

The Belchertown Police Department poses for photos by their festival booth.



BPD has a massive 'Night Out'

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

BELCHERTOWN – The yearly National Night Out event in Belchertown took place on Aug. 4. Though National Night Outs take place all across the country, in Belchertown, the event has a life of its own. Chestnut

Hill's parking lot campus was filled with live music, a copious amount of business and municipal information booths, food, drinks, live demonstrations and even a dunk tank for residents to drench local police officers.

"This is probably the eighth or ninth time we've done it," said Belchertown Police Chief

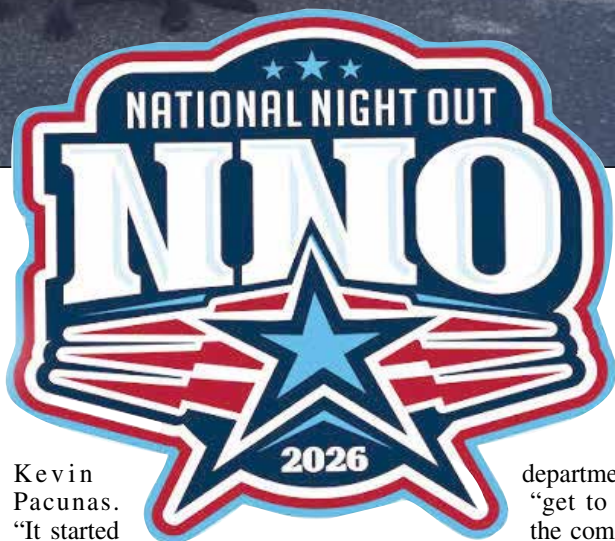
Kevin Pacunas. "It started out at our police station back in 2017. We just made it our national night out and we did a tour of the station; that kind of thing."

According to the police chief, the event allows town

departments to "get to know the community" through a family-friendly night

of fun and festivities. As residents and first responders intermingle, it creates an

Please see **NIGHT OUT**, page 8



Late policy presented to school committee

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

GRANBY – Principal Allison Jordan of the Granby Junior Senior High School revealed the new tardiness policy updates added to the student handbook to the Granby School Committee on Aug. 4.

"We ended up adjusting the chart to reflect that five tardies is five hours of community service."

– Allison Jordan
Granby High School Principal

"A lot of work has been done in the handbook in the past few years," Jordan said and highlighted the first change in tardiness policies. Previously, three tardy marks equaled an absence from school. Feeling a strong need to undo the policy, Jordan cited it was "hard to track" and very "punitive" to mark kids for the behavior.

"We took a different approach and did every five tardies equaled, for this past year, a Saturday school," Jordan said. "We learned rather quickly that the students were attentive."

Jordan stated the new policy improved attendance by "a significant amount," a fact which was applauded by school staff. Despite negative parent feedback, the principal maintained the new policy was a step in the right direction.

"Is there anything else you can explore?" Jordan said as she quoted parental backlash. "We're like, 'all

right; it's new for us. Let's entertain this. What are your suggestions?"

A common parent suggestion was for community service, which Jordan admitted still held kids accountable while also allowing them to "work on skills." As Jordan mused over the potential punishment shift, she also

acknowledged it gave delinquent students an opportunity to "give back to the community." "We ended up adjusting the chart to reflect that five tardies is five hours of community service," Jordan said. "We didn't want to start with one, right? It's hard for them to do one hour of community service once they lock into a project, it's nice to have them for a good amount of time."

The new policy gave students either one or two weeks to complete the compulsory service, with the encouragement to complete multiple hours at a time once the project started. However, she noted some students wouldn't complete it and some were "intentionally skipping."

"It's hard to track that too," Jordan said. "And we get it. It's a lot. It puts it on the parent, guardian, caregivers to come to school and pick up the kids. But we're always flexible and worked with the students."

Please see **LATE POLICY**, page 5

BOH monitor banana compost situation

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

GRANBY – The Board of Health reviewed outstanding concerns with a banana compost operation on Taylor St. Residents reported significant rodent activity within the area and petitioned the Board to investigate the manner.

"We got a letter from Ms. Tara LaFlam dated July 19 about the banana compost operation on Taylor Street," Board of Health member William Shaheen said. "Apparently, the effort that was embarked on during the spring to eradicate the rats and propagation of rats on the property has apparently failed."

Shaheen further stated it was in their opinion it was the first time they addressed concerns on the property. They cited a complaint in February of 2025, where the Board had to investigate a crow complaint in the area, as well as reports of exposed compost. Shaheen said, according to Ms. LaFlam's letter, the issue was getting worse.

"Essentially it's a three strikes and you're out situation, in my opinion," Shaheen said and sought his fellow Board member's opinion.

"I was kind of hoping that the folks at Red Fire Farm would have taken a lead on this," Board of Health member Lee Lalonde said.

Lalonde further expressed their desire for the farm to make efforts to "get this operation at least a half to three-

fourths of a mile off the road" and concluded they didn't understand why there was a delay in getting the issue resolved.

Shaheen read from the letter, which reported the rat activity on the premises "remains significant since poison has been used as part of the mitigation efforts." The letter went on to claim the property owner found "dead and dying rats" in their yard, which they described as "concerning and unacceptable."

"We are noticing rat burrows developing along our front stone wall," Shaheen said as he read from the letter. "Given those ongoing issues, we would appreciate an update on the next steps being taken to fully address the problem."

Banana Compost owner Lee Gilman stated the company received the letter "back in May" from the neighbors across the street about the "rodent activity." Though he was uncertain if the letter was made public at the time, he reported they sent a letter to the Board of Health "about six weeks ago" which explained their relationship with the farm.

"Since then, we have doubled our efforts on putting more carbon material on top of our food scraps," Gilman said. "That helps keep them covered and buried from animals getting in there."

Please see **COMPOST**, page 2

Project 351 serves community

Students harvest crops from garden

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

BELCHERTOWN – On July 27, students harvested crops from the Belchertown School Garden on the Chestnut Hill school campus and donated the cultivated food to both the Summer Eats and local Chestnut Hill Community School programs. The efforts to solve local food instability programs will continue one kale leaf at a time until the season's end on Aug. 21.

Project 351 engages students across 351 towns and cities across Massachusetts, involving them in community service projects while also informing them of their region's needs. The program builds leadership skills in practical settings, as both alumni and ambassadors gain practical knowledge through on-the-job training while "building a brighter future for all."

There are a few roles within Project 351. Ambassador years start in eighth grade and students become eligible for alumni status as they enter high school, as they grow into Senior leaders and mentor the new crop of students entering the program.

The morning began as



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Levy (center) and Lapointe (far left) orient the Project 351 youth to the Belchertown gardens.



Zucchini come in all sizes, including Smiley, here approaching the size of a baseball bat.

Debra Lapointe gave a tour of the stunning pollinator garden while she explained the value of school gardens. She shared her knowledge on garden maintenance and informed attendees about how the recent drought impacted food production within the past three years.

The group picked rainbow chard and discussed the necessity of genetic diversity in food crops. They also plucked flat and curly kale while they explored the science of row covers for pest control and seasonal extension. Dill and tomatoes were also harvested during the day's events.

Cucumbers were hunted as well. The group discovered a five pound squash within the garden and named it Smiley, all while they discovered why gloves are essential during crop harvesting to avoid prickly vines.

"Looking for cucumbers is like going on a treasure hunt," said one participant as they scoured the garden.

"I can't believe there are so many weeds and the plants just keep growing," said another as they weeded the plot.

Please see **GARDEN**, page 7

■ COMMUNITY

UMass professor to talk drought conditions

BELCHERTOWN — As drought conditions become an increasingly familiar part of life in Massachusetts, residents will have an opportunity to learn more about how drought develops, how it affects local water supplies, and what the future may hold during a free public presentation on Thursday, Aug. 20, at 6:30 p.m. in the Belchertown Town Hall Auditorium hosted by the Belchertown Conservation Department.

The program, “Understanding Drought and Water Supplies” will be presented by Professor Konstantinos (Kostas) Andreadis of the University of Massachusetts Amherst, whose research focuses on hydrology, water resources, drought, and climate impacts.

Designed for homeowners, residents, and anyone interested in understanding where their water comes from, the presentation will explain the science behind drought in clear, practical terms. Topics will include how Massachusetts defines the different stages of drought, why droughts have become more frequent in recent years, and what scientists expect as the climate continues to change.

