

# QUABOAG CURRENT

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Quaboag Current  
Newspaper

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Volume 17, Number 12

Friday, February 16, 2024

## School Committee hears proposed FY 25 budget

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
pouimette@turley.com

**NORTH BROOKFIELD** – Superintendent Timothy McCormick presented the proposed fiscal year 2025 school budget to the School Committee.

McCormick also shared the school district's newly adopted mission statement, which states that the mission is to "empower every student to reach their full potential by providing a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and a sense of belonging. We are

committed to continuous improvement, innovation, and the celebration of diversity, ensuring the delivery of high-quality education to all. We prepare our students for success in a global society by instilling qualities and skills to be contributing and effective citizens." He said the mission state-

ment frames the discussion they will have regarding the proposed budget.

At the School Committee's Jan. 22 meeting, McCormick said the entire administrative team was involved in the budget process, getting feedback from teachers and staff.

They looked at "what do

we need, what do we have, and where do we want to be not only next year, but years down the road," McCormick said.

Preservation of resources is a top priority for the FY 25 budget, but growth and improvement are also very important.

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## School dance celebrates that special someone



Shown from left are Leiland, Samantha, Gurli, and Joe posing for a photo together at the photo booth. TURLEY PHOTO BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS

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

**NORTH BROOKFIELD** – For the first time since COVID, the Elementary School was finally able to host their Special Someone Dance.

"Because not every child has a dad, we decided to call it a 'Special Someone' Dance instead of the traditional Father Daughter Dance," Jessica Mauro, the president of the Parent Teacher Organization,

said.

The members of PTO wanted to create a dance for the children of North Brookfield from grades pre-K through six so that they could truly have fun as families.

The timing worked perfectly, and fell just before Valentine's Day, and the cafeteria was decorated with pretty hearts and streamers.

The dance had a \$3 entry fee, or free entry with a food donation for the North Brook-

See **DANCE** | PAGE 14

## Library hosts Valentine's Day cardmaking event

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

**NORTH BROOKFIELD** – The Haston Free Public Library hosted a valentine making event last Thursday evening for the community.

It was filled with conversations and plans of who to give these beautifully crafted cards to. Amy Vessella hosts monthly adult craft nights for the community to enjoy a relaxing and creative time.

"I feel like it's a good way for people to connect with their inner child," Vessella said. "It gives adults a time to escape and do some crafts."

The group gathered included Linda and her caretaker Jenn as well as Ellen and Laura, friends who enjoy coming to

See **LIBRARY** | PAGE 14



Laura and Ellen are shown standing with their cards behind Linda and Jenn, ready to give their beautifully made cards to their valentines. TURLEY PHOTO BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS

## Learning the history of the valentine

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

**STURBRIDGE** – The Old Sturbridge Village AmeriCorps team set up a Valentine's Day cardmaking event at the Joshua Hyde Public Library.

The AmeriCorps team are community-based educators that take what is learned at the OSV museum outside of the physical location. They complete service programs for the community, and AmeriCorps volunteer Debra Wing-Colson

See **HISTORY** | PAGE 14



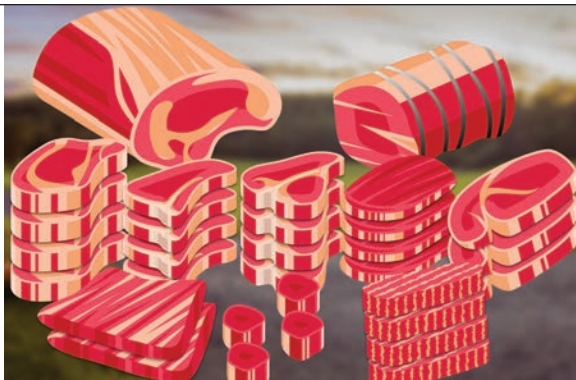
Volunteers from the Old Sturbridge Village AmeriCorps team are shown from left to right, Yismerli Polanco, Maya Simpson, Debra Wing-Colson and Aibhlin Harrigan. TURLEY PHOTO BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS



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# - community -

## Historical Society presents 'The Stone Walls of Sturbridge'

STURBRIDGE – Have you ever wondered about the stone walls you see in the woods? Who built them? What was their purpose? How were they built?

Join the Sturbridge Historical Society on Thursday, Feb. 22 at 7 p.m. at the Publick House in as member Rich Paradise provides some answers to those questions. Since moving to Sturbridge in 2002, Paradise has been an avid hiker of the local trails.

For the past 13 years he has been a member of the town's Trails Committee. He has volunteered his chainsaw skills to the committee, and at numerous places around town following the 2011 tornado.

He is also a member of the Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor. His study of stone walls was sparked by Robert Thorson's book "Stone by Stone". He has led numerous hikes for The Last Green Valley, and has given two on-site stone wall talks for the Holland Trails Committee. Paradise's presentation will have you looking at the landscape in a new way.

The program is free and open to the public, and is generously hosted by the Publick House.

## MassDOT recommends Palmer as future West-East Rail stop

PALMER – After years of advocating for the inclusion of a Palmer stop in the plans for the West-East Rail Project (now titled Compass Rail), state Sen. Jake Oliveira (Hampden, Hampshire & Worcester District) was delighted and relieved to see the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) officially recommend the town as a future stop on the upcoming West-East Rail.

The announcement was made on Jan. 17 during the MassDOT Board of Directors Meeting. Rail and Transit Administrator Meredith Slesinger was on hand to make the announcement.

"I'm grateful for the commitment made by the Governor and the administration for this pivotal development for not only the West-East Rail but for Palmer and Western Mass" Oliveira said in a press release. "The West-East Rail represents a monumental infrastructure project that will connect the greater Commonwealth, bridging the geographical and economic gaps between

Western Mass and Boston. The promise of this railway network is immense, with the potential to catalyze economic growth, promote regional development, and bolster social cohesion. I'm thrilled to see MassDOT take the next step in this generational project, and I'm glad they realized what we've known for some time. Palmer is the ideal location as a gateway to Western Mass."

MassDOT came to the decision to recommend Palmer for a future stop on the rail following studies they conducted last year and will be allocating \$4 million for Planning and Design through their Capital Investment Program.

Consulting firm RTD was selected in December for Planning and Conceptual Design. This will include key components such as public outreach, site selection, identification of station amenities and access, conceptual design, and environmental scoping.

The project is expected to follow an estimated 18-month schedule.



**PHONE**  
413.967.3505  
Fax: 413.967.6009  
Subscriptions: 413.283.8393

**EMAIL**  
Advertising Sales  
Dan Flynn  
dfflynn@turley.com

Tim Mara  
tmara@turley.com

**Editor**  
Paula Ouimette  
pouimette@turley.com

**WEB**  
www.quaboagcurrent.turley.com

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## QVARC offers amateur radio exam on Feb. 27

WEST BROOKFIELD – Would you like to get on the air? Now could be your chance.

On Saturday, Feb. 27 at 5:30 p.m. at the West Brookfield Senior Center, Volunteer Examiners will administer an exam that will get you started to be licensed as a radio amateur by the FCC.

