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Knox's Noble Train stopped in Sturbridge

By Paula Ouimette
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STURBRIDGE – In the winter of 1775-1776, Henry Knox and his men transported 59 pieces of heavy artillery across a frozen landscape from Fort Ticonderoga in New York, to Dorchester Heights.

According to the Fort Ticonderoga website, this artillery weighed nearly 60 tons, and this Noble Train of Artillery, was known as “one of the most challenging operations of the American Revolution.”

At just 25 years old and a bookseller by trade, Knox and his men have long been recognized for their efforts, which proved to be a turning point in the war.

This past weekend, Old Sturbridge Village partnered with Fort Ticonderoga to commemorate the 250th anniversary of this historic journey, offering a variety of demonstrations and activities for all to experience.

Historical re-enactor and longtime village black-



A historian portraying Henry Knox enlisted the help of young visitors in attendance at Old Sturbridge Village to secure a cannon to a sled. The museum held a weekend-long commemoration of the 250th anniversary of Knox's Noble Train of Artillery.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA OUIMETTE

smith, Robert Lyon, spoke about his participation in a reenactment of the march in 1976, when he was just a couple of years older than Knox was on the original journey.

The 1976 reenactment

lasted 18 days, traveling through the Berkshires into Cambridge.

Lyons spoke about the challenges they faced on the journey, and shared some of the highlights, including a stay at Spec Pond

in Wilbraham.

While camped at a pavilion near the pond, a local woman offered to wash the clothes of the re-enactors,

See KNOX NOBLE TRAIN, PAGE 5

Bob Ayers appointed as interim Town Administrator

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Correspondent

BROOKFIELD – The Select Board officially appointed Bob Ayers as interim town administrator at their meeting last Wednesday.

The board interviewed Ayers at their Jan. 13 meeting, and moved forward in the hiring process with him, conducting negotiations and background checks before his official appointment on Wednesday. His term will end no later than June 30.

Ayers and members of the Select Board discussed their expectations within the first month of his employment as town administrator. Ayers said he expects the board to provide him with clear expectations as to what his responsibilities are, along with becoming familiar with various town employees.

Board member Beth Coughlin said she expects Ayers to be a “buffer” between the Select Board and department heads, and to understand the jobs and struggles of each department, as

well as facilitate free flow of information between the departments and the board.

Coughlin also brought up the importance of making sure all employees feel safe in the workplace.

Ayers said that safety is “number one” and called for “compassion and respect” in the workplace. He also said he expects employees to put differences aside during the work day, and be “all business” on the job.

Town Administrator job description

The board continued their discussion on the town administrator job description. At their last meeting, Coughlin offered to revise it, saying that there was a lot of “language” in it that needed to be “cleaned up.” She said she had technical issues this week, and the work she had done disappeared, and that she would redo it for the next meeting.

Finance discussion

Town Accountant Laurie Bartkus reviewed the High-

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Planning Board voted to support BESS moratorium article

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
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STURBRIDGE – The Planning Board held a public hearing to consider an amendment to the existing zoning bylaw by inserting a new Article XXI, a temporary moratorium on large scale standalone battery energy storage systems.

The moratorium would be in effect through Dec. 1, 2026, or until the town adopts amendments to the zoning bylaws concerning battery energy storage systems.

At the Jan. 26 hearing, Town Planner Jean Bubon said she has been looking to draft a bylaw regarding battery energy storage systems. “They’ve been deemed

to be so needed by the state and by the governor and subsequently through court actions...and are exempt from many of the laws that we would consider kind of necessary and prudent to the operation of placement of such facilities,” Bubon said. “It makes sense that we kind of protect ourselves and protect our communities by enacting some type

of bylaw.”

She said where the town does not currently have a bylaw for battery energy storage systems, it is possible that the moratorium will be upheld by the Attorney General’s office until a bylaw is in place.

Bubon said the town of Oakham had a bylaw in place, and received a proposal for a large battery energy

storage system, which was turned down by the town. She said this decision is being appealed to the state by the applicant.

The proposed facility is over Oakham’s groundwater protection district and would have hundreds of large trailer-sized units.

“They’re encouraging other communities to support them in their fight

against this facility,” Bubon said of the town of Oakham. “They’ve been actively trying to stop this facility for a very long time.”

The board members also shared safety concerns about fires at battery energy storage systems.

Bubon said she does

See STURBRIDGE, PAGE 8

Board of Health held tobacco regulation hearing

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Correspondent

BROOKFIELD – The Board of Health held a public hearing last Wednesday to address the board’s proposed changes to their tobacco sale regulations.

The proposed amendment to the article, which was ratified in June 2025, is section G, which previously read “The sale or distribution of oral nicotine pouches is restricted to adult only retail tobacco stores.” The proposed amendment reads “no retailer or person shall sell or distribute or cause to be sold or distributed oral nicotine pouches with a nicotine content greater than 6 mg/per individual pouch.”

Board of Health Chair Maureen Lepak explained that nicotine pouches were authorized to be sold by the FDA in 2025, but local boards of health can make amendments to the tobacco regulations at their discretion.

Residents gathered, both in support and opposition to the proposed amendment. Resident Christopher Kelleher said that the Board of Health has been creating and

enforcing regulations without public knowledge, and the amendment can unfairly affect the businesses that operate in Brookfield.

Many other residents raised concerns about the effects the amendment could have on businesses, including Lisa Boswell, who said that limiting the availability of nicotine pouches in Brookfield will drive customers to other towns, and away from Brookfield.

Residents in opposition also said education on the dangers of nicotine could be better than restricting the sale of it, including resident Jake Hill. Hill questioned whether strict rules surrounding the sale of nicotine are necessary, and that education could better prevent children from accessing nicotine than limiting the choices of adults.

Hill volunteered to assist the board in educational outreach.

Residents and organizations in support of limiting the sale of nicotine pouches cited the health risks that nicotine can pose. Sarah McColgan, a representative from

See BOH, PAGE 6



Bernie Wilson of B&D Enterprises, is shown on the right.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY RICHARD MURPHY



John Thompson of Thompson's Maple Farm displayed his maple syrup.

When weather outside is frightful, go to farmers market

By Richard Murphy
Correspondent

WEST BROOKFIELD – Winter has turned a corner, and not for the better. A huge dollop of snow and cold has settled over the Brookfields and the northeast, as well as much of the rest of the country.

If that were not enough, weather forecasters predicted something big this weekend and they are suggesting the next event will be some-

thing called a “bomb cyclone.” Sounds dreadful.

In the interlude between last weekends onslaught and the next deluge there was at least one place of refuge. As usual, Wednesday afternoon finds people crossing East Main Street in West Brookfield to enter The First Congregational Church. At 3 p.m., the weekly Winter Farmers Market begins and runs until 6 p.m. It is a haven of warmth among vendors and shoppers.

Entering the market, as one comes in the door, to the left is the market manager Joy Hinton. The lady is known for her Joy of Beans gourmet coffee that is sourced globally. As mentioned last week, she is working on an interesting project and in a month or so may have an announcement.

Continuing on, is Gail of Autumn Leaf Farm, with her microgreens and locally grown varieties of mushrooms. Also on her table

were lovely eggs from her charming Golden Comet chickens.

Next, at her usual table is Linda Fuchs of Flourish Farm, known for microgreens, ginger, turmeric, garlic. You know, healthy stuff grown on a “half an acre of sunlight.”

Turning the corner left, and back again this week from Charlton is Kelly

See WINTER MARKET, PAGE 6

- community -

Board of Selectmen OK'd borrowing for Fire/Highway project

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – Board of Selectmen Chair Jason Petraitis said the town is going to move from temporary borrowing to permanent borrowing for the Fire/Highway buildings project.

At the Jan. 20 meeting, Town Accountant Shiela LeBlanc said the town did a bond anticipation note during the construction and

in April, they will look to permanently borrow for the project.

“There is a couple different options that our financial advisor gave us,” she said. “He could not give us actuals on interest, but the interest he did give us was based on the current rates.”

Options include a level debt service for 27 years, level principal for 27 years, level debt for 20 years or level principal for 20 years. LeBlanc said the 27-year option would have a higher amount

of interest.

She said the level principal loan lowers the debt quicker, reducing the overall interest by about \$415,000 for the 20-year loan.

“It’s basically up to the Selectmen to make this determination,” she said.