Professor Andreadis will also discuss the differences between surface water and groundwater systems, why



The Quabbin Reservoir is currently 10 feet below full capacity. SUBMITTED PHOTO

each responds differently to drought, and how water managers evaluate long-term and short-term impacts on water supplies. Additional topics will include aquifers, seasonal groundwater recharge from rainfall and snowmelt, well fields, deep and shallow wells, artesian wells, and how public water supply systems collect, store, and distribute drinking water.

“With all the changes in

weather we have been having, we felt that this would be a great presentation to help everyone understand how these changes affect their water supply, whether it is wells or reservoirs,” said Belchertown Conservation Administrator Julie Meyer. “Regular droughts are just now a fact of life, and we need to plan and prepare for their impacts.”

Whether residents rely on

a private well or a municipal water system, the program will provide valuable insight into the factors that influence water availability and help explain the science behind the drought conditions affecting communities across the Commonwealth.

The presentation is free and open to the public. Questions from attendees will be welcomed following the presentation.

Veterans’ Services to host Back-to-School event for veterans and families

Free haircuts and community cookout planned for Aug. 26; town seeking school supply donations

BELCHERTOWN — The Belchertown Veterans’ Services Office will host a Back to School event for veterans, their spouses, and immediate family members from Belchertown and surrounding communities on Wednesday, August 26, from 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM at 4 Berkshire Avenue.

The event will feature free haircuts and a community cookout, with hamburgers, hot dogs, and chips provided at no cost. Attendees are welcome to relax, eat well, and connect

with fellow veterans in a laid-back, community setting.

“We’re excited to bring this event to our veterans and their families,” said Dustin Ruby, Director of Veterans’ Services. “Our hope is to make this an annual tradition here in Belchertown.”

Members of the public are invited to support the event by donating back to school supplies, such as notebooks, pens, and backpacks. Donations may be dropped off at the Veterans’ Services Office, 4 Berkshire Avenue, during normal business hours through the day of the event.

Organizations interested in tabling or offering resources at the event should contact Dustin Ruby, Director of Veterans’ Services, at 413-323-0409.

COMPOST from page 1

Gilman also reported they hired a professional pest control company to come out and handle the situation, as well as treating the area with bait boxes “every other week.” He also revealed the company was using “non-secondary poisoning” to control the issue.

“They’re using rat-ex,” Gilman said. “It basically just dries the animal out, so there’s no secondary poisoning.”

Gilman asserted all of their material was “covered with tarps every night” and concluded the company had “done a lot to improve the situation.” He went on further to argue against the letter’s cited issue of “dead rats on the road,” as he didn’t find this to be the case while investigating the site “the other day” and reported they were seeing a “decrease in rat activity” on their end.

“As far as communication, we talked,” Banana Compost representative Steve DeMont said in reference to his previous communication with Nate LaFlam. “It was about a month and a half ago,

maybe a month ago in May. We just kind of told them what was our plan and what Matt said.”

Shaheen clarified to Banana Compost representatives they were “civilly liable” if any injury or disease was traced as a result of the rat problem, which would make the business eligible to be sued in civil court. As all parties agreed they didn’t want the issue to escalate into a civil lawsuit, they agreed to work together to mitigate the problem.

The Board of Health also stated they would have two weeks to research a solution to the problem, with the Board pledging to also do their own independent research. They scheduled a hearing in two weeks to compare notes and resolve the issue.

“If you want to bring your lawyers to the hearing, that would be fine,” Shaheen said. “Let’s come up with a game plan in two weeks and set it into motion and everyone is going to be happy. We’ve got to mitigate this problem because someone’s going to get hurt, someone’s going to get sued and it’s not going to be nice.”

Time running out to sending vote-by-mail postcards

BELCHERTOWN – All Massachusetts voters have the option to vote early by mail in all 2026 elections, with no excuse required.

Forty-five days before each statewide elec-

tion, the Secretary of the Commonwealth will send a pre-addressed, postage pre-paid Vote by Mail application to every registered voter before each statewide election. This mailing is required

by state law and is going out the week of July 5, 2026.

You won’t be sent an application if you’ve already applied to vote by mail for the upcoming elections.

You can use this applica-

tion to request a ballot for the next statewide election, or for all remaining elections this year. Simply mark your selections, sign the application, and drop it in the mail or the drop box here at Town Hall at 2 Jabish St., Belchertown.

For primaries only: If you are not registered in a party, you must include which party’s ballot you would like to receive, Democrat or Republican.

The deadline to request a ballot for the Sept. 1 State Primary is Tuesday, Aug. 25 at 5 p.m.

Please contact the Town Clerk’s office at 413-323-2081 or email clerk@belchertown.org, with any questions or concerns.

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■ COMMUNITY

Brian Willette appointed Sergeant-at-Arms for VFW

RENO, NV – Brian Willette of South Hadley was appointed for the sixth consecutive time as National Sergeant-at-Arms of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) on July 29 at the 127th VFW National Convention in Reno, Nevada.

Brian served in the United States Army, earning his VFW eligibility by serving in Bosnia in support of Operation Joint Forge, and in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. In recognition of his service, Brian received the Purple Heart and the Combat Action Badge.

He is a Gold Legacy Life member of Post 3104 in South Hadley, Massachusetts; a five-time All-American Post Commander, past All-American District Commander, past Department Judge Advocate, and he currently serves as the Department of Massachusetts Sergeant-at-Arms.

On the national level, Brian has served on the Sergeant-at-Arms team since 2016 and has served as the National Sergeant-at-Arms since 2021. He has been a member of the National



Brian Willette

Honor Guard since 2019. He also served on the Veterans and Military Support Committee and as a National Assistant Inspector General. He is a life member of the VFW National Home for Children.

Brian is a member of the American Legion, Sons of the American Legion, DAV, AMVETS, Marine Corps League (associate member), Association of 3D Armored Division Veterans, Yankee Division Veterans Association, 29th Division Veterans Association, and serves as the National POW-MIA officer for the Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A.

BOAT hosting outdoor movie night Aug. 15

BELCHERTOWN – Belchertown Overcoming Adversity Together (BOAT), in partnership with the Belchertown Recreation Department, invites families and community members to join “Making Waves: A Summer of Prevention” for a free outdoor showing of Dolphin Tale on Saturday, Aug. 15 at Belchertown Town Beach.

Parking opens at 7 p.m., and the movie begins at 8 p.m. Families are encouraged to bring their favorite chairs and enjoy an evening together at the beach. Free popcorn will be available, and the concession stand will be open.

Prevention starts with connection

While Dolphin Tale is a family movie about an injured dolphin and the people who come together to help her, its themes reach

well beyond the story on screen. The film highlights resilience, perseverance, friendship, family, mentorship, compassion, and the importance of having a supportive community—all important components of prevention.

“Prevention isn’t just about preventing substance use or mental health challenges,” said Kris Hoag, Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Program Director/BOAT Co-Chair “It is also about creating communities where people feel connected, supported, and valued. Events like this give families an opportunity to spend time together, build relationships, and experience healthy, positive recreation.”

BOAT recognizes that substance use disorder and mental health conditions are public health issues. The organization supports and imple-

Please see **BOAT**, page 8

Belchertown has many openings on boards, committees

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown Select Board is looking for citizens interested in sharing their expertise by serving on a Town Board/Committee. If you have time and are interested in getting involved in your Town’s activities, please submit a letter of interest to: The Office of the Select Board and Town Manager, The Finnerty House, One South Main Street, P.O. Box 670, Belchertown, MA 01007 or by email to selectboard@belchertown.org (unless otherwise indicated below). You may also submit a volunteer form on our website: <https://www.belchertown.org/374/Volunteer>

All vacancies are posted until filled.

The Town wishes to fill the following vacancies:

Agricultural Commission: The Town wishes to fill one (1) associate member seat on the Agricultural Commission. This commission promotes agricultural-based economic opportunities; preserves, revitalizes and sustains the Belchertown agricultural industries, and encourages the pursuit of agriculture as a career opportunity and lifestyle.

Conservation Commission: The Town of Belchertown is currently seeking to fill a vacancy on the Conservation Commission. The Commission is a volunteer board that reviews projects that fall under jurisdiction of the Wetlands Protection Act and local Bylaw. The position requires attending meetings every second and fourth Monday of the month, a basic comprehension of the local, state, and federal wetlands regulations, and occasional

site visits. Qualified candidates have also demonstrated an interest, expertise, or experience in environmental protection. Commissioners must also have a willingness to attend training sessions, gain the relevant knowledge in a timely fashion, remain current, and generally make the necessary time commitment. If interested, please send a letter of interest to the Conservation Department at conservation@belchertown.org. Any questions call the office at 413-323-0405.

