

Belchertown surpasses state energy reduction goals

Has resulted in
cost savings

By Melina Bourdeau
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN – The town has exceeded state energy reduction targets under

the Green Communities program, cutting municipal energy use more than 20% from 2009 levels. But local energy leaders warn that future gains will require costly upgrades beyond “low-hanging fruit.”

During an update to the Selectboard, the Energy and Sustainability Committee

reported strong progress in building and streetlight savings, contrasted with rising fleet and high school energy use. Members outlined compliance achievements, structural barriers, and potential next steps including solar and stricter building codes.

Committee chair John

Piekara said the town has met and exceeded its reduction target in each of the last three fiscal years, based on data drawn from the state’s Mass Energy Insight system.

“The goal was to be below 20% in energy usage from the 2009 usage... and right now we’re at 23.3%... we’ve

pretty much surpassed that every year,” Piekara said. “With 2023 being the best year, about 31% reduction, 2024 being a 27% reduction and 2025 being a 23.3% reduction.”

Energy and Sustainability Committee member Mim Plavin-Masterman explained

that the town’s performance is measured in MMBTUs, a standard unit that allows electricity, oil and other energy sources to be tracked together.

“You’re going to see me present some numbers that

Please see **ENERGY**, page 2



TURLEY PHOTO BY BEN HERNANDEZ
Smiling volunteers prepare to do their part.

Granby Food Mobile fights food insecurity in region

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

GRANBY – The Food Mobile on Aug. 14 was held at Church of Christ Congregational. The mobile combats food scarcity within the region, providing donated food to struggling families who came prepared with reusable shopping bags.

“How it mainly got start-

ed is with the Granby to Go program,” said Granby to Go Program Manager Judy DeLong. “We noticed in November, when the government shut down, that families were struggling even more than what they usually were.”

DeLong reached out to Granby to Go volunteers and non-profit organization Neighbors Helping Neighbors to help “put some-

thing together.” The first mobile was coordinated in November and was held at Kellogg Hall. She described the initial service as “like a drive-through.”

“We noticed that also in the community, there were a lot of elderly that were also in need of food,” DeLong said.

“It’s been a blessing to many in the community,”

said Granby Church of Christ Christian Education Director and Co-Chair of Missions Tasondra Jardine. Jardine also is the co-president of both the Neighbors Helping Neighbors and Granby to Go’s boards. “We average providing food to between 40 to 48 families per mobile in an hour.”

Please see **FOOD**, page 11

TA provides updates on West Street

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

GRANBY – The Granby Select Board gathered on Aug. 10 to discuss recent town developments. Town Administrator Ron Aponte announced the senior center parking lot was undergoing some ceiling maintenance, which is scheduled to occur either by the weekend of Aug. 15 or should “Mother Nature not cooperate,” on the weekend of Aug. 22.

“Just as a heads up, there’ll be no parking in here just in case someone wants to come in and do some work over the weekend,” Aponte said and mentioned building inspector concerns regarding information not being submitted to them “in the correct format or on a timely enough basis.”

Aponte expressed intent to organize a meeting between the Board of Assessors and the building inspector to “make sure everyone was on the same page” and to avoid further miscommunications between the two departments. The town administrator also mentioned he met with “certain members” of the ongoing West Street Building project regarding IT costs submitted for the future municipal headquarters.

Aponte summarized the meeting as “very strange.” He described the quoted

hardware costs as “very reasonable” though the projected labor costs were “astronomically through the roof.” With an expressed desire for a “little bit more consistency” between pricing and labor, Aponte reported he was still waiting to hear back from them.

“More or less, we told them to sharpen their pencils,” Aponte said.

The town administrator also provided an update on the new municipal building’s security systems. Though the Select Board had originally chosen Rackcliff as the main contractors to install cameras and the “entry security systems” on the premises, Aponte informed the Board the company was not on the state bid list.

“We were under the assumption that they were, but we found out that they’re not,” Aponte said.

After reaching out to other vendors it turned out Ochters, who also was in the bidding for the cable poll installation at the site, offered a better price for the full security solution. Aponte called the revelation a “fortuitous error.” As he concluded his report, Aponte also reported the building inspector met last week with insurance rep-

Please see **UPDATES**, page 3

Cultural Council hosting movie night

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

GRANBY – The Granby Cultural Council is hosting a free movie night on August 28 at Cindy’s Drive-In campus. The large outdoor screen will be playing “Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Arc” in the field behind the town famous ice cream stand. Cultural Council chair Joanna Delphia recommends attendees bring blankets, lawn chairs and friends.

Please see **MOVIE NIGHT**, page 13

Fundraiser honors memory of local skater

Event proceeds benefit park renovations

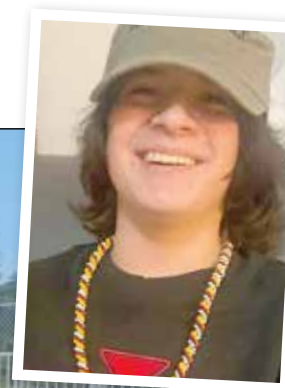
By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

BELCHERTOWN – A fundraiser organized by Thierry’s Skate Shop and Eileen Martinez will be held in the memory of local resident Daniel Martinez. The event will take place at the local Belchertown Municipal Skate Park on Sunday, Aug. 23 from 1 to 4 p.m. Event proceeds will go towards park renovation and repair, with surplus money going towards installing additional facilities to supplement the park.

Please see **SKATE PARK**, page 5



TURLEY PHOTO BY BEN HERNANDEZ
A fundraiser is being held to help pay for repairs at the Belchertown Skate Park.



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■ COMMUNITY

Belchertown Community Energy Choice program year two

BELCHERTOWN—The Belchertown Community Energy Choice program just passed the two-year mark since the program launched in June 2024. With this town program, residents and businesses are allowed to band together and buy their electricity in bulk, offering lower supply rates, more renewable energy content and stable pricing.

Currently, there are 4,511 residential accounts enrolled in the program. The majority (88%) are on the Belchertown Standard default option with a supply rate of 13.37 cents / kWhr

and 10% more renewable energy content than the State standard. This amounts to a collective savings of approximately \$1,265,900 for town residents over the last two years compared to National Grid supply rates over that period. More good news is in the carbon displacement savings. Associated CO2 displacement savings amounted to 4,200,000 lbs since program launch. This is equivalent to greenhouse gas emissions from 444 gasoline powered passenger vehicles driven for 1 year, or carbon offset of 31,500 trees over a year, or emissions from 256

homes’ energy use for one year. Figures are approximate and provided by Good Energy, program consultant.

The savings will be even more beginning in August as the National Grid basic supply rate will be going up to 17.185 cents per kWh beginning Aug. 1 through Jan. 31, 2027. The BCEC program rates are locked in through the end of 2027.

Even more carbon offset can be achieved by enrolling in the Belchertown 100 option, which offers a 100% renewable energy supply for less than a penny more than the Belchertown Standard

rate (14.31 cents / kWhr for Belchertown 100) and still less than the National Grid basic supply rate, now at 17.185 cents / kWhr. For those that have chosen to go 100% renewable through a third-party electricity supply service, the Belchertown 100 tends to be the better value when comparing rates.

Three things you can do to save money and help the environment depending on your situation:

- Check the second page of your electric bill. If it does not say Belchertown Community Energy Choice under the Supply Services

section or National Grid is still listed as your supplier, consider enrolling in the town program.

- To maximize environmental benefit, consider opting up to the Belchertown 100 choice. It is an easy and cost-effective action you can take to help protect the environment.
- If you are with a third-party supplier for your 100% renewable source, check when your contract renews and make the switch to the Belchertown 100 option.

Enroll and learn more at Energy.Belchertown.org.

Belchertown Skate Park jam Aug. 23

BELCHERTOWN— The Belchertown Skate Park Jam will be held on Sunday, Aug. 23 from 1 to 4 p.m. at 66 State St. in Belchertown.

The Skatepark Jam will be held in memory of Daniel Martinez.

This event will take place to help fund the ground resurfacing of the park.

There will be a Best Trick competition, DJ, raffles and donations accepted.

ENERGY from page 1

are MMBTUs... a standardized unit of measurement... so towns and cities can measure their usage over time in an apples-to-apples way... all of it gets converted with a formula in the Mass Energy Insight database,” said Plavin-Masterman.

Plavin-Masterman reported that the town is in full compliance with all five Green Communities criteria, including siting, expedited permitting for clean energy facilities, adoption of an energy reduction plan, fuel-efficient vehicle purchasing and the state’s stretch building code.

Committee members

highlighted building and streetlight performance as strengths, noting reductions on the order of 28 to 39% for buildings and roughly 55% for street lighting, according to their slide deck.

However, the presentation underscored two persistent concerns, the Belchertown High School’s energy use and

the town’s vehicle fleet.

Plavin-Masterman said school buildings, particularly the high school, remain the largest municipal energy users even after lighting retrofits, in part because they still rely on oil for heating and face high capital costs for deeper upgrades.

“They have... oil that’s... a lot of the heat for the high school for the school buildings across the board... that’s really just expensive and continues to get more expensive, not less,” she said. “And so that’s a challenge.”

She added that the high school has bid documents for retro-commissioning, but the scale of work is comparable to multi-million-dollar projects undertaken in other districts.

On the vehicle side, the town has begun transitioning to more efficient models, including its first fully electric municipal vehicle, but overall fleet energy use has risen above the 2009 baseline.

“The first fully electric vehicle purchase was a Tesla Model Y... and that was that’s the town’s first full EV,” Plavin-Masterman said.

Plavin-Masterman told the board that Belchertown has already captured most of the low-cost efficiency gains, from LED retrofits and street-light conversions to targeted upgrades in key facilities.

“We’ve done a lot of the low hanging fruit, and getting to the next level is going to take a lot of investment... we’re sort of in this uncanny valley... it’s going to take a lot to get to the next... phase,” she said.

Committee members identified several high-intensity energy users on a per-square-foot basis, including the transfer station, the EMS building and the senior center, driven by compactors, round-the-clock occupancy and older cold-storage equipment.

They also noted that rooftop solar remains an underused option for municipal buildings.

One example is the fire station, where panels were removed during a roof project and not yet reinstalled.

Committee members said they are drawing on outside resources to shape next steps, including Pioneer Valley Planning Commission meetings, a regional energy manager and a recently overhauled Mass Energy Insight platform that allows towns to compare their performance to other municipalities.

Piekara suggested that the town could also examine whether to adopt a more stringent stretch code beyond the current Green Communities requirement but warned that it may be difficult for a mid-sized community to meet.

“There is another stretch code, but it’s... the next level... It’s difficult for like a town our size to support something like that,” he said.

“There’s a lot more restrictions on what’s required for new buildings and existing buildings... it’s tough to meet those standards, and not too many towns have actually... gone on that.”

Throughout the discussion, both committee members and Selectboard emphasized that continued progress will likely depend on external funding, including state and federal grants for major school and infrastructure upgrades, as well as more aggressive use of renewables and regional planning support.

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TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN

Hybrid Public Hearing –

Tuesday, September 8, 2026 at 6:35 PM

Select Board Meeting Room
Town Hall – 2 Jabish Street, Belchertown, MA 01007

Remote Access Information
You can join this meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone at:
<https://meet.goto.com/377465909>

You can also dial in using your phone:
United States: +1 (872) 240-3412; Access Code: 377-465-909

Belchertown FY22/23 CDBG Performance Hearing

The Belchertown Select Board, in association with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, will conduct a Public Hearing on Tuesday, September 8th, 2026, starting at 6:35 pm. The hearing will be conducted in a hybrid format, and interested parties may attend in person at the Belchertown Town Hall or join via the Go To Meeting link or phone number provided above.

