

Health insurance increase to have 'huge budget impact'

By Melina Bourdeau
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN – The town is faced with another financial crisis following an announcement of a 20% rate increase on Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust premiums for active plans, according to Belchertown Human

Resources Director Joanne Misiaszek.

The town will need to pay a total of \$911,000: \$241,024 for the town side and \$666,352 for school district, according to Director of Human Resources Joanne Misiaszek.

The town gets its insurance from Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust.

"The trust is established... for the joint purchase of insurance. The towns, cities, fire districts, regional school districts, water districts and Community Development Corporations are members of the trust," according to its website. "The employees are not members of the trust but employees of the member units."

"If this increase didn't go into effect, it would be more likely to become insolvent and we would be without health insurance. It's a very unfortunate situation."

– JOANNE MISIASZEK

The trust covers over 12,000 participants including municipal employees and

their families.

"If this increase didn't go into effect, it would be more

likely to become insolvent and we would be without health insurance," said Misiaszek. "It's a very unfortunate situation."

Town Manager Steve Williams said the town has been in contact with local legislatures, calling the situation a "devastating hit to the budget."

Please see **BUDGET**, page 5

Belchertown Community Band returns for the summer

By Emily-Rose Pappas
Staff Writer
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BELCHERTOWN – The time for outdoor concerts has arrived, and the blankets and lawn chairs are out for an evening of relaxing time to listen to music, and have a good time with family and friends.

The Belchertown Community Band, which has been going strong since 1986, is back and offering performances through the end of August, sharing their musical talents with the community.

"There are 90 members on the books but about 75 different musicians play weekly due to summer vacations. Members range from 12 to 80 years old and all abilities levels and occupations. There are members that play weekly in other area groups and those who literally play for our 8 week long season," said Michael Bauer, the director of the band.

The band has been going strong for 40 years, but this year is its 49th season, as they did not meet to play during one year of the COVID pandemic.

The community band



Playing on the common, all in matching white shirts.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

is made up of mostly Belchertown residents, but a few came to join the band from towns as far away as Sutton and Hinsdale.

"I love the diversity and different mix of musicians. I thoroughly enjoy the "closet musicians" who dig their instrument out of the closet for eight weeks. These are

usually people who loved playing in their high school band but went on to different career and families and all that goes with it," said Bauer.

Musicians come from all sorts of playing styles, and some may have been playing consistently, but others may not have played for decades and want to take up the art-

form once more. Whatever your play style, and no matter how long it's been, the community band is open to everyone who has a love, or once had a love, for playing music.

"It's enjoyable to see that the members coming

Please see **BAND**, page 5

School Committee discusses possible regionalization

By Emily-Rose Pappas
Staff Writer
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BELCHERTOWN – The School Committee, during their June 17 meeting, discussed the idea of regionalization and the idea of potential school consolidation, as well as what they would do regarding school choice.

"We're trying to find a way to save money and consolidate our buildings."

– JACOB HULSEBERG

During their July 29 meeting, they continued their discussion about regionalization, and whether or not they would go forward with it, with several members of the community coming forward during public comment to share their thoughts and ask questions.

Superintendent Brian Cameron began the conversation about regionalization of schools at the June 17 meeting, and what parts of

the school district would be regionalized.

"It's all what we want out of it, and once again we need the partnership of another town," said Cameron.

While the question of regionalization and what towns are actually willing to regionalize is still there, it is difficult to figure out which towns will actually

be willing considering the opinions of the towns and their residents.

The committee members weighed

their options, and how to address whether the buildings will be consolidated or not, with studies planned for the future.

"It's a big decision, but I just don't know what to ask for at this point from anyone that would like to pursue [regionalization]," said Cameron.

Members Jacob Hulseberg and Lamikko

Please see **REGIONALIZE**, page 5

Reading fun with Cera the Triceratops

By Emily-Rose Pappas
Staff Writer
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BELCHERTOWN – The time of summer reading is coming to the end with school starting just around the corner, but it isn't just humans that enjoy a good book and learning something new.

As a part of a new and fun experience, Clapp Memorial Library's very

own Cera Triceratops went on a travelling adventure "around the world" to discover new and different libraries around the world.

"I'm happy to be a part of creating magical moments in our town. Our local librarian triceratops is traveling around the world this summer and I get to help make her look good in pictures?! Yes please,"

Please see **CERA**, page 9



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Cera the Triceratops with her bag packed and grabbing a snack before her adventure.

Teens celebrate end of summer reading series

By Emily-Rose Pappas
Staff Writer
epappas@turley.com

BELCHERTOWN – The teens had their summer reading party to close out the summer reading series last Friday, and it was a wonderful occasion that brought out teens from all over town, filling the front lawn of the library.

Ruthie Sterling, the teen services coordinator, has run the teen program for the past five years, and loves every minute of it, taking her own love for the library as she has worked there since she was a page at 15 years old, to now running the teen program.

"I've been able to see it from the whole perspective. I started here as a library page, and having my whole life move up, being a part of the community, and being part of the change to get the teens their own space and reading program is awesome because I know I would have appreciated that as a kid," said Sterling.

With the exception of the first year being a little chaotic as Sterling began the teen program as the pandemic began, it has since grown to truly encompass and welcome teens from all backgrounds, with different ideas and personalities that have helped it to grow.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS

Jassen and Logan West with Jacob Staples dyeing their shirts together, and a biker stopping to listen to the music.

"I feel like they are Belchertown's future, and they are the future library users. When teens come to the library, it means they actually want to be there," said Sterling. "Being here for the past five years, I've been able to see the people become friends and develop their own talents and then go off to college. Teens know so much more than what adults give them credit for."

The teens a part of the summer reading program

have come and gone in the past, with it starting out with about 50 or so joining in, then losing interest, but this year, the teens really took on the challenge to "level up" their reading.

"I love every part of the summer programs. Who doesn't love summer? I have always loved summer, but specifically knowing with the teens, they get to enjoy what the town and library has to offer without being stressed about grades at the

same time. It's so much more relaxed," said Sterling.

This year, Ultraviolet came to perform at the party, and the teens got to do the yearly tradition of tie-dyeing their t-shirts, and also got to enjoy the chance to select a book or two from the free books leftover from the regular deleted rotations from the library shelf, or the book sale.

Please see **TEENS**, page 12

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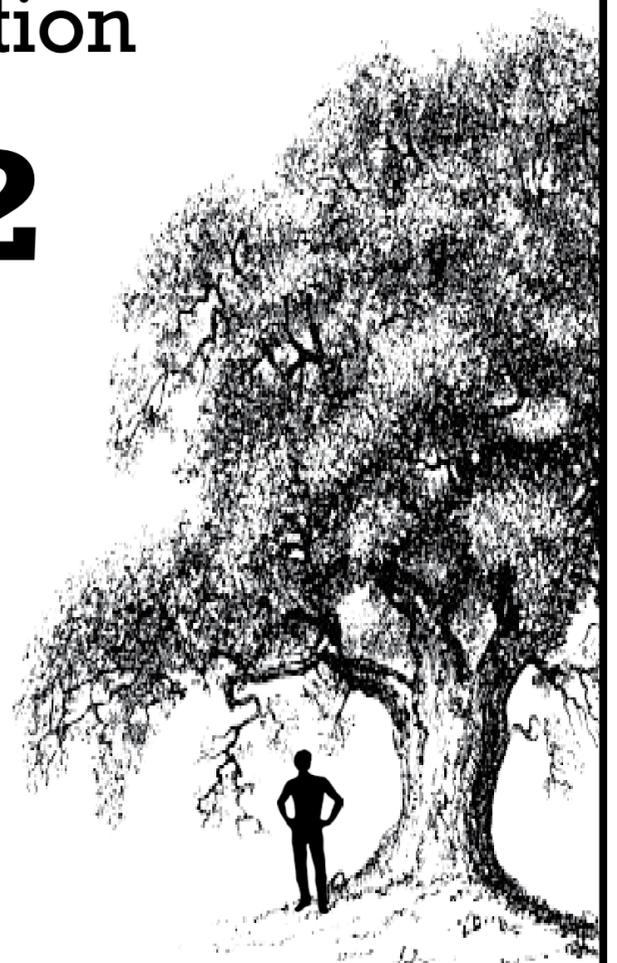
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Ryan Gould, Sofia Cofone, Brandon O'Connor, and Brian Burns.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

BHS students attend leadership program

Four rising seniors from Belchertown High School's Class of 2026 (Ryan Gould, Sofia Cofone, Brandon O'Connor, and Brian Burns) were selected to attend the American Legion's

Massachusetts Boys State and Girls State programs this summer at Stonehill College. During the weeklong program, they explored government, leadership, and civic engagement through hands-

on activities like mock elections and legislative sessions. Founded in the 1930s, the program is widely respected for its role in inspiring young leaders and fostering a strong sense of civic responsibility.