There are also two vacancies for associate members, who although are not voting members, they can gain knowledge and experience and could be elevated to a voting member in the future

Energy and Sustainability Committee: The Town wishes to fill a full member vacancy on the Energy and Sustainability Committee. Its purpose is to develop and recommend sound energy and sustainability programs and policies for the Town. Energy relates to the fuel choices we make for buildings, vehicles, and industry. Sustainability means meeting our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Visit their webpage at www.belchertown.org.

Family Center Committee: The Belchertown Family Center Committee is seeking passionate, service-minded individuals to fill an active voting member position. This committee is charged with oversight of the Belchertown Family Center and its support programming for families, and is actively working to create a breadth of resources for our community.

Memorial Committee: The Town wishes to fill a vacancy on the Memorial Committee. This committee ensures placement, care and maintenance to all town memorials and monuments on property owned or maintained by the Town of Belchertown.

MVP Housing Trust: The Town of Belchertown is seeking three (3) residents to serve as Trustees on the Belchertown Affordable and Resilient Housing Trust Fund Board of Trustees, alongside one (1) member of the Belchertown Selectboard and one (1) member of the Belchertown Planning Board.

This is a public charitable trust for the purpose of creating, preserving, rehabilitating and supporting community housing as defined in Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44B, for the benefit of low- and moderate-income households in the Town of Belchertown.

As a Trustee, you’ll have the opportunity to make a lasting impact on the community by helping preserve safe, stable housing for Belchertown homeowners. Trustees work together to establish policies, evaluate funding opportunities, build community partnerships, and guide the Trust’s efforts to help homeowners maintain and improve their existing homes.

Once the board has been appointed, the frequency, dates, and times of meetings will be determined by the Board of Trustees.

Applicants are required to be residents of Belchertown, and those who possess professional or personal experience in affordable hous-



ing, real estate, banking, finance, architecture, climate resilience or social services are desirable.

For more information on the Belchertown Affordable and Resilient Housing Trust, please visit <https://www.belchertown.org/786/Affordable-and-Resilient-Housing-Trust>

Scholarship Committee: The Town wishes to fill the Home Schooling Representative seat on the Scholarship Committee. If you are interested in serving in this capacity, please submit a letter of interest.

Taxation Aid Committee: The Town is looking to fill one (1) anticipated vacancy on the Taxation Aid Committee. This is a one-year appointed volunteer position which will consist of the Chair of the Board of Assessors, the Treasurer/Collector, and three residents from Town with the purpose of defraying the real estate taxes of elderly and disabled persons of low income and which shall be funded by voluntary donations made by taxpayers through an earmark on their real estate and motor vehicle excise tax bills.

Zoning Board of Appeals: The Town wishes to fill two (2) openings for associate member seats on the Zoning Board of Appeals. The ZBA is responsible for hearing and deciding on applications for Special Permits, Variances and Appeals from decisions of the Zoning Enforcement Officer/Building Inspector.

Friends of Clapp Memorial Library holding \$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, CDs and vinyl records 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 hundreds of puzzles from 300 to 1000+ pieces and so many DVDs and CDs, we didn’t count them. If you are a fan of vinyl records, we have several boxes filled with some great hits.

So many of you have expressed regrets about

not having a book sale this year. The Trustees and the Friends of CML are working diligently on the basement renovations, with the plan to start having book sales again in 2027.

In October we will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Friends of the Clapp Memorial Library. Plans are

underway to have a smaller version “Like New” book sale in the Activity Room at that time. 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.

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SCHOOL

BHS '25-26 fourth quarter honor roll announced

Grade 12
High Honors
Edith Audette, Olivia Bailey, Mackenzie Burch, Canyon Charron, Josalyn Currier, Ryan Gould, Graham Guardenfield, Avigail Heroux, Laila Hurlburt, Brooklyn Keeler, Ethan Lamore, Hannah Mandeville, Nathan Marino, Miles McNamara, Isabel Moreau, Brandon O'Connor, Aleksandra Randall, Camryn Scoon, Arabella Smith, Sam Smolinski, Kiera Struzziero, and Gabriella Vazquez.

Grade 12
Honors
Abigail Almeida, Emma Almeida, Rachel Baltazar, Jaden Bean, Brian Burns, Mya Carpin, Lily Carr, Sofia Cofone, Luke Dudek, Lydia Edds, Jake Gormely, Mason Gualberto, Izabella Haggerty, Jillian Harper, Allison Harris, Jordan Kalish, Alexa Karabetos, Alexis Kessler, Emma Kornbluth, Collin Laragy, Molly Mazzaferro, Mya Philpott, Lily Potter, Austin Raymer, Donald Rogers, Jiovanka Rosa-Cortez, Sofia Santos, Mersad Sharifi Torbatti, Gabriella Smith, Abigail Stevens, and Lyla-Rae Williams.

Grade 11
High Honors
Jonathan Alves, Hayden Bressette, Cooper Chianciola, Avery Cooper,

Avery Cote, Mason DeStefano, Addison-Rose DiBona, Grace Duchon, Madison Howes, Natalie Jordan, Sokaltida Kan, Dory Keefe, Alexander Land-Kazlauskas, Owen Laurenzo, Cian Lindsay, Sean Lindsay, Charlotte MacKenzie, Isaiah Matthey, Sophia Mitus, Jezelle Morisseau, Jocelyn Patten, Piper Patten, Madelynn Perry, Racquel Pogoda, Alexa Radner, Troy Robinson, Elise Roggie, Morgan Sambor, Miles Schneider, Dustin Shnayder, Lily Tellier, Payton Tucker, and Gianna Zenon.

Grade 11
Honors
Tyler Boisjolie, Kaiya Cavanaugh, Claire Corbin, Gavin Couchon, Paige Dias, Drake Dragon, Ryleigh Fine, Charles Fisher, Delaney Floyd, Jacob Gladu, Austin Hammon, Andre Jarry, Brandon Johannes, Morghan Litz, Aubrey McCain, Gina Moson, Ifeanyichukwu Nebedum, Tahlia Nesbitt, Madelyn Philpott, Lia Pikul, Mason Pobieglo, Ella Ricker, Lila Roy, Fatim Siri, Danny Toledo, Ryan Toner, Lelia VanBuren, Isabella Vozzella, Emily Waller, Henry Walter, Maya Whitney, and Mya Wojtczak.

Grade 10
High Honors
Myra Ablicki, Ameyo

Ampiah-Bonney, Thomas Chien, Ethan Davis, Peyton Dias, Rachel Dorman, Kylie Ferreira, Brennan Griffin, Matthew Harrington, Sakura Hartsfield, Salem Hubbard, Aubrey Klingensmith, Owen Kurzeski, Ryan Lacroix, Andrew Lambert, Samantha Letzeisen, Joy Lian, Cassidy MacLean, Grace Perron, Niko Pisano, Alexa Raymer, Adryan Roy, Kina Roy, Ava Swiatlowski, William Verrochi, Madeline Williams, and John Yoon.

Grade 10
Honors
Camilla Adamczyk, Harper Bean, Bridget Breton, Kaidin Brodeur, Ashlyn Carey, Jason Carlson, Haylee Catyb, Arda Cayan, Jameson Derouin, Lacey Douillard, Benjamin Dudek, Charlie Goldman, Lucas Haluch, Carter Hampson, Scott Holmes, Landon Honeywell, Cooper Honstetter, Serena Jones, Nathan Leblond, Braedan Longe, Sokoldara Mao, Nick McArdle, Jocelyn McMahon, Quinn McNamara, Ronan Mosher, Henry Mueller, Brody Pope, Christian Reda, Kayla Roy, Kian Roy, Miles Sheldon, Angela Vanderpuije, Owen Wallace, Margaret Wheeler, and Avery Willemain.

Grade 9
High Honors
Matthew Almeida, Cecilia

Bermudez, Mary DiBona, Shannon Fuller, Jackson Goodsell, Zoey Hale, Helaine Holt, Asher Johnson-Jones, MaryRose Johnson-Jones, Madison Lacroix, Harper Laurenzo, Piper Laurenzo, Josephine Lian, Ryan Longe, Amalie Martins, Charles Maurer, Lucy Nolan, Jada Okyere Baffour, Janice Okyere Baffour, Natalie Parent, Cora Podraza, Annalie Roggie, Kamila Santiago, Ava Stelmokas, Ella Stelmokas, Noah Turgeon, Lukas Versace, and Bradford Yacek.