For more info, check out the Quaboag Valley Amateur Radio Club website at <https://qvarc.com/>.

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# - community -

## West Brookfield Historical Commission announces 2024 scholarship

WEST BROOKFIELD – The West Brookfield Historical Commission is pleased to announce its 2024, 13th annual scholarship in the amount of \$2000.

Qualified students must reside in West Brookfield and may attend Quaboag Regional High School, or be school-choice students, homeschooled students and independent school students.

This award is made possible through the J. Irving and Jane L. England Charitable Trust.

### Application criteria

The students must be planning to attend either a four-year college/university program or a two-year college with the intent to a transfer to a four-year college.

The Commission will show preference to study plans with concentration on history and history-related areas. Major or minors may include political science, social studies, anthropology, archaeology, historical preservation, museum studies and education in any of these related fields.

Applicants must submit a brief essay based on one of the notable persons or

significant places listed on the application. All necessary information and the application can be found on the West Brookfield Historical Commission website. <http://westbrookfield.org>.

Essays are due no later than April 8 and can be emailed to [info@westbrookfield.org](mailto:info@westbrookfield.org) or mailed to West Brookfield Historical Commission, P.O. Box 372, West Brookfield, MA 01585.

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**Gardening questions that pose a challenge**

A recent visit to mom's house prompted the following question about poinsettias.

Now, don't worry, I haven't forgotten what the date is. Sure, the poinsettia hasn't been in its glory for a few weeks now, but that doesn't mean she is going to give up on it.

You see, my mother likes a challenge, especially when it comes to plants. She wanted some advice on how to encourage new healthy growth before trying to coax it into re-bloom next fall.

Read on to learn how it's done:

In early April cut back the plant to eight inches. Fertilize with an all-purpose houseplant fertilizer once a month. New growth should appear by the end of May.

After the danger of frost has passed, move the plant outdoors. Continue to water but increase fertilization to every two weeks.

Pinch plants in late June or early July to promote bushy growth. At this time you may also wish to repot the poinsettia. Select a pot one size larger, filling around the root ball with a good potting soil.

Bring the plant indoors as temperatures fall in late summer.

The poinsettia is photoperiodic, and long nights of uninterrupted darkness encourage it to bloom. In greenhouses, growers go to great lengths to withhold light, as even small amounts can delay or stop the plant from setting bud.

At home, putting the plant in the closet for 14 hours each night is your best bet. Setting a reminder alarm or making a note helps to keep on track.

Most people get on a 5 p.m.-8 a.m. schedule beginning Oct. 1 and continue it for eight-10 weeks until color shows on the bracts. Night temperatures should be no higher than 70 degrees or flowering may be delayed.

This all sounds fairly straight forward. I think the biggest frustration for her over the years has been missing a night of darkness, especially near the end of the routine.

Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. Still fun to try, however.

A friend of mine recently asked what I thought of the cloth grow bags that are all the rage right now. Although I haven't used them myself, another friend, Chris, has been gardening up a storm the last few years using these bags.

She has an amazing flower border that you would think is growing in the ground, but it is a collection of dozens of bags in various sizes, holding everything from cannas to dahlias, zinnias and marigolds. She has great success with potatoes and other vegetables, too.

Read on to learn about the benefits of these bags.

I guess the one benefit that I never thought of is breathability. Because the fabric is permeable there is good air exchange, the roots grow to the edge, are air-pruned and branch out.

This is altogether different than plastic or glazed ceramic pots that don't breathe and encourage tangles of roots that encircle the pot eventually becoming bound. When a plant is root bound, it suffers until it is repotted; not so with grow bags!

Another pro would be drainage. The grow



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

**Friends group thanks all who made Soup-er Bowl successful**

The Friends of the North Brookfield Council on Aging thank everyone involved in our wildly successful Annual Soup-er Bowl this year. We sold 175+ pints of soup.

Proceeds will benefit our food program at the North Brookfield Senior Center.

Our first thank you goes to all 10 area restaurants that generously donated their homemade soups: 308 Lakeside (butternut bisque), Charlie's Diner (clam chowder); The Clam Box (clam chowder); E. B. Flatts (chili); Kosta's Cafe (chicken and rice soup); Mason's Grille (vegetable soup); Panda Garden 2 (wonton soup); Salem Cross Inn (seafood chowder); Spencer Subway (broccoli cheddar soup); and Yamato Asian Bistro (egg drop soup and hibachi broth).

We also thank our energetic volunteers who requested donations, made and/or

picked up soups, ladled and labeled them into dozens of containers, and somehow kept all the orders straight. Always with a "We can do this" determination and a smile.

We thank the Quaboag Current for promoting our event in January. Many who purchased our soups noted that they found out about it while reading the Quaboag Current.

Finally, we thank all of you who purchased these flavorful soups. We hope that they made your Super Bowl delightful.

You can follow us on Facebook @NorthBrookfieldSenior Center to learn more about us. See you next year!

**The Friends of the North Brookfield Council on Aging**  
North Brookfield

Guest Column

**Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance Drug Free Communities project work**

By Rebecca Edwards, director, Drug Free Communities Grant, Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance.

My name is Rebecca Edwards, and I recently joined the Town of Ware and Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance's prevention team to direct their Drug Free Communities grant.

Because this work is a community effort, I am taking this opportunity to introduce myself and share a bit about the work on which I hope we will partner.

The Drug Free Communities Support Program is a 10-year, federal grant managed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While the Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance works across the spectrum of prevention, treatment and recovery in 18 towns in the region, our grant specifically focuses on teen substance use prevention in Ware, Warren, and West Brookfield.

What I mean by prevention is using evidence-based strategies and activities to help young people make healthier decisions by avoiding substances or by delaying first use for as long as possible.

We ideally want young people to delay using substances because research tells us that the longer they wait, the less likely

they are to develop a dependent relationship with substances. If someone can wait until their brain is fully developed, around the age of 25, then they significantly reduce their chance of becoming addicted.

This is because the brain is like a puzzle, and from birth until 25 years old, puzzle pieces in the brain are coming together. When a substance such as alcohol, nicotine or cannabis is introduced during that brain development timeframe, the chemicals of that substance becomes part of the puzzle, making that puzzle piece harder to remove.

Once the brain is fully developed and its puzzle pieces are all in place, substances can be introduced with less risk. That said, using substances at any time of life is risky, and the type of substance, the frequency of use and potency of the substance all factor into how risky something is.

To make progress in reducing teen substance use, we implement evidence-based strategies. Gone are the days of "Just Say No."

We have much more nuanced and science-based approaches now; for example, we know that teens listen to their caregivers, even if it seems like they don't. Therefore, talking about substances regularly at home

**OPINION PAGE/ LETTERS POLICY**

Letters to the editor should be 250 words or less in length, and guest columns between 500 and 800 words. No unsigned or anonymous opinions will be published. We require that the person submitting the opinion also include his or her town of residence and home telephone number. We authenticate authorship prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions deemed to be libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks, or defamation of character.