BOAT to host annual Overdose Awareness Vigil

BELCHERTOWN - BOAT (Belchertown Overcoming Adversity Together) will host its annual Overdose Awareness Vigil on Wednesday, August 28, 2025, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM on the Belchertown Town Common. This event honors those lost to overdose and provides space for remembrance, reflection, and community healing. The evening will include personal stories, remembrance activities, and access to local support resources.

From 6:00 to 6:45 PM, attendees may visit reflection stations including:

- A Memory Table / Wall of Light
- A Creative Healing Station with kindness rock painting, dragonfly art, and luminary bag decorating
- A Comfort & Care Station
- Resource Tables with information on recovery and grief support

- A Legacy in Action Table for honoring loved ones through future service

At 6:45 PM, BOAT Co-Chair Angela Battle will open the speaking portion, followed by remarks from State Representative Aaron Saunders. BOAT Secretary Alene Motta will share a poem, and community members are invited to read their own tributes.

The evening also includes a First Light Candle Relay, collective name reading, moment of stillness, and an open mic for personal stories.

"We gather not only to grieve, but to remember with intention and to support each other in healing," said Angela Battle. "Every name, every story, every light matters."

The event is free and open to the public. Guests are encouraged to bring photos for the memory table.

For more information or to volunteer, contact BOAT at khoag@belchertownps.org

Amherst Senior Center seeking donations

AMHERST - The Friends of the Amherst Senior Center are seeking donations of gently used purses, jewelry, scarves, wallets, and other accessories again this year. We are preparing for our third very successful Pop-Up Closet Fundraiser to be held on September 20 at

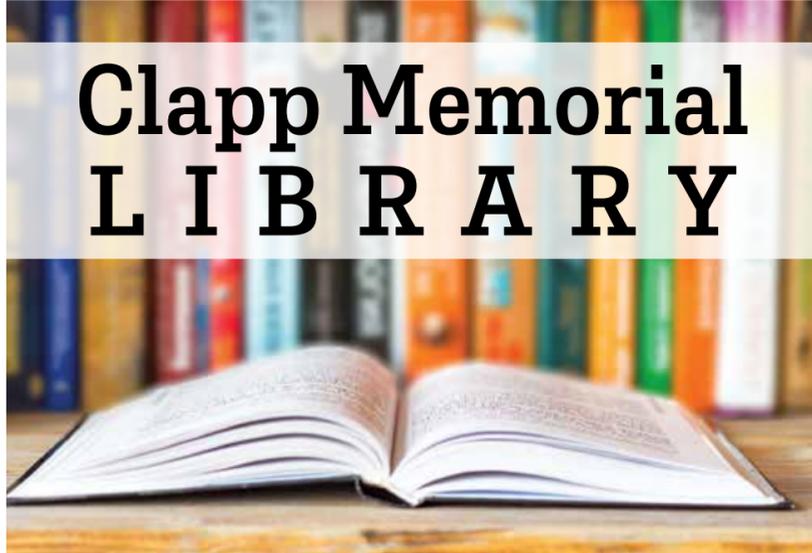
the Amherst Farmers' Market with a rain date of September 27. Donations may be brought to the Amherst Senior Center, 70 Boltwood Walk, until September 12 during business hours. We ask that donations be clean and in good condition. No clothing or furniture, please.

Drive up and drop off for the book sale

BELCHERTOWN - The Friends of the Clapp Memorial Library are collecting books, DVDs, CDs, and Puzzles for their semi-annual book sale. We will have volunteers in the Library parking lot on Saturday, August 16 from 9 a.m. to noon, who will remove the items from your vehicle. You don't even have to get out of the car! So drive on down to your Library and donate those books, DVDs, CDs, and puzzles. No VHS tapes, please. Thank you for your support.

Immaculate Heart of Mary's Summerfest returns

GRANBY - Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Granby, MA will be having their Summerfest Chicken BBQ on Sunday August 24, from noon to 4 p.m. Chicken dinner is \$15 and includes a Half BBQ Chicken, Baked Potato and Corn on the Cob, as well as dessert and a bottled water. Hamburgers and Hot Dogs will also be available. Raffle Prizes of \$500, \$250, and \$100, Raffle Baskets, Bake Sale, Kids Games, Prizes, Lottery Trees, and Music. Fun for the whole family.



What's coming up this August at the library

BELCHERTOWN - The Clapp Memorial Library has programs and events for all ages coming up in the first half of August. Visit our website: clapplibrary.org or stop by the library at 19 South Main Street in Belchertown to find out everything that's going on. We love to see our friends and neighbors! For All Ages: "Level Up at Your Library" Summer Reading Programs - Through August 16th! This year's Summer Reading Program theme is "Level Up at Your Library". We have a Summer Reading Program for every age group with reading challenges, raffles and prizes, special events, parties, and more! Register online at clapplibrary.beanstack.com or via the Beanstack app. For more information, visit our website: clapplibrary.org. To register offline, please visit the Circulation Desk or call 413-323-0417.

books and CD audiobooks can be requested and picked up at the library's circulation desk. New members are welcome! Email rsterling@cwmar.org with any questions.

messages about accepting feelings, celebrating differences, and loving ourselves exactly as we are. This concert will take place on the Library lawn, or in case of rain, Town Hall. Made possible by the Friends of the Clapp Memorial Library and our Community Sponsors.

FOR TEENS

Teen Book Club on Wednesday, from August 13, 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Join the library's Teen Book Club for its last meeting of the summer to discuss Star Splitter by Matthew J. Kirby. 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. Copies of the book are available for checkout at the library's circulation desk and on the Libby app. Snacks will be provided at the meeting. Email clapplibrarytab@gmail.com with any questions. All attendees will earn a raffle ticket for the Teen Summer Reading Program.

Jacques' Concert on Wednesday, August 13, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Join us for an evening of music on the Library Lawn! Singing, dancing, and fun for all ages with Ann Marie Messbauer and Jacques "Pop" Hooten. We'll meet in Town Hall if it rains. Made possible by the Friends of the Clapp Memorial Library and our Community Sponsors.

Billy Goats and Beyond: Wildlife Bridge Challenge on Friday, August 15, from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Three goats crossing a bridge? Sounds like a fairytale, but it's a great way to keep animals safe! Join a Hitchcock Center for the Environment educator for this hands-on children's program. We'll read a quick story about a real-life animal crossing; then, express your inner engineer as you and your adult design, build, and test a bridge using simple materials. Can it stand strong in a salamander stampede or a mammal migration? And we'll end with a visit from a live critter who puts wildlife bridges to use. Best for children ages 5 to 10 with an adult. Registration is required. Sign up online through our calendar at clapplibrary.org, or call 413-323-0417. This program is funded by Friends of the Clapp Memorial Library and our Community sponsors.

Ask-a-Nurse Friday on August 15, from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Kirsten Krieger, RN, BSN, the Public Health Nurse for the Quabbin Health District, will be at the library for this free health and wellness clinic. Learn about health conditions, receive blood pressure and blood sugar checks, find out about community resources including harm reduction, health and wellness education, and more! No appointment needed.

FOR ADULTS

What "YA" Readin'? Book Club on Thursday, August 7, from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Still loving The Hunger Games? Not over Twilight? Are you curious about what teens are reading these days? Clapp Memorial Library has a book discussion group for individuals aged 18 or older who read Young Adult books! At our August meeting, we'll discuss Sunrise on the Reaping by Suzanne Collins. Copies of the book are available to borrow on hoopla. Physical

Taylor Swift Diamond-Painting on Wednesday, August 13, from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Taylor Swift will never go out of Style! Have The Best Day at the library at this Diamond-Painting program for teens ages 12-18! Make your own Bejeweled Diamond-Painted Swiftie Eras bookmark! Space (and Eras) are limited so don't wait a fortnight! Email clapplibrarytab@gmail.com or call the library to register! Are you... Ready for It? All attendees will earn a raffle ticket for the Teen Summer Reading Program. Teens must be registered for the Teen Summer Reading Program to attend. This program is funded by the Friends of the Clapp Memorial Library.