LeBlanc said taxpayers would begin paying back the loan starting in fiscal year 2027. She said the average single-family household would pay about \$1.59 per thousand-dollar valuation for all of the town’s com-

bined debt exclusions.

The board members agreed that a 20-year loan would be better for the taxpayers overall, due to less interest being paid. The level debt loan would have a lesser impact on the taxpayers initially, but would carry a higher interest; while the higher initial payment of the level principal loan would continue to reduce as the principal was paid down.

“You save almost a half a million dollars,” Board of Selectmen Vice-Chair Jamie

Gilman said of the 20-year level principal loan over the level budget loan.

The board voted in favor of moving forward with the 20-year level principal loan.

Use of the Senior Center Petraitis said many boards and committees used to utilize the Senior Center for meetings in the past, and he made a motion to continue doing that.

Council on Aging Director Courtenay Rivera said there should not be any conflict with evening meetings

and Senior Center events. She said several boards and committees have been holding their meetings at the center, including the Planning Board and Conservation Commission.

Rivera said she is looking into having one of the doors replaced at the Senior Center, and replacing fluorescent lights with LED to save energy costs.

The board members voted in favor of Petraitis’ motion.

FrOST hosts 6th annual Ice Carving Event

STURBRIDGE – The Friends of Sturbridge Trails invites you to reserve a free block of ice and give ice sculpting a try at its 6th annual Ice Carving Event.

Sculpt at home, experiment with friends or family, and then place your creation along our Riverlands trail. This year’s theme is patriotic with an evening lit stroll, transforming the Riverlands trail into a glowing winter gallery for the whole community to enjoy.

This is a perfect creative winter project and adventure for families, scout troops, classrooms, friends, and neighbors.

Ice blocks must be reserved by emailing Jen Scherer at: jenchris27@aol.com by 6 p.m., Feb. 9. The ice blocks are free, courtesy of the Sturbridge Tourist Association who is covering some of the costs of this event.

Ice blocks will be delivered to the Riverlands, 52 Stallion Hill Road on Wednesday, Feb. 11 for pick up from 4-6 p.m. The theme for this year’s event is Patriotic: “Celebrating our 250th Anniversary”.

Carvers can set out their work on Saturday, Feb. 14, starting at 3 p.m. Volunteers will be assisting ice block set out.

Submission judging, and professional ice carver demonstrations (two) start at 4 p.m., on Feb. 14. The trail will be lit for an evening stroll, with a warming barrel fire and hot choco-



Here is one of the winners of last year's ice carving event. The Friends of Sturbridge Trails will hold its 6th annual Ice Carving Event, to be displayed on Saturday, Feb. 14 on the main trail of the Riverlands.

late and hot coffee provided for free by Deep Roots Distillery.

Come out and enjoy this annual winter evening event.

Deep Roots Distillery is also providing a gift certificate that will be awarded to the judges favorite ice sculpture. Ice sculptures will remain out on the main trail of the Riverlands until Mother Nature melts them away.

Parking for this event will be in the main Old Sturbridge Village parking lot, at 29 Stallion Hill Road, directly across the street from the Riverlands, extra lighting and volunteers will assist in safe crossing of Stallion Hill Road for this event.

Thanks to Old Sturbridge Village for the use of their parking lot.

Wondering how on

earth you could sculpt ice?

Here is a video highlighting 10 levels of sculpting ice: from using only hand tools to using more intricate power tools:

https://youtu.be/jmeO6oPa0I0?si=fM_gkUc8fhQbFcgqan

Additional questions, and to reserve your block of ice contact Jenifer Scherer at jenchris27@aol.com.

The Friends of Sturbridge Trails (FrOST) is a 501 3c membership financed nonprofit whose mission is to support the trail committee and promote trail related events of Sturbridge Trail System. Visit the friend’s website at www.treksturbridge.org with information on how to join FrOST and follow on Facebook: Friends of Sturbridge Trails.

Deadline for ‘Winter’ art entries is Feb. 12

WARE – ArtWorks Gallery invites artists of all mediums from throughout the northeastern U.S. to explore the theme of “Winter.”

The deadline for entry is Feb. 12 by midnight. The entry form and full details can be found on workshop13.org.

ArtWorks Gallery is located at 69 Main St. “Winter” will be on display from March 7 through April

4, opening with a reception on Saturday, March 7, from 3-5 p.m. Gallery hours are Saturdays and Sundays from 1-4 p.m.

The juror for “Winter” is Susan Tilton Pecora. She has been painting the streets, harbors, factories and farms of New England throughout her life.

About ArtWorks Gallery

ArtWorks Gallery is Workshop13’s gallery on

Main Street. This space features numerous art exhibitions each year and is also available to rent for individual or group shows.

Workshop13 is a dynamic center where arts, culture, and community converge – expanding access to the arts and nurturing creativity and self-expression in the rural region. For more information visit workshop13.org, or call 413-277-6072.

Selectmen approved spending requests

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
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NORTH BROOKFIELD – The board approved a spending request from the Highway Department to purchase a bearing for the chain on the sander in the amount of \$435 at its Jan. 27 meeting.

The board also approved a Reserve Fund request in the amount of \$6,735 to be transferred to the Police Equipment and Repair line item for the purchase of an air handler unit. The current unit has failed, and cannot be repaired as that model is no longer being made.

Board of Selectmen Chair Jason Petraitis said a temporary fix is in place, but there is no temperature control or fresh air exchange for the Police Station, which can cause issues with carbon monoxide. He said the Finance Committee unanimously approved

the request.

The Police Department also requested \$3,500 to be transferred to the Police Facility Expense line item to cover the cost of preventative maintenance completed this past July. The Town Accountant supported the request and the board approved the transfer.

The board also approved a Reserve Fund request from the Fire Department in the amount of \$4,594.41 to be transferred to the Vehicle Repairs and Maintenance line item for the emergency repairs to Rescue 1.

Petraitis said the vehicle’s battery shorted out and caused a hazardous situation, which required the vehicle to be stored outside of the Fire Station, resulting in damage to the pump.

Recognition

Board of Selectmen Vice-Chair Jamie Gilman recognized the Highway Department and town staff that helped to clear snow after the two-day storm.

“It was a heck of a night, and I thought they did a dynamite job,” Gilman said.

Snow removal Petraitis reminded residents that it is not legal, per state law, to plow snow from their properties, across town streets. He said he knows it is difficult to move snow given the amount that accumulated, but that this practice creates safety hazards.

“Unfortunately what happens when you do it, is a lot of people leave these little traces of snow across the street, and that ends of having to get re-plowed,” he said.

Appointments

The board appointed Jessica Fulghum and Ernie Grimes to serve on the Memorial Park Committee. The board had previously appointed John Tripp to the committee.

Job description

The board members approved the revised job description for the Senior Center Program Assistant.

Crafters made frosty winter luminaries

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – This past week was craft night at the Haston Free Public Library, which had another great turnout.

Library Director Lia Tulip was the instructor for this workshop, which involved frosty winter luminaries. A total of 12 crafters attended craft night and were ready to decorate a craft that symbolizes the cold winter taking place.

All the supplies were provided by the Haston Free Public Library and began with the base of the project, jars. There were mason jars and other varieties of jars such as sauce and salsa jars available for crafters to begin decorating.

One of the pieces to decorating these luminaries was Epsom salt, which served as frost or snow to make the luminaries look frosty. Spray was also used to keep the decorative salt intact. This way, the material won’t “flake off” as Library Assistant Joyce Tibbetts put it.

There were also pine-



Frosty winter luminaries were made during craft night at the Haston Free Public Library.

cones, twine, and wooden pieces that served as additional decorations for the frosty winter luminaries. The flameless candles were provided to offer the glow behind these beautiful luminaries.

The next craft night will be on Thursday, Feb. 26 at 5:30 p.m. Youth Services Librarian Brianna Lamb will be the instructor for the next craft and will be teaching needle felting. Lamb has taught a couple needle felt-

ing workshops at the library and will be bringing it back for a Valentine-themed felt project. There will be some hearts involved with this project.

For more information and events at the Haston Free Public Library, visit www.northbrookfieldlibrary.org. Visit the library at 161 North Main St. or contact the library by calling 508-867-0208 or emailing hastonfreepubliclibrary@gmail.com.



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- community -

Dance performance comes to Hardwick

Local dancer returns home

WEST BROOKFIELD – Betty Gundersen Studio of Dance is proud to announce that alumna Avree Gundersen will return to Massachusetts as a featured performer with Nova Linea Contemporary Dance, Wisconsin's premier contemporary dance company, in a compelling full-length performance titled "some wounds never heal."

