

## Relay for Life walks to scare away cancer

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

BELCHERTOWN – Cancer is terrible. It not only impacts the people who have it, but the people around them in many ways.

Relay for Life, an organization created by the American Cancer Society, was designed to help raise money to sponsor the research and care of people with cancer, in the hopes of finding a cure for all cancers, so no one needs to suffer.

“I went for my first relay in 2008, the year after I was diagnosed with Esophageal Cancer. Within 4 years, I joined the event leadership team and became event lead in about 2015,” said Brian Meehan. “I have been involved with the Quaboag Valley Relay for Life since 2010. For the first three years, I helped



Team members dressed up and ready to scare away cancer.

TURLEY PHOTO BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS

Please see **RELAY**, page 5

## Fin Com tackles budget clarity

School funding at annual meeting

By Melina Bourdeau  
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN — The Finance Committee grappled with the continuing challenges of local budgeting, school funding, and financial transparency as members approved annual reports, debated formatting changes, and discussed the nuances of the state’s Chapter 70 education funding formula.

Free cash policy and budget allocations

A significant portion of the meeting addressed how

Please see **FINCOM**, page 4

## Town administrator Tammy Martin fired by Selectboard

Martin’s attorney has filed open meeting complaints, says dismissal was without cause

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer  
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GRANBY – The Granby Selectboard has fired Tammy Martin, and the ousted town

administrator is claiming she was terminated without cause.

In addition, her attorney alleges the Selectboard violated the Open Meeting Law on the date they dismissed her from the position.

An Open Meeting Law complaint has been filed against the town by former Martin, who was fired on Dec. 1, 2025.

In a letter to the Sentinel, John Clifford, of Clifford & Kenny LLP stated that “Ms. Martin was fired without any justification or cause.”

“The basic problem is that they signed a contract with Tammy that started last March, and that contract gives her job security in that she can’t be fired without just cause.”

– Atty. John Clifford

The letter alleges that Martin’s termination was a breach of her contract with the town and violated state labor and transparency laws.

According to the letter sent to the Sentinel, Clifford writes: “On November 26, 2025, the day before Thanksgiving, the Selectboard posted two agendas for December 1, 2025... The executive session agenda was intended for negotiations with non-union personnel. The open session agenda did not list

or include any items relating to the Town Administrator’s employment.”

Clifford filed an Open Meeting Law violation complaint with the Attorney General’s office on Dec. 10. Per state law, the complaint was also filed with the Granby Selectboard.

Clifford has since shared plans to move forward with a lawsuit against the town of Granby on behalf of Martin.

In a statement made at the Monday, Jan. 5 Selectboard Meeting, Chair Mark Bail said, “Attorney John Clifford,

who is representing former Town Administrator Tammy Martin, filed a complaint that the Selectboard violated open meeting law.

Tonight, we are voting to authorize labor counsel Jack Collins and town counsel Brian O’Toole to respond to those allegations.

“Last week, Attorney Clifford sent a press release to the Daily Hampshire Gazette and Belchertown Sentinel. Because there are laws that rightly protect the

Please see **MARTIN**, page 3



Everyone proudly showing off their adorable needle-felted penguins.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS

## Learning a new skill, making little friends

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

BELCHERTOWN – The cold months are a time where people look for more cozy things to do indoors rather than venture into the cold. One of those unique projects to try is needle felting.

The Clapp Memorial Library, sponsored by the Friends, hosted a special session for all to come and learn how to needle felt a baby penguin with talented artist and needle felter, Anna Sunschaer.

“What got me into it was my mom had a pair of felted wool slippers, and I thought, ‘I’ve got to fix this’, so I went on Google,” said Anna Sunschaer. “It brought me a lot of joy to be able to fix it for her, and it opened up a whole world and craft I never knew about.”

Sunschaer learned to make little Pokémon char-



An army of little penguins, each one unique to the one who made them.

acters, and then kept going, making adorable and colorful little animals like manta rays, bunnies, deer, bears, lizards, and so much more as she perfected the craft, then took it to share in workshops at libraries.

Sunschaer began their workshops right at the Clapp Memorial Library, thanks to the steadfast and encouraging words and support from Director Cyndi Harbeson,

who showed them they were capable of leading a workshop or two.

“The thing I love most about it is that you can make almost anything, and you don’t need any special equipment—just one tool,” said Sunschaer.

They found joy in creating the little felted creatures, and in sharing the art form with others, providing the tools to make the little critters,

including chickens at a past workshop, and sharing the love of the craft.

Tools to create the felted creatures include wool strands, a Styrofoam cube to stab into, and a special needle to help gather and press the wool together.

People were able to go at their own pace, sit back and relax with friends and family, and of course, have fun learning something new.

## CML looks forward to celebrating a new year

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer  
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BELCHERTOWN – The new year is here, and with it come chances for new opportunities, new goals, and so much more for the Clapp Memorial Library to hold.

Whether your personal goals involve learning a new language, like Director Cyndi Harbeson, who wants to learn Akan Twi, a dialect spoken in Ghana to com-

municate with family and friends, or something else, 2026 is the perfect time to do so.

“We’ve wanted to do Juneteenth programming since we started, and this year, we’re going to do it with some fun events, so I’m really looking forward to that,” said Harbeson.

Some of the other new and exciting events coming to the library this year include cele-

Please see **CML**, page 8



Ruthie Sterling and Director Cyndi Harbeson bundled up with warm scarves.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

# DL&G TREE

Tree  
Removal



Structural  
Pruning



Crane  
Service



Storm  
Damage



Stump  
Grinding



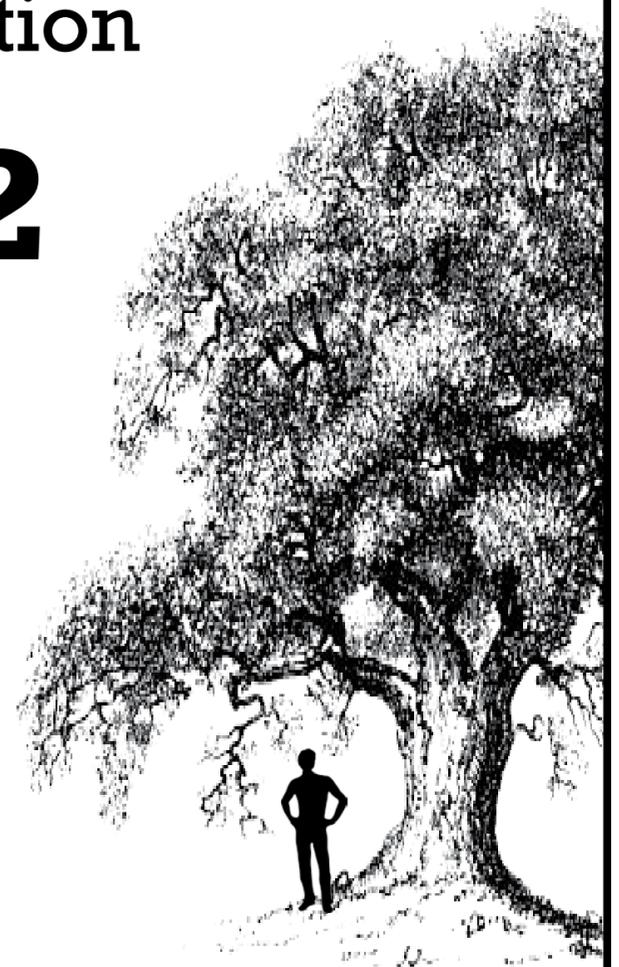
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# DL&G TREE



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## COMMUNITY

## Baystate Wing's CHNA reported to Quaboag Valley Food Policy Council

By Paula Ouimette  
pouimette@turley.com

WARE – Members of the Quaboag Valley Food Policy Council heard the results of Baystate Wing Hospital's recent Community Health Needs Assessment.

Presenting the findings of the assessment at the Dec. 17 meeting were Annamie Golden, Director of Community Relations and Community Benefits at Baystate Health and Lisa Ranghelli, Director of Assessment and Capacity Building at the Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts.

Golden explained the purpose of the assessment, and how its data is used to help address the health needs of the communities Baystate Wing Hospital serves.

Golden said nonprofit hospitals are required to conduct a CHNA every three years.

Baystate Wing Hospital is located in Palmer, with 46 patient beds, 50 physicians and 500 employees. The hospital serves patients across multiple counties including Hampshire, Hampden and Worcester.

Golden said the hospital has a busy emergency department, with 20 private patient rooms, trauma and behavioral health crisis services and CT and X-ray services. Last year the emergency department had more than 38,000 patient visits.

"Our team there is absolutely fabulous," she said.

Data for the assessment is collected through various sources thanks to the partnership of nine hospitals and insurers through the Coalition of Western MA Hospitals/Insurers.

"The coalition was established in 2012 to leverage resources," Golden said. "There's a lot of overlap."

Ranghelli shared the key findings of the CHNA, which highlighted health trends and needs across the counties.

"This is a very comprehensive and inclusive process. We use it as our starting point," Ranghelli said. "A lot of different folks have been engaged."

Ranghelli said data was collected from 300 community members from western Massachusetts, through focus groups, key informant interviews, public health surveys and through regional advisory committee members.

The CHNA took into consideration social and economic influences, barriers to care, health behaviors and outcomes and priority populations.

The key findings for this year's CHNA showed a focus on maternal health,

mental health, substance use, access to basic needs (food, housing and transportation) and difficulty with insurance and medical systems.

"Access to needs is a perennial challenge, including food, transportation and housing," Ranghelli said.

### Maternal health

Ranghelli reported that the level of adequate prenatal care rates have dropped by 10-20% per county, based on whether the patient has private or public health insurance.

"Access to prenatal care showed a difference based on what health insurance you have," she said. "Public health insurance had more barriers across all three counties."

Ranghelli said higher rates of low birth weights were also reported by patients with public health insurance, especially in Hampshire County.

"Hampshire County has doubled the low birth weight for public insurance compared to private," she said.

### Adult mental health and substance use

Ranghelli said the assessment found an increase in the rates of poor mental health, compared to findings from 2019.

"Unfortunately, we see increases in rates of poor mental health and we're seeing that across the board," she said. "This continues to be a challenge in the present day."

Binge drinking was also identified as an ongoing challenge in all of the counties. With one in five people reporting having binge drank.

Ranghelli said while there has been a more positive shift in substance use care in the community, those who use substances are still facing barriers for basic needs in addition to discrimination and stigma in emergency rooms and other medical settings.

Ranghelli said people from the Recovery Center of HOPE were interviewed about these barriers, and that the staff leaders at Baystate Wing Hospital were responsive to the feedback received.

Youth substance use and mental health

In the spring, students at Monson, North Brookfield and Quabbin Regional middle/high schools were given a survey about substance use.

The survey showed that alcohol is the most commonly used substance with 20% of eighth grade students reporting that they tried it.

Mental health continues to be a challenge, with four out of 10 students reporting

daily anxiety. Seventy-eight percent of LGBTQIA+ students reported high levels of daily anxiety.

Of all students surveyed, 27% reported feeling depressed or sad nearly every day.

### Common themes

Ranghelli said there's "a lot of crosscutting themes" across the following population groups: older adults, immigrants and refugees and young children and their parents/caregivers. Barriers include access to transportation, access to technology, earning a livable wage, access to reliable and affordable childcare and access to food.

"One of the biggest expenses for grandparent caregivers is food for the children," she said.

Ranghelli said many grandparent caregivers do not qualify for government assistance to help with food insecurity, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Older adults are struggling with housing, social isolation and loneliness, and a lack of geriatric care providers. Women age 65+ are more likely to be widowed and living in poverty than men are.

With immigrants and refugees, there is a great need for trauma informed care and practice. There are also language barriers, despite Baystate Wing Hospital having translation services.

Transportation in rural areas is still a barrier to healthcare, which can also have an impact on a person's ability to get food.

Ranghelli said the Quaboag Connector, a transportation service based out of Ware, is trying to meet those needs.

Ranghelli said the cost of housing has continued to rise and the town of Palmer reported higher eviction rates.

"Many folks, more than a quarter, pay more than 30% of their income for housing," she said.

Food insecurity had decreased in 2021 when supports were in place, but now there is an uptick due to inflation and those supports being gone.

