

New town meeting information packet launched



SUBMITTED PHOTO

A new information packet is being introduced to assist residents at this year's Annual Town Meeting.

ATM, STM packet available for download

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

BELCHERTOWN – The Town of Belchertown announced last Friday afternoon that residents would be able to have access to a new Town Meeting Information Packet, which

will allow residents to have needed information to make informed decision when it comes to the articles on the warrant of the Annual Town Meeting, which takes place on Monday, May 11.

According to a press release from the town, the packet will be

available for download for both the Annual Town Meeting, as well as the Special Town Meeting that takes place prior to clean up old business for fiscal year 2026.

The press release states it will “include expanded explanatory text and committee votes,

where applicable, to help voters better understand each article in advance. It can be downloaded at www.Belchertown.org/TownMeetingPacket.”

Town Manager Steve Williams said he already provides the same context for the Select Board. The same information should be made available to all those in attendance.

“Each year, I prepare brief explanatory text for the Select

Board to provide context on the warrant articles,” said Williams. “We recognized that this same information would be valuable to residents, so we are now including it in a packet available to everyone attending Town Meeting.”

According to the press release, traditionally, much of this information has been shared verbally during

Please see **PACKET**, page 2

Ruby takes helm as new Veteran's Services Officer

By Ben Hernandez
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN – Dustin Ruby is the new veteran service officer of Belchertown. The veteran comes from an extensive background; eleven years of service in the military, serving in the National Guard, performing a tour in Afghanistan as a military intelligence officer, as well as convoy security duty in Iraq. Ruby is transitioning from his former role as a deputy director in Chicopee, finding his new position as “a natural fit.”



“I kind of wanted to be the VSO,” said Ruby. “I have some family here. So when it came open, I was like ‘Yeah, that sounds great to me.’”

Ruby reports that he has “big shoes to fill,” inheriting his new responsibilities from former officer Charly Roque, who served until March 12 of this year. Ruby identifies his department’s main focus as Chapter 115 benefits, which are state subsistence programs designed to help veterans who are “kind of struggling financially.”

“It can help them out with medical billing,” added Ruby. “It can be there for the veteran. It can be there for the spouse. It can be for dependent children but that’s kind of our main bread and butter.”

Ruby hopes to use his position to advocate for more claims, which he reports he

has “a passion for” and are support opportunities more on the federal side. Article 115 state benefits are more focused on “keeping you whole;” providing financial aid to avoid veterans from becoming homeless or financially struggling. Federal claims are benefits earned from going above and beyond for the country.

“Claims are more along the lines of ‘you served your country. You did something beyond the norm.’ Maybe you deployed overseas. Maybe you didn’t and you didn’t come back the same. Maybe mentally you’re not the same.”

Ruby explained claims are a part of the contract a soldier signs with the federal government, a promise that the government will take care of them should they be harmed in the line of duty. Claims are a way to “make sure the government is having their feet to the fire” when veterans are in need of services. It allows them to receive help for getting needed services, such as paying for hearing aids.

“If you have to go to the doctor and they send you to an audiologist and they say ‘hey, you need some hearing aids,’ those hearing aids are going to cost you between five and seven thousand dollars out of your pocket,” described Ruby. “So, if we

Please see **RUBY**, page 5

FinCom backs \$69.4M budget

Stresses long-term stability ahead of Town Meeting

By Melina Bourdeau
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN – The Finance Committee endorsed a \$69.4 million spending plan for fiscal 2027 that repays past stabilization borrowing, maintains an annual capital commitment and leans on free cash, while

warning of rising benefit costs and long-term obligations.

The budget recommendations, finalized at the committee’s April 17 meeting, set the stage for the upcoming Special Town Meeting and Annual Town Meeting. Residents will be asked to support a complex package of operating budgets, capital borrowing and transfers that committee members say are necessary to keep services stable and infrastructure from falling further behind.

The package includes full repayment of a prior snow and ice draw from the town’s stabilization fund, continued follow-through on last year’s Proposition 2½ override promises and a slate of school and town departmental appropriations that reflect both enrollment declines and growing fixed costs.

Using the override as promised

Finance Committee Chair Brian Gibbons reminded the committee that the fis-

cal 2027 budget fully implements the second year of the override voters approved last year to shore up town and school finances.

The new override money totals \$559,921 and is earmarked to fully fund six firefighters whose federal grant has ended, lease an ambulance and maintain a grants manager position previously supported with federal aid.

Please see **BUDGET**, page 4



One of the young artists shows off his work at United Methodist Church's first Children's Art Exhibit held last Saturday. See more photos on page 2.

Select Board declares town lots as surplus

Key State Street strips kept for future needs

By Melina Bourdeau
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN – Officials voted to declare a dozen town-owned parcels as surplus property, advancing an effort to clean up the town’s land inventory while preserving key open space and strategic slivers along State Street.

The Select Board walked through how staff narrowed an original list of 191 municipal parcels down to about a dozen that could realistically be sold or otherwise disposed. Members ultimately backed Town Administrator Steve Williams’ recommendation

to surplus most of the lots, while pulling two narrow State Street strips off the list in case the town needs them for drainage or other infrastructure in the future.

Williams told the board the surplus list grew out of a comprehensive open space review that tried to distinguish between land the town must keep and land it can let go.

“I had the public works director, town planner, recreation director, conservation office, myself ... all reviewed the list,” he said.

He said staff immediately removed developed parcels such as Town Hall, designated conservation land and large tracts of subdivision open space that are important for recreation and hab-

Please see **SURPLUS**, page 8



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TURLEY PHOTOS BY BEN HERNANDEZ



Artwork was on display last Saturday, Apr. 25 at United Methodist Church.

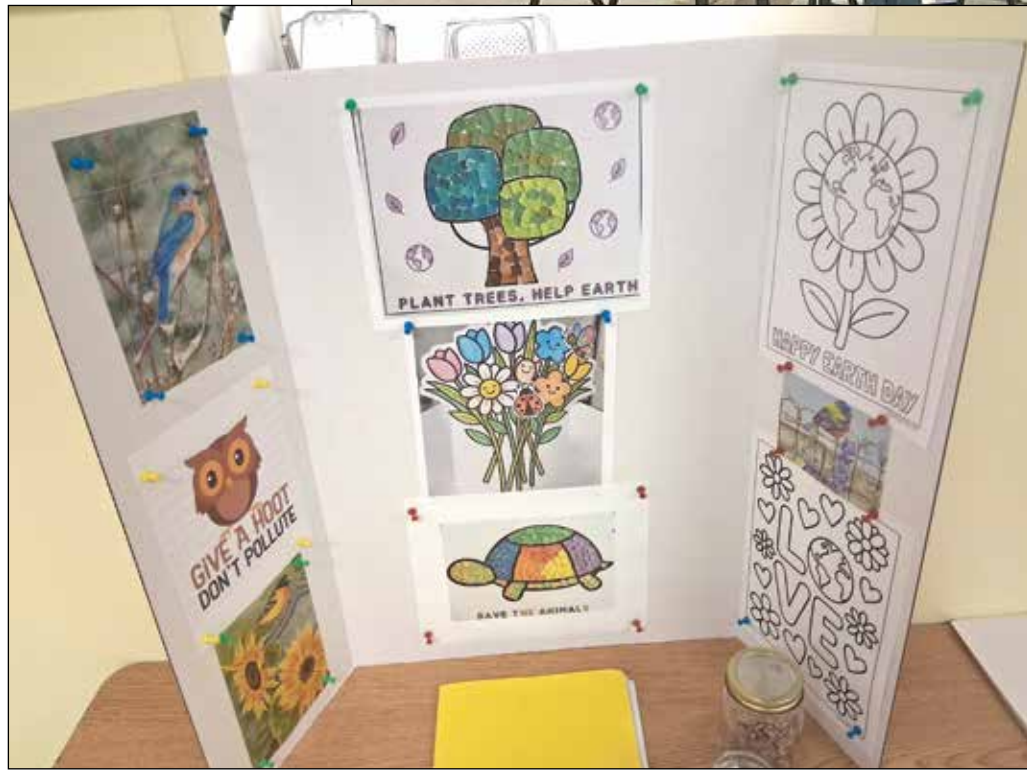
Attendees to the event could make their own art.

United Methodist Church holds first Children's Art Exhibit



The theme of this year's exhibit.

AT LEFT: Children were encouraged to engage with art at the exhibit.



The first Children's Art Exhibit occurred on April 25. In the spirit of Earth Day, children drew pictures that urged recycling, the importance of cleaning up trash, and the importance of everyone doing their part to save the planet. United Women of Faith community members Roseann Novak, Beverly Pead, and Anita Easter were in attendance, supervising and encouraging the children in their artistic endeavors. Submitted art will be framed and on display at 30 Carew Street and prizes will be distributed for winning art work.

Earth Day was the theme of the exhibit.

Sullivan to speak at 5th Annual Umbrella of Wellness Fair

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown Overcoming Adversity Together (BOAT) coalition proudly announces the 5th Annual Umbrella of Wellness Fair, taking place on May 16 at Chestnut Hill Community School. This free, family-friendly event continues to grow as a cornerstone of community health, bringing together education, resources, and interactive experiences under one powerful mission: to support healthier, safer, and more connected lives.

The event will run from 12 to 4 p.m. The Umbrella of Wellness Fair is dedicated to promoting health and wellness through education, engagement, and empowerment. By uniting local organizations, service providers, and community members, the event raises awareness, encourages informed decision-making, and fosters a safe, inclusive environment where individuals and families can connect, learn, and thrive.

This year's fair will feature Chris Sullivan, founder of Not in the Playbook and former New England Patriots player, as the keynote speaker. Sullivan will deliver a compelling presentation on decision-making, substance use awareness, and real-life consequences—an especially impactful message for high school students as prom and graduation season

approach. Attendees will have access to 70 community resource tables, offering valuable information and support services across all areas of wellness. Educational opportunities will include Narcan training and CPR/First Aid overviews led by local EMTs, as well as interactive exhibits like the Hidden in Plain Sight Trailer from the Alex Fisher Foundation.

Designed with all ages in mind, the event offers a wide variety of engaging activities:

Kids' Corner (during the speaker): Hosted by Helping Hands students, featuring Kaptain Kraw's magic show, balloon art, face painting, and henna tattoos

Interactive experiences: Comfort dogs, touch-a-fire-truck, ambulance display with CPR/First Aid demonstrations, Smiley from the WooSox, and Boomer from the Thunderbirds

Special attraction: Barrows Family Pulling Team "Pulling for a Cause" truck

Food and fun: Free raffles and a \$10 food truck token for attendees

With over 450 attendees expected, the Umbrella of Wellness Fair continues to strengthen community connections while making vital health and wellness resources accessible and engaging for all.



Spaghetti fundraiser to benefit Nick's Waves of Change, Inc.

BELCHERTOWN / LUDLOW – Coming up on Thursday, May 7 from 5:30 to 7 p.m., there will be a spaghetti dinner fundraiser to benefit Nick's Waves of Change, Inc. This is the fifth year the fundraiser has been held. The event will be held at the Ludlow Elks Lodge at 69 Chapin St. The cost is \$15 per person with children 10 and under costing \$12.