**Send opinions to:**  
Letters to the Editor, 80 Main Street, Ware, MA 01082 OR e-mail to [pouimette@turley.com](mailto:pouimette@turley.com). Deadline for submission is Monday at noon for the following week's edition.

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**PATRICK H. TURLEY**  
CEO

**KEITH TURLEY**  
President

**EDITOR**  
Paula Ouimette  
[pouimette@turley.com](mailto:pouimette@turley.com)

**ADVERTISING SALES**  
Dan Flynn  
Tim Mara

**SPORTS EDITOR**  
Greg Scibelli  
[sports@turley.com](mailto:sports@turley.com)

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**Quaboag Current Newspaper**



# Sweets and charcuterie boards get ready for Valentine's Day

By Ryan Drago  
Staff Writer  
rdrago@turley.com

**BROOKFIELD** – The spirit of celebrating Valentine's Day came early to the Oakholm Brewing Company with sweets and charcuterie boards.

More than a dozen guests joined Paige Massey of Good Graze Charcuterie to make a Valentine themed charcuterie board. A perfect activity for couples to enjoy prior to Valentine's Day. This was Massey's sixth charcuterie workshop and she always enjoys offering this fun social activity.

For this Valentine themed charcuterie board everything is about hearts. Many guests and Massey were wearing heart themed sweaters and were soon to be surrounded by heart themed cheeses and meats.

The board itself was heart shaped and came with a complimentary gift of

heart shaped cookies by Melissa Forristall of Sweets by M&M. Forristall is the owner and baker of her own business that she started back in 2020.

Based out of Southbridge, Sweets by M&M specializes in celebration cakes and decorated sugar cookies. At the brewery, a booth was set up by Forristall and featured many specialized cookies that express the spirit of Valentine's Day and love.

Back in the upstairs seating area of Oakholm Brewery, guests were nearly finished with their heart shaped charcuterie boards. Massey was very helpful demonstrating some of the decorative features of the Valentine charcuterie board.

Some of those features include a salami rose and provolone cheese flowers. During the demonstration, Massey shared that making the salami rose is her favorite part about working on a charcuterie board.



Couples celebrated Valentine's Day early by attending a Valentine Charcuterie Board Workshop at Oakholm Brewing Company. TURLEY PHOTOS BY RYAN DRAGO



One of the popular steps of making a charcuterie board is making a salami rose.



Sweets by M&M had a table full of baked goods at the Oakholm Brewery.



Paint your own cookies come in all themes. The Sweets by M&M table had pizza themed cookies.



Melissa Forristall of Sweets by M&M specializes in cakes and cookies. Her booth featured a lot of Valentine themed baked cookies.



A couple enjoying the Valentine Charcuterie Board workshop holding their completed heart shaped boards.

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# Annual Small Business Craft Fair at Quaboag

Vendors and artisans team up to support Student Council

By Ryan Drago  
Staff Writer  
rdrago@turley.com

WARREN – Quaboag Regional Middle High School hosted its annual Small Business Craft Fair this past weekend, to support the Student Council.

The school welcomed over 90 vendors consisting of small businesses owners from numerous communities. Funds from the vendors go to support the Student Council's trip to their annual leadership conference that will take place in Hyannis.

The Student Council also provided a raffle table featuring numerous prizes with proceeds benefitting the Student Council and their contributions to the Special Olympics. Each vendor donated one item to make up all the prizes for the raffle.

Advisor to the Student Council is Kayla Hatch and co-advisor is Jennifer Murray. The Small Business Craft Fair takes place at Quaboag usually during the second week of February.



High school cafeteria at Quaboag had the vast majority of the 90 plus vendors who attended the Small Business Craft Fair. TURLEY PHOTOS BY RYAN DRAGO



For a tasty treat, guests stopped over at the Cookies by Ray table for gourmet style cookies that come in many delicious flavors.



Author and screenwriter Dawn Gray had a booth of some of her published works.



Unique metal art figurines crafted into people, animals and objects.



Quaboag's Student Council ran a raffle table during the Small Business Craft Fair.



Emily Jasmin of the Lost Arts in Warren featuring themed crafts for Valentine's Day and Easter.



Proud owners of Pampered Chef at their booth during the Small Business Craft Fair at QRMHS.



More than 90 vendors were spread across both cafeterias and the hallway over by the middle school entrance.



# - community -

## Farmers Market Spotlight

# Kelly Homestead Apiary at the West Brookfield Winter Market

*Editor's note: The Quaboag Current will regularly feature a spotlight story on different farmers market vendors. Learn about the people that bring food and locally sourced items to your community.*

By Richard Murphy  
Correspondent

WEST BROOKFIELD – Every week at the West Brookfield Winter Farmers Market, Kelly Homestead Apiary appears.

It is wonderful to have beekeepers at a market, but that is only the start of what this operation located in Charlton does.

Granted, an apiary of over 80 hives is not tiny, but the Kelly operation also has 100 hens producing organic eggs, and they also raise chicken for sale, as well as turkeys seasonally.

So, with all this production, homestead might be an understatement, but the farm is about 2.7 acres, that is a lot on a small plot.

How did it all start? What drives the passion?

Ever since she was a little girl, Ginger loved agriculture and still does.

“I want to eat really good food. I really enjoy the organic movement. I enjoy healthy soil, I enjoy a healthy environment and so to me when I was younger, organic food seemed like it was so expensive that I didn't think that I could afford it. So, I figured I can grow it myself. So, I did. And we started a homestead where we produce 30% of our food,” she said.

Kelly Homestead does a lot of raising, canning, preserving, and aims to have about a year's supply on hand for the family.

Ginger was living in Oxford and thought a couple of hives might help her deal with seasonal allergies. Then came the move to Charlton, and expanding and keeping bees on other properties.

The hives on other plots give the honey a variety of flavors, such as the ones from the blueberry farm.

The homestead is also enthusiastic about pollinators, as are many if not most beekeepers. In this, they consider themselves pollinator conservationists, and have recently purchased another plot of raw land in Franklin county to make pollinator meadows.

Ginger and the farm propagate numerous varieties for their pollinator value and she waxed poetic describing them. If Kelly Homestead does not have a tasty, healthy honey, it may not exist.

In explaining the operation, Ginger said something that floored your correspondent. As she began her farming odyssey with raising children and going back to school, she took on a what would seem to mere mortals a daunting task.

While doing all this, she went through school and eventually ended up with a law degree. One almost feels compelled to put tongue in cheek and say, “in her spare time?”

I know I am not going to try this at home.

She has not practiced law since COVID, but does advise.

Ginger has ceased the practice of bankruptcy law: “Because it's hard to sit behind a desk, and I just would rather be



Ginger of Kelly Homestead Apiary is a regular vendor at the West Brookfield Winter Farmers Market. TURLEY PHOTO BY RICHARD MURPHY

outside taking care of my gardens, my bees and my poultry and it's just a nice life style, much better than paperwork.”

