

Town holds community summit to collaborate

BELCHERTOWN — On March 14, more than 70 community members, local leaders, and representatives from various organizations gathered for the Belchertown Community Summit, a collaborative event hosted by the Town of Belchertown, Belchertown Creative Economy, and Belchertown Community TV, focused on shaping the town's future.

The Summit brought together residents to participate in a series of roundtable discussions centered on four key topics: space and land use, signature event planning, money and marketing, and volunteer recruitment and retention. The event provided a platform for meaningful conversation and collective problem-solving, with a strong emphasis on building a more connected, inclusive, and sustainable community.

Select Board member Whitney Jorns Kuhnlenz reflected on the energy and collaboration that defined the event.

"I am constantly impressed by the commitment and passion of our town members. The summit was an opportunity for volunteers, elected officials and dedicated residents to come together to openly discuss their hopes and concerns and to strategically plan for the future. Belchertown is full of bril-

liant leaders and professionals- and seeing them utilizing their expertise for community facilitation was so inspiring."

A Shared Vision for Thoughtful Growth

Across discussions, participants emphasized the importance of balancing growth with preservation of Belchertown's rural character. Residents expressed a strong desire for development that respects the town's identity while allowing for innovation, including mixed-use spaces and more flexible land use. The need for accessible, multi-purpose community gathering spaces also



Organizers of the Mar. 14 community summit.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS



Dawn Cote makes a presentation.

emerged as a key priority.

Sustainability and environmental stewardship were recurring themes, with participants highlighting the importance of protecting natural resources while planning for future growth.

Sarah Maroney, co-chair of Belchertown Creative

Economy, said the Summit highlighted how naturally residents came together around a shared vision, "What stood out to me at the Summit was how naturally people leaned in to sharing their ideas, making connections, and thinking beyond themselves. It was a reminder

that in Belchertown, thoughtful growth isn't something we plan for someday, it's already happening through the people who come together and take part in all the wonderful pieces that make Belchertown so special."

Please see **SUMMIT**, page 8

Committee approves cell phone policy, responds to SPED resolve

Public hearing on FY27 budget set for April 14

By Melina Bourdeau
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN — The School Committee approved a new pre-K-8 cell phone policy, advanced its fiscal 2027 budget and reviewed state-ordered special education improvements at its last meeting.

In a session that touched on student behavior, district finances and state accountability, the committee tightened rules for student phone use in the lower grades, scheduled a public budget

hearing for April 14 and outlined how Belchertown is responding to a "needs assistance" designation for special education.

FY27 budget update
On the budget, Superintendent Brian Cameron reminded the committee that state law requires a public hearing before the School Committee adopts its annual plan. The public hearing is set for Tuesday, April 14.

Cameron said the administration will present the same budget shown at a prior meeting, giving committee members and the public time to digest the numbers and ask questions. He added that once

approved the budget would be final until voted on by residents at the Town Meeting.

Cell phone policy

The cell phone policy will apply to students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade, standardizing expectations across Cold Spring, Swift River and Chestnut Hill schools and the middle school.

The policy which bans cell phone and accessories like Blue-tooth headphones and smartwatches from "bell to bell." There are exceptions for phone use for health-related purposes. The policy does not apply to sports or

Please see **BELCHERTOWN**, page 5

Granby school officials seek input as budget uncertainty looms

By Melina Bourdeau
Correspondent

GRANBY — Granby school officials urged community engagement as leaders discussed school choice allocations, the Massachusetts School Building Authority statement of interest and budget scenarios that could force cuts if town funding or health-insurance chargebacks remain uncertain.

At the March 24 School Committee meeting, administrators authorized submission of the MSBA statement of interest to keep the district in line for future building funds, approved proposed school choice seats for 2026-27 and prepared

to present multiple FY27 budget scenarios at a public forum March 31 as officials warned that missing town-provided data, notably

"I had presented in December an original draft of our budget, which was just slightly over 2% increase over FY26..."
— Todd Dorman

in-kind chargebacks and health insurance figures, could turn a modest proposed increase into a deficit requiring program reductions.

Officials emphasized the procedural importance of the

MSBA filing and its limits.

"It's important that we fill out this yearly (Statement of Interest)," Superintendent Mary Jane Rickson said, explaining the district must remain in the queue in case state funding becomes available.

"If we don't put it in every year, if indeed the time comes for us to either do some sort of project, whether it be accelerated project or a new building project, we have to start at the very bottom, and it could take five to seven

Please see **GRANBY**, page 3

Plots available at the community garden

BELCHERTOWN — Individual, fully prepared, 300 square foot garden plots are still available to all Belchertown and surrounding area residents at Lampson Brook Farm, located at 275 Jackson Street, Belchertown. Residents can obtain a plot for \$35 (non-residents \$40) for the season, Mid-May through October. Those receiving SNAP benefits are welcome to garden at half price. The garden fee includes compost, the use of shared tools in a well-organized tool shed, convenient access to water, a restroom, and parking. The companionship and wisdom of your gardening neighbors are free! Members of the Community Garden also contribute several hours of their time during the season to maintaining the common areas. A limited number of plots for vegetables and flowers are still available—so don't delay.

To receive a 2026 registration form, email BCGardenNews@gmail.com. Applications must be received by April 6.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Get your plot reserved now for 2026 for the Belchertown Community Garden.

Belchertown man arraigned in fatal shooting of wife

BELCHERTOWN — Mark Opper, 56, of Belchertown was arraigned this morning in Eastern Hampshire District Court, in connection with the fatal shooting of his wife, Diane Opper, 56, also of Belchertown. The shooting is alleged to have occurred shortly after 5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 27, 2026, inside the couple's residence at 111 Daniel Shays Highway in Belchertown.

The defendant was arraigned on charges of murder and assault and battery on a family or household member. Judge Bruce Melikian ordered that the defendant be held without

bail and continued the case to April 27, 2026.

Northwestern Assistant District Attorney Erin Aiello, Chief of the Office's Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Unit, represented the Commonwealth. Attorney Jonah Goldsmith of the Committee for Public Counsel Services was appointed to represent the defendant.

The case remains under active investigation by the Belchertown Police Department and the Massachusetts State Police Detective Unit assigned to the Northwestern District Attorney's Office.

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Granby Police Log

Editor's Note: The Granby Police Department responded to 116 calls for the week March 20, through March 26. Those arrested are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. The Granby Police Department provides all information.

Friday, March 20

10:52 a.m. – A resident reported that their detached garage is on fire. Granby Fire and Police responded. Mutual aid was called in from South Hadley Fire, Belchertown Fire, And Westover Fire. The fire was extinguished and there were no injuries.

Sunday, March 22

4:45 p.m. – A motorist

reported a two-car accident on Amherst Street. There were no injuries.

Wednesday, March 25

9:24 p.m. – While on patrol, an officer observed a vehicle with a headlight not working. The vehicle was stopped and it was discovered that it had not been inspected since 2025. The operator was issued a civil citation for failure to inspect and a verbal warning for the defective headlight.

Thursday, March 26

2:54 p.m. – A caller reported that her storage unit was broken into six to seven years ago, and she finally came to empty out the unit. She discovered two safes in the unit that were not hers. Officers retrieved the safes and brought them to the station.

Relay hosting concert fundraiser

BELCHERTOWN – Quaboag Valley Relay for Life will host a fundraiser to “Scare Cancer Away” on Saturday, Apr. 11 at 3 p.m. at the Belchertown Untied Church of Christ, 18 Park St.

The featured performer is Ray Guillemette, Jr. the 10-time international award-winning Elvis tribute artist.

The event is being held to help cancer patients, fund more research to help with the government cutbacks, and to honor those we’ve lost too soon to cancer.

Tickets are \$20 and are available at <https://buccsangels.ticketspice.com/rays-of-elvis-relay-fundraiser>. Refreshments will be available for purchase.



St. Francis of Assisi's schedule

Palm Sunday - March 28 and 29: The Mass celebration of the triumphal entry of Jesus into the Holy City will take place on Saturday, at the 4 p.m. Vigil and on Sunday at 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Sacred Triduum Services Holy Thursday - April 2: As we begin the Sacred Triduum, we commemorate Jesus's betrayal by Judas with the Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7 p.m., followed by Adoration in the "Garden of Gethsemane" until 10 p.m. The garden will be set up in a corner of the main Church.

Good Friday - April 3: At 7 p.m., the Sacred

Triduum continues with the commemoration of Jesus' passion and death, including the Veneration of the Cross.

Additionally, the following devotionals will be offered during the day:

Children's Stations of the Cross will be offered at 11 a.m. for children in grades K-6 and their families. During the hours of noon to 3 p.m., all are encouraged to spend silent time in prayer. At 3 p.m., the Stations of the Cross will be prayed.

Holy Saturday - April 4 At 8 a.m., the community will hold a Prayer Service with the Rites of Preparation for those

entering the Church during the Easter Vigil.

At 11:30 a.m., the Blessing of Easter Food Baskets will take place in the Church gathering space.

Easter Vigil - April 4: The Sacred Triduum concludes with the Easter Vigil, which will take place at 8 p.m., beginning with the lighting of the Easter fire outside the Church, followed by the Procession of Light into the Church. This is the Church's greatest liturgy, which invites us to truly enter into the great mystery of our faith regarding the death and resurrection of the Lord.

Water Commission confidence report available

BELCHERTOWN — The 2025 Belchertown Water District Consumer Confidence Report is available by mail by calling (413)323-6987. It is available online on the District website www.belchertownwaterdistrict.org under "Reports" Direct URL: <https://www.belchertownwaterdistrict.org/Forms/ccrreport2025.bwd.pdf> This water quality report is also available at the Belchertown

Select Board's office, the Belchertown Public Library, as well as Belchertown Water District office located at 206 Jabish Street.

GRANBY from page 1

years to get into the queue," said Rickson.

The committee voted to add school choice seats for the 2026-27 school year after discussion about accommodating incoming students and avoiding a perception of exclusion. Chair Jennifer Bartosz pressed for flexibility, saying she would "hate to see a zero there" for seniors.