The performance will take place on Saturday, Feb. 7 at 7 p.m. at The Cultural Center at Eagle Hill School in Hardwick. Tickets are on sale now, priced at \$30-\$35, and are available through The Cultural Center at Eagle Hill School website at <https://www.thecenterateaglehill.org/shows-tickets/buy-tickets>.

Choreographed by Nova Linea Artistic Director Jared Baker, "some wounds never heal" stands apart from traditional narrative dance works. Rather than telling a linear story, the 90-minute performance explores an overwhelming emotional state – grief – inviting audiences to sit with the experience rather than watch it resolve.

The work unfolds in two chapters, separated by an intermission. Senior Company Artist Gracie Plath appears throughout as the grief-stricken human at the center of the piece, anchoring the audience's emotional journey as the ensemble moves around and through her experience of loss.

"This is not a dance that explains grief – it allows the audience to feel it," said Betty Gundersen, founder and director of Betty Gundersen



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Nova Linea Contemporary Dance will perform on Saturday, Feb. 7 at 7 p.m. at The Cultural Center at Eagle Hill School, in Hardwick

Studio of Dance. "The honesty of the movement, the pacing, and the emotional restraint make this work incredibly powerful. It's rare to see a full-length contemporary piece that asks viewers to reflect rather than be told what to feel."

Through physically expressive movement and emotionally evocative imagery, the piece examines how loss can leave us feeling frozen in place and how connection, empathy, and community become essential to healing. The work encourages audiences to confront their own experiences with grief and resilience, finding meaning in shared understanding.

Dance workshop for local students

In addition to the public performance, Nova Linea Contemporary Dance will offer a one-day student workshop at Betty Gundersen Studio of Dance on Sunday, Feb. 8, from 9 a.m.-2:15 p.m. Open to dancers ages 7 and up, the workshop will include

individual technique classes taught by company members.

The cost for the full-day workshop is \$140 per student. Advance registration is required. A separate registration form must be completed for each dancer at <https://bit.ly/4bF5xa1>

"This is such a wonderful and rare opportunity for young dancers to work closely with professional artists from across the country," Gundersen said. "Experiences like this help students understand not just how dance looks, but how it communicates."

About Nova Linea Contemporary Dance

Nova Linea Contemporary Dance is Wisconsin's premier contemporary dance company, known nationally for its emotionally provocative performances and its mission to present accessible, relatable stories through dance. The company's work emphasizes human connection – both onstage and within the communities where it

performs.

The dance company is dedicated to creating a positive environment where artists feel valued, collaborating with and supporting youth dance studios, and aiding in the resurgence of live theater. Through these efforts, the company seeks to cultivate future audiences for dance while sharing the profound emotional and cultural impact of live performance.

To learn more about Nova Linea Contemporary Dance, visit <https://novalineadance.com/>.

About the Betty Gundersen Studio of Dance

The Betty Gundersen Studio of Dance, located at 79 Wickaboag Valley Road, West Brookfield, offers a full range of classes designed to nurture local students at every age and stage. Additional information can be found at <https://bettygundersendance.com/>, by calling 508-867-8925, or by emailing bgstudioofdance@gmail.com.

Town Clerk announces annual election information

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The North Brookfield Annual Town Election will be held on Monday, May 4.

The last day to submit nomination papers is Monday, March 16, 2026, at 5 p.m.

The following offices are up for election: Board of Selectmen – one seat, three-year term; Board of Assessors – one seat, three-year term; Board of Assessors – one seat, two-year term (to fill a vacancy); Board of Assessors – one seat, one-year term (to fill a vacancy); School Committee – two seats, three-year terms; School Committee – one seat, one-year term (to fill a vacancy); Water Commissioner – one seat, three-year term; Water Commissioner – one seat, two-year

term (to fill a vacancy); Board of Health – one seat, three-year term; Cemetery Commissioner – one seat, three-year term; Library Trustees – two seats, three-year terms; Planning Board – one seat, five-year term; Planning Board – one seat, four-year term (to fill a vacancy); Housing Authority – one seat, five-year term; and Southern Worcester County Regional Vocational School District (Bay Path) – one seat, three-year term.

It is strongly encouraged that anyone interested in serving to become familiar with the work and responsibilities of these boards, committees, and commissions.

Nomination papers are available from the Town Clerk's Office.

West Brookfield Town Clerk lists town election information

WEST BROOKFIELD – Town Clerk, Klarissa Rose, announces that Nomination Papers are available on Monday, Feb. 2, for the upcoming Town Election to be held on Tuesday, May 5.

These papers must be filed with the Board of Registrars, in the Town Clerk's office, for certification on or before Tuesday, March 17 at 5 p.m. Final day to withdraw as a candidate is Thursday, April 2 at 5 p.m.

Appearing on the ballot will be the following: Selectman, three-year term; Board of Health, three-year term; Assessor, three-year term; Common Committee, three-year term; Library Board of Trustees, three-year term; Library Board of Trustees, three-year term; Planning Board, five-year

term; Housing Authority, five-year term; Water Commissioner, three-year term.

The Quaboag Regional School District positions will also be incorporated on the Town Ballot. Two members from the Town of West Brookfield for a three-year term and two members from the Town of Warren for a three-year term.

These nomination papers are available on Feb. 2 at the Superintendent's office at 284 Old West Brookfield Road, Warren. Deadline for returning these papers is Friday, March 20 by 4 p.m. Last day to register to vote before the Town Election is Friday, April 24, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Town Clerk's office at 2 East Main St.

Brookfields Lions Club accepting scholarship applications

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The Brookfields Lions Club is now accepting applications for its annual scholarship program, according to club president Bill Cass.

Each year, the club awards a scholarship of up to \$1,000 to a graduating senior in each of the club's member communities, Cass said. Recipients of the 2026 Brookfields Lions Club scholarship awards will be announced in June.

To qualify for consideration, applicants must live in one of the member communities – Brookfield, East Brookfield, North Brookfield, West Brookfield, and New Braintree – and submit an application before their school's spring break. The application must include the student's class rank and be signed by the school's guidance director.

The application form is now available for download on the club's website at brookfieldlionsclub.org/scholarships. The complet-

ed form should be mailed to the scholarship selection committee care of Brookfields Lions Club, Scholarship Committee, P.O. Box 128, North Brookfield, MA 01535.

For additional information, please contact the Brookfields Lions Club at brookfieldlionsclub@gmail.com, or visit the Club's Facebook page at facebook.com/BrookfieldsLionsClub.

About the Lions Club

As the world's largest, youngest and most active service organization, the mission of Lions Clubs International is to empower volunteers to serve their communities, meet humanitarian needs, encourage peace, and promote international understanding. Members of the Brookfields Lions Club are dedicated to service and support in the communities of Brookfield, East Brookfield, North Brookfield, West Brookfield, and New Braintree.

Historical Commission held 'Save Our Structures' session

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Correspondent

RUTLAND – The Historical Commission held a public session last Saturday regarding the Department of Conservation and Recreation's proposal to demolish the cells at the Rutland Prison Camps, and fill in the root cellar.

According to Historical Commission chair Peter Pasierb, the DCR cited hate speech, vandalism and safety concerns in their proposal.

Pasierb began the meeting by reading an email from DCR representative Dan

Clark in response to an email the commission sent to DCR asking for specifics on instances of hate speech, injuries, and claims filed against the state or DCR. The email said that DCR "has painted over hate speech many many times," and their position on demolition had not changed since their original proposal in 2021, and that Clark did not recall any discussions regarding saving the structures as they are without "offering a realistic solution to address DCR's concerns."

A resident asked what counts as hate speech, and the commission said they

were unaware as DCR had not given them specifics as to what they have observed, or how often.

Pasierb suggested a "three-pronged approach" as a potential solution to DCR's concerns including mitigation, education, and stewardship.

One of the main concerns from DCR is people trespassing on the property. The commission suggested installing motion sensing cameras, or cameras with cellular connection. They also suggested placing barriers, including boulders, near the entrance of the property to prevent ve-

hicle access, in order to deter potential vandals.

The commission also discussed community painting days, which can be used to cover up the hate speech, and create new art. Member Michele Van Reet said the town has painting supplies from a previous grant.