We feel ya, Ginger.

Did we also mention she has a master's in beekeeping from Cornell University?

Of course, all this physical and intellectual exercise is done solo.

We asked her if this was so, and she apprised us of reality, letting us know that it would not be possible without Ken.

Ken Kelly, her husband, and co-farmer is a renaissance man in the same manner she is a renaissance woman.

Ken is an engineer working for a firm in Boston doing plumbing and fire protection engineering.

Ken is also a carpenter and would like to retire from his job and build the supers and bee equipment and infrastructure for animals and poultry.

Not a bad plan, but while they're still here, the West Brookfield Winter Farmers Market is the place to see them locally.

There is the farm stand at 167 Carpenter Hill Road, Charlton that is open 9 a.m. until sunset, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

On the web they are at <https://www.kellyhomesteadapiary.com/>.

# Quabbin Regional High School lists honor roll

BARRE – Quabbin Regional High School announces the second quarter honor roll for the 2023-2024 school year.

### Grade 9, High Honors

Madeleine Boisselle, Makenzie Casey, James Cook, Benjamin Darcey, Jack Desjean, Isabel Doty, Tess Dunphy, Grace Flamand, Mia Gleason, Anna Hautala, Anna Metcalf and Brendan Welch.

### Grade 9, Honors

Klavdiya Antonian, Alexa Araujo, Skyler Bard, Jacob Bassett, Halo Bissonnette, Logan Bruley, Kherington Deschenes, Leah Doucette, Sabrina Downs, Katelyn Durant, Brody Faucher, Quinlan Fauteux, Alijah Flint, Jacoby Hartshorn, Violet Kelley, Jillian LaMontagne, Audrey Laursen, Scarlett Merriman, Mia Miville, Jesse Newton, Samantha O'Connor, Charlotte Oliver, Julia Quintal, Ella Reeves, Arianna Riendeau, Abigail Rogowski, Emma Ryan, Kailynn Schuster, Gabriella Totas, Owen Twarog, Grace Vanoudenhove, Ellary White and Leanna Zou.

### Grade 10, High Honors

Aaron Bodine, Kalina Dyer, Kenzie Gallagher, Grace Manna, Elizabeth Mattheson and Zoe Orellana Cadenas.

### Grade 10, Honors

Owen Breuer, Branden Brooks, Tricia Bruso, Troy Budreau, Micah Cerezo, Kylee Costello, Trace Davin, Mia Ducos, Aiden Fuller, Evelyn Giese, Ava Gilman, Madeleine Hardy, Adelaide Harmon, Emma Kahlau, Jacob LaValley, Collin Lindley, Madison Lyden, Hunter McQueston, Garrett Pease, Parker Proulx, Aaron Rowell, Allison Sprankle, Madelyn Stauder, Cameran Vega, Samantha Vessair, Andrew Warfield, Farah Wojcik and Jin Xi Zou.

### Grade 11, High Honors

Alexander Bedard, Kevin Boles, Matthew Erickson, Samuel Guertin, Isabel LaBelle, Ethan Salvadore, Sydney Slattery, Irene Stolgitis, Richard Tucker and Jaxon Warburton.

### Grade 11, Honors

Andre Ampong, Benjamin Bibik, Joshua Bibik, Samantha Carlson, Teaghan Earle, Adam Faulha, Angelina Feliciano, Sophia Gagne, Kun Liu, Vincent Marinelli, Veronika Mendrek, Sadie Sheldon, Hannah Shepard, Julia Smith, Vanecia Tarquinio, Abigail Ure and Travis Wells.

### Grade 12, High Honors

Baylee Garcia, Kylie Casey, Sophia Januszewski, Gavin Majoy, Julianna Stanger, Eleanor Thompson, Michael Tobin, John Waltz and Brianna Whitelaw.

### Grade 12, Honors

Annabel Audino, Hannah Baxter, Brianna Caponigro, Samantha Dube, Colin Harmon, Taylor LaRocque, Grace LaValley, Jake Leazott, Kan Lee, Ally Legare, Joshua Marcotte, Jr., Kelsey Marsh, Emma Masser, Cole Morrill, Camryn Orsini, Carlee Rich, Kayla Sherblom, Amy Stauder, Heather Stuart, Lillian Swett, Gracie Talbot, Lillian Thibeault, Seth Twarog and Benjamin Vasseur.

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# Troop 163 honors newest Eagle Scout

STURBRIDGE – Peyton Sanborn was the latest Scout to earn the rank of Eagle in Troop 163, Sturbridge.

Her project was converting an existing overgrown blacktop space into an interactive and colorful outdoor play area at the Eastford Road School in Southbridge.

In order to create this space for the school Peyton needed to remove the overgrowth, clean up trash, pressure wash the blacktop, outline the new games, and paint them bright and colorful colors. In the end she created two hopscotch areas, two four square courts, two bullseyes tossing areas, and an alphabet caterpillar that weaves between the activities.

Rain may not have been a challenge, but working equipment was, setting her back a couple days when it came to power washing and then painting the area. There was also more time spent on cleaning up overgrowth than originally planned.

In the end it came out extremely well.

“This new outdoor activity space provides a great outdoor atmosphere for our students to learn and play,” said Receiver/Superintendent Dr. Villar. “On behalf of the entire district, I want to thank Peyton for her dedication and leadership, which will benefit Eastford Road School for years to come.”

It took Peyton a bit to figure out what she would do for her Eagle Project, coming up with several different ideas along the way. She knew she wanted to do something to help kids in the community, how was the question.

Scoutmaster Chrissy commented, “The biggest piece of advice I give to my Scouts is to make the project meaningful for you, you need to have a connection to it in some way, otherwise its just a means to an end, the end being Eagle.”

Peyton knows she wants to work with children in the future, but in what way is still being determined. So, this project helped the age group she is hoping to work with in the future.

Peyton joined Troop 163 in late 2019, during its first year in existence, becoming a founding member of the troop.

“She was very shy at first and is still one of my quieter Scouts today,” said Scoutmaster Chrissy. “But after a while she opened up, and you could really tell she was enjoying the program and would eventually become an Eagle Scout.”

As Peyton progressed in the program, she was elected to the Order of the Arrow, Scouting’s honor society, where she is currently a Brotherhood member in Catamount Lodge. She attended the National Scout Jamboree in West Virginia as climbing staff in 2023.

She was a Counselor in training during the 2022 summer camp season, then became a staff member



Peyton Sanborn is Scouts BSA Troop 163's newest Eagle Scout. SUBMITTED PHOTOS

at Camp Wanocksett in Dublin, New Hampshire the following summer. This summer she will be serving as Assistant Climbing Director at camp.

Also this summer she is heading to New Mexico for a backpacking trip at Philmont, one of the BSA's High Adventure Bases.

She has also served as Patrol Leader, Senior Patrol Leader, Junior Assistant Scoutmaster and Den Chief in the troop. She is currently serving as Crew President in the Venture Crew she belongs to and is registered as an Assistant Scoutmaster in the troop.