The hearing will review the FY22/23 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) awarded to the Town of Belchertown through funding provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and awarded by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities. The funding provided is supporting infrastructure improvements at the Sportshaven mobile home community. Construction includes water and septic system improvements and paving of the roadway.

All people with questions or comments will have an opportunity to be heard. The Belchertown Town Hall is handicapped accessible and interested parties are also encouraged to participate via the web address or phone number provided above. Written comments will be received by the Planning Commission on behalf of the Town through September 8th at 2:00 PM. Written comments will be read aloud during the hearing. For further information or to submit a written comment, contact Erica Johnson at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission at (413) 781-6045 or ejohnson@pvpc.org.

■ COMMUNITY

Belchertown Select Board announces board/committee vacancies

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.

Capital Improvement Planning Committee: The Town wishes to fill

one (1) seat on the Capital Improvement Planning Committee. Those interested must be Belchertown residents with demonstrated knowledge of construction, facility maintenance, fleet management, architecture, engineering, or a related field.

Communications Committee: The Belchertown Communication Committee is looking for one (1) new member to help shape how our town shares news and stays connected. This group has supported projects like the Belchertown.org upgrade, Carriagetown Chronicles, and installing a broader social media strategy. We’re seeking residents with everyday skills in communications, document preparation, accessibility, social media, or technology - especially individuals with practical experience using AI in workplace or business settings, to support the careful and responsible adoption of these tools in town government.

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 one (1) 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 two (2) active voting member positions. 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 housing, 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) 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.

UPDATES from page 1

representatives and stated early indications suggested “things went well.”

“We had all the proper documentation in place,” Aponte said and stated the International Organization

for Standardization analysts seemed “pleased” with the presentation. Though he was hesitant to conclude the project was in the clear, he appeared optimistic about the results.

“Of course, we won’t know for sure until we actu-

ally receive the report back, probably in a few weeks, but that’s important for the insurance rates for the entire town,” Aponte said. “Not just necessarily the municipality and municipal buildings, but across the board.”

Church hosting summer event on Aug. 23

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 dessert 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.

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Saturday, September 12, 2026

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SURROUNDING TOWNS ARE INVITED TO TAKE PART

Fine Arts Center announces fall 2026 visual arts exhibitions

Season features work by Dianne Smith, Athena LaTocha, Desmond Beach, Anita Hunt and other contemporary artists

AMHERST—The Fine Arts Center’s visual arts program will present a diverse slate of exhibitions this fall, bringing together internationally recognized artists, emerging and midcareer talents, and student voices across three campus galleries.

The 2026-2027 visual arts season will feature 15 exhibitions at the University Museum of Contemporary Art, Augusta Savage Gallery and Hampden Gallery, with work spanning painting, sculpture, photography, fiber arts, sound installation and interdisciplinary practice. Receptions, artist talks, workshops and other public programs will offer audiences opportunities to engage directly with artists and their work.

Augusta Savage Gallery

Augusta Savage Gallery opens the semester with a three-week run of “Surveying Gravity: A Mirror for Growing Contradictions” by Justin Randolph Thompson, on view Sept. 4–25, with a reception on Sept. 10. The show is an exploration of leg-

acy and remembering, told through Thompson’s relationship with his grandfather Randolph W. Bromery, the former UMass chancellor for whom the Fine Arts Center’s main building is named

Oct. 2 through Nov. 13, the gallery will showcase quilted portraits and other artworks by Desmond Beach in “The Souls of Black Folk.” The exhibition explores what it means to protect and honor Black bodies who are subject to systemic injustice in the United States.

Later in the semester, from Nov. 20 through Dec. 9, UMass graduate student Farihah Aliyah Shah embarks on an exploration of cultural, land and personal memory through photography, video and sound. The multimedia project traces Shah’s connections to Canada and Guyana.

Hampden Gallery

On view Sept. 8 through Dec. 15 at Hampden Gallery, “Ghosts, Echoes, and Other Wonders” showcases the work of local printmaker Anita S. Hunt. Bringing together old and new prints, drawings, collages and paper sculptures, the exhibition

explores Hunt’s relationship with rural New England.

Meanwhile, in the gallery’s intimate Incubator Project Space, digital photographs by Mexico City-based artist Alvaro Alejandro López invite viewers to encounter the book as both a material object and a living score that each reader brings to life. A reception for López’s “De Natural Libris” and Hunt’s exhibition will be held Sept. 17.

This semester, Hampden Gallery continues its emphasis on advancing the careers of artists at all levels through a series of hands-on workshops led by local artists, and its craft studio that is open to all students and the public during regular gallery hours.

University Museum of Contemporary Art
The University Museum of Contemporary Art opens Sept. 15 with two single artist exhibitions and one group exhibition, all running through Dec. 13.

“Athena LaTocha: Buried Heat” features a series of ten sand-cast iron sculptures. Known for her large scale

drawings — described by the New York Times as art that “reads the land in deep time” — LaTocha places a renewed emphasis on her sculptural works, which she developed through vigorous research into the geography, history and cultures of the Mesabi iron range for which they are named. The sculptures will be shown alongside two monumental works on paper that convey the artist’s emotional and intellectual response to the land.

In the West Gallery, the museum will display costumes and works of art by multidisciplinary artist Dianne Smith in a show that draws on Smith’s Belizean heritage, “Sonic Futures, Radiant Bodies” envisioning Black futurity through photography, sound, performance, sculpture and ritual. And in the East Gallery, a selection from the museum’s permanent collection of contemporary works on paper, “Between Earth and Sky: Artists in Dialogue with the Land” presents the work of artists engaged with the American landscape from the 1960s through the present

day.

Another feature of the museum’s season, its In Sight series, will spotlight one work of art from the permanent collection each month in recognition of national cultural heritage and awareness months. The series will feature the work of Papo Colo for Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month in September, Daisy Patton for National Disability Awareness Month in October, and George Morrison for Native American Heritage Month in November.

The museum will host an opening reception for its fall exhibitions on September 24. Later, it will once again host its popular interactive Vote for Art event, through which it invites the public to participate in selecting new acquisitions from a group of pieces identified by undergraduate students enrolled in the museum’s introduction to art curation class, Collecting 101. New programming includes a book club partnership with the Jones Library.

Full exhibition and reception schedules follow. Select photos available here.

Augusta Savage Gallery
Sept. 4-25
Reception: Sept. 10
Surveying Gravity: A Mirror for Growing Contradictions by Justin Randolph Thompson

Oct. 2 – Nov. 13
Reception: Oct. 2
The Souls of Black Folk by Desmond Beach
Nov. 20 – Dec. 9
Reception: Nov. 20
Land of Water and Sugar Cane by Farihah Aliyah Shah

Hampden Gallery
Sept. 8 – Dec. 15
Reception: Sept. 17
Ghosts, Echoes, and Other Wonders by Anita S. Hunt
De Natura Libris by Alvaro Alejandro López

University Museum of Contemporary Art
Sept. 15 – Dec. 13
Reception: Sept. 24
Athena LaTocha: Buried Heat
Dianne Smith: Sonic Futures, Radiant Bodies
Between Earth and Sky: Artists in Dialogue with the Land
In Sight

Amherst Cinema presents LATE FAME and post-film discussion

AMHERST—Amherst Cinema is delighted to welcome director Kent Jones to the stage for a post-film discussion with poet Peter Gizzi, following a preview screening of his film LATE FAME on Thursday, August 20 at 7 p.m.

A New York Times Critic’s Pick, LATE FAME stars the great Willem Dafoe who lends his delicate gravitas to the role of Ed Saxberger, a

forgotten New York poet who works in the post office. After an eager and flattering young admirer (Edmund Donovan) appears on his doorstep, Saxberger is beckoned into a coterie of twentysomething admirers who anoint him as a rediscovered genius. Intoxicated by the attention-and by the alluring presence of Gloria, the group’s “tragic heroine” (a sinuous,

Kurt Weill-crooning Greta Lee)-Saxberger gradually reckons with the authenticity of his newfound poetic circle.

This thoughtful, witty second feature from Kent Jones (DIANE), working from a sly and hugely entertaining script by Oscar-nominated screenwriter Samy Burch (MAY DECEMBER), is a wistful yet unromantic look at a lost idea of downtown New York.

“In a sense, the film, directed by Kent Jones, is like a wonderful little poem. It’s also a touching nod to the past, gracefully intertwining aspects of “Metropolitan” and “Dead Poets Society.” Wall Street Journal

LATE FAME plays in a full schedule starting Friday, August 21.

Tickets for this screening are \$11.75 for general

admission, \$10.75 for seniors and students, and are free to Amherst Cinema Members. Tickets can be purchased in person at the Amherst Cinema box office, or online: <https://amherstcinema.org/films-and-events/late-fame-with-kent-jones>

About Amherst Cinema: Amherst Cinema is an independent, nonprofit arts and

education center brimming with world-class programs. The comfortable, fully accessible theater offers state-of-the-art projection and sound and is a welcoming crossroads for all. Amherst Cinema presents over 250 programs a year on three screens in more than 35 languages. For more information, visit: <https://amherstcinema.org>

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Early voting by mail option available

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 election, the Secretary of the Commonwealth will send a pre-addressed, postage pre-paid Vote by Mail applica-

tion to every registered voter before each statewide election. This mailing is required by state law and went 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 application to request a ballot for the

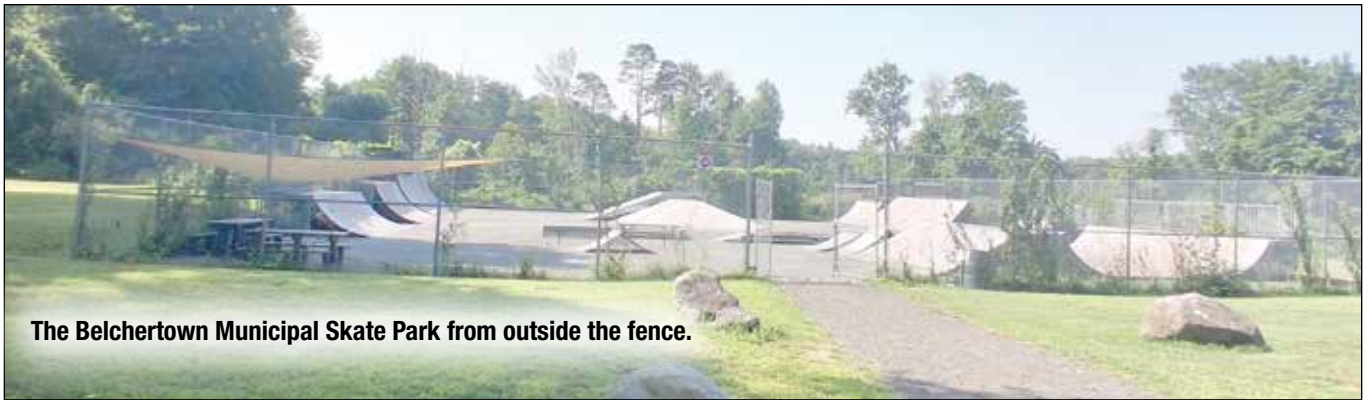
next statewide election, or for all remaining elections this year. Simply mark your selections, sign the application, and drop it in the mail or the drop box here at Town Hall at 2 Jabish St., Belchertown.

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.



The Belchertown Municipal Skate Park from outside the fence.

SKATE PARK from page 1

Martinez said the inspiration towards funding the skate park arose due to it being one of the last places her late son enjoyed. The fundraiser is both a way to honor her son's memory and as a way to give back to the local skateboarding community he cherished.