Ranghelli said the top searches on 413Cares were related to housing and food.

"We know we have areas where food isn't available and we have limited access," she said.

### More about the CHNA

The 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment is available at baystatehealth.org/CHNA. The Health New England Community Health Needs Assessment will be published in January 2026.



## Thanking Santa for a wonderful season

As the Christmas season comes to an end, we want to thank George "Santa" Randall for filling our Legion Hall with holiday cheer and making the wishes and dreams of so many children a possibility. Thank you, Santa!

## Granby to Go Mobile serving the community

GRANBY – The Granby To Go Food Mobile will be coming again to the Church of Christ parking lot located

at 235 State St, in Granby on January 23 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. This food mobile is for all Granby residents and is

a drive thru food mobile For more information or questions you may contact us granbyto-go@granbyschoolsma.net.

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privacy of employees, and on the advice of counsel, the Board will not be making further comment in this forum at this time."

The vote by the Selectboard to terminate Martin was 2-1, and was made under the understanding she was still in her current probationary period, which, under the "Compensation" section in her employment agreement, contains a footnote that pointed towards a six-month probation that would occur during the first year of her employment.

Martin, although her contract states that her employment agreement went into effect on March 3, did not begin with an official start date until June 2, according to the Selectboard. Using this date in June, Martin's probationary period would have ended on Dec. 3, two days after her termination.

The Selectboard posted a meeting that included an executive session to discuss her contract, but it does not show in the agenda that they were planning on terminating Tammy in any way, leading Clifford and Martin to file an Open Meeting Law violation. The Dec. 1 Selectboard agenda can be found on the Town Website.

"The basic problem is that they signed a contract with Tammy that started last March, and that contract gives her job securi-

ty in that she can't be fired without just cause," Clifford said in an interview with the Sentinel.

Bail disagrees with Clifford's allegation of an Open Meeting Law violation, and that Martin had a probationary period in place, and the Selectboard decided not to extend this probationary period, and also shared that Tammy did not want to extend the period, and so, her employment ended with the end of the probationary period.

Bail said it is "customary for a contract employee to have a probationary period where they are an at-will employee during that time, and if it didn't work out, they could be fired."

Bail refused any public comment to the Sentinel regarding the exact reasoning for Martin's termination, and Labor Counsel Jack Collins declined comment, deferring to Town Counsel Brian O'Toole, who has not responded to the Sentinel's request for information as of press time.

Clifford countered with the claims that Martin's work contract says something different, and that the Selectboard "decided" to fire her as a probationary employee.

"The contract doesn't explain what this probationary period is, either," Clifford said over the phone in an interview with the Sentinel.

The press release from Clifford notes toward the end

## Free Rabies, Microchip Clinic

BELCHERTOWN – On Sunday, Jan. 18, 2026, from 9 to 11 a.m., there will be a free rabies vaccine and microchip clinic being held at the Belchertown Animal Control, at 165 George Hannum St., Belchertown.

The Belchertown Animal Relief Committee, BARC, is sponsoring the event and covering the costs of all vaccines and chips. Dr. Molly Russo, owner of Westbrook Veterinary Hospital, will be the attending vet. Dogs must be on a leash and cats in carriers. Please bring proof of a previous rabies vaccine.

For any questions, please call 413-519-1754.

that "On a well-deserved day off, she was told by Mark Bail, via text message, that he intended to fire her that Monday evening."

Clifford states that the Selectboard did not give a reason for Martin's termination.

In a phone interview with the Sentinel, Bail explained that there were some internal, private issues within personnel, but that he didn't have evidence for the issues, only words from others, and did not provide any further comment or information at this time.

Clifford, in the press release, details three violations against the town that they are taking action for: A violation of a breach on work contract, a violation of the wage act (she was fired on Dec. 1, and the town did not pay her all money owed on the day of her firing), and a violation of Open Meeting Law with no posting of decision before decision was made.

"By making this hasty, ill-considered decision, they've put the town on the hook," Clifford said in a phone interview.

The town is now searching for a new Town Administrator. At their Thursday, Dec. 4 meeting, the board appointed Police Chief Kevin O'Grady as the interim Town Administrator. Applications for the position will remain open until Jan. 30.

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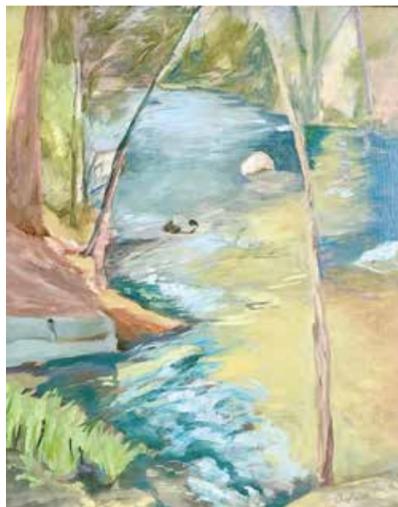
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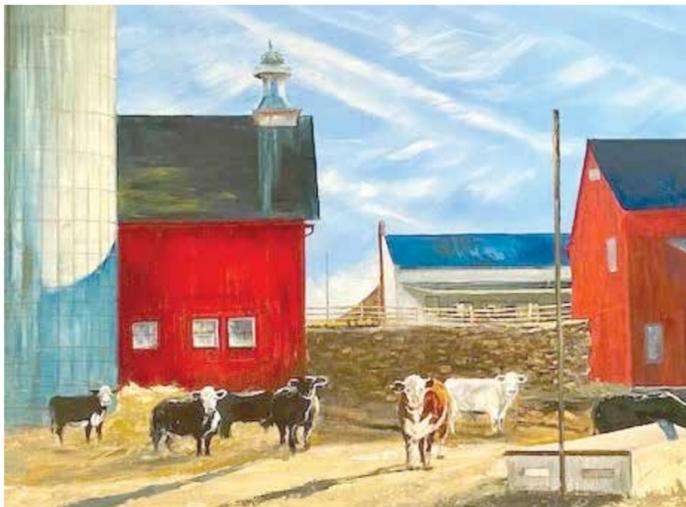
Jim.Potter@Raveis.com

200 Triangle Street | Amherst, MA 01002





Deborah Sacon



Susan Pecora



Terrence Kiernan

## Art exhibit showcases Quabbin Art Association artists at NBSB

BELCHERTOWN — The Quabbin Art Association announces year-round rotating art exhibits at North Brookfield Savings Bank, 4 Daniel Shays Highway in Belchertown. The lobby will feature work by QAA members, with shows changing every three months.

The opening exhibit shows artwork by artists Terrence Kiernan, Susan Pecora, and Deborah Sacon, now on display through March during regular business hours.

QAA is grateful to North Brookfield Savings Bank for its

support of local artists and commitment to enriching the community through the arts.

**About Quabbin Art Association**  
The Quabbin Art Association (QAA) is a Belchertown-based regional arts organization dedicated to supporting artists and promoting access to the visual arts through exhibitions, education, and community partnerships. For more information, please visit their website at <http://www.quabbinartassociation.com>.

## Granby Police Log

*Editor's Note: The Granby Police Department responded to 125 calls for the week of Jan. 2, through Jan. 8. Those arrested are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. The Granby Police Department provides all information.*

was traveling at 75 MPH in a posted 45 MPH zone. The vehicle was stopped and the operator was issued a civil citation for speeding.

11:45 p.m. — A motorist reported a minor two-car accident. There were no injuries.

### Saturday, Jan. 3

11:32 a.m. — A resident came to the station to report a fraudulent charge on his card.

### Sunday, Jan. 4

6:58 p.m. — While on patrol, an officer observed a motor vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed that the vehicle

### Monday, Jan. 5

11:14 a.m. — While on patrol, an officer performed a random license plate query revealing that the vehicle's registration was revoked for no insurance. The vehicle was stopped and the registered owner was issued a criminal citation for operating with a revoked registration and no insurance.

## Boy Scout Troop 507 Can & Bottle Drive January 24

BELCHERTOWN — Belchertown Boy Scout Troop 507 is holding a Can & Bottle Drive on Saturday, January 24 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Pride Gas Station at the intersection of Rt. 21 and Rt 202, 165 State St., Belchertown. Gather up all of those unwanted returnable bottles and cans from your Holiday gatherings and

help support the Boy Scouts of Belchertown. Returnable water bottles are also accepted. Bring them to the Pride station where the Scouts will be collecting them to raise money to help make their scouting experience more meaningful. If you have questions, please email [BelchertownTroop507@gmail.com](mailto:BelchertownTroop507@gmail.com).

### FINCOM from page 1

the town allocates its "free cash" — surplus funds certified each year — and considered adjustments to long-standing practices in response to economic pressures and one-time receipts from property transactions.

Finance Committee Chair Brian Gibbons summarized the free cash situation. The current amount of free cash is \$1,418,350, and of this, \$108,000 is set aside to repay the stabilization fund.

Town Administrator Steve Williams outlined a current 60/40 policy split and proposed a new, more conservative adjustment due to external pressures: "This year, we're at 60/40 with 40% going to capital stabilization and 60% going (to the operational budget.) The intent was to drop it to 20% in light of the health insurance crisis. There was some talk about

being flexible in the past. So, two things: we have the health insurance issue, but we've also been tightening up on free cash. If that trend continues and there's going to be a smaller portion to divvy up."

He said he and the Town Accountant, Jill Rossi, recommend dividing Free Cash by 50/50.

He elaborated, "If we saw free cash stabilized or going up, then it wouldn't hurt as much. It's a two-pronged approach. We were looking to tighten that up a little bit, and it's happening. Next year, we already know that there's some one-time money we're going to have in free cash."

Due to the sale of a school and a lease of another, the town will not use it for operating budget funding because it won't be annual funding.

Selectboard member Nicole Miner sought clarification about whether the

committee could earmark these one-time funds for future years: "Could we earmark early to ensure that the funds coming from Franklin School in the Cold Spring lease definitely go to the following year's free cash policy? Or is that something that has to get voted on each year?"

Williams responded that such designations would be symbolic, as the revenue will automatically flow into the following year's free cash pool: "The money goes into the free cash that you're received fiscally, you know. It's going to be part of the FY 26 free cash, which means it's available to budget for the FY27 cycle...Any vote you take is just symbolic."

Committee members discussed various allocations and the importance of transparency and planning in the face of fluctuating revenues and unexpected receipts,

emphasizing a belief in conservative budgeting to "make a little bit of a difference over 10 years," according to Gibbons.

### Chapter 70, state school funding and local levy

A significant portion of the meeting focused on understanding Massachusetts' Chapter 70 school funding and how state and local shares are calculated.

Gibbons explained, "Our hands are tied to a 2.5% increase in local revenue through income property tax levy, and the budget is built to be about your average, 59% borne by the town and 41% by the state in Chapter 70 funding. It's not quite exactly that here in Belchertown, but it's not far off that."

Finance Committee member Laurie Shea highlighted local contributions: "Recently, as much as \$5 million over and above our required minimum spending to support the schools, Belchertown." The committee emphasized that, unlike some urban districts that fund only the bare mini-

mum, Belchertown typically exceeds required spending for its schools.

"We contribute to the school annually, over and above what we're required to do, 59% is the baseline," Shea said, "Most cities and towns such as Belchertown throughout the Commonwealth do contribute substantially more than that, because that 59% is just not enough to sustain most of the schools."

Members also debated strategies for optimizing state aid calculations, property assessments, and how local income statistics influence Massachusetts allotments, citing both challenges and long-term opportunities for fiscal improvement.

The meeting adjourned after roll call, with plans to reconvene the committee for the next scheduled meeting on Jan. 26.