Finance officials urged outreach to the public ahead of the budget forum and cautioned that key town numbers still were not available. Director of Finance and Operations Todd Dorman outlined the budget's fragility, saying the district has "a scenario where we are proposing a 2% increase" but warned that incomplete town data on in-kind expenses and health insurance could change that

picture substantially.

"I had presented in December an original draft of our budget, which was just slightly over 2% increase over FY26 ... Without those two key pieces of information, we don't have our full picture," said Dorman.

Dorman said in-kind chargebacks last year totaled nearly \$3 million and health-insurance costs exceeded \$1.16 million, figures that will shape the FY27 outlook.

The administration moved the budget forum back one week to give the town time to provide missing data, with officials planning to present multiple scenarios, including worst-case cuts, to the public at the March 31 hearing.

The superintendent reported robust kindergarten interest, about 45 completed registrations so far, and ongoing

efforts to contact census-listed families who have not yet enrolled. On the lunch program, Dorman said profitability dropped compared with the prior year because of enrollment declines and scheduling changes at the junior-senior high school.

The committee reviewed findings from an IMR (Interim Monitoring Report) review and outlined a corrective action plan for documentation and policy alignment. Rickson said the district avoided noncompliance findings but must improve written procedures and handbooks. She told the committee that many fixes will be implemented over the summer.

Bartosz said community voices will be important as the district balances maintaining services and preparing for potential funding shortfalls.

Hope United Methodist schedule

BELCHERTOWN — Hope United Methodist Church announced the following schedule for 2026 Holy Week:

2026 HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Palm Sunday: March 29 at 10 a.m. Distribution of Palm Branches

Maunder Thursday:

April 2 at 7 p.m. A service of prayers, music, scripture, and Holy Communion

Good Friday: April 3, 1 to 3 p.m. Sanctuary open for prayer and reflection followed by steeple bell tolling at 3 p.m.

7 p.m.: A service contemplating the Shadows of Condemnation, Separation,

Sorrow, Despair, Suffering, and Death.

Easter Sunrise Service: April 5 at 6:15 a.m. Quabbin Reservoir – Tower Parking Lot.

Ecumenical Service Easter Sunday Worship: April 5 at 10 a.m. Resurrection Celebration

Quabbin Art Association announces new exhibit on display through June 25

BELCHERTOWN – The Quabbin Art Association (QAA) is pleased to announce the second show in its year-round series of rotating art exhibits hosted at North Brookfield Savings Bank, 4 Daniel Shays Highway, Belchertown.

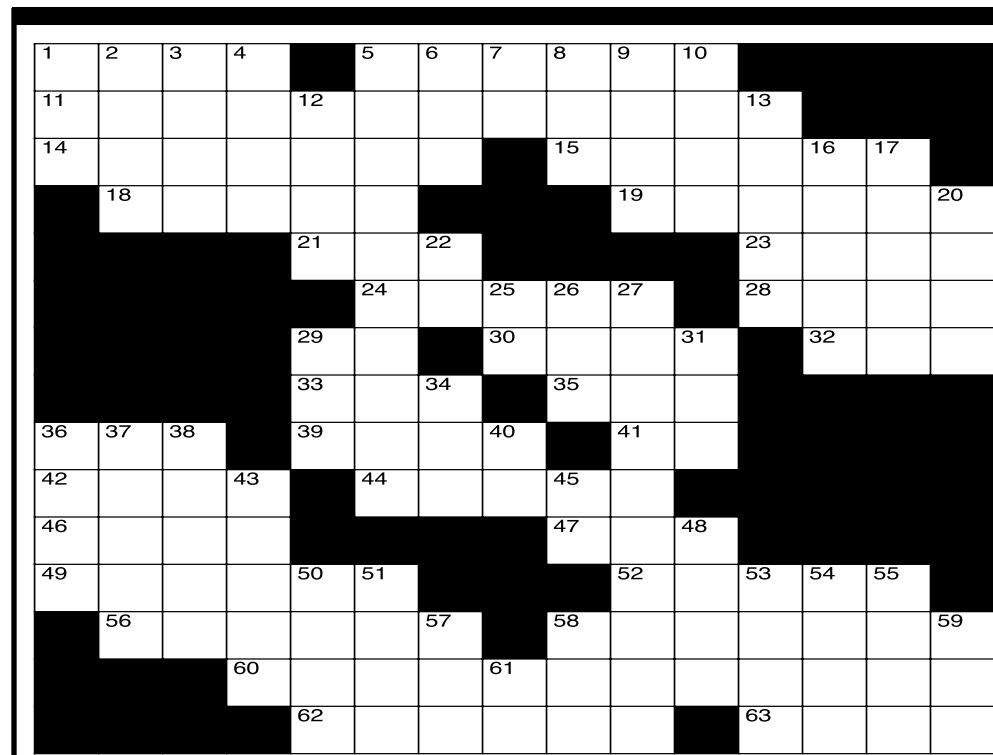
Featured works by QAA member artists Katherine

Brunza, Rosemary Chaban, and Rochelle Shicoff will be on display in the bank lobby now through June 25 during regular business hours.

Approaching 100 members, QAA takes pride in cultivating an inclusive, supportive community for artists of all skill levels. The organization offers

year-round exhibition opportunities, a Plein Air group, community events, artisan markets, and more.

For more information about the exhibit or the Quabbin Art Association, please visit <http://www.quabbinartorganization.com> or contact: info@quabbinartassociation.com



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|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|
| CLUES ACROSS | 35. Electronic data processing | CLUES DOWN | 29. Woman (French) |
| 1. Absence of difficulty | 36. Drivers' licenses and passports are two | 1. Body part | 31. Sunscreen rating |
| 5. Preserve a dead body | 39. Snake-like fishes | 2. Mimics | 34. Brew |
| 11. Gratitude | 41. Air Force | 3. Expel or eject (variant sp.) | 36. Leader |
| 14. The act of coming together again | 42. Popular personal computers | 4. Sea eagle | 37. Indigo bush genus |
| 15. More cushy | 44. Stages in ecological succession | 5. Taxonomic category | 38. Burn with a hot liquid |
| 18. Visionaries | 46. Wings | 6. Chinese languages | 40. Junior's father |
| 19. Large fish-eating bird | 47. In the center | 7. Mr. T's "A-Team" character | 43. Mackerel genus |
| 21. Indicates near | 49. Pleasantly smooth | 8. Consumed | 45. Morning |
| 23. Former CIA and CIA critic | 52. Jeweled headdress | 9. Chinese dynasty | 48. Straight line from side to side (abbr.) |
| 24. Icelandic poems | 56. In slow tempo | 10. NFL legend Randy | 50. Type of molding |
| 28. Pop | 58. ___ Falls | 12. Ireland | 51. Small, thin or twisted bunch |
| 29. Hammer is one | 60. Reiterations | 13. Palm trees with creeping roots | 53. Worn by exposure to the weather |
| 30. Selfs | 62. Eras | 16. Fungal disease | 54. Mars crater |
| 32. Thyroid-stimulating hormone | 63. Hyphen | 17. Tall, slender-leaved plants | 55. Humanities |
| 33. Nowhere to be found | | 20. Affirmative! (slang) | 57. Relating to the ears |
| | | 22. It says who you are | 58. "To the ___ degree" |
| | | 25. Atlantic coast state | 59. Residue when something is burned |
| | | 26. Grow older | 61. It cools a home |
| | | 27. Associations | |

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HADLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL CHOICE OPENINGS 2026-2027

Hadley Public Schools grades PK-12 is now accepting School Choice Applications.

They can be found at www.hadleyschools.org.
 The cut-off date for applications is April 15th.

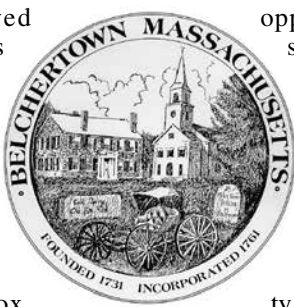
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*Open spots in grades K-2.
 Limited spots grades 3-5.
 Grade 6 closed. Grades 7-12 open.

Multiple vacancies on Belchertown boards, committees

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



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

Animal Control Advisory Board: The Town wishes to fill one (1) vacancy on the Animal Control Advisory Board. This Board works with the Animal Control Officer and the public when a complaint is brought against a dog in Town. The Board may conduct hearings as allowed in the Town Bylaw [Chapter 15] and Mass. Gen. Law ch. 140, Sec. 157 and

pose conditions upon the animal owner(s) as deemed appropriate. As the Board works with dog complaints (only), an ideal applicant would be someone familiar with dogs; a current or past dog owner or person who works with dogs, or an interested community member.

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 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 full members and two (2) associate 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.

Creative Economy Committee: The Town of Belchertown is accepting letters of interest to fill one (1) vacancy on the Creative Economy Committee. This Committee oversees the strategic planning, municipi-

pal arts program development, outreach & marketing, activity implementation, evaluation & reporting, and coordinates arts and culture outreach for the town of Belchertown and forthcoming Cultural District.

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

Please see **VACANCIES**, page 11



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Betty Allen Chapter NSDAR recognizes BHS senior

NORTHAMPTON — The Betty Allen Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) hosted a reception on March 24 in Northampton to honor its recipient of the DAR Good Citizens Essay Program and Scholarship Contest.

Entries submitted by students from high schools across Hampshire County are reviewed and judged independently. Evaluation criteria include academic achievement, extracurricular involvement, and letters of recommendation. This year's essay prompt asked students to reflect on the upcoming 250th anniversary of the United States on July 4, 2026, and to describe how the qualities of a good citizen help renew and strengthen the democracy established by the Patriots of the American Revolution.

Sofia Cofone, a senior at Belchertown High School, was selected as the 2025-

2026 scholarship recipient for the Betty Allen Chapter. She was joined at the reception by her parents and Belchertown High School Principal Christine Vigneux. Massachusetts State Representative Aaron Saunders also attended and offered greetings, remarks, and a State House certificate signed by both himself and Senator Oliveira. Betty Allen Good Citizen Chapter Chair, Tracy Dawson-Greene, presented Ms. Cofone with a NSDAR Good Citizen Certificate and Pin, along with a scholarship from Betty Allen Chapter, NDAR.