"My son went through a lot of pain and suffering in the last years of his life in terms of the chronic pain condition and having no real medical answers to it," Martinez said. "Which lead to being depressed and ultimately taking his own life. The skate park was one of the last things that he still found some joy in."

An avid skateboarder, Daniel's appetite for skate parks had the two navigate all over New England, with some trips going as far as Nashua, New Hampshire. As she reflected on their road trips together, Martinez noticed a common element in the other parks they frequented.

"Most new parks are cement now," Martinez said.

Belchertown's skate park, in contrast, is made of old wood and metal. Though Martinez conceded the ramps were still "good" for bikers and scooters, the ground surface made it unusable for skaters. She mentioned the ramps were in need of basic repair, at the very least.

"The point of the fundraiser in Daniel's honor is the skate park needs massive repairs," Daniel's mother Eileen Martinez said. "The surface is cracked and broken, so skateboarders don't use it much anymore...it's not good for skaters."

Initial goals are to resurface park structures to make them more skater-friendly, as well as basic repairs to the ramps already on site. Additional money will go towards installing a phone charging station and a bathroom.

"When my son would go to the park, they'd either have to go over to Krispy's or cross over to Dunkin's to charge their phones," Martinez said. "Inevitably, teenagers' phones are always dying."

Martinez also pointed out there was no water station on the premises, with the only



A more detailed shot of the sloped ramps leading to the opposite wall ramps.

amenity being a Port-A-Potty installed just outside of the skate park. She stated a water bottle station would be ideal not only for the skaters but for potential hikers taking the nearby trail.

"The Lake Wallace Sensory Trail is right there, which is a beautiful trail that was created some years ago," Martinez said. "So, it benefits both areas."

Event activities will include a ramp mural unveiling from local muralist Mark Austin, live music, games and activities. A follow up dedication ceremony will be held on October 3rd during Fall Fest. Donations may be made to the Belchertown Recreation Department at 66 State Street, Unit 1, Belchertown MA, though note the proceeds should go to the skate park in the memo. Direct donations may also be made to the Go Fund Me page at <http://gofund.me/102708233>.



A side-long shot of the smaller ramps by the entrance.



A small shaded area to rest.



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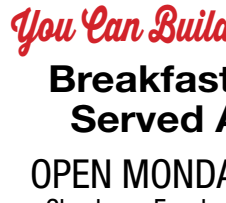
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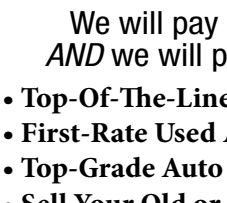


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OPINION

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor

I worked for my ex-husband but wasn't paid and now have little Social Security. What are my options?

Author note: This is article number 500 in the AMAC Foundation's "Ask Rusty" series of Social Security articles, which have been published nationwide every week since February 2017. "Ask Rusty" is provided free of charge as an integral part of the AMAC Foundation's mission to "support and educate America's seniors." If you would like to help the AMAC Foundation fulfill its mission, charitable donations are graciously accepted at <https://amacfoundation.org/donate/>.

Dear Rusty: Sadly, I was in business with my ex-husband. I'm a nurse and he was a chiropractor. He refused to pay me "on the books" and now, at age 73, after divorcing him due to his financial irresponsibility. (I don't want to burden you with the thefts that he perpetrated), I am stuck with a small \$773 Social Security payment each month.

At age 73 I am now faced with having to go back into the workforce. Is there anything I can do to prove that I worked 40 years for my husband, but wasn't paid?

Signed: Distressed Divorcee

Dear Distressed: We are so sorry to hear of your unfortunate circumstances. Assuming your ex-husband is now collecting Social Security retirement benefits or is at least eligible to if you are divorced at least two years, you should be able to collect an ex-spouse benefit as his former wife. In that case, you would be entitled to receive 50% of the Social Security benefit he was entitled to at his own Full Retirement Age because he and you were married for over 10 years.

The way that will work is that you would continue to receive your personally-earned \$773 monthly Social Security retirement amount earned from other employment, but you would also be entitled to a supplemental "spousal boost" to bring your payment up to half of the SS payment amount your ex-husband is entitled to at his SS Full Retirement Age.

In other words, because you were married to your ex for more than 10 years, you are entitled to the same Social Security benefits as though you were still married. That is true, even if he has remarried

and his new wife is also getting a spouse benefit from his record.

You will still be entitled to an ex-spouse benefit from your ex-husband as his former wife. And if he dies before you, as a surviving ex-spouse you will get the same Social Security benefit he was receiving at his death, instead of the smaller amount you will get while you are both living.

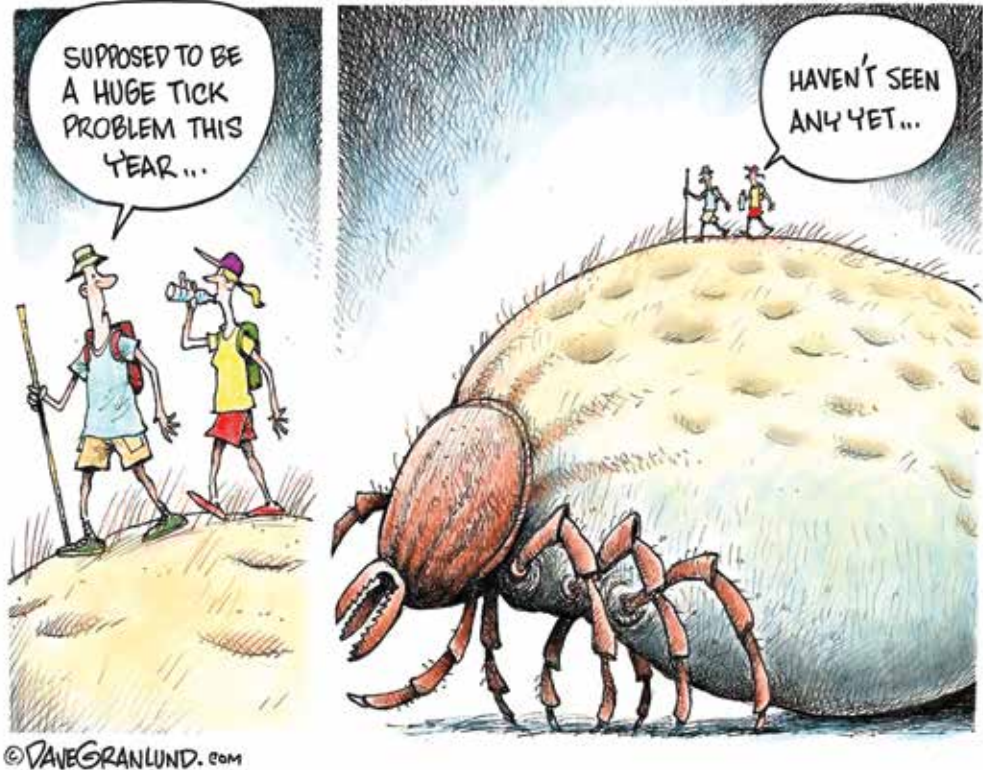
Regarding rejoining the workforce, while you can certainly go back to work at age 73 without it negatively affecting your Social Security benefits, if you are struggling financially, I suggest you visit this website sponsored by the National Council on Aging: www.benefitscheckup.org.

At this website, you can enter your zip code and find much information about other supplemental assistance you may be entitled to where you live, including healthcare and medication assistance, housing, nutritional assistance, etc.

Regarding your question: "Is there anything I can do to prove that I worked 40 years and wasn't paid?" Social Security determines benefits based solely on your personal earnings as reported to the Internal Revenue Service, which is, in turn, dependent on how your joint income taxes were filed over the years you worked in your husband's business.

Social Security is unable to assist you with IRS matters. I'm afraid yours is more of a legal matter you would need to pursue by discussing your situation directly with the IRS or engaging an attorney for assistance.

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.



Weeds and seeds

I came back from vacation and was shocked as to how much the garden had grown.

Crops were ready to be harvested and weeds that were merely inches tall had grown by leaps and bounds! Of course, we did have nearly a half foot of rain that week, and this probably played a part in such exuberant growth.

Read on to learn how indiscriminate watering by Mother Nature can mean weeds, weeds and more weeds.

Why such a growth spurt? Because just like other seeds, those of our least favorite weedy plants need both sunlight and water in order to germinate and grow well.

When we water on purpose, we can direct the rain where we'd like – usually at the base of the plant. Unfortunately, rainfall that lands on a brick path, the garden aisle, and also in between plants within the row can cause a lot of weeds to sprout.

Hand weeding and hoeing are both great exercise, and the best option for otherwise bare areas of young weeds.

Many gardeners make the mistake, however, of hoeing too deeply and exposing more weed seeds to sunlight. Try to just scrape the surface of the soil.

Stirrup hoes are particularly effective, skimming across the soil and severing the stems of weeds at the root line as they go. Very tall weeds can be cut down by use of garden shears, scissors or a week whacker, depending on the size of the area.

Once cut back, you can cover the whole area with a tarp, or black plastic to fry what was underneath, killing

weed seed.

In preparation for sowing cover crop seed, the soil surface should be scuffed up so that the seeds will make good contact with earth.

Once prep is complete I rake the soil smooth and broadcast the grain, first throwing the seed in one direction and then the other.

It's a good idea to divide the seed in half and try to cover all the area you have once, then go back and fill in the light spots with the rest. After the seed has been sown I'll drag the flat end of a steel rake over the soil surface to bury it ever so slightly.

My goal is to have the seed sprout now, so that its roots will hold the soil and its nutrients in place over the off season.

Winter rye will put on an amazing amount of top growth by spring – weed whack or mow it first to make incorporating easier.

I am also contemplating "tarping" it to solarize the soil at the same time, then working in the dead plants by hand.

Either way, if you do this for a few years in a row you'll watch the organic matter content of your soil soar, reportedly at a rate of three to four thousand pounds per acre!

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



NEWS & FEATURES

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

For more information on news or community features for The Sentinel, please email sentinel@turley.com

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Menopause is having a moment



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

“Why didn't our mothers tell us?” seems to be the predominant feeling about menopause on the part of Gen X women, those approximately between the ages 40 and 60. For my mother's generation and those that

came before her, it was simply “The Change.” Just get on with it.

And doctors don't seem to pay it much mind either, even though it affects half of their patients and comes with 34 known symptoms ranging from hot flashes and irregular

periods to night sweats and mood changes.

“Doctors seem to think we are either pre-pregnant, pregnant or invisible,” one woman commented.

In the last few years, though, the conversation has been shifting. Women are more assertive about getting treated for menopause symptoms, new treatments are emerging, and it seems some doctors are increasingly recognizing the need for better menopause care.