Grade 9
Honors
Linnea Anderson, Gianna Boisjolie, Adilyn Bottari, Ashlynn Brunell, Kylee Burnham, Sage Cartel, Quinten Chen, Nolan Chianciola, Connor Cormier, Charles Cozine, Jillian Carrier, Tovah DelPrete, Hannah Fillion, Michael Fontaine, Patrick Gibson, Vivienza Haggerty, Callie Hevey, Greta Kristensen, Nathaniel Lewis, Kayleigh Malone, Lily Mann, Eleanor Mazzaferro, Annabelle Morra, Logan Motta, Hunter Neiford, Joshua Page, Charlotte Perry, William Polanco, Kyla Riley, Kierstyn Shaink, Ashley Siri, Brayden Slattery, Tyler Stahl, Shay Teixeira, Lucy Toner, Alivia Vozzella, and Lydia Wentworth.

Chicopee St. to receive work

GRANBY – Road resurfacing on Chicopee St. between School St. and Carver St. Work will commence the week of Aug. 18. Please seek alternate routes if possible. Roadway detours and/or closures are anticipated. Residents may experience short-term inconvenience/ delays due to construction operations.

LATE POLICY from page 1
Jordan stated the amount of community service matched the amount of total infractions. At 15 tardies, however, she mentioned they would “lock into a Saturday school” punishment for the student, as well as for 20 tardiness marks. Saturday school blocks are four hours in length and Jordan mentioned if the student was unable to attend Saturday school, they were instead offered an

after-school make up class. However, Jordan noticed in those cases, students intentionally skipped classes to avoid the Saturday school punishment. “Interestingly enough, we had some parents say ‘we can’t do a Saturday school for whatever reason.’ Maybe they’re away,” Jordan said as she recalled parental frustrations. “Okay, what else can we do? We’re at this point, we’re beyond five hours. It’s

progressive discipline. And parents started suggesting ‘well, here we go in-house.’” Jordan said her school didn’t want to do in-house suspensions, as the students would be “with us all day” and “that really impacts our day.” “We really do try to make a concerted effort to work with families,” Jordan said. “Believe it or not, it’s really the last thing we want to be doing.”

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OPINION

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor

Is the Medicare Part B premium a percentage of our Social Security amount?

Dear Rusty:

I have a simple question: Is the amount we pay for Medicare Part B premium a percent of our Social Security amount we receive?

Signed: Curious

Dear Curious:

Your Medicare Part B premium is not based on a percentage of your monthly Social Security benefit amount.

Medicare Part B premiums are set in October of each year by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and are based upon anticipated total costs of the Medicare program in the forthcoming year.

Generally speaking, Medicare Part B enrollee premiums are expected to offset about 25% of CMS' anticipated total Medicare Part B costs; the rest is borne by the Federal Government.

So, when CMS estimates Medicare program costs for the upcoming year, they also look at the number of anticipated Part B enrollees. They then divide 25% of total anticipated Part B program costs by the number of expected Part B enrollees, resulting in the "standard" Medicare Part B premium for next year.

For 2026, the standard Part B premium amount is \$202.90. The standard premium for 2027 will be announced in October 2026 and will likely be different.

It's important to understand also that not everyone pays the "standard" Part B premium. Some lower income seniors may pay less because of the so-called "hold harmless provision," and some higher income folks may pay more than the "standard" monthly Part B premium because of a provision called Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount.

The "hold harmless provision" says that monthly Social Security benefits cannot decrease as a result of a Medicare premium increase, so if the annual SS Cost Of Living Adjustment is insufficient to offset any increase to the standard Part B premium, then the SS beneficiary may pay a smaller Part B premium amount so that their SS benefit doesn't decrease (note there are exceptions to this rule).

Conversely, those with a higher "provisional income" (an IRS definition), may pay more than the standard Medicare

Part B premium. That's because of a provision known as IRMAA, which adds a supplemental amount on top of the standard Medicare Part B premium.

IRMAA supplement amounts are determined using a sliding scale to define the required higher Part B premium for each income level category and IRMAA will cause the Part B premium to be more than the standard premium amount.

For those with exceptionally high incomes, the Part B premium can be as much as \$690 per month.

For your information, income reported to the IRS two years ago is used to determine if an individual is subject to IRMAA for the forthcoming year.

The reason for this is timing: when next year's Part B premium is determined in October of each current year, the IRS has processed all tax returns for the preceding year but doesn't yet have individual income for the current year.

Thus, they must use a person's income from October of the preceding year to determine who will pay the standard Part B premium next year, and who will pay a higher IRMAA amount.

And just to complete this picture, you should be aware that IRMAA also applies to Medicare Part D premiums. And that means that those with higher incomes who are affected by IRMAA for Part B will also pay a higher Medicare Part D premium.

Medicare Part D is private insurance coverage for prescription drugs). But none of this is related to your Social Security benefit 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.



Midsummer questions for the Garden Lady

Karen, who has a vegetable garden in Hardwick, is concerned over her tomatoes cracking and is asking the Garden Lady for some advice.

"With all the rainstorms we've had, one measuring over 5 inches last week, my cherry tomatoes, and even some of my paste types are starting to crack. Is this a normal occurrence and if so, is there anything I can do to prevent this from happening in the future?"

This is a timely question, Karen, and one that I am sure a lot of readers can relate to. I know I can.

It's always exciting when the tomatoes start ripening and then this happens.

Fruit cracking around the stem, either in rings or radiating downward is caused by overwatering; we or Mother Nature can be at fault. This year I will blame her for some of it.

A week ago many gardeners in the area received an inch or more of rain in two separate deluges. Keep in mind that most veggies require about an inch per week.

Adjust your irrigation to accommodate for the excess.

Mulches do well to moderate soil moisture; if you mulch, you can water less often. If cracking ends up being a big problem for you, consider scouring the seed catalogs for varieties that are resistant to it.

As long as the cracks are fresh, and haven't begun to show mold, I use the fruit

anyway. Watering issues can also affect other plants. Sometimes gardeners complain that their cucumbers look funny, bent in the shape of an apostrophe.

And yes, they are safe to eat.

Some people comment that the berries with this disorder are a little tough or flavorless. It doesn't really bother me.

Moldy berries would look furry and the area would be raised.

Bill is growing basil for the first time and he had this question for the Garden Lady: "My basil was slow to take off. I came back from vacation and it is in flower. While the bees seem to enjoy the flowers, I was hoping to harvest some of the leaves. Do you have any advice as to how to get it out of flower mode and into leaf production?"

Yes, I do. It involves giving the basil a hair cut. Sure enough, your plant needs to be rid of those flowers.

Once you do that, provide some nitrogen to get them greened up and growing. This could be by the addition of a little blood meal at the base of the plant or a foliar feed of fish emulsion or compost tea.

In no time your plant will rebound. Just be sure to keep those flowers trimmed off.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 32 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line



My daughter, Paula Ouimette, took this photo of a juvenile brown headed cowbird watching her run laps with her dog, Jo Jo.

The young cowbird perched on a fence near the driveway of the elementary school in Hardwick.

My daughter used the Seek app by iNaturalist to get the identification. It stayed there for about 20 minutes before flying off.

She said there were no other cowbirds around, but cowbirds lay their eggs in nests of birds smaller than then in hopes they will raise their young.

Obviously, this young cowbird looks well feed. I wonder what bird raised it, often at the expense of their own offspring.

Warblers and vireos are the most common cowbird hosts. Their nestlings weight less than half as much as the cowbird nestling.

Some species will either push the cowbird egg out of their nest or leave that nest and start another nest.

The brown-headed cowbird is a stocky blackbird. The females do not build a nest and instead produce up to three dozen eggs per summer.

They lay the eggs in the nests of other bird species and let them raise their young, know as brood parasitism.

Brown-headed cowbirds are

native to North America, but many people consider them a nuisance bird because of their parenting style.

Cowbirds destroy the eggs and young of smaller songbirds and have been implicated in the decline of several endangered species, including Kirtland's warbler and black-capped vireo.

Adult male cowbirds have glossy black bodies and brown heads, hence their name. In poor lighting, the male's head looks brown.

