



Healthy Incentives Program

supports needy families, farmers

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

GRANBY – The Healthy Incentives Program celebrated \$100 million worth of produce distributed to needy families within the region. The first national program

of its kind, HIP began in the Pioneer Valley as a way to supplement SNAP benefits through connecting participants with local food. Supporters, media and state representatives flocked to Red Fire Farm to celebrate the milestone and to spread

program awareness to the public.

“So, HIP is like an add-on to SNAP,” said HIP Director for the Department of Transitional Systems Mia Koredebein. “If you live in Massachusetts and you get SNAP, then you’re automati-

cally signed up for HIP.”

The director explained how local food is vital for supporting communities during a time of food scarcity. Beginning as a pilot in Hampden County all the way back in November 2011 inspired by a survey con-

State Senator Jake Oliveira and State Representative Homar Gomez number among the attendees during the celebratory event.

ducted by the United States Department of Agriculture, the program expanded into a state-funded program within Massachusetts. Red Fire

Please see **HEALTHY PROGRAM**, page 3

Summer Eats back on the menu

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

BELCHERTOWN – Despite setbacks which almost canceled the program for this year, the Summer Eats program is back on the menu. The program, which supplies low income houses with free and nutritious lunch and breakfast options for children 18 years and younger, was almost canceled due to unexpected leave from the food services director.

“Basically what happened was our food services director had made a plan to have three sites scattered throughout the town in areas of low income,” Food Services Director Assistant Diane Zak said. “What happened was he had to take leave and we didn’t have all the final plans for this.”

Zak identified the absence and stepped into the role. With Superintendent Cameron’s help, she intended to “make something that would work” to help feed the students of Belchertown. She also reported surrounding towns were also welcome to “stop in as well.”

Please see **SUMMER EATS**, page 4

Town’s drought rules tighten

Water district weighs fields, growth and supply

By Melina Bourdeau
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN – The town’s water district is defending a reduced state withdrawal permit, enforcing irrigation bans on school fields and warning that limited supply could squeeze major projects, as the Selectboard presses for clarity on drought rules and redevelopment at the former state school.

In a briefing to the Selectboard on July 20, district officials walked through the legal and physical limits of the public water system, explaining

how drought stages, stream-flow triggers and a hard daily pumping cap shape everything from athletic field maintenance to the future of Carriage Grove and other redevelopment on the former Belchertown State School site.

The Belchertown Water District is a separate governmental entity, governed by its own bylaws and three elected commissioners. It was created by a special act of the Legislature nearly a century ago.

“Originally the district was created in 1928 and there’s actually a physical boundary on all sides of what was included in the original creation of the district,” Gary Brougham,

Please see **DROUGHT**, page 8

Town Hall energized by new EV chargers

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

BELCHERTOWN – Town representatives and residents celebrated the installation of electric vehicle chargers near Town Hall. The chargers are part of the Massachusetts Electric Vehicle Incentive Program, a state funded initiative to promote the widespread adoption of electric vehicles and charging station infrastructure across Massachusetts, and were funded by the Mass EVA grant.

The project was five years in the making. The initial steps began in January 2021, where the Energy and Sustainability Committee was established within the town. Committee clerk Patricia Krebs stated the committee was established with the help of Jim Barry to address the town’s sustainability and resiliency

concerns, namely to work on “trying to get EV chargers” for Belchertown.

The chargers on site were developed by EVSE LLC in partnership with the town and offer four level two charging stations located near the town hall. According to Krebs, these stations should work for any electrical vehicle, though some cars may require an adapter for them to function.

“The kind of connection it uses is one of the most common,” Krebs said. “Level one is like an outlet

Please see **EV CHARGERS**, page 4



Four chargers have been installed near town hall and are ready to serve residents.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY BEN HERNANDEZ

State Rep. Aaron Saunders advocates fair access to Quabbin resources

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

BELCHERTOWN – Multiple towns gathered to discuss the fate of the Quabbin Reservoir on July 10 at the Quabbin Visitor Center. The conference arose due to resident demand for equity and fairness, as well as to determine the fate of the reservoir. State Representative Aaron Saunders took the stand to

address concerns about reservoir water extraction not benefiting the region.

“This is an important opportunity to hear directly from those who not only have been affected historically by Providence, but who are affected today and will be in perpetuity,” Saunders said and listed extraction operations in the valley. Regional operations included rare earth minerals, oil and natural gas. The conference organizers, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, extract water.

“We need water. Folks here can only use water for essential purposes,” Saunders

said. “While 180 billion gallons per day are extracted from this community.”

The comment was a direct address of the ongoing water ban in Belchertown which, as of this writing, prohibits non-essential outdoor water use such as lawn watering, irrigation, vehicle washing and filling swimming pools. Saunders called the current situation in town “not great.”

“I imagine if there was 180 million gallons of water a day available in those communities, they’d feel that it might be fair,” Saunders

Please see **QUABBIN RESOURCES**, page 2



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Delegates gather to discuss the future of the Quabbin Reservoir.

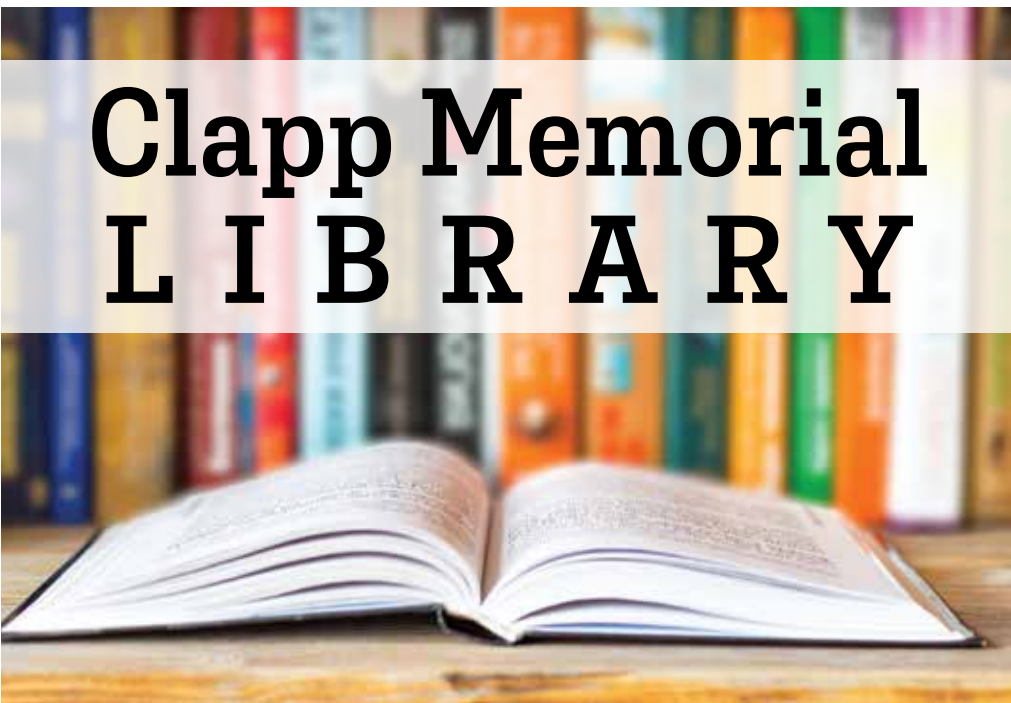
COMMUNITY

Upcoming Programs and Events

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

FOR ADULTS:
What “YA” Readin’? Book Group
Thursday, Aug 6, 7 to 8 p.m.
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, Aug 6th in the Select Board Meeting room at the Town Hall to discuss The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas. Copies of the book are available for check-out at the circulation desk. New members are welcome!