And celebrities aren't shy about it, either. Actor Naomi Watts said on Instagram that she felt like she had been hit by a truck. “How could I figure this out when no one was talking? ... It's oddly like an unwritten code of silence: Women should suck it up and

Please see **HEALTH**, page 15

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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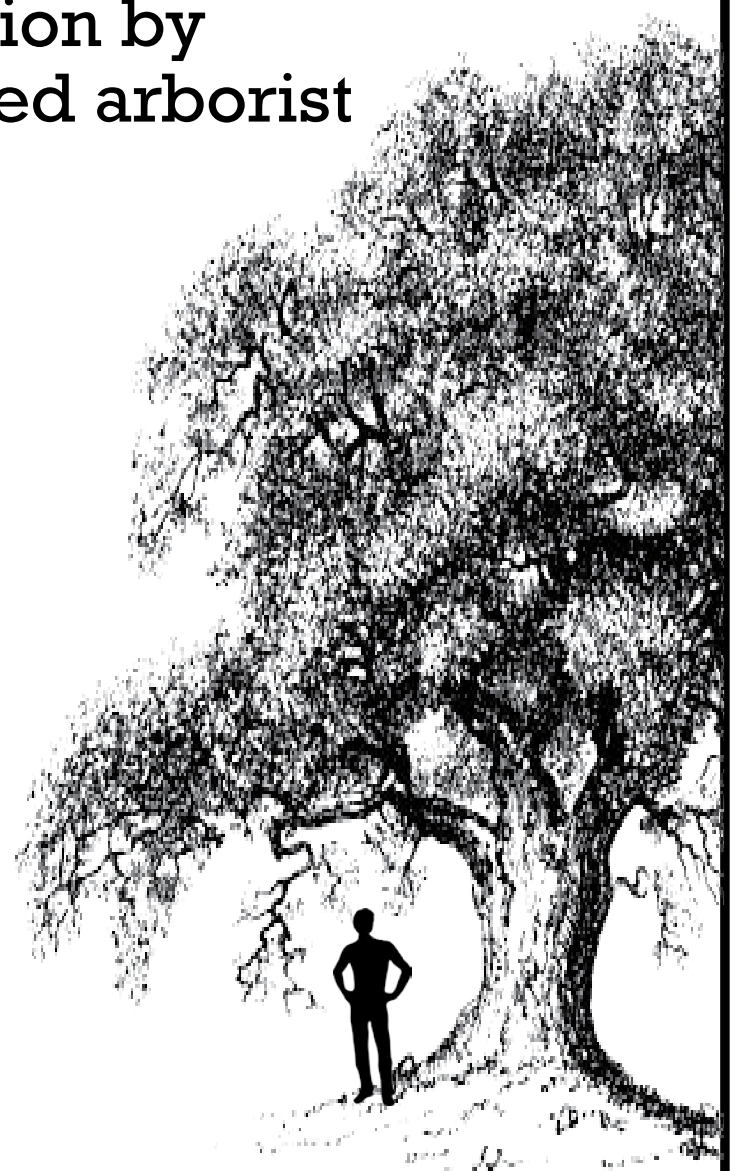


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Belchertown Cultural Council name upcoming grant opportunities

Public reception at ArcPoint on Aug. 24

BELCHERTOWN—The Belchertown Cultural Council (BCC) is pleased to announce that our 2027 grant cycle opens on September 1. In celebration of arts and culture in town and the upcoming cycle, the BCC is hosting a reception at ArcPoint Brewery on Aug. 24 from 5 to 7 p.m. The event is open to the public, so bring a friend, coworker, or fellow committee members along. This is an informal opportunity for anyone who has questions about arts and culture in town, would like to get involved with the BCC, or is considering applying for a grant.

We welcome grant applications from local artists, educators, performers, and community organizations who are working to bring enriching cultural experiences to Belchertown. Grants support projects in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences that benefit our community, both big and small.

Key dates for the 2027 grant cycle:

Sept. 1 – Applications open

Sept. 10 at 6 p.m. - virtual info session with Mass Cultural Council

Oct. 15 – Applications due

Belchertown is part of a network of 351 Local Cultural Councils (LCCs)



in the Commonwealth. The state legislature provides an annual appropriation to the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency, which then allocates funds to each LCC. Based on community input, the BCC determines local priorities to fund. 2027 funding priorities are for public events, nature, science and environmental education, and programs celebrating local history and cultural diversity.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to explore the program guidelines at <https://belchertown.org/bcc>.

For more information email Molly Robinson at the Belchertown Cultural Council BCCgrantsMgr@gmail.com

Dog park hosting Friday evening concert Aug. 21

AMHERST—The Amherst Dog Park is hosting a Friday evening concert on August 21, from 5 pm until dusk. Juliana Hatfield, alternative rock recording artist for ALR will open the evening. The

acoustic trio, Nectar, plays music from the Americas with guitar, bass and vocals. The community and their dogs are invited. The dog park on Old Belchertown Rd., has separate areas for

large and small dogs; people must stay with their dogs. Bring chairs or blankets, but no food or glass bottles are allowed inside the dog park. The concert is free, donations appreciated.

Free pet vaccine clinic to be offered

BELCHERTOWN—Second Chance Animal Services will hold a Free Pet Vaccine Clinic on Saturday, Sept. 19 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The clinic will be held at 165 George Hannum Street in Belchertown.

Free services that will be available are rabies vaccine, distemper/parvo combo vac-

cine and microchipping. Pre-registration required for the free clinic, scan the QR code to pre-register.

Dogs must be on leash and cats in carries for the safety of all attending. This event is made possible in part by Petco Love and Belchertown Animal Relief Committee (BARC).



Belchertown alerts residents to spotted lanternfly Infestation

Town urges property owners to learn to identify invasive pest and its preferred host plant

BELCHERTOWN—The Town of Belchertown is in a known area of spotted lanternfly (SLF) infestation, and officials are urging residents to learn how to identify the invasive insect and take steps to manage it on their property.

Spotted lanternfly is an invasive pest first introduced into the United States around 2014. While it does not bite, sting, or otherwise harm people or pets, it can seriously damage grapevines, tree-of-heaven, and black walnut. Heavy infestations also produce a sticky waste called honeydew that coats plants,

vehicles, and outdoor furniture.

The pest’s appearance changes throughout the year. Egg masses, present from September through June, appear as flat, gray or beige waxy patches about one inch long. Young nymphs, seen May through July, are tiny, wingless, and black with white spots. Older nymphs, present July through September, are small, red, and wingless with black and white spots. Adults, seen August through December, are large insects at least one inch long with grayish, black-spotted wings and a red patch on the hindwings.

Spotted lanternfly’s preferred host plant, tree-of-heaven, is often mistaken for native sumac, a mix-up that can lead residents to remove the wrong tree or overlook the real one. The Town has shared a short video comparing tree-of-heaven and sumac to help residents tell the two apart: <https://youtu.be/UfbSbN2sBgQ?si=1DVT09-EQWWyx9gc>

Residents are encouraged to take the following steps:

- Inspect trees, vehicles, and outdoor items for SLF adults, nymphs, or egg masses
- Avoid parking under infested trees
- Squish adults and nymphs when found in small numbers, and scrape and destroy egg masses
- Consider traps, professional treatment, or tree-of-heaven removal for heavier infestations
- Report SLF sightings outside known infested areas to the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR)

For the full management guide, including chemical and non-chemical treatment options, visit the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources’ spotted lanternfly page: <https://www.mass.gov/slf>

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Local residents named to Simmons University Dean’s List

BOSTON—The following local residents were named to the 2026 spring semester dean’s list at Simmons University in Boston.

Annaliese Kittrell of Amherst and Shuchang Yin of Amherst

To qualify for dean’s list status, undergraduate students must obtain a grade point average of 3.5 or higher, based on 12 or more credit hours of work in classes using the letter grade system.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52

CLUES ACROSS

1. Microgram

4. Fixed charge

7. Each

8. Feeling of humiliation

10. Coat with sticky substance

12. Powerful “Severance” family

13. Japanese city

14. “Pulp Fiction” actress Thurman

16. Hat

17. Place where rockers work

19. Psyche

20. Snakelike fishes

21. Where people live

25. Body part

26. Old towel

27. One’s essential being

29. Japanese alcoholic beverage

30. Boxing’s GOAT

31. Wet muddy ground

32. Christian Laettner is one

39. A place to store lawn tools

41. Large tub for liquid

42. Old World lizard

43. One-time European member group

44. Healing student

45. Nuclear weapon

46. “Kiss of the Spider Woman” actress Sonia

48. Silk garment

49. About some Norse poems

50. Woman religious community member

51. Congressman (abbr.)

CLUES DOWN

1. An insane person

2. “Homeland” actress Danes

3. Buttock muscles

4. US federal agency

5. Birds of prey

6. Electronic communication

8. Ocean

9. Terminates

11. Low-pitched sound from a bell

14. Exclamation: yuck!

15. A place to attach a boat

18. Exclamation of surprise

19. Make a mistake

20. Border line

22. Have religious faith

23. Klutz

24. Large tree

27. House of __ rulers

28. Red deer

29. Small coin (French)

31. Popular sandwich

32. 10-year period

33. Not good

34. Government lawyer

35. Egypt’s intelligence agency

36. Without an occupant or incumbent

37. Stain with one’s hands

38. Crippling

39. One point east of southeast

40. Large, united groups

44. __ and cheese

47. Alcoholic beverage

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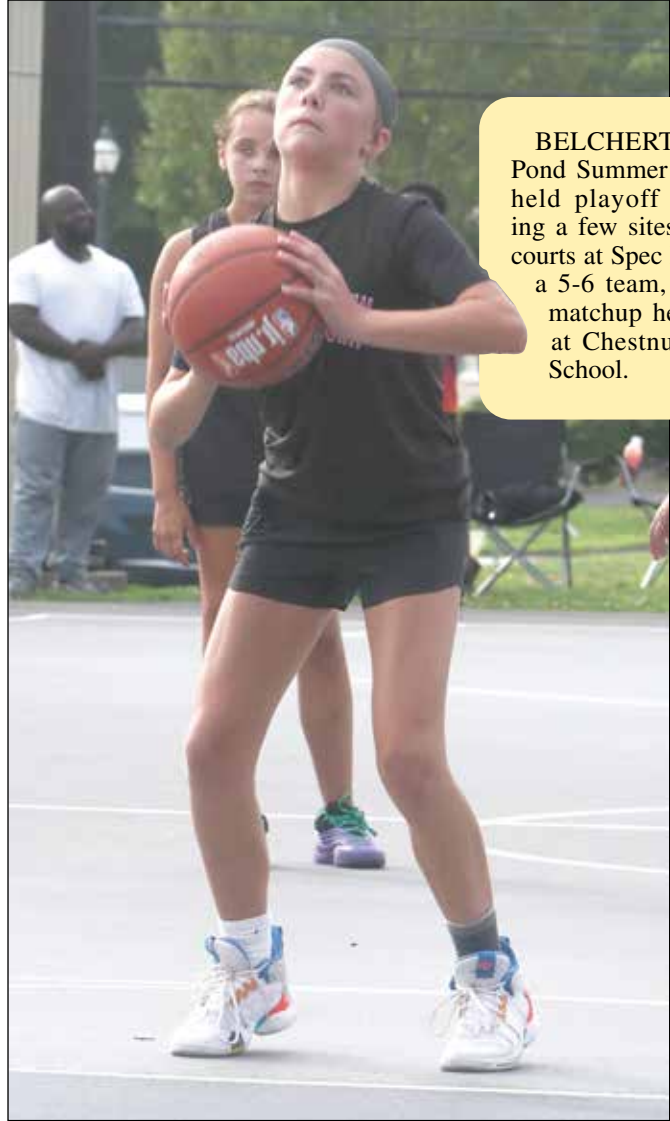
Rylee Salem takes the jump shot.



B-Town youth basketball finishes up summer season

Grace Adamczyk gets the layup from the right side.

Pricilla Phaneuf takes a free throw.



ROSE PYNE – The Spec Pond Summer Basketball League held playoff last week, utilizing a few sites in addition to the courts at Spec Pond. Belchertown, a 5-6 team, was involved in a matchup held in Belchertown at Chestnut Hill Community School.



ALIVIA THIBEAULT – The Spec Pond Summer Basketball League held playoff last week, utilizing a few sites in addition to the courts at Spec Pond. Belchertown, a 5-6 team, was involved in a matchup held in Belchertown at Chestnut Hill Community School.