Please see BACKYARD, page 7

Turley Publications Letters to the Editor Policy

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

Turley Election Policy

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

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

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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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GARDEN from page 1

“It could be kind of easy to grow food anywhere, right,” another participant said as they mused about why food scarcity persisted in the area. The five youths participating in the program this year demonstrated thoughtfulness, determination and an admirable kit of leadership skills. The participants and the program advocate for Belchertown as they continue to showcase the best of what the town has to offer. Belchertown biology teacher Louise Levy stated when she was “looking for a dose of hope,” all she had to do was “looking towards these youth to find it.”

The Belchertown School Garden and Pollinator Garden need volunteers. Interested parties may contact btowngarden@gmail.com to get involved. The school garden is also looking for volunteers, with a target of two to four families from both CHCS and Swift River Elementary. They hope to also contact a few Belchertown High School students looking to take the lead in their Civic action project, which is a new high school graduation require-



July 27 ... a drought and lots of weeds equals a small but fabulous harvest.



It was hot by the time the harvesting and weeding were done, but the smiles were a genuine reflection of a job well done. SUBMITTED PHOTOS

ment within the region. “We hope this will smooth the way for educators at all three adjacent schools to see the School Garden for what it is,” Levy said. “A fabulous curriculum resource that is free, full of opportunities and a short distance from any classroom.”



Levy and Ambassadors with the harvest on July 27.

Granby library set for fall book sale

GRANBY – Book lovers. Bargain Hunters. The Friends of the Granby Free Public Library will host their annual Month-Long Fall Book Sale during the month of September in the Community Room of the Library. You will be able to choose from a large assortment of used and like-new hardcover, 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 Sept. 1 to 30. Starting Aug. 1, the Library will be 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, dictionaries, thesauri, 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 Aug. 27. Thank you for your support! The library is located at 297 E State St in Granby MA 01033.

Church hosting summer event

GRANBY – Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Granby will be having their Summerfest on Sunday, Aug. 23 from 12 to 4 p.m. Chicken dinner is \$15 and includes a half bbq chicken, baked potato and corn on the cob, as well as des-

sert and bottled water. Hamburgers and hot dogs will also be available. Raffles prizes including \$500, \$250, \$100. Raffle baskets, bake sale, kids games, prizes, lottery trees and more. Fun for the whole family.

Ware Grange Fair book program coming up

WARE – The Ware Grange Fair program books are here. Plan your exhibits by checking out the categories of exhibits in the fair program book. Books are available online at waregrange.org or to receive a book by mail call 413-284-1135 or email waregrange164@gmail.

com. Exhibitors may enter in a variety of categories including vegetables, fruits, eggs, cut flowers, baked goods, fancywork, arts and crafts, and photography. Plan your exhibits now for the fair which takes place Aug. 28 and 29. See the Ware Grange website for schedule and details.

BACKYARD from page 6

The female is brown with the head lighter brown than the body. She has fine streaking on the belly/ Both sexes have thick, conical bills and black eyes. They are 7.5 to 8.7 inches long. They feed on the ground and can be seen walking behind livestock to eat what their hooves stir up.

They are found in open habitats such as fields, pastures, meadows, forest edges and lawns. They also perch on a prominent branch high in a tree. They are primarily seed-eaters and insectivores, adapting their diet based on availability and season, often gleaned from the ground or by following grazing animals.

They will come to feeders as well and prefer sunflower seeds and millet. Other Hardwick birds My daughter, Paula, saw lots of bluebirds, swallows, robins and one hen turkey with a poult. She said there were probably more underneath the hen turkey, but only one was brave enough to come out.

Red tail hawks I have several red tail hawks in Barre, New Braintree and Oakham. Recently, one flew off and the sunshine showed off the hawks red tail. They are often seen by freshly mowed fields in hopes of featching some rodents, who stand out on a newly cut field. Great blue heron

Long Pond in Rutland is a popular spot to find a great blue heron “fishing” in the shallows along Route 122. Meal worms I continue to have catbirds come for the mealworms I leave them on the picnic table. The other day I heard a catbird make its meowing call. Males use the call to establish territory and females

for communication and alarm purposes. Raven Recently, the common raven flew overhead making its gurgling croak. I could hear it, but I was unable to see it with all the trees. People may report a bird sighting by emailing edowne@turley.com or calling or texting 774-262-5882.

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Residents enjoyed a night of food and fun on local school grounds.

NIGHT OUT from page 1

opportunity to bridge the communication gap between police officers and the residents they serve.

“The fire department really stepped up their game this year,” Pacunas said. “They had the fire demonstration with the sprinklers in the house. They had a demo with sprinklers and without.”

Other highlights included a canine demonstration, a rope course created by the local Belchertown Boy Scouts troop and a ladder truck. A slew of vendors populated the parking lot, from town departments like the Conservation Commission to local banks. The festivities were complete with a local tribute band who played classic tunes throughout the night’s activities.

“It means a lot,” Chief Pacunas said. “It means that we have a good relationship



The event even included a stock car for public viewing.

with the other town departments; with our community. Community supports us.”

In the same community spirit, Chief Pacunas acknowledged Patrol Officer Draine Colon-Rivera as the main organizer behind the event. A second-generation police officer, Rivera reported her love for family outreach stemmed from her mother’s

ability to connect with “little kids.”

“I didn’t know a lot of English when I came here,” Rivera said as she reflected on her time as a youth counselor prior to putting on the badge. “So I started in the Boys and Girls’ Club. To be honest, those little kids helped me so much. They inspired me so much. They

said I was their role model when they were my role model.”

Having been in the force for only four and a half years, Rivera attributes the event’s growing success to both her background and her passion for community outreach. Unsatisfied with how small the event was prior to her arrival, Rivera took it upon herself to make it a town-wide festival.

“I love trying to make the community come together,” Rivera said. “So I said, let’s try to mimic what the other PDs are able to do. Three years ago, we initiated this and it just kept flowing and, as you can see, it’s getting bigger every year.”

Rivera mentioned Belchertown was getting recognized by nearby towns for their National Night Outs, evidenced by the Amherst Police Department having their own booth. The event

success, according to Rivera, is the extensive planning done by the department. She stated creating the event required year-round planning, which started as early as the day after.

“Once this ends, I send out a little feedback review for everyone because I love hearing feedback,” Rivera said. “That’s what makes us better. I’ll get that feedback around October and I’ll get reading on it.”

Though the Night Out is already very large, Rivera has ambition to expand it even further. As she reflected on the night’s success, her only dream was to make it grow even more.

“I just want to get this filled up for the community,” Rivera said. “To get more resources out here. If you have a business that you want to advertise...come on here, get your name out there and let’s work together.”

BOAT from page 3

ments a proactive approach through preventative education, harm reduction strategies, reducing stigma, and ease of access to treatment.

Building Protective Factors Through Community

Prevention works best when communities invest in the conditions that help people thrive. Positive relationships, supportive adults, meaningful activities, healthy coping skills, and a strong sense of belonging can all serve as protective factors, particularly for young people.

The evening’s themes include:

Resilience: Learning that setbacks do not have to define our future.

Connection: Understanding the importance of supportive family, friends, mentors, and community members.

Healthy coping: Finding constructive ways to manage challenges and adversity.

Belonging: Creating spaces where people feel welcomed, included, and supported.

Positive recreation: Providing substance-free opportunities for families and young people to enjoy time together.

Compassion and reducing stigma: Recognizing that everyone experiences challenges and that asking for help is a strength.

“BOAT believes prevention is something we do with our community, not simply for our community,” said Alene Motta, DFC Community Engagement Coordinator. “By bringing people together, creating opportunities for connection, and making prevention part of everyday community life, we can help build a stronger and healthier Belchertown.”

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By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW— Riding a flawless 13-0-0 mark, the top-seeded Granby Lady Rams rolled into the Pioneer Valley Summer Soccer League B Division finals, eager to bring home the championship trophy in a showdown with second-seeded Hopkins Academy.

The championship match was tied at 1-1 when Hopkins Academy's

Nora Hanna scored the winning goal eight minutes into the first 10-minute overtime period giving her team a 2-1 win at Lusitano Stadium in Ludlow on Saturday, Aug. 1.

"This loss is a little bit frustrating, especially since we had an undefeated record," said Kalli White, who was a co-captain of the Granby summer league team, along with McKenna Zumbruski. "We had several scoring chances in today's game."

The two squads also faced each other in the last two Western Mass. Class D

championship matches.

The 2024 contest was scoreless until the shootout where the Lady Rams pulled out a 4-2 win. Granby won last year's game by the score of 2-0.

They also met during the PVSSL regular season in the middle of July. Granby posted a 5-0 victory.

It was Hopkins (11-1-1), who also had a few players from Amherst High School, only set back of the summer league season.