FOR KIDS Carrie Ferguson and The Grumpytime Club Concert on Wednesday, August 6, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The Grumpytime Club offers children and families welcoming and inclusive

The Clapp Memorial Library is open:

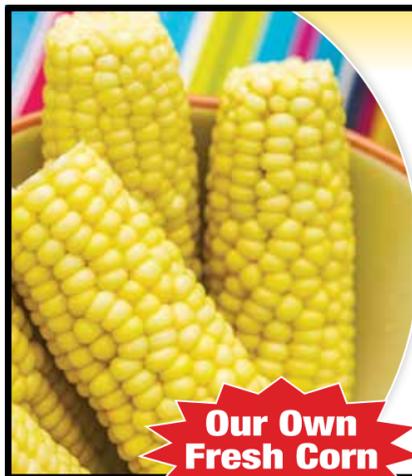
Monday 9:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
Tuesday 9:30 a.m.-7 p.m.
Wednesday 9:30 a.m.-7 p.m.
Thursday 9:30 a.m.-7 p.m.
Friday 9:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
Saturday 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

BCB to host free community concerts

BELCHERTOWN - The Belchertown Community Band is in its 39th year of performing for free on the Belchertown Town Common. Concerts are on

Thursday nights, with an additional Sunday afternoon concert. If it is raining, the Thursday concerts are held at the Belchertown High School. Dates and times are

as follows: August 7 at 7 p.m., August 14 at 7 p.m., and Sunday, August 17, at 4 p.m. If Sunday, August 17 is raining, the concert is cancelled.



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Belchertown launches senior and veteran tax work-off program

New initiative offers up to \$1,000 in property tax relief in exchange for community service.

BELCHERTOWN – The Town of Belchertown is proud to announce the launch of its Senior and Veteran Tax Work-Off Program, a new initiative that allows eligible residents to reduce their property taxes by up to \$1,000 per year in exchange for volunteer service to the Town. The program was approved at the May 2025 Annual Town Meeting and will begin with a pilot this fall.

Open to residents aged 65 and older or veterans as defined by Massachusetts law, the program offers participants the opportunity to earn tax credit at the state minimum wage by volunteering in a variety of municipal roles. The credit is applied directly to their property tax bill.

Volunteer positions are available in many areas of Town government and services. Opportunities include outdoor work to help beautify public spaces, working with and supporting students, community outreach efforts, and important office-based roles that help the town run smoothly.

to support residents who have served our community, whether through military service or simply by spending their later years here in Belchertown,” said Town Manager Steve Williams. “The Tax Work-Off Program not only provides financial relief but also creates opportunities for civic engagement and keeps our seniors and veterans connected to the town and it’s government.”

The pilot phase of the program will run from September 1 through November 15, 2025, with credits applied to the December 2025 tax bill. Up to ten participants will be accepted in this first year.

- To qualify, residents must:
- Be 65 years of age or older or a veteran;
 - Have owned and lived in a Belchertown home for at least two years;
 - Meet income and asset limits;

Submit a completed application by August 15, 2025. Participants will be interviewed and matched with available assignments based on their skills and interests as well as the needs of the Town.

Applications are available at the Belchertown Senior Center or online at www.belchertown.org/taxworkoff-program. The program is administered by the Senior Center, and interested residents can call (413) 323-0420 with any questions.



Alumni from Belchertown High School class of 1965 at Grapevine Grille.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

High school reunion brings together old friends

BELCHERTOWN – Alumni Members of the Belchertown High School Class of 1965 gathered for

their 60th reunion celebration at the Grapevine Grille on Friday, August 1, 2025. Sixteen members of the

original 48 graduates were present, some traveling from as far away as Florida and Ecuador. A fun time gather-

ing followed the meal with a perfect ending toasting marshmallows over an open fire.

Belchertown Lions Club to host Cruise on the Common

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown Lions Club will be returning to the Belchertown Town Common on August 9, 2025 (rain date: Aug. 10) for its 2nd Annual Memorial Car Show, and it promises to be even bigger and better than ever!

This year, our trophy awards will be custom-made laser-engraved slate 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 specialty, or Best in Show presentations!



Scan this QR code for more information.

with a raffle table and a 50/50 raffle! All vehicles are welcome (with specialty awards for best motorcycle, import, 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., fol-

lowed immediately by the raffle drawings and the awarding of trophies.

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

More information and possible rain date updates can be found at <https://www.belchertownlionsclub.com/car-show.htm>, and our Belchertown Lions Club Facebook page.

please recycle this newspaper

The old bags are back

BELCHERTOWN – Have we got a bag for you! The Belchertown Historical Association is holding a second Old Bag Sale on Saturday, August 9, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Belchertown United Church of Christ, located on Park Street behind the town common. Our many fans and supporters were so generous

with their spring donations of gently used bags that we still have hundreds of bags left for you to select from. The holidays will be here before you know it, so come and choose pocketbooks, wallets, and backpacks for someone on your gift list, or just treat yourself. We have something for anyone and any occasion.

LOWER PRICES TO BOOST YOUR BUDGET!		INFLATION PRICE BUSTERS		PRICES IN RED ARE AT OR BELOW LAST YEAR'S PRICES!	
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USDA INSP. FROZEN PORK SHOULDER PICNIC	\$1.39 lb	CUT FREE		USDA INSP. FRESH WHOLE CHICKENS TWIN PAK	\$1.49 lb
USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS CENTER CUT PORK	\$1.88 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF SIRLOIN SPOON ROAST or STEAKS	\$6.99 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS & SKINLESS CHICKEN BREAST 10 LB BAG	\$2.35 lb
SLICED IN OUR DELI				USDA INSP. FROZEN SUPERIOR ON MAIN ECLAIRS CREAM FILLED JUMBO PAK 30.75 OZ	\$8.88 ea
USDA INSP. WUNDERBAR BOLOGNA	\$2.99 lb			USDA INSP. IQF FROZEN GORTON'S CRUNCHY BREADED FRESH PORTIONS 3 LB BAG	\$9.99 ea
USDA INSP. MONTEREY JACK CHEESE	\$4.99 lb			90 Meat Outlet 90 Avocado St. Springfield 413-737-1288 www.90meat.com	
GREAT ON THE GRILL				HOURS: Mon. - Wed. 8-4 Thurs. 8-6 • Fri. 8-6 • Sat. 8-3	
USDA INSP. STOREMADE ITALIAN MARINATED 1/2 CHICKEN	\$2.99 lb	USDA INSP. GROUND FRESH DAILY 90% DIET LEAN GROUND BEEF	\$4.99 lb	We reserve the right to limit quantities.	
USDA INSP. STOREMADE KOREAN BBQ MARINATED BONELESS PORK BUTT STRIPS	\$3.69 lb	SALE DATES: 8/7/25-8/13/25		BUY DIRECT FOR SAVINGS • SELECTION • SERVICE	

READING NEWSPAPERS IS A QUEST LIKE NO OTHER

August 2025

Quabbin Health District Public Health Nurse Newsletter

Kirsten L Krieger RN, BSN, Public Health Nurse

Andrea Crete MPH, RS, Director of Public Health

Email: kkrieger@townofware.com

Online: www.quabbinhealthdistrict.com

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In this month's online issue:

Quabbin Health District Harm Reduction Program!

KIDS eat right.
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Foundation

National Immunization Awareness Month
During August, AAI is highlighting the importance of vaccination for people of all ages. #ivax2protect

NIGHT OUT

For the full issue visit:



The band set up on stage in the high school for practice.

BAND from page 1

to rehearsal have a great time making music together. Anyone who has heard them know they are quite good. It's wonderful to see an appreciative audience at our concerts. On most nights we draw well over 300 people on the common," said Bauer.

The community band plays a wide range of different music at the concerts, including film scores, and songs by artists like the Beatles, Billy Joel, Pink Panther, Dixieland, and patriotic music. There are other talented musicians featured during their concerts, including Town Moderator Ben Farrell, who plays the saxophone.

"Outside of the support of the community I love playing on the Common. It is such a beautiful venue for our performances. Such a beautiful New England town green with the church steeples and wonderful homes. The perfect setting," said Bauer.

Bauer grew up in Pennsylvania, where he learned to play the clarinet



Music truly unites people of all ages.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

net throughout grammar school. He later majored in music education at the New England Conservatory in Boston, and began his teaching career in Palmer in 1970, and taught there for 16 years before taking a job as the Belchertown Band Director, later retiring in 2004.

At one point during his time as the band director, there were over 200 musicians a part of it, representing a third of the school population, and were winners at the Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade three years in a row.

"We have wonderful community support. In addition

to the great audiences, we have terrific financial backing. Extremely grateful to Belchertown Cultural Council for their generous grant," said Bauer. "We also have many sponsors that help us pay our bills. Many local businesses as well as individuals support our band. They are all listed in the programs weekly."

The Belchertown Community Band has truly become a part of the community, and the common fills every week to listen to their friends and neighbors play music.

The band's steering committee truly helps the band keep moving, with the nearly dozen individuals working out the details for the concert seasons, including their leader Melissa Hurst, who is devoted to the band.

You can find them on the Belchertown Common on Thursday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. There will be two more, on August 7 and 14, with a final Sunday afternoon concert on Aug. 17.

REGIONALIZE from page 1

Magee shared their thoughts regarding holding off on regionalization, and offered to instead look to "remain Belchertown" and to look at closing Cold Spring School.

The committee reviewed the number of students in a classroom, and how it would affect the other students and teachers after the school closes.

