select Board / Town Manager's Office at mshattuck@belchertown.org or 413-323-0403.

Granby library hosting photography workshop

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

If you love flowers, plants, and gardens, chances are you love taking pictures of them too. How do you elevate your flower and plant photos from nice snapshots to gorgeous images that you'll treasure for years to come? Come learn a set of simple techniques for taking stunning flower and garden photos. All cameras, phones, and experience levels are welcome.

You'll have a chance to try your new skills as we photograph real flowers and

experiment with backgrounds, small lights, reflectors, diffusers, Lensball, special effect attachments for your phone, and more. You'll be amazed at the beautiful images you can create.

This workshop is led by Massachusetts-based event, lifestyle, and branding photographer, Joan Celebi.

Space is limited, so please contact the library to sign up. Sponsored by the Friends of the Granby Free Public Library.



The first-ever Granby Vendor Fair attracted numerous local businesses looking to network and expand their enterprises.

FAIR from page 1

working were just as important to growing a business than the products and services offered, as booth presence provided a certain level of natural advertising. As children painted in the background with provided canvases and paint materials, she offered gratitude for her growing community support.

"I am so grateful for the people that I get to meet in our community," Miller said. "It's so wonderful to work with children and help them express their creativity and just give them an outlet to come paint and have fun."

Amanda Rodriguez, founder of Playful & Polished, described the event as a "super community vibe." She started her own earring making business back in February, inspired by the lost of her own earring. Rodriguez expressed the best part of running her own company was the amount of validation and appreciation received by her customers.

"This is my third show that I've done and I enjoy it," Rodriguez said. "I like meeting people. I love when people just say 'these are so cute.' So, being validated in that way and having people appreciate what I've made is really exciting."



Serial entrepreneur Robyn Miller represents her latest enterprise, Ladybug Party Rentals.



Evan from unique fitness studio HotWorx smiles for the camera.



New business owner Amanda Rodriguez expresses gratitude for a growing supportive customer base.

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OPINION

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor

Why doesn't my Social Security record show all my military earnings?

Dear Rusty: When I look at my earnings on my Social Security account, I see that in 1955 and 1956 have no earnings. I was in the U.S. Navy as a first officer and have my DD-214 paperwork, which shows my military service from Oct. 1954-Oct. 1958. My Social Security earnings record shows that I had earnings in 1954, 1957 and 1958 but doesn't show that I was paid in 1955 or 1956. Shouldn't I have received Social Security credit for all my service years?

Signed: An Older Veteran

Dear Older Veteran: First, I want to thank you for your military service. Whether your earnings while in the military would provide you with any additional Social Security benefit depends on your career earnings after leaving military service. Here's why: Your monthly Social Security benefit is based upon the highest earning 35 years over your lifetime with earlier years adjusted for inflation. From those highest earning 35 years, SS develops your Average Indexed Monthly Earnings, your lifetime "AIME," which is the basis of the SS benefit you get if you claim for benefits to start at your Full Retirement Age So, if - after you completed your military service - you had at least 35 years of other employment where you earned more money than you did while serving, then your military pay won't affect your Social Security benefit.

FYI, Social Security payroll tax has been withheld from military pay since 1957, which is why your SS earnings record shows your military pay only for 1957 and 1958. Your SS record wouldn't show military pay prior to 1957 because you didn't contribute to SS from your military pay during those years.

The earnings you see in your SS earnings record for 1954 are likely from non-military employment prior to starting active duty in October 1954. SS does provide older veterans with "special

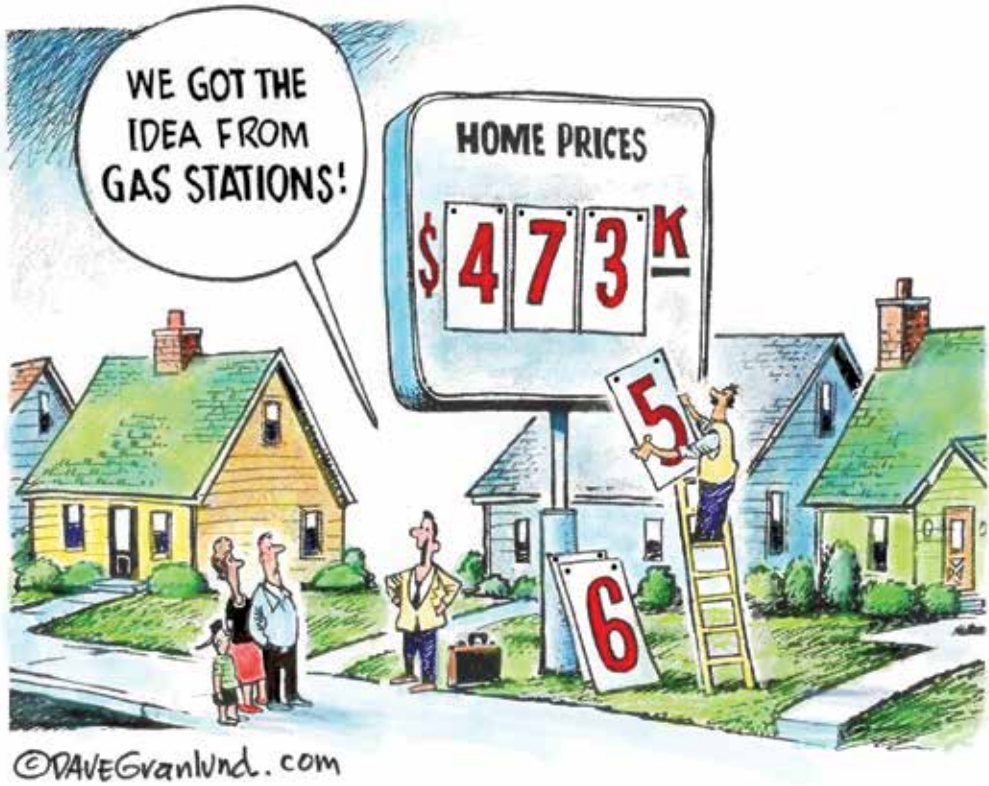
extra credits for military service," but those credits are only a supplemental earnings amount added to your military pay record during the years you served.