All state-accredited high schools are invited to nominate one senior as their DAR Good Citizen. Each honoree receives a pin and certificate, regardless of participation in the scholarship contest. Selected students must demonstrate the qualities of dependability, service, leadership, and

patriotism.

The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) is a women's service organization whose members can trace their lineage to individuals who contributed to securing American independence during the Revolutionary War. Today, DAR includes more than 185,000 members in approximately 3,000 chapters in the United States and abroad. Members collectively contribute millions of hours of volunteer service each year, supporting historic preservation, education, and patriotism initiatives. Since its founding in 1890, more than one million women have joined the organization.

For more information about DAR membership, visit the Betty Allen Chapter's Facebook page or contact Regent Donna Helm at regentbettyallenchapterdar@gmail.com.



Zonta to celebrate Earth Day

BELCHERTOWN — On Apr. 13 at the Ludlow Country Club Zonta will celebrate Earth Day with a look at gender equity in rural MA and an online, local, farm to door delivery service connecting Quaboag Valley to the freshest farm products, bakeries & specialty food shops.

Anne Gobi became Massachusetts's first Director of Rural Affairs in January 2023. Beginning her political life in the town of Spencer in 1998, she was first elected to the state House in an October 2001 special election. While a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, Gobi worked on multiple committees; including the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. She served as co-chair of the Committee on Agriculture. In 2014, Gobi was elected to the state Senate. In the Senate, Gobi served as the Senate Co-chair of the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture and Joint Committee on Higher Education. She will be speaking to us on Women in Rural Massachusetts, opportunities and challenges.

Also joining us is Farmer At The Door Entrepreneur Jessica Petrie-Cummings of Petrie Family Farm, Brimfield MA. Her online, local, farm to door delivery service connects Quaboag Valley to the freshest farm products, bakeries & specialty food shops. Jess will share her story and have items for sale before and after the program.

The public is invited to join us on Apr. 13.

BELCHERTOWN from page 1

after-school activities.

High school students will continue under the existing handbook rules for now.

Committee members spent time on how the new ban should be enforced and monitored.

School Committee member Ruby Bansal said she supports the intent of the policy but wants to understand how it affects student discipline once it is in place.

"I would like to hear after the policy has been in place for a little time what the impact is, what are we seeing in terms of discipline?" Bansal said. "I'm definitely, personally in support of the impetus, but I also want to make sure we're not disciplining students more in a way that's not necessarily going to be helpful."

Administrators said principals do not want classroom teachers in confrontations over phones and will take the lead when there are violations.

Cameron noted that schools will gather data on how frequently the new rules are enforced and assured the committee he would give it an update.

The committee ultimately voted to adopt the cell phone free policy for PreK-8, while leaving the high

school's current approach unchanged for now.

Special Education determination and next steps

The committee also heard a detailed report on the state's special education determination for Belchertown.

Director of Special Education and Student Support Services Rebecca Lynch explained that a change in the state's scoring matrix led to more districts, including Belchertown, being classified as "needs assistance."

"We have consistently been fine until last year, when they changed the matrix," she said.

She said Belchertown scored well on compliance, but lost points in other performance areas.

"We lost a point or so for our graduation rate with our indices specifically for special education students. And the majority of the points were lost on [MCAS] scores specifically," she told the board.

In response, the district formed a multi-stakeholder team and completed a root-cause analysis, she said.

"We have a variety of different types of people on our team," she said. "We looked at our success gaps, and we completed a root

cause analysis. At this stage, we just submitted our action plan, and we're waiting for feedback."

Even if the state upgrades Belchertown's status this spring, the district will still be required to continue the improvement process into the 2026-27 school year, she said.

Cameron told the committee that the special education work is being deliberately tied to districtwide efforts on writing, literacy and consistent instructional expectations.

"Back in August, we went to a workshop in Worcester about instructional strategies and learning expectations, and the same thing that we identified there [is] coming up in our action plans for special education, but we all made the commitment that, yes, it's for special education, but we're going into it for all students," Cameron said. "We have dissected what clear high expectations are for every classroom. We're going to create boards for that, so everybody has the same expectation from pre-K to 12."

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Good Friday - April 3 at 4 p.m.
Easter Vigil - April 4 at 4 p.m.

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OPINION

SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor

I'll be 70 on New Year's Day. When should I apply for Social Security?

Dear Rusty:

I was born on Jan. 1, 1958, so I believe Social Security considers me to be 70 as of December 2027. I'm planning on filing when I turn 70 to maximize the payment. I'm not sure if I should start in December, with the first payment in January 2028. Or should I start in January with the first payment in February 2028? I know I can start anytime, however I don't want to file before the maximum payment, even by one month.

Signed: Wanting Maximum Benefit

Dear Wanting:

You are correct that if your birth date is Jan. 1, 1958, you are entitled to your full age 70 benefit in December 2027. So, if you claim your SS benefit to start in December 2027 you will get your maximum benefit amount and you will receive that payment in January 2028 (on the second Wednesday). Basically, anyone born on the first of any month is considered to have been born in the previous month for SS benefit purposes.

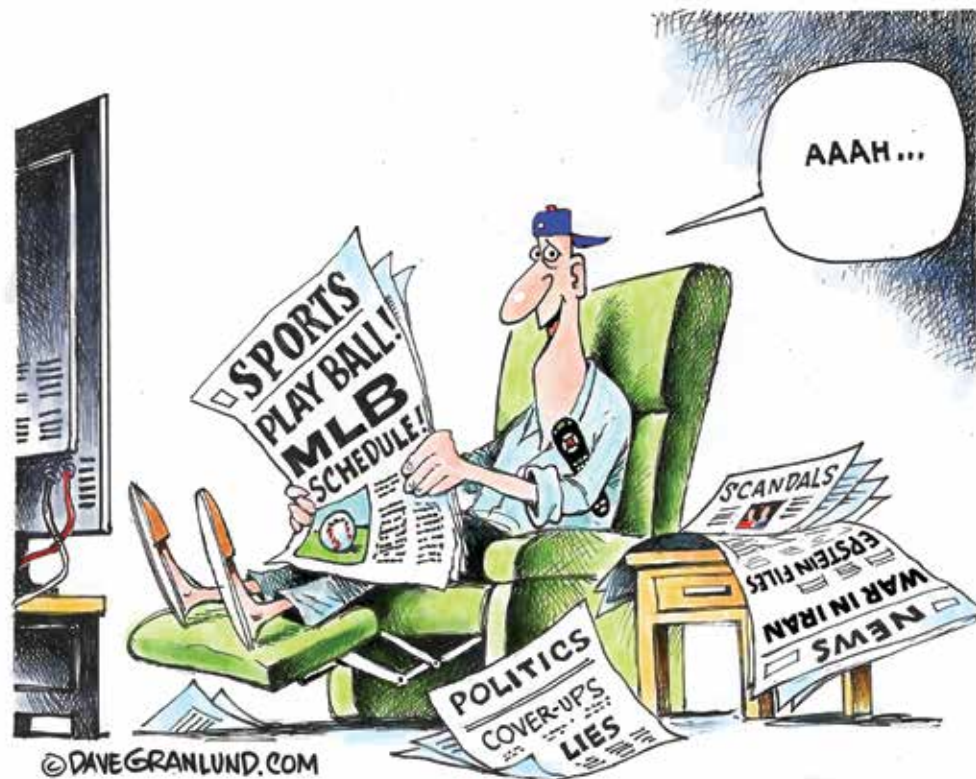
You can apply for your benefits up to four months prior to your birthday month and SS usually suggests applying about three months in advance to give them time to process your application. When you complete the application, you will specify the month you wish your benefits to start, so applying early does not present a problem. You can either call SSA at 1-800-772-1213 to make an appointment to apply over the phone or you can apply

online at www.ssa.gov/ apply.

The one thing you might want to do is put the following in the "Remarks" section of your application for SS benefits: "I do not wish to receive any retroactive Social Security benefits. I want my benefits to become effective with the first month of my age 70 eligibility (December 2027 because I was born on the first of January)."

Including that remark will ensure that your benefit will be the full maximum amount you are entitled to at 70 years of age, without any reduction. And I congratulate you on choosing a strategy which maximizes your monthly benefit and will likely provide you with the most in cumulative lifetime Social Security benefits.

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 informational purposes and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.



Pruning your hydrangeas

It was encouraging to see so many gardeners out in force this past weekend, regardless of the fact that it remained a little chilly.

I got outside too, mainly to clean up some leaves and debris from a bed near the front door. While I was there, I began pruning my pink flowered Hydrangea (*H. paniculata*), mainly by removing last year's blooms.

I often get questions about blue hydrangeas and how to prune and what to do to coax it into bloom. So, before you get the pruners out and have at it, read on.

Most established hydrangea bushes, the "Mophead" types (*Hydrangea macrophylla*) say those older than 15 years or so, flower on "old" wood, in other words, from buds made on the previous season's stems. That is why they are not pruned in the fall or in the spring for that matter, unless the stem is dead or partially dead.

An early autumn frost, a hard winter, or a late spring frost can kill buds or even entire stems. If the stem does not leaf out at all the further we get into spring, it is likely dead, and you should cut it down to the ground.

Usually the plant's roots are not harmed, and new growth will emerge from the base of the plant.

However, with these older



cultivars, you will be left with just foliage in summer because the buds made the previous year will have been cut away. Sometimes a stem is only partially winter killed and it may leaf out midway down the stem.

In that case, just prune away the portion that is dead and leave the rest. Don't worry that you may remove flower buds in the process; more occur further down the stem and will bloom if they too haven't been eliminated by Old Man Winter.

Perhaps you have one of the newer cultivars such as "Endless Summer," "Penny Mac," or others that bloom on new growth as well as old growth. In that case how much you cut away is not as critical. You should get flowers even if last season's stems are cut to the ground because soon enough new stems will produce new buds.