FOR TEENS:
Teen Book Club
Wednesday, July 29, 3 to 4 p.m.
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 check-out 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.



Teen Crafternoon: Upcycled Planters
Monday, Aug. 3, 4:30 to 5:30 pm
Teens ages 12-18 are invited to the library to upcycle tea tins into planters to celebrate the 2026 Teen Summer Reading Program theme, “Plant a Seed, Read!” This program will take place Monday, August 3rd on the front lawn of the library, except in the case of rain in which the program will be rescheduled to Friday, August 7th at the same time. This program is drop-in; teens can come by any time over the hour to create their planter as supplies last. This program is funded by the Friends of the Clapp Memorial Library and thanks to the generosity of our community spider plant donors.

FOR TEENS AND TWEENS:
Studio Ghibli Movie Night: Spirited Away
Friday, July 24, 6 to 8 p.m.

Teens and tweens entering grades 6-12 are invited to the Clapp Memorial Library for a Studio Ghibli Movie Night on Friday, July 24th! Join us as we watch Spirited Away, a perfect film to pair with this year’s Summer Reading theme: Plant a Seed, Read! Free popcorn and beverages will be provided. Students can sign up for the program at the library or by emailing macona@cwmars.org. Participants of the Teen Summer Reading Program will earn a raffle ticket for their attendance. This program is funded by the Friends of the Clapp Memorial Library.

FOR TEENS AND CHILDREN 7 AND UP:
Comics Workshop with Jarrett J Krosoczka Live Webinar
Thursday, July 30, 6 to 7 p.m.
Belchertown Town Hall Auditorium
Join us at the Town Hall auditorium for an engaging live webinar with New York

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@cwmars.org.

Princess Story Time
Wednesday, July 29, 5:30 to 7 p.m.
Belchertown Town Hall Auditorium
Meet our visiting princess from Alyssa’s Happily Ever Afters! The Wayfinder princess will sing some of her favorite songs and tell her story. We’ll have fun crafts and activities while you wait to have your picture taken with her! Wear a costume or come as you are. This program will be held in the town hall auditorium and requires registration. Register online at clapplibrary.org or call 413-323-0417. All children who register for this program must also be registered for “Plant a Seed, Read!” our summer reading program. Ages 2 and up. Children can also register for the movie showing that will follow at the Library at 7 pm. Funded by the Friends of the Clapp Memorial Library and our Community Sponsors.

Movie Night
Wednesday, July 29, 7 to 9 p.m.
In this PG rated animated movie from 2016, an adventurous teenager sails out on a daring mission to save her people. During her journey, she learns how to be a Master Wayfinder. It’s an action-packed voyage, with enormous monsters and nearly impossible odds. Registration is required. Register online at clapplibrary.org or call 413-323-0417. All children who register for this program must also be registered for “Plant a Seed, Read!” our summer reading program.

Carrie Ferguson and The Grumpytime Club
Wednesday, Aug. 5, 6 to 7 p.m.
Put on your dancing shoes and come sing and dance with us! The Grumpytime Club offers children and families welcoming and inclusive messages about accepting feelings, celebrating differences, and loving ourselves exactly as we are. This event will take place on the library Lawn or in Town Hall if it rains. Part of the library’s “Plant a Seed, Read!” summer reading program. Funded in part by the Belchertown Cultural Council, a local agency funded by Mass Cultural Council, a state agency; Friends of Clapp Memorial Library, and library sponsors.

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Belchertown, MA 01007
413-323-0417
clapplibrary.org

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9:30 a.m. – 7 p.m.
<i>Wednesday</i>
9:30 a.m. – 7 p.m.
<i>Thursday</i>
9:30 a.m. – 7 p.m.
<i>Friday</i>
9:30 a.m. – 6 p.m.
<i>Saturday</i>
9:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.
.....

EV CHARGERS
from page 1
in your house. Level two is like a dryer type of outlet. Like, it’s a little bit stronger amperage. Level three is the DC fast charging and only certain cars can take the fast charging. This is not a fast charging.”
The on-site stations will require users to install an app and payments may be made via credit card. Usage is charged per kilowatt hour, a departure from other chargers which charge by the total hours plugged into the sta-

tion. Krebs applauded the design decision for its efficiency, as users will only be charged for “exactly what energy you’re taking.”
Accompanied by local government members and State Senator Jake Oliveira, State Representative Aaron Saunders spoke on the new initiative to help the town go green.
“There’s going to be hundreds and soon thousands of folks who have the opportunity and benefit of locally and conveniently charging their EVs,” Saunders said. “We know that the single

biggest hurdle we have to EV uptake is charging and when local communities invest in taking on that challenge, we see the results.”
Saunders applauded the Energy and Sustainability Committee’s efforts to serve the town and mentioned despite recent “federal friends stepping away from the responsibility” of reducing airborne pollutants, Massachusetts wouldn’t shy away from the challenge.
“We are moving forward with or without them,” Saunders said. “And we’re hopeful very soon it will continue to once again be with them. But in the meantime, we’re not hitting pause on our own commitments to ensuring a clean energy future for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.”

QUABBIN RESOURCES
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said. “Not MWRA advisory board fair. It’s a different standard. We’ll address that at a different time. But it would be fair to share in that resource.”
Saunders addressed the current regional drought, which he described as so bad Belchertown schools would have to cancel fall sports due to the water ban preventing field irrigation and contrasted it with a recent police station visit in New Salem.
“It’s quite the luxury to be able to use the bathroom in a police station,” Saunders said. “It’s one that’s not shared out here.”
In his speech, Saunders emphasized the confer-

ence wasn’t about seeking a handout or a petition for charity but to recognize the “value of the resource” extracted from the region which, according to the representative, numbers in the billions of billions of dollars in economic development.
“This isn’t handouts. It’s not charity. It’s recognition for the value of the resource you extract that has facilitated billions upon billions of dollars in economic development for our friends and neighbors in the eastern part of the state,” Saunders said. “It’s facilitated thousands upon thousands of desperately needed housing units while we can’t redevelop the Belchertown State School because we don’t have enough water. While the Chickadee Valley aqueduct runs under our streets,

we don’t get a drop.”
Saunders stated the issue was how land was valued in the Quabbin valley. He stated the acre price came down to what the MWRA believed the land was worth. While Saunders acknowledged the MWRA was the largest taxpayer in the region, he found the assigned acre price to be woefully insufficient for the region.
“It’s an admission of how criminally small the considerations for our communities have been for decades and decades,” Saunders said. “For so-called annex land here in Belchertown, some of which I believe we’re on right now, it’s \$3,800 an acre. Might get you a shoebox in Boston.”

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Friends of Clapp Memorial Library to hold \$1 sale

BELCHERTOWN – On Saturday, Aug. 22 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., there will be a one-day only sale of Jigsaw Puzzles, DVDs and CDs in the Activity Room of the Belchertown Clapp Memorial Library. All items will be only \$1 each. Cash only (no credit cards or Venmo).

There are nearly two hundred puzzles from 300 to 1000+ pieces and so many DVDs and CDs, we didn't count them. You are sure to find something for all ages. Jigsaw puzzles are a fun family activity any time of the year so come by and load up!

So many of you have expressed regrets about not having a book sale this year. The Friends of CML feel the same way. The basement renovations are being planned with the hopes that we will have book sales again in 2027.

In the meantime, we do hope to have a smaller version "Like New" book sale in the Activity Room in October when we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Friends of the Clapp Memorial Library. More information will be forthcoming as the date comes closer.

So mark your calendar for our special \$1 sale on Aug. 22. See you there.