It is not a bonus amount added to your monthly Social Security payment; rather it is only an amount added to your military pay record used when calculating your Social Security benefit. For those who served prior to 1957, Social Security would have no record of your military earnings during those early service years.

But when you claimed Social Security later in life, they would have asked if you served in the military and given you "special extra credit" in the form of presumed earnings for your service years. They likely asked for a copy of your DD-214 and would have added \$160 to your military earnings record for each active-duty month from October 1954 through December 1956 and additional earnings credits for 1957 and 1958.

But that doesn't mean you get a special Social Security bonus for your military service. If you have at least 35 years of civilian employment after serving in the Navy, your service years would only affect your SS benefit if those military service years were among the highest paying 35 years over your entire lifetime. And, again, please accept our appreciation for your service to our country.

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.



Bad news and good news in this week's garden

My annual flower gardens were just starting to come into their own when I noticed some damage on the leaves. They looked chomped on from the outer edge going in. Some leaves also had a watery brown residue on them.

Going by date, I knew the culprit already, even before digging around the base of the plant. The Asiatic Garden beetle is hard at work wrecking my plants.

Read on to learn more about this pest. I've also got some good news. Blueberries and peas are ready for harvest. Yippee! The Asiatic Garden beetle is a bit smaller than the Japanese beetle and is chestnut brown in color. It feeds during the night, so look for chewed foliage in gardens or planter boxes under lamp-posts, street lights or other outside lights.

Cultivate directly underneath the affected plant during the day and you will likely see the culprits scurry back into the soil. Usually they snuggle up very close to the stems an inch or so below the soil surface.

Sometimes watering at the base of the plant will bring them to the top of the soil where they can be easily collected or squished. This is one pest you don't want to have around - send them swimming in a soapy bath or you may not have any plants left!

In my experience, two plants they particularly love are coleus and calibrachoa. This year they are decimating my blue salvia.

It's pretty amazing that



Now you may be thinking that I really know how to have fun, but to me, this is what summer is made of!

I plant my peas the end of April, so typically they ripen almost on cue each year!

I plant three seeds deep a couple of inches apart up against the interior of my garden fence where they naturally climb up with their tendrils attaching to one another and the fence. I loosen up the soil prior to planting, but I never add any fertilizer - maybe just a sprinkling of compost if I am feeling generous.

Since peas are legumes, they "fix" their own nitrogen from the air.

I do soak the seeds in an inoculant prior to planting them, however, to make the fixation happen easily and to reportedly increase yield.

If you are going to try your hand at freezing your "shell" peas, as opposed to sugar snap or snow peas, be sure to pick, shuck and freeze in the same sitting, since peas begin to lose their sweetness within hours of being off the plant.

Like anything else, we take the good with the bad. As long as there is enough good, we won't throw in the trowel just yet.

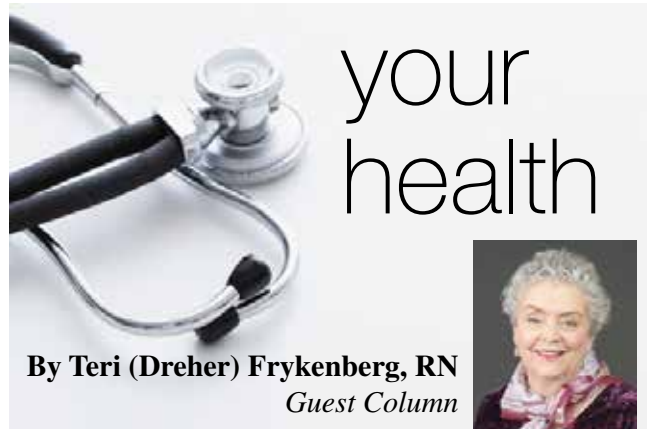
Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 34 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

Keep your liver alive for a lifetime

Tucked under your ribs next to your stomach on the right side, your liver may not be a body part you think about every day, but this three-pound powerhouse - our largest internal organ - performs a lot of important functions our bodies rely on.

And it's up to us to keep it going.

Some liver diseases are caused by genetic mutations that can be inherited. Liver health, however, is largely dependent on our own lifestyle behaviors. Let's take a moment to appreciate all our liver does for us, and how we can keep it in tip-top condition.



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN Guest Column

What does the liver do?

A lot. Your liver's biggest job is filtering harmful substances and waste from your blood. Every day, your liver filters more than 250 gallons of blood. As if that weren't enough, it also makes cholesterol, produces certain hormones, makes proteins, stores glucose to keep your

blood sugar steady, and breaks down toxins and germs so your body can eliminate them.

How do you know if your liver is healthy?