"They were missing a couple of players the first time that we played them," White

added. "We really wanted to win today's game."

The other players listed on the Granby roster are Marcela Tapia, McKenna Cudworth, Bri-

Please see **RAMS**, page 10



Eleanor Szlosek watches her pass head up the field.



Lily Los competes against an opponent for possession.



Goalie Meredith Bartosz leaps for save opportunity.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Mount Carmel captured the PVSSL Men's title this year.

Mount Carmel takes Men's PVSSL title

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—Anthony Bourget was an assistant boys' soccer coach under longtime varsity coach John O'Keefe at Minnechaug Regional High School before stepping down at the end of last season.

Bourget was also the head coach of Villa FC, which captured the last two Pioneer Valley Summer Soccer League men's championship titles. Villa FC changed sponsors before the start of the 2026 summer league season and are now known as Mount Carmel FC.

Mason Perham is one of the former Minnechaug soccer players listed on the Mount Carmel roster.

Perham scored a second half goal, which helped top-seeded Mount Carmel

FC win the championship title once again with a crisp 2-0 win over second-seeded Rumbleseat before a large crowd at Lusitano Stadium in Ludlow on Friday, July 31.

"We've won the last two men's championship titles with Villa, and this is our first one with Mount Carmel," Bourget said. "Winning the championship game is something that we expect to do every year. It was a hard fought battle tonight. Rumbleseat played very well against us."

Mount Carmel FC, who finished the PVSSL regular season with a 10-1-0 record, defeated fourth-seeded CF Ardor, 2-0, in the semifinals.

Rumbleseat, who also lost to Mount Carmel during the regular season, entered the playoffs with a 9-1-1 record. They advanced into the

Please see **MEN**, page 10



Deandrae Brown dribbles away from a defender.

West Side Sports Shop grabs ladies title

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—Since joining the prestigious Pioneer Valley Summer Soccer League in 2021, West Side Sports Shop has claimed the women's championship title five times.

West Side Sports Shop entered this year's playoffs as the fourth seed. They posted a 2-0 shutout victory over second-seeded W. Mass Xtremes in the women's finals held at historic Lusitano Stadium in Ludlow, last Friday night.

"We might be the fourth seed, but we played very well in the playoffs," said West Side Sports Shop head coach Chris Andre. "We lost to the Xtremes twice during the regular season."

The only year that West Side Sports Shop didn't take home the championship trophy was in 2024. They beat top seeded Here for Beer in the finals a year ago.

"We've set a high standard here," Andre added. "A number of these players have been playing for me since

Please see **WEST SIDE**, page 11



TURLEY PHOTO BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Sydney Mercier sends a free kick away.

SPORTS

Silk takes open modified race

WINCHESTER, NH - Ron Silk thought it was Independence Day all over again Aug. 1 at Monadnock Speedway. The July 4 winner of \$7,600 for topping that night's Open Modified main event, took home another \$10,000 Saturday by winning the night's 100-lap Dash For Cash headline race.

The Nutmeg State star, a two-time NASCAR Whelen Modified series champion, is no stranger to victory lane at the high-banked oval. A summer ago, he won a Whelen 200-lapper at Monadnock, while this summer he was victorious in two of the three Open Modified 100s at the fast quarter-mile.

But Silk's two Open Modified victories weren't enough to place him at the top for the overall series championship. That honor went to Bennington, NH second-generation star Matt Kimball, who cut his racing teeth here on the high banks in the oval's youth division Young Guns.

Kimball's spot atop the three-race points parade netted him \$5,000, which, when added to his Saturday fourth-place purse money and event bonuses, sent him home with close to \$10,000, not quite as much as Silk, but a still hefty pay day.

In other action Saturday on the high banks, Daniel Petrowicz scored his first career victory in the Limited Late Models, Jon Fultz made it two on the year in the Mini Stocks, and Jimmy Zellman won a thriller in the Pure Stocks. Young Gun Dylan Stati won his track-high eleventh 2026 feature race Saturday, while New England Dwarf Car ace Ryan Carman had to twice take the lead en route to his second win in six days, his Saturday win following a Sabbath Day score at Hudson.

A top-12 redraw put Silk on the pole for the night's Country 93.5 FM Open Modified Dash For Cash 100-lap main event. Blasting off at the green, Silk led the first two go-rounds before twice trading the early lead with Kyle Bonsignore en route to holding the top spot for 83 laps as he dashed off to win with ease. The big defining moment in this one happened on a lap 56 restart.

Repeating his July 4 strategy, Silk led nine other cars to the pits for fresh rubber, handing the top spot to Brad Zahensky. Back under green, a wild mess unfolded as the tight pack charged out of turn two.

Kimball and Brian Robie entered Saturday's 100-lapper tied for the top spot atop the three-race series. When the dust had settled along the backstretch on lap 55, Bosignore and Robie were amongst the casualties. Kimball, then at mid-pack, started counting, all the way up to \$5,000.

With Silk sailing off into the night to win with ease, steady Joey Cipriano came home second. Anthony Nocella, with Kimball at his bumper, took home the bronze metal hardware. Zahensky's choice to stay on the track under caution netted him seventh, while Robie's promising start fizzled to a 14th place finish.

Daniel Petrowicz started up front in the nightcap Twin State Truck Services Limited Late Model main event and never looked back as he sped off to his first career win in front of the night's huge Dash For Cash speedway crowd.

Robert Hagar had the fastest car in the field, closing a third-lap deficit to finish four lengths behind Petrowicz for his second runner-up showing of the weekend. Top points man JD Stockwell, a seven-time 2026 winner, had a rare quiet night, getting up for third, just ahead of Hillary Renaud.

Popular Pat Houle led the first dozen laps of the Keene Towing and Recovery Mini Stock feature, then giving way to rocketman Jon Fultz. Once in front, the Bay State ace was unstoppable, winning with ease ahead of number two point man Craig Chaffee.

Houle held strong to finish a season best third, with former track champ Louie Mahar fourth, and Tim Paquette fifth. Paquette's top-five run kept him atop the 2026 points parade.

Maya Bell was the early leader in the Brattleboro Towing and Recovery Pure Stock 25-lapper, then giving way to Dylan Zullo, who, in turn, surrendered the top spot to four-time winner Michael Yeaton, zooming off in quest of win number five. But this one wasn't over yet.

A lap- 24 restart sat Yeaton and Jimmy Zellman side-by-side as the event's defining moment unfolded. The top two banged and clanged out of turn four at the drop of the green, sending Yeaton to the pits and Zellman to the lead. The Bay State blaster held strong to edge top points man rookie Josh Bringham for the win. Kyle Begos, from way back in row nine, charged up for third, with Markus O'Neil and Zullo completing the top five.

Ryan Carman led twice in the New England Dwarf Car feature, taking the top spot the second time with a lap-21 pass of Tom Harwood as they blasted out of turn two. Harwood held strong for second, and Cody Hodgdon was solid in third.

Dylan Stati continued his dominance of the Doug's Auto Body Young Guns Saturday, romping to his eleventh win of the summer. Maeve Barry was second, and Mason Bezio earned the third-place trophy.

Rocket to visit T-Birds for home opener

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds announced today that the club will host the Laval Rocket as they open the home-ice portion of its 2026-27 season on Saturday, October 10 at 6:05 p.m. inside the MassMutual Center.

Steve Ott returns behind the bench for the Thunderbirds for his first full season at the helm. After joining the T-Birds for his head coaching debut on Jan. 23, the former Blues associate coach led Springfield to a 19-13-2-0 record down the stretch, bringing the T-Birds from the bottom of the AHL standings into a playoff position.

From there, Ott helped orchestrate a pair of stunning upsets. Springfield erased a 1-0 series deficit to win two straight and eliminate the Charlotte Checkers in the First Round before completing the biggest upset in Calder Cup Playoff history with a four-game dispatching of the Providence Bruins in the Atlantic Division Semifinals. The Thunderbirds had finished the regular season 38 points behind the Macgregor Kilpatrick Trophy-winning Bruins.

RAMS from page 9

Anne Kraus, Sofia Marsh, Brenna Moreno, Makayla Dennis, Margaret Healey, Sophia Labonte, Caroline Koziol, Olivia Heroux, Emily Durham, Kara White, Meredith Bartosz, Sophia Press, Eleanor Szlosek, Kaelynn Slapski, Sophia White, Lily Los, Savannah Kraus, Leighton Ladass, Madison Scheinost, Carli Zobka, Kaylee Vincelette, and Alexa Nai.