Getting your photos off your hard drive

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

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

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

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

"For many photographers, the joy is in taking the photo," said QPG Program Chair Ed Comeau. "Whether it is planning for the shoot, the experience of

being out in nature, or the post-production editing that go into an image. Printing a well-crafted nature photograph, whether is wildlife or landscape, provides an opportunity to share nature's beauty as seen by the photographer through the lens of a camera."

Before joining Frame It Easy, Ackerman spent more than two decades working in her family's picture framing business in Cincinnati, Ohio. Her experience spans both traditional custom framing and modern online printing and framing services, providing photographers with practical insights into today's display options.

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

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

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



Red Fire Farm was one of the first local farms enrolled in the state-wide Healthy Incentives Program.

HEALTHY PROGRAM

from page 1

Farm was selected for the press conference as it was one of the first farms brought on board by the initiative.

"It started as a study done by the USDA and DTA... to see if people had better access to to buy more fruits and vegetables," Koredebein said. "Living on a low income, would they want to buy more fruits and vegetables? And the answer was yes."

Receiving HIP assistance is quite simple, according to Koredebein. Swiping an EBT card on affiliated farms automatically covers the cost of picked fruits and vegetables up to "\$40, \$60 or \$80 a month depending on your household size."

State Senator Jake Oliveira applauded HIP's milestone and called it a "great program." As he stood on Red Fire Farm's campus, the senator took a moment to appreciate how hard the agricultural business was to operate.

"It is not easy to keep and maintain a farm," Oliveira said. "There are a lot of things out of your control."

Oliveira stressed HIP was a way to invest in local farms and called them "the backbone" of the regional food system. He stated though most state farms were run by "big agricultural businesses that are owned by corporations," it wasn't the case within Massachusetts.

"Most of our farms are run by families," Oliveira said. "That's why it's important for programs like the Healthy Incentive Program because it has dual benefit. Number one, it benefits those one in seven Massachusetts residents that receive DTA benefits, but allows the to access healthy foods."

Linking state benefits to the local food supply,



TURLEY PHOTOS BY BEN HERNANDEZ

State Senator Jake Oliveira learns about garlic bulb planting from resident farmer Ryan Voiland.



Red Fire Farm's Ryan Voiland explains crop cultivation to state representatives.

regional business and to offer widespread access to nourishing organic food. The senator also argued the state and insurers spent less money as a result of the program.

"Every dollar that we invest in the Healthy Incentives Program is double in economic activity," Oliveira said. "Since many farms are located here in western Massachusetts, that's an economic boost for our region. Which means that, even though we were celebrating \$100 million today for the Healthy Incentives Program, that's \$200 million in economic benefits."

Koredebein thanked community partners, customers and farmers for making the program possible, as well as the state for the continued assistance. She stated HIP was an example of "government innovation actually working at its best" and a stellar example of what happens "when we all work together."

"If you think that families should eat well, if you want to eat well yourself, if you think that farmers should be viable and local farms should have a shot at surviving, you're going to think this program is a good idea," Koredebein said.

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COMMUNITY

Staying safe from ticks and mosquitos

By Quinn Suomala
Correspondent

As the weather gets warmer there is an increase in the number of ticks and mosquitos as people go about summer activities. It is important for people to be aware of protection against these insects to prevent illnesses, including West Nile Virus, Lyme disease and Alpha-gal Syndrome.

The Director of Public Health in Wilbraham Ryan Paxton recommends that people check themselves, children and pets for ticks after going outdoors.

The key places to check are: inside and behind ears, along the hairline, the back of the neck, the armpits, the groin, the legs, and between the toes.

To remove a tick utilize fine point tweezers and grab the tick as close to the skin as possible. Try to pull straight out, as moving at an angle



can leave parts of the tick behind.

Additionally, as is on the website for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, people should avoid applying kerosene, petroleum jelly, nail polish or a hot match tip to remove a tick, as those methods aren't effective and can result in injury.

The Department of Public Health also recommends noting when the tick was removed and where on the body it was removed from. This information will be helpful if a person or pet needs to go to a doctor for treatment.

A person should go to the doctor if they develop a rash where they were bitten or experience the common symptoms of tick-borne diseases (including fever, headache, fatigue or sore muscles).

Someone should also go to the doctor if they have stomach or intestinal problems (including nausea, vomiting or diarrhea) or symptoms of an allergic reaction within a few hours of eating meat or dairy.

It is also important to be aware of mosquito bites. The West Nile Virus is the most common mosquito-born illness in the United States.

However, this illness has not been reported in humans in Massachusetts this year.

To prevent tick and mosquito bites a person can wear a light-colored long-sleeved shirt with long pants and tuck their pants into their socks. This helps to prevent a tick or mosquito from getting onto a person's skin and can help a

person to spot a tick on their clothing.

Avoiding outdoor activities between dusk and dawn during peak mosquito season also greatly lowers the risk of mosquito bites.

The Department of Public Health also recommends removing standing water in yards, as that is where mosquitos breed.

This can include water in garbage cans, flowerpots, bird baths and discarded tires.

Property owners can also utilize mosquito prevention services, including spraying private property with insect repellent to help reduce the amount of insects.

Additionally, people should use bug repellents that contain DEET on their skin. There should be no more than 30-35% DEET in repellents for adults and no more than 10-15% DEET in repellents for children.

Fireworks display kicks off 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 communi-

ty 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.

SUMMER EATS

from page 1

"We do have one restriction which he was not going to have," Zak said. "That is the fact that unless students qualified for free or reduced [meals] during the school year, we were not supposed to be feeding them free."

Those the stipulation would disqualify many residents struggling to put food on the table over the summer, coverage will still be offered courtesy of the Belchertown School Food Services Department. Due to "a bit of reserve" identified within the account, Zak reported people who wouldn't initially be eligible would still receive their subsidized meals.

"So what we did was we shrunk from three sites and needing 24 employees

to doing it at one site with three employees," Zak said. She stated the downsized wouldn't be an issue, as the proposed three site initiative this year would have been a departure from their usual one site operations. The additional sites would have worked under different conditions as well.

"They were all going to be an outside service area," Zak said. "With a tent."

The idea was to use the tents as a gathering spot, where the residents would

be able to come in, eat and pick up to go meals. However, with the recent transition of Cold Spring School to Pathfinder Tech ownership and other "movement" happening within the school district, the plan would have made everything a "little more difficult."

"Everyone was really super busy," Zak said. "I just decided that we had to simplify, do what we could do, and still be able to feed the

kids."

Operation days during the summer are Monday through Friday between the hours of 11:30am and 1pm. Participants will receive a lunch and a bagged breakfast to "take home for the next morning." The program began on July 6 and will stop service on August 21. Zak also extended an offer for those looking to advertise or promote community events.

"Vendors are welcome," Zak said. "We do have face painters and glitter tattoos... there'll be other events going on throughout the time."

Those interested in applying to be a vendor or otherwise helping out the program may contact Zak at dzak@blechertownps.org.



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OPINION

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters By Russell Gloor

Can my spouse file at 63 and then get half of mine when I later claim?

Dear Rusty: My spouse is 63 and I am 65. I am planning to take my Social Security benefits at age 70. Can my lower earning spouse take his own benefits now, and then -when I take my full benefits at age 70, can he then file for 50% of mine instead of the lower benefit he is getting because he claimed at age 63?

Signed: Higher Earning Spouse

Dear Higher Earning Spouse:

Yes, your lower-earning spouse can take his benefits based on his personal lifetime earnings record at any time (i.e., age 63) and, when you later claim your own SS at 70, your spouse will be evaluated to determine whether he is eligible for a “spousal boost” based on your Social Security record.