The committee also considered birth rates, and how many projected children are said to be coming in in the future, and what percentage of these new students could choose other schooling option, with previous guesses for enrollment numbers

reaching very close to the actual enrollment that year.

"We're trying to find a way to save money and consolidate our buildings," said Hulseberg. "We know we have space at the high school, we don't know exactly the impact it's going to have on class size for our elementary kids, so we might want to be able to flip-flop the order of these two things to have the least impact on kids possible."

The committee made the decision to come back to regionalization at another time, and moved to the next item to discuss whether or not school choice will be considered.

The committee reviewed

whether they would open up to school choice, and which grades they would open up the option for school choice or not.

Cameron gave the recommendation to open up 10 spots in grades seven and eight, five spots in grade nine, and five spots in grade 10, and maybe two or three spots in kindergarten.

They deliberated on which spots to open up for school choice would create the most impacts on the town, both positively and negatively, in order to make sure that the interest is in the families, with the given policy that preference is given to siblings of current students and teacher's kids so they can be

in the same district.

"School choice to me should be operational one-time buys... we shouldn't be focusing on school choice to maintain our schools, but that that being said we're going to have to have a plan if it ever come off of it," said Cameron.

Gutkenst made a motion to grant 10 spots in seventh and eighth, and five in ninth and 10th, and two in kindergarten with 32 seats total, and Hulseberg made a motion to amend the numbers for seventh and eight to 6 spots, but the amendment did not pass. The original motion passed with three in favor, one against.

BUDGET from page 1

"As of now, there are probably three options in front of us," he said. "The first would be we go back to the taxpayers and we take out of the stabilization fund. We can wait until free cash is certified in January, go back to town meeting and transfer free cash to cover the deficit or we can start positioning now and try to make it up (via budget cuts)."

He said the town can wait until September to get a better budget outlook from the state and address the mat-

ter at the tri-board meeting of the Selectboard, Finance Committee and School Committee.

Misiaszek provided context on how the premium increase occurred.

The rates that went into effect on July 1 were set in January, when there was at least \$20 million in Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust's reserves.

Then over the subsequent months, the claims came in high, and reserves were dipped into, depleting the fund.

"We had no idea it was

going to need to be 20% and that came very quickly - like within a month and a half," said Misiaszek.

Selectboard member Jonathan Ritter said he wanted to emphasize the increase was not "the town's fault."

Williams added that the town "needs to make sure that the employees know the Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust rates are more affordable or within the same range" as other groups.

Selectboard Chair Lesa Lessard Pearson said she is afraid to go back to taxpayers after the recent proposition 2

½ override vote.

"I fear if we go to the taxpayers again, we won't get the answer we want," she said. "Everyone is pressed."

Misiaszek told the board that if the town left the trust, insurance claims would be town's responsibility.

No decisions were made by the board, with Lessard Pearson adding that "all of the players" needed to weight in, referring to the School Committee and Finance Committee which is set for Sept. 8.

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OPINION

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor

Why hasn't my Social Security benefit changed because I am still working?

Dear Rusty:

I am currently receiving Social Security benefits while continuing to work full time.

There are no restrictions on my wage earnings because I waited until full retirement age before beginning benefits. However, I was also told that my benefit amount would be reviewed each year if my current earnings were higher than past earnings.

That held true for the first two years, but has yet to be adjusted for 2025. I thought it might be because of HR 82, which does not impact me directly, but I think it may be the reason my payment has not yet been changed. Has enough time passed so I should contact SSA now to see if this is the case?

calculating your benefit amount.

Your earnings for each year in your lifetime up to age 60 were adjusted for inflation when you originally claimed SS and your recent earnings would need to be higher than the inflation-adjusted amounts used by SS when you claimed. They use the 35 highest earnings years adjusted for inflation over your lifetime to calculate your benefit and inflation has a substantial effect. For example, \$50,000 earned in 1990 would require over \$100,000 in earnings today to cause an increase in your benefit. Thus, you cannot go by the actual dollars you earned in earlier years, because SS uses inflated amounts to calculate your benefit.

Signed:

Waiting Anxiously

Dear Waiting:

If you are already collecting benefits, Social Security reviews your earnings each year to see if your more recent earnings are high enough to warrant an increase in your monthly benefit. They do this automatically, after they get your most recent earnings data from the IRS and they typically do that review by the end of the third quarter of each year. If a higher benefit is indicated, they will increase your monthly amount and pay you retroactively to the beginning of the year for any difference in your benefit.

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.

SSA has, indeed, been vigorously working on changes resulting from HR82 (the Social Security Fairness Act), which may have affected the timeliness of their review of your recent earnings. However, I suspect that is not why your SS benefit has not yet changed. More likely, it has to do with the fact that your past earnings have been adjusted for inflation, which is a normal part of Social Security's process when

Alternative to buying flood insurance...



Midsummer maintenance will keep annuals going strong

The half dead pot of petunias on the rental house's steps got me thinking about the perfect column for this time of year! After all, we invest hard earned money in annual flowers and plants, and we expect that they will provide us with color through the first frost. What steps can we take now to ensure that they will?

Read on for some useful advice, straight from the archives.

Remove spent flowers

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

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

If a plant has produced enough flowers that have gone to seed it will consider its job to be done, flower production will cease, and it will begin to decline. By deadheading, we keep the plant in reproductive mode, in other words, in flower!

When you remove dying blossoms, make sure to pinch off the entire flower, not just the petals, or it will do no good. Include the stem as well to keep the plant tidy.

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

throughout the growing season.

or manure tea has long been used to keep growth lush. Steep a burlap bag of either compost or aged manure in a large trash bucket filled with water and use as needed.

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

Shear them back to encourage new growth

Some annuals start to get a leggy appearance about now. Others may have brown tips.

These plants require more drastic measures to bring back their youthful good looks. Give them a good haircut.

Simply look within the plant and find healthy, green growth. Cut calendulas, pansies and snapdragon back to that point. Alyssum or lobelia can often be sheared to within inches of the ground.

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

Feed your plants

Annuals that are well fertilized at planting time likely look a bit pale by now. If foliage is off-color and flower production is nil, pull back the bark mulch and sprinkle some organic fertilizer granules at the base of each plant.

Cultivate gently and water in a little bit. You can also use a water soluble liquid fertilizer every couple of weeks.

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



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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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SPORTS

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Eleanor Szlosek sends a free kick away.

Rams ousted from playoffs by Monson

By **Tim Peterson**
Sports Correspondent

MONSON— The Pioneer Valley Summer Soccer League Girls' Division B semifinal match between fourth-seeded Granby and top-seeded Monson was played from start to finish in a downpour.

The score was tied 4-4 at halftime before Monson netted a pair of second half goals leading to a 6-4 victory at Larry Tassinari Field in Monson.

"Playing soccer in the rain is a lot different than on a dry day. The ball moves very quickly on the wet grass and it bounces differently," said Monson summer league coach Brooke

Murphy, "I'm very glad that none of the players on either team suffered an injury."

Being a goalie is very difficult on a rainy day.

Granby's starting goalie was Emily Durham, who was filling in for normal starter Meredith Bartosz, who was on vacation.

The Monson starting goalie was Grace Berry.

"It's very difficult on both goalies," Murphy added. Their gloves are soaking wet which makes it very hard to make the saves."

The major difference maker in the semifinal match for Monson, who went 10-1 during the regular season was Tennessee Murphy and Hannah Murphy, who aren't related.

The duo will be playing college soccer at the Division 1 level in the fall of 2026.

Tennessee Murphy, who's Brooke's younger sister, has committed to play soccer for the Bucknell University women's team after graduating from the Loomis Chaffee School next spring.

She was also selected as an All-American player last December and was a member of the New England Mutiny, which lost in the United Women's Soccer League championship match for the second consecutive year.

Hannah Murphy, who'll be the only senior on the Monson girls' soccer team this fall,



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGHOTOS.COM

Caroline Koziol clashes with an opponent for the ball.



McKenna Cudworth fights for the ball.

Please see **RAMS**, page 8



Kalli White goes after the loose ball

Patnode, Brousseau take modified wins at Monadnock Speedway

WINCHESTER, N.H. - Todd Patnode and Andrew Brousseau each won a Modified feature on the high banks of Monadnock Speedway Saturday, July 26, the potent pair each roaring to victory on New England's fastest quarter-mile oval.

Andrea St. Amour was awarded the Pure Stocks win

after a post-race inspection penalized Kyle Begos, and Erik Smith was victorious in the Super Street main event.

Young Gun Hunter Duquette continued his summer of success, scoring his fourth 2025 feature win. And while top 604 Modified point man Brian Robie came up short of winning for the fifth

time this season, he still had a strong night all the same.

Todd Patnode and Brian Chapin led the Allstates Materials Group 604 Modifieds to the green in round one of the open-wheeled rocket ships twin 35-lap main events. Patnode jumped all over the opening lead, bringing teen blaster Ty

Leclerc - launching from row two - with him.