The doors will open at 4:30 p.m. with dinner beginning to be served at 5:30 p.m.

Tickets will be sold at the door. To purchase tickets or donate, please contact Jennifer Boileau at 413-323-7821 or email us at info@nickswavesofchange.org. Payment can be made via cash or check payable to Nick's Waves of Change Inc.

PACKET from page 1

Town Meeting. By making it available in advance, residents have more time to review the articles and make their decisions before the meeting.

The packet also includes committee votes, which are typically presented verbally at the meeting itself.

"This approach gives people the opportunity to come prepared," Williams added. "It allows for thoughtful consideration rather than on-the-

spot decision-making."

The Belchertown Communications Committee was behind the addition of the packet, and consulted with other municipalities that have implemented similar packets.

"One town clerk told us they would never go back," said Communications Committee Chair Chris Martin. "Providing this information ahead of time helps answer questions in advance and leads to a more streamlined Town Meeting."


Town officials note that this is the first year of implementation and that the process will continue to be refined.

"We know there may be some adjustments as we move forward," said Williams. "Developing warrant articles is already a complex process, and this adds another layer, but it is one that ultimately benefits the community."

While hard copies are going to be made available at the meeting, the down-

loadable version will be made available in advance, allowing for consumption of the information prior to the meeting.

Residents are encouraged to download it in advance at www.Belchertown.org/TownMeetingPacket. Hard copies of the packet are available for those that need them upon request at the Town Manager's Office, 1 South Street, or by calling 413-323-0403.



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**TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN
FINANCE COMMITTEE VACANCY**

Belchertown is looking for a volunteer to fill an anticipated vacancy on the Town Finance Committee. The Finance Committee consists of five members, each with a three-year term. The primary duties of the Committee are to advise and make recommendations for the Annual Town Meeting and any Special Town Meeting regarding the budget and other areas of finance. Members are required to attend regularly scheduled public meetings and any special meetings as needed.

If you are interested in an appointment to the Finance Committee, please send a letter of interest to the Select Board's Office outlining your background in finance and reasons for wanting to join the committee. Letters can be sent via email to selectboard@belchertown.org or physically to the Office of the Select Board, One South Main Street, PO Box 670, Belchertown, MA 01007.

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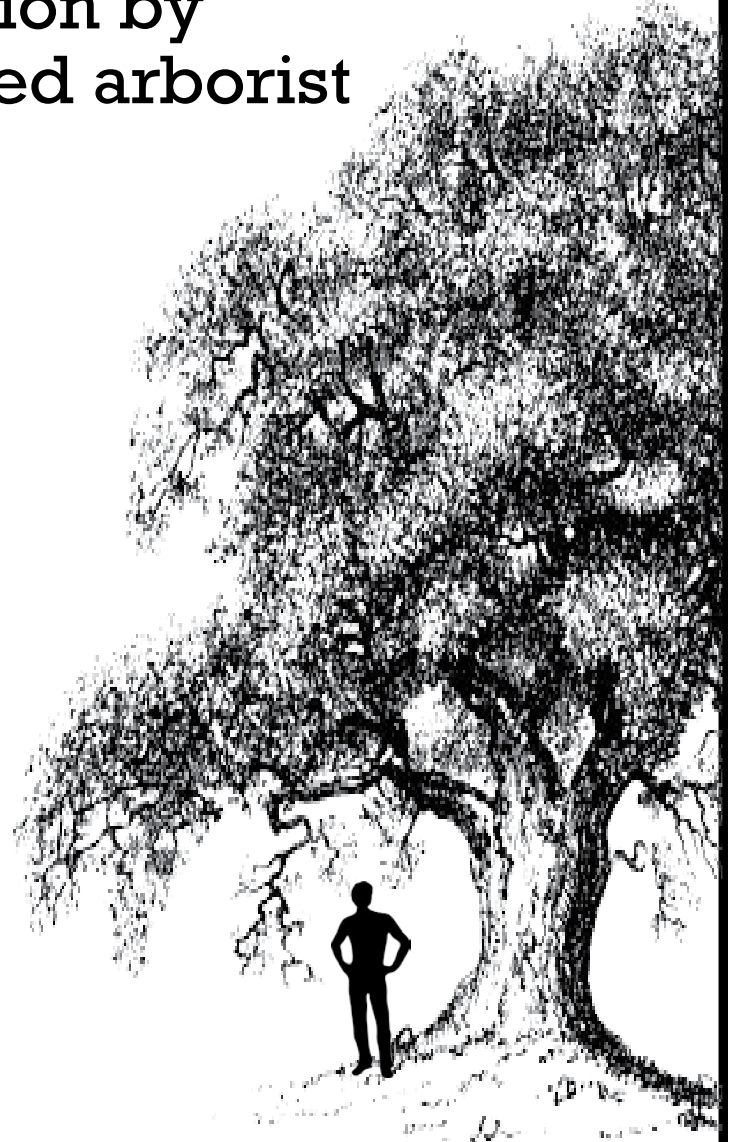


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Ware Grange to host 'Kids Corner' workshop

WARE – This year's first Kids' Corner workshop at Ware Grange will be called "Farm Tools and Planting" and will take place on Saturday, May 9 at 10 a.m. at the Grange Hall at 297 Belchertown Road in Ware. Kids' Corner workshops are led by preschool teacher, Jen McNally, and teach children about nature and the environment through stories, songs and fun activities. This workshop will focus on the many working tools on the farm. Children will learn about tractors, trucks and other tools that farmers use to grow the food that we all eat. Visit Ware Grange on Facebook or at ware-grange.org for more information.

ArtWorks Gallery Celebrates the Figure exhibit



WARE – Workshop13's ArtWorks Gallery presents its 5th annual Celebrating the Figure exhibition. This exhibition embraces the diverse ways in which artists approach representing the human form, showcasing pieces that utilize both the clothed and unclothed figure, and uplifting the works of local and regional visual artists.

ArtWorks Gallery is located at 69 Main Street in Ware, MA. The 5th annual Celebrating the Figure exhibition opened with a reception on April 11 and is on display now through May 9. Gallery hours are Saturdays and

Sundays from 1 to 4 p.m. For those who cannot attend the show in person, a virtual gallery is available for viewing at workshop13.org.

Fine artist SK Sullivan served as the juror for Celebrating the Figure. Liz Popolo was awarded Best in Show for her atmospheric charcoal study, Susie Lee Hutt's sculptural piece Torso in Bronze received an Honorable Mention, as did Jordan Hayslip's painting Distant Gaze. Each of these artists and their works will be spotlighted on Workshop13's social media pages as well as in their weekly newsletter.



Workshop13's ArtWorks Gallery of featuring its latest display. SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Residents advised of road work

GRANBY – Road resurfacing on Amherst Street between Aldrich Street and Route 116. Work will commence on May 7. Please seek alternate routes if possible. Roadway detours and/or closures are anticipated.

Residents may experience short-term inconvenience/delays due to construction operations.

BUDGET from page 1

"The total fiscal year 27 budget for the town of Belchertown is \$69,389,027," Gibbons said as he reviewed the draft financial message for residents. That figure includes operating budgets, capital spending, transfers to reserves and required contributions toward retiree benefits.

Gibbons also stressed that the town is honoring a central promise of the earlier override: an ongoing \$500,000 annual capital line. Article 8 of the warrant allocates that amount for capital and one-time expenditures, on top of \$420,339 in free cash for additional one-time projects under Article 9.

"There's no question that these are all good projects," he said of the capital list vetted by the Capital Improvement Planning Committee, adding that the committee scrutinizes each request in detail before recommending funding.

Schools: modest increase, unresolved structural concerns

The committee unanimously recommended a \$36.3 million operating budget for the Belchertown School Department, a 2% percent increase over the current

year. That figure does not include the town's separate assessment for the Pathfinder Regional Vocational district.

Gibbons pointed to the recent closure of Cold Spring School, which saved roughly \$500,000 in building operating costs, but said he is worried the town may soon face another override request if those savings are not used to strengthen the district's long-term position.

"I'm really afraid that we're going to be in the same position next year that they were in last year before the override," he said. "I'm really disappointed that nothing was done to take some of those excess costs or excess funds ... and put it towards helping them increase their efficiencies."

Committee members also discussed declining enrollment and school choice, but did not recommend any changes to the proposed school appropriation, noting that the Select Board has already advanced the school budget to the Town Meeting warrant.

Pathfinder's assessment is projected to decrease about 6.2% to \$1.48 million, reflecting fewer Belchertown students enrolled there. Still, members signaled interest in providing residents

more context in the Finance Committee's written report by comparing year-over-year enrollment and per-pupil costs.

Town-side budgets and enterprise funds

On the municipal side, the committee backed \$14.6 million in operating appropriations for town departments, a 6.4% percent increase. Roughly four percentage points of that increase are tied directly to the override-funded items on the town side, including public safety staffing.

Members voted unanimously in favor of a series of sub-articles under Article 8, covering general government, public safety, human services, culture and recreation, public works and several enterprise funds.

Enterprise funds for the landfill, sewer and stormwater systems will continue to be supported by user fees and their own reserves, not the tax levy. Town Accountant Jill Rossi explained these funds are structured to keep operational and capital costs within the systems that generate them.

"It's an enterprise fund. All the fees paid fund the funds," she said of the sewer account. "There's no tax-

ation that goes into enterprise funds. It's part of the town; it's just set up differently than other departments."

The committee also recommended \$1,032,037 for human services, \$1,051,158 for culture and recreation, and \$1,062,361 for DPW buildings and grounds.

Rising benefit costs and long-term liabilities

One of the sharpest warnings of the night came during discussion of pensions and insurance, which together total \$7.67 million for fiscal 2027. That line includes health insurance, Medicare, life insurance, unemployment, workers' compensation and retirement costs for town employees and some school personnel.

Gibbons described the trend as "unsustainable" if unchecked.

"This is one of our fastest-growing, consistent budget items every year," he said of benefit costs. "You've got to pay it. There's no question. There's no leeway there whatsoever."

The town's unfunded other post-employment benefits, or OPEB, liability is estimated at more than \$45.5 million as of June 30, 2025. The budget includes a \$32,334 contribution to the OPEB trust fund,

well below what outside advisors have recommended if the town wants to meaningfully reduce its long-term obligation.

"The liability will continue to put pressure on the current operations through funding retirement payments if we do not commit to an annual funding solution," Gibbons read from the draft report.

Paying back stabilization and using free cash

The committee emphasized that the town will fully repay a prior \$325,000 draw from the stabilization fund that was used to cover snow and ice deficits. Article 2 transfers \$200,000 from the Belchertown Public Schools and \$125,000 from the town's health insurance account back into stabilization.

Gibbons said it was important for residents to understand that these repayments are separate from routine year-end transfers between accounts.

"I don't want anybody to get the impression that we're using that money for anything else," he said.

The stabilization balance is expected to reach about \$2.73 million, or 4% of operating expenditures, still short of the 5% to 8% range finan-

cial experts recommend but moving in the right direction. The town is also using \$646,675 of free cash to help balance the budget.