One resident suggested the town hire a local artist to paint a mural related to the town. Van Reet said that some of the graffiti is anti-DCR, and suggested that

See PRISON CAMP, PAGE 6

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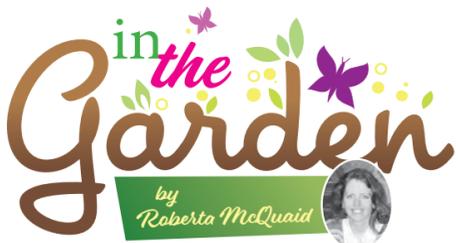
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- opinion -



Onion culture, continued

This morning, after reading last week's column, my mom commented, "Boy, I didn't realize onions are so challenging to grow."

Oh no, I truly hope that the column did not convey that message. I've been growing onions for years, and find them no more challenging than any other vegetable that you start indoors.

I hope I didn't discourage anyone. In fact, I hope just the opposite happened, whereby everyone purchased some seed to give growing onions a whirl.

Read on to learn more from where we left off last week.

Growing on

How does one achieve lots of top growth so that by seasons' end a big bulb will result? Provide sufficient moisture and nitrogen, and lots of it, but only early in the gardening season.

Amend a 100 square foot area with a bushel of aged manure or finished compost prior to planting, then top dress when plants are six-eight inches high and again for the last time three weeks later. Fish emulsion is a great foliar fertilizer for this purpose.

Because onions have limited top growth and are relatively shallow rooted, it makes it hard for them to compete with more aggressive plants for moisture and nutrients. For that reason, be sure to address enemy #1: weeds!

I have found that a hand held circle hoe is great for getting into the narrow space between plants as well as within the rows. Perform this task once or twice a week and you will be weed-free all summer. You can also apply grass clippings or chopped up leaves as mulch. It will reduce weeds and conserve moisture, and, as it breaks down add valuable organic matter to the soil.

As the summer solstice draws near, the need for nitrogen drops as the bulb switches from top growth to bulbing up. From this point on, no additional fertilizer is necessary and watering can be cut back some.

Harvesting

In early fall your onion tops will begin to yellow and bend at the necks. As mentioned earlier, reduced daylight has signaled the plant to go into dormancy.

When half have bent, bend the rest and allow them to remain in the garden just a few more days. If no rain is in the forecast, pull them up and lay them on edge in place, turning on occasion. This will begin the curing process.

Should rain threaten, they can easily be protected with a tarp or moved under cover.

After three days to a week of sunshine it is time to move them to an airy, dry location such as a shed to cure for an additional two-three weeks. Should this time frame include lots of rain or humidity, sometimes a household fan can help the drying process along.

Dry onions will definitely be the best for long term storage.

Storage

You have a good idea that your onions are ready for storage when the necks have withered away and the outer skin is dry and starts to slip. Nineteenth century gardeners would have braided and hung them in the root cellar, where cool and dry conditions would, fingers crossed, keep them fit for use as needed into the spring months.

Onion braids have modern day appeal- they look pretty and it is easy to simply tug the perfect size onion from the braid as you need it. The key to success is to attach twine or string to at least one of the braiding strands - this will give your braid strength, not to mention a way of hanging it up.

We can also store onions in mesh bags or old hosiery in a household location that remains close to freezing and relatively dry. My unheated mudroom works great.

Here simply cut the tops to one inch prior to bagging up. When you are going through them to cut, or braid, be sure to separate out those with double bulbs, as well as those whose necks remain thick; neither will be good keepers and should be used first.

This is also a great time to think about good traits and the prospect of saving some of your best onions for seed production.

Save the seeds

Saving the seeds of your open-pollinated, non-hybrid onions is the next frontier for allium aficionados. In the north, we employ what is called the "bulb to seed" method.

Our bulbs are harvested normally and stored over the winter, and when the ground is ready for planting, three or four of your best onions are replanted three inches apart. Soon a flower stalk will form. It can get quite tall (three-five feet!) so place a stake for support early on and tie it off as you need to.

After the flower head has formed be on watch for the black seeds to ripen and loosen up- you want to catch them before they shatter. This can be accomplished by clipping a few sections of the head at a time.

Dry in an airy spot for a few days before storing in paper envelopes in a cool, dry location for use the following spring. Be advised that to avoid cross pollination, only one variety of onion can be in flower at a time; it is fine, however, to have first year onions in the garden.

Onion seeds are viable for one-two years.

Now that you know the ins and outs of onion culture, embrace the challenge and try growing onions from seed this year.

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

Claiming Social Security early and investing it

Dear Rusty:
I am a 63-year-old single lady and I have questions regarding Social Security "early retirement," though I will still be working full time.



I know there is a maximum allowable income limit and, if I exceed that, I will need to return probably 2/3 of my received Social Security benefit. I'm thinking about taking those early SS benefits about \$1,400 per month and putting them in my high yield savings or CD where I can gain the interest on it and have it stay "liquid" so I can return what I need to.

My current interest rate is 3.65% on the savings and over 4.25% on CD, with options for 3,6,9 mos. or longer- but I want to be able to access the money to pay Social Security back at the end of the year. Can you advise me on this? Signed: Still Working but Wondering

Dear Still Working:

I commend you, for investigating your options before claiming early Social Security benefits while still working. FYI, the 2026 annual earnings limit for those collecting early SS benefits is \$24,480 (changes annually). If your 2026 work earnings exceed the annual limit, Social Security will take away \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the limit. The annual earnings limit lasts until you reach your Full Retirement Age and the limit is about 2.5 times higher during the year you attain FRA.

FYI, when you apply for benefits, Social Security will ask if you are working and, if so, how much you make. Using that information, they will evaluate whether you can take benefits now and, if so, how many months they can actually pay your benefits.

For example, if your projected 2026 earnings are,

say, \$100,000, you would be about \$75,000 over the annual limit which means that half of that \$37,500 would need to be paid back to SS. Since your monthly SS benefit at your current age would be about \$1,400 per month, Social Security will say that you are temporarily ineligible to collect early benefits because you cannot pay back within one year what you would owe for exceeding the limit. In other words, they won't pay your SS benefits just yet because your earnings are too high and they do not want to overpay benefits, which you will only need to return.

For additional perspective, if your expected 2026 earnings are less say about \$50,000 that means you would be about \$25,000 over the limit about half of that (about \$12,500) would need to be paid back to SS. In that event, SSA would tell you they will withhold nine months of your SS payments in advance and pay your benefits for only 3 months. This because the overpayment, with your current benefit of about \$1,400, could be recovered by withholding your SS payments for nine months. They do not want to intentionally overpay your SS benefits.

So, despite your best repayment intentions, Social Security will not favor intentionally overpaying your benefits. Historically, overpayment of benefits due to exceeding the annual earnings limit has been a notoriously difficult issue for the Social Security Administration. So, to get your early SS benefits while you are working full time, you would likely need to lie about your anticipated 2026 earnings on your application for SS benefits, which we strongly

discourage.

Keep in mind that this all changes when you reach your FRA (67), because the earning limit goes away entirely when you reach FRA and the limit goes up by about 2.5 times in the year you attain full retirement age. So, depending on your earnings level, you may wish to either wait until your full retirement age, or until you stop working full time, to claim SS.

Now, as for the general idea of taking early benefits and investing them, many have said they wish to do that and we understand that logic. Our caution is that it requires religious discipline to put the SS money into a higher yield investment vehicle to accomplish the goal of beating the SS increase realized when you wait to claim. Many who try it succumb to the temptation to use the invested funds for emergency needs and sometimes non-emergency needs. I offer this only as something to be aware of, as some have shared that they failed in their investment objectives with their Social Security money.

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 Administration. To submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

Protein: The big food craze of 2026

First it was low-calorie. Then it was fat-free. Then high fiber and low carb. Then gluten-free and zero sugar.

And now, it's protein. Walk down the aisle of your favorite store and you'll see shelves packed with protein powders, shakes, chips, bars, coffee, cereal, even protein soft drinks, alcoholic drinks and ice cream.

Food giants such as PepsiCo, Kellogg and Pop-Tarts maker Kellanova have rolled out protein-boosted versions of their products. Starbucks and Kroger are offering protein-fortified coffees and French toast sticks. The global market for protein-fortified



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

to eat more protein, up from 59% just three years ago.

We've always known that our bodies need protein to build and maintain lean muscle, hair, bones, connective tissues and general health. But what's driving the current fad, and how much protein do we need anyway?