Sometimes people complain that they still don't get flowers and this is very perplexing. I've been to forums where everything from prop-

er siting (morning sun, dappled shade) to fertilization is discussed (not too high in nitrogen, please).

One complaint was that our growing season is just borderline long enough for flowers to appear on new growth and reportedly some of these early repeat bloomers are being phased out because of it. If that's the case, I am sure they are breeding more dependable cultivars as we speak.

I had always wanted a hydrangea and finally bought one as a Mother's Day gift to self maybe four years ago. It is a newer generation and so far I have been very happy. It's filled out nicely and had well over two dozen flowers last year.

Hopefully the harsh winter will not effect my hopes for a repeat performance this summer. I wish you much success and many blooms on your hydrangeas!

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

Smoking cessation is beneficial at any age

If there's one habit every doctor wishes you would break, it's smoking. Quitting significantly improves health and reduces the risk of diseases.

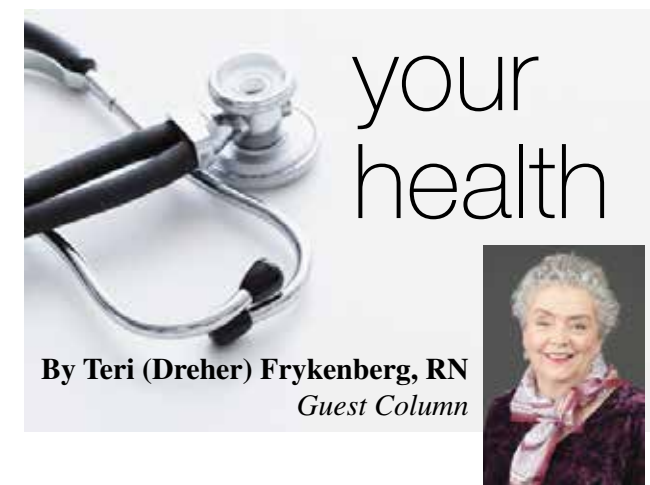
And this is true no matter what age you are, from your 20s right into your 70s. While some older adults may believe it's "too late" to change, evidence shows that about one-third of older adults who attend specialized clinics successfully quit and stay off cigarettes for at least a year.

Research has also found that even 75-year-olds who are able to stop cigarettes gain an average of one year of life expectancy. That's one more year to do some of the things you enjoy, like visiting with grandchildren (and not being relegated to the patio to light up).

Besides life expectancy, other benefits for older quitters are:

A lower risk of disease: Older adults who quit have lower rates of death from heart attacks, strokes and cancer compared to those who continue to smoke.

Reduced frailty: Stopping smoking is associated with a lower degree of "frailty" (a measure of increased vulnerability and weakness) over time, promoting healthier aging and better physical



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

function.

Cognitive and sexual health: Quitting smoking can lead to improved brain function and has been shown to improve long-term sexual function recovery following procedures like prostate surgery.

Surgical success: For older adults facing surgery, quitting at least eight weeks prior can significantly decrease the risk of lung-related complications. If you can go eight weeks, you can keep going.

Quitting cigarettes is really, really hard because of the addictive properties of nicotine, which has been shown to boost dopamine in the reward circuits of the brain, but causes cravings and withdrawal

symptoms when it's stopped. This is true whether your source of nicotine is a cigarette or a vape.

Most adults who smoke say they want to quit. A 2022 survey found that more than half of adult smokers tried to quit in the previous year. If you fall into that group, don't go it alone, especially if smoking is a decades-long ingrained habit. Chances of success improve with support from doctors and family.

Support for smoking cessation is everywhere you look. The National Cancer Institute hosts a website, smokefree.gov, which is chock full of tips and techniques to help you on your journey to becoming a former smoker.

For example, there's guidance on nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), which has been shown to increase the success rate, especially when several forms are used, such as a nicotine patch supplemented by lozenges or gum. Some studies suggest that older adults may actually have higher success rates using NRT compared to younger smokers.

You can also find apps, texting and social media sites that offer support, along with how to build a quit plan.

Medicare wants you to quit smoking, too. After all, it will save them money. Medicare covers counseling sessions to help you stop smoking under Part B, allowing up to eight sessions every 12 months at no cost if your provider accepts Medicare. Additionally, Medicare Part D covers certain prescription medications to assist with smoking cessation.

Medicare Advantage Plans are required to cover counseling and some medications as well, though benefits vary by plan.

Here in Massachusetts, 1-800-QUIT-NOW is Massachusetts' tobacco and nicotine Quitline, where you can connect to a free trained quit coach by phone or line. They share

strategies to curb cravings, handle life's big and small stresses and tackle. You can track your progress and learn how to access free NRT supplies.

Talking to your health-care provider is also important, both as a source of support and advice on using certain prescription medications to curb smoking such as varenicline (Chantix). This medication can be used by older adults, but caution is advised because of a higher likelihood of age-related kidney issues. Your doctor may also recommend cognitive behavior therapy (CBT).

What does a quit plan look like? Pick a date you're going to quit and rid the house of cigarettes, ashtrays and other smoking paraphernalia. You might need to take some things to the dry cleaner to get the cigarette smell out. Tell everyone that you've made a quit plan and you need their help.

Be proud of what you're accomplishing! Let people know when you've been smoke-free for a week, a month, a year. If you do happen to light up, don't give up. Tomorrow is another day.

Please see **HEALTH**, page 10

Turley Publications Letters to the Editor Policy

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

Turley Election Policy

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

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



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HCC to host American Sign Language pickleball tournament April 4

HOLYOKE — Holyoke Community College will host its second annual American Sign Language pickleball tournament on Saturday, Apr. 4.

Sponsored by the HCC Deaf Studies Department, the tournament will run from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on the pickleball courts inside the Bartley Center for Athletics and Recreation.

This fun and friendly tournament is free for participants and geared for players of any skill level. Spectators are welcome. Paddles and balls will be supplied for players who need them.

The tournament begins at 9 a.m. with introductions and instructions in pickleball rules and strategy given in American Sign Language. Pickleball practice will start at 9:30 a.m. with the tournament running from 10 to 11:30 a.m., followed by an awards presentation and social time.

HCC ASL instructors



Minh Vo and Mick Posner, who teach in the HCC Deaf Studies Department, will lead the pickleball instruction.

“The tournament is open to HCC as well as members of the local Deaf community regardless of their pickleball skills and knowledge of ASL,” said Claire Sanders, chair of the Deaf Studies Department.

After practice time, players will be randomly assigned

doubles partners, and the tournament will proceed using a round robin format.

Certificates will be awarded to the top five players.

To register, go to: hcc.edu/asl-pickleball

For more information, please contact HCC Professor Claire Sanders, chair of the Deaf Studies Department at csanders@hcc.edu.

Rosen declares candidacy for Granby Select Board seat

My name is Rosemarie Rosen, called Ro, and I am running for Select Board in Granby. I would like to have people know that and consider voting for me on May 18.

I moved to Granby about three years ago from Albany, NY. My daughter has lived in Northampton for fifteen years and I have visited many times. I wanted to be near her and

I found this area beautiful and inviting.

I have over thirty years of government experience at both the state and local level. My specialties were in Finance and Human Resources. I volunteer at the Granby library and last year was elected a Library Trustee. I really would like to do more.

It is clear that there have been difficulties in the past

in Granby and with the significantly rising fixed costs and the disappearing grants and Federal support, Granby, like towns all across the state and the country, faces difficult times ahead. I have met many Granby people who are gracious and very proud of their community. I want to bring my experience and expertise to help.

BUCC to hold April Meatball Sub Sale

BELCHERTOWN — April’s Meatball Sub Sale will return to the grounds of the Belchertown United Church of Christ on Park St. on Saturday, Apr. 18.

Our food wagon will be set up right along the sidewalk--allowing customers to drive up, place an order, and have a freshly prepared meatball grinder/mozzarella cheese and sauce, a bag

of chips, and a beverage in their hands within a couple of minutes for only \$10. Still holding our pricing steady for the past several years.

Serving begins at 11 a.m. and continues until sell-out (which is usually about 2-1/2 hours)

No prep and no dishes for you to clean up. Let us do the lunchtime cooking for

you.

All proceeds from these grinder sales, as always, will go to local charities. Thanks to the support of folks like you in all of our fundraising endeavors, the club is proud to announce that we set a new charitable donation record this past year of \$57,900.

We hope to see you again on Apr. 18.



Quaboag Hills

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SUMMIT from page 1

Strengthening Communication and Community Connection

A central takeaway from the Summit was the need for improved communication across town committees, organizations, and local businesses. Participants noted that while there is strong interest in local events and initiatives, awareness remains a challenge.

Ideas such as a centralized community calendar, shared digital communication platforms, and increased cross-promotion were identified as immediate opportunities to strengthen engagement. There was also strong support for developing additional signature events that bring together diverse groups and foster a shared sense of community identity.

Trista Hevey, who facilitated the Signature Event Planning roundtable discussion, emphasized the importance of improving how local opportunities are shared, "Committees and various community groups are already hosting such amazing events taking place right here in Belchertown. We need to find more effective communication methods to ensure our community remains aware of the opportunities. Not only from an attendee perspective but for volunteer engagement as well."

Expanding Resources and Telling the Community's Story

Dawn Cote, the Town of Belchertown's Grants Manager, who also facilitated the Money and Marketing discussion, spoke to the enthusiasm and momentum in the room, "Town Hall was alive with local pride and ambition. Ideas flowed with incredible energy, but even more inspiring was the collective willingness to roll up our sleeves, learn, and turn those ideas into action. That collaborative, forward-think-

ing spirit is what will truly move our community forward."

Discussions around funding and marketing highlighted the need to look beyond local budgets by pursuing grants, sponsorships, and partnerships. Participants stressed that stronger collaboration and clearer messaging about Belchertown's strengths could help attract both financial support and broader participation.

Creating shared marketing tools, offering training in grant writing and promotion, and developing a cohesive community narrative were identified as practical next steps.