But to be sure you are clear, if you claim at age 70, your spouse will not get 50% of your age 70 benefit amount.

Spousal benefits are always determined by comparing each partners’ Full Retirement Age entitlement and, if your spouse’s FRA entitlement is less than half of your FRA entitlement, your spouse will get a “spousal boost” to bring his monthly SS retirement payment up to what he is entitled to as your spouse.

The amount of the “spousal boost” would be the difference between his FRA entitlement and 50% of your FRA entitlement, which would be added to his own (age 63) SS retirement amount.

And that means that his total benefit amount would be less than half of your age 70 amount (less also than 50% of your FRA amount, because he claimed at age 63).

One caution for your spouse to be aware of: if he is still working and claims at age 63, he will be subject to Social Security’s Annual Earnings Test, which

limits how much he can earn before SS takes away some benefits.

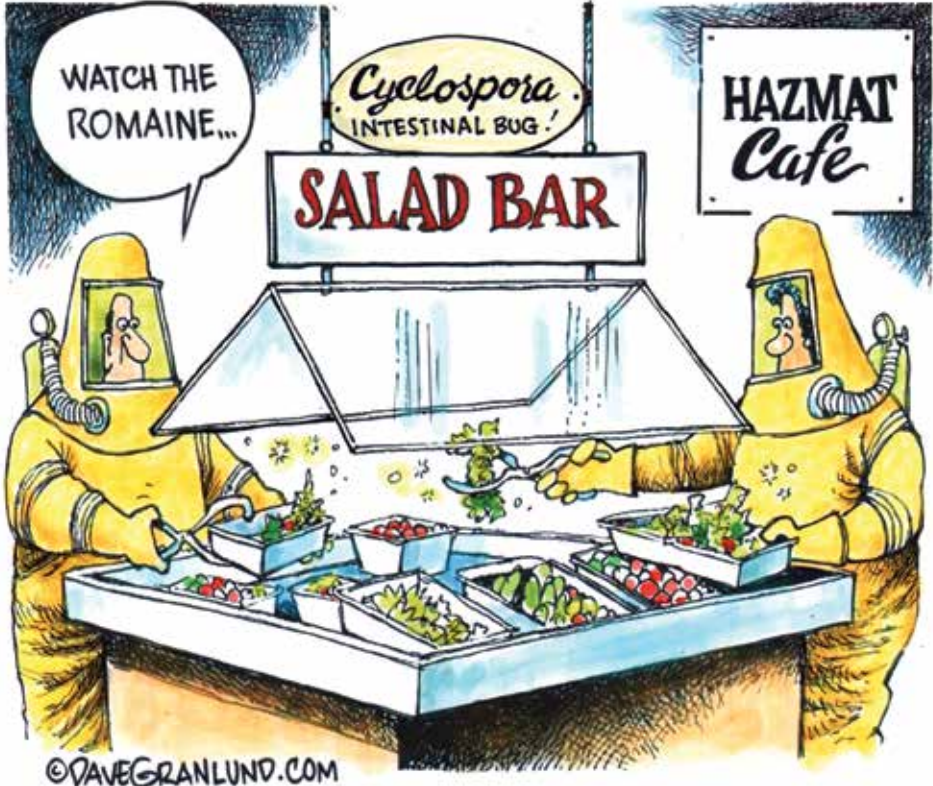
The earnings limit for 2026 is \$24,480 (changes annually) and if that is exceeded, SS will take back \$1 of benefits for every \$2 he is over the limit. FYI, Social Security will “take back” by withholding future benefit payments, so he will not get his benefits for some months if he exceeds the annual earnings limit.

And if the annual earnings limit is significantly exceeded, your spouse could even be temporarily ineligible to receive SS benefits (until he either earns less or reaches his full retirement age, the earnings limit goes away when FRA is reached).

The only way your spouse can avoid both a reduced personal benefit and the annual earnings test limitation is to wait until his own Full Retirement Age to claim Social Security.

However, if he’s not working full time and needs the Social Security money sooner, then claiming at age 63 may be a good choice. In any case, he won’t get half of your age 70 amount.

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.



Washing the elephant

The name Paul Rogers may ring a bell with some of my readers. Paul was a dear friend of mine, a mentor and acclaimed horticulturist who had amazing influence at Old Sturbridge Village, especially early on in my tenure.

He operated Stonehedge Gardens with his wife Barb in Charlton and for many decades wrote a regular column for the Worcester Telegram and Gazette. Paul also had a radio show, a weekly gardening Q&A on WTAG.

It was with his coaxing that I applied for and got this gig as the Garden Lady for Turley Publications over 20 years ago. He was very well known throughout Central Massachusetts, the Boston area and beyond.

Once I was in Bath, Maine, and to my disbelief someone mentioned that they knew Paul Rogers when I was shopping in a kitchen store of all places. But alas, I digress.

Paul and I would meet every other week at the Village unless he was traveling on some horticultural odyssey. Many times he and I would chat before we took our walks around campus to assess my beds.

I learned all about his trips in great detail and he got to know me pretty well, too. He always knew when I was “down in the dumps.”

During those periods, Paul would say, “you’ve got to wash the elephant.”

At first this made little sense to me, but after a bit I understood. When you are not feeling like yourself, you have to tackle a project, a big, elephant-like project, and afterwards you will feel better.

Of course, his projects

were, and mine are, typically garden related.

I had never seen anything like it. As I unearthed the rhizomes I smelled the rot before I found my first borer. To say it was gross was an understatement.

Each rhizome was lifted, inspected and cut back to healthy tissue. Two inch long borers were collected in a yogurt container for the chickens. They ranged in color from light pink to deep mahogany.

So this weekend I tackled the iris and rose bed. Or shall I say the iris, rose and violet bed?

The violets were unwelcome guests in the garden, as were the borers, but we will get to that in a minute.

You see, I inherited this beautiful patch of blue-purple bearded irises when we moved to this house. For years it bloomed effortlessly. I divided it once a few years back and it was nice for awhile.

But this year blooms were sparse and rose suckers began to show up everywhere within the garden. Violet foliage crowded out the vertical spear-shaped iris leaves.

How was I to tame this mess and do it in the most efficient way possible? My approach may seem unconventional, but if I didn’t do it this way I might still be outside squatting in that very garden.

I took out the lawn mower and adjusted the height to the tallest I could, six inches. Then I mowed down the garden.

After that I got into the bed with a hand trowel and one scoop at a time, dug up the bed. It was easier than I thought, because the irises were in worse shape than I thought. They came up so easily because they were weakened by a bad iris borer infestation.



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

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

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Twenty-four days on the Appalachian Trail

Mountains, miles & memories

By Julie Midura

Seventeen days into our 320-mile walk on the A.T. from North Carolina to Virginia, the sky broke open with unyielding rain, drumming the leaves overhead and turning the trail into a torrent of rushing water. The squish, squish, squish of water-filled shoes became a constant melody for the next eight days as rain drifted through the forest... sometimes in sheets and sometimes in hushed murmurs.



Wet foliage accosted us at every turn, the branches leaning heavily onto the trail from the weight of SO MUCH unrelenting rain.

Every step became methodical. Our eyes looked down rather than ahead, focusing on the individual brushstrokes rather than the entire painting. Only then were we able to see the tiny little details we likely would not have noticed under sunny skies.

As we continued to walk through ever-present WET, our attention narrowed. We focused our eyes on a much smaller world-the one directly below our feet.