### Finance Committee statement

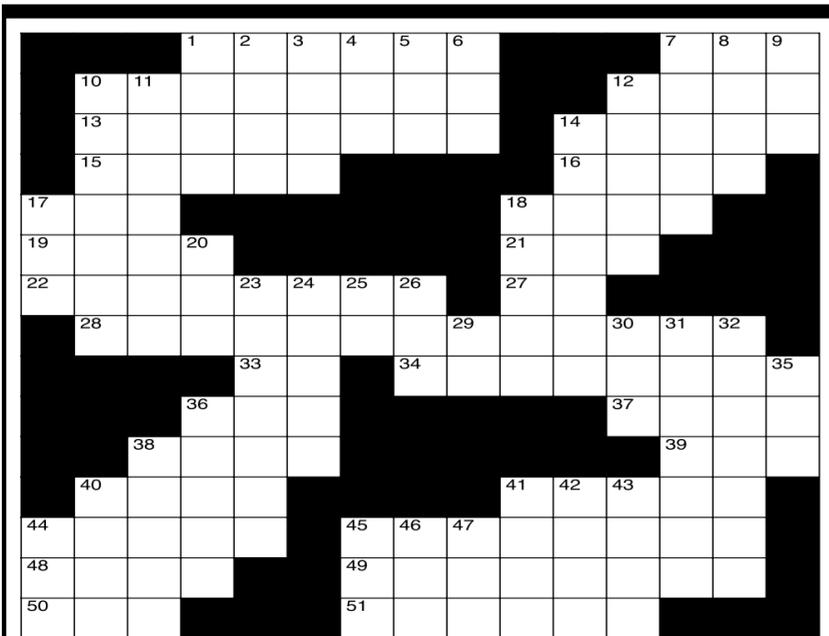
Gibbons read a statement for committee approval, hoping to clarify the Finance Committee's advisory role

and approach to transparency.

"The finance committee is an advisory committee that collaborates with the town manager, town accountant, and Select Board members throughout the budget process cycle to gather information and data to make sound financial recommendations on the fiscally related warrants at annual or special town meeting," Gibbons said. "[T]he finance committee strives to maintain transparency in the budget process, be collaborative, open-minded, and consider, first and foremost, what is best overall. Of the town and its schools and its fiscal-related recommendations, as well as what is sustainable operationally."

He emphasized limits on the committee's role: "I don't want anybody to think that we have anything to do with what departments do with their funds once they have it, because we really don't."

With committee consensus and no objections, the statement was adopted as guidance moving forward.



### CLUES ACROSS

- Mechanical lever
- Rocky peak
- Leave a country
- Discount
- D.C. ballplayer
- Partner to "oohed"
- Engine sound
- Japanese ornamental box
- Fido is one
- Amounts of time
- DiFranco and Phylo are two
- Yearly tonnage (abbr.)
- Make secret plans
- "Tiny Bubbles" singer
- "His Airness"
- Morning
- Perfected
- Winger guitarist

### Beach

- Abba \_\_, Israeli politician
- Self-immolation by fire ritual
- A way to save money
- Pulpit
- Make ecstatically happy
- Once more
- Works on
- Nocturnal S. American rodent
- State again
- Expression of disappointment
- Type of door

### CLUES DOWN

- Yugoslavian communist leader
- Exchange rate
- High school dance

### 4. Peter's last name

- When you anticipate arriving
- Israeli city \_\_ Aviv
- Goat-like mammals
- Margarine
- End-of-the-spectrum color
- Make poisonous
- Popular beverage
- Actress Lathan
- Where planes land and depart
- Political fundraising entity
- The distinctive spirit of a people or an era
- Buffer used in microbiology
- Light, open carriage
- Metrical feet
- Email subject line feature

### 26. A street with lots of nightmares

- Rapper Rule
- River in Scotland
- One who settles a dispute
- Most chummy
- We all have our own
- Arab tribe
- Slap
- Ottoman military commanders
- Scottish or Irish Gaelic language
- Emit coherent radiation
- Sun or solar disk (Egyptian mythology)
- Inclined to
- Olfactory reference syndrome
- Chest muscle (slang)
- Body part

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COMMUNITY

# Belchertown Select Board announces 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: Select Board, The Finnerty House, One South Main Street, P.O. Box 670, Belchertown, MA 01007, or by email to [selectboard@belchertown.org](mailto: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 two associate member seats 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.

**Belchertown Buildings & Grounds Committee:** The Town wishes to fill one (1) full real estate member seat and one (1) associate member seat on the Belchertown Buildings and Grounds Committee. The committee will advise the Town and the Select Board on funding opportunities for maintaining and developing Town buildings that fit the guidelines of repurpose and/or renovation to benefit the local economy and population as well as advising on historical and cultural development opportunities. Expertise with real estate/architecture, grant writing, or historical experience to strengthen the skill set of the committee is highly preferred.

**Board of Assessors:** The Town of Belchertown is looking to fill a vacancy on the Board of Assessors. This position has a stipend of \$1,000 per year. This recently vacated position will be appointed in accordance with the provisions outlined in MGL Chapter 41, Section 11 by a joint appointment of the Board of Assessors and Select Board. The appointed individual will fill the seat's remaining term and shall perform duties of the office until the next annual election in May 2026. The applicant must be a registered voter in the Town of Belchertown.

In accordance with MCL Chapter 59, Section 21, the Assessors shall assess all taxes duly certified to them and perform all necessary duties as defined in MGL Chapter 59. Some of the duties include the classification and valuation of all real and personal property along with setting the tax rate each fiscal year.

For further information, contact Jay Whelihan, Director of Assessments, at 323-0413, [jwhelihan@belchertown.org](mailto:jwhelihan@belchertown.org) or Steve Williams, Town Manager, at 323-0403.

**Capital Improvement Planning Committee:** Belchertown is seeking two (2) residents with demonstrated knowledge of construction, facility maintenance, fleet management, architecture, engineering, or a related field to fill a full member seat.

**Communications Committee:** The Belchertown Communications Committee is looking for two (2) new members 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.

**Energy and Sustainability Committee:** The Town wishes to fill a full member seat 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](http://www.belchertown.org).

**Historic District By-Law Commission:** The Town wishes to fill a member Real Estate seat on the Historic District By-Law Commission. The Commission has regulatory control over new construction, reconstruction, alterations, movements, and demolition of all exterior architectural features of buildings and structures within the Historic District which are visible from any public street, public way, or public park.

**Pioneer Valley Transit Authority Advisory Board:** The Town is seeking an individual to represent and serve as a Liaison to the Town of Belchertown on the PVTA Advisory Board. Interested individuals should have the time and desire to attend respective meetings in Springfield and periodically review the PVTA's services to the Town and its contiguous communities.

**Quaboag Valley Business Assistance Corporation (QVBAC) / Quaboag Valley**

**Community Development Corporation (QVDC) Board Member:** The Town is seeking an individual to represent and serve as a Liaison to the Town of Belchertown on the QVBAC to bring the concerns of Belchertown's residents and small business community forward to ensure that the services provided by the QVBAC/QVDC are in line with the town's needs. The board member also helps disseminate information from the QVBAC board to Belchertown's residents and small business community, especially when there is a particular program or initiative they'd benefit from. While no business acumen is required, an interest in and or connections with Belchertown's small business community would be advantageous. Enthusiasm for Belchertown, and the ability to determine and communicate the interests of its residents are the most important qualifications. For more information about the Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation and the Quaboag Valley Business Assistance Corporation, please visit [www.qvdc.org](http://www.qvdc.org).

**Veterans' Services Advisory Board (VSAB):** The Town is looking to fill one (1) vacancy on the VSAB. The Board works closely with the Town's Veterans' Agent on issues pertaining to veterans to include but not limited to Veterans Day and Memorial Day ceremonies, war memorials, veterans' graves or any other related areas of concern.

**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.

RELAY from page 1

my friend with the Survivor Dinner," said Eleanore Gray.

Gray's daughter, Lynn, was diagnosed in 2014 with uterine cancer, and Gray formed a team to walk to raise donations in her honor after she lost her battle on August 18, 2014.

"To date our team has donated over \$160,000 to the American Cancer Society. Many of the people Lynn met while her husband was in the military and stationed all over the US are still members of our team and making donations in her memory," said Gray. "Lynn's two sisters and her great niece are team members and walk in her memory."

The Quabbin Relay for Life group hosted their first walk this past Saturday at the Belchertown Common parking lot with the goal of getting the word out and preparing the community ahead of their first event and Kick-Off Celebration coming up.

"Relay gives me an oppor-

tunity to 'Pay it Forward'. I was lucky to have beaten cancer, and I have made it my goal to help as many people as I can to get the same positive result," said Meehan.

"Belonging to Relay means that we can get donations for the American Cancer Society and hopefully help others who were luckier than Lynn," said Gray.

Relay for Life is a 12-hour celebration of life with a DJ, motivational speeches, fun activities for everyone to enjoy, and "a meaningful focus on honoring and helping people who have ever heard the words, 'you have cancer,'" said Meehan.

The Relay for Life teams are open for anyone to join to support and stand with the families and survivors of cancer, even if you are not able to give financially, and instead walk, share, and promote the Relay to bring it to many, many more people.

"My relay team brings together all the different parts of my life, from My church family to my birth family, to



TURLEY PHOTO BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS  
Walking around the common parking lot to kick off their Relay for Life season.

my families of choice. We are all one family fighting for the same cause," said Meehan.

"I love that my team is willing to fundraise for ACS. If they can't donate, they are willing to give us moral support. They are willing to help in any way that they can to keep Lynn's memory alive," said Gray.

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## OPINION

## SOCIAL SECURITY

## Matters

By Russell Gloor

## Why didn't my friend's wife get all her SS immediately?

## Dear Rusty:

A friend told me about what he believes is a strange thing in the Social Security system.

His wife reached her full retirement age of 66 several years ago. She delayed filing for Social Security past her FRA and claimed on her 68th birthday in June of that year, exactly two years after her FRA. When she filed, she was told she would receive approximately \$300 per month, which, of course, was more than she would have received at her FRA.

She was told however that she would only receive \$300 per month as of Jan. 1 of the following year. Between June of the year she turned 68 and filed for SS until the end of that year, she would receive an amount less than \$300. This lower amount was the amount she would have received if she had filed in December, the year she turned 67. She said she was told that was how SS works. She would never receive the difference in benefits she lost from June through December of the year she filed. If the above is true, can you explain?

Signed: Astounded Friend

## Dear Astounded:

What your friend described is, indeed, a unique methodology for how Social Security handles benefit payments for those who choose to wait beyond their Full Retirement Age to claim SS benefits. To understand it, let me first describe how Social Security retirement benefits are calculated.

At Full Retirement Age, a person is entitled to 100% of the SS benefit they have earned from a lifetime of working. That FRA benefit amount is known as the person's "Primary Insurance Amount" and is based upon the highest earning 35 years over the individual's lifetime.

From those past years, average lifetime monthly earnings are computed, known as the person's "Average Indexed Monthly Earnings." Their AIME is subjected to a formula which yields their Primary Insurance Amount – the benefit the person is entitled to in the month they attain their full retirement age – typically about 40% of the person's average monthly lifetime earnings. However, if the person chooses to do so, they can wait beyond their FRA to claim Social Security to get a monthly benefit even higher than their PIA, by earning Delayed Retirement Credits.

DRCs are applied to the person's PIA when they claim Social Security. For each month after FRA the person claims, they

will have .667% added to their PIA. That means that for each full year of delay, that person will get an extra 8% added to their PIA. For someone (like your friend's wife) who claimed 24 months after her FRA, she would receive a benefit 16% higher than her FRA amount. However, Social Security normally only applies DRCs in January of each year.

So, even though your friend's wife claimed her SS benefits in June, 24 months after her FRA, she would initially only get the DRCs she had accumulated through the end of the previous year – in this case, about 18 months' worth of DRCs or an SS payment about 12% higher than her PIA (her FRA amount).

She would not get her remaining earned DRCs (another 4%) until January of the following year. So, in effect, the wife's initial benefit didn't reflect all her earned DRCs until her later January benefit payment. Thus, the wife essentially lost that extra benefit money for the period between June and December of the year she claimed Social Security.

In other words, she wouldn't get the full 16% amount until SS applied the additional 4% DRCs to her benefit payment the following January. And that is why your friend's wife initially received a payment a bit less than the \$300 Social Security said she was entitled to by waiting two years after her FRA to claim.

This surprises many who choose to wait beyond their full retirement age to claim Social Security. But, curiously, this process doesn't apply to those who wait until age 70 to claim their SS benefits. For those who wait until age 70 to claim, Social Security will immediately apply all DRCs that they have accumulated and provide them with their maximum SS benefit immediately.