“Scouting has opened up many opportunities and activities that I would have never done otherwise,” Peyton said. “I am grateful for those who have poured into me during this time.”

“Peyton is nothing short of amazing” said Scoutmaster Chrissy.

This year alone, she is a senior in high school, is dual enrolled at Greenfield Commonwealth Virtual School and Greenfield Community College, and she is on track to graduate with a high school diploma and an Associate's degree in Liberal Arts.

“Between school, the troop, the venture crew, summer camp staff, her upcoming Philmont trek and all her volunteer work, I really don't know how she does

it. But she does, and she does it incredibly well,” Scoutmaster Chrissy said.

After graduation Peyton hopes to remain involved in the troop and crew. She is also going on a mission trip with her church which includes a three-month stay in a foreign country working with people there.

“What sets Peyton apart is her willingness to step outside of her own comfort zone to encourage and inspire others to achieve greatness,” Tim Lundstrom, Pastor of Quaboag Church. “Peyton is one of the humblest young ladies I have ever met. Her desire to serve is evident as she has faithfully served our church in several capacities,” said Robert Cross, Pastor Connections Church.

“What I perhaps admire most about Peyton though, is how much she strives for excellence in everything that she does,” Annie Souza Crew Associate Advisor said. “With her kindness, honesty, and helpfulness I have no doubt that Peyton will continue to be an amazing leader in Scouting, and in whatever else she decides to do.”

It is clear to us that she embodies the Scout Oath and Law and will continue to live up to those ideas long after she has left the program. Congratulations to Peyton Sanborn on earning the rank of Eagle Scout.

To learn more about Peyton's project, or Troop 163, reach out to Scoutmaster Chrissy by emailing ChrissyCSM163@gmail.com or go to their troop Facebook page: facebook.com/troop163sturbridge.



Peyton Sanborn converted an overgrown blacktop space into an outdoor play area.

## Quaboag Historical Society seeks nominations for awards

The Quaboag Historical Society requests nominations for the annual Lucy Stone Achievement Award and the Irving and Jane England Award.

The QHS recognizes its most impressive community leaders and volunteers each year with these two awards. The Lucy Stone Achievement Award is given annually in observance of the commonwealth's designation of Lucy Stone Day on March 8.

Born on Coy Hill in West Brookfield, Stone worked tirelessly throughout her life to obtain equal rights for all individuals. She was a lecturer for abolitionist and equal rights groups and the founder and editor of “The Woman's Journal”.

For the Lucy Stone Award, the QHS requests nomination letters for anyone living in one of the six Quaboag Plantation area towns (the four Brookfields, New Braintree and Warren). Residents are asked to nominate individuals whose volunteer efforts have helped make their communities better places to live.

The nominating letters should provide a brief explanation of why the writer believes the nominee is deserving of the award. The name, address, and phone number of the nominator and the nominee must be included in the letter.

“For this award, we are seeking nominees who have done an exemplary job of giving back through community service,” said QHS Co-President Amy Dugas, who described the motto of the Lucy Stone Award as honoring residents who make the world a better place.

The Irving and Jane England Award, also presented annually by the QHS, is given each year to a resident of West Brookfield who has helped better the community through community service. Nomination regulations for this award are the same as those for the Lucy Stone Award.

Dugas and other QHS leaders feel it's important to take a few moments each year to honor those who contribute countless hours to improving their communities.

“Those people willing to put in the time, get involved, and make a significant contribution to the community should be recognized,” Dugas added.

All award nomination entries should be submitted to the QHS by Friday, March 15. The recipients will be invited to attend a dinner which will be held at Salem Cross Inn in West Brookfield.

Nomination letters should be mailed to The Quaboag Historical Society, P.O. Box 635, West Brookfield, MA, 01585.

## Paisleigh G. Atwood named to Dean's List at Saint Michael's

COLCHESTER, VT – Paisleigh G. Atwood of West Brookfield was named to the Dean's List at Saint Michael's College for the fall 2023 semester.

Students who complete at least 12 credits of classes and achieve a grade point average of at least 3.5 in a particular semester are cited on the Dean's List for that semester.

### GARDEN | FROM PAGE 4

bags hold only what moisture the soil can hold and the rest of it drains away. Sure, the flip side is that you will need to water often in times of drought, but it's nice to know that if we have another summer like we did last year, the plants won't rot, either.

Other more obvious benefits include portability, heat resistance and ease of storage. If you purchase bags with handles, you can move them around the yard much easier than you could if the plants were in heavy pots.

The bags weigh next to nothing compared to clay or ceramics. Grow bags also do not heat up the way glazed or plastic pots do; roots are cooler and the plants are happier.

When the season is over, you can wash the bags and flatten to store. Most brands say that they last for four-five seasons or longer with good care.

Do some research to pair the size bag you use with the plants you are growing.

A quick check gleaned that 10 gallon bags are good for three seed potatoes or a single indeterminate tomato plant. Bush type tomatoes would grow well in a seven gallon pot.

Also research the best potting soil or compost mixes to use; there are many out there. Chris uses a blend and uses organic fertilizers, crediting that to her success.

The apple may not fall far from the tree. Mom likes her challenges, and I like mine. I think trying out grow bags is in my near (gardening) future.

*Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.*





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Retirement planning may be one of the most important acts that an advisor can perform. Everyone would love a stress-free retirement. A good planner can help calculate how much you will need to save to retire. He or she will also create a

strategy for claiming social security and any pensions in order to meet retirement spending needs.

An often-overlooked benefit of having a good financial expert is tax planning. Should you invest in a traditional 401k or a Roth? When should you begin withdrawing from your taxable accounts? Do you have to pay taxes on social security? When do you need to take Required Minimum Distributions and are you taking the correct amount?

In addition to all the above, proper estate planning is imperative to make sure that your assets end up where you would like them to, with the least amount of hassle. Do you need trust or is your will sufficient? Is your house protected from Medicaid in the future? Hiring a good financial expert can greatly enhance your financial life.

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# QHSUA looks at ties between SDV and substance use

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
pouimette@turley.com

The Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance welcomed guest speaker JAC Patrissi, founder and principal of Growing a New Heart, a consortium of leaders in the healing arts helping to move people toward respectful and healthy relationships.

At the alliance's Feb. 12 meeting, Patrissi spoke about her work with the Department of Public Health to explore the intersection of sexual and domestic violence and substance use disorder.

"Public health allows us to look interpersonally and systemically," Patrissi said. "We explore the connection among sexual and domestic violence, a culture of dominance and white supremacy, compassionate accountable use of power in a workspace and recovery from substance use disorder."

The SDV + SUD Collaborative Project is an initiative that began in 2018 under the DPH's awarded Centers for Disease Control grant, Cooperative Agreement for Emergency Response: Opioid Public Health Crisis Response. Resources have been built by a team of professionals, including Patrissi.

Patrissi said those involved in the initiative help to sort the difference among sex work, trafficking and survival or transactional sex when working with survivors in recovery.