A healthy liver doesn't really call attention to itself. Typically, your regular bloodwork will look at

albumin and bilirubin levels. Low albumin levels, typically below 3.5 grams per deciliter, can indicate liver malfunction. A normal bilirubin level is generally less than 1 milligram per deciliter; anything higher is associated with potential liver disease. Abnormal results in these measures may indicate further screening is needed.

A liver that's feeling poorly will make you feel poorly, too, with fatigue, swelling in feet and ankles, abdominal pain, easy bruising or bleeding, and chills. Another telltale sign is jaundice, a yellowing of the skin and eyes caused by the buildup of bilirubin.

What can go wrong with your liver?

One of the more prevalent liver disorders is inflammation classified as Hepatitis A, B and C. Hep A is caused by

contaminated food or water, not a huge problem in the U.S. but more common elsewhere in the world.

Hep B and Hep C viruses spread through contact with infected blood and body fluids through unprotected sex or needle sharing. It used to be that blood transfusions were a common source of hepatitis, but today's thorough screening methods make that very rare now. Vaccines help prevent Hep A and B. There's no vaccine yet for Hep C because the virus takes many different forms.

The most common liver disorder is metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), which is excessive fat buildup in the liver without another clear cause, such as alcohol use. Obesity and type 2

Please see HEALTH, page 11

Turley Publications Letters to the Editor Policy

Letters to the editor should be 350 words or less in length. No unsigned or anonymous opinions will be published. We require letter writers to include his or her town of residence and home telephone number. We must authenticate authorship prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions deemed to be libelous or contain unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks, defamation of character and offensive language. All unknown or alleged facts and quotations offered by the author need to cite credible, unbiased sources. Send letters to: Sentinel, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069 or via email to sentinel@turley.com. The deadline for submissions is Friday at 5 p.m.

Turley Election Policy

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

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

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INDEPENDENCE DAY



Cheryl and Terry Soderstrom wore matching patriotic accessories.



Loretta Lund and Lorraine Spelko joined in the 4th of July celebration.



Mary and Dick Stedman participated in the 4th of July parade held at Pine Valley Plantation on Saturday morning.



The 4th of July parade made its way through Pine Valley Plantation, covering 5.5 miles.

PARADE from page 1

also celebrating significant birthday milestones, including Lenny, who is Pine Valley's oldest resident, having just turned 96. He has lived at the mobile home park for almost 27 years.

Lenny is one of 10 children, with seven brothers and two sisters. One of his brother's will be turning 98 soon.

Pine Valley Plantation's oldest couple was also participating in the parade, Dick and Mary Stedman. Like Lenny, Dick will also be celebrating his 96th birthday this year.

Throughout the park, residents came out to

watch the parade with many wearing their patriotic best.

Retired U.S. Marine Corps Master Sergeant Richard W. Cuthbertson has lived at Pine Valley Plantation for about three years. He wore his uniform to watch the parade, and he said he was looking forward to attending the picnic afterward.

Cuthbertson served 10 years in the military, and said he "made every war in the 50s and 60s."

"I was glad to do it," he said of his service. "Somebody's got to do it."



Pine Valley Plantation's oldest resident, Lenny (age 96), was the passenger in this vehicle.



Violet Silva and Diane Ericksberg rode with Casper the dog in the parade.



This parade participant sat at the base of Mount Rushmore on the float.



Forest, Corey, Rebecca and Allyson were ready for the parade.



Sally and Jack Lynch drove Sally's 2019 Ford Mustang in the parade.



Wayne LaPierre created this impressive float that he pulled in the parade with his tractor.



The parade float featured important U.S. landmarks including the Statue of Liberty, the Liberty Bell, the Lincoln Monument and more.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA OUIMETTE



Ted and Phyllis wore their patriotic best on their Harley Davidson trike.



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Orioles out to tough start in summer



Niko Pisano gets a header.



Liam Verrochi is pursued by an opponent.



Nathan Lablond makes a throw-in.



Ryan Lacroix sends a free kick away.

BELCHERTOWN – Last week, Belchertown boys summer soccer wrapped up the first part of their summer schedule. The Orioles, playing in the A Division, are out to a 2-4 start to the summer season. They are currently outside the top eight for the play-offs, but hope to turn that around following the Fourth of July holiday.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

B-Town Legion falls to Greenfield

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN--The Greenfield Post 81 Senior Legion baseball team held a slim 2-0 lead against Belchertown entering the top of the fifth inning.

Greenfield broke the contest open during that frame by capitalizing on a pair of miscues and with a couple of base hits leading to six runs. Post 81 would tack on two more runs in sixth to finish off a 10-0 shutout victory at the Belchertown High School baseball field on June 29.

"I felt like we were right in the game until the fifth inning," said Belchertown manager Todd McDonald. "We just need to start putting things together both offensively and defensively."

Belchertown, who were a very successful team during the past several seasons, are a much younger squad this year's team with only a handful of veteran players.

"Our teams the last few years were filled with kids who had played together for a long time. I also coached many of them," McDonald said. "The players on this year's team are still learning to play together."

While Greenfield entered July with a perfect 8-0 record, Belchertown had a 2-5 overall record.

Their two victories came against West Springfield Post 207, 14-6, on the road in the season opener and at Monson, 4-2, on June 19. Two days earlier, Belchertown traveled to Veteran's Field in Greenfield and suffered a 9-4 setback.

Both teams had an opportunity to take the lead during the first inning in their second meeting of the regular season.

Belchertown right-hander Jake Waller stranded two runners on base in the top half of the frame.

The home team also had two runners reach base in their first at-bats.