*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](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at [ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org). Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.*

## ANNUAL REACTION OF COMMUTERS...



## Baking bread with herbs

There has been a resurgence lately in doing things the "old fashioned way!" I am definitely all for that, since I have often felt I was born a century too late.

People are making their own soap and laundry detergent, growing gardens, and canning and preserving the harvest. Many have also gotten the sourdough itch, and are baking all sorts of breads, rolls and treats using sourdough starter. My niece shared some of her starter with my husband and I! It traveled several states to make it to us and boy was our first loaf delicious.

I don't feel as if I will give up making yeasted bread entirely, though, especially since my favorite bread of all time is a braided bread that incorporates herbs. (You knew that eventually I would weave in a gardening topic!) I'm excited to share the recipe with you.

Maybe you will even become inspired to grow your own herbs to use in this or any number of recipes down the road.

This time of year it is likely you won't have fresh herbs on hand, so before we begin, I'd like to give you some tips for using dried herbs.

First, remember to break them up finely just before you incorporate them into any recipe. Honestly, there is nothing worse than coming across a full-size piece of Rosemary foliage, for example. It's like you are chomping on a pine needle!

Besides making the herbs more palatable, the flavor will be released ever so nicely once they are finely ground. Small amounts of herbs can be crushed between your fingertips – larger amounts can be ground up using a mortar and pestle.

Pulverize whole spices in a coffee grinder. Some folks gently roast them first to intensify their flavor. If you want to substitute fresh herbs for dried in any recipe, use at least twice as much; likewise in this recipe you would use only half the amount if using dried.

salt.

Stir into yeast mixture ½ cup at a time to form a slightly sticky dough, adding up to ½ cup additional flour if necessary.

Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth and elastic, about 5 minutes. Place dough in a large bowl that has been lightly buttered.

Turn dough to coat entire surface. Cover with a clean cloth and let rise in a warm, draft-free area until the dough has doubled in volume, about 1 ½ hours.

Punch dough down. Divide into thirds.

One by one, take each third and knead in the individual herbs. Roll each dough ball between the palms of your hands into a rope about 20 inches long. Taper the ends.

When complete, lay the three side by side and working from the middle, braid each end. Transfer the bread to a buttered baking sheet and cover loosely with a clean cloth.

Allow to rise in a warm place for 45-50 minutes, until doubled in size.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Brush loaf with remaining 1 tablespoon of melted butter and bake for 20-30 minutes or until golden and loaf sounds hollow when tapped.

Cool for 30 minutes before serving. Serve it warm with a pat of butter or have some olive oil handy for dipping!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 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](mailto:pouimette@turley.com) with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

## in the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



Store dried herbs and spices away from heat and light; even so, they will start to lose their flavor after about a year. When I buy a new jar of dried herbs, I find it helpful to mark the date right on the bottle.

Without any further ado, here is the recipe for that wonderful bread – as pretty as it is flavorful. Certainly a nice addition to a bowl of soup on a winter's night! And it makes the best croutons, too!

## COUNTRY HERB BREAD TWIST

1 envelope active dry yeast  
1 teaspoon sugar  
¼ cup water (110 degrees)  
¼ stick unsalted butter, melted (2 tablespoons)  
2 ½- 3 cups all-purpose flour  
1 ½ teaspoons salt  
1 tablespoon minced fresh oregano  
1 tablespoon minced fresh thyme  
1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary

Sprinkle yeast and sugar over ¼ cup warm water in a large bowl; stir to dissolve. Let stand until foamy (approximately 15 minutes).

Blend 1 cup water and 1 tablespoon of the melted butter into the yeast mixture. Combine 2 ½ cups flour and

## in my BACKYARD

By Ellenor Downer

A resident of Lake Lashaway saw her first ever evening grosbeak in the morning at her feeder on Sunday, Jan. 4.

The evening grosbeak is an eight inch long, chunky, thick billed finch, which wanders widely in winter.

The males are yellow and brown with black and white wings. The females are gray with white and black wings. Both sexes have a thick bill. They have notched, square

tipped tails and pointed wings.

Often evening grosbeaks visit feeders in large flocks. They inhabit conifer forests and in winter are seen in box elders, maples and fruiting shrubs. They breed in the coniferous and mixed forests. They are seen in spruce and fir trees in the northern forests and pines in the western mountains. They

Male evening grosbeak



are seen in winter in deciduous woodlands and semi-open country. Their song is a series of short, musical whistles. Their call note is similar to the chirp of a house sparrow, but louder.

The female lays three to

Please see **BACKYARD**, page 7

## Turley Publications Letters to the Editor Policy

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



The stages of progress on this adorable little friend.



JenaRose and her mom showing their penguins in stages of completion.

## Share Your Best 2025 Photo

*Help bring our Annual Report to life!*

**BELCHERTOWN** – We're excited to announce the launch of the 2025 Annual Town Report Photo Contest! The deadline for submissions is January 31, 2026, so now is the perfect time to look back on your favorite photos taken in Belchertown during 2025.

This contest is open to all ages and all abilities - everyone is encouraged to participate!

Last year's report proudly featured a submitted photo on the cover, thanks to the entries we received. But in other recent years, when submissions were low or none came in, the Town had to publish the report with a plain, image-free cover. Belchertown is full of beauty, energy, and community spirit, and we want this year's report to reflect that.

If you captured a memorable moment or scene in Belchertown during 2025, we invite you to submit

your photo for a chance to be featured on the cover of the 2025 Annual Town Report. Your photo could be the image that represents our community to residents, visitors, and future generations.

The winning photographer will be notified by email by February 6, 2026, and additional photos may be featured throughout the report, adding color, character, and local pride to every page. All submitted photos may also be used in future Town materials to help showcase Belchertown year-round.

Submit your photo here: /FormCenter/General-Forms-4/Annual-Town-Report-Photo-Contest-2025-70

Let's continue the momentum from last year and ensure the 2025 Annual Town Report reflects the true heart of Belchertown—not a blank cover, but a vibrant image captured by someone in our own community.

Share your photo today and help us celebrate the beauty of Belchertown!

## Needle felting at CML



Getting work done and following the steps for new little penguin friends.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS

## New Electric Vehicle Chargers in Belchertown

**BELCHERTOWN** – Four new electric vehicle (EV) chargers have been installed between the Finnerty House and the Clapp Memorial Library in the center of Belchertown. They are Level 2 chargers made by EVSE LLC. Users of the chargers can pay for their charging via the AMPUP phone app or by using a credit card with the credit card reader on the charger unit. The energy price is competitive with other nearby Level 2 charging stations and the charging rate is significantly faster (9.6 KW vs. 6.6 KW) than most other Level 2 chargers in the area.

The parking space

reserved for Charger #1 is American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant, offering easy access to that charger. These chargers were activated on 1/1/2026, are always open to the public, and are convenient for anyone who lives/works near the center of Belchertown. They are in a convenient location for attending events nearby (e.g., Town Commons activities) and are within walking distance of four eateries near the Town Commons.

The chargers use a J1772 connector. Vehicles with North American Charging Standard (NACS) ports (Tesla-style connectors) will need to bring an adapter to charge.



### BACKYARD from page 6

four pale blue to blue green, blotched with brown, gray or purple eggs. The female does all the incubating, but the male may feed the female during this time. Both parents feed the nestlings.

Their diet is mostly seeds and some berries and insects. They prefer seeds of box elder, ash, maple, locust and other trees. At feeders, they prefer sunflower seeds. They also will feed on oozing maple sap. They extended their breeding range eastward in the 19th century and early 20th century. The population declined in the east in recent years.

#### Other birds at Lake Lashaway

The Lake Lashaway resident also had red cardinals, blue jays galore, gold finches and a red bellied woodpecker.

er. She said bald eagles are very common visitors on the lake.

#### Brimfield birds

I received an email from a Brimfield resident on Jan. 5. He said, "Not much happening in the yard. We've seen one white-throated sparrow after recent snow storms and a group of about a dozen house finches show up often. Yesterday there was a group of American goldfinch in a birch tree eating seeds but they didn't come to the feeder."

#### Christmas bird count

He said, "My wife and I did the Christmas Bird Count with the Allen Bird Club again this year. We cover the town of Ludlow. The weather was fine but the birds were not cooperating. We managed 26 species which is a few below our average.

Woodpeckers (only 1 downy) and sparrows (3 junco) were hard to find."

He also said, "At the Ludlow Reservoir there was a good amount of open water but few birds, eight hooded mergansers and four mallards. Curiously last year there was a lot less open water at the reservoir but a lot more birds. Go figure."

People may visit <https://netapp.audubon.org/CBCObservation/CurrentYear/ResultsByCount.aspx> to obtain Christmas Bird count results. Enter the county and state to get Massachusetts counts. He said he did not know the Springfield count results, but the Worcester count had 78 species.

#### Snowy owls

He also heard there have been two snowy owls in Northampton for a few

weeks now. Initially they were seen in fields north of Route 9, but lately have been seen in the fields near the airport.

#### Barred owl and pileated woodpecker

I saw a barred owl and a pileated woodpecker in the same day, Jan. 6. The barred owl was perched in a tree and stayed awhile before flying off. When I went to pick up my grandson at the bus stop, I saw a pileated woodpecker on Lincoln Road.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing [mybackyard88@aol.com](mailto:mybackyard88@aol.com) or [edowner@turley.com](mailto:edowner@turley.com) or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.



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COMMUNITY

# What's new at CML this week?

BELCHERTOWN – The Clapp Memorial Library wishes everyone a happy and healthy 2026! Here's a sample of what's happening this month at the library.

**FOR TEENS:  
Teen Movie Night**  
Friday, Jan. 16,  
6 to 8:45 p.m.

Teens in grades 7-12 are invited to the library for a musical Teen Movie Night on Friday, January 16th. Free popcorn will be provided as teens watch a Tony award-winning musical about America's founding father Alexander Hamilton. Space is limited; email [clapplibrarytab@gmail.com](mailto:clapplibrarytab@gmail.com) to reserve your seat! This program is funded by the Friends of the Clapp Memorial Library.

**TAB Meeting**  
Friday, Jan. 23,  
4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

The Clapp Memorial Library's Teen Advisory Board will meet on Friday, January 23, in the library's Activity Room. TAB is a group of 7th-12th-grade students who meet monthly during the school year to propose library programming for teens, provide input on teen services, volunteer, and have fun! At this meeting, teens will make cards for Cards for Hospitalized Kids and prepare for their "Love Your Neighbor" Food Drive in February. Teens can email [clapplibrarytab@gmail.com](mailto:clapplibrarytab@gmail.com) to register. New members are welcome!

**Teen Book Club**  
Wednesday, Jan. 28,  
3 to 4 p.m.

The Clapp Memorial Library has a book club for teens in grades 7-12! On Wednesday, January 28 from 3 to 4 p.m., teens will discuss *The Reappearance* of Rachel Price by Holly Jackson. Copies of the book are available for checkout at the library's circulation desk and on the Libby and hoopla apps. Snacks will be pro-

vided at the meeting. Email [clapplibrarytab@gmail.com](mailto:clapplibrarytab@gmail.com) with any questions.

**FOR ADULTS:  
Getting Started with...  
Kanopy and Mango  
Languages**

Wednesdays: Jan. 21 and 28,  
noon to 1 p.m.

Let's start off the new year with new skills! You're invited to a workshop to introduce you to different library offerings, all available with your Clapp Memorial Library card. Come by with your questions and get started! Already using these services? All are welcome, and maybe we can help you learn some new tricks. January 21: Getting started with Kanopy: Find out how to stream movies and TV series from this online library collection. January 28: Getting started with Mango Languages: Get started on a language journey!

**Adult Writing Group**  
Wednesday, Jan. 21,  
6 to 7 p.m.

The Clapp Memorial Library hosts a writing group on the first and third Wednesdays of each month for adults aged 18+. Whether you write romance, mystery, fantasy, non-fiction, poetry, children's books, or screenplays, you're welcome to join us! Come meet with other writers and share what you've been working on over the past month, work on your writing, and more. If you are interested, contact Annie at the library to sign up: [maco-na@cwmars.org](mailto:maco-na@cwmars.org)

**Hands-Only CPR**  
Wednesday, Jan. 21,  
3 to 4 p.m.

Location: Belchertown Town Hall Auditorium  
Be ready to save a life with hands-only CPR. It's easy to learn. You can increase the chance of someone surviving a cardiac emergency by taking a FREE American Red Cross 30-minute class. Limited space is available; registration is required.