The Swanzey competitor, a past speedway champion and winner of volumes of both Modified and Pro Stock main events here, would be sorely tested but would never bend en route to ending a two-season personal drought on the high banks.

Robie, charging from row four, got up for second on lap 13, yielded it back to rookie phenom Ty Leclerc on lap 20, and the battle was on, as Leclerc, Robie, and Chapin fought tooth-and-nail for the number two spot. Leclerc prevailed for a career-best runner-up finish, and Robie nudged past Chapin to steal

third on the final lap. In the nightcap 35, Brousseau started up front and never looked back. The second-generation hot shoe survived several strong restart bids by Colton Martin to stay on top as he blasted to his second win of the summer.

Please see **RACE**, page 8

Rivalry renewed as PeoplesBank takes title over St. Joe's

By **Tim Peterson**
Sports Correspondent

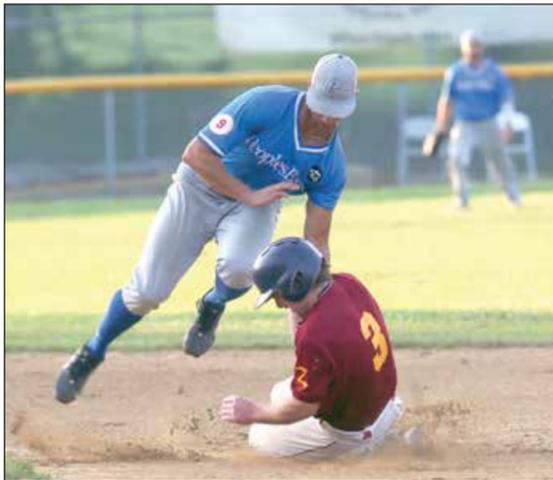
HOLYOKE—The Tri-County Baseball League will be celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2029.

PeoplesBank, who has been the best team in the league during the past thirty years, swept St. Joseph's in this year's best of three

championship series.

"Feels great to win another championship. It's our goal every summer," said PeoplesBank player/manager Joe Ferry. "We just enjoy playing baseball with each other. Our chemistry is a key to our success. I can't thank the players enough."

Ferry, who started both games against St. Joe's in left



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGHOTOS.COM

Dave Clark gets the out at second.

field, was aided by assistant coach Rey Rivera, who had three base hits and an RBI in game two.

PeoplesBank has captured the championship title in each of the past twelve seasons and a total of twenty times since 1995.

PeoplesBank and St. Joseph's both finished the 2025 regular season with ten victories.

"Our season was a success

and great bonds were created," said St. Joe's player/manager Brian Hayes. "We had a team composed of mostly college players this year."

PeoplesBank, who was the top-seeded team, advanced into the finals after sweeping fourth-seeded Teddy Bear Pools & Spas in the semifinals.

Please see **RIVAL**, page 8

Central takes silver in field hockey games

West receives bronze

FITCHBURG - Utilizing the turf fields at Game On Sports Complex, the Bay State Games for field hockey were held, featuring teams from Western and Central Massachusetts, both of which have had great success in the sport in past Bay State Games competitions. The games, which were held the weekend of July 11 to 13, started off with a strong 3-0 victory from Central over the Metro/Northeast team.

Western Mass. got into the action right after, taking on a Central team that has just played a few hours earlier. But Central was equal to the task and scored a 4-2 win over West.

West then had its second game of the day, facing off with the Coastal team, and rebounding with a 4-3 win.

On Saturday, July 12, West fell for a second time 4-1 against the Southeast team while Central also

suffered a loss, falling 5-2 against Southeast.

Both teams would rebound with wins later in the day. Central beat Coastal 5-3 while West shut out Metro/Northeast with a 4-0 decision. That put the West team in the bronze medal game on Sunday, July 13.

West would defeat Coastal in a rematch of their second game of the tournament, winning 3-2. Central made the gold medal game, but suffered a 2-0 shutout against the Southeast team.

This year, representing Central Mass. in the games were Quabbin High School's Makenzie Casey and Tantasqua's Sophia Bochicchio.

Tantasqua's Dessa Demears played for the Western Mass. team, while Anna Taylor and Kendall Placzek represented Minnechaug Regional.

Agawam High School placed four players on the team. Alyssa DaSilva, Finnola Mahoney, Olivia Govoni, and Lily Charest represented the Brownies.



Sam Allen swings for PeoplesBank.

SPORTS

Quabbin Valley set to host second over-28 fall league

Following up on the resounding success of its inaugural campaign, the Quabbin Valley Baseball League, an over-28 adult baseball league will hold its second Fall League this September and October.

Seeking to create a similar competition environment to its spring/summer league, Quabbin Valley, with contributions from the Valley Wheel Over-28 Baseball League, created a four-team fall league last year featuring the Braves, Dodgers, Cardinals, and Twins.

Those same four teams are set to return and each team tends to have openings on them. Additionally, the league is open to welcoming more teams in to the league if it finds enough interest.

While the fall league schedule is still under construction, it will mostly feature Sunday morning games played with wood-bat only, which is customary for fall baseball. There could be some Saturday games added to the schedule depending on the completion of the spring/summer season as well as to makeup rainouts, potentially. Games are nine-innings long and there is a small playoff and cham-

Please see **LEAGUE**, page 11

T-Birds makes moves in operations staff

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds announced hockey operations staff changes on Wednesday. Julia Snow has been promoted to Head Athletic Trainer, and Dylan Schoen has been hired as the team's Video Coach. In addition, former Thunderbirds Head Athletic Trainer Koryd Lavimoniere has accepted a position with the NHL's Carolina Hurricanes as an Assistant Athletic Trainer.

"We're thrilled for Koryd on his much-deserved promotion to the NHL and want to thank him for his dedication to the Blues and Thunderbirds organizations," said Thunderbirds general manager Kevin Maxwell. "Our team will be in great hands with Julia moving into the head athletic trainer position, where she will remain a key resource for our players and staff. We look forward to continuing to work with her."

Snow is entering her fourth season in the Thunderbirds organization after serving as Assistant Athletic Trainer since August of 2022. She becomes the fourth female actively to serve as a head athletic trainer in the AHL. Prior to joining the T-Birds, Snow served as the Head Athletic Trainer for the ECHL's Worcester Railers, as well as stints with the Hyannis Harbor Hawks of the Cape Cod Baseball League and the Massachusetts Pirates indoor football team.

Snow graduated from Worcester State University with a health education and therapeutic studies degree in 2018 before obtaining her masters in athletic training at Boston University.

Schoen is entering his first season in the Thunderbirds organization after serving as an assistant coach last season with Bowling Green State University.

"We are pleased to welcome Dylan into the Thunderbirds organization," said Maxwell. "His background in coaching at the junior and collegiate levels has prepared him to take on this new opportunity in Springfield, and we are happy to have him join our coaching staff."

A former NCAA Division III goaltender at SUNY-Geneseo and Stevenson University, Schoen has also served as a goaltending coach and assistant coach, respectively, for the North American Hockey League's Amarillo Bulls and Maryland Black Bears.

Springfield Thunderbirds fans are encouraged to visit www.SpringfieldThunderbirds.com to learn more about 2025-26 Ticket Memberships, which feature the best benefits, including a special 10th anniversary season ticket holder jersey. For more information or to order now, call (413) 739-GOAL (4625).



RIVAL from page 7

Second-seeded St. Joseph's needed three games to eliminate third-seeded bankESB in the semifinal round.

The Bankers scored seven runs on seven base hits in the bottom of the first inning enroute to a 10-0 victory in game one of the championship series last Monday night. The contest ended after 4 1/2 innings due to the ten run mercy rule.

It was also PeoplesBank last game of the season at Mackenzie Stadium in Holyoke.

"We just love playing games on this field," said Ferry following game one. "We played very well in tonight's, but as Kobe Bryant, who was my favorite athlete growing up once said, 'the jobs not finished'."

PeoplesBank finished the job twenty four hours later with a 10-7 win in an old fashion slugfest at St. Joe's Field in Thorndike.

The winning pitcher in game one was lefthander James Flahive, who's sidearm. He allowed only two base hits and issued two walks in his final start of the 2025 campaign.

"Jimmy has been the best pitcher in the league during the past four or five years," Ferry said. "I don't ever recall him losing a game since he put on a Peoplesbank jersey."

St. Joe's shortstop Devin Slattery, who was an outstanding three-sport athlete at Ware High School, drew a walk with one-out in the top of the first inning. After the next batter flied out to right, Slattery was thrown out trying to steal second base by catcher Pete Hogan.

Centerfielder Seth Allen hit a ground ball up the middle into centerfield for a single leading off the bottom of the first inning against St. Joe's righthander Jack Feltovic.