I crouched down to see a turtle shyly peeking its head out of its bright yellow lacquered shell. I squatted with my elbows on my knees in the middle of the path to watch a snail moving with ceremonial slowness as it crossed the trail on a rotting log, leaving a trail of silver in its wake. I stooped low to get a closer look at a vivid orange salamander with black speckles dusting its back and golden eyes staring straight into mine. I observed tiny creatures of our earth-who remain under cover on hot sunny days-come to life on the surface of the rain-drops.

For eight days in a row, we awoke in a tent and pulled on soaking wet socks and shoes. We gripped trekking

Please see HIKING, page 7



HIKING from page 6

poles with fingers that turned white and puckered by days end. But we also witnessed magical forest spirits and tiny details we would never have noticed on a clear day.

It rained overnight and was still spitting when we packed up our wet tent on our final day on trail. Before we started walking, we ended our morning prayer with, “And if it be your will, Lord, please let us end this hike under sunny skies.”

Several hours later, we reached the end of our journey at the Virginia border, completing our 320-mile walk from Fontana Dam, NC to Damascus, VA! We congratulated each other, snapped a few pictures, then continued hiking the final few miles toward the town of Damascus, where our friends were meeting us to shuttle us back to our car.

As we walked, the clouds finally began to loosen their grip on the sky. Minutes later, golden beams of sunlight spilled between the branches, as if an unseen hand was parting a curtain. The entire forest came alive with a radiance that could not be explained by mere sunlight alone.

I stopped walking, and with my pack on my shoulders, I tilted my face upward as the sun poured rivers of gold through the canopy above me. And suddenly, I was filled with an overwhelming revelation—so powerful that I began to weep uncontrollably.

I wept not because the rain finally stopped. Not because the hike had been so hard. Not because we completed our goal. I cried, because in that sudden moment of awakening, I could feel God’s presence to the depths of my very soul. And I realized we had never walked a single mile alone.

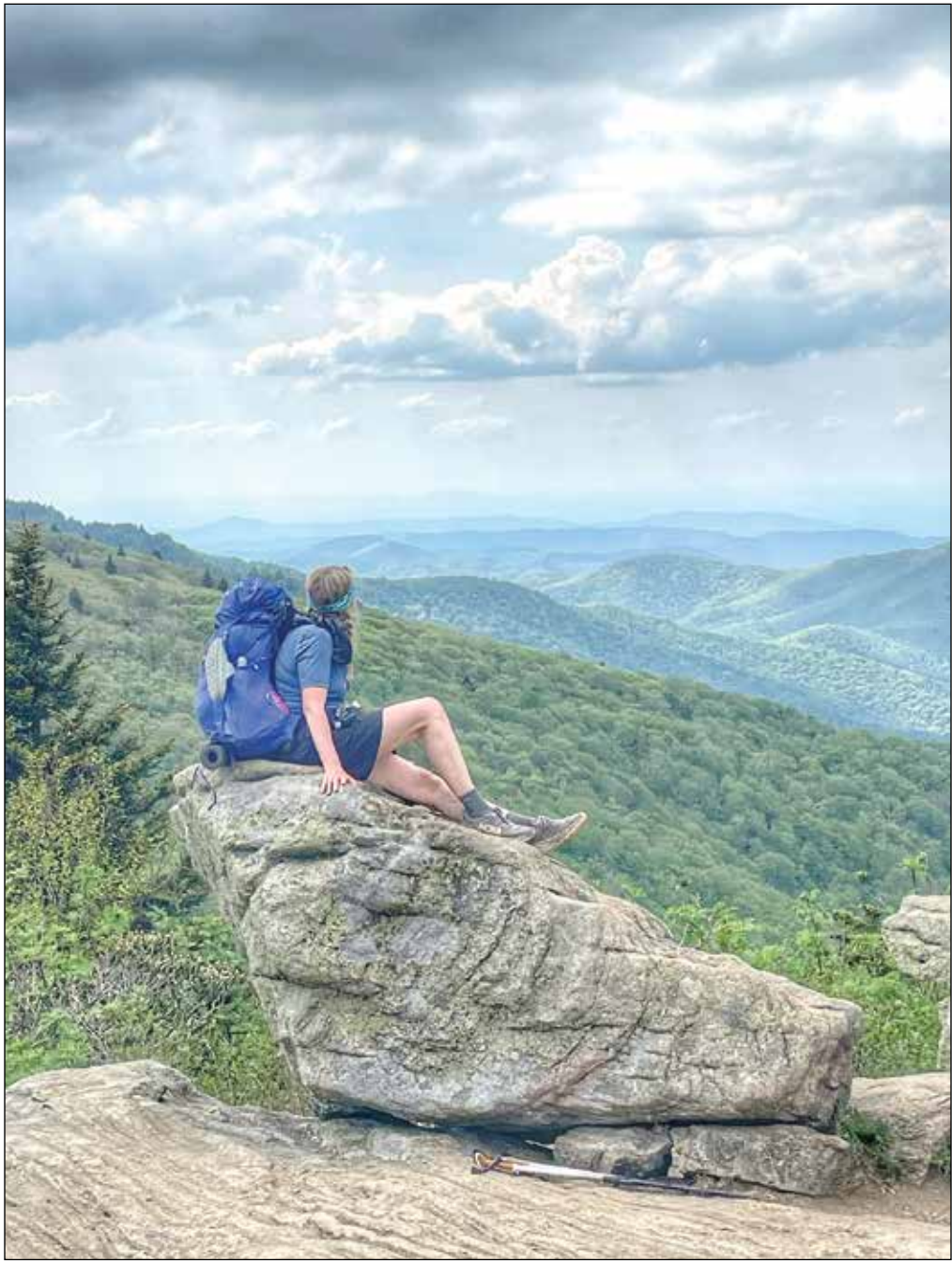
God had carried us through every storm. Through every drop of rain. Every exhausting climb. Every windswept ridge. Every stretch of muddy trail. Through every ache and every pain.

He had not been waiting for us at the end. Had not been watching us from a distance. He had been walking right alongside us, filling us with His glory with every step, and carrying us when we could no longer carry ourselves.

My fatigue had concealed it. The rain and clouds had obscured it. My own determination had camouflaged it. But here, in a moment of complete clarity, with the sunlight warming my face, drops of water dripping from the leaves above me, and over three hundred miles behind me, I could see it clearly.

God had been with us in every step.

In the strength when ours failed. In the shelter that appeared when we needed it most. In the strangers



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

who offered kindness. In the moments when we thought we had nothing left, yet somehow continued forward.

I stood among the trees, while beams of golden light streamed through the branches above me in silent testimony. Stripped of my armor, I wept on my husband’s shoulder while he held me in his arms. And finally, every raindrop, every ache, every hard climb, every trial, and every mile... made sense.

We completed our goal, not because it was easy, but because we kept putting one foot in front of the other for 24 days.

We embraced a path that humbled us. Carried us. Challenged us. Stripped us down and built us up—physically, mentally and emotionally. Taught us resilience. Showed us that we can sit in discomfort without becoming a casualty of it.

We tasted freedom. We inhaled silence. We knew peace.

The miles may be finished, but we will carry what they gave us as we step out of this wilderness and re-enter the world we left behind.

Onward!

Read more about Julie and Tom’s wilderness adventures on Instagram @morethanthe-mountain



Lions Club Car Show set for Aug. 8

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown Lions Club will be returning to the Belchertown Town Common on Aug. 8 (rain date: Aug. 9) for its 3rd Annual Memorial Car Show...and it promises to be even bigger and better than ever.

We will continue with our custom-made laser-engraved slate trophy plaques with leather hanging straps—no two the same. We hope that your ride will take home one of our very unique Top 20, four specialties, or the Best in Show presentations.