With one-out, second baseman Thatcher Rudnik beat out an infield hit to the short-stop.

It wound up being the

only base hit allowed by Greenfield righty Evan Tsipenyuk, who hurled the first five innings.

Tsipenyuk also issued a walk to shortstop Ian McDonald before the bottom of the first ended with a strikeout and a pop-up.

Tsipenyuk would then retire ten batters in a row before Belchertown left fielder Brodie Funk reached first base following a fielding error with one-out in the fifth inning.

Greenfield took a 2-0 lead in second inning.

Centerfielder Brodie Burke walked leading off the frame before stealing both second and third. Catcher Luca Siano also walked and stole second base. Both runners crossed the plate following ground ball outs by leftfielder Aiden Shea and third baseman Jackson Campbell.

Greenfield also had a pair of singles by right fielder Shawn Baumann and DH Ethan Mauthe in that same inning.

Baumann tried to score on Mauthe's hit but was tagged out by catcher Joey Minnon for the final out.

Waller, who pitched the first 4 1/3 innings, stranded runners in scoring position in both the third and fourth innings.

Just like they did in the second inning, Greenfield began the fifth inning with back-to-back walks. The visiting team took a 3-0 lead following a throwing error. Then Burke and Campbell contributed with RBI singles before a two run triple by Siano increased the lead to 6-0. Greenfield's other two runs in the fifth inning crossed the plate following another throwing error and an infield hit by Baumann.

Siano had a two-run single to center with two outs in the sixth.

Belchertown centerfielder Nathan Marino singled against righty relief pitcher Samuel Connors leading off the bottom of the sixth. Connors retired the next three batters quickly, which ended the ballgame an inning early due to the ten-run mercy rule.



Pete Hogan fires down to second to try and catch a base stealer.



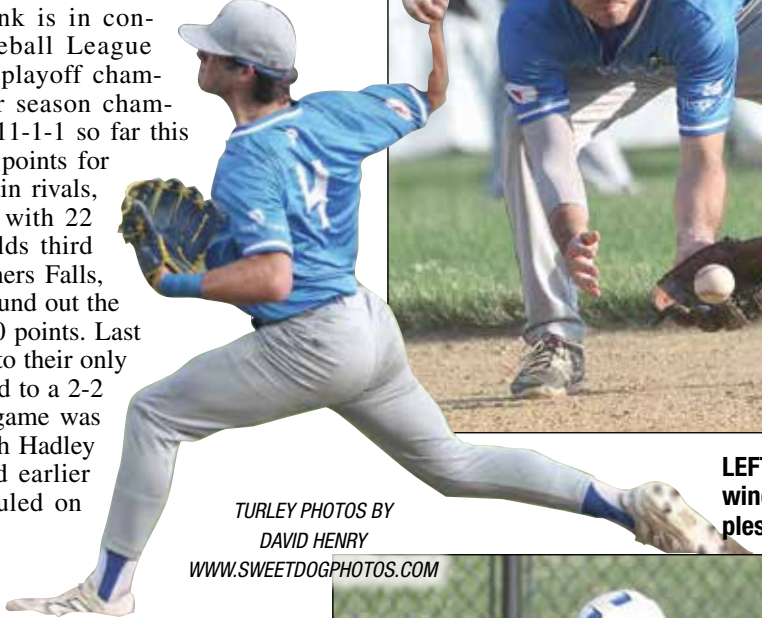
Brian Hungerford tries to keep a throw from getting to the outfield.

Bankers in control following Fourth of July holiday

HOLYOKE – PeoplesBank is in control of the Tri-County Baseball League once again, as the longtime playoff champions and multi-time regular season champions stand at an impressive 11-1-1 so far this season. The Bankers have 23 points for the league lead with their main rivals, St. Joseph's, tugging behind with 22 points. Teddy Bear Pools holds third place at 17 points, while Turners Falls, the Spartans, and BankESB round out the standings, all with less than 10 points. Last Monday, PeoplesBank played to their only tie of the season as they battled to a 2-2 draw with the Spartans. The game was called due to darkness at South Hadley High School. Action resumed earlier this week with games scheduled on Wednesday, July 8.



Sam Allen fields a grounder behind second base.



LEFT: Jackson LaValley winds and fires for PeoplesBank.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY
DAVID HENRY
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Rey Rivera fakes a throw after making a play.



Cam Rivest, of Agawam, swings and connects.

Pioneers, Black Rock battle to 1-1 draw

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—Just when it appeared that the Western Mass. Pioneers were set to close out a 1-0 shutout victory against Black Rock FC, a late lapse gave the visitors from Nashua, New Hampshire an opportunity to score the tying goal.

Black Rock FC converted a corner kick goal during the seventh minute of stoppage time and last Friday night's USL League 2 match-up held at Lusitano Stadium ended in a 1-1 draw.

The result all but ended the Pioneers' postseason hopes, eliminating them from the USL League Two playoffs for the first time since joining the league in 2019.

"I really don't know what happened at the end of tonight's game," said Pioneers head coach Federico Molinari. "Almost everything has gone wrong for us this season."

It was the third consecutive tie between the two teams, who played a scoreless tie in the first meeting of the season on June 3. The two squads also played a 1-1 draw at Lusitano Stadium a year ago.

The Pioneers entered the final week of the 2026 regular season sitting in third place in the Northeast Division table with a 7-2-3 (24 points) overall record.

The Western Mass. squad were scheduled to play at AC Connecticut on Tuesday night before hosting the first place and undefeated Vermont Green FC, who have already clinched a playoff berth, in the regular season finale on Friday night.