"We have a bunch of talented soccer players on this team," Kalli White said. "We're hoping to win the state title after making it to the final four last year. If it does happen, it'll be a dream come true for us."

Granby advanced into the PVSSL B-Division finals after defeating the eighth-seeded Falcons, 6-0, in the quarterfinals and another 3-0 shut-out against Frontier in the semifinals.

Granby took a 1-0 half-time lead when Healey blasted a free kick from the top of the box into the right corner of the net. Hanna scored the equalizer with unassisted goal four minutes into the second half.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Sofia Marsh tries to turn play around.

Savannah Kraus advances up the field.

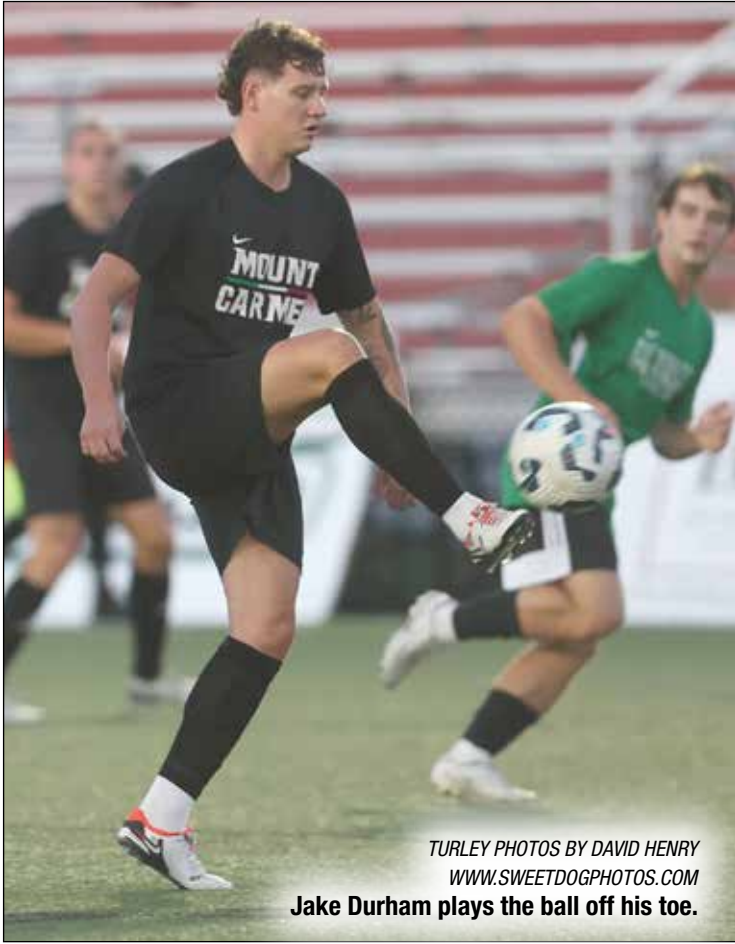
The PVSSL B-Division finals was scoreless until late in the first half.

Granby took a 1-0 half-time lead when Healey blasted a free kick from the top of the box into the right corner of the net. Hanna scored the equalizer with unassisted goal four minutes into the second half.

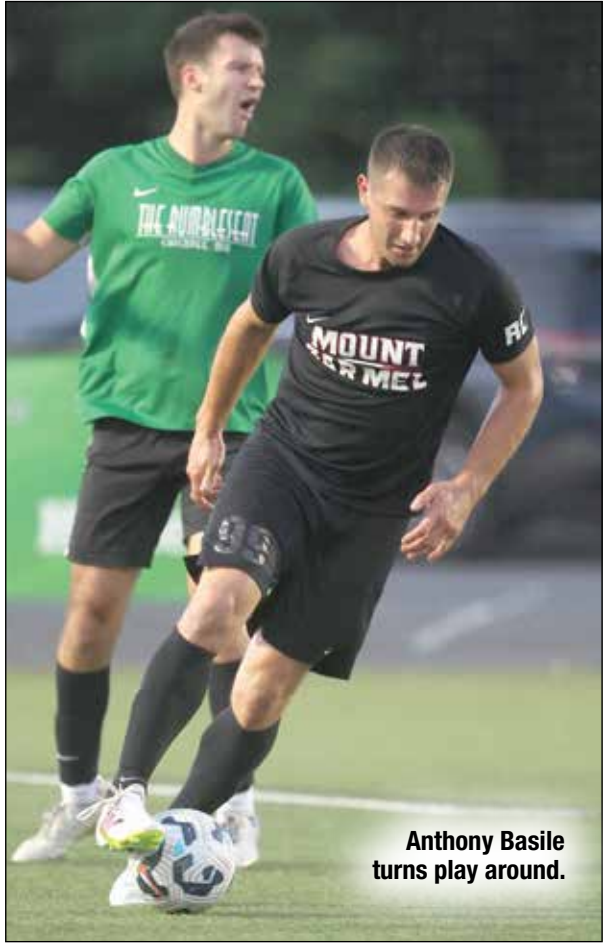
With a little more than ten minutes remaining in regulation, a shot attempt from Kalli White clanged off the crossbar.

Kraus and Zumbruski also had shots on goal, but the score remained tied until Hanna netted the game winning goal on a deflected shot in overtime.

Following the championship match, Hanna was given the M.V.P. award.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Jake Durham plays the ball off his toe.



Anthony Basile turns play around.

MEN from page 9

men's finals for the first time in more than ten years after knocking off the third-seeded KO Elites FC, 2-1, in the semifinals.

"This is the first time that we've made the finals in many years, and it was a fun game tonight," said Kyle Giroud, who was an outstanding three-sport athlete at Chicopee Comp. "It's always a great time playing in this league and I'm looking forward to playing again next year."

Giroud is also a member of the Skidmore College men's soccer team.

The men's finals was scoreless at halftime.

Mount Carmel broke the ice four minutes into the second half.

The scoring play began with a crossing pass from Joao Miranda to Deandrae Brown, who fired a shot from the top of the box past Rumbleseat goalie Luke Theroux.

Miranda was selected as the M.V.P. following the match.

About ten minutes later, Perham scored a goal, which was assisted by Brown.



Shane Sewell sends a pass away.

"It just felt awesome to score a goal in the championship game," Perham said. "We took control of the game at the start of the second half. We had another great season."

Perham has been a member of Villa/Mount Carmel for the past four years.

"I'm very happy for Mason," Bourget said. "He began playing with us the year after he graduated from Minnechaug. We also have a couple of other Minnechaug players on our team. We have a bunch of talented players on this team."

The other former

Minnechaug soccer players listed on the Mount Carmel roster are Kyle Atkin, Nick Cianflone, Chase Henderson, and Cam Rigney.

The members of the Mount Carmel FC are hoping to make it a four-peat in the summer of 2027.



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SPORTS

The Valley Blue Sox season comes to end

HOLYOKE — The Valley Blue Sox’s bats finally awoke at home during Game 2 of the 2026 NECBL Playoffs Opening Round on Aug. 2. While the Blue Sox ultimately lost 14-5 to the Sanford Mainers, head coach John Raiola says his team has a lot to be pleased with.

“[As a coach] you try to provide the motivation and the energy and the right words, which are tough to find sometimes, especially when things aren’t going well,” said Raiola. “There are brighter days ahead, and we have an outstanding coaching staff

who brings that same message, and that is something we are proud of.”

The journey to get to the playoffs was grueling for the Blue Sox, winning both games of a home-and-away series on the final day of the regular season to secure their spot in the postseason. The team gave it everything they had in the two weeks leading up to the playoffs, but unfortunately ran out of steam in the end.

“They had to go out there and show up every single day, tired, and same lineup, grinding their way through it,” said

Raiola. “Credit to the players, credit to [team owner] Matt [Drury], and the coaching staff for keeping the train on the tracks.”

Despite finally breaking their duck and hitting the ball out of Mackenzie Stadium for the first time all summer, Sunday’s loss eliminated Valley from the playoffs.

Mackenzie Stadium is one of the larger fields in the league, with dimensions of 400 ft. to center, 330 ft. to right, and 315 ft. to left, making it one of the hardest parks in the NECBL to hit a home run in. Valley did not hit a

home run at the Mack until Sunday’s loss.

Entering the postseason, it seemed unlikely that statistic would change, but Valley’s Josh Toole (George Mason) went yard with two outs and two men on base in the bottom of the second. Toole swung at the first pitch he saw from Drew Smith (UConn) and sent the ball out of left field, scoring the first Blue Sox home run at Mackenzie Stadium this summer, putting his team up 3-0.