Building a Culture of Volunteerism

Volunteer recruitment and retention emerged as a critical area for growth. Participants agreed that clear expectations, personal outreach, and a welcoming environment including being open to new ideas are essential to encouraging participation. Many noted that people are more likely to get involved when they feel connected, valued, and informed.

"One of our goals is to break through to individuals who have thought about supporting a mission they feel connected to, but haven't yet taken that step to make it happen. Tapping into the talents of a broader base of individuals will not only benefit town organizations and committees, it will help individuals feel more connected and fulfilled," says Jenn Faulkner, a town resident and founder of Innovate Culture Lab, LLC, who facilitated this session.

Suggestions included offering flexible, short-term volunteer opportunities, improving outreach beyond social media, and creating systems to better match residents with opportunities. Long-term ideas focused on building stronger volunteer infrastructure, fostering partnerships



The event included a lot of participants from the public.



Belchertown Creative Economy Co-Chairs, Sarah Maroney and Jill Bierly at the Mar. 14 community summit.



Cultural District Manager Lisa Stahl speaks at the summit.

with schools and local organizations, and cultivating a culture of civic engagement across generations.

Moving Forward

The Belchertown Community Summit underscored a strong commitment among residents to work col-

laboratively toward a vibrant and inclusive future. The ideas and feedback gathered will help inform next steps, including potential new initiatives, improved communication strategies, and ongoing opportunities for community engagement.

"This Summit demon-

strated the passion and dedication that exists within our community," said Cultural District Manager Lisa Stahl. "There is a clear desire to build on our strengths, address challenges together, and create meaningful opportunities for connection and growth."

As conversations continue, the Town of Belchertown encourages residents, organizations, and businesses to stay engaged and contribute to the evolving vision for the community.



A group discusses money and marketing.



More planning takes place among a group.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Whitney Jorns Kuhnlenz, addresses the participants at the summit.

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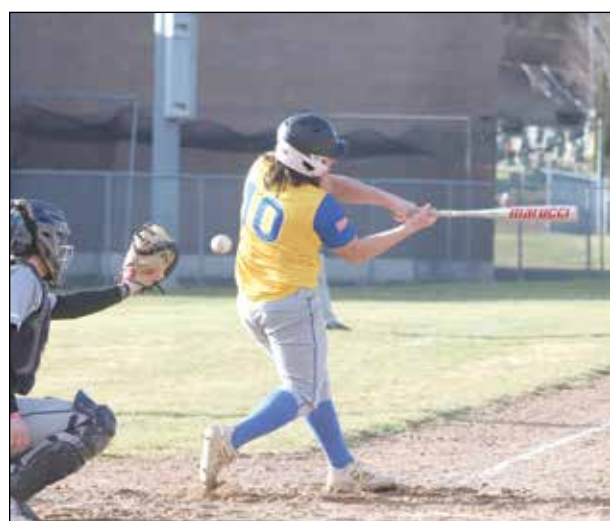
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Ian Sauri Nieves lunges for a throw down to second.



Brody Wetnicka fouls off a pitch.



Zachary Smith pitches in relief for the Pioneers.

Pioneers have tough opener



Anthony Elliott extends to catch an out at first.

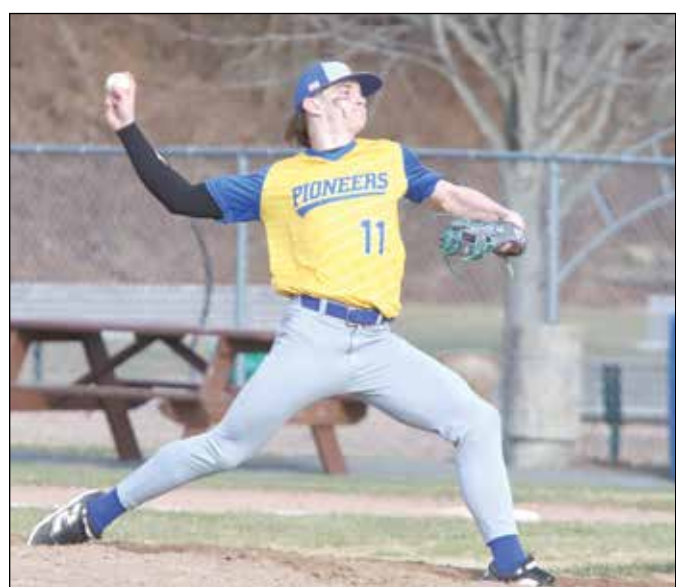


Outfielder Andrew Sullivan sends a throw back to the infield.



Dayne Shanley takes a swing and sends a base hit to right.

PALMER – The Pathfinder Tech baseball team got their season started very early with a cold afternoon at Legion Field in Palmer. The Pioneers were scored on early and often and lost to McCann Tech 13-2. McCann had an eight-run first inning to pace the game. Pathfinder only got two runs in the bottom of the third inning. The Pioneers are back in action on Friday, Apr. 3 against Palmer High School at 4 p.m.



Emerson Boronski fires a pitch home.

Bay State Games announces new leadership changes

BOSTON – Bay State Games has announced new staff appointments and board leadership changes leading into the 2026 Summer Games.

Alanis Tirabassi has been promoted to deputy executive director. Alanis has been with Bay State Games since 2017, when she began as an intern while attending Salem State University. She was hired full-time as sports coordinator in 2020 and later promoted to director of operations before her recent promotion.

She joins Kevin Cummings, who has been with the Bay State Games since 1984 and has served as executive director since 1999, as part of the organization's two-person full-time staff. In addition to her role with Bay State Games, Tirabassi serves as a committee chairperson for the National Congress of State Games. She also works as a consul-

tant for Dave McGillivray Sports Enterprises and Conventures Events, Communications & Marketing.



After more than 22 years as chair of the Bay State Games Board of Directors, Phil Gloude-mans will step down this spring. Under his leadership, Bay State Games has grown into one of the largest multi-sport nonprofit organizations in New England. He joined the Board of Directors in 1987 and he will continue to serve on the board and its executive committee.

Gloude-mans is the associate director of media relations at Boston College. Prior to his BC position, he held senior media relations roles at Brown University and Boston University, as well as with three international public relations firms in Boston.

The Board of Directors has elected Dan Adams of Polsinelli PC Law Firm

Please see **GAMES**, page 10

Safety first: Extra bag coming to baseball

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

Over the past decade, safety has been a key theme for many of the rule changes that come through either the National Federation of High Schools, or the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association.

Rule changes have centered around taking care of athletes, limiting unsafe play, and especially anything that can result in concussions.

Years ago, softball implemented an orange bag, a safety bag, at first base. It's more commonly known as a double bag since there are literally two. The orange bag is directly to the right of first base and is mostly for the runner's use.

Any runner running out a ground ball in a way where they would run through first base, utilize the second bag, typically colored orange. The runner is required to step on the orange bag while the fielder can use the standard white bag. The purpose has been to avoid collisions between a hustling runner and the first baseman, who could get carried in a different direction by an errant through. The second bag puts a little space between the runner and the fielder.



TURLEY PHOTO BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Softball has utilized the double first base bags for safety for many years.

After seeing success with safety in softball, the double bag is coming to high school baseball. The NFHS is making the base a requirement for high schools beginning in 2027. However, several high schools, including Agawam and South Hadley, have opted to install the double bags this season and implement the new rules to help high school students get used to playing with them before the rule is fully implemented.

Some schools will wait until next year depending on the time it takes to install another anchor for the double bag.

High school umpires are also being educated on the new rules concerning using the double bag in a baseball game. Andy Rogers, who is the coordinator and assignor for high school games, said

it has been a part of recent meetings with umpires to prepare for this year. There are nuances to the double bag rule that umpires will need to enforce.

Among them, while the standard practice is that runners running through first base such as in the situation of trying to beat out a ground ball will use the orange bag and fielders trying to record a force out will utilize will use the white bag, there are couple of exceptions.

One is the dropped third strike. If there is a dropped third strike and a catcher throwing on the outside of the baseline to first base, the first baseman is allowed to utilize the orange bag to field the throw and record the out. The runner, in this situation, can use either base. After a runner has run

through first base, typically after beating out a ground ball, that runner must come back and touch the white bag. If the runner comes back and touches the orange bag, that runner is in play once they touch the orange bag and can be tagged out.

On situations like a clean base hit, a batter/runner who heads for first and rounds the bag, will utilize the white bag. But a runner running out a ground ball who touches the white bag instead of the orange bag could be called out on appeal because it can be treated like missing a base.

While the normal white base is the border of fair territory, the orange bag is in foul territory. If a batted ball hits the orange bag, the ball will be called foul. A ball that hits the white bag or rolls over it is still fair.

The second bag at first base is orange in most cases, but can be another color.

For 2026, players playing on fields that have the double first base bag will use them with the rules that come with them. Adult leagues in the region have pledged to observe the rules of the double bag if they play on fields that have them. Most adult leagues go by MLB rules, which do not require a double bag at first base.

Registration continues for new players in QVBL

SOUTH HADLEY – Registration for new players in the Quabbin Valley Baseball League, an over-28 recreational league, continues. The league is now headed for its open practices for new players and the new-player draft for players looking to join the league.

There will be open prac-

tices for all players but specifically targeted at new players scheduled for Mar. 29 and Apr. 4 at times and locations to be announced. The draft is currently scheduled to take place on Apr. 4 following that practice. Any players who sign up will be contacted directly for the time and location of the open

practice. For the 2026 season, the cost will be \$215 and will include a 16th game added to the regular season schedule.

During the 2025 season, the league experimented with playing on Mother's Day Saturday as well as a weeknight game to allow

players an opportunity to play under the lights. While the night games were very successful, the Mother's Day Saturday games were rained out.

Those elements will return along with a 16th game with an opponent to be determine as the league's board

Please see **QVBL**, page 10

SPORTS

Railers suffer loss to Wheeling

WHEELING, WV — The Worcester Railers HC (27-28-5-2, 61 pts) fell short to the Wheeling Nailers (41-16-3-3, 88 pts) in a narrow 2-1 loss on Saturday, March 28th at WesBanco Arena, in front of a crowd of 3,588. The Railers will wrap up their weekend road trip in Wheeling with a final matchup against the Nailers on Sunday, March 29th, with a 4:10 p.m. EDT puck drop.