NEFC (10-2-0), who joined the league a year ago, is sitting in second place with 30 points. They only need a tie against either last place Boston City FC or the Albany Rush to officially lock up a playoff spot for the first time. NEFC defeated the Pioneers, 4-2, at Lusitano Stadium on May 23.

Black Rock FC (5-3-3, 18 points) has the chance to tie for third place if they can win their final three matches and the Pioneers lose a match.

Each soccer team earns three points for a victory and one point for a draw.

Just like in their first meeting of the regular season meeting a month earlier, neither Black Rock FC nor the Pioneers scored a goal during the first 45 minutes of last Friday's contest.

Geronnimo Gomes had two of the shot attempts for the home side during the opening half.

At the beginning of the contest, Jackson Gould lined a shot from outside the top of the box that sailed wide of the net.

The Pioneers, who had four corner kicks in the first half, best scoring chance came during the 36th minute. That's when a shot taken by Vasco Teixeira clanged off the post keeping the match scoreless a little bit longer.

Down at the other end of the field, Western Mass. goalie Ben Alexander didn't have to make any saves during the first half.

The Pioneers finally ended the scoreless drought with a free kick goal in the 65th minute.

The duo of Ronan O'Brien and Shun Murasawa, who stepped onto the pitch together during the 60th minute, produced the Pioneers goal.

O'Brien sent the ball into the box from the right side where Murasawa headed into the right corner for his first goal of the season.

"I just focused on the ball, and I managed to score my first goal as a member of this team," Murasawa said. It was a great feeling, but we lost our focus on the last play.

Murasawa was born in Kawasaki, Japan before moving to Franklin, Tennessee with his family as a sophomore in high school. He'll be a sophomore member of the UMass Amherst men's soccer team in the fall. He was recruited by UMass volunteer assistant coach Takehiko Nakamura.

Murasawa's roommate at UMass as a freshman was Thomas Wadas, who's also



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Santiago Blasco Gomez tries to keep the ball from going out.



Riley Priddy dribbles up the field.

a member of the UMass soccer team.

Wadas also plays for the Pioneers and was an outstanding soccer player at Ludlow High School.

"Thomas was my college roommate and teammate last

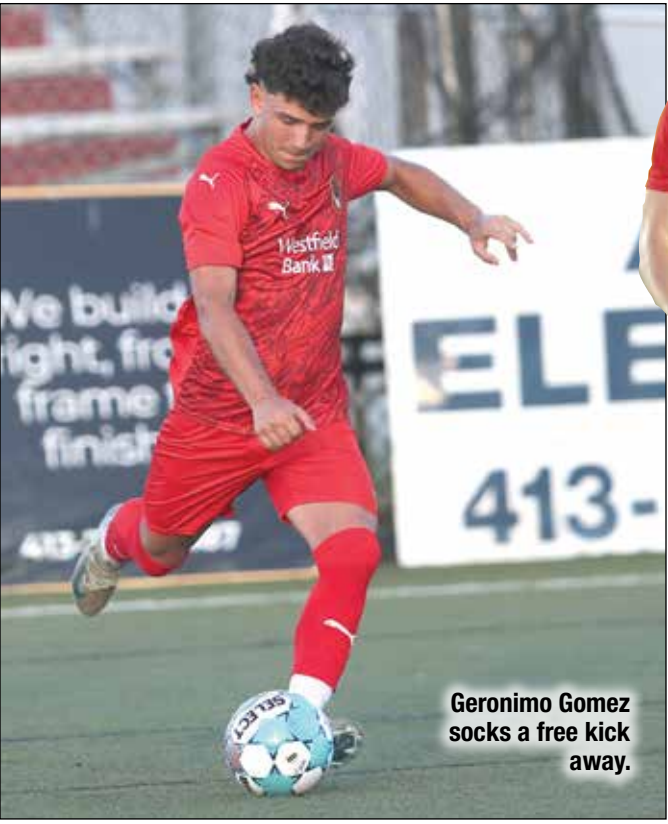
year," Murasawa said. "He told me about the Pioneers, and I wound up playing here. It's been a lot of fun and it's a great atmosphere here."

The score remained 1-0 until stoppage time.

With ten Black Rock players standing inside the box on a corner kick, Juan O'Neill booted the ball from

the right corner and goalie Christian Herluf Braae-Anderson put a shot into the net, which spoiled the Pioneers night.

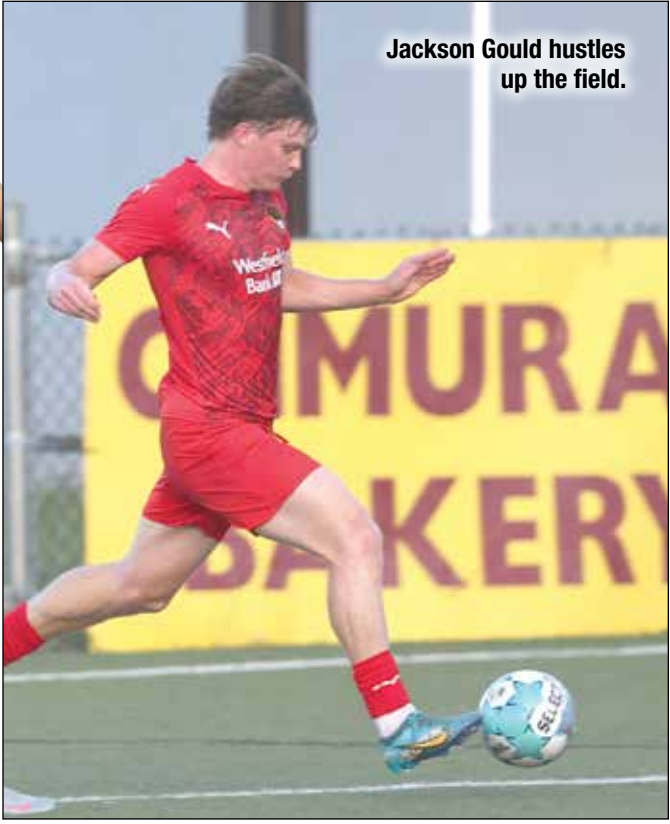
The Pioneers supporters are hoping to celebrate a victory in the regular season finale on Friday night against the undefeated Vermont Green FC.