The protein push seems to be partly the result of the boom in semaglutide (GLP-1) medications, such as Ozempic, Wegovy, Mounjaro and the like. They are helping people lose weight and maintain it, but users are also los-

See YOUR HEALTH, PAGE 8

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- community -

Local historian/author to hold book signing Feb. 14

STURBRIDGE – Local historian and author Walter J. Hersee announces the release of “To Defend All That Is Dear”, a groundbreaking reconstruction of Sturbridge’s Revolutionary War roster that recovers dozens of forgotten patriots and provides a replicable research model for communities preparing for the nation’s 250th anniversary.

A public book signing and author talk will be held on Saturday, Feb. 14 at 10:30 a.m. at the Joshua Hyde Public Library, located at 306 Main St.

Unlike traditional Revolu-

tionary War histories that retell familiar battles, “To Defend All That Is Dear” focuses on the recovery of the soldiers whose service was omitted, misrecorded, or lost through generations of incomplete documentation. Through meticulous archival work – including cross-referencing the Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors volumes, pension files, muster rolls, Continental returns, bounty records, and town meeting documents – Hersee identified 186 overlooked soldiers tied to Sturbridge and confirmed 23 wartime deaths

previously absent from the town’s historical memory.

“Every community has missing patriots,” Hersee explained. “Their absence isn’t intentional – it’s a quiet drift caused by record loss, transcription errors, and assumptions passed down over centuries. This book shows how towns can recover those names and restore them to the story.”

The study also serves as a practical guide. Hersee’s transparent methodology demonstrates how individuals, local historians, genealogists, and historical societies can rebuild their

own Revolutionary War rolls using both traditional and modern tools. With the 250th anniversary approaching, the book arrives at a crucial time for communities seeking accurate histories and inclusive commemorations.

Hersee, a member of the Sturbridge Historical Commission, the Community Preservation Committee, and several regional history initiatives, has been widely recognized for his work updating Sturbridge’s honor rolls and re-examining long-standing assumptions about local Revolutionary

War service.

“This is more than Sturbridge’s story,” Hersee noted. “It’s a blueprint. Any town – large or small – can do this work and rediscover those who stepped forward to defend all that is dear.”

Published under his imprint, Heritage Oak Press, the book includes corrected service profiles, narrative insights, and detailed explanations of the research process – bridging scholarly rigor with accessible community history.

Residents, history enthusiasts, genealogists, and representatives from regional

historical societies are encouraged to attend the Feb. 14 event to meet the author, learn about the research, and obtain signed copies.

About the author

Walter J. “Wally” Hersee is a Sturbridge-based historian, researcher, and author whose work centers on recovering forgotten local stories through deep archival research. He serves on several historical and municipal committees and is the author of “Common Witness: Leaves from a New England Town” and forthcoming works from Heritage Oak Press.



A young team of oxen prepared to get hitched to a sled.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA QUIMETTE



Henry Knox recruited spectators to aid in the journey across the countryside.

KNOX NOBLE TRAIN FROM PAGE 1

who had been on the road for quite some time. In exchange for this generous offer, all she requested was to have a cannon fired off in front of her flower shop.

Lyon, who was charged with carrying the black powder, was eager to oblige.

To repay her kindness, the re-enactors loaded a mortar and lit it, creating a loud and powerful boom, which was followed by the sound of tinkling glass – the force of the mortar’s explosion had caused the shop’s windows to break, along with several flower pots. Lyon said the woman seemed pleased with their efforts, and didn’t mind the broken glass at all.

While on the trail, Lyon and his crew enjoyed a variety of meals, from breakfast at Friendly’s, to multiple McDonald’s stops. He said once they reached Palmer, they enjoyed a delicious (and historically accurate) venison stew.

The group traveled through Warren, Slab City and West Brookfield, where Lyon met his future wife. This town later became his home.

Lyon recalled traveling Foster Hill Road, and noticing how little had changed in the past 200 years.

“It was an amazing trip that I’ll never forget,” he said.



A historian described the conditions from Fort Ticonderoga to Massachusetts, and how the 59 pieces of artillery were moved 300 miles through a harsh winter.



A team of oxen arrived to pull a sled carrying a 300 plus pound cannon.



Henry Knox recruited spectators to aid in the journey across the countryside.



A historian carried a box of supplies.

BROOKFIELD FROM PAGE 1

way Department’s funds. She said they have American Rescue Plan Act funds allocated for road reconstruction in the amount of about \$114,000, which need to be spent by the end of this year to avoid losing the funds.

Bartkus also said the town’s chapter 90 account has about negative \$150,000, as reimbursements still need to be finalized.

According to the Massachusetts Department of

Transportation’s chapter 90 program municipal guidance document, chapter 90 is a state funding program that gives money to municipalities for transportation improvements. The definition reads in part, “this is a reimbursement program, which means that municipalities pay for approved expenses up-front and receive reimbursement afterwards.” Bartkus said over \$81,000 of reimbursements should be appearing in their bank accounts soon.

Bartkus said the Highway

Department received a Mass-Works grant of \$1 million, and have spent over 80% of it. She also said general highway funds are running “incredibly low” and that they will be “running into issues soon.”

She cited that the winter season still has more than a month left, and much of the winter funds have been exhausted.

EMT appointment

The board unanimously appointed Jared Maldonado as an on call EMT for Brookfield EMS.

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- community -

New Braintree Police Log

During the weeks of Jan. 19-Feb. 2, the Hardwick/New Braintree Police Department responded to 23 building/property checks, 47 directed/area patrols, 15 radar assignments, seven traffic controls, seven emergency 911 calls, two scams, two complaints, one fraud, one safety hazard, two assist other agencies, one motor vehicle accident, one animal call and 10 motor vehicle stops in the town of New Braintree.

Monday, Jan. 19
11:46 a.m. 911 Motor Vehicle Crash, Gilbertville Road, Patient Refusal

Tuesday, Jan. 20
1:18 p.m. Scam, Gilbertville Road, Officer Handled

Wednesday, Jan. 21
10:40 p.m. 911 Suspicious Activity, West Brookfield Road, Spoken To

Thursday, Jan. 22
6:13 a.m. Medical Emergency, West Brookfield Road, Patient Refusal

8:35 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, West Brookfield Road, Patient Refusal

11:46 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, West Brookfield

Road, Vehicle Towed

Saturday, Jan. 24
11:11 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Ravine Road, Written Warning

Monday, Jan. 26
9:58 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

2:04 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

5:17 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Barre Cut Off Road, Transported to Hospital

Tuesday, Jan. 27
8:51 a.m. Complaint, Unitas Road, Services Rendered

Wednesday, Jan. 28
9:03 a.m. Safety Hazard, Mara Road, Negative Contact

1:10 p.m. Complaint, Prouty Road, Spoken To

Friday, Jan. 30
9:32 a.m. Scam, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

Saturday, Jan. 31
3:21 a.m. Medical Emergency, West Brookfield Road, Patient Refusal

8:51 p.m. Fraud, Wine Road, Officer Handled

Sunday, Feb. 1
9:02 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, West Brookfield Road, Patient Refusal

WooSox Foundation honors Country Bank's Jodie Gerulaitis

WORCESTER — The WooSox Foundation recognized Jodie Gerulaitis, First Vice President of Community Relations at Country Bank, during its Fourth Annual WooSox Foundation Honors Gala.

Gerulaitis was honored for her outstanding contributions to the community, particularly in advancing education across Central and Western Massachusetts.

Although Gerulaitis was traveling internationally at the time of the event, her devoted parents proudly accepted the award on her behalf, while she joined the celebration virtually.

In her role at Country Bank, Gerulaitis leads the Bank's community relations and financial literacy initiatives, delivering education programs that empower children with essential money management skills. She also spearheads Country Bank's partnership with the WooSox Foundation Most Valuable Teacher program, an initiative that celebrates and elevates educators who make a meaningful difference in students' lives throughout the region.

"Jodie's passion for ed-



Shown from left are Dr. Charles Steinberg, President, WooSox & WooSox Foundation; Jodie Gerulaitis, First Vice President of Community Relations at Country Bank; and Brooke Cooper, EVP/General Manager, WooSox. Gerulaitis was recognized by the WooSox Foundation for her outstanding contributions to the community.

ucation and her commitment to recognizing the true MVPs in our communities, our teachers, reflect the very heart of what this award represents," said Dr. Charles Steinberg of the WooSox. "Her impact

reaches far beyond the classroom and continues to strengthen our region for generations to come."