Anthony Repaci (1-0-1) got things going for Worcester as he collected a chance bounce off a Nailers' skate at 7:16 in the first. Wheeling evened the score with a bar-down tally ten minutes later from Connor Lockhart (1-0-1)(1-1). A tip from Matty De St. Phalle (1-0-1) at 19:20 closed out scoring for the first period and put the Nailers ahead by one (2-1). There were no other goals scored for the remainder of the game for a narrow 2-1 final.

Worcester got themselves on the board early in the

first as Anthony Repaci (20th) lit the lamp unassisted at 7:16. Repaci maneuvered the puck out in front after a ricochet off the heel of a Nailers' skate kept the game alive in the zone. Connor Lockhart (20th) erased the one-goal lead ten minutes later with a bar-down shot sent sailing high over netminder Parker Gahagen. A shot from Brent Johnson was tipped along the way by Matty De St. Phalle (10th) at 19:20 and sent the puck wide of Gahagen to put the Nailers in the lead as the game transitioned into its second frame. Wheeling narrowly led in shots on goal with 14 to Worcester's 13. The sole penalty of the period was called on Wheeling's De St. Phalle for tripping at 12:55.

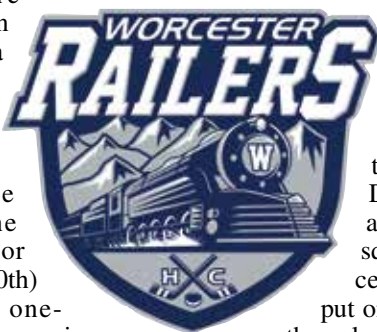
The middle frame was an action-packed affair of

shed gloves and flying fists. Tensions ran high between Max Dorrington and Matt Quercia, who kicked off the stream of penalties to follow. Dorrington and Quercia squared off at center ice and put on a show for the onlooking crowd.

The pair skated to their respective penalty boxes for a five-minute stretch as play returned. Lincoln Hatten and Aidan Sutter eagerly kept things going and soon joined their teammates in the box for roughing 25 seconds later. Cole Donhauser and Brent Johnson would complete the trifectas for each side as well, with less than a minute gone from the clock. As the boxes emptied, Riley Piercey and Max Graham took their turn in the ring at 14:08, and much like Dorrington and Quercia, would remain there

for the next five minutes. Gleb Veremyev capped off the second period rap sheet with a holding call at 18:36, which handed Wheeling their only power play opportunity of the evening. Shots in the period were 20-10 in favor of Worcester.

Veremyev's call from the close of the second carried over for 36 seconds into the third and gave the Nailers an extra man advantage in the final frame. Worcester put on another offensively-dominated performance with three consecutive power play chances that bracketed the split of the period. Neither side found the back of the net, which left the Railers down by one at the close as the Nailers clinched the first spot in the Kelly Cup Playoffs for the North Division. Worcester's shots on goal totaled 50 across the evening to Wheeling's 27. Worcester skated away clean with no penalties in the final frame, while Wheeling collected three.



T-Birds grab win over Lehigh Phantoms

ALLENTOWN, PA — The Springfield Thunderbirds (26-29-6-2) got big performances from their leadership group en route to a 5-3 win over the Lehigh Valley Phantoms (27-30-3-3) on Friday night in a pivotal Atlantic Division battle inside the PPL Center. With the win, the T-Birds jumped back into the sixth and final playoff position in the Atlantic Division with nine games remaining.

Veteran leaders helped set the early tone for Springfield as captain Chris Wagner dropped a pass inside the blue line to Dillon Dube, who wired a wrist shot past Aleksei Kolosov at 7:28 of the first to hand the T-Birds the 1-0 advantage.

Lehigh Valley got a response courtesy of one of their veteran leaders 4:17 later as Anthony Richard finished a backhand bid past Vadim Zherenko off a set-up pass by pro debutant Cole Knuble to tie the score, 1-1.

Numerous scoring chances and one power play for each team also came up empty as Zherenko finished a busy first with nine saves, while Kolosov stopped the other 11 offerings that came into his crease.

The T-Birds' leadership group was not finished putting their stamp on the contest, as Dube created a turnover deep in the Lehigh Valley zone, nudging the puck into the slot for Wagner, who rifled a forehander through Kolosov at 7:09 of the second, extending the Springfield advantage to 2-1.

Zherenko barely had to lift a finger in the middle period as the T-Birds allowed a season-low two shots in the frame. However, the Phantoms' penalty kill, which had been struggling mightily

against the T-Birds, answered the bell with two man-down successes to keep their defiance at a single goal heading into the final period.

After failing to equalize on a power play to begin the third, the Phantoms eventually got the game squared up again at 6:32 when David Jiricek found Zayde Wisdom crashing the net to make it a 2-2 score.

Unruffled, the T-Birds then turned the game on its head with three goals in a 4:28 blitz, beginning with Alek Kaskimaki scooping up a rebound in the blue paint at 9:08 to restore the Springfield lead, 3-2. Wagner and Dube each picked up their third points of the night on the helpers.

Just 2:10 later, Marc-Andre Gaudet made an alert read up on the right-wing wall to steal a puck off a Phantoms defender before setting up Juraj Pekarcik for an insurance making tally and a 4-2 lead. Pekarcik also drew a Springfield power play following a post-goal cross-check by Sawyer Boulton.

The T-Birds did not score on the ensuing power play, but it set the table for Hugh McGing to join the party at 13:36, firing a perfect shot into the top shelf from the left circle and giving Springfield the 5-2 advantage.

Oscar Eklind finally halted the T-Birds scoring run at 17:44, but it proved to be too little, too late for Lehigh Valley. Zherenko needed to make just 18 saves for his 14th win of the season, while Kolosov had 27 stops in the losing effort for the Phantoms.

More players wanted for new team in Pioneer Valley League

SOUTH HADLEY — The Pioneer Valley Baseball League, an adult baseball league for players who are age 18 and over, is now fully open for registration for the 2026 season.

New players are especially wanted for the new sixth team. There are several spots open for that sixth team, so players interested in joining the league should get signed up as soon as possible to claim a spot.

The adult league will be administered by the Quabbin Valley Baseball League, and a registration link is on the home page of the league's website www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org. Thought it will be under the Quabbin umbrella, there will be no major changes in how the league is operated.

This year, the PVBL will have a 22-game regular season schedule followed by a double-elimination playoffs. The league, which had five teams last year and had to utilize multiple byes throughout the season, will be fielding a sixth team this season.

The league is a wood-bat only league utilizing playing under regular baseball rules though all players do bat. The league operates on a Saturday-Tuesday schedule. Games are played on Saturday mornings with 10 a.m. starts typical and on Tuesday evenings with start times in the 5:30 to 6 p.m. range. The league will start play in late April and run through the end of August. There are slots open for both full-time players and



part-time players. The fee for full-time players will be \$260 with part-time players getting up to 11 games for \$130. Fees paid go toward the operation of the league, paying for insurance, umpires, fields, and baseballs. No one profits in any way.

In addition to the new sixth team, there are limited open roster spots on the other teams in the league, so get your registration in as soon as possible to partici-

pate in this season. Games are played at ballfields throughout the region from as far south as Southwick's Whalley Field, through South Hadley's Beachgrounds and up north at Frontier Regional High School in South Deerfield.

For any questions, please go to the league website for more information. The league hopes interested players will come out and join the fun this spring and summer.

QVBL from page 9

explores possibilities for interleague matchups with another league in the region.

The season is currently slated to start on Sunday, April 19 and following the

success of the six-team fall league last year, the league will also have a fall league in September and October this season.

The registration is live at www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org. Players must register and then pay the league

dues via Venmo or contact the league leadership if an alternate form of payment is needed.

Aside from the weeknight and Mother's Day games, other games take place Sundays at 10 a.m. outside of Mother's Day, Memorial

Day and July 4 weekends. Playoffs will be in August.

This is the 30th season for the league and league officials are looking to celebrate the anniversary with a couple of events.

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GAMES from page 9

in Boston as its new board chair. Adams has served on the Bay State Games board for nearly 20 years and is head of sports and entertainment at Polsinelli PC. He holds a bachelor's degree from Boston College, a law degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and an MBA from Harvard University.

In addition to his volunteer work with Bay State Games, Adams serves on the Board of Directors of the East Greenbush Miracle League. His experience with state games spans decades,

including as a three-time participant in the Empire State Summer Games of New York.

Registration for the 2026 Bay State Summer Games will begin in early March. The 2026 Summer Games will feature events from May 9 through July 25 across 30 different sports throughout eastern and central Massachusetts.

Players from Western and Central Massachusetts schools have consistently participated in the Bay State Games during the summer, especially in sports like soccer, field hockey, and volleyball.

HEALTH from page 6

And you may have more tomorrows when you've become an ex-smoker. Good luck!

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, R.N., a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate, is the founder of www.NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com, which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advo-

cates. A Monson, MA resident, she is the author of "How to Be a Healthcare Advocate for Yourself & Your Loved Ones" and her new book, "Advocating Well: Strategies for Finding Strength and Understanding in Health Care," available at Amazon.com. Contact her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com to set up a free phone consultation.

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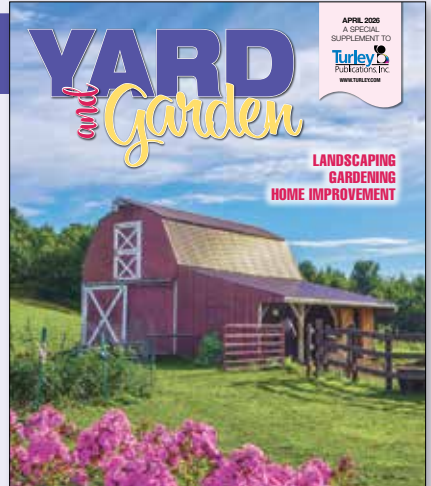
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Upcoming Programs and Events

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

Tote Bags for Good!