Geronimo Gomez socks a free kick away.



Wynn Hammond looks to shoot.



Jackson Gould hustles up the field.

Thunderbirds bring in forward T.J. Tynan for 2026-27 season

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds announced today that the club has signed forward T.J. Tynan to a one-year AHL contract for the 2026-27 season.

Tynan, 34, skated in 67 games last season with the Colorado Eagles, posting 50 points (3g, 47a). He added

another 14 points (2g, 12a) in 17 Calder Cup Playoff games as the Eagles advanced to Game 7 of the Western Conference Finals.

A veteran of 760 regular-season AHL games, Tynan ranks seventh in league history with 579 career assists to go along

with 113 goals. The Orland Park, Ill. native and Notre Dame alumnus has eclipsed the 40-point mark 11 times in his standout career. He has also recorded 51 points (9g, 42a) in 85 career Calder Cup Playoff games, including trips to the Calder Cup Finals in 2016 and 2019.

A two-time recipient of the Les Cunningham Award as AHL MVP, Tynan posted a career-high 98 points in 2021-22 with the Ontario Reign, highlighted by 84 assists, tied for the third-most in a single season in AHL history. He has led the AHL in assists four times

during his career and enters the 2026-27 season just eight points shy of 700 for his career, a milestone reached by only 26 players in league history.

Tynan's professional journey began in Springfield with the Falcons organization in 2014. A third-round pick by

the Columbus Blue Jackets in 2011, Tynan appeared in the first 78 AHL games of his career in the City of Firsts, recording 13 goals and 35 assists during the 2014-15 season. He later captured a Calder Cup championship with the Lake Erie Monsters in 2015-16.



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Town of Russell, MA
The Town of Russell seeks a **Town Administrator** with strong communication and collaborative skills to oversee and manage day-to-day operations for our Town. Russell is a small rural community (pop. 1643) in the Southern Hilltown's of the Pioneer Valley region in Hampden County. Led by a three-member Select Board, and Open Town Meeting form of government, the Town relies on the Town Administrator to be responsible for the oversight and management of daily operations of the Town.
Responsibilities include scheduling, developing and implementing town projects, assisting with the preparation of budgets, coordinating with various town boards and committees, supervising and coordinating overall operations of Town government and managing day-to-day affairs under the general direction of the Select Board. The Town Administrator will support the Select Board, ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, interface with government agencies and the public and manage municipal operations for the Town. Attendance at certain evening meetings is required.
Candidates should have knowledge and competence in municipal finance and budgeting, project management, human resource/personnel administration, Massachusetts municipal law, and intergovernmental and community relations. The successful candidate should possess five (5) years of municipal management and leadership experience, or similar responsibilities in a public or government agency. A degree in public administration or a related field is preferred. An equivalent combination of education, training and experience which demonstrates possession of the required knowledge, skills and abilities may also be considered.
This is a full-time position with benefits. Starting salary range of \$70,000 – \$85,000 commensurate with qualifications and experience.
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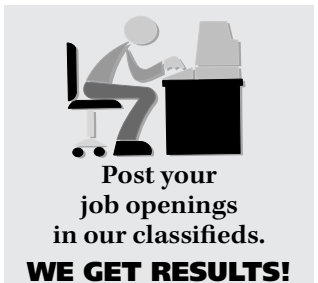
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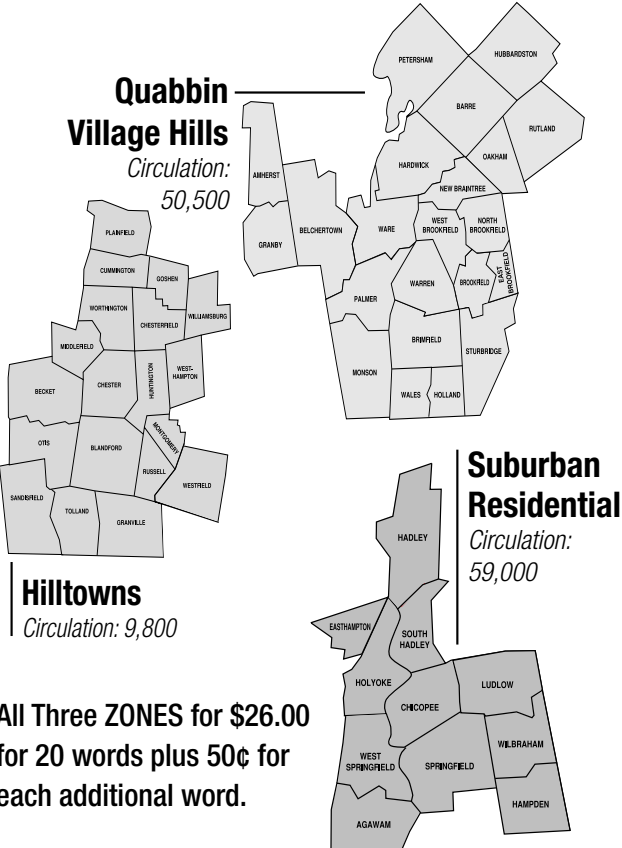
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Zonta Club offering fun golf day