Starting in the winter of 2021, a small team of sexual and domestic violence providers and substance use disorder providers held three focus groups to learn what is needed to better serve people with SUD who are survivors of sexual or domestic violence.

"The key finding is there is an overwhelming overlap in SUD and SDV," Patrissi said. The majority of people (99%) in Bureau of Substance Addiction Services residential services have been impacted by sexual and domestic violence.

Another key finding during the focus groups was that while BSAS residential services used a trauma-informed approach, it did not address sexual or domestic violence directly out of concern that doing so could destabilize a person in early recovery.

Patrissi said the trauma-informed approach "is sensitive, but not addressing" sexual and domestic violence, and that providers shared that they don't have any tools to do so.

Patrissi said it is important to use the insights from the SDV field to look at relationships as a whole.

"Usually, we think of sexual domestic violence work as what happens with a couple. But this also applies to all relationships," she said.

Patrissi said there are eight fundamentally, deeply held beliefs that people have when they inflict dominance over others.

- Believing that I can hurt or intimidate you or misuse my power or show contempt if I feel uncomfortable.
- Believing that I am inherently superior, i.e., that males or White people are superior, or that traits culturally associated with "the feminine" are inferior (no matter your gender expression) or that identities "unlike my own" are inferior, such as non-binary gender expression, age, race, (dis)ability, LGBTQ, etc.
- Believing that it is your job to accept me as I am, no matter what I do.
- Believing that I have the right to tear you down if you point out something about me that threatens my self-concept.

- Believing that you must celebrate me, my self-perceived strengths, my growth and change, and not mention how little I have actually changed.
- Believing that I can act disgusted and insulted and insulting if you point out significant things that I forget or do not know.
- Believing that I can establish reality (fact patterns) to my liking.
- Believing that I can be contemptuous or violent if you complain, because I should never be answerable to you.

"Any form of dominance uses this pattern, any at all," she said. "Abusive values impact us all. We're all in relationship to these."

Patrissi said no one is exempt from using these eight values and what makes you abusive is if someone shows you, "and you double down and do it more." "The trauma is the impact," she said. "Hurt people don't hurt people. Millions of people are hurt and don't inflict hurt on others. It's hurt people with untransformed abusive values that hurt people."

Recognizing this is what helps service providers be more responsive to the needs of survivors.

"We can validate all of the experiences and do them all. They're not separate," Patrissi said.

Patrissi said there are several trainings available, including Women's Residential Services that offers effective supports for survivors of sexual and domestic violence in recovery. This free, three-part, 12-hour training is skills based and will be held March 18-20 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

The training will look at nondominant ways to work with resident survivors in their process of navigating their relationship and experiences of sexual violence in ways that align with recovery work; how to approach safety; and people and programs who serve as your community resources.

Patrissi said there is also a one-hour training called "Can They Really Change? Can We?" that will be held during the months of April, May and June and on demand.

This training allows peer workers and practitioners to strengthen their ability to assess the impact of intimate partner violence on the people in recovery they work with.

For advocates working with sexual violence survivors, the training, "Closing the Gap: Working with Survivors in Recovery," will demonstrate a non-coercive dialogue approach for advocates talking with survivors who may be thinking about recovery.

Learning Collaboratives meets monthly for two-hour sessions and Technical Assistance, helping supervisors and others in BSAS contracted services to learn about and adapt best practices, screening tools or supervisory approaches to addressing the challenges of the SDV and SUD intersection in their work.

Technical Assistance (60-90 minute sessions) is available to service providers when complex challenges arise related to the SDV and SUD intersection.

The Cabinet, which advised the SDV + SUD Collaborative Project as a whole, works toward referrals and skills, an integrated service model, systems uses of power and cultivating a shared lens.

"Why we need to cultivate a shared lens," Patrissi said, when looking at SDV and SDV. "The substance use field grew up separately from the sexual and domestic violence field...progress has been made in substance use disorder but there is still a lot of work for sexual vio-

lence and domestic violence."

For more information about this initiative, available trainings, or other resources, visit [www.growinganewheart.org](http://www.growinganewheart.org).

## Retirement

QHSUA's Prevention Director Gail Gramarosa announced that she will be retiring from her position at the end of March. Resumes are being accepted to fill the vacancy.

"I have no doubt we'll be able to find someone to pick up the projects and go from there," Gramarosa said.

A celebration will be scheduled later this year to celebrate Gramarosa's retirement, and QHSUA's 10-year anniversary.

## Upcoming events

An "Opioids and Opioid Rescue Training" will be offered by Kirsten Krieger, Public Health Nurse on Monday, Feb. 26 at 4:30 p.m. at Education to Employment, 79 Main St., Ware. RSVP to Krieger by Feb. 23 by emailing [kkrieger@townofware.com](mailto:kkrieger@townofware.com).

The next Palmer-focused substance use meeting will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 27 from 2:30-4 p.m. in the Palmer High School library.

Drug Endangered Children Awareness Training will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 27 from 2-4 p.m. and Wednesday, Feb. 28 from 10 a.m.-noon. For more information, contact Ellen Miller at District Attorney Joseph D. Early's Office by emailing [ellen.miller@mass.gov](mailto:ellen.miller@mass.gov).

Q-DRUG, an organization that is also celebrating 10 years this year, will host inspirational speaker Chris Herren on Thursday, March 7 at 6 p.m. at Quabbin Regional High School, 800

South St., Barre.

"The Evolving Dynamics of the Poly-substance Use Crisis" will be presented by District Attorney Joseph D. Early's Office on Thursday, Marcy 7 from 5:30-6:30 p.m. at Worcester Technical High School, 1 Officer Manny Familia Way, Worcester. For more information, email [luke.piers@mass.gov](mailto:luke.piers@mass.gov) or [caroline.root@mass.gov](mailto:caroline.root@mass.gov).

## Next meeting

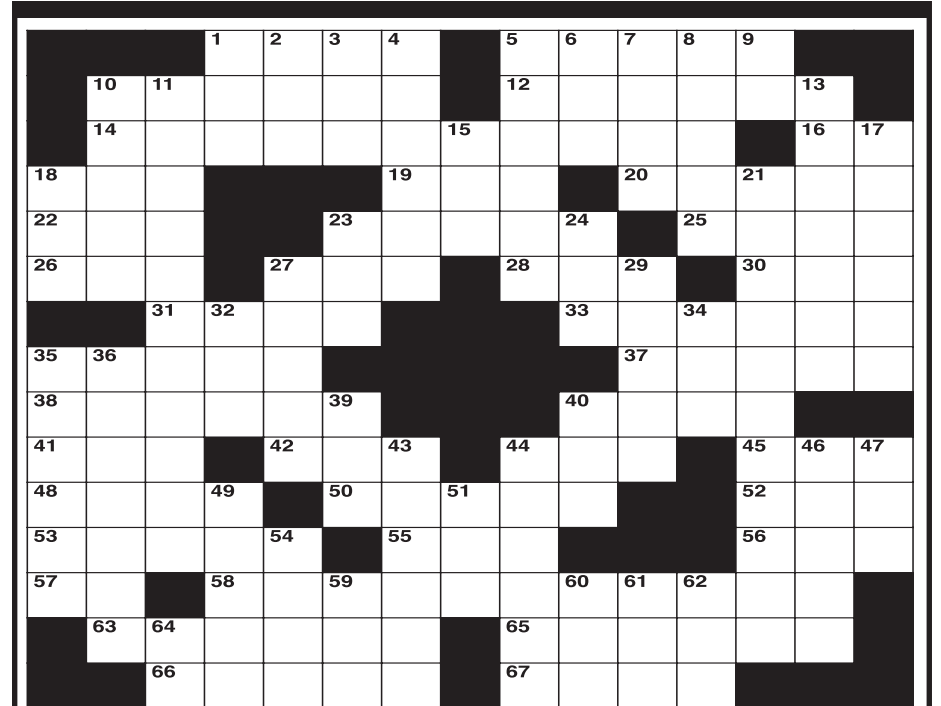
The next meeting of the QHSUA will be Monday, March 11.