Burgers, dogs, meatball grinders, fries, and canned soft drinks are available—along with a raffle table and a 50/50 raffle.

All vehicles are welcomed (with specialty awards for best motorcycle,

truck, paint, and engine.) Spectators get free admission! Participant parking on the grass: \$20

No pre-registration (So please don’t be a victim of online pre-show registration scams.)

Registration begins at 9 a.m. at 28 Park St. on the Town Common. Judging continues until 1 p.m.—followed immediately by the raffle drawings and the awarding of trophies.

All proceeds will go to local charities including Veterans’ Affairs, Senior Center, fuel assistance, Girl Scouts, Scouting America, high school scholarships, food pantries, etc.

More information and possible rain date updates can be found at <https://www.belchertownlions-club.com/car-show.htm>

Amherst Area Chamber online auction through July 24

BELCHERTOWN — The Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce will host its inaugural Online Auction Fundraiser from July 13 to 24, featuring original artwork, VIP sports experiences, local getaways, and one-of-a-kind opportunities from across the region. Every bid supports the Amherst Area Chamber’s work to strengthen local businesses, build community connections, and advance a more vibrant, resilient, and inclusive regional economy. The Chamber aims to engage 300 bidders and raise \$5,000 to sustain this programming and mission.

Sponsored by Belchertown-based Window World of Western Mass, the auction will showcase items that highlight the creativity, culture, and community spirit of the region and seven towns served by the Chamber: Amherst, Belchertown, Hadley, Leverett, Pelham, Shutesbury and Sunderland.

“There is something for everyone in this first online auction supporting the work of the Amherst Area Chamber. We purposely designed the auction to highlight the creativity, culture and natural surroundings of our area. We have something special here and we are celebrating it,” said Jennifer

Faulkner, Board Member of the Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce and Belchertown resident and business owner.

Local businesses, artists, and community partners from across the region have contributed unique offerings to the auction, designed to inspire participation and excitement. Featured items include a glass planet by renowned artist Josh Simpson, skincare services from Grace Aesthetics, a full-moon paddle tour experience with Adventure East, writing time in Emily Dickinson’s own creative space, an expert-guided tour of Lake Wallace, and the opportunity to name a newborn calf at Barstow’s Longview Farm.

The auction coincides with the Chamber’s 23rd Annual Golf Tournament, taking place Friday, July 17 at Cold Spring Country Club in Belchertown. As the featured nonprofit of the event, Friends of Lake Wallace will be highlighted during the tournament for their work to create an accessible sensory trail in Belchertown.

Bidding opens Monday, July 13, and closes Friday, July 24, at 12 noon. To view the auction and place a bid, visit birdease.com/amherstareaauction.

Historical Association announces ice cream social

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown Historical Association is hosting its annual Ice Cream Social on Sunday afternoon, July 26 from 2 to 4 p.m. on the grounds of the Stone House Museum. The public is invited to attend and share in a typical, community gathering from the

19th and early 20th centuries. Bring your blanket or lawn chair and find a shady spot to sit and enjoy your Rondeau’s ice cream.



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Granby library announces August activities

Adult Book Group
Thursday, Aug. 13 at 6 p.m.
The book group will be

**Friends of the Granby
Library Meeting**
Thursday, Aug. 20 at 4:30

Adult Summer Reading
Plant a Seed, Read! Ends
Aug. 21
Get your tickets in by Aug.
21 to win great prizes.

This is an opportunity for local vendors and sellers

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

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

“The water district is self-sufficient based on the users, the user rates,” he said. “Something like a water ban like this, it hurts our budget flat out. We don’t want to do it... but it’s mandatory. We need to protect the resource, and we need to do what the state says.”

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Oscar Reich returns the ball to the infield.

B-Town Legion's postseason runs reaches its end

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WESTFIELD—Last Saturday's American Legion Senior Division playoff matchup between Belchertown Post 239 and Westfield Post 124 was completed without any weather-related interruptions.

That's the good news. The bad news is Belchertown's postseason run came to an end following a 4-0 loss in

the rain at Jachym Field in Westfield.

Post 239 had captured the District 3 championship in each of the past three seasons.

"We knew coming into this season that it was going to be a different team than it has been over the last three years," said Belchertown manager Todd McDonald. "Our goal was to be a better team today than we were on day one. I thought every single player progressed in some way, even if it was in their own little way."

The Belchertown senior squad finished the season with a 6-11 overall record. They began the double-elimination playoffs with a 7-1 loss at Northampton Post 28 two days earlier.

One of the few Belchertown players who won't be returning next summer is Ian McDonald, who graduated from Belchertown High School in 2025. He was a freshman on the Rivier University baseball team this past spring.

"It has been a blast to not only watch but also coach my son Ian," said Todd McDonald, who also had



Anthony Misiasek brings in a throw to first.

the opportunity to coach his older son, Tyler, on the Legion team. "It was one of the main reasons that I started coaching 14 years ago."

Tyler McDonald, who plays college baseball at Lasell

Jake Waller fires across the diamond.

University, is a member of the Western Mass. Pioneers baseball team, which competes in the Connecticut Collegiate Baseball Summer League.

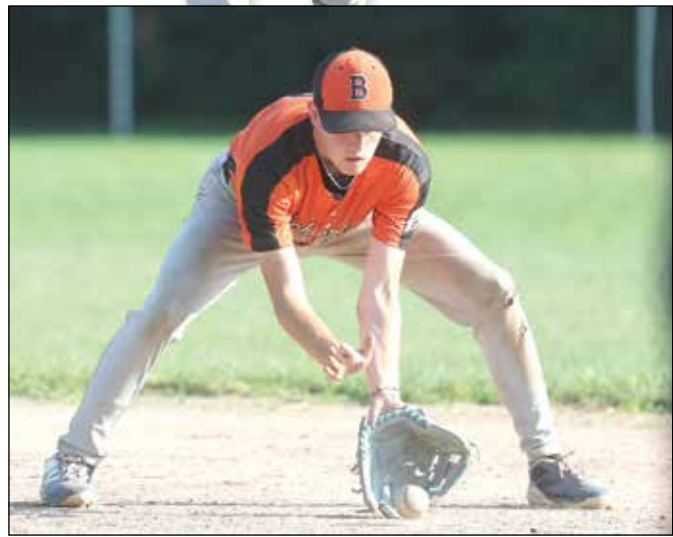
Canyon Charron, who graduated from Belchertown High School this past spring, was the starting pitcher for Belchertown in the

elimination game against Westfield (8-9-1).

The righthander hurled the first three innings, allowing four unearned runs on four base hits. He issued two walks and struck out three.

Ian McDonald, who's also a righty, pitched the final three innings of the contest without allowing any runs on just one base hit.

Please see **LEGION**, page 10



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Ian MacDonald fields a grounder.



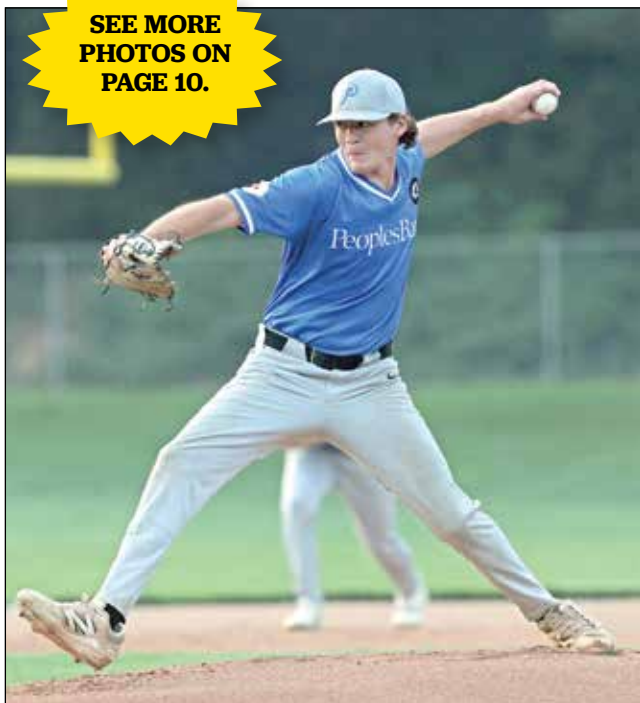
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Darien Rosado is safe as he slides home.