Country Bank and the WooSox Foundation extend their congratulations and gratitude to Gerulaitis

for her unwavering dedication to children, educators, and local communities.

About Country Bank
Established in 1850, Country Bank has a rich history of supporting personal and business banking customers through financial solutions with FDIC and DIF insurance for added security.

Country Bank is a full-service \$2 billion mutual community bank serving Central and Western Massachusetts with 15 banking centers and two business offices in Ware, Palmer, West Brookfield, Brimfield, Belchertown, Wilbraham, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Leicester, Paxton, Charlton, Springfield, Uxbridge and Worcester. With a commitment to personalized service and community involvement, Country Bank offers individuals, businesses, and municipalities a comprehensive range of banking products and services.

Country Bank is a member of FDIC, DIF, and the SUM network. Country Bank can be reached at 800-322-8233 or online at countrybank.com.

BOH FROM PAGE 1

the Massachusetts Health Officers Association, expressed her, and the association's support for the original restriction, and said that nicotine in children and teenagers can cause mental health issues like depression.

Heather Warner, coordinator of the Franklin Hampshire Tobacco Free Community Partnership, supported the restriction, saying that ease of access increases use. She said tobacco companies intentionally market to young people, and it is becoming more affordable.

The restriction was

also supported by Everett resident Anna Pereira, a representative from the 84 movement, which is an anti-tobacco youth program. Pereira said she has seen first-hand in her high school the negative effects tobacco can have on adolescents, and said nicotine pouches are not safe, and they are easy to hide.

Brookfield resident Leah Monroe said nobody is in favor of children using tobacco, and said the board should consider what the residents think about the restriction, rather than what organizations and residents from outside

Brookfield support. Following public comment, the board went into deliberation to decide how to move forward with the amendments.

They voted to remove section A of the tobacco regulations, which was the statement of purpose. They also voted to remove the wording of sections H, which restricted individual cigar sales, and section L, which restricted free samples, coupons, or discounts of tobacco.

They said sections H and L would instead refer to section S, which mandates adherence to state laws.

WINTER MARKET, FROM PAGE 1

Homestead Apiary, Ken and Ginger's daughter was staffing the table and had the usual variety of products from flavored honey to eggs and poultry, and even dog treats and more.

First year vendor Bucha Bros was back again with one of the partners, Ryan Laurie, in charge of presenting the healthy probiotic-rich beverage to the shoppers.

After Bucha Bros at his usual spot was the man who helps people bring home the bacon, as well as chops, roasts, and other pork delicacies. Farm46 is one of the regulars and comes to the market from Charlton

No matter, the lads put on a good show. If you get a chance, you otter go see 'em.

And of course, in the center of the hall, Halley and Still Life Farm were there as who knows when people will be able to get out again. Stock up on the veggies now!

This week we are going to highlight a couple of vendors who have been at this market for a number of years: B&D Enterprises and Thompson's Maple Farm.

B&D Enterprises

Bernie Wilson is a native of Ware and has been vending at the Winter Market for several years, starting out with the pens he produces from the recycled wood of old pallets. He related that he used that resource because he is "too cheap to buy wood." Bernie has taken up also making them from the American Chestnut wood salvaged in the reconstruction of the Ware/Hardwick covered Bridge.

Though it was first pens he came to the market with, since he has brought kitchen utensils, also with parts made from recycled wood.

There was on sale was a dangerous looking sling shot made from the same wood.

Need to call a deer, Bernie makes deer calls.

New were a couple of yo yo's he fashioned out of the wood. Asked about them, he said one was a Democrat, and the other Republican. Did we relate that our good man is not without a sense of humor?

Bernie, with his wife Debby, together operate as B&D

Enterprises.

Thompson's Maple Farm A fixture at the West Brookfield Summer Market and at the Winter Market since the beginning is Thompson's Maple Farm. John Thompson is always standing at the table.

Tapping trees, the New Braintree operation is as local as it gets.

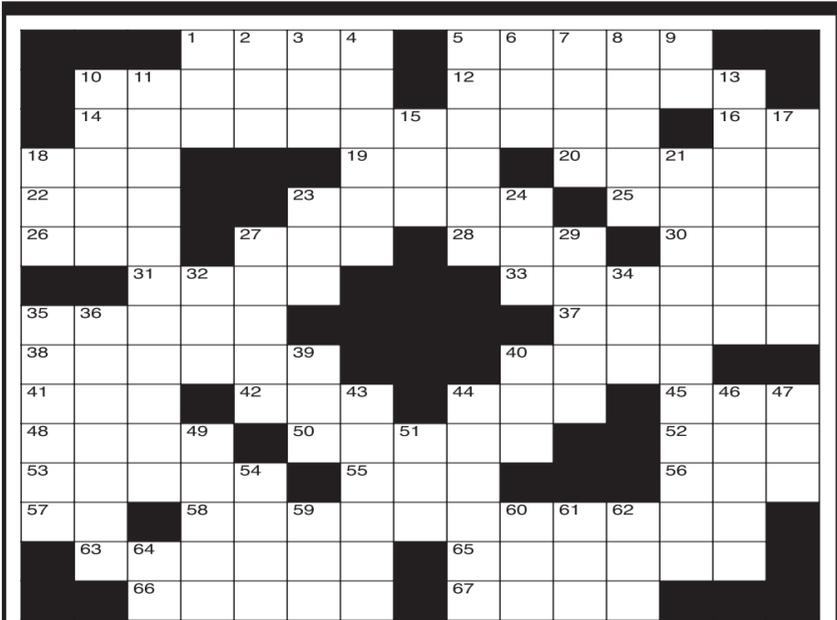
The Thompsons also make ice cream. As it is not a dairy, Thompsons relies on milk products from Cooper's Hilltop Farm in Leicester. But just about all the other ice cream ingredients are inputs grown on farm. Raspberries, strawberries, blackberries, and peaches are from family bushes, plants or trees. Other ingredients are traded for with neighbors, bartering ice cream or maple products.

Around 2014, the Thompsons started showing up at farmers markets and other events. There are the above-mentioned West Brookfield venues, but you can find Thompson's Maple at Sturbridge and Brimfield. You can also run into them at the West Brookfield Asparagus Festival and the Sturbridge Harvest Festival and at other holiday fairs.

Thompson's has also been up at Farmer Matt's for some evening events.

John is bringing new bottles, but it's the same great syrup, and soon enough John and the Thompson team will be out tapping trees. Then we shall catch them at the summer market.

You can visit them on Facebook.



CLUES ACROSS

- Native American group of N. California
- Geological times (Brit. sp.)
- Tool to remove
- Rods
- One who renews
- They precede C
- Chatter incessantly
- King Cole, musician
- Insect parts
- One from Utah
- The world of the dead
- Singer Redding
- NBA legend Nelson
- Indicates wrongly
- Unhappy
- Anger
- Dark brown
- Some are in kitchens
- Made a mistake

CLUES DOWN

- Damp
- Type of fuel
- Actor Damon
- What thespians do
- One's mother
- Disallow
- Swiss river
- A banana has one
- Philippines lake and volcano are two
- Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
- Agave
- Journalist Tarbell
- One-time tech giant
- Indicates upon
- Intestinal bacteria
- Loose sheaths around the spinal cord
- It goes with nook
- A fashion
- Very eager to hear or see

CLUES DOWN

- Witch
- Utilize
- Writing utensil
- Where rockers go to work
- Subsides
- Consume
- Greek mythological figures
- California mountain town
- Tin
- Muse of lyric and love poetry
- Animates anew
- Humorous criticisms
- Cool!
- Worst
- Wet dirt
- Designed to be useful
- Hebrew unit of liquid capacity
- High schoolers' test

CLUES DOWN

- Computer device
- Indian territory and Diu
- A place to sleep
- Al tool
- Pass or go by
- Indicates a purchase
- A digital tape recording of sound
- More (Spanish)
- Disfigured
- White (Spanish)
- Church building
- Georgia rockers
- Type of surgery
- Much about nothing
- Make by braiding
- Local area network
- Unit of work or energy
- Member of indigenous people of Thailand
- Liquefied natural gas
- Distance to top

PRISON CAMP FROM PAGE 3

art done by a local artist may be respected by the graffiti artists.

The commission discussed placing the prison camps on the Massachusetts Register or Historic Places, which would effectively ban demolition, explaining that the process is starting, but it is cumbersome, and one barrier is the town's historic inventory. The commission said many towns in the state have hundreds of sites on their historic inventory, while Rutland has only about 20.