Rose Pyne eyes a shot.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Alivia Thibeault goes for a running layup.

Lusitano keeps the soccer going

Hosts exhibition collegiate match

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW— In what could become an annual tradition, the UConn and UMass women’s soccer teams met in an exhibition match in front of a large crowd at Lusitano Stadium on Aug. 5.

Neither team was able to find the back of the net during the contest, played in three 30-minute intervals, but it was still a memorable evening at the 108-year-old stadium located on Winsor Street in Ludlow.

“It’s very exciting to be hosting a college soccer match here at Lusitano Stadium,” said Joe Ferrara

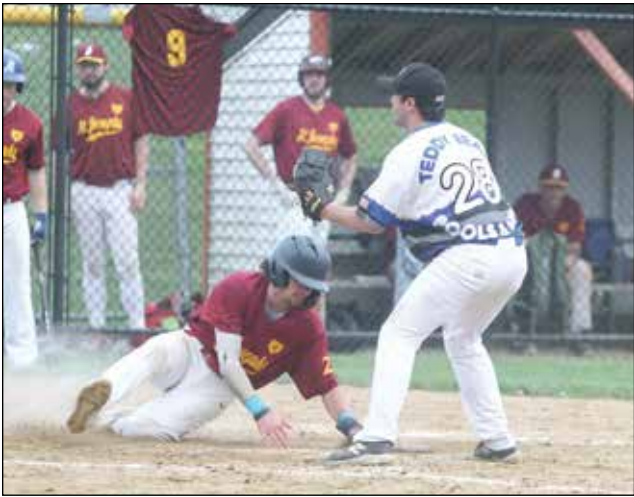
Jr., who’s the Managing Director of the New England Mutiny and the General Manager of the Western Mass. Pioneers. “Both UConn and UMass have been very supportive of the Mutiny over the years. I also have a personal relationship with both coaching staffs.”

The last time a college soccer match was held at Lusitano Stadium was on October 17, 2018.

On that fall evening, the Worcester State University Lancers squared off against the Western New England University Golden Bears in a non-conference men’s match-up.

Cyrus Raines, a Belchertown High School

Please see **SOCCER**, page 10



TURLEY PHOTO BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Nate Carrill slides safely home.

Tri-County finals forced to a deciding game three

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

SOUTH HADLEY— Third-seeded Teddy Bear Pools & Spas had a golden opportunity to sweep the top-seeded St. Joseph’s Saints in the Tri-County League championship series.

Teddy Bear held a 1-0 lead entering the top of the third inning in game two.

St. Joe’s rallied for three runs in the third and fourth innings and they evened the best-of-three series at 1-1 following a 6-3 victory at South Hadley High School Friday, Aug. 7.

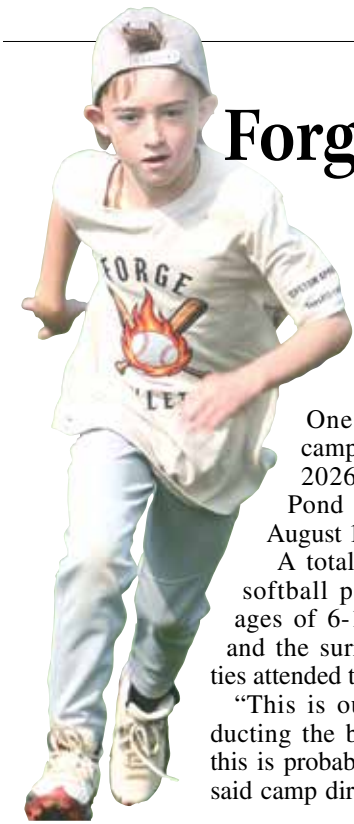
The game came to an

end after five innings due to darkness, which didn’t please the Teddy Bear players and their supporters.

“It’s a very frustrating situation,” said Teddy Bear player/manager Ryan Magni. “I think we should’ve been able to finish the final two innings of tonight’s game at St. Joe’s Park before playing the deciding game tomorrow night.”

The baseball field at South Hadley High School doesn’t have any lights and the first pitch of game two was thrown by Teddy Bear

Please see **TRI-COUNTY**, page 10



Forge Baseball Clinic returns to Western Mass.

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WILBRAHAM— One of the last sports camps of the summer of 2026 was held at Spec Pond in Wilbraham from August 10-13.

A total of 57 baseball and softball players between the ages of 6-16 from Wilbraham and the surrounding communities attended the four day clinic.

“This is our fourth year conducting the baseball clinics, and this is probably the best one yet,” said camp director Dustin Brisson

“We have almost 60 kids, including a couple of softball players for the first time, this week. It’s the most campers we’ve ever had at this clinic and I’m very pleased.”

Brisson, who is the owner of Forge Athletics, was born in Florida and played college baseball at the University of Central Florida from 1997-2000. The first baseman was drafted by the Boston Red Sox in the 15th round of the 2000 MLB draft.

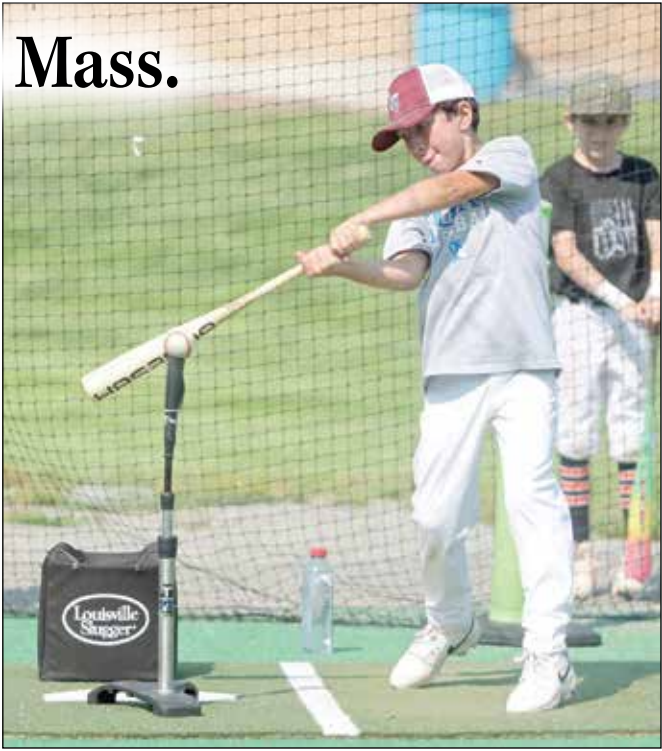
Brisson, who played 345 minor league games, advanced to Double A Portland. His baseball career came to an end due to an injury.

“I was blessed to have the opportunity to play professional baseball,” Brisson said. “I’m doing what I can to give back to these kids.”

Some of the camp instructors were Lindsay Beer, David Wendt, Ace Adams Chade Shade, who’s the head coach of the Springfield College baseball team, Pat Strange, who’s the pitching coach at Westfield State University, Dan Gomez, who’s the head baseball coach at Western New England University, and Terry Doyle, who’s the the baseball coach at New England College.

“It’s an honor to have these coaches working at our clinic this year,” Brisson said. “They want to help these kids. This is a high level skills clinic. I just want the older kids to have the opportunity to work with the college coaches.”

A couple of the guest speakers at the clinic were Brandon Seymour, who’s the gen-



Blue Sox look back on ‘resilient’ 2026 campaign

HOLYOKE – When the Valley Blue Sox walked off the field following a 14-5 loss to the Sanford Mainers in Game 2 of the NECBL South Division Semifinals on Aug. 2, the scoreboard marked the end of a 2026 season to remember.



Valley returned to the postseason for the first time since 2024 after navigating the ups and downs that come with collegiate summer baseball. A scorching start gave way to a difficult stretch of roster turnover and injuries before the Blue Sox caught fire at exactly the right time, winning 10 of their final 13 regular-season games to clinch a play-off berth.

“We don’t do it for the wins,” head coach John Raiola said. “The wins happen as a result of continuing to show up, [doing] the right thing every day and [continuing] to grind and work.”

After opening the season with an 11-inning tie against the Newport Gulls, Valley won seven of its

next eight games to jump near the top of the NECBL South Division standings. Strong pitching, reliable defense and timely hitting fueled victories over Ocean State, Upper Valley, Danbury, North Shore and Mystic, giving the Blue Sox an early identity as one of the league’s toughest teams.

But the middle of the summer presented new challenges.

As is common throughout the NECBL season, the roster shifted constantly as players departed and newcomers arrived. Valley dropped 10 out of 13 games between late June and mid-July, forcing the coaching staff and returning players to quickly adjust, all while keeping their postseason hopes alive.

Rather than allowing the season to slip away, the Blue Sox responded.

Please see **BLUE SOX**, page 13

CAMP from page 9

eral manager of the Valley Blue Sox, Nancy Street, who’s a board member of the Miracle League of Western Massachusetts, and Duke Castiglione Jr who’s a sportscaster at a television station in Boston.

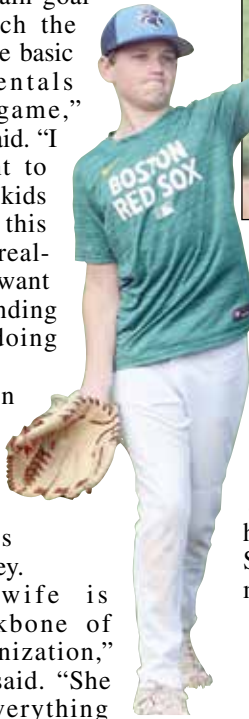
Ray Fagnant, who grew up in Chicopee and is the Boston Red Sox Northeast Regional Scouting Supervisor, also spent a day at the clinic.

A few of the different stations were hitting, fielding, and throwing.

“My main goal is to teach the players the basic fundamentals of the game,” Brisson said. “I also want to keep the kids active at this clinic. I really don’t want them standing around doing nothing.”

Brisson was aided at the clinic by his wife, Kasey.

“My wife is the backbone of the organization,” Brisson said. “She keeps everything



Brodie Craven makes a throw.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHTOS.COM

Campers receive some instructions from one of the coaches in the Forge Baseball Clinic.

in order. I appreciate all the support from many different people that I’ve received running this camp.”

Brisson and his staff is already looking forward to holding the baseball clinic at Spec Pond again next summer.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHTOS.COM
Adam Smola swings off a tee.

TRI-COUNTY from page 9

righthander Sean Rosemond at 5:55p.m. The three umpires made the decision to end the game at 7:45 p.m.

“The pace of tonight’s game was very slow,” said St. Joe’s manager Paul Marcinek. “We were very lucky to finish five innings which made it an official game.”

Had the game ended before the bottom of the fifth inning, it would’ve resumed at South Hadley High School the following day. If the score would’ve been tied, game two would’ve been replayed from the beginning, which has been a TCL rule for many years.

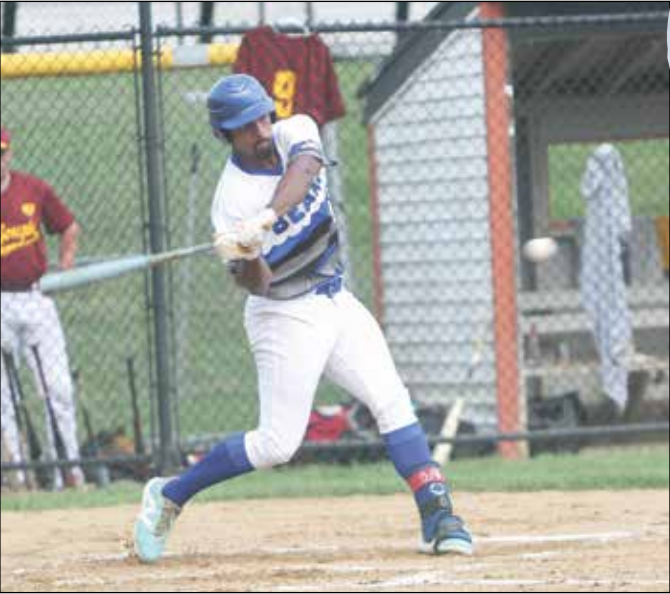
Teddy Bear won game one

Joe’s Park, last Thursday night.