Show your support for the library AND help our Belchertown community all at the same time. Buy a 2025 Summer Reading Program Tote Bag for \$20 and \$5 will be donated to the local organization of your choice: 1) Belchertown Meals on Wheels for Seniors, 2) Belchertown's three Food Pantries, or 3) the Sensory Trail at Lake Wallace! Tote bags showcase the Summer Reading logos designed by local fantasy artist, Scott Fischer. Scott is a Belchertown resident who has been donating his time and talent designing our logos for 10 years! This great bag has all 10 of his Summer Reading logos. It's an excellent library book bag! Visit the display in the Library near the circulation desk for more information and to purchase your bag.

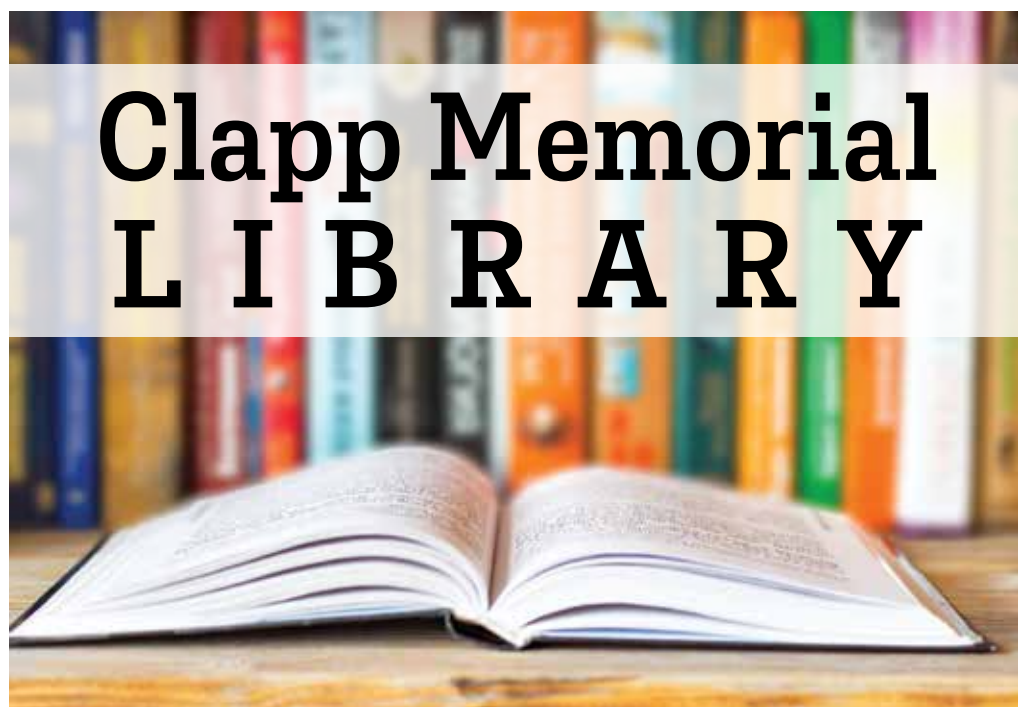
Seed Swap

Saturday, April 4, 10 -11 a.m.
Bring seeds (or not!) to the library and swap them for new ones. Please package your seeds for individual use in envelopes and label them with the plant, the date the seeds were collected, and original packaging if possible. Please do not bring invasive plant seeds. This program is funded by the Belchertown and Around Plant Swap.

FOR ADULTS:

What "YA" Readin' Book Group

Thursday, April 2, 7-8 p.m.
The library's What "YA" Readin'? Book Group, a group for adults who read Young Adult books, will meet to discuss One Step Forward by Marcie Flinchum



Atkins. Copies of the book are available for checkout at the circulation desk. New members are welcome!

RPG Night

Thursday, April 14, 6-8 p.m.

Break out your dice and join us for a monthly game! Our current RPG campaign, Vaesen: The Lost Mountain Saga & Other Tales, is a dark Gothic setting steeped in Nordic folklore and the old myths of Scandinavia! Dive into mysteries where old struggles against the new, and myths come alive. No experience necessary, email tmannino@cwmars.org to join. Previous campaigns have included Spelljammer (Dungeons & Dragons) and Ghostbusters: a Frightfully Cheerful Roleplaying Game!

Call for Volunteers! Volunteers needed for "Knotweed Knockdown"

First Work Day: Saturday, April 25, 9:30am - 12:30pm (Rain Date: Sunday, April 26)

Many of you are familiar with the large patch of Knotweed located behind the library. Knotweed is one of the most difficult invasive plants to remove. We would like to take back the space behind the library, so this

April through October, we'll be working to clear it during Knotweed Knockdown. Chemicals will not be used, so we're recruiting volunteers to help with the physical removal of the plants. No gardening experience is necessary. Volunteers will be asked to register, complete a CORI check, and sign a waiver. If you're interested in getting involved or learning more, please contact Cyndi Harbeson at charbeson@cwmars.org. More details to follow!

FOR TEENS:

Free Food Friday

Friday, April 10, 2-3 p.m.

Teens in grades 7-12 are invited to the library after school on the second Fridays, through May, for free snacks as they visit and use the library! This program is funded by the Friends of the Clapp Memorial Library.

Teen Advisory Board Meeting

Friday, April 10, 4:30-5:30 p.m.

The Clapp Memorial Library's Teen Advisory Board will meet for an early celebration of Good Deeds Day by making cards for Cards for Hospitalized Kids! 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. Teens can email clapplibrarytab@gmail.com to register. New members are welcome!

FOR CHILDREN: Children's Scavenger Hunt Every Month in 2026!

March's Theme: Author Julius Lester and Illustrator Jerry Pinkney

Prize: \$20 Gift Card to PlayNow! Toys in Ludlow

We're inviting children to participate in March's Scavenger Hunt! Look for book illustrations hidden in the children's area and write down the word you find with them. When you have all of the words, figure out the saying and enter to win this month's prize! One raffle ticket per child each month.

The Full STEAM Ahead program for children has been cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. Our sincere apologies for the cancellation.

Clapp Memorial Library Hours:

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

Town of Belchertown Scholarship Fund now accepting applications

BELCHERTOWN — The Belchertown Scholarship Fund Committee is now accepting applications for academic year 2026. The scholarship program is open to all Belchertown residents who are graduating high school seniors, including students attending Belchertown High School, Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School, and those who are homeschooled.

To be eligible, applicants must have an acceptance to an accredited post-secondary institution, including college degree programs, trade certifications, or licensing programs. Scholarship awards may be applied toward the costs of tuition, books, and fees. Applications are evaluated based on financial need, academic achievement, character, and participation in extracurricular activities.

Paper applications are available for pickup at the Belchertown High School guidance office (142 Springfield Road), the Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School guidance office (240 Sykes Street, Palmer), and the Clapp Memorial Library (19 South Main Street, Belchertown). Applications may also be downloaded at www.belchertown.org/2026_Scholarship.

All completed applications must be submitted on paper and dropped off at the Belchertown Public Schools Central Office, 14 Maple Street, Belchertown. No electronic submissions will be accepted. Applications are due no later than Thursday, Apr. 16 at 4 p.m. No exceptions will be made.

For more information and to download the application, visit www.belchertown.org/2026_Scholarship

Scholarships available through Valley Press Club

SPRINGFIELD — The Valley Press Club, based in Springfield, Mass., will award \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors in Western Massachusetts and Northern Connecticut who are interested in pursuing a career in journalism.

The Valley Press Club Scholarships, funded by contributions and dues to the Press Club, are for students planning careers in print, online or broadcast journalism.

The Republican Scholarship, funded by The Republican, is for students living within the newspaper's circulation area who are planning careers in print journalism.

The 22News Scholarship, funded by WWLP-22News is for students planning careers in broadcast journalism.

The Mass Live Scholarship is for a Massachusetts high school senior planning to pursue a career in print, online or broadcast journalism/communication. This scholarship is available to a student who is underrepresented in the field of journalism and is planning to attend an institution of higher education in the field.

The Edward J. Malley Jr. Memorial Scholarship, established in memory of a chief photographer for the Springfield Newspapers, is for students planning

careers in photojournalism.

The Rhonda Swan Memorial Scholarship, established in memory of the award-winning journalist, editor and author, honors her legacy by supporting students from the Greater Springfield area who aspire to careers in journalism and bring voices and perspectives that have been historically underrepresented in the field.

Primary emphasis is placed on career goals, writing ability, scholastic aptitude and overall achievement as measured by an applicant's high school transcript, class rank, academic awards, SAT scores and extracurricular activities. The deadline for submissions is Apr. 10.

Scholarship applications are available at www.ValleyPressClub.com or high school guidance offices. Applications may be sent by mail to Noreen Tassinari, Scholarship Chair, Valley Press Club, P.O. Box 5475, Springfield, Mass. 01102 or electronically to NTassinari77@gmail.com

Over the course of six decades, The Valley Press Club has presented over \$140,000 in scholarships to eligible students. The Valley Press Club consists of active and retired journalists and public relations professionals from corporate and non-profit organizations.

VACANCIES from page 4

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.

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.



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HELP WANTED

The Town of North Brookfield is looking for a **part-time Program Assistant** for the Council on Aging. Please submit a resume with a letter of interest to the **Selectmen's Office, 215 Main St., North Brookfield, MA 01535**; or by email to selectmen@northbrookfield.net.

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

ALL REAL ESTATE advertised herein is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination." We will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. All persons are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised are available on an equal opportunity basis.