Then Hogan walked before second baseman Dave Clark launched a 3-run homer that landed beneath the giant scoreboard in left field.

Following back-to-back singles by first baseman Kyle Platner and right fielder Cam Rivest, DH Johnny Gegetska delivered an RBI single to left giving the home team a 4-0 advantage.

Another run crossed the plate following a sacrifice fly to left by shortstop Sam Allen.

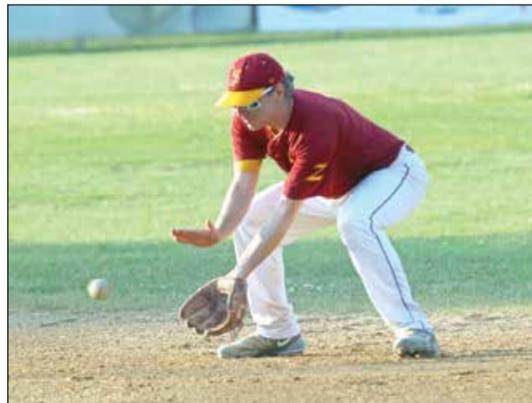
After catching the ball, St. Joe's left fielder Jacob Petrin threw the ball to third baseman Brandon Magni, who tagged out the runner who was trying to advance to third base on the play.

Shortstop Seth Allen, who's Sam's twin brother, capped off the opening frame by hitting a two run double off the left field fence.

"We kept passing the bat



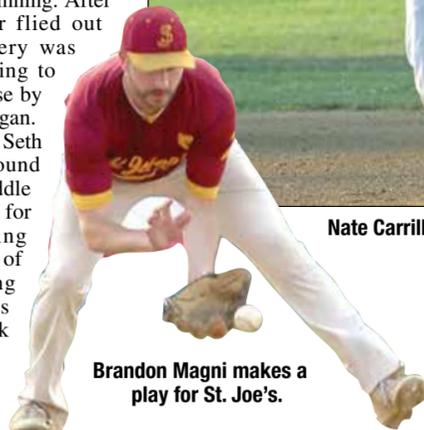
TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
James Flahive delivers a pitch home in the championship series.



Greg Vouros fields a grounder to second.



Nate Carrill makes an off-balance play.



Brandon Magni makes a play for St. Joe's.

and put a lot of pressure on them in the first inning," Ferry said. "We had some hard hits and a couple of walks in that inning. We also batted around in the first inning of last year's finals. I capped the inning off with a bases loaded triple in that game."

St. Joe's DH Pat Fitzgibbons drew a walk leading off the second inning, but he was thrown out trying to steal by Hogan.

PeoplesBank scored three more runs in the third inning.

Clark, who was hit-by-a-pitch in the second inning, knocked home the first run of the frame with a double to left. Platner followed with a two-run double to right.

Trailing, 10-0, St. Joe's began the fourth inning with a line-drive single by Petrin, who was thrown out trying to steal second base.

Slattery also singled, but the next batter grounded into a 6-4-3 inning ending double play.

St. Joe's standard two runs on base in the top of the fifth, as PeoplesBank took a 1-0 lead in the series.

The Bankers jumped out a 7-0 lead in game two before St. Joe's battled with five runs in the bottom of the fourth inning.

Center fielder Aaron Little knocked home two runs with a double and right fielder Colby Harrington contributed with an RBI single. The other two runs crossed the plate following errors.

The Bankers, who were led offensively by third baseman Cam MacDonald with two hits and two RBIs, responded with three runs in the sixth inning giving the visitors a 10-5 advantage.

St. Joe's scored two more runs in the bottom of the sixth inning.

Danny Gaines was the winning pitcher in game two, which capped off another memorable season for PeoplesBank.

RAMS from page 9

has made a verbal commitment to play for the women's soccer team at Sacred Heart University, which is in Fairfield, Connecticut. She recorded a hat-trick in the semifinal victory.

"They've been playing soccer together for many years," said Brooke Murphy, who played college soccer at the University of New Hampshire and was also an All-American player during her high school career at Monson. "They always find each other on the field and are a lot of fun to watch."

Five minutes into the opening half, Tennessee Murphy delivered a crossing pass to Hannah Murphy, who finished off the play by scoring a breakaway goal.

The duo hooked up again during the 10th minute, as Hannah Murphy fired a low shot into the right corner of the net giving Monson a 2-0 lead.

Granby, who finished the summer league regular season with a 7-3-1, cut the deficit in half during the 13th minute following an unassisted goal by Kalli White, who's only going to be a junior.

"It's very difficult playing



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Sophia Press looks to clear the ball.

in the rain," White said. "I'm very glad that nobody got injured. We need everyone to be healthy to have a successful season this fall."

Monson built a 4-1 lead with ten minutes remaining in the first half.

Hannah Murphy scored an unassisted goal before Tennessee Murphy netted

her first goal of the contest following a corner kick from Emma Maziarz.

Granby came storming back with three goals by White in a five-minute span at the end of the opening half.

"Once I scored my first goal during that span, I was able to score a couple more, which tied the score," White said. "I wish we could've scored a few more goals during the second half. We're looking forward to playing Monson again this fall."

Monson retook the lead ten minutes into the second half following another corner kick goal.

This time Hannah Murphy booted the ball into the box from the left corner where Tennessee Murphy put a shot into the right corner.

Hannah Murphy, who enjoys playing in the rain, sealed the deal for Monson after scoring her third goal, which was unassisted, with less than two minutes remaining in regulation.

The two regular season meetings between the Granby and Monson girls' soccer teams are scheduled to take place on Sept. 19 and Oct. 9.



Marcela Tapia looks to a make a run.

Granby library's August and September programs

GRANBY – This August and September, the Granby Free Public Library has many different events and activities to enjoy before school begins, and after.

Fly Away With Books!

Finished Summer Reading and want another challenge? Pick up a "Fly Away With Books!" sheet. Read 5 picture books or 1 chapter book at home & write the title(s) on the lines in the hot air balloon. Color your hot air balloon, then return the sheet to the library for a small prize by August 29. For

kids up to age 11 years.

Going Back to School? Starting School? Check out our large selection of starting school books to help your child's transition go more smoothly whether it's preschool, kindergarten or other grades.

CFCE PLAYGROUPS

Summer Playgroups are held once weekly on Wednesdays through August 6. Playgroups the last week of August; August 27 Playgroup (regular, drop in) and Friday August 29 Pre K Readiness Playgroup (registration

required.) No Playgroup September 3 & 5. Fall Playgroup dates: September 10 on, every Wednesday and Friday 10:30 a.m. to noon. Join us for this free playgroup, where you & your child (birth- 5yrs.) can enjoy playtime, an activity, and story circle time with Marti.

Playgroups are made possible with funding from a Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CF CE) grant from the MA Department of Early Education and Care, administered by the Collaborative for Educational Services.

Reading Buddies with Bright Spot Therapy Dogs

Thursdays 3:30 to 5 p.m. Dates: August 7 and 21, September 4 and 18, October 2, 16, and 30. Children in Kindergarten & up will enjoy reading aloud to gentle, comforting Reading Buddies with Bright Spot Therapy Dogs as they practice their reading. Pre-register for a time slot.

Mochi Squishy Scavenger Hunt! August 12 to 23

Cute little Mochi Kawaii critters are fun to play with, but they are very sneaky

and we've had many of ours escape. Can you help us find them? Take a find sheet, find them, then turn in your sheet for your own *Mochi Kawaii to take home! Ages 4 to 11 years, one time per child, while supplies last.

Be a Kid Spy!

August. 26 – September 13 Check out an I Spy or Look & Find type of book and get a DIY mini "I Spy" bottle kit *while supplies last - Ages 4 and up.

Play I SPY Look in our I Spy terrarium, find and count the items on the Find Sheet

as you go. When you've spied everything on this sheet, then you receive a little toy/treat! September's Read for Treats "Apples" Sheets

Pick up a sheet & get a treat for reading! Read 5 picture or 1 chapter book at home, then write the book title(s) on the lines inside the apple. Color the apple & return the sheet to the library to redeem for a treat/toy. Ends September 23.

Please see **LIBRARY**, page 11

Call for nominations for the annual A+ Awards

Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce puts out call for nominations

AMHERST - Nominations for the Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce's 2025 A+ Awards are open! Each year, the Amherst Area Chamber bestows A+ Awards to individuals and organizations that enrich the life of the community through their work in education, business, and civic engagement across the area that the Chamber serves (Amherst, Belchertown, Hadley, Leverett, Pelham, Shutesbury, and Sunderland) and the valley as a whole.

"The A+ Awards are a powerful platform for sharing the inspiring stories of leaders, businesses, and organizations who shape our community through innovation, creativity, and impactful solutions," said Jacob Robinson, Executive Director of the Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce. "Through professionally produced videos and our annual awards dinner, attended by hundreds of community and business leaders, we celebrate and amplify these stories, highlighting their essential role in making our region thrive. If someone in your network has made a difference this year, now's the time to nominate them and ensure their story is told."