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

Registration starts at 7:30 a.m., with a shotgun starts at 8:30 a.m. Registration form and link are at www.ZontaQV.org/golf. Questions can be directed to Mary Knight at 413-219-8260. Your support directly funds scholarships and grants that empower women and girls to overcome challenges and achieve their full potential. We’re working to end child marriage, domestic violence, and human trafficking, while also supporting climate justice, education equality, and women in decision-making positions.

Blue Sox fall to Mystic Schooners

HOLYOKE – The Valley Blue Sox fell 11-2 to the Mystic Schooners on July 3 at Mackenzie Stadium. Mystic got in front early with four runs in each the second and third innings, never looking back en route to a dominant victory.

The loss is the Blue Sox’s sixth in seventh games and the seventh time they have allowed 10 or more runs in the 2026 season. The Schooners flipped the script on a Blue Sox team that beat them 11-3, largely driven by nine early runs June 12.

LHP Andrew Speranza (Marist) took the ball in his first Blue Sox start and lasted three innings, allowing eight earned runs in his debut on six hits. Blue Sox’s Head coach John Raiola said Speranza was put in a tough start for his first appearance.

“Not to make excuses, but in reality he drove two hours to get here in 104 degrees and didn’t know anybody, and here you go,” Raiola said. “... Obviously

it didn’t go the way that he wanted, and kind of snowballed on us from there.”

Speranza was the third new Blue Sox’s player to join the team in the past week and make a start in his first appearance. However his start went south quickly and was essentially ended by a three-run home run into the Blue Sox bullpen. It was only the second home run hit at Mackenzie Stadium this season.

The Valley bullpen did well cleaning up the mess, pitching the remaining six innings without allowing an earned run. LHP Mike Madigan (George Mason), RHP Lukas Jachens (SUNY Oneonta) and RHP Jason Pinsonnault (Western New England) combined for a line of zero earned runs, five hits, one walk and three strikeouts.

For Pinsonnault, who has been a frequent late innings pitcher for Valley, it was business as usual. Pinsonnault has not allowed an earned run since

June 14, a span where he has thrown eight innings.

“Just been mixing well,” Pinsonnault said. “Everything’s felt good. I’ve been able to command everything. Being able to command and mix with all three has been the biggest thing for me.”

While the bullpen did not have any earned runs, Mystic did score three times after Speranza exited, largely due to some shaky defense from a Valley team that made five errors, a season high.

The Blue Sox are in their roughest stretch of play this season. They have lost six of their last seven games and dropped to fifth in the South Division.

Despite the tough run of games, Raiola is still optimistic that his team can grind their way out of a rut.

“One thing we just talked about is June is over,” Raiola said. “Be the best July hitter, be the best July pitcher that we have. Everyone should be striving for that.”

NOTICES

Belchertown Conservation Commission LEGAL NOTICE

Pursuant to the authority of the Wetlands Protection Act (M.G.L. Ch. 131, Sec. 40, its Regulations (310 CMR 10.00) and the Belchertown Wetlands Protection Bylaw (Chapter 139), the Belchertown Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on **Monday, July 20, 2026 at 7:00 PM in the Town Hall Auditorium, located at 2 Jabish Street in Belchertown, MA 01007** to review a **Request for Determination of Applicability** permit application submitted by Paul Desroches c/o J & P Engineering Services **for the proposed work to replace an existing failed septic system at 52 Summit Street (Assessor’s Map 251-87) in Belchertown.** Work is proposed to occur within the 100-foot Buffer Zone to Bordering Vegetated Wetlands. Anyone interested in this matter should appear at the time and place designated. 07/09/2026

Belchertown Conservation Commission LEGAL NOTICE

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fer Zone to Bordering Vegetated Wetlands and Scarboro Brook. Anyone interested in this matter should appear at the time and place designate 07/09/2026

Belchertown Conservation Commission LEGAL NOTICE

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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.

HEALTH from page 6

diabetes are associated with this disorder.

What does alcohol do to your liver?

Heavy drinkers and binge drinkers are at particular risk for liver disease, but even moderate drinking can affect liver function. Alcohol stresses the liver by causing fat buildup, inflammation and eventually scarring, leading to conditions like alcoholic fatty liver disease, alcoholic hepatitis and cirrhosis.

The good news is that our livers are remarkably resilient. Going 24 hours without alcohol eases the burden on the liver, and taking a break for a full 30 days lets your liver go into full recovery mode. If you drink, try to take a 30-day break a couple of times a year, and then have a few “dry” days each week. Your liver will thank you.

How do you keep a healthy liver healthy?

A lot of the same foods in a healthy diet are also liver-friendly: lean proteins, fatty fish, cruciferous veggies (i.e. broccoli, kale, cabbage and the like), nuts and olive oil.

Some studies indicate that blueberry and cranberry extracts may be helpful, but more research is needed. Experts warn against so-called “de-tox” treatments for livers because they haven’t been through clinical trials or been approved by the FDA.