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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 advertised 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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PUBLIC NOTICES

Belchertown Conservation Commission LEGAL NOTICE
Pursuant to the authority of the Wetlands Protection Act (M.G.L. Ch. 131, Sec. 40, its Regulations (310 CMR 10.00) and the Belchertown Wetlands Protection Bylaw (Chapter 139), the Belchertown Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on **Monday, April 13, 2026 at 7:00 PM in the Lawrence Memorial Hall Auditorium, located at 2 Jabish Street in Belchertown, MA 01007** to review a **Request for Determination of Applicability** permit application submitted by Michele Lariviere for the proposed tree removals at 43 Kopec Ave (Assessor's Map 226-48.1) in Belchertown. Work is proposed to occur within the 100-foot Buffer Zone to Bordering Vegetated Wetlands. Anyone interested in this matter should appear at the time and place designated.
04/02/2026

Public Hearing Special Permit Legal Notice
Belchertown Planning Board
In accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40A, Sections 9 and 11, and pursuant to the Town of Belchertown Chapter 145-27 and 145-69, the Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing to discuss a site plan proposed by 50 Federal Operating Company, LLC, P.O. Box 326, Belchertown, MA 01007 for site plan approval for a Multiple Dwelling Development at Pelham Road, Belchertown, MA 01007, Map 238, Lot 62 & 63, owner: 50 Federal Operating Company, LLC.
Place: Belchertown Town Hall, 2 Jabish Street, Belchertown, MA
Date: **April 28, 2026**
Time: **7:15 pm**
Remote access information: <https://meet.goto.com/173538941>
Access Code: 173-538-941
The application is available for inspection during regular business hours at the Town Clerk and Planning Board office, 2 Jabish Street
Daniel Beaudette, Chair
Belchertown Planning Board
04/02, 04/09/2026

BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET PRESENTATION PUBLIC HEARING
The Belchertown School Committee will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, April 14, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.**, to present the FY27 School Department Budget. The public is invited to attend the presentation, which will be held in the Chestnut Hill Community School Auditorium. Members of the Public can access the meeting via live stream. Link will be located at www.belchertownps.org under the School Committee link at the top of the page beside the Agenda for this meeting.
04/02, 04/09/2026

Notice of Planning Board Hearing Relative to Proposed Zoning By-law Amendments
Pursuant to MGL c.40A, §5. The Belchertown Planning Board will hold a public hearing to discuss proposed amendments to the town's zoning by-laws. The public hearing will be held both remotely and in person:
Select Board Meeting Room, Lawrence Memorial Hall 2 Jabish Street, Belchertown April 28, 2026 at 7:05 p.m.
Remote access information: <https://meet.goto.com/173538941>
Access Code: 173-538-941

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

The subject matter of the proposed amendments is:
1. To amend §145-68, Board of Appeals, to delete the words "Select Board" and replace them with "Town Manager".
2. To amend §145-69, Special Permits, Subsection B, to delete the words "Select Board" and replace them with "Town Manager".
The complete text relative to the proposed amendments are available for inspection during regular business hours at the Town Clerk's office and the Planning Board office and at masspublicnotices.org
04/02, 04/09/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampshire Probate and Family Court 15 Atwood Drive Northampton MA, 01060 Docket No. HS24P0677PM
In the matter of: Doris May Goodrow of Belchertown, MA Protected Person/ Disabled Person/ Respondent CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF CONSERVATOR'S ACCOUNT

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, you are hereby notified Pursuant to Rule 72 of the Supplemental Rules of the Probate and Family Court, the **First and Final** account of Howard Goodrow, Jr. of Belchertown, MA and Lynn Goodrow of Belchertown, MA as conservator of the property of the said Respondent has or have been presented to the Court for allowance.
You have the right to object to the account(s). If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of **04/22/2026**. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to object to the account(s). If you fail to file the written appearance and objection by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you, including the allowance of the account(s).
Additionally, within thirty days after said return day (or within such other time as the Court upon motion may order), you must file a written affidavit of objections stating the specific facts and grounds upon which each objection is based and a copy shall be served upon the Conservator pursuant to Rule 3 of the Supplemental Rules of the Probate & Family Court.
You have the right to send to the Conservator, by registered or certified mail, a written request to receive a copy of the Petition and account(s) at no cost to you.
IMPORTANT NOTICE
The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named

person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.
Witness, Hon. **Diana S. Velez Harris**, First Justice of this Court.
Date: March 19, 2026
Mark S. Ames
Register of Probate
04/02/2026

Belchertown Conservation Commission LEGAL NOTICE
Pursuant to the authority of the Wetlands Protection Act (M.G.L. Ch. 131, Sec. 40, its Regulations (310 CMR 10.00) and the Belchertown Wetlands Protection Bylaw (Chapter 139), the Belchertown Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on **Monday, April 13, 2026 at 7:00 PM in the Lawrence Memorial Hall Auditorium, located at 2 Jabish Street in Belchertown, MA 01007** to review a **Request for Determination of Applicability** permit application submitted by Chris Volonte for the proposed parking lot improvements at **Holland Glen Conservation Area (Assessor's Map 218-72) in Belchertown**. Work is proposed to occur within the 200-foot Buffer Zone to Hop Brook. Anyone interested in this matter should appear at the time and place designated.
04/02/2026

TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS
Sealed Bids for the construction of the "Town of Belchertown, MA Wastewater System SCADA Replacement Project" will be received by the Town of Belchertown, Department of Public Works, 290 Jackson Street, Belchertown, MA 01007 until **2:00 p.m. local time on April 23, 2026** at which time the Bids received will be publicly opened and read. Sealed Bids must have outer envelope marked as "**Town of Belchertown, MA Wastewater System SCADA Replacement Project**". Bidding Documents may be obtained electronically from the Tighe & Bond website at: http://www.tighebond.com/Projects_Out_to_Bid.php
The work consists of upgrades to the SCADA system including new telemetry equipment, panels, and enclosures at the wastewater treatment plant, upgrades to the existing programmable logic controllers (PLCs) and disk filter panel at the wastewater treatment plant, and PLC replacements at four remote pump stations. Bids shall be on a lump sum basis as indicated in the Bid Form. All Bids for this project are subject to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 149, Section 44A 44J inclusive as amended.
Please direct all questions to Consulting Engineer: Tighe & Bond, Inc., 53 Southampton Road, Westfield, MA 01085 (413) 562-1600
04/02/2026

OBITUARIES

Richard I. Cole IV, 44

Richard Cole (44), lovingly referred to as Rich or Richy, passed away on Thursday, March 12, 2026, after battling esophageal cancer.



He leaves behind four children, of whom he was extremely proud and loved more than he could ever express: Wren, Nathaniel, Ethan, and Elisabeth. Though his passing brings great grief to those who loved him, there is solace in knowing he is now reunited with his beloved daughter, Madeline, and his sister Michelle, who passed before him.

Rich is survived by his parents, Richard and Ginette Cole of Belchertown; his three cherished sisters: Heather (and Al Leger), Sharon (and Khemara Kang), and Stephanie Cole (and Derek Beynor); his nieces and nephews, and a large extended family of aunts, uncles, and cousins. He also leaves behind Carey, who was selfless throughout his

care and provided so much love and comfort to Richy and our family.

Richy leaves behind memories as vibrant and mischievous as he was. Known for his quirky sense of humor, love of jokes, and fascination with fireworks, he often left people amused. Rich was a lover of the outdoors and all things related to Massachusetts. He enjoyed fishing, playing golf, attending concerts, watching fireworks, and taking night hikes to look at the stars. He was a proud alumnus of UMass Amherst, a passionate fan of Boston sports, and an incredible chef who loved cooking for others. A collector and thrifter at heart, Rich always found joy in acquiring unique treasures to give to someone he cared about. His thoughtfulness, care for those he loved, and playful spirit will forever be his legacy.

Memorial arrangements will be shared once finalized.

Janice Labelle 1936-2026

Janice Helen (Story) Labelle passed away peacefully on March 20, 2026 surrounded by her loving family. She was born in Springfield on April 25, 1936, the first daughter of the late Helen Louise (Pike) and William Erwin Story.



She lived in West Springfield during her childhood, and attended Mittingue Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1954 she graduated from West Springfield High School. She worked in Springfield at Lobels Children's Store, Highland, and Sheraton Hotels. She then was employed by Mercy Hospital, caring for patients as a certified nursing assistant.

Janice was predeceased by her beloved husband of 54 years Emile J. Labelle. She leaves her daughters Audrey Johnson and her husband Ralph, Lisa Dunn and companion

Henry Ritzer, Laurie Labelle and companion Robert Anderson. Janice also leaves her sisters Joan Kopinsky, Natalie McCarthy, and her husband Paul. She is predeceased by her sister Rosalie Rubright and Theodore and Jay Labelle.

Janice maintained an interest in American history, singing hymns, summer beach vacations, sending cards, fashion, and floral design. She loved being a Nana to all of her wonderful grandchildren, families, and special great grandchildren. She also leaves nieces, nephews, and loyal friends.

The family wishes to thank the staff of East Longmeadow Skilled and Beacon Hospice for all their loving care to Janice during the last two years of her life.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions are kindly directed to the Wounded Warrior Project.

DEATH NOTICES

Cole IV, Richard I.
Died March 12, 2026
Labelle, Janice
Died March 20, 2026
Hennessey, Joan M.
Died Feb. 27, 2026
Celebration of Life graveside Saturday, April 18 at 10 a.m., South Cemetery, Belchertown

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.

The Sentinel
OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place. The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph.

Death Notices & Paid Obituaries should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

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COMPUTERS ALIX & SONS COMPUTER CENTER. PC/Macs, Laptops, Screen Repairs. New Computer Sales and Accessories, PC Diagnostic Repairs and Upgrades, On Site Work, Home or Office. 40 Daniel Shays Highway. 413-323-1122. John Alix, Owner.	HAIRDRESSER COUNTRY STYLIST, 171 Federal St., Belchertown. 413-323-6012. Great cuts for men and women. A full service hair salon. Open Tue-Sat., evening hours available.	OUTDOOR POWER EQUIPMENT BOYDEN & PERRON INC. Sales and service, Toro, Wheel Horse, Scag, Jonsered, Residential and Commercial. 41 South Whitney St., Amherst, since 1956. Call today. 253-7358.	WELDING AMHERST WELDING, INC. Snow plows, sanders, sales & service, hydraulic hoses & repairs, trailer hitches, trailer repairs, welding, fabrication, lawnmower repairs. 330 Harkness Rd., Amherst. 413-253-4867

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