Rossi reminded members that free cash is not just unspent appropriations, but also revenue received above estimates.

"We have to put in estimated revenue. We have to put in numbers that are reasonable and conservative," she said. "When the revenue comes in over and above what we have estimated ... that also goes into free cash."

Capital borrowing and what's next

The committee endorsed borrowing about \$3.2 million for a package of capital projects, many at the schools, with terms ranging from five to 20 years based on useful life. An email from the treasurer showed that a 10-year borrowing at 3.75% would cost about \$445,000 in interest, while a 20-year option at 4.5% would cost roughly \$1.7 million.

Gibbons said he favors shorter terms where possible.

"I like the fact that there's a lot of school projects in here," he said, adding that each had been "vetted in great detail" by the capital planning committee.

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BUSINESS

Pioneer Valley Financial Group announces second CFP professional

Pioneer Valley Financial Group (PV) is proud to announce that Kevin Sylvester has earned his Certified Financial Planner (CFP) certification, becoming the firm's second CFP professional.



Kevin Sylvester

Sylvester joined the PV team in 2019 and has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to professional growth and client service. His dedication to advancing his knowledge and expertise reflects both his personal drive and PV's culture of continuous development.

"The cornerstone of PV Financial Group is our continued support of professional development for

our team," said Managing Partner and Wealth Advisor Ed Sokolowski. "Kevin has shown that commitment since the day he started, and our clients are better for it."

Before entering the financial services industry, Sylvester made a career change in 2011 and returned to school while balancing the demands of work and family. He attended University of Massachusetts Amherst, graduating in 2018 with a degree in Mathematics and a concentration in Actuarial Science. Shortly after, he began his career in wealth management, where he discovered a passion for helping clients achieve long-term financial success.

Sylvester continued to build on his expertise by earning both his Accredited Investment Fiduciary (AIF) and Certified Plan Fiduciary Advisor (CPFA) designations, further strengthening his ability to serve clients with integrity and insight.

The CFP certification is one of the most respected credentials in the financial planning industry. To earn the designation, candidates must complete rigorous education requirements, pass a comprehensive six-hour examination, gain relevant professional experience, and commit to upholding strict ethical standards.

Sylvester's achievement marks an important milestone for both his career and Pioneer Valley Financial Group's ongoing commitment to excellence.

Celebrate Earth Day Trash Cleanup this Saturday

BELCHERTOWN – Mark your calendars for the Celebrate Earth Day event on Saturday, May 2 at the Town Common (25 Park Street) from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. There will be a trash pickup and drop-off station, can and bottle drive by the Scouts, and several booths to encourage a culture of environmental awareness.

Registration to pick up a bag for trash clean up begins at 9:30 a.m. Native plant and tree seedlings will be available as supplies last. There are many ways for you to participate – pick up litter at your favorite recreation area, conservation area, or in your own neighborhood, donate your cans and bottles to the Scouts, and visit the various booths sharing information to encourage a culture of environmental awareness and action. Dress appropriately including high visibility clothing, gloves and sturdy shoes.

Light refreshments will be provided. For more information contact the Belchertown Conservation Department at conservation@belchertown.org or at (413) 323-0405.

This event is sponsored by the Belchertown Conservation Department, Department of Public Works, the Energy & Sustainability Committee, and Friends of Lake Wallace.



Community Yard Sale coming back

BELCHERTOWN – Belchertown Community Yard Sale Returns the First Weekend in August Belchertown, MA — The Belchertown Community Yard Sale is set to return for its third year, continuing to establish itself as a growing summer tradition in Western Massachusetts. The event will take place the first weekend in August, from July 31 through Aug. 2 (Rain dates: Aug. 7 to 9).

Over the past two years, the Belchertown Community Yard Sale has welcomed thousands of visitors from across the region, transforming the town into a destination for treasure hunters and community engagement. In 2025 alone, the event drew more than 6,400 visitors and

raised over \$4,000 for the Belchertown Senior Center and Council on Aging, contributing to a total of more than \$7,000 raised for local non-profits and community initiatives since its inception.

For 2026, the event is proud to announce that its beneficiary will be the Clapp Memorial Library, furthering its mission of supporting vital community resources.

As the event grows, organizers hope to solidify the Belchertown Community Yard Sale as a signature annual tradition, making the first weekend in August a must-visit experience for residents and visitors alike.

Registration for households and vendors will open on May 1. Participation is open to all, with a cost of \$30

for individual households and \$60 for vendors wishing to sell at the Town Fields. Sellers across Belchertown will be featured on an official event map, guiding visitors to over 100 sales throughout town. Maps will be sold at the Town Fields, 60 State Street, Belchertown, for \$5.

Event organizers welcome local business sponsors and community volunteers to help expand the reach and impact of the event. Those interested in sponsoring, volunteering, or learning more can contact Organizer Kris Lynds at belchertownyardsale@gmail.com

For additional details, updates, and registration information, visit www.belchertownyardsale.com

RUBY from page 1

can positively identify that hearing loss began or got worse while you were in the service, we can file that claim which, yeah, maybe you're going to get ten percent, which is around \$180 a month, but that's not really the big benefit."

The big benefit to which Ruby is referring is the opportunity to enroll in Veteran's Affairs health care. Health care needs could be fully funded through the VA, depending on eligibility. It's possible, Ruby described, for the veteran in need of hearing aids to get it funded through VA services.

"Those hearing aids that would have cost you five or seven thousand dollars, the VA is on the hook for that. They're going to take care of that. They're going to get

you those hearing aids and when those hearing aids go bad, they're going to get you the next set of hearing aids," detailed Ruby.

Ruby identifies that part of the struggle is informing veterans about the resources available to them. He stated that many discredit themselves, believing that others are more eligible for benefits than they are. His goal is specifically to strengthen awareness about the Veteran's Tax Work Off program, which he stated had "pretty good success" in his former Chicopee position.

"Belchertown does have that program already, but they haven't really gotten any volunteers coming in." Ruby stated. "So, I would like to maybe expand that a little bit and see if we can get some people involved in that."

In addition to them receiving proper benefits, Ruby

stated that the main issue for veterans was isolation. He identified it as a major concern for him moving forward and that he endeavors to make veterans realize that they are valued and part of a greater community. He stated that work programs were a great way to give them a sense of purpose and belonging.

"If there's a clean sweep or some sort of community effort," stated Ruby. "We like to get our veterans out front to make sure they're forward-facing. They do get paid a little bit. It's not much. It's maybe about \$1000 a year for about ten hours. But it also gives them a sense of community. And for veterans, that's kind of huge."

Ruby also emphasized that he anticipates his role to be more of a "background person," and pushing veterans to "thrive versus just trying to keep them alive."

"If I can help them have a sense of community, have a sense of belonging, have a sense that we do care about you, that there are people out there that care about you, then that's really going to be better for them than just trying to put the Band-Aids on when there's a problem," Ruby concluded. "I'm very open to having VA representatives come here and give presentations, to talk with them about different services, to collaborate with different departments and just to make ourselves available."

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OPINION

SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor

Should I collect SS now or wait two years until age 70?

Dear Rusty:

I am 67 and 9 months old, collecting a modest SS survivor benefit with plans to collect my own much larger benefit at age 70.

I was confident this plan was a good one, but recent turbulent events make me nervous that cuts could come to Social Security at any time without warning. Would it be prudent to file for my own Social Security as soon as possible so that my benefit might be "grandfathered" in before any sudden and drastic cuts occur? I do not generally panic, but these are unprecedented times. I would be quite comfortable with the benefit listed on my 2024 statement for my current age; I was just hoping to maximize the benefit by waiting.

When I go to the Social Security website to view my 2025 annual statement to see the personalized monthly retirement benefit estimates for ages 68, 69 and 70 that section no longer shows. This omission makes me uncomfortable. Can I find out what my current benefit estimate would be for ages 68, 69 and 70? Or should I just rely on the 2024 statement?

Signed: Nervous in
Portland

Dear Nervous:

Please do not be nervous that recent "turbulent events" pose a threat to your future Social Security benefits. Those events do not, in any way, jeopardize your future Social Security benefits, because Social Security is completely separate from all other federal political issues and finances. The primary problem with Social Security became an issue long before the current administration took office.

The Trustees of Social Security have been warning Congress for decades that Social Security's finances require Congressional attention. The fact is that Social Security revenue (as predicted decades ago) became insufficient to pay all benefit obligations in about 2021. Since that time, money from Social Security's reserved funds (Trust Funds) has been used to pay full benefits to all.

In 2020, there was nearly \$3 trillion in SS reserved funds, but that has now dwindled to about \$2.5 trillion as reserves are used to supplement SS payments. And that problem continues. The Trustees of SS now predict that the reserves will be fully depleted in about 2032, at which time, lacking program reform by Congress, Social Security will be forced to pay out only what it receives in revenue. And that would mean an estimated cut of about 23% to everyone's monthly SS benefit. In the unlikely event that happens, wouldn't a 23% reduction to your larger age 70 benefit be better than a 23% cut to your lower age 68 benefit?

No one wants those cuts to happen least of all politicians because it would amount to political suicide (seniors are, after all, a very large voting bloc). Thus, we believe that Congress will act to reform Social Security to prevent any general ben-

efit cuts from happening. It will, however, require Congressional bipartisanship because the reforms needed for Social Security are likely unsavory to some.

Those reforms may include SS tax increases and changes to the basic structure of the SS program to align it with today's demographic reality. The program needs reform, which Congress has, unfortunately, neglected to provide for many years.

And this neglect will likely also continue, at least through the forthcoming mid-term elections. It seems the nature of Congress is to wait until the last possible moment to offer corrective legislation.

Here's what to keep in mind: Congress already knows how to reform Social Security to avoid any future benefit cuts; they just lack the bipartisanship to accomplish that reform. For our part, the Association of Mature American Citizens has offered to Congress a commonsense reform plan via its "Social Security Guarantee." AMAC's proposal has received a positive reception in Congressional circles and we are optimistic that the proposal will provide financial stability to the program for generations. AMAC continues to advocate for SS reform in Washington, D.C. on a regular basis, even more intensely as the depletion of the SS Trust Funds grows closer.

We do not suggest changing your strategy for claiming Social Security benefits based upon fear the program will cut benefits. That's because it's unlikely that all benefits will be cut because we believe Congress will eventually enact reform. And even in the unlikely event that Congress neglects to reform the program by 2032, the percentage of reduction to a higher monthly SS benefit amount would be better than a similar reduction to a lower benefit amount. In other words, your original plan is still a prudent one.

Regarding your question about your estimated benefits, I expect your most recent SS statement didn't include future benefits because you are already collecting SS survivor benefits. You can contact SSA at 1-800-772-1213 to obtain the future SS retirement estimates you seek.

The Association Mature Citizens Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. This article is intended for information purposes and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadvisory@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

Alternative to airport TSA lines ...