PeoplesBank defeats Teddy Bear Pools

WILBRAHAM – Last Thursday night at Spec Pond in Wilbraham, Jake Jachym pitched PeoplesBank to a 7-5 win over Teddy Bear Pools. The Bankers got a save from Johnny Gegetsas

to secure the win. The Bankers lead the Tri-County League with a 15-3-1 record and 31 points. The regular season is about to wrap up with the playoffs beginning shortly after.



Jake Jachym sends a pitch home.

SEE MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 10.

Softball defeats Scituate

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN—Ludlow was represented on the Belchertown 14U All-Star softball roster by the quartet of Alivia Coates, Aliyah Coates, Olivia Courchesne, and Kylie Gregory.

Alivia Coates, a six-year softball veteran, punctuated an eight-run third inning with her first career grand slam, powering Belchertown to a 15-5 victory over Scituate Chestnut Hill School softball field on July 13.

"I've been playing softball for six years and the grand slam was my first home run ever," Coates said. "It felt very good. I'm also very glad that I was chosen to play for this softball team."

The Belchertown 14U softball team, which competed in the Junior League State Sectional Tournament for the first time, finished pool play with a 2-2 record. Their other victory came against Peabody, 5-3, in extra innings at Belchertown High School on July 10. Belchertown didn't advance to the state championship game.

"It does feel very nice to win another home game," said Belchertown manager Mike Fine. "We won another home game during the District tournament."

The Belchertown 14U softball team also had four players from Chicopee. Those players are Aubrey Klett, Kaylen Schultski, Madison Sawicki, and

Please see **SOFTBALL**, page 10

Mutiny finishes up first dual league season

Laci Lewis fights to keep possession.

LUDLOW – Earlier this month, the New England Mutiny, which features soccer players from all over the region as well as some players from out of state, finished up their season, unfortunately failing to reach any postseason play despite playing in two leagues this season. The Mutiny participated in both the USL as well as the UWS, nearly doubling its number of games this season. The Mutiny hope to have better luck next season with the added schedule.

Sadie Mathis winds up for a long shot.

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Addyson Earl hustles after the loose ball.



Trinity Clark dribbles toward the goal.

PEOPLESBANK DEFEATS TEDDY BEAR POOLS



Ray Toth gets the grounder to short. Robert Ninotti fires a throw across the diamond. Alex Gochinski cleanly fields a grounder.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Mason Barcomb pitches for Teddy Bear Pools.

St. Joe’s suffers late-season loss

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

THORNDIKE— In what might’ve been a preview of a Tri-Country League playoff matchup, Teddy Bear Pools and Spas broke open the final meeting of the regular season against St. Joseph’s by scoring nine runs across the fifth and sixth innings, rolling to an 11-1 victory at St. Joe’s Field in Thorndike, last Friday night.

“We split with St. Joe’s during the regular season, and we’ll probably be seeing them again in the playoffs,” said Teddy Bear Pools player/manager Ryan Magni. “The first three innings of tonight’s game was almost like a playoff game. Then we were able to break it open against their relief pitchers.

Even though Friday’s make-up game was played at St. Joe’s Field, Teddy Bear Pools served as the home team because their own field was unavailable. The game ended with two outs in the bottom of the sixth inning due to the ten-run mercy rule.

Teddy Bear Pools entered the final week of the regular season sitting in third place in the league standings with a 13-5-1 record one point behind second place St. Joseph’s. The Saints had a 14-4 overall record.

Peoples Bank (15-3-1), who are looking to capture the league championship title for the 13th consecutive season, was sitting in first place.

Teddy Bear Pools could move into second place with a win against BankESB on Thursday night and if St. Joe’s losses their final two regular season games.

The Saints had the opportunity to move into first place if they defeated the DOC Spartans on Monday and Peoples Bank on Wednesday.

The top two finishers in the league standings earn a first round bye and the first place team will get home field advantage throughout the playoffs, which are all best of three series.

Teddy Bear Pools righthander Matt Drobiak, who graduated from South Hadley High School, was the winning pitcher in last Friday’s game. He went the distance, allowing one run on just one base hit with three walks and two strikeouts.

“My defense made the plays behind me in tonight’s game,” said Drobiak. “This is a big win for us, and it feels great. We’re hoping to play them again in the playoffs.”

Teddy Bear Pools took a 1-0 lead against St. Joe’s with two outs in the bottom of the third inning.

Magni, who started in centerfield, drew a lead-off walk. Then St. Joe’s lefthander Jackson Hayes retired the next two batters before catcher Michael Toth hit a flyball which the centerfielder lost in the twilight. Toth, who graduated from Granby High School, wound up at second base with a double and Magni

scored on the play.

St. Joe’s tied the score in the fourth inning.

Designated hitter Mark Jodoiin singled leading off the frame before stealing second. He scored the tying run when right fielder Ryan O’Leary hit a sacrifice fly.

Drobiak then retired seven of the final eight batters that he faced.

“We just didn’t hit the ball very well in tonight’s game,” said St. Joe’s manager Paul Marcinek. “You can’t beat many teams by scoring only one run.”

Prior to the start of the bottom of the fourth inning, righty Jack Feltovic replaced Hayes on the mound.

Teddy Bear Pools retook the lead with two outs in that inning when designated hitter Bailey Griggs hit a ground ball single up the middle into centerfield scoring shortstop Ray Toth (walk).

Teddy Bear Pools scored three more runs in the fifth inning. Two of the runs crossed the break on RBI singles from Ray Toth and right fielder Sean Rosemond. The other run scored following a throwing error by the catcher.

Holding a 5-1 lead, Teddy Bear Pools scored six more runs in the sixth.

Left fielder Josh Frometa and Magni knocked home a pair of runs with RBI singles, while second baseman Ramon Jomenez added a run scoring ground rule double to center. Griggs also drew a bases loaded walk during that frame.

LEGION from page 9

With two outs in the top of the first inning, Charron smacked a double to right field against Westfield righty Jack Madsen before advancing to third on a wild pitch.

Madsen, who only gave up three singles over the final six frames, retired the next batter on a flyball to right.

Westfield had runners on second and third with two outs in the home half of the opening frame.

The contest remained scoreless as Charron fielded a comebacker before tossing the ball to first baseman Ryan Gould for the final out of the inning.

Belchertown third baseman Nolan Ingram grounded a single into left field leading off the top of the second inning, but he was thrown out trying to steal second base by Westfield catcher Donovan Cummings.

The home team scored all four of their runs during the third inning with the help of three errors and a balk.

“Regardless of what happened defensively during that one inning, we struggled offensively,” Todd McDonald said. “If you don’t score any runs, you’re probably not going to win many games.”

Trailing 4-0, Belchertown loaded the bases in the fourth inning.

Second baseman Jake Waller began the rally by hitting a single into left field with one out. After the next batter struck out, leftfielder Brodie Funk singled to center and centerfielder Anthony Misiaszek drew a walk, which brought the tying run to the plate.