Register online at [clapplibrary.org/events](http://clapplibrary.org/events) or call 413-323-0417.

**Daughters Book Talk with  
Corinne Demas**  
Thursday, Jan. 22,  
3 to 4 p.m.  
(Rescheduled  
from December)

Corinne Demas will be at the Clapp Memorial Library to talk about her new book, *Daughters*, a novel "exploring the age-old friction between mothers and daughters, a story of a family rediscovering itself." Corinne Demas is an award-winning author and Professor Emerita of English at Mount Holyoke College. Books will be available for purchase and signing.

**FOR GENERAL  
AUDIENCES:  
Indigenous Stories from  
this Valley and Beyond with  
David Brule**

Saturday, Jan. 31,  
2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Join Clapp Memorial Library for an afternoon of Indigenous stories with David Brule, President of the Nolumbeka Project and chair of the Nehantic Tribal Council. Drawing from oral traditions, research, and a decade-long study of King Philip's War, his stories highlight gratitude, balance with nature, and cultural resilience. Sponsored by the Friends of Clapp Memorial Library.

**CLAPP MEMORIAL  
LIBRARY HOURS:**

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

# Death by Cupcake!

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown Historical Association is holding its annual murder mystery dinner on Saturday, Feb. 7, at Tony and Penny's Restaurant in Ludlow. The show will begin at 6:30 p.m., followed by the dinner buffet at 7 p.m. Guests can arrive as early as 6 p.m.

This year's show, written by Paula Hilton, is entitled: *Death by Cupcake*. We look forward, as always, to the hilarious antics of the BUCC Players from the Belchertown United Church

of Christ. Plan a night out of dinner and entertainment while supporting our historical association, the United Church of Christ, Belchertown, and a favorite local restaurant business.

The tickets are \$47 each and include the show, dinner, and dessert. There will be a cash bar. Tickets are available at Cold Spring Discount Liquors (on the Belchertown Common) or by contacting Sally Shattuck at 413-230-2022 or [sallyshattuck54@gmail.com](mailto:sallyshattuck54@gmail.com).



CML from page 1

brating the 50th anniversary of the Friends of the Clapp Memorial Library, as well as monthly scavenger hunts in the children's room with book bundles as a prize.

The recently started Anime and Manga Club for tweens has become increasingly popular, and will continue into 2026, and Harbeson shared, "I'm excited by how it's going."

The library is also looking to chop down the inva-

sive Japanese knotweed in the back of the property so they can plant a native plant garden. The library is looking to host a community event to get it all out, and if they are able to get the grant, they'll be able to get an ADA-compliant ramp down to the garden.

"I feel very privileged to be able to work in this community with this committed staff, and really create opportunities for people to experience different things, crafts, programs, learning

opportunities, and create a space for people to hang out in," said Harbeson.

The library is full of many new and exciting things to explore, and the librarians are always looking for ways to improve the space, and one of those ways includes creating a reading nook under the window on the main floor of the building for all to enjoy.

"I want people to know most of all that I am happy that they are here visiting the library, and if they have suggestions or comments, I want them to know that they can come talk to me about their recommendations for books or anything else because we want this library to support all of the residents of Belchertown," said Harbeson.

The Clapp Memorial Library is ready for all the patrons who walk through its doors, whether it's a new person or a frequent user of the library.

"I really love my job, and I love almost all aspects of my job, and I think one of the things I love about it is that it allows me to do so many different things," said Harbeson. "Working with the community and collaborating with different organizations and town events is always wonderful."



Cera with the new tote bag to celebrate ten years of art from Scott Fischer.

Read The Sentinel online at [www.sentinel.turley.com](http://www.sentinel.turley.com)

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# SPORTS

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Brice Letendre shoots from the free throw line.

## Orioles takes win against rival Ludlow

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

**LUDLOW** — The Belchertown boys' varsity basketball team won their first meeting with Ludlow since 2023 by the final score of 60-49 before a large crowd at Mullins Gymnasium, last Wednesday night.

"This was our first game of 2026 and it's a very big win for us because we have a very tough upcoming schedule," said Belchertown head coach Jim Hart following his team's non-league road victory. "The atmosphere in this gym was outstanding, and it was a very exciting game."

The two neighboring high schools used to be hockey rivals before forming a co-op a year ago.

The Orioles boys' basketball team, who defeated the Lions three times between 2018-2023, made the trip home on route 21 with a 4-3 overall record. Their first three losses of the

regular season were by five points or less.

The Lions (5-2), who began the regular season with five straight victories, suffered their second home loss of 2026. The last time that they defeated the Orioles on the hardwood was a 63-49 road win on February 21, 2017.

"I thought we would match up well with Belchertown and we had a very good gameplan coming into tonight's game," said Ludlow head coach C.W. Zimmer. "We had a chance to win the game in the fourth quarter, but we just ran out of gas."

Because of the matchups, the Lions head coach decided to make a couple of changes in the starting line-up.

Senior Cam Lyman, who's normally a starting small forward, was the starting point guard against the Orioles. Junior Jadel Rodriguez, who's listed as a guard on the roster, defended against junior forward Brice Letendre, who's the Orioles



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Please see **ORIOLES**, page 18 Nathan Marino looks for a path around an opponent.

## Orioles fall in independent matchup with Warriors

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

**FISKDALE**—Because of the MIAA's power ranking system, athletic directors are always looking to schedule the best non-league opponents for their teams.

Belchertown High School Athletic Director Kevin McNeill and Tantasqua Regional Athletic Director Marcus Backlin were able to schedule a non-league girls basketball game.

The first ever meeting on the hardwood between the two squads was a very entertaining affair from start to finish.

The four freshmen players listed on the Tantasqua varsity roster combined to score 43 points which helped the Lady Warriors secure a 58-53 home victory over the Belchertown Lady Orioles, last Tuesday night.

"Belchertown is a very good basketball team and they're well coached," said Tantasqua head coach Andy Haley. "Marcus always does a very good job of finding different opponents for us to play against. It was also nice playing a solid non-league opponent before beginning our league schedule."

Belchertown is the only Western Mass. opponent listed on Tantasqua's regular season schedule.

The Lady Orioles posted a 56-24 victory at Quabog Regional in their final game of 2025.

Belchertown and Tantasqua are both young teams this year with only two seniors. They're trying to qualify for the Division 3 state tournament.

Freshman Myah Lewis and Teagan Baker led Tantasqua with 12 points apiece. The Lady Warriors' other two freshmen are Ellie Barnes (10 points), and Milayna Bousquet (9 points).

"I thought our four freshmen took a step forward in tonight's game," Haley said.

"The older players are doing a very good job of being leaders. It's a close knit team."

Sophia Ezzo, who's one of the Tantasqua seniors, netted six of her 10 points after halftime.

Junior Tessa Sheldon also scored five points in the second half.

The five-point victory improved the Lady Warriors overall record to 5-2, while the Lady Orioles had a 3-3 record.

"Both teams played well and it was a fun game tonight," said Belchertown head coach Jason Woodcock. "I would rather lose a game against a very good team than beat a weaker opponent by 30 points."

The Lady Orioles were outrebounded by the Lady Warriors.

"My players played very hard, but we were outrebounded which was the difference maker," Woodcock said. "They're not much taller than us, but they were a little more physical and wanted the ball a little bit more. We just kept giving them four or five chances to score."

One of the three Belchertown sophomore starters is Gabriella Slovack, who led the way offensively with a career-high 17 points. She scored two field goals in each of the four quarters. She also made a free throw in the third quarter.

"Gabby played very well in tonight's game," Woodcock said. "We decided to spread the floor, and she scored most of her points by cutting to the basket."

Belchertown's other two starting sophomores are Aubrey Klingensmith, who scored eight of her 10 points in the first quarter before getting into foul trouble, and Kina Roy, who scored six of her eight points during the final minute of regulation.

"I took a chance leaving Aubrey in the game with two

fouls in the first quarter," Woodcock added. "She's a smart basketball player, but she picked up a third foul and had to sit on the bench for rest of the first half. She scored eight quick points and had a hard time getting into a rhythm offensively again in the second half."

Junior Morghan Litz also reached double digits for the Lady Orioles with 10 points. Junior Aubrey McCain added five points.

Ezzo and Sheldon also picked up two personal fouls during the opening quarter.

"We always seem to be in foul trouble," Haley said. "We just need to fine tune a few things."

The score was tied four times and there were several lead changes during the first 16 minutes of the contest.

The game was tied for the first time at 11-11 before a Slovack lay-up and a Litz 3-pointer from the left corner gave the Lady Orioles a 16-11 advantage entering the second quarter.

With 3:55 remaining in the first half, Bousquet made a 3-pointer from the left corner giving the home team a slim 21-19 lead.

The Lady Warriors also held a two point lead with less than two minutes left before Roy hit a jumper in the lane and Slovack made another lay-up.

Belchertown also scored the first five points of the second half and held a 30-23 lead.

Tantasqua would then put together a 15-2 run during the final five minutes of the third quarter.

The duo of Barnes and Sheldon scored seven of those points. A put-back hoop from Ezzo increased the Lady Warriors lead to 38-32 at the end of the third quarter.

A Litz 3-pointer and an inside hoop by sophomore



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

Brandon Carillon tries to power around his opponent.



Brodie Funk tries to overcome a block.

## Granby offense suffers power outage at Ware

**WARE** — Last Thursday evening, Granby fell to Ware 69-29 in boys basketball action. The offense struggled to find the net against the

Indians with Raymond Colon being Granby's only bright spot with 14 points. Ware was led by Jack Gaudreau with 24 points, all on two-point field

goals. Dalton Marquis would sink nine points. Ware got scoring from nine different players. Granby is now 1-8 this season while Ware is 3-5 now.



Raymond Colon takes at free throw.

Liam McKinnon hustles down the court.

Samuel Moure heads up for a shot.

Please see **LADY ORIOLES**, page 18



# CAREER Education

## HCSS: Empowering students for a brighter future

Are you searching for a school where academic excellence meets a supportive community? Hampden Charter School of Science (HCSS) is a top-ranked, tuition-free public charter school serving grades 6-12 in Western Massachusetts. Since its founding in 2009, HCSS has been dedicated to preparing students for college, careers, and a lifetime of success.

### Why Choose HCSS?

HCSS stands out as a premier choice for families because of its unique combination of academic rigor, personalized attention, and community spirit. Our two campuses—the Middle School in West Springfield (Grades 6-8) and the High School in Chicopee (Grades 9-12)—offer students a seamless transition from middle school to high school and beyond. Here's what makes HCSS truly exceptional:

**Academic Excellence:** Our rigorous curriculum is guided by the College Board's AP standards and the Common Core. With honors courses beginning in 7th grade, 15 AP offerings in high school, and innovative programs like Project Lead The Way (PLTW), students are challenged to reach their full potential.

**Comprehensive College and Career Preparation:**



HCSS begins college and career readiness as early as 6th grade, including SAT/PSAT prep, dual enrollment opportunities, and experiential college campus visits. With a 100% college acceptance rate and over \$49M in scholarships awarded in 2025, our graduates are set for success.

**State-of-the-Art Technology:** Students benefit from one-to-one Chromebook access, SMART Inter-

active Displays, and hands-on science labs, preparing them for a tech-driven world.

**Award-Winning Extracurriculars:** From robotics, drone, and science olympiad clubs to competitive athletics and social activities, students thrive outside the classroom as well.

### Join Us for an Open House

Explore what HCSS has to offer during our upcoming Welcome Saturday Open

House events. Meet our dedicated staff, tour our campuses, and learn how HCSS can help your child achieve their dreams. Interested families can also join a Virtual Information Session for an in-depth look at our programs from the comfort of home.

### What Parents and Students Love About HCSS

Parents and students consistently praise HCSS for

its nurturing environment, where every student feels valued and supported. The school's commitment to diversity and inclusion fosters a vibrant community that celebrates different perspectives and cultures. Families also appreciate the convenience of free transportation and extensive tutoring services, ensuring all students have the tools they need to succeed.