LETTERS

Vote Hope Guardenier for School Committee

Dear Editor:

I am pleased to provide my support today for Hope Guardenier for Belchertown School Committee. Hope is and has been a committed participant in the Belchertown community for many years, serving on the Board of Health, BPS Strategic Planning Committee, Agricultural Commission, and Fair Exhibit Hall Committee. She is an educator of our region's youngest citizens providing hands-on education not only as the founder of School Sprouts Educational Gardens and the Farm and Garden Camp at Hampshire College, but also as a Belchertown

school garden advocate and volunteer.

Hope is a smart, open-minded listener and learner. She digs deep into a topic to understand it fully, ensuring that all perspectives have been considered. I have had the pleasure of witnessing Hope engage with community members who did not hold the same beliefs as her; these interactions were respectful and ultimately found both parties walking away with a better understanding of each other, even if they still disagreed. Instead of being fearful of differences, Hope takes them head on to improve on her own perspective.

In short, Hope's curiosi-

ty, passion and expertise is what Belchertown needs as our town continues to struggle with the inadequacy of the state's K-12 local contribution formulas, challenges associated with the closing and merging of our schools, and persistent budget shortfalls. She is a parent of two BPS students committed to helping our school system do better for all the children in our town. Hope is stepping up and is committed to helping our community thrive during challenging times.

I will be voting for Hope at the polls on May 18 - I urge you to also provide her with your vote and support.

Marla Lindsay

Support Pearson for re-election to Select Board

Dear Editor:

I am writing this letter in support of Lesa Lessard Pearson for a position as a member of the Belchertown Select Board. Lesa currently serves as the Chair of the Belchertown Select Board, and is responsible for the overall leadership of the Executive Branch of Belchertown Government. The Chair is responsible for all policy decisions of the town, and responsible for ensuring that most of the decisions made at the Town Meeting are carried out.

I have known Lesa for a number of years and she has been fully vested in the success of Belchertown while a member of the Select Board. She has shown that leadership is a function of recog-

nizing the past and preparing for the challenges of the future. Lesa has an employment resume with years dedicated to a changing and challenging landscape within public health policy, and brings thoughtful and intelligent attributes to resolving changes within the town going forward.

Lesa is committed to supporting our seniors and veterans and making solid choices that reflect community impact. How do I know this? I asked Lesa to support the Senior and Veteran Tax Work-Off Program that is currently in place in the town to help folks in reducing real estate taxes. Lesa embraced the idea and took it to the table at the Town Meeting where it passed overwhelmingly. This is more actual

support than words by Lesa - this is real action to help people. Other examples include supporting the Housing Trust initiative to help folks stay in their homes (including mobile homes), and Diversity and Equity Programs in town.

My take away of Lesa - she shows up not only to vote but to lead and participate. She shows up at community events and public forums. She is there to listen. She can be trusted.

Lesa is the right choice for Belchertown. Please join me in support of Lesa and vote for her reelection as a Member of the Belchertown Select Board. I am proud to support Lesa and hope you will be also.

Thank you.

Michael Caney

Please support Guardenier for school committee

Dear Editor:

What makes a great school committee member? I believe that it's someone who has proven their commitment to serving the community, as well as someone who is dedicated to fully hearing and understanding the opinions and experiences of others.

That is why I'm writing in support of Hope Guardenier for the Belchertown School Committee.

Hope has a strong record of public service and community involvement. Her service on

the Board of Health demonstrated her commitment to the well-being of our residents. Hope has also been an active member of the Fair Exhibit Hall Committee, where she dedicates her time to bringing people together and celebrating our amazing community.

As a longtime educator who works with public school systems throughout the valley, she understands the challenges facing our schools, and she also has insight into the types of support that students, families and teachers need to succeed.

Most importantly, Hope is a thoughtful and compassionate person. She is a good listener, who takes the time to hear different perspectives, and weighs decisions carefully.

As a public school teacher of 23 years, as well as a parent to two students in the district, I enthusiastically support Hope for the Belchertown School Committee. Please join me in voting for Hope Guardenier on Election Day.

Sincerely,

Margaret Goldman

Town is changing, like it or not

Dear Editor:

Belchertown is changing whether we plan for it or not.

Right now, many young families can't afford to move here, and many seniors can't afford to stay. At the same time, local employers across Hampshire County are struggling to find workers who can live nearby.

The redevelopment of the

former Belchertown State School site is a rare opportunity to address both challenges at once—by adding thoughtfully designed housing on land that's already set aside for development

This isn't about overbuilding or changing the character of our town. It's about making sure Belchertown remains a place where people who grew up here, work

here, and contribute here can actually afford to live and retire here.

There are very few specifics in The Master Plan but one of them is to bring a skilled nursing facility to Belchertown. If we want services like a skilled nursing facility, we need the work-

Please see **LETTER**,
page 7

Turley
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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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“Beets,” me

I was so happy to finally get into the vegetable garden this past week.

My peas seeds are sown! Yippee!

Next on my list is beets. I have to admit that I am no beet aficionado. In fact, I began eating beets only a few years ago.

Who knows what turned me off in my younger years. Maybe it was the fact that I only knew beets by way of a can – we never grew them in our home garden. They honestly didn't look or taste all that yummy, especially to a kid who ate a total of two other vegetables; that is, of course, if corn counts.

Anyway, I think what finally convinced me to include beets in my garden was the fact that the plants are multipurpose (you can eat both the greens and the roots) and beets themselves are wonderful “keepers.” Lately, there is a lot of talk about the benefits of eating them in relation to heart health.

Let me give you a brief run down on how to grow beets.

Beet seeds are unique in appearance. I can only describe them as multi-faceted “orbs.”

The orb is a grouping of seeds. You can go through the trouble of trying to separate them by way of wax paper and a rolling pin, but most folks don't bother.

Because the orb is thick, however, and moisture must penetrate it in order for it to germinate, a good soaking is beneficial. Although you can try starting beets nearly as soon as the soil can be worked in spring, it is probably best to wait until two weeks before the last expected frost.

In our location that translates into the first or second week of May. This timeframe will give them the most desirable soil temperature (sixty degrees plus) for germination.

Be sure that you keep the seed bed moist until the



in the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



early beet greens as it for its beets.

Looking for less leaf and more beet? Try “Detroit Dark Red Short Top.”

Well over one hundred years old, this late variety is great for canning.

Beets also come in a wide array of colors. For a dependable and tasty yellow beet try “Touchtone Gold.” Another interesting heirloom beet is “Chiogga” (aka “Bassano”).

Cercospora Leaf Spot of Swiss Chard, Beets, and Spinach is a common fungus that appears as circular rings on the leaves, making them unsightly and barely edible.

There are a number of tactics that claim to help if this is a problem for you. Water at the base of the plant, and do it early in the day so it dries out by evening, especially in the summer months when humidity heightens the spread.

Likewise, if you make successive sowings, space them a distance apart from one another. There are organic and chemical means of control that are worth investigating.

If that's not for you, give growing these plants a break for two-three years and likely you'll be in the clear to attempt trying again. Some companies offer disease free seed, too.

It's worth looking into.

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.

seeds pop up, and continue to provide at least one inch of water throughout the growing season if Mother Nature does not. Steady moisture will keep your beets sweet and crack-free.

I should also mention that beets prefer a soil that is slightly alkaline, and well-drained but fertile. In other words, sprinkle some lime and work a couple inches of compost into the soil!

Beet seeds should be sown an inch or so apart- my theory is to sow once and sow heavy. Because multiple plants may come from one “orb” it is critical that you thin your plants: first to one and a half inch spacing and then, when beets are the size of a marble, to a final spacing of three inches apart.

Don't feel badly when you are thinning – you are honestly doing your plants a favor. Beets that are grown too close together will never develop to their full potential.

Instead of letting the thinnings go to waste, make a salad and be grateful for some early season greens. Even when beets are at their final spacing I will rob the patch of some leaves every now and then for the very same reason. As long as I am prudent, no harm will be done to the developing roots.

Some beet varieties are grown especially for their greens. Try “Bull's Blood,” an heirloom variety known for its large and sweet reddish-purple leaves. “Early Wonder Tall Top” is another oldie – prized as much for its

WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT

Maloof-Hanley celebrate wedding

On Sunday, Feb. 15, Julia Maloof and Kevin Hanley celebrated their wedding with family and friends in Middletown, Connecticut. The happy couple met at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Maloof holds a bachelor's degree in music performance and education from UMass, Amherst, and she will complete her Masters of Education from Eastern Illinois University this summer, 2026. Hanley holds a bachelor's degree in music performance and history. He also earned a master's degree in social work from the University of Connecticut.

Julia was raised in Belchertown, Massachusetts where her parents, David Maloof and Deborah Sacon Maloof reside, and Kevin, son of Chip and Kathy Hanley grew up in New Fairfield, Connecticut. Julia teaches elementary music in Springfield Public Schools, and Kevin, a licensed clinical social worker, works as a program manager in com-



community mental health in West Springfield with their pet rabbit, Bad Bunny.

The newlyweds live in

Remembrance game at Austin-Gaughan Field

BELCHERTOWN - On Saturday, May 2, members of the Western Relics will hold their third annual softball game at Austin-Gaughan Field. This event honors 1st Lt. Michael P. Austin and Cpl. Roger Gaughan, who lost their lives in Vietnam. Michael and Roger were lifelong residents of Belchertown and members of the Belchertown High School baseball team.

A special connection exists between two of the Relics, Ken Thompson and Darrell Weldon, and the Austin Family. Ken served as a medic with Michael in Vietnam and was with Michael on his final mission. Darrell first met the Austin Family in 2009 when he organized a clean-up of Austin-Gaughan Field. Dozens of Belchertown volunteers showed up on April 19 (coincidentally Michael's

birthday) to rake, weed, plant, and paint to give the field a much-needed facelift. Darrell had known Ken for years but did not know of Ken's connection to the Austins until another team member pointed it out. Introductions were made on Austin-Gaughan Field in May, 2023, and the first memorial Relics game was played in 2024.

The game is free and open to the public. Donations will be accepted to support the Remembrance Tree Program in Maine which provides the balsam tips for the Wreaths Across America Program. Dog tags will be created for Michael and Roger and attached to trees.

The field is on George Hannum Road. The welcome and opening ceremony begin at 9:00 a.m. Come enjoy a great game on a beautiful field.

Grange holding first workshop of season

WARE – The Ware Grange's first gardening workshop of the year, “Hands on with Summer Annual Flowers,” will be held on Friday, May 1 at 7 p.m. at the Grange Hall at 297 Belchertown Road in Ware. Our presenter will be Roberta McQuaid, author of the weekly “In the Garden” column for Turley Publications. Participants will learn about easy to grow summer annuals and get to try their hand at seed starting. Such favorites as Marigolds, Zinnias, Cosmos and Bachelor's Buttons will be covered. Visit Ware Grange on Facebook or at ware-grange.org for more information.

Granby holding candidates night

GRANBY – The Town of Granby Communications Committee is hosting a Meet The Candidate's night at the East Meadow School Cafeteria on Wednesday, May 6 at 6:30 p.m. All candidates running for local office will be given an opportunity to speak, with Q&A from attendees. Childcare will be provided by the Granby National Honor Society.

LETTER from page 6

force that makes those services possible. And that workforce needs housing.