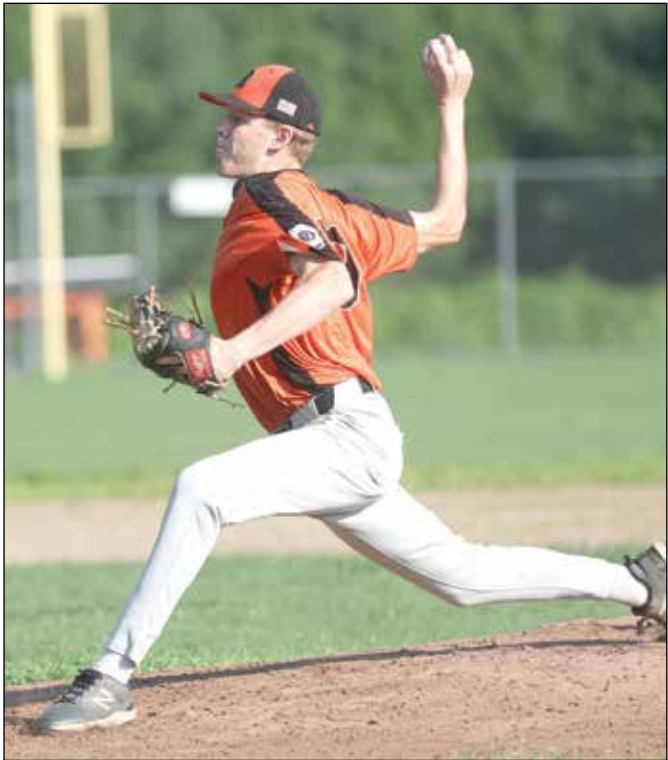
Madsen escaped the bases loaded jam with a ground ball out to the second baseman.

Two innings later, Waller and Funk drew walks with two-outs before Madsen ended that threat with a strikeout.

With the rain coming down a little bit harder, Madsen quickly retired the



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Jacoby Homer tries to get a one-hand grab.



Brodie Funk sends a pitch home.

side in order in the seventh ending Belchertown’s season.

Westfield was scheduled

to host Sheffield Post 340 in another elimination game the following afternoon.

HoopHall names presenters

SPRINGFIELD – The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame has announced the list of Hall of Famers who will present the Class of 2026 at the Enshrinement Ceremony on Saturday, August 15, at Symphony Hall in Springfield, Massachusetts, the “Birthplace of Basketball.” Over 50 Hall of Famers are expected to be in attendance for the ceremony.

Each member of the Class of 2026 selected their

presenter(s) from among previously inducted Hall of Famers, a decision made by the inductee, while the 1996 USA Basketball Women’s National Team will be presented by its own previously enshrined members.

The 2026 Hall of Fame Inductees and Presenters:

Joey Crawford - Danny Crawford (Class of 2025), Rod Thorn (‘18)

Mike D’Antoni - Jerry Colangelo (‘04), Bob

McAdoo (‘00), Steve Nash (‘18), Amar’e Stoudemire (‘26), Rod Thorn (‘18)

Elena Delle Donne - Sylvia Fowles (‘25), Marianne Stanley (‘22)

Mark Few - John Calipari (‘15), Grant Hill (‘18), John Stockton (‘09)

Chamique Holdscaw - Tamika Catchings (‘20), Tina Thompson (‘18), Teresa Weatherspoon (‘19)

Candace Parker - Tamika Catchings (‘20), Allen Iverson (‘16), Cheryl Miller (‘95), Dwyane Wade (‘23)

Doc Rivers - Kevin Garnett (‘20), Paul Pierce (‘21)

Amar’e Stoudemire - Jerry Colangelo (‘04), Mike D’Antoni (‘26), Grant Hill (‘18), Tracy McGrady (‘17), Steve Nash (‘18), Rick Welts (‘18)

1996 USA Basketball Women’s National Team - Teresa Edwards (‘11), Lisa Leslie (‘15), Rebecca Lobo (‘17), Katrina McClain (‘12), Dawn Staley (‘13), Sheryl Swoopes (‘16), Tara VanDerveer (‘11)

SOFTBALL from page 9

Natalie Couture.

Rounding out the 14U squad were Gracelynn Nite, Raelynn Fine, Abigail Couture, Gianna Grazioso, and Bailey Austin, who are from Belchertown.

The Belchertown manager wasn’t very pleased with how his players began the game.

“Our energy level early in the game was much lower than what I expected,” Mike Fine said. “I don’t care if they are making mistakes at 110 percent, but I do care when they’re making mistakes at 75 percent. Our energy level finally changed in the third inning.”

Scituate, who lost their first two pool games, jumped out to a 2-0 lead in the top of

the first inning.

The home team managed to cut the deficit in half with two outs in the bottom of the first inning.

Klett, who drew a walk, scored when Raelynn Fine hit a flyball double to right field.

Belchertown also had another tagged out trying to score which ended the opening inning.

After Fine, who’s a righthander, struck out the side in the top of the second, Belchertown tied the score.

With two outs in the bottom of the second, Aliyah Coates, who was hit-by-a-pitch, scored the tying run following an infield hit by her sister.

Scituate retook the lead in the top of the third after scoring three runs with the help

of a couple of errors made by the Belchertown defense.

Belchertown responded by scoring eight runs as they batted around in the bottom of the third inning.

An infield hit by Fine scored Belchertown’s first run. A couple of batters later, Grazioso tied the score at 5-5 with a two run double to left field. The go-ahead run scored following a bases loaded walk by Natalie Couture. Then Alivia Coates followed with a grand slam to left field.

Fine hit a two run homer to right field with two outs in the fourth giving Belchertown a 12-5 lead.

Belchertown scored three more runs in the fifth and the contest ended at that point due to the ten-run mercy rule.

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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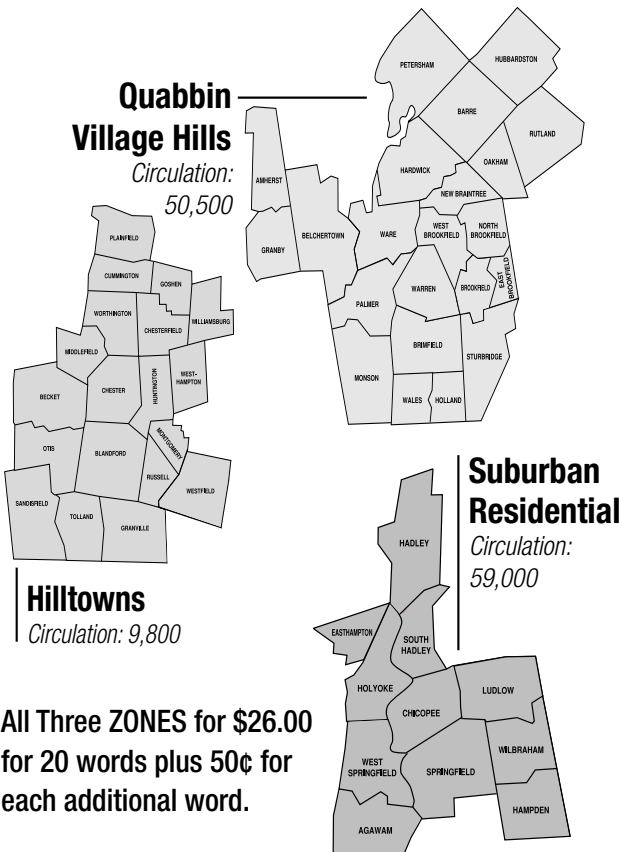
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