Other helpful behaviors include maintaining a healthy weight and exercising. No surprises there. Above all, limit alcohol intake and take booze breaks for a day, a week or a month.

Problems with our livers can creep up on us, causing few symptoms until significant damage has already been done. If you have a family history of liver disease, acquaint yourself with the symptoms and ask your doctor whether more screening should be done.

While liver transplants have become relatively com-

mon - more than 11,000 performed in 2024 - it’s likely you can keep yours going with some smart lifestyle choices.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, R.N., a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate, is the founder of www.NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com, which trains medical professionals to become successful pri-

ivate patient advocates. A Monson, MA resident, she is the author of “How to Be a Healthcare Advocate for Yourself & Your Loved Ones” and her new book, “Advocating Well: Strategies for Finding Strength and Understanding in Health Care,” available at Amazon.com. Contact her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com to set up a free phone consultation.

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.

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- 1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com
- 2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.
- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts’ public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

Public notice deadlines are Friday at 3 p.m.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com

Send Us Your Autumn Event Information

Turley Publications will print your Autumn event **FREE OF CHARGE** in our **Autumn Fest Supplement** which will be published **September 9, 2026.**

Total circulation of 85,000 reaching over 200,000 readers in the Pioneer Valley.

Deadline for Calendar submissions is August 19.

Community Autumn Events

Event Should Be Non-Profit & Open to the Public

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Event Name _____

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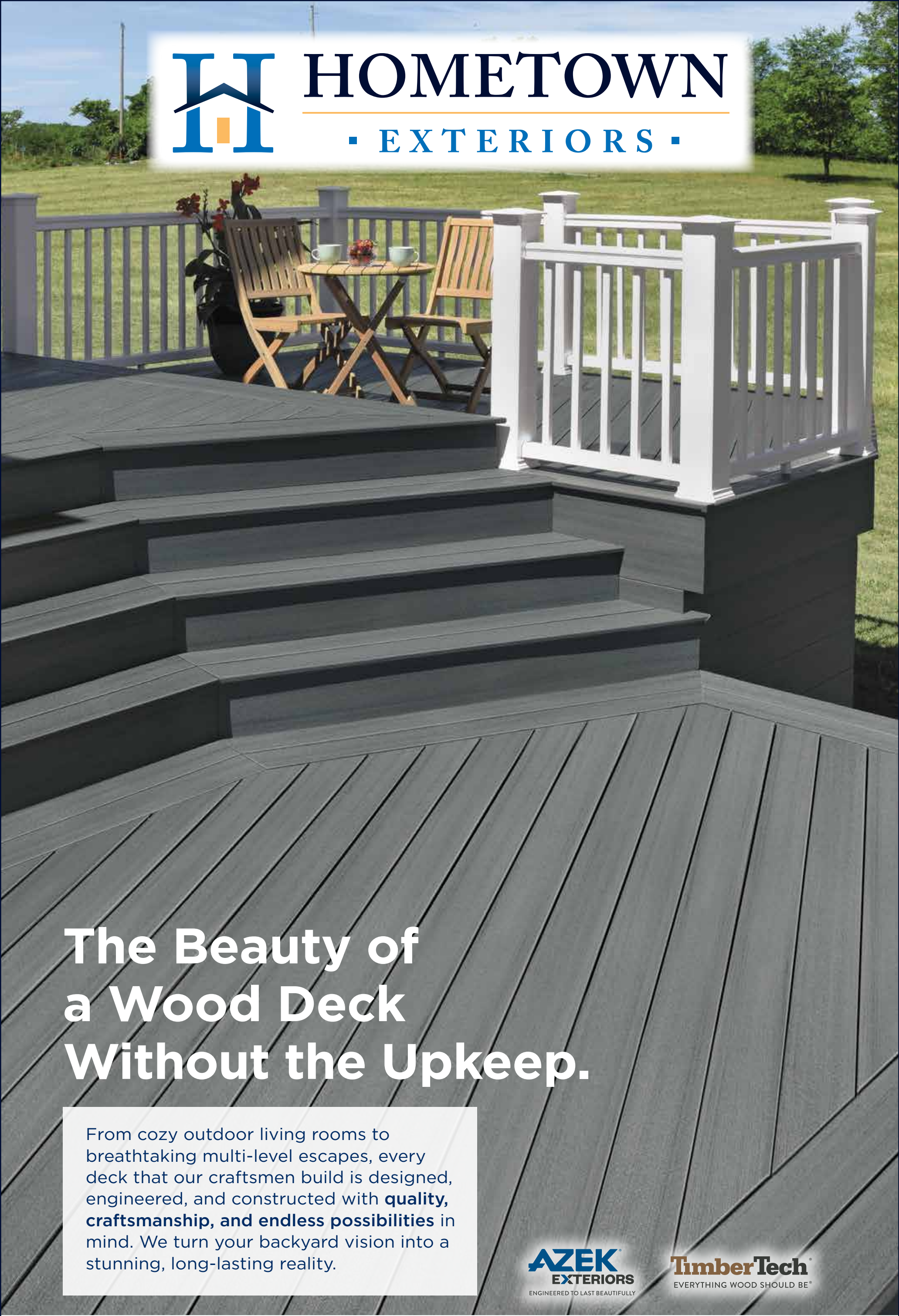
Location _____

Description _____

Cost _____

Contact name & phone number for more information _____

MAIL YOUR LISTING INFORMATION TO:
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or email* them to: jamie@turley.com
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