If we don't shape this change, it will happen anyway—but in ways we don't control.

Housing and economic development aren't separate issues—housing is what makes economic development work. We, the members of the Belchertown Economic

Development Industrial Corporation, urge you to support this project by voting in favor of Articles #28 and #41 at Annual Town Meeting May 11.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Maroney, Jonathan Speigel, Kirk Stephens, Robert Rivard, Cheryl Dutton
Directors, Belchertown Economic Development Corporation (BEDIC)



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EDUCATION

JBMS announces its third quarter honor roll

**7th Grade Honor Roll
High Honors:**

Madison Beaulieu, Jane Bernard, Helen Bierly, Olivia Bourdeau, Jonathan Chapman, Henry Chien, Addison DuCharme, Gia Henn, Connor Hooten, Abigail Jackson, Isabella Korzec, Charles McCloskey, Connor McNeill, Cora Pelletier, Rosalie Pelletier, Amaya Peters, Anna Sherwood, Callen Stellato, Wyatt Swiatlowski, Annabelle Tamawa and Layjai Tiangbe

Honors:

Alexander Aaronian, Quinn Attebury, Jaymes Besaw, Alexis Campos. Zachariah Cartel Wyatt Carver, Bradyn Cavanaugh, Parker Chianciola, Tenzin Chodhen, Gwyneth Conlin, Robert Cote, Autumn Dupras, Hannah Dupuis, Rylan Fortier, Jude Gloster, Tyler Goodsell, Lucille Gray, Jacob Haughey, Nicholas Hodgen, Lelia Hulvey, Lilah Jordan,

Sophie Karabetsos, Claire Lacroix, Karolina Landrio, Hadleigh Lozier, Caleb MacDonald, Amelia Mann, Zion Marrero, Logan Martin, Hazel Martins, Jaxson Martins, Stryker McNutt, Elizabeth McSpadden, Peyton Milou, Adam Mueller, Lucas Athanasios Nesbitt, Liam O'Connell, Shannon Pelissier, Robert Pellegrini, Jonathan Rainaud, Luke Raymond, Stella Reece, Declan Rege, Addyson Renkie, Ava Rocha, Hailey Rosienski, Aliya Schneider, Khloe Shaink, Reese Sheldon, Krystian Skora, Asher Sloat, Jaden Son, Daniel Stanton, Ruby Stapert, Aiden Thomas, Cora Thomas, Nolan Timms, Reese Warchelak, Liliana Whalen, and Aiden Yacek.

**8th Grade Honor Roll
High Honors:**

Joshua Annis, Rioghan Auffrey, Bailey Bachand, Miranda Barrett, Eliza Boyko, Sophia Brown,

Laurah Chaverri, Anna Cormier, Amelia Donovan, Brielle DuBois, Jeffrey Duprey, Ruby Harrington, Olivia Leahy, Torrence MacTavish, Orelia Manduley, Madelyn Murray, Katalina Pazos, Alexa



Pobieglo, Quinn Rathburn, Emma Scoon, John Shattuck, and Logan West.

Honors:

Mason Archambault, Ryan Blazejowski, Olivia Brach, Emery Calvanese, Caleb Cassella, Isabella Chapman, Natalie Couture, Kiernan Crosby, Emma Dean, Lilliana Deleo, Bridget Donah, Awrenna Duncan, Leo Fisher, Heaven Foster, Ayla Frost, Gianna Gassnola, Flynn Goldman, Archer Goraj,

Liam Hibler, Delaney Jacque, Alilah Jordan, Lillian Jurczyk, Willa Keefe, Kristofer Kelly, Lucas Kofidis, Samuel Leblond, Ryan Litz, Emelia Maldanis, Sovanmolika Mao, Aliah Miller, Avery Miller, Olivia Murphy, Tenzin Namgyal, Gracelynn Nite, Giana Patruno, Bentley Pope, Zackary Ritter, Jacob Staples, Jordan Stone, Collin Verrochi, Zachary Wall, Brynn Wilcox, and Benjamin Williams.

Belchertown launches ADA self-evaluation, transition plan

Town invites all residents to share their accessibility experiences through online survey

BELCHERTOWN — The Town of Belchertown has retained KMA, LLC to conduct an ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan to ensure that all Town programs, services, and facilities are accessible to residents and visitors with disabilities. As part of this process, the Town

is asking the public to complete a short six-question survey. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a disability includes a wide range of physical and mental conditions, including mobility impairments, hearing or vision loss, chronic illness,

PTSD, autism, and more. Paul Adzima, Belchertown's ADA Coordinator and Building Commissioner, is overseeing the project in partnership with KMA, LLC. Public input is an essential part of this effort. Residents are encouraged to share their experiences — whether positive or challenging — with accessibility in Belchertown's public spaces, programs, and ser-

VICES. Survey responses will directly inform how the Town prioritizes accessibility improvements in the years ahead. The survey is available online at www.surveymonkey.com/r/HCNH77M. Hard copies are available at the following locations:
Clapp Memorial Library — 19 South Main Street
Belchertown Senior Center — 60 State Street

Mini-book sale at library

BELCHERTOWN — If you'd like to borrow a book, the Clapp Memorial Library is the place to go; if you'd like to buy a book, the Clapp Memorial Library is also the place to go. The Friend's group has a small Ongoing Book Sale in the large white bookcase located under the stained-glass window. It offers good quality books in a variety of genres for adults and young adults as well as nonreaders, all for \$2 or less. Recently they added a "Like New" section offer-

ing books for adult readers with copyright dates of 2023 or newer at slightly higher prices, as well as young adult and children's books in excellent condition. These are gift quality books that easily match bookstore purchases but at significantly lower prices. Check the Ongoing Book Sale out each time you visit the Library as offerings change on an irregular schedule. Pay for these books at the circulation desk. All sales receipts go to support a number of the Library's free programs.

Stone House Museum grand opening May 9

BELCHERTOWN — The Belchertown Historical Association is holding its Opening Day activities at the Stone House Museum on Saturday, May 9. There will be free tours of the museum, our famous "Old Bag" sale, and our plant sale, featuring locally grown perennials. Every year we look forward to the support of our community in making this a successful fundraiser through your contributions of old bags and plants. The plant sale committee welcomes donations of perennials dug from your gardens and generously donated to the plant sale. We are looking for flowering plants, shade plants, vegetable plants, trees, shrubs, bulbs, fruit bearing plants and house plants. Plants can be brought to the Stone House during the week before the sale and left near the schoolhouse. Please email sallyshattuck54@gmail.com if you have any questions. Old bags can be donated at local businesses: Easthampton Savings Bank, Clapp Library, and Looks to Kill Salon.

Old bags can be donated at local businesses: Easthampton Savings Bank, Clapp Library, and Looks to Kill Salon.



SURPLUS from page 1

itat. That left a far smaller pool. "We identified about a dozen properties that we thought would be saleable," Williams said.

State Street slivers pulled back

Williams said that since the board's packet was published, he decided to remove two State Street parcels from the surplus list after a closer look.

"The reason I removed them ... Barton Avenue used to have two entrances on the State Street," he said. He walked the board through the history of that stretch of Route 202, where a farmhouse once sat between the old Barton Avenue alignment and the highway. "The town bought that sliver of property, destroyed the ... farmhouse, and extended the road straight out," Williams said. "So that's why Barton Avenue comes out to Toute 202 but also has two

streets going left and right. It's the property between the old Barton Avenue and the highway." Those strips, he said, are less than a quarter acre each but could matter down the road. "What I realized is that if we ever had a future need for drainage or some sort of facilities in that area, we should own those," he said. Because those lots are staying in town hands, a related Town Meeting article on surplus property is being

dropped. Town counsel concluded that the board could dispose of tax-title parcels on its own, without Town Meeting approval, once they are declared surplus. "All these other properties were taken for tax title," Williams said. "And town counsel has opined that any properties that were taken for tax title, the Select Board are the custodians of it, and you can divest those without further approval. You do not need to go to town meeting to do that."

West Street slivers likely headed to abutters

Several of the surplus lots are tiny slices of land along West Street, created when a survey shifted the town line with Ludlow. "These are the ones in West Street or less," Williams said. "There was a survey done on the Ludlow side that showed that the town line was actually slightly further over than it was, so it created all these small slivers of property." Select Board member Jen Turner called the border "a very weird" configuration after looking up the parcels. Williams said the West Street strips are effectively unusable on their own. "It's a very weird ... I don't think they're going to sell," he said. "They're unbuildable. They're basically 10 feet wide. They're just this little, tiny strip that runs behind people's homes." Instead, he said he hopes to fold them into existing yards. "I'm going to look into whether or not we can just incorporate them into the abutters property," Williams said. "Because, you know, they have no value. They're just, they're just taking up space on our inventory." Board member Nicole Miner asked how that would work in practice.

"You would give them to the abutter at no charge, but then the abutter would obviously be paying taxes on them," Miner said. "Yeah," Williams replied. "I mean, you know, vacant land is at a little value, so we'd have to work that out. Otherwise, I don't know what to do with it."

Balancing open space and clean records

The open space plan also identified large areas held under multiple parcel numbers, such as subdivision greenways and woods. Williams said those will remain as open space rather than be combined into single tax parcels, which he said would be administratively complex and unnecessary. "We're just trying to clean up that report," he told the board. "We just need to identify that we have this open space area that's made up of multiple properties." Board Chair Lesa Lessard Pearson welcomed the idea of protecting open areas, even as the town looks to shed unneeded land. "It's nice to have some open space," she said. Williams said he would share the full spreadsheet of properties so board members can see how everything is organized.

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B-Town baseball battles back for win over Comp

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN— The second meeting of the regular season between Valley East League rivals Chicopee Comp and Belchertown was an old fashion pitcher's duel.

Comp junior righthander Jacoby Haney and Belchertown senior righty Ryan Gould didn't allow a run during the first six innings.

The Colts managed to score three unearned runs with two outs in the top of the seventh inning.

The Orioles battled back in the bottom half of the final frame, but the visiting team held on for a 3-2 win on a chilly afternoon at the Belchertown High School baseball field, last Wednesday.

"The bounces just went our way in that last inning," said

Chicopee Comp head coach Justin Franczek. "Whenever you can score multiple runs in an inning, it's always very important."

Haney, who suffered a 3-1 home loss to the Orioles at the end of March, won his first game of the regular season.

"It feels great to win today's game, especially after losing to them earlier in the season," said Haney, who's also an outstanding 3-pointer shooter for the Colts varsity hoop team. "They had a lot of base hits against me the first time, but I was able to throw a lot more

strikes in today's game. This is a big win for us."

The road victory improved Comp's overall record to 4-5.

It was the first of three consecutive games for Comp

Please see **BATTLES**, page 10

Belchertown girls lacrosse outlasts Chicopee



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI
Aubrey McLain is pressured by a Comp defender.



Lia Pikul runs into a defender.



Shannon Fuller holds the ball looking to make a pass to nearby teammate.



Ken LePage makes a pass with pressure coming on.