### Student Success Stories

HCSS alumni have gone on to attend prestigious universities, including Ivy League institutions like Harvard, Columbia, and Dartmouth. Our students' achievements are a testament to the school's dedication to academic and personal growth. With a consistent college matriculation rate of over 95%, HCSS prepares students not just to attend college but to excel once they get there.

### How to Apply

Applications for the 2026-2027 school year are now open. Rising 6th-10th graders should apply no later than March 1, 2026, to secure a spot in our admission lottery. Visit [www.hampdencharter.org](http://www.hampdencharter.org) to apply and take the first step toward a brighter future.

At Hampden Charter School of Science, we believe every student deserves a world-class education. Join our community of learners, achievers, and leaders today—because your child's future begins here.

### HCSS High School

20 Johnson Rd.  
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Tel. 413-593-9090

### HCSS Middle School

511 Main Street  
West Springfield, MA 01089

Tel. 413-278-5450  
[hampdencharter.org](http://hampdencharter.org)



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ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR GRADE 6-10



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11:00 AM - 1:00PM

January 10th  
January 24th  
February 7th  
February 28th

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[WWW.HAMPDENCHARTER.ORG](http://WWW.HAMPDENCHARTER.ORG)

APPLY NOW / DEADLINE



MARCH 1, 2026





# CAREER Education

## St. Joan of Arc School offers comprehensive education

Located in Chicopee, MA, St. Joan of Arc (SJA) School is a private Catholic institution serving students from Pre-K through Grade 8.

St. Joan of Arc School provides a comprehensive educational environment focused on physical, intellectual,

and spiritual wellness.

In the fall the school community welcomed Mrs. Ashley Mahan as the new principal. A lifelong Chicopee resident and former educator in the local public school system, Mrs. Mahan brings extensive experience and a personal connection to the community.

Students can engage in several new and returning enrichment opportunities this year, including:

- Creative Arts: Liturgical Dance Troupe and Choir.
- STEM & Literacy: Robotics, 3D Printing, LEGO,

Book and Newspaper Clubs.

- Curriculum: Academic programs are integrated with technology, music, library, and physical education.
- Student Services: The school offers free breakfast and lunch programs and has hot meal options available for students.
- Extended Care: Affordable extended care and extracurricular programs are available to support families.
- Language Learning:

Innovative offerings include foreign language instruction through tools like Duolingo.

- Our Preschool program for ages 3 and 4 offers full and part-time care, geared toward preparing your child for Kindergarten. Children learn Kindergarten readiness and pre-reading skills through a developmentally appropriate teacher-created curriculum designed to hold your child's interest and spark their curiosity.

The school will be holding an Open House on Saturday, Jan. 31 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. (no appointment needed). Appointment only tours for families will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 3 and Thursday, Feb. 5 from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Please call Janine or Chris in the Business Office at 413-276-4608 for registration information, or to make an appointment. To learn more visit [www.sjachicopee.org](http://www.sjachicopee.org).

We look forward to meeting you.

### ST. JOAN OF ARC SCHOOL

Pre-K to Grade 8

587 Grattan Street, Chicopee ~ 533-1475

[sjachicopee.org](http://sjachicopee.org)

*Learning Rooted in Christian Values*



### OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, January 31st, 9am-12 noon

*No Appointment Needed*

Tuesday, February 3rd & Thursday, Feb 5th, 3pm-7pm

*By Appointment Only*



Affordable Tuition & Extended Care ~ Free Breakfast & Lunch

Extracurricular Programs~ Technology ~ Physical Education

Music ~ Library ~ Duolingo

Welcoming, Safe & Secure School Community

Social, Physical, Spiritual & Intellectual Wellness Tuition Assistance

*Easy Access to I391 & I90*



## St. Stanislaus School students shine as servant leaders

St. Stanislaus School proudly announces the success of its recent community service initiatives, exemplifying its motto: "Servant Leaders for Today and Tomorrow."

In a spirited effort to support those in need, Student Council organized a can drive that collected an impressive 3,500 items, surpassing their original goal by 1,000 donations. The drive demonstrated the school community's commitment to service, teamwork, and making a tangible difference in the lives of local families.

Building on this momentum, St. Stanislaus students also gathered toiletries, diapers, and other personal items to fulfill the wish lists of The Gray House and Christina's House in Springfield. These organizations provide critical support and safe spaces for individuals and families facing challenging circumstances.

"This can drive is run by our Student Council in grades 4-8," said Mrs. Katherine Rorrio, Principal of St. Stanislaus School. "This drive aligns with the state-

ment that we believe our students are servant leaders for today and tomorrow. It assists our school community in understanding the global community, where we are all neighbors and members of God's family. Our school theme this year is 'Go Make Disciples of All Nations.' Our students are wonderful examples of disciples going out and making a difference in the community. We are so proud of all of our students and families for being so generous to those in need."

St. Stanislaus School remains committed to fostering a culture of compassion, responsibility, and service, preparing students not only for academic success but also for meaningful engagement in their communities.

Founded over 125 years ago, St. Stanislaus School has a rich history of serving families in Chicopee and surrounding communities. Although the original building was lost to fire, the school will celebrate the 50th anniversary of its current building on Saturday, Jan. 31, beginning with Mass at 4 p.m., followed by an Open House and

Celebration. Families interested in scheduling a private tour at another time may call the school at (413) 592-5135.

St. Stanislaus School is a Roman Catholic, Franciscan, co-educational Pre-K through 8th grade school. Students are assisted in developing their potential spiritually, physically, and socially within a safe and diverse community. A foundation of academic excellence is created to prepare students to become contributing members of a global society.

The school has a welcoming Franciscan environment, modern air-conditioned facility, strong core curriculum, enrichment classes, certified faculty, full-day preschool (PreK 3 & 4) and Kindergarten, free breakfast and hot lunch, before and after school program, and one-to-one use and integration of iPads and Chromebooks into curriculum. Financial Aid is available. Interested students are invited to spend a day with us. To learn more please visit [www.saintstansschool.org](http://www.saintstansschool.org).

We can't wait to meet you.

## ST. STANISLAUS SCHOOL

SERVANT LEADERS FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW



CALL TO SCHEDULE A PRIVATE TOUR!



- Welcoming Franciscan environment
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- Enrichment classes
- Certified faculty
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- Free breakfast and hot lunch
- Before & After school program
- One to one use and integration of iPads & Chromebooks into curriculum
- Modern facility - full gym, full cafeteria, air conditioned, carpeted classrooms.

PREK - 8TH GRADE SCHOOL  
PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL, AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



To learn more



Call us for more information and to schedule a tour. We welcome the opportunity for you to experience St. Stanislaus School! Interested students are invited to "spend a day with us."



[www.saintstansschool.org](http://www.saintstansschool.org)  
534 Front Street, Chicopee, MA 01013  
413-592-5135



# CAREER Education

## HCC opens registration for Spring 2026 noncredit classes

Holyoke Community College has opened registration for its Spring 2026 catalog of noncredit personal enrichment and professional development classes.

The spring calendar begins Jan. 12, with individual classes running on different schedules throughout the semester.

New next semester is a series of classes for seniors focused on basic technology. Each one-hour class is available for just \$20 and cover a wide range of subjects, including Windows 11, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft PowerPoint, Canva (for graphic design), Artificial Intelligence, Zoom, smartphone use (Android or iPhone), managing and editing photos, document storage, web browsers, and computer scams.

Other classes for spring include cooking (Caribbean, charcuterie, Puerto Rican, Southern), wine tasting (winter reds, Tuscany, New Zealand, Rose, summer wines), sewing (for beginners), sewing (machine), watercolor painting, acrylic painting, drawing, piano, conversational French, conversational Spanish, music technology, voiceover coaching, financial literacy, retirement planning, K-12 education (professional development), writing and publishing (fiction, nonfiction,



tion, screenwriting, short stories, query letters, mysteries, travel, blogs), ChatGPT, how to launch a pet-sitting and dog-walking business, and Quickbooks.

Most classes meet in the Kittredge Center for Business and Workforce Development on the main HCC campus, 303 Homestead Ave. Cooking and wine-tasting classes meet at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute, 164 Race St. Some classes meet over Zoom.

To see complete spring course listings and schedules, or to register, please visit [hcc.edu/bcs](http://hcc.edu/bcs).

More classes will be added as spring approaches.

The Commonwealth's oldest community college, Holyoke Community College opened its doors in 1946 as the first two-year college in Massachusetts. In the decades since, the college has paved the way for generations of learners from western Massachusetts and beyond, a beacon of hope and opportunity for people

seeking better lives. Please visit us at [hcc.edu](http://hcc.edu).

HCC's Kittredge Center for Business and Workforce Development is the Pioneer Valley's premiere resource for workforce training, professional development, and personal growth. It provides innovative and affordable programming that helps businesses, organizations, and individuals achieve their goals.



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- + Radiologic Technology
- + Medical Assisting
- + Veterinary and Animal Science

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# CAREER Education

## Jump Start Preschool invites families to learn, play, and grow together

Two Locations in Feeding Hills and West Springfield

Jump Start Preschool is proud to welcome families to a nurturing, play-based learning environment where children are encouraged to explore, grow, and develop essential life skills. Serving children ages 2.9 to 5 years old, Jump Start Preschool focuses on learning through play while fostering independence, creativity, and confidence.

At Jump Start Preschool, social-emotional learning and communication are key components of each age group's curriculum. Children learn how to problem-solve with peers, practice self-regulation strategies, and build the foundational skills that help them succeed academically and socially. By supporting emotional growth alongside academics, Jump Start helps children thrive both in and out of the classroom.

Family and community partnerships are at the heart

of the Jump Start Preschool mission. In support of this commitment, Jump Start Preschool will host a 5K Run/Walk on May 30, bringing the community together to raise funds for Autism Allies and the children of Jump Start Preschool. Sixty percent of all donations will benefit Autism Allies. The event will feature live music, local businesses, exercise, and great company. Community members are encouraged to participate and support children and families.

Event information and registration: <https://Milesofhopeforautism.eventbrite.com>

Jump Start Preschool offers a wide range of perks designed to support both children and working families, including:

- Open year-round
  - Reasonable tuition
  - Family-friendly hours
- Feeding Hills:**  
7:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
- West Springfield:**  
7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
- Free healthy morning and afternoon snacks
  - Community and in-

house field trips

- Family engagement activities throughout the year
- EEC-certified staff trained in CPR, First Aid, and medication administration
- State-of-the-art playground
- Preschool graduation with a professional photographer
- School photos twice per year
- Free occupational therapy and speech screenings twice annually

"Timeless moments come from learning through movement, creativity, and connection," said Jump Start Preschool. "We invite families to come dance with us and experience the joy of early learning."

Families interested in enrolling are encouraged to visit [www.jumpstartpreschoolma.com](http://www.jumpstartpreschoolma.com) and complete an interest form. Jump Start Preschool is currently enrolling preschoolers ages 2.9 to 5 at both the Feeding Hills and West Springfield locations.

Watch out — learning is happening.

## Various ways newspapers are good for kids

Newspapers have long been part of the fabric of the communities they cover and serve. Whether it's a big-city daily tabloid or a small town weekly, newspapers keep readers and residents up-to-date on the latest goings-on in their communities and across the globe.

Newspapers have been linked to a range of benefits for adults that include greater civic engagement and stronger voter turnout. Such benefits are indispensable, and it's equally important to recognize ways in which newspapers benefit children.

**Reading and discussing newspaper stories can foster stronger language development.** A 2022 study published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* noted that parents who provide newspapers at home for their children to read and then discuss stories with young readers can help kids develop strong language skills, which could ultimately benefit them in the classroom and in their personal interactions. The study also noted that discussing newspaper stories with youngsters creates opportunities for children to explore their thoughts.

**Newspapers can help children develop their critical thinking skills.** A me-



ta-analysis examining ways to teach students critical thinking skills published in the *Review of Educational Research* noted that critical thinking skills are vital because they bolster students' ability to interpret, analyze, evaluate, and make inferences. Newspapers are an invaluable resource for educators aiming to bolster kids' critical thinking skills, as they can be used to teach students to recognize why stories were written, how information in a given story was learned and gathered and how to verify information in a news story. Each of those lessons requires interpretation, analysis and evaluation, ultimately instilling in students vital critical thinking skills that can serve them in the classroom and beyond.