Righthander Matt Drobiak, who graduated from South Hadley High School in 2024, went the distance for Teddy Bear. He allowed a run on six hits and three strikeouts without issuing a walk.

Drobiak outdueled St. Joe’s righty Trey Yesu, who graduated from Monson High School in 2022.

Yesu also went seven innings allowing three runs (two earned) on six hits with six



Ryan McLane does a running drill of the championship series, which was an old fashion pitcher’s duel, 3-1, at St.

strikeouts and two walks.

Teddy Bear took a 1-0 lead in game against lefthander



Greg Vouros fires a throw to first base.

Jackson Hayes with two outs in the bottom of the first inning following a run scoring double by second baseman Ramon Jimenez.

St. Joe’s took the lead against Rosemond in the top of the third inning.

Catcher Nate Carillon and second baseman Greg Vouros began the St. Joe’s rally with

Ray Toth makes a throw on the run.

back-to-back singles. After Drobiak retired the next batter on a pop-up, before Carillon scored the tying run following a wild pitch. Then right fielder Brian Hayes drew a walk before center-fielder Pat Fitzgibbons hit a two run single into right field giving St. Joe’s a 3-1 lead.

With one-out in the bottom of the third inning, Drobiak,



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHTOS.COM

Matt Drobiak tries to evade a run-down.

who started at first base, launched a solo home run over the left field fence.

Holding a slim 3-2 lead, St. Joe’s scored three more runs in the fourth inning.

The first two runs crossed the plate following a two-run single down the right field line by Vouros.

At that point, Rosemond was replaced on the mound by righthander Mason Barcomb.

Shortstop Jacob Hayes greeted the relief pitcher with an RBI single into left field giving the visiting team a commanding 6-2 lead.

After Jackson Hayes retired the first two batters in the bottom of the fourth

on flyballs to center, consecutive walks by third baseman Alex Gochinski, right fielder Ty Evans, and catcher Eric Robert loaded the bases. Another walk by Ryan Magni plated Teddy Bear’s second run.

Relief pitcher Matt Irzyk, who wound up as the winning pitcher in game two, retired the only batter he faced in the fourth on a pop-up caught by Jacob Hayes.

Irzyk allowed a single to shortstop Ray Toth in the bottom of the fifth inning before the umpires halted to game.

Photos and highlights from the deciding game three will be in next week’s edition.

SOCCER from page 9

graduate, delivered his first collegiate goal during the second half, which lifted the Lancers to a 1-0 shutout victory. Raines, who’s a defender, finished his college soccer career with three goals.

The Worcester State head coach at that time was Jason Willis, who’s currently an assistant coach for the Western Mass Pioneers. He also coaches a Western United Pioneers team.

Willis graduated from Ludlow High School, and he helped the Lions boys’ soccer team win two state titles and three Western Mass. titles back in the 1990’s.

Ferrara, who also graduated from Ludlow High School in the 1980’s, played many soccer games on the grass stadium field.

“I recall scoring a lot of big goals on this field while I was in high school,” Ferrara

said. “I also played for the Lusitano Whites, which won the first ever summer league championship on this field. I hope the college players appreciate the history of this place.”

This past spring, Ferrara approached UMass head coach Jason Dowiak about playing the exhibition match against UConn at Lusitano Stadium.

“Because it was UMass turned to host the exhibition, I asked coach Dowiak if he would be interested in playing the game here this year,” Ferrara said. “He thought it was a very good idea.”

It was something that Dowiak, who was hired as the UMass women’s soccer coach in 2017, had always wanted to do.

“I’m beginning my ninth season as the UMass women’s soccer coach and this is something that I’ve always wanted to do,” said Dowiak

following the scoreless draw.

“I’ve watched several Mutiny games here in the past and this was really a very special night for us. I’m very glad that the soccer community came out and supported us. This was an electric atmosphere for an exhibition game.”

A year ago, UMass posted a 5-8-4 overall record and went 3-6-2 against their Mid-American Conference foes.

“I thought my team played very well against a fantastic UConn team, and this is a positive step for us,” Dowiak added. “I feel like we can go into tough environments and still be successful.”

One of the three graduated students listed on the UMass women’s roster is Bianca Cardano, who’s from Monson. She attended Minnechaug Regional where she played soccer for Nundi Goncalves, who’s another Ludlow High graduate.

“I’ve played a lot of games at this stadium,” Cardano said. “My family and friends were here tonight. It was a very special night.”

Cardano, who’s a management major, fell in love with the UMass campus when she made her official visit.

“UMass was always my top choice,” she said. “The girls on the soccer team are like members of my own family. We’re hoping to finish first in the Mid-American Conference.”

Cardano, who’s a starting defender, played in 16 games as a freshman before missing her entire sophomore season recovering from a right knee injury. She was limited to just three matches (two starts) in 2024.

A year ago, Cardano was a starter in ten of the 14 matches that she played in.

“We’re really hoping that Bianca is able to play the whole season for us this

year,” Dowiak said. “She’s a fantastic leader on and off the field.”

Cardano isn’t the only Minnechaug girls’ soccer player to play soccer at UMass.

Jess Howe, who was a member of the Lady Falcons 2005 Western Mass championship team and the 2008 state title team, was a defender at UMass from 2009-2012.

UConn head coach Margaret Rodriguez played soccer at Lusitano Stadium for a couple of seasons as a member of the Western Mass. Lady Pioneers. She also played for the Mutiny for one year when they played their home matches at Agawam High School.

“We’ve led the Big East in fan support during the past several years,” Rodriguez said. “This was a good way for my players to get used to playing in this type of a set-

ting under the lights.”

The Huskies, who finished the 2025 campaign with an 11-4-3 overall record and a 7-1-2 conference record, were picked to finish second behind Georgetown in the BIG EAST Preseason Women’s Soccer Coaches’ Poll.

Redshirt sophomore Se-Hanna Mars, who plays for the Mutiny, was selected to the preseason All-Big East team, along with senior Anaya Johnson.

There is a very good chance that the UConn and UMass women’s soccer teams will be meeting at Lusitano Stadium again next August.

Western Mass. soccer fans will get another chance to take in collegiate action at Lusitano Stadium, as the Western New England University men’s team hosts Wesleyan University on September 22 at 7 p.m.

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.

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The Sentinel

FOOD from page 1

According to Jardine, the organizations are sister pantries which have come together to provide food and volunteers for the event, which occur every two weeks. DeLong called the partnership a “win-win situation.” Granby food mobiles occur every two weeks, where families in need may receive food after answering a few basic questions.

“We take stats to see how many people are coming through, which just gives us a good idea of who we’re feeding,” DeLong said. “We do not ask them any personal information. That is not for us to do.”

The program started out slow until a massive boom in January. Ever since the start of the year, DeLong stated the mobile was “in full force” and attributes the growth to word of mouth advertising. The donated food is sourced through food drives, community donations and earmark grants provided by the state. DeLong credited recent grant windfalls to state representatives Mindy Domb and Homar Gomez.

“We noticed the families need the real basics, like the dairy, the meats and everything else,” DeLong said when asked about what was provided by the food mobile. “We get milk, we get cheese, we will get yogurt, we will get meats.”

The night’s offerings also included peanut butter, jelly and bread. Volunteers from the church’s Youth Group and Missions Board helped with food distribution, along with volunteers from the Granby Council on Aging.

“It means a lot,” DeLong said when asked what the program meant to her. “It’s seeing that kids succeed in school by having a full stomach. I have elderly family members and, seeing that they’re also getting fed, that’s really important too.”

As the program continues



A group photo of the joint non-profit organizational effort.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY BEN HERNANDEZ



Zucchini, asparagus and red peppers presented in front of an eager volunteer.



Volunteers ready themselves for service with Select Board member Mark Bail

to grow, DeLong stated her only goal is to reach more people. As she reflected on how the food mobile continues to address the scarcity gaps within the community, she strives to ensure no one has to make a difficult choice

between eating and paying their bills.

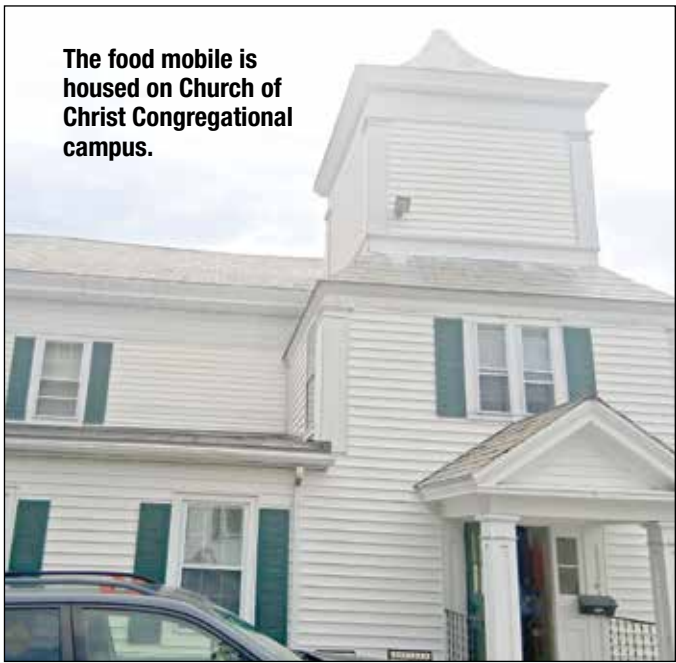
“We are there to help them make sure they get something to eat,” DeLong said. “Like I said, we want to reach as many people as we can in the community... because then we’re making sure people are getting food; so now, people don’t have to spend that extra money and they can pay the electric bill, or pay their mortgage or put gas in their car.”



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The food mobile is housed on Church of Christ Congregational campus.



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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 31, through Aug. 13. 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

Saturday, Aug. 8
6 p.m. – A Belchertown man was arrested on charges of assault and battery on a household member, operating with a suspended license and operating under the influence of alcohol/liquor. An officer responded to a parking lot for a report of a man who was hitting a person. They were located.
7:03 p.m. – A 24-year-old Granby male was placed into protective custody. An officer responded to an apartment for a report of a shirtless man trying to get into a car. The officer found the person hanging on the car. The officer spoke with the man who was identified and impaired. They were intoxicated and the officers weren't sure if they could safely walk home. They were brought to the station for protective custody. They were able to call a friend who would pick them up in the morning.

Sunday, Aug. 9
2:34 p.m. – A 42-year-old Ludlow male was issued a summons for operating with a suspended license and using an electronic device while operating a motor vehicle. An officer stopped a vehicle after seeing the operator holding a cell phone in their hand while they were driving. They were putting an address into a GPS. The offi-

cer also found the person's license was suspended for an immediate threat. Then they indicated they knew it was suspended. The vehicle was towed from the scene.

Monday, Aug. 10
2:33 p.m. – An officer doing an incident follow up with issues with neighbors. The argument happened after the property was surveyed. One resident also had video of a child of the neighbor dumping grass clippings into their yard. They attempted to contact the neighbor. A criminal complaint will be filed once information is obtained for illegal disposal.
3:04 p.m. – A woman was issued a summons for assault and battery on a family/household member.