BELCHERTOWN — There was a lot of scoring last Thursday afternoon, but Belchertown girls lacrosse was able to defeat Chicopee 14-9 with some late scoring to secure the win. Lily Tellier had seven goals for the Orioles while McKenzie LePage scored five teams to lead the way. Chicopee got five goals from Kiyah Price. The Pacers are 4-3 while Belchertown improved to 6-4 for the season.



Maddy Philpott tries to pick up the loose ball.

Orioles score big softball win over Ludlow

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN— Entering their second matchup of the regular season on the softball diamond, the Ludlow Lady Lions occupied the top spot in the Bi-County league standings, with the Belchertown Lady Orioles close behind in second place.

The Lady Orioles hopes of moving into a first-place tie with the Lady Lions were dashed following a 9-2 home defeat on a chilly afternoon, last Wednesday.

"We were able to score some runs early in the game, which is always very important," said Ludlow head coach Missy Rocker. "We've been hitting the ball very well and pitching very well so far this season. We've also limited our errors."

The Lady Lions, who captured back-to-back league titles in 2022 and 2023, celebrated a 9-6 home win in the first meeting against the Lady Orioles on April 1. They had a perfect 8-0 overall record and 7-0 league record following last week's road win. They banged out a total of 14 base hits against Belchertown sophomore righthander Madeline Williams.

"This is the first time that we've started the season with an 8-0 since I've been coaching the varsity team," Rocker added. "I'm hoping we can continue playing well during the second half of the regular season."

The Lady Orioles, who haven't won a league title since 2013, remained in second place with a 7-2 overall record and league record. Their previous six

games ended early due to the 12-run mercy rule.

Belchertown hasn't defeated Ludlow on the softball field since 2019.

"Ludlow is a talented softball team, and they're probably going to win the league title this year," said Belchertown head coach Mike Lafayette. "Their pitcher dominated today's game. We just need to continue working hard and keep plugging away."

Ludlow freshman righthander Madison Goncalves, who shares the starting duties with sophomore Olivia Slatton, held Belchertown to just one base hit during the first five innings.

Goncalves, who allowed a total of five hits, issued four walks and recorded ten strikeouts.

"Madison has a lot of potential, and I can't wait to see what the future holds for her," Rocker said. "We have two outstanding pitchers, who have different pitching styles. Madison has a very good change-up."

Goncalves struck out a season-high 11 batters in a 4-0 home shutout win against league rival Northampton on April 10.

Slatton, who was the starting pitcher in first meeting with Belchertown, started at third base in last Wednesday's contest. She went 2-for-4 with two RBI.

The Lady Lions, who won't be celebrating senior day this spring, held a 3-0 lead before Goncalves threw a pitch in the bottom of the first inning.

Freshman shortstop Abby Monette began the game with a walk. Junior center-fielder Caitlyn Peczkla, who was a perfect 4-for-4 with 3

Please see **SOFTBALL**, page 10

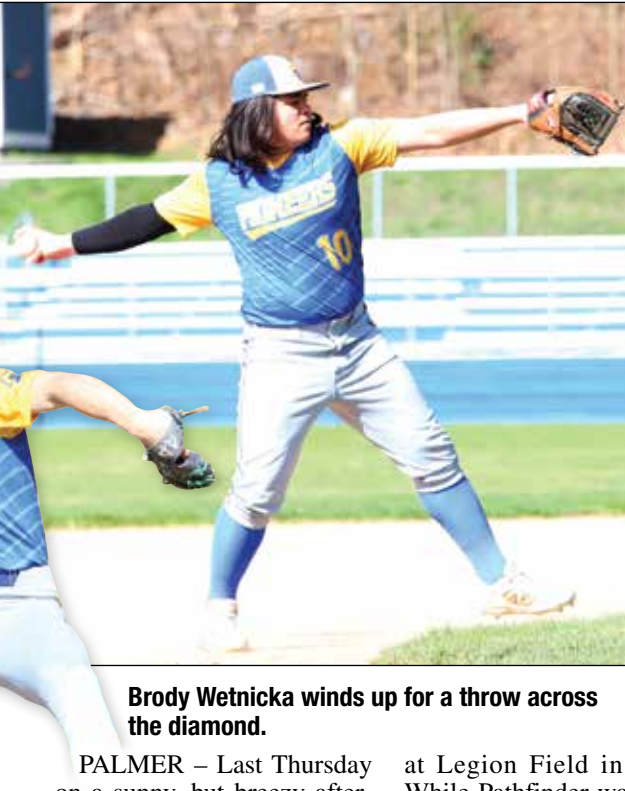
Pathfinder baseball falls to SICS



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI
Zachary Latourelle sends a throw to first.



Emerson Boronski delivers a pitch.



Brody Wetnicka winds up for a throw across the diamond.



Dayne Shanley takes the pickoff throw at first.

PALMER — Last Thursday on a sunny, but breezy afternoon, Pathfinder baseball was defeated 14-4 by SICS

at Legion Field in Palmer. While Pathfinder was able to get on the scoreboard, SICS was able to score some early

runs to get ahead, and the Pioneers could not match the offense. Pathfinder fell to 0-8 on the regular season.

T-Birds move to next round of playoffs

CHARLOTTE, N.C. - The Springfield Thunderbirds proved to be the comeback kids for the second straight night, defeating the Charlotte Checkers 2-1 in overtime in the deciding Game 3 of the clubs' First Round Calder Cup Playoff series.

For a third straight game, a Checkers blueliner broke the ice within six minutes of game action. With the teams skating 4-on-4, Jack Studnicka skated up the right side before sliding a pass across the slot to Tobias Bjornfot, who flipped a wrist shot past Georgi Romanov's glove hand at 5:58 to give Charlotte the 1-0 advantage.

As he did in Game 2, though, Romanov helped stabilize the defensive zone, turning away a sneaky backhand effort from Noah Gregor and the remaining seven shots that came his way in the opening period.

Springfield's offense only got four shots on the net, but chances began to arrive late in the period, with Otto Stenberg catching the post on a sharp angle chance and Julien Gauthier forcing Charlotte goalie Cooper Black to hold the fort on two net-crashing efforts. The T-Birds also got a power play opportunity late in the period that came up empty, then carried a second man advantage into the opening 1:38 of period two.

The Springfield power play had a difficult time getting offense established, and the T-Birds were limited to just eight shots for the duration of period two, then failed to get on the board with a power play to open the third period as well.

Despite the odds, Steve Ott's club continued to dig deeper, and at 5:45 of the third, a greasy goal changed

the T-Birds fortunes when Chris Wagner rolled a puck into the blue paint, where Calle Rosen crashed the net front and tucked it across the line to even the score, 1-1.

Black and Romanov kept things locked down for the remainder of the third, forcing the winner-take-all game into sudden death overtime.

Springfield managed just two shots in the extra period, but the second of those two, at 14:54 of the frame, proved to be the dagger as former Checker Julien Gauthier power-drove the right side of the net, flipping a backhand that glanced off the post, then off Black's backside before finding its way home for the series-clinching goal.

The T-Birds now move on to face the Providence Bruins in the Atlantic Division Semifinals; Game 1 is slated for Friday, May 1 at 7:05 p.m. at Amica Mutual Pavilion.

BATTLE from page 9

during the school vacation week.

The following night, the Colts suffered a 12-11 loss to archrival Chicopee High School at Dunkin' Park in Hartford. They got back into the win column by celebrating a 16-15 home win against Ludlow last Friday.

Haney, who's a second year member of the Colts varsity baseball team, was selected to play in the Massachusetts Baseball Coaches Association Sophomore All-Star Game a year ago. He was named as the game's MVP.

"Jacoby didn't play baseball as a freshman," Franczek said. "He joined our team last year and had a very good season. I nominated him for the sophomore All-Star game in Malden. He's a great shooter in basketball and played football for the first time last fall."

In his start at Belchertown, Haney allowed two runs (one earned) on three base hits with three walks and eight strikeouts. He threw a total of 93 pitches in seven innings.

Gould, who also went the distance, gave up three unearned runs on five hits. He walked two and recorded 12 K's.

"Ryan pitched well during the first six innings," said Belchertown head coach

Evan Berneche. "We just didn't execute very well defensively in the final inning. The game should've still been scoreless entering the bottom of the seventh inning."

The Orioles also had a 4-5 overall record following the home loss.

Gould, who finished his outing with 107 pitches, has committed to playing college baseball at R.P.I. next year.

Both teams stranded runners in scoring position during the first six frames.

With one-out in the top of the first, Comp senior second baseman Zach Bajgier drew a walk before advancing to second base on a wild pitch. Haney followed with an infield hit putting runners on the corners.

The Colts threat ended quickly, as Gould picked off his counterpart at first base before ending the inning with a groundball out to third.

Belchertown senior first baseman Canyon Charron blasted a double to centerfield leading off the second inning. Haney retired the next three batters on a groundout and two strikeouts.

With two outs in the next inning, senior second baseman Nathan Marino walked before stealing second. Haney retired the next batter on a flyball to right.

Gould reached base following a fielding error with

two outs in the fourth. He stole second, but the inning ended with a strikeout.

Gould retired 13 batters in a row, which included striking out the first two batters that he faced in the seventh inning.

Then Comp senior centerfielder Jaylen Gonzalez hit a tapper in front of the plate. It could've been the final out of the inning, but Gonzalez was safe at first base following a throwing error by the catcher, which opened the floodgates.

Gonzalez stole second base before crossing the plate with the game's first run when junior right fielder John Rentas singled to right. Senior third baseman Tanner Martell and freshman DH Brayden Klett also singled, driving home the other two runs. The Colts sent nine batters to the plate before Gould recorded his final strikeout of the game.

Sophomore pinch hitter Alex Rycek was safe at first base following a fielding error by the shortstop leading off the home half of the inning. Junior catcher Jonathan Perron also drew a walk.

A sacrifice bunt by junior third baseman Dustin Braid scored the Orioles' first run. Another other run was also scored on a bunt hit by senior right fielder Joe Minnon.

Gagnon gets second milestone

GRANBY - Last Monday afternoon, Granby High School boys volleyball, which is in its sixth year as a varsity program, defeated Holyoke 3-0. In the win, Jake Gagnon scored his 500th career kill. He has that to go with 1,000th career assists, achieved earlier this season. He had eight in the sweep of Holyoke while Nathan Walsh also contributed eight kills. Granby is now 8-4 on the season.



Jake Gagnon gets a big spike for the Rams.



Braeden Gallagher goes for the spike.



Nathan Walsh looks for a point.



Duran Garden tries to sneak the ball over the net.