A resident also suggested getting the prison camps on

Preservation Massachusetts' list of endangered sites (<https://www.preservationmass.org/mer>), which could attract more visibility. Historical commission member Lindsay Maus said that if a site is in "imminent danger" of destruction, that site could be expedited onto the registry of historic places.

A resident also suggested spreading awareness about the prison camps. The commission said a letter campaign in support of saving the prison camps has been sent to DCR, and they have a petition posted in various parts of the town on a QR code.

Attendees also discussed the possibility of school events, raising awareness for children.

History of the Rutland Prison Camps
Maus gave a brief history of the prison camps, saying that they were opened in 1903 to house minor offenders. They operated a farm, which sold milk to Worcester, and had a tuberculosis hospital on site to treat the inmates on site.

She said the prisoners were treated well, and there were barriers to prevent escape, and the inmates learned skills and trades at the camps. The camps were abandoned in 1934.

SPORTS

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Recent win streak gets Cougars above .500

WARREN – Quaboag Regional boys basketball has won four straight games, and is now 7-5 on the regular season. Last Wednesday night was Quaboag's latest win. The Cougars scored a solid win over Whitinsville Christian School 53-30.

The Cougars also defeated Advance Math & Sciences, Douglas, and Bartlett.

The Cougars, who are now in better shape to make tournament, are next set to face Douglas in a rematch on Monday, Feb. 9 at 6:30 p.m.



Jacoby Labillois flies and takes a shot.



Isaac Cowher goes on a break to the hoop.



Kadin Dufault looks to get around an opponent.



Jackson McGarry works around two defenders.



Jacob Toomey dribbles near midcourt.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Panthers notch third win of the season

BARRE – Despite a lot of early pressure, Quabbin Regional boys basketball overcame Tyngsborough's defense and scored a 57-45 win last Friday night at home. The Panthers improved to 3-11 on the regular season. The Panthers got revenge from an earlier loss to the Tigers, as they lost on the road at Tyngsborough on Jan. 6.



Brady Patchen flies to catch a pass.



Collin Leclair tries to overcome full court pressure.



Aiden Crane makes a line for the hoop.



Isaac Patchen makes a no-look pass.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Taylor Allen hustles down the court.



Megan Clark attempts a bank shot.



Cassandra Nykiel tries to get her hands on the ball.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Pioneers unable to come back against Duggan

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

SPRINGFIELD — After defeating John J. Duggan Academy by 19 points in a home game at the beginning of January, the Pathfinder Tech Lady Pioneers made the trip to Springfield last Thursday night looking to sweep the season series.

Things didn't go according to plan for the Lady Pioneers, who were hoping to move above the .500 mark. The Jayhawks built a 15-point lead in the middle of the second quarter and held off the Lady Pioneers during the second half for a 47-37 home victory in a Tri-County North League contest.

"I'm very disappointed because we defeated them pretty easily in our first meeting," said Kevin Aldrich, who's been coaching the Pathfinder Tech girls' basketball team for the past twenty years. "If we don't qualify for the postseason tournament or contend for the league title, this will be one of the games that we'll look back on. The players probably thought it would be another easy game. Give Duggan a lot of credit because they played very hard against us. They just wanted it a



Addison Doktor grabs an offensive rebound.

little more than we did."

The Lady Pioneers (5-6) will need to win at least four of their remaining regular season games to clinch a berth in the Division 5 state tournament for the third consecutive year.

A year ago, Pathfinder Tech defeated Boston United, 57-36, in a preliminary round home game before losing at the Renaissance School in the round of 32. It marked the first time that the Lady Pioneers had won a state tournament game since the MIAA changed the post-season format prior to the start of the 2021-22 regular

season. The Lady Pioneers probably won't be one of the eight teams who'll be competing in the Western Mass. Class C tournament, which starts next week.

Junior Megan Clark and senior Addison Doktor each finished with 14 points in the road contest against the Jayhawks (4-8).

Doktor, who fouled out late in the fourth quarter, scored 34 points in the first meeting with Duggan, which was a 50-31 victory on January 2. She made 16 field goals and two foul shots in that contest.

In the second meeting, Doktor scored eight first half points on four inside hoops. She only made two field goals and two free throws in the second half.

Clark doubled her point total from the home win against the Jayhawks. She scored nine second half points in last Thursday's contest.

The Lady Pioneers only other scorers were junior's Ciara Green (4 points) and Taylor Allen, who scored all five of her points in the fourth quarter.

The only time that Pathfinder Tech held the lead was at 2-0 less than a minute into the opening

See PATH GIRLS, PAGE 8

- legals -

PUBLIC NOTICE RIGHT OF WAY MAINTENANCE

As required by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 132B, National Grid (New England Power and/or Massachusetts Electric Company) hereby gives notice that it intends to selectively apply herbicides along specific transmission line rights-of-way in 2026.

The selective use of herbicides to manage vegetation along rights-of-way is done within the context of an Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) program consisting of mechanical, chemical, natural, and cultural components. In right-of-way vegetation management the pest or target is vegetation (primarily tall growing) that will cause outages and safety issues. National Grid's IVM program encourages natural controls by promoting low growing plant communities that resist invasion by target vegetation. The selective use of herbicides and mechanical controls are the direct techniques used to control target vegetation and help establish and maintain natural controls.

National Grid may utilize any of the herbicides noted the MA Sensitive Materials list. Rodeo, and possibly one of the following herbicides, Arsenal or Arsenal Powerline, will be applied directly to the surface of stumps immediately after target vegetation is cut (Cut Stump Treatment). Garlon 4 or Garlon 4 Ultra will be applied selectively to the stems of target vegetation using hand-held equipment (Basal Treatment and Dormant stem treatment). Krenite S or Rodeo, mixed with Escort XP, and one of the following herbicides, Arsenal or Arsenal Powerline, or Milestone will be applied selectively to the foliage of target vegetation using hand-held equipment (Foliar Treatment). Cambistat as a tree growth regulator. Applications shall not commence more than ten days before nor conclude more than ten days after the following treatment periods. The herbicide mixes and additional information about rights of way management in Massachusetts can be found here:

<https://www.mass.gov/rights-of-way-vegetation-management>

Municipalities that have rights-of-way scheduled for herbicide treatments in 2026:
Brookfield, Sturbridge, West Brookfield

Municipalities that have rights-of-way that were treated in 2025 but may require some touch-up work in 2026:
West Brookfield

TREATMENT PERIODS

Feb 1–May 30, 2026	May 30–Oct 15, 2026	Oct 15–Dec 31, 2026
CST	Foliar	CST
Basal	CST	Basal
Dormant stem	Basal	Dormant stem
	Cut stubble	

*The exact treatment dates are dependent upon weather conditions and field crew progress.

Further information may be requested by contacting (during business hours, Mon–Fri from 8:00 am–4:00 pm):
Mariclaire Rigby, National Grid,
939 Southbridge Street, Worcester, MA 01610.
Telephone: (781) 290-8310 or email:
mariclaire.rigby@nationalgrid.com

02/06/2026

PLEASE REMEMBER TO RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

PATH GIRLS FROM PAGE 7

quarter following a Doktor inside hoop.

Doktor also made a put-back basket, which sliced the Lady Pioneers deficit to 11-8 with 2:10 left in the opening quarter.

When Pathfinder scored again with two minutes remaining in the first half, they were trailing, 23-8.

"We struggled offensively in the first half," Aldrich said. "We should've scored 50 or 55 points in this game. We just kept allowing them to get into their defensive sets. They played a man-to-man defense against us, which we didn't handle very well."

The Jayhawks reeled off twelve unanswered points during that ten minute stretch.

Senior Rosemary Santos scored 15 of her game-high 28 points for the home team during the first 16 minutes. She scored 10 points in the opening quarter.

No other Duggan player scored more than six points in the home win.

Clark finally ended the Lady Pioneers scoring drought with a 3-pointer from the left side.

Doktor also added an inside basket and a put-back, which sliced Pathfinder Tech's deficit to 25-15 at halftime.