Fans were still riding the high from Toole’s homer when Nick Spaventa (UPenn)

added the second Blue Sox home run at the Mack an inning later. Spaventa hit the ball out into Valley’s bullpen with Esteban Garcia (Boston College) on third, extending the lead to 5-0.

Though the Blue Sox did not walk away with the win, it was only fitting for the team that clinched their playoff spot on the last day of the regular season to also score their first home runs at the Mack during their last game of the summer.



“We talk so much about the wins and the losses through-out the year, but we don’t do it for the wins; the wins happen as a result of them continuing to show up and do the right things,” said Raiola. “They will look back on it, and they will realize that through failure comes a lot of success down the road, and that part in itself is rewarding.”



Chapin Jeannotte takes the ball up the sideline.



Kaela Mochak heads up the field.



LEFT: Emily Howard makes a stop.

Julianna Beaulieu sends a pass away.

WEST SIDE from page 9

our first year in this league. We also add a couple of new players each year. The players get along with each other very well and we always have a lot of fun.”

West Side Sports Shop, who finished the 2026 regular season with a 7-4-0 record, defeated the fifth-seeded Lusitano Women, 5-1, in the quarter-finals. Just like they did a year ago, they beat top seeded Here for Beer, 3-2, in the semifinals. West Side Sports also won the regular season match-up Here for Beer.

“Here For Beer is a very talented soccer team,” Andre said. “We played very well against them the other night.”

The West Side Sports Shop captain is Rhiann Ryan, who graduated from Minnechaug a couple of years ago.

“I love being a member of this soccer team,” Ryan said. “It feels nice to finally beat Xtremes, especially after losing to them twice during the regular season.”

Six other players listed on the Westside Sports Shop roster played soc-

cer for legendary head coach Nundi Goncalves at Minnechaug. They are Emily Howard, Gabby Rita, Lylah Jeannotte, Chapin Jeannotte, Gaby Williams, and Claire Poindexter.

One of the West Side Sports Shop starters in the championship match was Mallory Pereira, who graduated from Ludlow High School.

Julianna Beaulieu, who graduated from Chicopee Comp, was selected as the M.V.P. of the women’s championship game.

“I never expected to be the M.V.P. of this game, but I knew we could win another championship title,” Beaulieu said. “I’ve now won three championships with this team, which is very special. It’s been a lot of fun playing soccer for this team.”

Beaulieu, who played both basketball and soccer at Utica University, scored a pair of goals in the finals.

She got things rolling during the 16th minute of the opening half by putting a shot into the back of the net past goalie Madison Harmon.

“Once the ball left my foot,



West Side Sports Shop, featuring adult female players from throughout the region, took the PVSSL Women’s Championship.

I knew it was going into the net,” Beaulieu said. “It set the tone for the rest of the game.”

The Xtremes, who went 10-1-0 during the regular season, had an opportunity to tie the score during the 27th minute. Gianna Sakowski,

who also graduated from Minnechaug, fired a shot on goal, which sailed high over the crossbar.

Beaulieu scored her second goal early in the second half. Sara Avery, who was the West Side Sports Shop

starting goalie, didn’t have to make very many saves in recording the shutout. Avery lives in Belchertown and she graduated from the MacDuffie School. She’ll be a senior on the AIC women’s soccer team this fall.

The members of the West Side Sports Shop will be looking to win another PVSSL championship title next summer.

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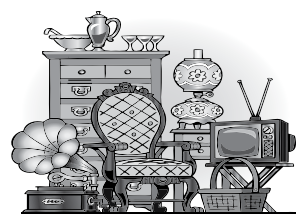
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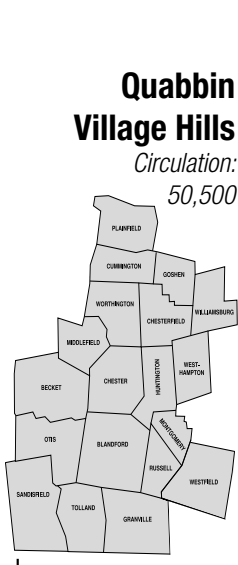
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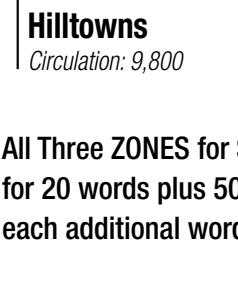
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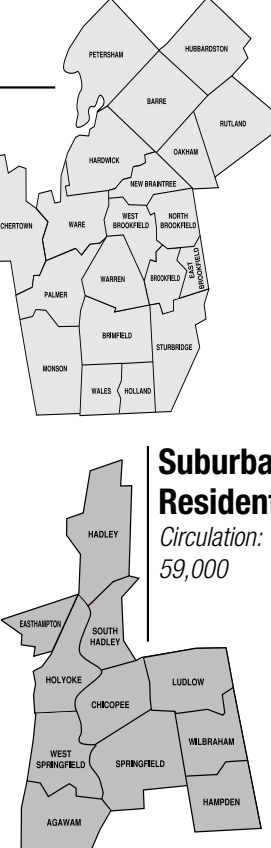
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VETERANS DAY SALUTE

Sentinel ~ November 5, 2026

Sentinel will be saluting our local veterans (from all wars and branches, including honoring deceased veterans), reservists, active duty U.S. Military members.

Please submit a photo of your veteran with his or her name, rank, branch of military and hometown by email to jamie@turley.com or drop off a photo to **Sentinel, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069**
All photos will be returned.

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

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



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Contact Paige at PLawor@turley.com or 413.283.8393



Send Us Your Community Autumn Events

Turley Publications will print your Autumn event **FREE OF CHARGE** in our **Autumn Fest Supplement** which will be published September 9, 2026.
Total circulation of 85,000 which reaches over 200,000 readers in the Pioneer Valley.
Event Should Be Non-Profit & Open to the Public

FREE Calendar Listings Reaching over 200,000 Readers in the Pioneer Valley

Event Name _____

Date/Time _____

Location _____

Description _____

Cost _____

Contact name & phone number for more information _____



Deadline for Calendar submissions is August 19.

MAIL YOUR LISTING INFORMATION TO:
Turley Publications, Attn: Jamie Joslyn,
24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069
or email* them to: jamie@turley.com
***Be sure to indicate "Autumn Event" in the subject line of your email.**

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65					66					67		
68					69					70		

CLUES ACROSS

1. Midway between south and southeast
4. Fathers
9. Wine grape
14. Al Bundy's wife
15. Derived from ammonia
16. Venezuelan state
17. Interest rate
18. Experts
20. Vascular tissues
22. Smooth and glossy
23. Administrative region in S. Korea
24. One from Damascus
28. Special interest group
29. It cools your home
30. Oh, God!
31. Intestinal pouches
33. Men
37. Twelfth star in a constellation
38. Former CIA
39. Arrange in grades of size

CLUES DOWN

1. Involuntary muscular contraction
2. Eastern US transit agency
3. Leaves a place
4. Cease to participate
5. Current units
6. Cease to exist
7. General's assistant (abbr.)
8. Earth vibration
9. Very strong winds
10. For each one
11. A bog
12. The creation of beautiful or significant things
13. Affirmative
19. Pie __ mode
21. Nonclerical
24. Indonesian island
25. Educational environment
26. Namibian peoples
27. Bring out or develop

CLUES ACROSS

41. A baglike structure in a plant or animal
42. "The Great Lakes State"
43. Having earlike appendages
44. Momentarily stop
46. Ancient kingdom
49. Of I
50. White clerical vestment
51. Songs to one's beloved
55. Charges
58. Computer application originator
59. A place to dock a boat
60. One guided by reason
64. Slang for cigarette
65. Sailboats
66. "Jerry Maguire" actor Zellweger
67. Screen type
68. Country legend Haggard
69. Puts together in time
70. When you anticipate arriving

CLUES DOWN

31. Moves into a place of thought
32. Out of the way
34. Loads a ship
35. Beloved Hollywood alien
36. Distinguishes
40. The ancient Egyptian sun god
41. Secondary or explanatory title
45. Relating to a wing
47. One who gives a speech
48. In the middle
52. Loop with a running knot
53. Airborne (abbr.)
54. Sweet persons
56. Put into play
57. Small cattle breed
59. Millisecond
60. Revolutions per minute
61. They __
62. Moon crater
63. A place to stay the night

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