Daniel Santiago goes low to keep the ball in play.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

1	2	3		4	5	6	
7				8			9
10			11			12	
13				14	15		16
17			18		19		20
21				22	23		24
				25			26
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39	40			41		42	
43			44			45	
46			47			48	
49							50
							52
51							

CLUES ACROSS

- Purchase
- British news organization
- Midway between northeast and east
- Language specialist group
- Fancy automobile
- Small loop or series of loops
- Exploiter
- Don't know when yet
- Group of languages
- One who's finished
- After B
- Angled
- A place to adopt pets
- Swiss river
- Young boy

- Unexciting
- American comedian Vidale
- Peyton's little brother
- Corporate higher-up
- "All in the Family" star
- Strike something forcefully
- Up in the air (abbr.)
- Clay earth pigments
- Means to record brain activity
- Small constellation
- Embraces
- Brief description
- Exclude
- White (French)
- Insect
- A major division of geological time

- Soviet Socialist Republic
- Type of whale
- In tune
- A citizen of Yemen
- Actress Ling
- One who supports
- Circus performer (abbr.)
- Yearly tonnage
- Quantitative fact
- Utah city
- Where a golfer begins
- Attendant
- The ancient Egyptian sun god
- Book of Chronicles (abbr.)
- Benedictine monk
- Not turbulent

- Car mechanics group
- Buffer used in chemistry
- Fall heavily
- Pie ___ mode
- The Brits love it
- Children's TV channel (abbr.)
- Jacksonville footballer
- Helps little firms
- ___ and behold
- A way to resemble
- Fingers
- Excessive indulgences
- You might be an "empty" one
- "How the West Was Won" writer
- European river
- They begin the alphabet
- The body's messenger

SOFTBALL from page 9

RBI, followed with a single down the third base line.

Ludlow took a 1-0 lead when Slatton hit a double down the left field line scoring Monette. The Lady Lions plated their other two runs in the opening frame on a sacrifice fly to left by sophomore catcher Madelyn Goncalves-Korny and a flyball single to right field by Goncalves.

The Lady Orioles, who only have three seniors, scored a run in the bottom half of the opening frame without the benefit of a base hit.

Junior shortstop Emily Waller and sophomore catcher Kina Roy began the inning with back-to-back walks. Then junior second baseman

hit a groundball to sophomore first baseman Marlie Fuentes. Waller was able to score from second base on the play.

With one-out in the following inning, Peczkka smashed a two-run double to center field. The ball glanced off the glove of sophomore centerfielder Alexa Raymer before she fell over the portable fence.

Raymer made her first varsity start in place of senior Loralai Smith. She made a total of four putouts, including an outstanding catch in the fourth inning.

"Our normal centerfielder is sick, so Alexa started her first varsity game today," Lafayette said. "She made a couple of nice catches."

The Lady Lions scored an unearned run in the third giving them a 6-1 advantage.

Ludlow added three more runs with two outs in the top of the sixth inning.

Peczkka and Slatton delivered RBI singles before Goncalves-Korny hit a run scoring double to center field.

With one-out in the bottom of the sixth, Kina Roy belted a line-drive home run over the left field fence.

It was Roy's first home run in a varsity game.

The Lady Orioles rally continued with singles by Mitus and junior third baseman Lila Roy (2-for-3). Senior left fielder Abigail Almeida also walked, but the home team had a runner tagged out at the plate before the inning ended with a strikeout.

The third meeting between the two neighboring high schools could take place during the Western Mass Class B tournament or the Division 3 state tournament.

The deadline for submissions for this sports section is the Monday before publication by noon.

To send in information, contact Sports Editor at 413-283-8393, send an e-mail to sports@turley.com or send it through the mail to: Turley Publications c/o Sports Editor, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069

■ POLICE LOGS

Belchertown Police Log

Editor's note: The following are brief explanations of select entries in the Belchertown Police log and arrests for the weeks of April 17, through April 23. The information was provided by a member of the police department based on the review of the detailed log summary. This feature is designed to provide context and explanation to some of the calls police respond to every day.

**ARRESTS/SUMMONS
Friday, April 17**

12:03 p.m. – A 50-year-old Ware man was issued a summons on charges of shoplifting. A state street business reported larceny of a product and the person walked out the store with the item. It was believed the person took a public transit bus out of the area.

Saturday, April 18

9:40 p.m. – A 36-year-old Mineola, New York woman who was issued a summons for unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle. An officer on patrol on State Street saw a vehicle come to stop and not move forward, another vehicle honked and the vehicle then pulled into Stadler Street. The officer then identified the operator and the person had a suspended license for failing to appear for a court date. The officer stopped the vehicle and a citation was issued.

**ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS
Friday, April 17**

8:34 a.m. – A North Main Street resident reported damage to their motor vehicle. It appeared the paint was scraped on top left corner of the windshield. The matter was documented.

12:15 p.m. – An officer responded to a disturbance on Summit Street. There was report of a person screaming and the officer found there was an argument between residents.

2:54 p.m. – An officer responded to a Federal Street residence for a report of suspicious activity. They saw a vehicle on the property via security footage. The time of the event didn't correspond with the timing of the event and the person was gone before the officer's arrival. A check of the property was done and footage of the incident was obtained. The matter was documented.

3:15 p.m. – An officer responded to assist a resident on Town Beach Road about an acquaintance who comes

to the residence uninvited. There were allegations of inappropriate behavior. The incident was documented.

Saturday, April 18

9:45 p.m. – An officer responded to a Jabish Street business for a report of a vehicle that was on fire. The vehicle was fully engulfed. Belchertown Police and Fire responded to the scene. The engulfed vehicle was parked next to another vehicle which also caught fire. It was extinguished. It was believed to be accidental.

Monday, April 20

10:47 a.m. – A person reported their Facebook account was hacked, everything was changed and they couldn't access anything. The account began selling things posing as another person and falsely posted items. They created a fake driver's license using the person's information. The person was advised to check with their bank accounts.

5:54 p.m. – An officer investigated a report of a person urinating outside of a location.

Tuesday, April 21

4:51 p.m. – A person was looking for an apartment to rent when they came across a Facebook post, they were asked to fill out an application and pay a fee to apply. The person was then told to send a gift card. The scammer via Facebook asked for more money. The person was also told they needed to have the application reviewed by an attorney. The person then figured out it was a scam.

10:08 p.m. – An officer responded to report of a suspicious person ringing a doorbell and walking toward Granby. The person was located and identified. The person was determined to be homeless. They said they needed medical services, and they were transported by Belchertown Fire paramedics.

Wednesday, April 22

11:16 a.m. – A person came to the lobby to request a wellbeing check on a relative.

4:33 p.m. – A circular saw was located on main street around the common. It was placed into property for safe keeping.

6:20 p.m. – An officer took a report of a vehicle that was shot with a BB or pellet gun on Keyes Street. The officer spoke with the reporting person, and the matter was documented. They were told to contact their insurance company.

Thursday, April 23

8:31 a.m. – An officer responded to a property to speak with neighbors about a property line dispute.

11:43 a.m. – An officer responded to Bay Road for an accident. A vehicle traveling on Bay Road avoided a deer in the roadway then a second deer struck the vehicle on the driver's side. The deer was still alive and the vehicle was able to be driven from the scene.

1:51 p.m. – An officer responded to Boardman Road for a report of illegal dumping. They were on a walk in the area when a large pile of trash with building materials desks and chairs. They said it was likely dumped by a trash vehicle. They were going to try to contact the utility company that owned the property.

Granby Police Log

Editor's Note: The Granby Police Department responded to 120 calls for the week of April 17, through April 23. Those arrested are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. The Granby Police Department provides all information.

Friday, April 17

2:59 a.m. – A motorist reported a motor vehicle crashed into a tree on West Street at Burnett Street. The motorist further reported that no one was in the vehicle. Officer responded and confirmed the reports. The area was searched and no one was located. The operator was contacted and later issued a criminal citation for failing to stop for a stop sign and leaving the scene of a property damage accident.

11:13 p.m. – While on patrol, an officer observed a vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed the vehicle was traveling at 65MPH in a posted 35MPH zone. The vehicle was stopped and the operator was issued a civil citation for speeding.

Monday, April 20

1:21 p.m. – A resident reported that dump trucks were illegally dumping milling on her property. An incident report was completed.

Wednesday, April 22

1:57 p.m. – A motorist reported a two-car accident in the parking lot. There were no injuries.

Thursday, April 23

1:35 p.m. – A motorist reported a two-car accident on West State Street. There were no injuries.

Pazmany named executive director of Downtown Amherst Foundation

AMHERST – The Downtown Amherst Foundation (DAF) has named Claudia Pazmany its new executive director, bringing a familiar downtown leader back to Amherst in a role focused fully on the Foundation and its signature cultural enterprise, The Drake. Her first day will be June 1.

"Bringing Claudia onto this team feels like the most natural next step," said Gabrielle Gould, president of the Downtown Amherst Foundation Board of Directors. "I truly can't imagine a better person to join us at this moment in our growth."

Gould said the hire marks an important step as The Drake builds on four years of momentum as a destination for live music, community gathering, and downtown energy.

"The Drake has thrived because of the support of our community and key partners across Amherst," Gould said. "We're grateful to everyone who has helped bring us this far and to the

generosity that is allowing us to take this next step toward long-term sustainability and success."

Pazmany previously served as executive director of the Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce from 2019 to 2024, where she was a visible advocate for local businesses and the vitality of downtown. She most recently served as chief development officer for Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services in Springfield, helping advance fundraising, partnerships, and new initiatives.

That combination of downtown knowledge, nonprofit leadership, and community-building experience makes Pazmany well positioned to guide the Foundation's next chapter.

"My time at Martin Luther King, Jr. Family Services has been profoundly shaping," Pazmany said. "I'm proud of what we built together - from launching inaugural events and statewide collaborations to strengthening partnerships

and laying the groundwork for sustainable fundraising. I remain dedicated to advancing its mission as a volunteer."

"As I step into this new role, I bring that same commitment to community, belonging, and bold, collaborative growth," she said. "I'm excited to help expand the reach of the arts across our communities, deepen access, widen participation, and help shape the next chapter of The Drake's impact in Amherst."

A longtime Amherst resident, Pazmany returns to downtown with deep roots in the community and a strong commitment to its civic, cultural, and economic life.

The Downtown Amherst Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to strengthening downtown Amherst through arts, culture, community partnership, and place-based initiatives and ensuring a thriving, beautiful, and diverse cultural college community.

The 'Old Bag Sale' is back

Sale to benefit the Stone House Museum

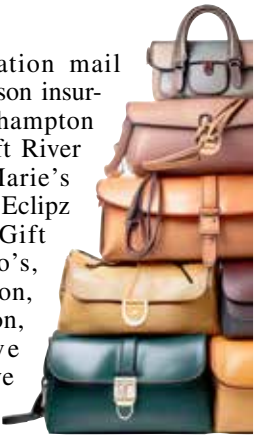
BELCHERTOWN – The Stonehouse Museum's opening day is Saturday, May 9 and the hugely popular Old Bag sale will be there again.

The museum needs your help to make this event a big success. We are collecting gently used bags, pocketbooks, purses, wallets, backpacks, etc. (please no suitcases).

Now is the time to clean out your closets and donate. Spread the word to friends and family as well.

Donation bins have been placed in several locations around town including the Senior Center, Clapp Memorial Library, Town Hall,

Pine Valley Plantation mail room, Bell and Hudson insurance Agency, Easthampton Savings Bank, Swift River Gift Shop, Tina Marie's Hair and Boutique, Eclipz Salon, Rannsaka Gift Shop, Dynamic Do's, Making Waves Salon, Looks To Kill Salon, and Station Five Salon. We also have 2 collection bins in Granby at the Granby Senior Center and the Granby Free Library. Collections end May 1 so do not delay. Help us make this this fundraiser a big success.