## Sturbridge residents earn Dean's List at AMC

PAXTON – Anna Maria College recently announced academic honors for students named to the Dean's List for the fall 2023 Semester.

Local students include Brooke Macey, Heather Monroe and Thomas Vanasse, all of Sturbridge.

Anna Maria College awards Dean's List recognition to students enrolled in a full-time undergraduate day program in good standing who have attained in the previous semester a GPA of 3.5 with no grade lower than "B" for a minimum of four courses.



### CLUES ACROSS

- Gene type
- Persian male given name
- Type of protection
- Cloud
- One who returns to life
- Gym class
- General's assistant (abbr.)
- Baby's dining accessory
- Enchantress
- Prefix denoting "in a"
- Spiritual leader
- Cavities
- Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
- Foot (Latin)
- Sweet potato
- Pharaoh of Lower Egypt
- Land
- More inquisitive
- Dog breed: \_\_\_ Apso
- Stood up
- Direct and uninhibited
- Authorless
- Blocking type of drug (abbr.)
- Retrospective analysis (abbr.)
- Root mean square (abbr.)
- Macaws
- Actress Remini
- Polynesian wrapped skirt
- City of Angels hoops team (abbr.)
- Fitzgerald and Baker are two
- Bowling alley must-have
- A way to cool down
- Ethnic group in Asia
- A way to alter
- Set of five
- Removes from the record
- Dummies

### CLUES DOWN

- DC Comics superhero
- Brew
- Play
- Single-celled animals
- Rough to the touch
- Small island (British)
- Often noted alongside cons
- Preparation of rootstock
- Atomic #44
- Egyptian unit of capacity
- About secretary
- Particular groups
- Poke fun at
- Make certain that something occurs
- Financial term
- Justify
- Arbiter
- 007's creato
- Czech name for Prague
- Groans
- American time
- No seats available
- \_\_\_ Stahl, journalist
- Cleft lip
- Talk incessantly
- Expresses atomic and molecular weights (abbr.)
- A part of a river where the current is very fast
- Curdled milk
- Running competitions
- A team's best pitcher
- Carthaginian explorer
- World-renowned city
- Most common Japanese surname
- The bill in a restaurant
- They \_\_\_
- City of Angels football team (abbr.)
- Distinctive practice
- One quintillion bytes



# Garrett Habib honored with Pete DePina Legacy Award

SHREWSBURY – Advantage Truck Group has named its 2023 Pete DePina Legacy Award winners for Massachusetts, recognizing one individual from each of its locations in Raynham, Shrewsbury and Westfield for making an impact on their fellow employees, customers and the company.

Senior IT Analyst Garrett Habib, a resident of East Brookfield, is the legacy award winner for the company's Shrewsbury location.

"Garrett is committed to addressing the needs of our team and always willing to tackle any challenge or urgent situation. His unwavering dedication, technical expertise, and responsive and proactive customer-focused approach create a positive impact for customers and team members across the entire ATG network," ATG President & CEO Kevin Holmes said in a press release.

The highest recognition that an ATG team member can receive, this annual award was created as a memorial to ATG employee Napoleon "Pete" DePina and honors an individual at each ATG location in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont who most embodies the values and qualities

DePina was known for, including integrity and a quiet leadership grounded in humility, generosity and selfless service to others.

"Our ability to provide the best service experience for our customers reflects the dedication and contributions of our team members," Holmes said. "This award helps us honor those who go beyond expectations, and whose efforts and attitude, like Pete's, elevate the quality of service across our network and make a positive impact on the people around them."

Employees were nominated by their peers for the award, and a winner was selected from each of ATG's eight locations. Winners were presented with a monetary award that they will continue to receive as part of their profit-sharing bonus each year throughout their employment with the company.

The largest Daimler Trucks North America dealer in New England, ATG offers employees performance pay programs and benefits starting day one, company training programs, and career development and advancement opportunities - all in a culture that is committed to giving back to its communities.



East Brookfield resident Garrett Habib, senior IT analyst at Advantage Truck Group in Shrewsbury, receives the Advantage Truck Group 2023 Pete DePina Legacy Award for making an impact on his fellow employees, customers and the company. From left are Advantage Truck Group Senior Vice President/General Manager John Paulik, Parts Director Mike Ramian, Senior IT Analyst Garrett Habib, President and CEO Kevin Holmes, CFO John Ritucci, Vice President of Network Operations Christopher Pentedemos, Vice President of Network Sales Christopher Marsh and CPO Kevin Gaugush. SUBMITTED PHOTO

## BUDGET | FROM PAGE 1

McCormick said the recommended budget with offsets for FY 25 is \$9,822,021.95, an increase of 8.5% over last year's approved budget. Offsets have also increased this year.

"We're looking at a much smaller increase," McCormick said. "It's obviously more than where we want to be." McCormick said the budget increase from FY 23 to FY 24 was initially 17%.

McCormick said there are three major budget drivers, including salaries which account for 64% of the total budget and 28% of the total increase. Salaries are expected to increase by \$220,764.31 or 4.7% over last year.

Special education will increase by \$97,761.32 or 6%. Three additional students will require out-of-district placements.

McCormick said there was a "huge spike" in out-of-district tuition costs last year, increasing by 14%; this year, the state allowed a 6% tuition increase.

Transportation is the third major driver for the FY 25 budget, seeing an increase of \$203,652.87 or 20.7% over the last fiscal year.

"Together, the increases to special education tuition, transportation and salaries from the FY 25 budget total \$522,177 which accounts for 82% of the total budget increase of 8.85%," he said. "In the absence of these three uncontrollable budget drivers, the budget increase would have been 1.6%."

McCormick said the budget process is still in the early stages prior to town meeting approval in the spring.

### Career pathways

McCormick said there is a student population that doesn't have a clear plan for their future when they leave high school. He said the school district will be partnering with Vibram to give seniors a work-based learning experience.