Pathfinder Tech battled back as they outscored

Town of North Brookfield Zoning Board of Appeals Notice of Public Hearing

The Town of North Brookfield Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) will hold a public hearing on **February 23, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the Senior Center 29 Forest Street.** The application is for a Special Permit to convert and renovate the existing building at 75 School Street into a four-unit multifamily residential building by AUM Blackrock Investments LLC. The request is being made under the North Brookfield Zoning Bylaws, Section IV(A)(2)(1), which allows an existing dwelling to be converted to multifamily use if the ZBA grants a Special Permit.
01/30, 02/06/2026

TOWN OF NORTH BROOKFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the North Brookfield Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing to consider a petition to locate poles, wires, cables, and fixtures, including the necessary anchors, guys, and other such sustaining and protecting fixtures, brought before it by Massachusetts Electric Company d/b/a National Grid and Verizon New England, Inc **Tuesday, February 24, 2026 at 6:15 PM** at the North Brookfield Police Department, 55 School Street, North Brookfield, MA 01535.

The pole location that will be considered is as follows:

Green Rd – National Grid to install 1 JO Pole on Green Rd beginning at a point approximately 1,135' feet south of the centerline of the intersection of Ward St. Install Stub Pole # 81-84 and anchor, across the street from existing P81 Green Rd.

Said hearing will begin at 6:15 PM and continue until completion, and will be conducted pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 166.

Jason M Petraitis, Chairman
Jamie Gilman
Ralph Kay

02/06, 02/13/2026

Duggan, 10-5, during the third quarter.

With 2:25 left in the third, Green hit a jumper in the lane, which closed the gap to 28-25 before Santos made a lay-up.

The Lady Pioneers were trailing 30-27 less than two minutes into the final quarter following a Green lay-up. They couldn't get any closer than that, as Duggan built a 41-32 lead with the help of an 11-5 run.

"We've been playing very well lately," Aldrich said. "I really didn't expect this outcome. We just need to bounce back from this loss."

It was Duggan's first win against Pathfinder Tech since 2023.

New license plate to honor fallen law enforcement officers

BOSTON – State Sen. Peter J. Durant, R-Spencer, voted in favor of legislation to create a new special license plate to honor fallen law enforcement officers by offering a symbol of respect to their surviving spouses, parents, and children.

The bill—S.2903, An Act honoring Blue Star Families directs the Registry of Motor Vehicles to create a new Blue Star (Law Enforcement) Families' plate to help the family members remember their loved one in a visible way on their car. It would also create a Blue Star Family emblem for motorcycle plates.

"When we see these license plates on vehicles, we will be reminded that our law enforcement officers do not always return home from work each day and it

will offer the chance to personally thank family members of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in order to keep us safe," Durant said.

Durant said he is hopeful the bill will be passed in the House and signed by the Governor.

"I believe that it would be comforting for family members to have these specialty license plates and to receive words of gratitude from people who notice them in public," Durant said.

Under the legislation, the RMV would be required to make the plates available to Blue Star Law Enforcement spouses, parents, and children without charge. The RMV would also be able to offer vanity plate registrations for Blue Star plates up to six characters in length.

The Blue Star Family license plates would join other special recognition plates currently offered by the RMV, including Gold Star Family plates for drivers with close family members who died in or as a result of their service in the Armed Forces.

The Senate Committee on Ways and Means advanced the legislation to the floor on a 17-0 vote Jan. 8, as a partial report on a bill that was advanced in December by the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security. All committee votes are publicly posted on the Legislature's website.

The Senate passed the bill on a 38-0 roll call vote, sending it to the House for further consideration.

STURBRIDGE, FROM PAGE 1

not know if the Attorney General's office will allow the moratorium to be put into place, but "it's worth a shot." She said a lot of towns are taking similar action and many have been denied.

Bubon recommended that the board bring this article to town meeting and see if the voters would support it.

"And at the same time, we should be working on a bylaw to try to safeguard the community and our residents, and our natural resources," she said.

Bubon said the article for the moratorium would be placed on the annual town meeting warrant and the bylaw regarding battery energy storage systems and new regulations for solar systems would likely be voted on during a special town meeting in the fall.

The Planning Board voted to support the proposed zoning amendment for the moratorium and to place it as an article on the annual town meeting warrant.

Town Planner update
Bubon said she has started to research and work on the zoning bylaw for the battery energy storage systems and the new regula-

tions for solar systems. She said the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission would be offering technical assistance to draft these bylaws to select communities.

Bubon said the bylaws would be combined, and need to be in place by October.

She said a representative from CMRPC would be meeting with the board on Feb. 9.

"I think this is really a good thing for us, that we can work with them," Bubon said.

The Planning Board will meet again on Feb. 9 and 23.

YOUR HEALTH FROM PAGE 4

ing muscle because "every pound is water, fat and muscle," registered dietitian Kim Shapira said in an interview. "This has just boomed an entire industry of protein," she said.

The problem is that a good deal of these protein-packed foods may not be good for us. A 2024 survey by Spanish researchers, posted on the National Institutes of Health website, that found 91% of foods with "protein" marketing claims (PCs) were less healthy overall because they are ultra-processed and often have added sugar, fat and sodium.

"The perception that foods with PCs are healthy is incorrect, and consuming them may pose an additional health risk," the researchers wrote.

The protein we need

everyday varies with age, weight, level of activity and other factors. To estimate your minimum recommended daily allowance (RDA), multiply your weight in pounds by 0.36 grams. For a 140-pound sedentary woman, that comes to about 50 grams a day.

Pregnant women and active adults benefit from more protein, but researchers really don't know how much is too much. (The USDA has a nutrition calculator on its website at myplate.gov.)

They do recommend spacing out protein consumption throughout the day rather than consuming most of it at dinner, as most Americans do.

Jumping on the protein bandwagon takes careful consideration. It's not just a question of jacking up protein consumption, but doing it in the context of healthy eating. In other words, eating six protein bars a day is not likely to help your overall health.

If you're ready to boost your protein intake, here are some tips:

Turn to protein-rich unprocessed or lightly processed foods, which you may have in your pantry and fridge. According to the USDA, some of the best are:

Tuna: 21 grams of protein in 3 ounces
Cooked chicken or tur-

key: 19 grams in 3 ounces
Plain Greek yogurt: 17 grams in 3 ounces
Cottage cheese: 14 grams in ¼ cup

Other good sources are beans, nuts, low-fat dairy and eggs.

Don't translate "eat more protein" as "eat more beef and cheese." The saturated fats in these foods are not good for cardiovascular health.

To avoid weight gain, cut back on other foods. If you're consuming more calories as protein, reduce the calories you get from breads, sweets and alcohol. Rather, up your intake of fruits, vegetables and legumes.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, R.N., a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate, is the founder of www.NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com, which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. A Monson, MA resident, she is the author of "How to Be a Healthcare Advocate for Yourself & Your Loved Ones" and her new book, "Advocating Well: Strategies for Finding Strength and Understanding in Health Care," available at Amazon.com. Contact her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com to set up a free phone consultation.

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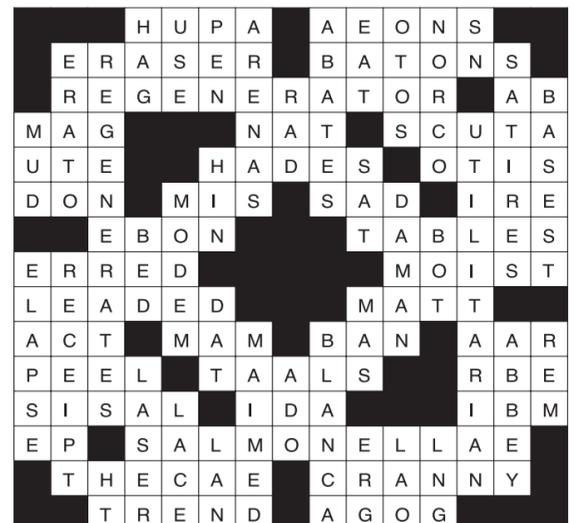
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 Mobile Home located in Waterwheel Village at 31 Edward Lane, Barre, MA 01005. This is a 55 and better community. This home includes a wonderful floor plan with very spacious rooms. Master bedroom includes a walk-in closet. Two full bathrooms. A four-season sunroom is off the kitchen. Includes two large woodsheds and a metal garage you can park under to fend off winter weather. **Asking \$288,000.** See listing on MLS # 73433198

NO ENTRANCE FEE
 Mobile Home located in Waterwheel Village at 21 Varney Lane, Barre, MA 01005. This is a 55 and Better community. This home includes a wonderful floor plan with spacious rooms. Master bedroom includes a large attached bathroom. Two full bathrooms, large back deck, and two large wood sheds. **Asking 245,000.** See MLS#73457117.

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