Wistariahurst Museum: Mother's Day Plant Sale

HOLYOKE – Wistariahurst Museum welcomes spring with the second annual Mother's Day Market being held Saturday, May 2 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. This event features a variety of vendors selling locally made products such as art, jewelry, and food. Vendors will be stationed indoors throughout the first floor of the museum. As guests shop and explore, the Brookline Trio will be playing live music for visitors to enjoy. Guests are also welcome inside the Carriage House as well, where they can shop our gift shop, take photos in the carriage, and view the frog circus.

During the event, visi-

tors can also participate in a free hands-on clay experience and cup exchange with Pots on Wheels. The Pots on Wheels truck will be parked in Wistariahurst's driveway, ready for guests to come on board and get creative. Come make a cup and take a cup home! During the Mother's Day Market from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, Wistariahurst's gardeners will be hosting the first on-site plant sale of the season. Wistariahurst has an array of annuals and perennials to brighten up any garden. Best of all, visitors can take home one plant for free thanks to Bank ESB, who is sponsoring this event. There is a limited supply of free plants, so make sure not to

miss out. Wistariahurst Museum's Mother's Day Market offers something for everyone. From plans, to textile pieces and prints, vases, and home decor- you're bound to find something your parent will love. This event is admission-free and open to the public, so that all can celebrate their beloved maternal figures.

Registration for this event is encouraged. Register on Wistariahurst's Eventbrite page: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2026-mothers-day-market-and-plant-sale-tickets-1985448051569?aff=oddtcreator&keep_tld=true



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PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Charles J. Lydon and Elaine A. Lydon to UMass Five College Federal Credit Union, said mortgage being dated December 5, 2014, and recorded in the Hampshire County Registry of Deeds in Book 11823, Page 134, of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder, for breach of the conditions of said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing, the same will be sold at Public Auction at **11:00 A.M. on Wednesday, May 13, 2026**, upon the premises described in said mortgage, namely 89 Green Avenue, Belchertown, Hampshire County, Massachusetts, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit: THE LAND IN BELCHERTOWN, HAMPSHIRE COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS BOUNDED AND DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

TRACT 1: BEGINNING AT A POINT ON THE SOUTHERLY SIDE OF GREEN AVENUE, WHICH POINT IS THE WESTERLY SIDE OF THE INTERSECTION OF GREEN AVENUE AND A RIGHT OF WAY LEADING FROM GREEN AVENUE TO THE PREMISES NOW OR FORMERLY OF GEORGE H.B. GREEN KNOWN AS THE "CARVER LOT"; THENCE RUNNING WESTERLY ALONG SAID GREEN AVENUE TWO HUNDRED SIXTEEN (216) FEET AND THENCE RUNNING IN A SOUTHERLY DIRECTION ALONG LAND NOW OR FORMERLY OF WILLIAM CHARLES BELMONT AND WILLIAM BELMONT, JR.

EIGHTY-THREE (83) FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO A STAKE; THENCE RUNNING EASTERLY ALONG SAID LAND OF WILLIAM CHARLES BELMONT AND WILLIAM BELMONT, JR. FIVE HUNDRED AND FIVE (505) FEET TO THE WESTERLY SIDE OF SAID RIGHT OF WAY; THENCE NORTHERLY ALONG SAID RIGHT OF WAY FOUR HUNDRED SEVENTY-FIVE (475) FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING. SUBJECT TO THE RIGHT OF ALL PERSONS LAWFULLY ENTITLED THERETO, TO USE THE RIGHT OF WAY WHICH RUNS ALONG THE EASTERLY LINE OF THE ABOVE DESCRIBED PREMISES.

BEING THE SAME PREMISES CONVEYED TO CHARLES J. LYDON BY DEED OF ELAINE A LYDON DATED OCTOBER 14, 1977 AND RECORDED IN SAID REGISTRY OF DEEDS IN BOOK 1985, PAGE 67.

TRACT 2: BEGINNING AT A POINT ON THE SOUTHERLY LINE OF GREEN AVENUE, WHICH POINT MARKS THE WESTERLY SIDE OF THE INTERSECTION OF GREEN AVENUE AND THE BROOK THAT PASSES UNDER THE ROAD; THENCE WESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHERLY LINE OF GREEN AVENUE TWO HUNDRED TEN (210) FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO A RIGHT OF WAY LEADING FROM GREEN AVENUE TO THE PREMISES NOW OR FORMERLY OF GEORGE H.B.; GREEN, KNOWN AS THE "CARRIER LOT"; THENCE SOUTHERLY FOUR HUNDRED SEVENTY-FIVE (475) FEET, MORE OR LESS, ALONG LAND NOW

OR FORMERLY OF ROBERT D. BLAKESLEE TO A POINT; THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG SAID OTHER LAND OF BLAKESLEE FIVE HUNDRED FIVE (505) FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO A STAKE; THENCE SOUTHERLY ONE HUNDRED TEN (110) FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO A STAKE IN A STONE WALL (SIC); THENCE SOUTHEASTERLY THREE HUNDRED (300) FEET, MORE OR LESS, ALONG LAND NOW OR FORMERLY OF WILLIAM CHARLES BELMONT AND WILLIAM BELMONT, JR. TO A STAKE AND STONE WALL, CORNER; THENCE RUNNING NORTHERLY ALONG SAID BELMONT PROPERTY THREE HUNDRED (300) FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE AFOREMENTIONED RIGHT OF WAY; CONTINUING NORTHERLY ACROSS SAID RIGHT OF WAY AND ALONG LAND OWNED NOW OR FORMERLY BY SAID GEORGE H.B. GREEN FOUR HUNDRED FIFTY (450) FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE WESTERLY SIDE OF THE AFOREMENTIONED BROOK; THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG SAID BROOK FIVE HUNDRED (500) FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING.

BEING THE SAME PREMISES CONVEYED TO ELAINE A. LYDON BY DEED OF CHARLES J. LYDON DATED OCTOBER 14, 1977 AND RECORDED WITH SAID REGISTRY OF DEEDS IN BOOK 1985, PAGE 68.

SUBJECT TO RESTRICTIONS, RESERVATIONS, EASEMENTS, COVENANTS, OIL, GAS OR MINERAL RIGHTS OF RECORD, IF ANY. BEING THE SAME PREMISES

CONVEYED TO CHARLES J. LYDON AND ELAINE A. LYDON, HUSBAND AND WIFE, AS TENANTS BY THE ENTIRETY FROM CHARLES J. LYDON AND ELAINE A. LYDON BY DEED DATED 3/31/1997, AND RECORDED ON 4/4/1997, AT BOOK 5089, PAGE 275, IN HAMPSHIRE COUNTY, MA.

Said premises will be sold subject to and/or with the benefit of any and all rights, rights of way, restrictions, easements, improvements, covenants, outstanding tax title, municipal or other public taxes, assessments, liens or claims in the nature of liens, rights of parties in possession, and existing encumbrances of record created prior to the mortgage, if any there be, whether or not reference to such restrictions, easements, improvements, liens or encumbrances is made in the Deed.

No representations, express or implied, are made with respect to any matter concerning the premises which will be sold "as is".

The successful high bidder will be responsible for paying the Massachusetts State Documentary Tax Stamps, all closing costs and all recording fees.

TERMS OF SALE: The highest bidder in the sale shall be required to deposit cash, bank treasurer's check or certified check in the amount of **TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$10,000.00)** at the time and the place of the sale of the premises to qualify as a bidder (the present holder of the mortgage is exempt from this requirement) to be held by the Mortgagee. The successful bidder will also be required to deposit an additional sum equal to ten percent (10%) of the amount bid less the \$10,000.00 deposit (but no less than \$10,000)

with the Mortgagee's auctioneer, Aaron Posnik & Co., Inc., 31 Capital Drive, West Springfield, Massachusetts 01089 or the Mortgagee's attorney as may be directed within five (5) days of the date of the sale to be held by the Mortgagee, and the balance of the purchase price shall be paid in cash, certified or bank treasurer's check at the closing which shall occur within thirty (30) days after the date of foreclosure sale, time being of the essence, unless the Mortgagee agrees otherwise. The successful bidder at the sale will also be required to pay a buyer's premium of 5% and shall be required to sign a Memorandum of Terms of Sale containing the above terms at the auction sale.

In the event that the successful bidder at the public auction shall default in purchasing the within described property according to the terms of this Notice of Mortgagee's Sale and/or the terms of the Memorandum of Sale executed at the public auction, the Mortgagee reserves the right, at its election, to sell the property to the second highest bidder at the public auction provided that Mortgagee, in its discretion, may require (1) said second highest bidder to deposit the amount of the required deposit as set forth herein within three (3) business days after written notice to the second highest bidder of the default of the previous highest bidder, (2) the second highest bidder to execute a Memorandum of Sale, and (3) the closing to occur within twenty (20) days of said written notice, time being of the essence unless the Mortgagee agrees otherwise. The Mortgagee reserves the right to sell any parcel or any portion thereof separately, or in any order that Mortgagee may choose and/or to

postpone this sale to a later time or date by public proclamation at the time and date appointed for the sale and to further postpone any adjourned sale date by public proclamation at the time and date appointed for the adjourned sale date.

Other terms, if any, to be announced at the time and place of the sale.

The description for the premises contained in said mortgage shall control in the event of a typographical error in this publication.

UMass Five College Federal Credit Union

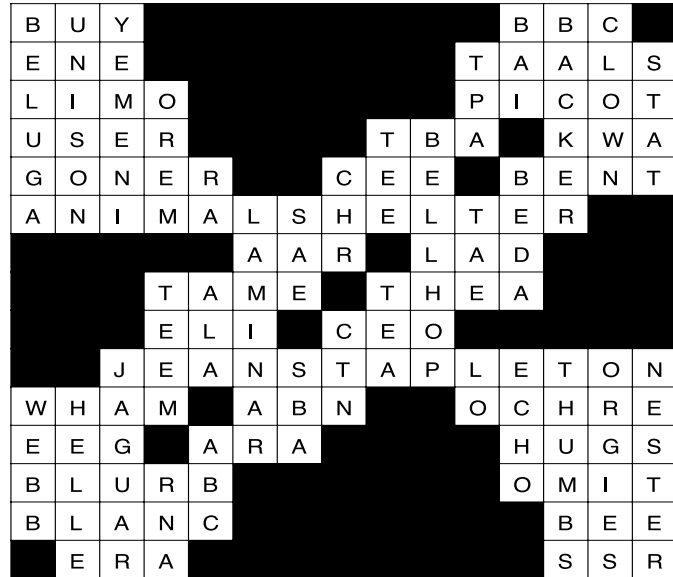
Present Holder of said Mortgage
By /s/ David A. Lavenburg
David A. Lavenburg,
Its Attorney
BACON WILSON, P.C.
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Springfield, MA 01103
(413) 781-0560
04/16, 04/23, 04/30/2026

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

The Sentinel
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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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Deadline for submissions is May 6.

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Location _____

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Please specify if you would like your name and number printed in the paper.

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