Nominate a community member in any of the award categories:

Legacy Award: Recognizing remarkable individuals/businesses for their exceptional contribu-

tions to the Amherst area throughout their career, leaving a lasting impact for generations to come.

Leader in Innovation Award: Spotting visionary entrepreneurs who revolutionize the way we live, work, and learn in the Amherst area through their creative solutions and forward-thinking mindset.

Leader in Sustainability Award: Honoring businesses, organizations, or individuals dedicated to building a sustainable future for the Amherst area, preserving its vitality for generations to come.

Young Professional Award: Applauding the impressive achievements of young professionals who have made a significant impact and brought positive change to the Amherst area.

Community Service Award: Recognizing businesses, non-profits, or individuals whose outstanding work and outreach have greatly enriched the lives of the Amherst area community.

Chamber MVP: Celebrating an individual who truly embodies the mission of the Amherst Area Chamber as a champion for business and community development, serving as a convener, connector, and catalyst.

Nominations can be submitted online through the Chamber's nomination form at amherstarea.com/awards. The deadline is Friday, August 29 at 5 p.m. Chamber membership is not necessary to nominate or be nominated for an A+ Award. There is no limit to the number of nominations you can submit! Everyone who submits

Please see **AWARDS**, page 11

CERA from page 1

said Charlotte Cassidy, who helped with making the photos look perfect to document Cera's travels.

Cera's family at first gave her to the Brimfield Public Library, but she ultimately came to find her home in Belchertown, where she has a proud and steadfast following and is loved by all who get to meet her.

"The Library staff loves to get selfies taken with Cera but sometimes we get annoyed when she falls asleep and starts to snore," said Jennifer Whitehead, the children's director.

Cera has been with the library for many years now, and stands guarding the stairs up to the children's library shelves, where if you ask, she'll give you spot-on recommendations for a book or two to read next.

"Cera loves when children visit her at the Clapp Memorial Library," said Whitehead. "They feed her leaves, ride on her back, and tell her stories."

After a while, the librarians taking care of her noticed she seemed to be getting a bit sad, so they helped her get her passport, and pack up her new Scott M. Fischer



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Cera's brand new passport with her very own signature.

tote bag with what she would need for some quality adventuring, and helped her out for the summer.

Since then, Cera has trav-

elled all over the world, with pictures posted on the Clapp Memorial Library's Facebook page, where she visits different libraries,

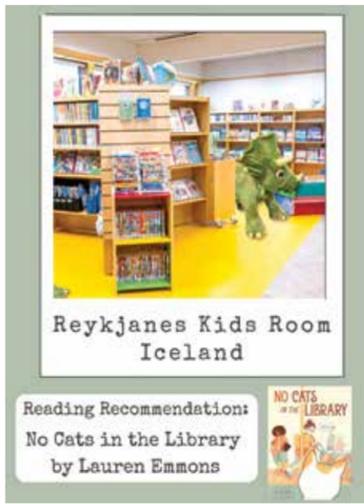
landmarks, and adventures through the great outdoors.

"She sends us pictures of her travels with a fun book recommendation to make sure that the children of Belchertown keep reading during the summer months," said Whitehead. "She says she misses us all and cannot wait to share stories about our summer adventures."

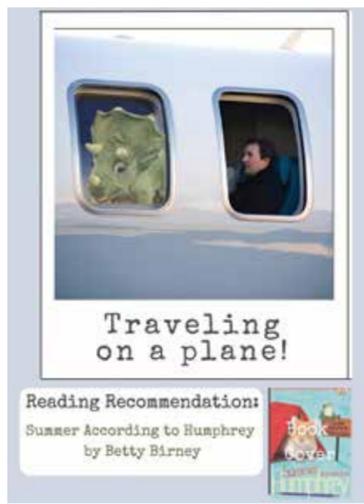
The love that the community has for Cera is truly felt, and her little adventure has helped the kids in the community to get interested in learning more about the places she visits, "levelling up" their understanding of the world and other libraries in the process.

"When I learned that Cera was vacationing in Maine, I went to join her. It was lovely to spend a day on the coast with her and hike some trails together near Wiggly Bridge in York," said Whitehead.

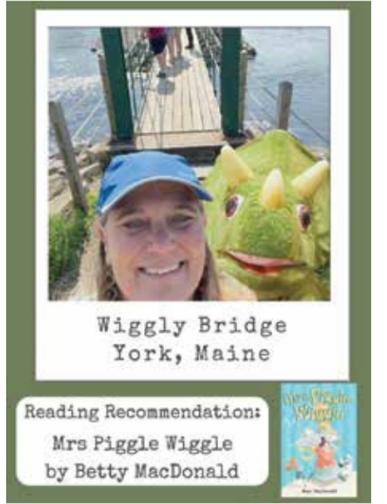
The adventures of Cera were truly a wonderful experience for all who got the chance to experience them, bringing together people of all ages to have some fun, and stretch their imaginations as they see this little dinosaur go on a truly remarkable adventure.



Cera checking out a book at the Reykjanes Kids Room in Iceland.



Cera on the plane, looking out the window in between reading her book.



Miss Jenn came to visit Cera at the Wiggly Bridge in York, Maine with her book recommendation.



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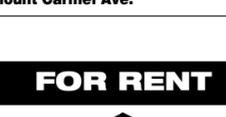
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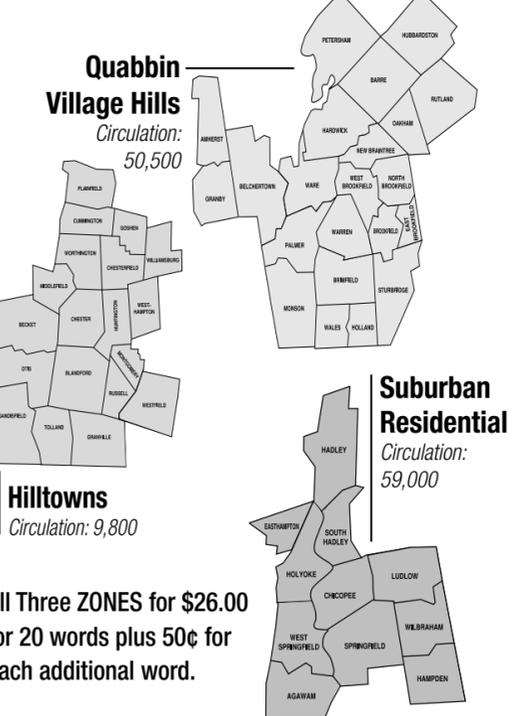
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Fall Book Sale coming to GFPL

GRANBY – Book lovers! Bargain Hunters! The Friends of the Granby Free Public Library will host their annual Month-Long Fall Book Sale during September in the Community Room of the Library. You will be able to choose from a large assortment of used and like-new hardcover, softcover, paperback books, teen books and children's books, along with a selection of CDs, DVDs, video games and audiobooks. The sale will run during regular library hours from September 2 through 30.

The Library is now accepting donations of hardcover and paperback books, DVDs,

music CDs, playable video games, and audiobooks in good condition acceptable for resale. The Library does not accept donations of: Textbooks, encyclopedias, Reader's Digest books, or books with smoke, mold, mildew, or water damage. Donations are accepted at the Library during open hours. Please do not leave donated books outside the library or in our book return. Donations accepted until August 28. Thank you for your support!

The Granby Free Public Library is located at 297 E State St, Granby, MA 01033. Visit granbylibrary.org for hours and more information.

LIBRARY from page 9

Meet a Balloon Artist A Sensory Friendly Experience with Brie's Balloons September 25th 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Sign up for a 15-min. one-on-one balloon twisting session with Brie's Balloons. Spaces are limited, please pre-register.

Choose between 2 experiences with Brie's Balloons when you register: *Exploration session (ages 3-4 years) is great for those getting comfortable with different sensory experiences or as an introduction to balloon twisting.

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ten & keep track with this nation-wide program. Sign up and get a folder at the library. Read a book (any book) to your newborn, infant, or toddler. The goal is to read 1,000 books (yes, you can repeat books) before your child starts kindergarten. Visit www.1000booksbeforekindergarten.org for more information.

To Granby Library patrons,

I am retiring at the end of September. As a Youth Service Librarian I have been able to combine my love of youth and libraries in the perfect setting, Granby. The years flew by and now it is time to embark on a new adventure - Retirement! I have been touched by so many memories. It has been a pleasure to get to know you and to foster a love of reading. I will miss you all and wish everyone well as you continue your library adventures!