Thursday, Aug. 13
4:54 p.m. – An 18-year-old male was arrested on charges of three counts assault and battery with a dangerous weapon associated with a mental health and domestic incident.

ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS
Friday, July 31
12:12 p.m. – Officers responded to residence for a report of a missing elderly woman. She had a history of walking home. She walked from the residence 40 minutes prior to the call. A ping was done on her phone and then an officer was able to locate the person on North Main Street. Belchertown Fire paramedics evaluated and bought to station for a pickup.
4:21 p.m. – A person spoke with an officer with concerns about an acquaintance they had.
5:20 p.m. – An officer spoke with a person about concerns regarding elder abuse and financial matters.

Sunday, Aug. 2
10:33 a.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Bardwell Street. A vehi-

cle going west on Bardwell Street went off the roadway and struck a tree stump and into the yard of a residence. The airbags were deployed. The vehicle was towed. No injuries were reported.
12:19 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Bay Road. A U-Hail took down power lines and drove away from the scene. Upon the officer's arrival, electrical and cable lines were pulled down. The road was blocked off. The officer got the registration plate from a witness at the scene. A subpoena was filed to get information on who was using the U-Haul at the time of the accident.
8:15 p.m. – An officer responded to a North Main Street residence for a resident who was concerned about a neighbor using a camera and pointing it at the property. They didn't know which direction it was facing in.

Monday, Aug. 3
12:39 p.m. – An officer spoke with a person regarding an incident of fraud. They were contacted by their bank reporting a check had been altered and cashed. The check was made to a company for services that were rendered and the company never got the check. The person was also told the amount was changed. The bank they made the check from was in Rhode Island, it was negotiated and cleared at another bank. An officer reached out to the bank to get video footage of the incident. The matter was being forwarded to an investigator.
1:52 p.m. – Officers emptying the drug take-back box. BPD wants to remind the public that sharps, liquids and inhalers don't go in the take back box. There will now be plastic bags to empty pill bottles into before being disposed of in the box.
9:45 p.m. – An officer responded to a residence to deal with a domestic and

mental health event involving a juvenile.

Tuesday, Aug. 4
4 a.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Boardman Road. A vehicle trying to back up and do a three-point turn, went into a ditch on Boardman Road. It was towed and driven away from the scene. No injuries were reported.
1:56 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident. A vehicle that was parked and unoccupied was struck by another vehicle that left the scene. The parked vehicle was able to be driven from the scene.

Wednesday, Aug. 5
8:41 p.m. – Belchertown fire paramedics and an officer went to a residence for a juvenile who was in a mental health crisis.
1:41 p.m. – An officer responded to a residence for a verbal domestic violence incident.
11:55 p.m. – An officer responded to a report of a stolen package. The person said they had packages to take in from the front stairs of their residence ordered from several businesses. They said they would get a receipt to the officer. There are no suspects at this time. Then the next day the officer followed up with the resident. The resident said they are waiting for reimbursement for one of the packages then they wouldn't need the incident report. They wanted the matter documented.

Thursday, Aug. 6
2:48 p.m. – An officer spoke with a resident regarding a check written to a company decided not to do business then later discovered purchase was made and no one knew who made the purchase and went to bank to report fraud. The matter was documented.
11:46 p.m. – An officer spoke with a person

about a past disturbance the night before the person was involved in a divorce. There were concerns about the children and the person wanted the incident to be documented.

Friday, Aug. 7
9:15 a.m. – An officer took a report of past threats made to a resident on Gulf Road. The person said they were exploring a relationship with a person when the person said they were going to go to the caller's house to confront them. They wanted the conversation documented. It was regarding a photo that was sent from one person to the other. The matter was documented.
12:23 p.m. – A resident wanted to turn in a BB gun they no longer used and it was entered into property to be destroyed.
2:46 p.m. – An officer was going to a residence for a mental health check. They were making threats to hurt themselves. A wellbeing check was conducted.
6:56 p.m. – An officer neighbor dispute. The officer spoke with the people involved. One person was allegedly harassing the person for money that was owed to them. Then the person was told they owed more money than originally agreed upon. The officer said it was a civil issue and were advised how to get a harassment prevention order.

Tuesday, Aug. 11
11:23 a.m. – An officer spoke with a Mill Valley Road resident for a phone call from a person claiming to need gift cards to make a payment on their electric bill. They were concerned about their bill being compromised and wanted to have the matter documented.
1:35 p.m. – An officer took a report of larceny/fraud. The resident got a phone call from a company they used to send money electronically. They believed it was legit and then said a recent transaction was not completed when their bank account was not reflecting the information. They also had another withdrawal through another account which wasn't flagged as fraud. Their WhatsApp account was hacked, and then suspicious messages were sent too.
3:42 p.m. – An officer and Belchertown fire paramedics responded to a youth in crisis. They were transported to the hospital for evaluation.

Wednesday, Aug. 12
6:23 a.m. – A person reported an elderly woman was disoriented and they fell. They didn't speak English.
7:34 a.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Federal Street. A vehicle reversed out of a parking spot in a parking lot of a Federal Street business and was struck by another vehicle. There was damage to both vehicles, but both were able to be driven from the scene. No injuries were reported.
3:46 p.m. – An officer responded to a George Hannum Road business to speak with loss prevention staff to report to shoplifting. The officer spoke with the person who reported a person entered through the store and grabbed energy drinks into a shopping cart from the back of the store. Then the person went out the exit on the opposite side of the entry.

They walked past open registers and then handed off the carriage to another person. After looking at surveillance they identified the suspect in question. One of the officers thought they recognized the person. Further investigation will be conducted.
4:05 p.m. – An officer spoke with a person about a scam. The person said they began an online relationship with a person they've never met in person. The relationship began in Dec. 2025. The person was asked to send photos of themselves and then the person proceeded to blackmail them. They were told to give the person gift cards and money. The matter was documented.
7:12 p.m. – An officer conducted a wellbeing check on a person concerning a disturbance that occurred with their neighbor. They have an ongoing issue with the neighbor. When one person came home, it appeared the neighbor was waiting for them, and they began yelling at one another. They swore at the person.

Thursday, Aug. 13
10:01 a.m. – An officer responded to a report of suspicious activity. An officer responded to a North Main Street residence for a report of a person knocking on a back door. The officer walked to the rear of the building and saw one person smoking on a different porch. They said their friend lives in the apartment, and they were waiting for the friend.

Granby Police Log

Editor's Note: The Granby Police Department responded to 165 calls for the week of Aug. 7 through Aug. 13. Those arrested are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. The Granby Police Department provides all information.

Saturday, Aug. 8
8:43 a.m. – A Red Fire employee reported a theft from their cash box in the farm stand. An incident report was completed.
9:25 a.m. – A motorist reported a two-car accident. Granby Police and Fire responded. There were no injuries.

Sunday, Aug. 9
6:43 p.m. – A motorist reported a two-car accident. South Hadley Police and Massachusetts State Police were called for mutual aid because our officers were on another call. Granby Fire responded. There were no injuries and state police completed the accident report.

Monday, Aug. 10
4:01 p.m. – A resident reported a minor two-car accident. There were no injuries.

Wednesday, Aug. 12
8:15 p.m. – A motorist reported that a deer just ran into their car. There were no injuries.

Thursday, Aug. 13
4:18 p.m. – A caller reported that a vehicle struck an electric bicycle at the listed intersection. Granby Police and Fire responded. No one was in the area after they arrived and the call was unfounded.

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MOVIE NIGHT from page 1

“Showtime is 8 p.m. We’ll have a booth up for about an hour,” Delphia said and mentioned later the booth opening will be at 7 p.m. “Of course, we’ll be taking donations but again, the event is free for the public.”

The movie night is one of many events in the works for the council, who strives to put Granby on the map as

both a cultural epicenter and a local tourist attraction. The events are designed to not only bring more eyes to the town but to increase awareness around the Cultural Council.

“I think we wanted to do something that was family friendly,” Delphia said when asked why they chose the iconic movie as the night’s screening. “It’s an outdoor movie night so there may be

noise, but I think so many people have seen this film that it won’t be a problem for people to miss little parts or if they have to get up and get an ice cream.”

Delphia stated the well-known film was a way to pull people in and get townsfolk more involved with the wider community. She expressed her desire to have original and different events in town other than the usual band

music nights or other traditional outdoor concerts.

“We want to try to attract other artists, maybe have more ideas of what to do outside,” Delphia said. The chair stated she wanted to have more “diversity” in the Council’s offerings, “maybe more diverse cultural events” as a supplement to more traditional planned outings. She cited plays as one potential fun offering for the

community and expressed a desire for more venues within town limits.

“One of the things that we would love to do is a food truck event,” Delphia said when asked which events she would like to see appear in Granby and what limitations the Council is facing. “We could have a great resource in Duffrense Park. We have other buildings that we think we could use but we

don’t. So, I think it’s really the space dictates a lot of what we can do.”

Those interested in running future events in Granby should be aware they do not necessarily have to be from the town, so long as the festivities take place within town limits. Those interested in pitching an event may reach out to the Granby Cultural Council at gcultural-council@gmail.com.

BLUE SOX from page 10

Beginning with a July 16 win over Ocean State, Valley continued the winning ways to close the regular season 10-3, including victories over Sanford, Vermont, Martha’s Vineyard and Ocean State. Valley capped off their hot finish by sweeping a must-win doubleheader on the final day of the regular season to secure the seventh seed in the NECBL playoffs.

Along the way, Valley reached the 20-win mark, a milestone Raiola said should

not be overlooked.

“Twenty wins is an accomplishment,” Raiola said. “It is tough to win 20 games in this league.”

The late-season push reflected the resilience the Blue Sox built over the course of the summer.

“Look at what happened [and] where we were in the middle of the year, and then [look at] how we ended it,” Raiola said. “Do you quit when times get tough, or do you stick it out and keep working?”

The postseason, however,

presented another challenge.

With four games in three days just to reach the playoffs, Valley entered its opening-round series against Sanford with a taxed pitching staff and an everyday lineup that had shouldered a heavy workload during the season’s final stretch. The Mainers capitalized, winning Games 1 and 2 to end the Blue Sox’s season.

“We just ran out of gas before we got to the finish line,” Raiola said.

Still, the finish did little to diminish what the group

accomplished.

“We don’t always want to have to win 10 out of the last 13 to get in. We’d like to take care of business a little bit before that, but that’s the way it went this year,” Raiola said. “Credit to [the players] who had to go out there and show up every single day, tired, same lineup and grinding their way through it ... Overall, [We want them to] be better at the end than when they started.”

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Local business offers to match donations for return of fireworks

BELCHERTOWN — The Town of Belchertown is preparing for the return of community fireworks on Sept. 24, the centerpiece of its America250 Semiquincentennial celebration, held alongside the Belchertown Fair. A new matching-donation opportunity from a local business is helping build momentum toward the event.

Window World of Western Mass. has offered to match community donations to the fireworks fund, dollar for dollar, up to \$12,000. The matching opportunity means that every gift made between now and the event will effectively double in impact, helping the community reach its fundraising goal.

“Belchertown has always been more than the place where we do business — it’s home. My family and I have built our lives

here, and we’re grateful to be part of a community that has supported us for so many years. The Belchertown Fair has long been a tradition that brings families, friends, and neighbors together, and the fireworks have always been one of the highlights. That’s why my family and I are proud to match donations to help bring the fireworks back this September. We hope our commitment encourages others to join us so this cherished tradition can continue creating memories for families throughout our community,” said Tim Drost, Owner, Window World of Western Mass.