**Newspapers help students develop vital communication skills.** A 2024 study published in the *Elementary Journal of Educational Research* found that reading newspapers helped student participants in the study improve their vocabulary, enhance their writing skills and more effectively articulate their ideas. Authors behind the study ultimately characterized newspapers as valuable educational tools, a conclusion that has been reached by researchers across a range of academic disciplines.

Newspapers are part of the fabric of the communities they cover, and children have much to gain from being granted access to their local papers in the classroom and at home.

# Jump Start Preschool

Enrolling Now for the **2026-2027** School Year!




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## WELDING

- Real hands-on experience
- Includes on site and off site internship
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Gateway's Welding program is a Chapter 74 vocational education program that prepares students for a career in Metal Fabrication and Welding!




[www.grsd.org](http://www.grsd.org)

**JOIN US! Apply today!**



## EARLY EDUCATION & CARE

At Gateway you can join our Early Education and Care program (EEC) in 9th grade!

By the time you graduate, you will be ready, certified, and prepared to work with young learners!




You will also be on track to:

- Know how to plan engaging activities and lessons
- Have CPR & First Aid certification
- Experience awesome internship opportunities



Visit: [www.grsd.org](http://www.grsd.org) for more information!



# CAREER Education

## Well-rounded education benefits students

Academic environments have undergone quite a change over the last several decades. Technological advancements have changed the way educators teach and how students learn, but there's also been a notable shift in what students are learning.

Science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) has become a point of emphasis in twenty-first century classrooms, and for good reason. The U.S. National Science Foundation notes that a workforce educated in STEM is vital to a country's prosperity and security. Opportunities in STEM fields are on the rise as well, as the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates STEM occupations will grow by roughly 11 percent between 2022 and 2032.

The value of STEM is undeniable. However, students and parents also should recognize the many ways a well-rounded education that includes math and science but also the humanities and social sciences facilitates strong academic performance.

### Critical thinking skills

A well-rounded education can instill important and useful critical thinking skills in students. When students direct the bulk of their attention to a single subject or



category of subjects, they're less likely to understand how interconnected coursework, and indeed the world, can be. A well-rounded education can instill in students a more nuanced way of looking at problems and potential solutions. That ability can positively affect students' personal lives and ultimately their professional lives when their formal schooling ends, as they will be in position to better assess situations.

### Comprehension

Tests are designed to gauge students' grasp of material. Students' ability to comprehend lessons taught in the classroom is a big part of that, and a well-round-

ed education fosters strong comprehension skills. A 2018 report from the New York State Education Department noted that research has found that students are better readers after they have been exposed to the language and vocabulary of the natural world, the sciences and social studies.

### Crossover benefits

A well-rounded education can help students perform better in all of their subjects. In 2021, a University of Buffalo academic and researcher studying children and dyslexia made a startling discovery regarding the value of reading and how it affects performance in subjects like math. The research found that reading proficiency crosses academic domains and actually guides how students approach various tasks and solve problems. That means a well-rounded education that includes reading-heavy subjects, like those in the humanities and social sciences, could actually improve how students perform in STEM classes.

A well-rounded education pays a number of dividends for students. Recognition of those benefits might compel parents to support a curriculum that includes a wide array of subjects and academic disciplines.

## Gateway announces expansion of career pathways, Chapter 74 vocational opportunities

Gateway Regional School (GRS) is proud to announce the expansion of its personalized learning model, featuring anticipated openings in its premier Chapter 74 Vocational Programs for the fall of 2026. Designed as a "launchpad" for student success, GRS continues to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world career readiness for students in grades 6–12.

### Innovative Middle School Exploration

The journey begins in the middle grades (6–8), where students engage in an expansive exploratory program. With 26 unique course options—ranging from Intro to Tourism and Woodshop to Data and Statistics in Sports and Sociology—students are encouraged to uncover their passions early.

By the eighth grade, students can gain a head start by accessing Gateway's Chapter 74 vocational programs, providing hands-on introduction to high-demand fields before they even enter high school.

### Challenging Chapter 74 Vocational Programs

Gateway's commitment

to excellence is anchored by two flagship programs that prepare students for immediate entry into the workforce:

- **Welding & Metal Fabrication:** This program offers real hands-on experience in state-of-the-art facilities renovated in 2022. Students learn on modern equipment, including a robotic arm, and participate in both on-site and off-site internships.

- **Early Education and Care (EEC):** Starting in 9th grade, students in the EEC program are put on a track to become certified professionals. The curriculum includes lesson planning for young learners, CPR and First Aid certification, and immersive internship opportunities.

### A Personalized Path to the Future

As students reach the 10th grade, they participate in a "demonstration of learning" to chart their specific goals for their final two years. This tailored approach allows for meaningful experiences, including:

- **Internships and Co-ops:** Real-world placements in students' fields of interest.
- **College Credits:** Through dual-enrollment and concurrent enrollment

partnerships with universities across the country.

- **Work-Study Placements:** Providing a practical balance between education and professional experience.

"At Gateway Regional School, education is more than coursework—it's a launchpad," Dr. Will Sullivan, GRS Principal, states. "We empower our students to excel in life after graduation through intentionally personalized learning pathways crafted to foster achievement and community impact."

### Join the

### Gateway Community

Gateway Regional School welcomes students from its six member towns and surrounding communities. Families interested in exploring these opportunities for the Fall 2026 semester are encouraged to apply today.

For more information on programs and how to apply, please visit [www.grsd.org](http://www.grsd.org).

Media Contact: Gateway Regional School District Website: [www.grsd.org](http://www.grsd.org)

Gateway Regional School District is located at 12 Littleville Road, Huntington, MA 01050.

## WELCOME TO GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL



**"AT GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL, EDUCATION IS MORE THAN COURSEWORK – IT'S A LAUNCHPAD."**

Gateway Regional School (GRS) is proud to educate and welcome students from the six member towns and surrounding communities in a vibrant, forward-thinking learning environment designed to prepare students for life beyond the classroom.

Serving students in grades 6-12, Gateway Regional School is built around one central goal: helping every student discover their interests, develop their strengths, and chart a clear path toward future success. That journey begins in the middle grades, where students in grades 6-8, participate in an expansive exploratory program offering 26 unique course options. From *Intro to Tourism and Woodshop* to *Data and Statistics in Sports, Financial Literacy, Engineering, and Sociology*, students are encouraged to explore new ideas, uncover passions, and start thinking about possible career pathways early on. Eighth-grade students can take that exploration even further by accessing Gateway's Chapter 74 vocational programs in *Early Education and Care* and *Welding*, giving them a hands-on introduction to high-demand fields before they enter high school.

Once students reach high school, Gateway shifts into a highly personalized learning model. In grade 10, students complete a demonstration of learning, sharing their goals and aspirations for their final two years at GRS. These plans guide meaningful experiences such as internships, co-ops, and work-study placements, allowing students to gain real-world experience in fields they are excited to pursue.

Gateway's strong partnerships with colleges and universities across the country further expand student opportunities through dual-enrollment and concurrent enrollment programs, helping students earn college credit while still in high school. Looking ahead, Gateway Regional School is excited to announce anticipated openings in its Chapter 74 Vocational Programs for fall 2026, creating new opportunities for students interested in *Early Education and Care* and *Welding*.

## GATEWAY REGIONAL'S COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE AND TO EXCELLENCE:

**AT GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL, STUDENTS ARE EMPOWERED TO EXCEL IN LIFE AFTER GRADUATION THROUGH INTENTIONALLY PERSONALIZED LEARNING PATHWAYS AND OPPORTUNITIES, CRAFTED TO FOSTER A FUTURE OF ACHIEVEMENT, CONTRIBUTION, UNDERSTANDING, LEADERSHIP, AND COMMUNITY IMPACT.**



# CAREER Education

## PVPA continues to invest in Arts-focused education



At a time when many public schools are trying to manage difficult budgets by cutting Art programs, Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Public Charter School continues to invest in Arts-focused education for students in Grades 7 - 12.

With an extensive Course Catalog of challenging Academic and Arts courses, PVPA employs 15

full-time Arts teachers, and now has five Arts Departments: Music, Dance, Theatre, Visual Arts and new this year, Technical Design and Production.

Students are encouraged to find their artistic voice through a range of introductory courses and audition level course options, with multiple performance opportunities, all integrated with

their core academics.

PVPA students consistently show that incorporating the arts into education creates, not just better artists, but better students who are equipped to be active participants in their future.

Visit for an Open House on Thursday, Jan. 22, and see why PVPA is consistently voted one of the Best Charter Schools in the Valley.

As a public charter school, admission to PVPA is free and open to all Massachusetts students by lottery; no tuition or audition required.

Now accepting applications for the 2026/2027 school year for Grades 7-12 at [pvpa.org/admissions](http://pvpa.org/admissions).

For more information, please email [admissions@pvpa.org](mailto:admissions@pvpa.org).



**Pioneer Valley Performing Arts**  
Charter Public School  
15 Mulligan Drive, South Hadley  
413-552-1580

### Apply Now!

## Grades 7-11

### 2026/27 school year

#### Free, Arts-focused College-prep Education

Dance, Music, Theater  
Visual Arts  
Technical Design/  
Production

Free Bus Transportation within PVPA region



[www.pvpa.org/admissions](http://www.pvpa.org/admissions)  
**APPLY NOW!**  
Deadline Feb 11, 2026  
**REGISTER FOR OPEN HOUSE**



### PVPA Open House

**Thursday, Jan 22**  
4:00-6:00pm

*\*registration encouraged\**



## Join Our Team!

# WE'RE HIRING!

### Teaching the Next Generation

Are you passionate about making a positive impact on young minds within a dynamic public school environment? Springfield Public Schools is seeking knowledgeable, highly effective, diverse educators, to join our K-12 district!

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Donald Roy (860) 874-8396

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Musical instruments, guitars, horns, keyboards, vintage electronics, jewelry, coins, watches, military cameras, sports memorabilia, art, sterling, signs, automotive, hunting, advertising, radios, ham radio equipment, audio equipment, toys, one item or entire estate.  
Call Paul 413-206-8688.

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Wilbraham United Church is hiring a part-time, experienced **ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/BOOKKEEPER.** Apply to **Wilbraham United Church, Attention: Alesia; 500 Main Street; Wilbraham, MA 01095.** More information at [www.wilbrahamunitedchurch.org/about-us-2/](http://www.wilbrahamunitedchurch.org/about-us-2/)

**LUDLOW PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT PARA-EDUCATOR.** Submit resume and letter of intent to: [www.schoolspring.com](http://www.schoolspring.com)

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## REAL ESTATE

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All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.  
This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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37 Base Price \$34.50	38 Base Price \$35.00	39 Base Price \$35.50	40 Base Price \$36.00

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**PUBLIC NOTICES**

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REGULATION PROGRAM  
Notice of Simplified License  
Application pursuant to  
M.G.L. Chapter 91  
25-WW-PRE-0122-APP**

Public notice is hereby given of the application for a Chapter 91 Simplified License by Rachel Telushkin to construct/maintain a Dock in the waters of Swift River at 241 East St. Belchertown, Hampshire County.

The Department will consider all written comments on this Chapter 91 application received by within 30 days of the "Notification Date". Failure of any aggrieved person or group of ten citizens or more to submit written comments to the Waterways Regulation Program will result in the waiver of any right to an adjudicatory hearing in accordance with 310 CMR 9.13(4)(c). The group of citizens must include at least five citizens who are residents of the municipality in which the proposed project is located.

Project plans for this Chapter 91 application are on file for public viewing electronically, by request to dep.waterways@mass.gov. If you do not have access to email, please leave a voicemail at (617) 292-5929 and you will be contacted with information on alternative options.