With sincere thanks and gratitude to everyone who has touched my life,

Miss Janice
(Janice McArdle,
Youth Service Librarian)

AWARDS from page 9

a nomination will be entered into a raffle to win one free ticket to the A+ Awards Dinner held on November 18, 2025 at the UMass Student Union Ballroom, presented by PeoplesBank. Interested in learning

more about the event or joining as a sponsor? Visit the event page: <https://www.amherstarea.com/awards> or contact Executive Director Jacob Robinson at director@amherstarea.com for more details and sponsorship information.

LEAGUE from page 8

pionship held at the end of the season. Last year's fall season was eight games and that is the goal for this year. Free and low-cost fields are used as well as just one umpire in an effort to keep the costs lower for players. The cost to play will likely range from \$40 to \$60 for the eight-game schedule. Players from outside the Quabbin League may also

pay a small fee for insurance as well.

An interest/registration form, will be forthcoming soon, but until then, to express interest in the league, you can email the coordinators of the league at either GScibelli22@yahoo.com or ikhandfield@gmail.com.

Scheduled and team placement for unaffiliated players will be finalized in mid-to-late August. Please join in the fun this fall.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Belchertown Police Log

Editor's note: The following are brief explanations of select entries in the Belchertown Police log and arrests for the weeks of July 25 through July 31. The information was provided by a member of the police department based on the review of the detailed log summary. This feature is designed to provide context and explanation to some of the calls police respond to every day.

ARRESTS/SUMMONS Sunday, July 27

12:38 p.m. – A Belchertown man arrested on charges of violation of an abuse prevention order and a warrant.

Thursday, July 31

12:53 p.m. – An officer responded to a call on George Hannum Road. A person was arrested on charges of domestic assault and battery.

Wednesday, July 30

10:39 a.m. – A 79-year-old Belchertown woman was issued a summons on charges of operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license due to an immediate threat. A reporting person said there was a person in the parking lot of the post office. They left the area, and an officer was able to stop the operator. The officer asked the operator why they left. She said she was aware but needs to be able to get out and do things.

11:05 a.m. – An 18-year-old Longmeadow male was issued a summons on charges of negligent/reckless operation of a recreational vehicle, helmet violation, public way violation with a recreational vehicle, and operating unregistered recreation vehicle. An officer responded to George Hannum Road for a report of a dirt bike, it was observed at a stop sign at Magnolia Street then passed over into a driveway and stopped. The dirt bike operator was taking it for a test drive after just repairing it. The officer later got an email that had a video of the person on a private way at a high rate of speed and running a stop sign. Based on the information in the video there was probable cause to charge them. Later that afternoon, they were served with a citation.

ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS Friday, July 25

2:49 p.m. – An officer responded to North Main Street business backing up and struck a parked vehicle. They came out and exchanged information.

4:40 p.m. – An officer investigated a possible 209A violation.

10:11 p.m. – An officer

responded to a residence regarding a phone that was allegedly hacked. They reported they had problems with the phone and said someone was hacking into it. The matter was documented.

Saturday, July 26

2:53 p.m. – An officer responded to South Main Street residence for a report of a vandalism. There was a report of a person trespassing and cutting down a tree on the property. The person said they noticed they were missing two trees, and they didn't have people working on the property.

Sunday, July 27

6:23 a.m. – An officer responded to Michael Sears Road for a report of a FedEx truck parked on the side of the road and the door was left open. A resident noticed the hood latch was left open as if someone was inspected. The keys were kept in safekeeping. The truck had broken down and the driver made arrangements to have it removed.

9:38 p.m. – An officer responded to a report of an accident on North Liberty Street. A dog was struck by a motor vehicle. It was unknown who struck the animal. The dog was deceased and removed. The animal control officer was contacted.

Monday, July 28

10:12 a.m. – An officer took a report of suspicious activity from a checking account. A resident reported they felt there was a fraudulent transaction. The person cancelled out the account and started a new one.

Tuesday, July 29

12:36 p.m. – An officer responded to a North Main Street residence for a report of a possible breaking and entering incident. The air conditioning was out of place. When the resident went to reposition, they said it was pushed in and had not just fallen out of place. There was no other indication of a break in, other than the air conditioning being moved.

8:53 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Turkey Hill Road. A vehicle going south on Turkey Hill Road was turning left into a business when a second vehicle struck its side. The operator of the first vehicle said they thought there was enough time to make the turn. The operator of the second vehicle said the first vehicle was traveling too fast and cut them off. There was airbag deployment in both vehicles. Both were towed from the scene. No injuries were reported.

Wednesday, July 30

7:03 a.m. – A person responded to the station with an expired driver's license they found while walking on State Street.

9:16 a.m. – An expired identification card for a person was found on the rail trail near Maple Street.

9:06 p.m. – An officer assisted Belchertown fire and paramedics.

Thursday, July 31

12:37 p.m. – An officer and Belchertown Fire and paramedics reported to Federal Street for a reported four-vehicle cash with injuries. A person was transported to the hospital.

1:15 p.m. – An officer responded to River Street for a report of smoke coming from the back of the vehicle that struck a pole. State Police and Palmer Police responded with mutual aid until a Belchertown officer arrived on scene. One person was transported to the hospital. A vehicle traveling east on River Street when it went off the roadway and struck a utility pole. The person said they were going too fast and lost control of the vehicle. A vehicle was towed from the scene.

Granby Police Log

Editor's Note: The Granby Police Department responded to 118 calls for the week of July 25 through July 31. Those arrested are presumed

innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. The Granby Police Department provides all information.

Friday, July 25

7:50 a.m. – A resident reported that the street sign for Pheasant Hill has been knocked down and there is a vehicle bumper and license plate on the ground. The operator was identified and stated that they had swerved to miss a deer and struck the sign in the process. There were no injuries.

Sunday, July 27

9 p.m. – While on patrol, an officer observed a motor vehicle pass another vehicle in a clearly marked no passing zone. The vehicle was traveling at 46MPH in a posted 30MPH zone. The vehicle was stopped and the operator was issued a civil citation for speeding and a passing violation.

Monday, July 28

3:56 p.m. – The owner of C&G Tool stated that a person was observed dumping bags of trash into their dumpster. Officers spoke to the involved party and they agreed to remove the trash from the dumpster.

Tuesday, July 29

7:42 a.m. – Several 911 callers reported a two-car accident. Granby Police and Fire responded. Two parked and unoccupied vehicles were struck as well. There were no injuries.

Wednesday, July 30

2:22 p.m. – A family member reported that another family member had stolen money from their mother. An incident report was completed.

Thursday, July 31

6:03 p.m. – A motorist reported a possible road rage incident where they observed a vehicle side-swipe another vehicle causing damage to a mirror. The aggressor was not identified and sped away. Officers spoke with the operator whose vehicle was damaged and completed an accident report.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Public Hearing Legal Notice Belchertown Zoning Board of Appeals

In accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40A, Section 11 the Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, August 20, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.**

This hearing will be held in the Select Board's meeting room of Lawrence Memorial Hall, 2 Jabbish Street, Belchertown, MA on the application from Robert Barry appealing the decision of the Building Commissioner declining building permit due to land not having legal road frontage necessary for a building lot at 240 Munsell Street Map 214 Parcel 1 Zoned Primary Agricultural.

Any Person interested and wishing to be heard should appear at the time and place designated.

Jennifer Sharrow, Chair Person,
Zoning Board of Appeals
08/07, 08/14/2025

PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

- 1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com
- 2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.
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Emily and JenaRose enjoying time together dyeing their shirts.



Free books are always the best, especially when you have a few more days of summer reading to get through.



Gracie Nite, Sydney Amoroso, and Valerie Nite enjoying their evening listening to some good music together.

TURLEY PHOTO BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS

TEENS from page 1

“I think it was really cool to have Ultraviolet come in because it was awesome to have a teen group, their peers essentially, being the performers, and that was really special. It was also special for us to support teens at the

teen summer reading party,” said Sterling.

In the past, there have been occasionally other adults to come and provide something during the party, but it made it even more special to have Ultraviolet this year.

“I felt it was one of the most successful teen events

of my career. We had so many teens sign up, and this year even more signed up for the program. The teens have been so engaged and committed, and it makes me really happy,” said Sterling.

From the kick-off event with Scott Fischer for the theme of levelling up, the

whole program has been “very serendipitous”, and the whole community enjoyed the opportunities it gave to learn more, and stretch out their horizons.

“I think the best part about teens is that they look at the world in such a different way, and I think adults would do a good job to calm down, and take on a teen’s perspective of the world. They are all dreamers, and I love that,” said Sterling.



RIGHT: Melissa LaFever tye-dyeing her new sweatshirt.



The sidewalk was filled with teens having fun together.



Ultraviolet came to perform, with a crowd gathered for them, too.

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AUGUST 16TH 9 AM - 3 PM

RAIN DATE: AUGUST 23RD, 9 AM - 3 PM

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