Several community sponsors have already stepped forward to help fund the display, including Hulmes Transportation, Easthampton Savings Bank, and Country Bank, along with other generous local donors.

“Community sponsors like these are what make an event like this possible,” said Kyle Thibeault, Recreation Director. “This night is about so much more than fireworks — it’s tied to the Belchertown Fair and to our town’s celebration of America’s 250th anniversary. Having local businesses and residents invest in that means the whole community gets to be part of something memorable together.”

Businesses interested in becoming a fireworks sponsor, across three sponsorship levels, are encouraged to contact Kyle Thibeault, Recreation Director, at KThibeault@belchertown.org or 413-323-0419.

Residents interested in making a donation can do so through the Recreation Department’s fireworks donation page: www.belchertown.org/FireworksDonation

Kids’ Corner workshop Aug. 29

WARE — The next Kids’ Corner workshop at Ware Grange will be the “Enchanted Forest Nature Party” and will take place during the Grange Fair on Saturday, Aug. 29 at 10 a.m. at the Grange Hall at 297 Belchertown Road in Ware.

Kids’ Corner workshops

are led by preschool teacher, Jen McNally, and teach children about nature and the environment through stories, songs and fun activities.

This workshop will explore the great outdoors in conjunction with the Ware Grange Fair.

Children will take a guided nature walk to learn about our outdoor world and look for natural items to use in making crafts.

Visit Ware Grange on Facebook or at waregrange.org for more information.

HEALTH from page 6

cope, because that’s how generations past have done it.”

In perimenopause, which can start in a woman’s late 30s, and menopause, estrogen levels begin dropping, which is what brings on a host of physical and emotional symptoms. Each month after puberty, your body prepares for pregnancy. In menopause, the ovaries stop that process, sometimes gradually and sometimes abruptly, as when a woman undergoes a hysterectomy that also removes the ovaries.

getting a receptor that helps regulate body temperature.

I think the most promising development in menopause treatment is the “matriarchal revolution,” the realization that post-menopausal years can be a time of increased empowerment and leadership, as women find new opportunities to embrace their wisdom and life experiences.

Gen X won’t let their daughters and granddaughters suffer, either. As one woman wrote on social media, “We’re going to be out there teaching Gen Z and Gen Alpha about what

to expect and how to treat symptoms.”

You go, girl.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, a Monson resident, is a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate. She is the author of several books on advocacy and founder of Nurse Advocate Entrepreneur, which equips medical professionals with the knowledge and skills to start their own advocacy businesses. Contact her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com.

There seem to be two main themes surrounding the discussion of menopause today: Better treatment and management of symptoms and the sense of empowerment a woman can gain when her child-bearing years are past.

Menopause is a natural process, not an illness or condition. Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) has long been in use as a front-line treatment for easing menopausal hot flashes. It also eases other menopause symptoms and slows bone loss. It’s best used by people who are younger than 60 and within 10 years of the onset of menopause.

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Not everyone can use estrogen because of cancer risks, although low-dosage creams or rings that can be inserted into the vagina are generally helpful for vaginal dryness, urinary issues and painful intercourse.

It’s encouraging to see new therapies emerging and new uses being found for existing medications. Low-dose antidepressants (SSRIs) and the anti-seizure medication gabapentin have been shown to reduce hot flashes, one of the most common complaints. Medications to slow bone loss and additional calcium are helpful. Soy may also reduce frequency and severity of symptoms.

Researchers are working to develop treatments that effectively manage menopausal symptoms while minimizing risks associated with HRT. A new non-hormonal treatment from AbCellera just completed a successful phase two clinical trial in which participants reported 83% fewer hot flashes and better sleep. It works by tar-

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE TO BIDDERS HVAC UPGRADES TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN POLICE STATION & SENIOR CENTER

The Town of Belchertown, the Awarding Authority, invites sealed bids for the HVAC Upgrades at Belchertown Police Station 70 State Street and Senior Center, 60 State Street, Belchertown, Massachusetts 01007.

The work involves the replacement of air handler units, fan coils, electronics, controls, and electric power upgrades. Estimated construction cost is six hundred thousand dollars (\$ 600,000).

DCAMM certification and update are required in the category of HVAC, prime.

DCAMM certification and update are required in the category of Electrical sub-bid

Bidder selection, procedures and contract awards shall be in conformity with M.G.L. Chapter 149 Section 44A-H. State mandated prevailing wage rates must be paid according to M.G.L. Chapter 149 sections 26-27H.

Digital copies of the drawings and specifications may be obtained by emailing requests to the office of Roy S. Brown Architects at 85rsba@gmail.com after Thursday, August 20, 2026 at 2 pm.

Sealed sub-bids for Electrical will be accepted from eligible bidders at the office of the Town Administrator, Finnerty House, 1 South Main Street, Belchertown, Massachusetts 01007 until 2:00 pm, Thursday, September 10, 2026 at which time they shall be publicly opened. A bid security

in the form of a bid bond, cash or certified check in the amount of five percent (5%) of the bid price must accompany the bid.

Sealed General Bids will be accepted from eligible bidders at the office of the Town Administrator, Finnerty House, 1 South Main Street, Belchertown, Massachusetts 01007 until 2:00 pm, Thursday, September 17, 2026 at which time they shall be publicly opened. A bid security in the form of a bid bond, cash or certified check in the amount of five percent (5%) of the bid price must accompany the bid.

A contractor briefing is scheduled Friday August 28, 2026 at 10 am, beginning at the Belchertown Police Station, 70 State Street and following at the Senior Center, 60 State Street, Belchertown, MA 01007.

The Awarding Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids, should it be deemed in the public interest to do so.

Steven J. Williams, Director
Town Administrator
08/20/2026

Remote access: <https://meet.goto.com/173538941>; **Phone:** +1 (408) 650-3123; **Access Code:** 173-538-941.

The subject matter to amend the zoning bylaw, Chapter 145 of the Code of the Town of Belchertown, by amending Chapter 145, Article V, §145-11, Schedule of Uses, to permit certain business uses in the Industrial zone as posted on the town’s web site and on file with the Town Clerk and Planning Department.

The complete text relative to the proposed amendments are available for inspection during regular business hours at the Town Clerk’s office and the Planning Board office and at masspublicnotices.org 08/20, 08/27/2026

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

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Town of Belchertown

Sealed sub-bids for Electrical will be accepted from eligible bidders at the office of the Town Administrator, Finnerty House, 1 South Main Street, Belchertown, Massachusetts 01007 until 2:00 pm, Thursday, September 10, 2026 at which time they shall be publicly opened. A bid security in the form of a bid bond, cash or certified check in the amount of five percent (5%) of the bid price must accompany the bid.

Health Director

The Town of Belchertown is seeking a full-time Health Director to oversee the health department. The position is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the health department, including the management of the health department staff, the development and implementation of health department policies and procedures, and the coordination of health department activities with other town departments. The Health Director will also be responsible for the development and implementation of health department programs and services, and for the coordination of health department activities with other town departments.

DRIVE FOR THE QUADRO CONNECTOR

The Town of Belchertown is seeking qualified candidates to perform high-level secretarial, clerical, and administrative work assisting the Town Administrator and Select Board. This is a part-time 10 hours per week position. For full job description, go to www.belchertown-ma.gov.

TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN

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BELL & HUDSON INSURANCE AGENCY INC., 19 North Main St., Belchertown, MA 01007. Tel. 413-323-9611, 800-894-9591. Fax 413-323-6117. Home, auto, life, commercial, group health.

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BOYDEN & PERRON INC. Sales and service, Toro, Wheel Horse, Scag, Jonsered, Residential and Commercial. 41 South Whitney St., Amherst, since 1956. Call today. 253-7358.

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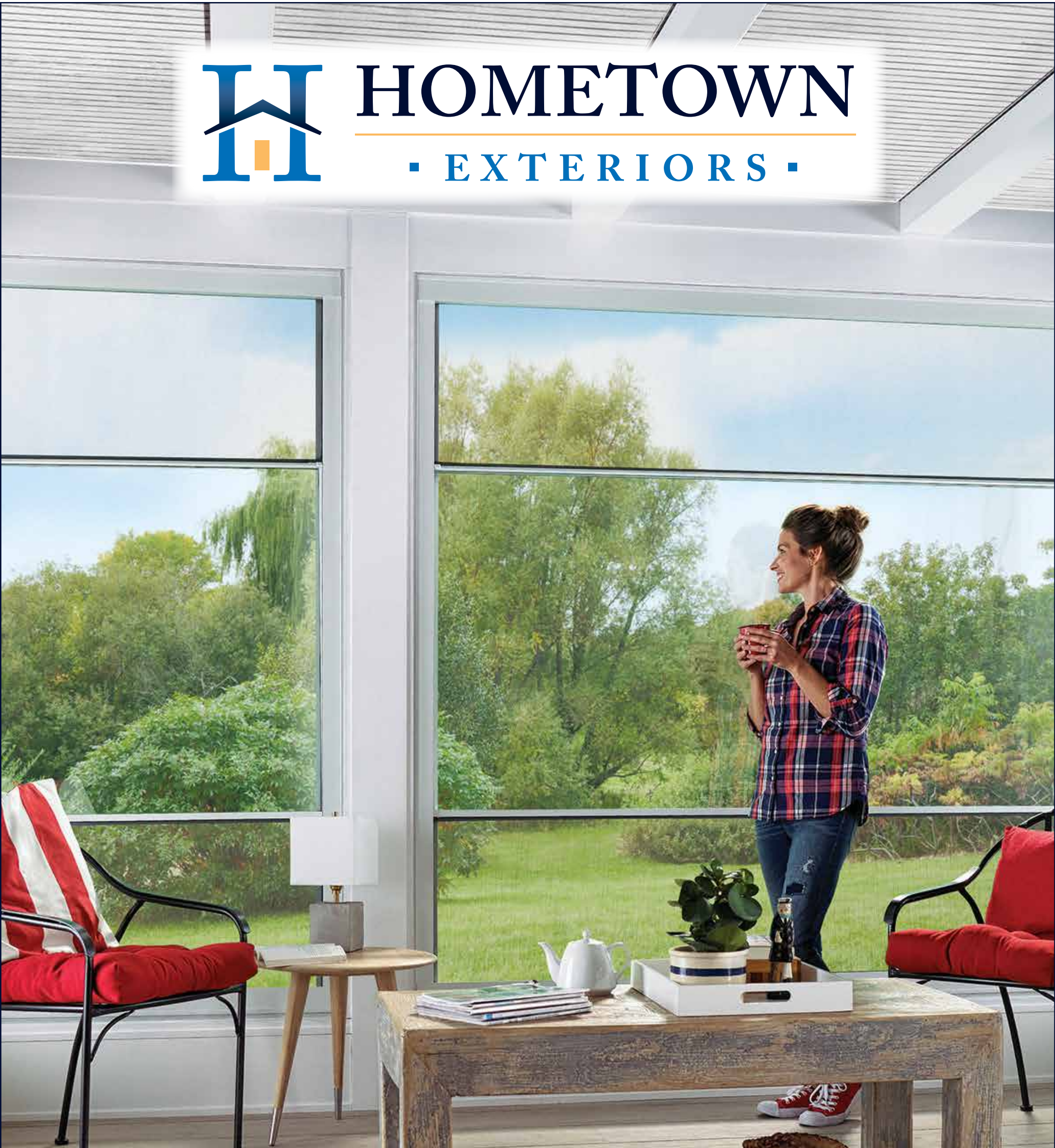
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