It is recommended that public comments be filed electronically with dep.waterways@mass.gov when possible. Alternatively, comments may be mailed to the Waterways Regulation Program at: 100 Cambridge St, Suite 900, Boston, MA 02114. 01/15/2026

**LEGAL NOTICE  
Town of Belchertown  
Lake Wallace Woods Trail  
Improvements**

The Town of Belchertown invites sealed Bids for the Lake Wallace Woods Trail Improvements Project. The project includes improvements to an existing recreational trail including areas of re-routing and construction as well as grading and slope stabilization. Additionally, separate bridge and boardwalk structures will be removed and replaced. This project is part of a series of trail improvement projects to provide safe, sustainable, and enjoyable access around Lake Wallace in Belchertown. This phase of the project is focused on public access while also reducing the need for ongoing maintenance and repair.

Bidding of this project is being completed by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) and funded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Recreational Trails Program through funding from the Federal Recreational Trails Program administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. Funding is also being provided by the Kestrel Land Trust. The estimated construction cost for this project is \$100,000.

Contract documents, including plans and specifications will be available electronically beginning January 14th, 2026, from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM through the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), 60 Congress Street, 1st Floor, Springfield, MA 01104, phone: 413-781-6045. Electronic copies may be obtained by contacting Sue Ortiz at sortiz@pvpc.org.

Bids shall be accompanied by

a bid deposit in the amount of 5% of the greatest possible bid amount, considering all alternatives and made payable to Town of Belchertown.

All bids for this project are subject to the provisions and minimum wage rates as required by M.G.L. c.30, §39M as amended, and M.G.L. c.149, §§26 to 27H, inclusive.

All applicable Federal minimum wage rates and applicable Federal labor standards shall also apply pursuant to the Davis-Bacon Act. When both State and Federal wage rates are applicable, the higher rate must be paid. Bids may be changed or withdrawn prior to the bid opening, but not within the sixty (60) days subsequent to the bid opening, by submission of such a change in writing in a sealed envelope, identifying the submitting party and indicating that it contains a correction of the bid for the Lake Wallace Woods Trail Improvements project.

The lowest qualified responsible bidder shall be awarded the contract subject to availability of funds under the grant programs. The Town of Belchertown may cancel this Invitation for Bid (IFB), in whole or in part, at any time that such an act is deemed in its best interest, reserves the right to waive any informality in the bidding or to reject any and all bids in total or in part as may be deemed to serve the best interest of the Town, and will not be responsible for any costs incurred by a bidder in preparing and submitting a bid in response to this IFB.

Questions regarding the bid specifications should be directed to Erica Johnson at the PVPC, 413-285-1184 or ejohnson@pvpc.org. Contract documents may be viewed at the PVPC, 60 Congress Street, 1st Floor, Springfield, MA 01104.

A pre-bid meeting will take place on Thursday January 22nd at 1:00 PM. Those interested should meet in front of the Belchertown Police Station located at 70 State Street. The meeting will be conducted outside and will include accessing the existing Lake Wallace Woods Trail.

**Bids must be received at the office of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission no later than 2:00 PM on Friday, January 30, 2026. Bids will be opened and read at that time.** 01/15/2026

**Notice of Public Sale**

Notice is hereby given that LocalStorage Granby will sell the contents of the storage units listed below at a public auction to satisfy a lien placed on the contents (pursuant to the Massachusetts Lien Law. General Laws Part I, Administration of the Government. Title XV Regulation of Trade Chapter 105A. Self-Service Storage Facility.

The sale will take place at the website <http://www.StorageTreasures.com>. The sale will be conducted on <http://www.StorageTreasures.com>, under the guidance of Christopher Rosa (AU005857) on behalf of the facility's management. Units will be available for viewing prior to the sale on <http://www.StorageTreasures.com>. All sales are final. Seller reserves the right to withdraw the property at any time before the sale or to refuse any bids. The property to be sold is described as general household items unless otherwise noted.

**LocalStorage Granby, 138 W State St, Granby, MA 01033**, will list storage units on the website <http://www.StorageTreasures.com> until sold or disposed of on **January 29, 2026, at 10:00 AM.**

Unit: #014 Roberta Dubovik, #039 Jexavier Santiago, #054 Lisa Foley, #059 Sheila Dietz, #095 Michael Broadhurst, #139 Catherine Everett, #215 Luis Carrillo Lozada, #712 Heather Alicea, #728 Jessilee Baldwin 01/15, 01/22/2026

**SALE OF MOTOR VEHICLE**

This ad is pursuant to MA Gen. Law Ch.255, Sec. 39A as of January 16, 2026 the following motor vehicle will be for sale to satisfy a garage keepers lien:

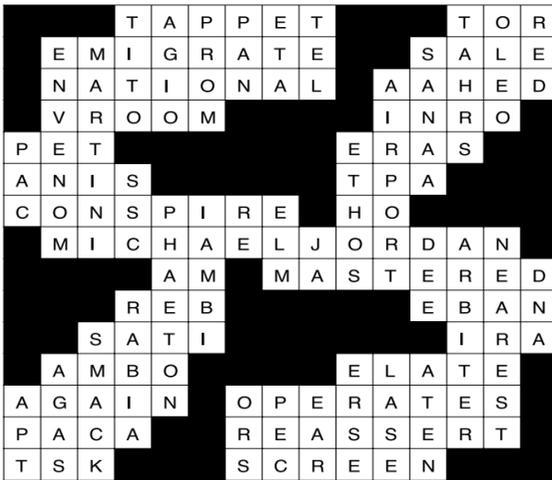
Vehicle: 2003 Acura TL  
Vin #: 19UUA566603A039534  
Color: Red  
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**NOTICE**

**ERRORS:** Each advertiser is requested to check their advertisement the first time it appears. This paper will not be responsible for more than one corrected insertion, nor will be liable for any error in an advertisement to a greater extent than the cost of the space occupied by the item in the advertisement.



**OBITUARY**

**Walter Edwin Bosworth**



Walter Edwin Bosworth, of Belchertown, passed away on January 10, 2026. He was born on June 15, 1950, to Melvin and Christine (Squires) Bosworth and grew up on Old Enfield Road in Belchertown with his brothers, Roger and Jim.

Walt serviced and sold lawnmowers and snowblowers to customers from all over New England. Walter was generous and kind, wild and stubborn, funny and playful. He was truly one of a kind.

After graduating from Belchertown High School, Walter enlisted in the United States Marine Corps and served his country during the Vietnam War. Following his military service, he worked for many years as a heavy equipment operator in Massachusetts and New Jersey before returning home to Belchertown, where he began a career with the Belchertown Highway Department. He retired in 2015 after 20 years of dedicated service to the community in which he was born and raised. Retirement did not slow Walter down. His true passion was fixing things, and for more than 30 years he did just that from his home garage, operating Walt's Small Engine Repair, which he founded in 1988. Known to many simply as "the lawn-

mower man," Walt serviced and sold lawnmowers and snowblowers to customers from all over New England. Walter was generous and kind, wild and stubborn, funny and playful. He was truly one of a kind. He was predeceased by his beloved wife, Norma "Tissie" Bosworth (Michalak), in 2019, as well as by his brothers. He is survived by his daughter, Tanya, and grandchildren, Ariana and Sawyer, all of Belchertown; his son, Mel, and daughter-in-law, Christy, of Easthampton; many friends and extended family members; and his cherished cats, Shadow and Murphy.

A private burial service will be held at a future date. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Walter's honor to support efforts to fight ALS. New England Funeral & Cremation Center, 25 Mill Street, Springfield, MA, has been entrusted with the arrangements. Please visit [www.nefcc.net](http://www.nefcc.net) to share expressions of sympathy.

**Death Notice**

**Walter Edwin Bosworth**  
Died January 10  
Services are private.

*The Sentinel*  
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SPORTS



Cassandra Hykiel tries to cut to the hoop.



Megan Clark crosses midcourt with the ball.



Addison Doktor goes for the short jump shot.



Taylor Allen heads down the court.

# Pioneers fall to Putnam Voke



Giara Green tries to power through Putnam's defense.



Jinx Ripley catches a high pass.

SPRINGFIELD – Last Friday evening, Pathfinder Tech girls basketball suffered a power outage late in the game, falling to host Putnam 52-39. The Pioneers managed just four points in the final quarter, making a big difference in the result. Putnam was led by Addison Doktor, who scored 25 points to lead the Pioneers in the matchup. Megan Clark added eight points. Pathfinder would fall to 2-3 on the season.

## Belchertown community food drive to honor MLK

BELCHERTOWN— Serving is how we honor Martin Luther King's legacy. Answering Dr. King's call to justice and service, this food drive is a chance to help neighbors facing food insecurity this winter. Supporting the Amherst Survival Center and benefiting Belchertown and 13 local communities.

Donations Requested: canned vegetables, beans, and soups, pasta, rice, and shelf-stable grains, peanut butter and protein rich foods, breakfast items (oatmeal, cereal), and personal care and hygiene and paper products.

The donations will be collected on Sunday, Jan. 18 at the Belchertown Town Hall, hosted by State Representative Aaron Saunders, State Representative Mindy Domb, and State Senator Jake Oliveira. Sponsored by Window World.



**ORIOLES** from page 9 leading scorer.

"Jadiel is our best defender, so we had him guard against Brice Letendre, who's a very good basketball player, in tonight's game," Zimmer said. "In order to do that, we had to move Cam to the point guard position."

Senior Ethan Love, who's normally the Lions starting point guard, came off the bench against Belchertown. He didn't score any points.

Letendre, who's a forward, had scored more than 130 points in the first seven games of the regular season. He netted 13 of his game-high 18 points against Ludlow during the first half. He scored three field goals in the first and second quarters on inside hoops.

The Orioles' other three double digits scorers were senior guard Austin Raymer (12 points), junior center Shea MacLean (11 points), and senior guard Jacob Pacunas (10 points).

Senior guard Jackson Mateus, who entered the

home contest as the Lions leading scorer this season with more than 120 points, finished with 11 points against the Orioles.

Raymer guarded against Mateus most of the game.

"I thought Austin did a very good job of guarding Jackson Mateus," Hart said. "We also used our full-court press defense for the first time in this game."

Mateus, who has scored more than 750 career points, is trying to become the Lions first boys' basketball player to score 1,000 career points since Mike Kane reached the elite milestone in 2005.

The duo of senior forward Mason Morace and Lyman picked up the slack offensively for Ludlow.

Morace, who was the starting quarterback for the Lions football team, scored 10 of his team-leading 17 points before halftime.

"This was probably Mason's best game of the season," Zimmer said. "He was outstanding at both ends of the court."

Lyman added 14 points.

With less than two minutes remaining in regulation, Mateus was fouled while making an inside hoop, which sliced the Lions deficit down to 52-48. He missed the bonus free throw.

Down at the other end of the court, MacLean did make a pair of free throws with 1:24 left.

He then scored an inside basket and a foul shot, which extended the visitors lead to 57-48 with 45 seconds remaining.

"They double teamed Brice, which left Shea open," Hart said. "He played very well down the stretch."

Following a Letendre steal, Pacunas made two more foul shots, which pushed the Orioles lead into double digits for the first time.

The Lions, who held an early 10-5 lead, were outscored 10-7 during the final five minutes of the opening quarter.

A Letendre lay-up closed the gap to 14-13 before Mateus buried a 3 pointer.



Austin Raymer tries to navigate through the middle of the court.

Then Pacunas made two free throws, and the Orioles were only trailing by two points (17-15) entering the second quarter.

Belchertown retook the



Jake Pacunas looks to make an inbound pass.

lead at 19-18 for the first time since early in the first quarter following a driving MacLean lay-up in the middle of the second stanza.

The Lions were trailing, 27-22, late in the first half when junior forward Kobe McKay knocked down a 3-pointer, which was his only

points of the contest.

The third quarter was evenly played, but the Orioles held a 47-41 lead, entering the final eight minutes.

The Lions got within four points of taking the lead before the Orioles pulled away.

the key, Klingensmith was fouled. She made both foul shots, making the score 56-50 with 33.5 seconds left. Another foul shot by Bousquet pushed the lead to seven points before Roy was fouled while attempting to make a three-point shot with 23.8 seconds remaining on the scoreboard clock. She sank all three free throws, but the Lady Orioles couldn't get any closer than four points. Unless the two teams face each other again in the Division 3 state tournament, Tantasqua will most likely be making a trip to the Belchertown High School gymnasium during the 2026-27 regular season.

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