"So that they can learn the soft skills they need to be successful in the workforce and then actually put some hours of work at Vibram," he said. "We had a great meeting with Vibram last week... we are just working on the details now."

McCormick said he and others feel this is the "next step" for students leaving high school to enter a specialized career path with more opportunities for earning.

"I think this is an exciting opportunity for our school," McCormick said.

This opportunity will lead to an Innovative Pathway designation for the school district in advanced manufacturing.

## Recognitions

McCormick commended staff and the Highway Department for clearing snow from sidewalks and parking lots.

"Without their efforts, we would have been looking at a day off of school," he said, following a weekend storm.

McCormick also welcomed new special education Administrative Assistant Katelinde Grenevich, who will also serve as the School Committee recording secretary.

### Student Council update

Student Representative Olivia Giangrande said the Student Council is working on its Excellence Book and other award submissions. They are planning on submitting a nomination for a Top 10 Project award and a National Council of Excellence award.

Giangrande said Unity Week will be held Feb. 12-16 and will enhance a sense of community for the school, and show support for different types of people, including LGBTQ and those with special needs.

The MASC Spring Conference will be held March 5-8 in Hyannis and another spring conference will be held in April.

Giangrande said the public is always welcome at Student Council meetings and encouraged people in the community to follow them on Facebook and Instagram.

### Communications

School Committee Chair Ron Ryel said Richard Rigney, union representative, had previously sent a letter to the School Committee asking to open negotiations with North Brookfield Educational Support Professionals. Ryel said the committee will need to set up meetings with the negotiation team.

Ryel said the School Committee received a draft agreement earlier that day, and he will propose some dates in February for meetings to discuss the contract.

### Regionalization update

Ryel said he has no update from the Regional Agreement Amendment Committee and the committee has not met since June. Ryel said he has reached out to their state representative for assistance.

### Staffing updates

In addition to Grenevich, McCormick announced new staff in the district include Kailyn Lachapelle, district-wide English Language Learner teacher; Elijah Babcock, second-shift high school custodian; and Tasha Thomasian, pre-school teacher.

School Committee members asked to be updated when staff leave the district in addition to any new hires.

## DANCE | FROM PAGE 1

field Food Pantry. The night brought in enough food donations to fill four totes to bring to the pantry.

The dance featured DJ Dan Rieudeau who donated his time to provide fun music for the night. The cafeteria was truly turned into something marvelous.

"It's a good excuse to go out, and it's nice to see people have fun," Mauro said.

The night was filled with fun, and all volunteers helped to make this possible. The North Brookfield PTO did a fantastic job bringing a beautiful dance to the students.

The North Brookfield PTO can be found on Facebook, and be sure to look out for their future events, and they are also looking for more volunteers and members to join.



Several bins were ready to collect food to bring to the local food pantry.

TURLEY PHOTO BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS

## LIBRARY | FROM PAGE 1

the craft nights the library hosts.

The holiday of Valentine's Day is usually a time for couples, but it can also be a time to express love for one's friends and family.

Linda's favorite part about Valentine's Day is simply "love", and Jenn agreed with her. "I love the general spirit of comradery," Jenn said. "Everyone

is thinking about love, romantic or otherwise."

Ellen talked about her favorite parts of Valentine's Day including making cookies for her grandchildren as she made a card for her husband.

"I like to celebrate loved ones, too," Laura said. "My husband, who is my number-one Valentine, is sending me away for vacation."

## HISTORY | FROM PAGE 1

described it as "learning through play".

The program kicked off in September of 2023 and since then they have gone to many after-school programs to bring fun learning experiences such as making your own pickles and growing peas.

The AmeriCorps program is a national and federal organization that provides resume-building experiences.

"One of the biggest draws is the educational award," Aibhlin Harrigan, the program coordinator, said.

But each of the members joined the team because of their own passions and desires.

"I like interacting with the kids," Wing-Colson said. "We have lots of different age groups and perspectives."

"I like the activities and planning new ones to bring to the kids," Yismerli Polanco said.

"I love the reactions of the kids to

the projects we do," Maya Simpson said. "Seeing the excitement at all the things they learned is really fun and fulfilling."

Harrigan, in her role as coordinator, reflected more on how awesome it was to see her team working together with the kids.

"My goal is making sure they have fun with what they bring to the kids," she said. "I'm excited to see where they take this experience and move forward in their careers."

The OSV AmeriCorps group put together this special Valentine's Day card-making event to remember and teach others about where valentines themselves originated.

In the late 1840s, Esther Allen Howland of Worcester, or the "Queen of Valentines" used her father's stationery company to create the first valentine cards. They began as romantic notes, but also included an assortment of love and appreciation for friendship, too.



# SPORTS

## Quaboag girls get past Prouty



WARREN – Quaboag girls basketball got a huge win 36-28 over David Prouty last Thursday night. The win got Quaboag to .500 at 8-8. Parker Tunley had 10 points while Evelyn Doe turned in seven points.

Evelyn Doe delivers an outside shot. TURLEY PHOTOS BY JACK CASCIO NEAP.SMUGMUG.COM



Riley Patchen fires off a sweet jump shot.



Riley Patchen fires off a sweet jump shot.



Juliette Boos breaks through the defense for this jumper.



Hailey Dumont makes a great save as she keeps the Cougar ball in play.

## Warriors handle Lancers

FISKDALE – Last Tuesday evening, Tantasqua Regional girls basketball entertained another Western Mass. opponent, facing Longmeadow High

School. The Warriors picked up the win 52-47 to improve to 11-4 on the season. Tantasqua has also faced

Minnechaug and Holyoke from Western Mass. Sophie Webb had 17 points to lead the Warriors while Nicki Vejak contributed 15 points.



Gabby Scanlon holds the ball high, looking to pass under pressure. TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Riley West sends a pass toward the corner of the court.



Nicki Vejak goes for a layup.



Sophie Webb works around the perimeter.



- sports -

# Ducos free throw wins it for Quabbin girls



Brooke Austin passes into Hannah Baxter. TURLEY PHOTOS BY RAY DUFFY



Hannah Baxter get fouled while putting up a shot.



Meg Doyle hits for a three-point basket.



Riley Bassett blocks the shot.



Mia Ducos hits the game winning free throw.

BARRE – Last Friday night, Mia Ducos hit a free throw in the waning seconds of the game and Quabbin defeated Littleton 42-41 for the 13th win of the season for the Panthers. Ducos had 12 points to lead all scorers and Brianna Whitelaw added 11 points while Hannah Baxter had 10 points.

## Candlepin League News

By Ryan Drago  
Staff Writer  
rdrago@turley.com

### Tuesday Night Commercial Elks League

With only one week left in round two, several teams on the Commercial Elks League are pursuing a playoff spot.

As of Jan. 30, The Champs R Here are in first place with a record of 24.5 wins and 7.5 losses. Closely behind is Life is Good at 22-10 and Acres at 20-12.

For the first league night in February, The Champs R Here bowled against #5 seeded team the Blue B's. In game one, The Champs were the winners by a score of 388-350. Leading the team was Taylor Colkos starting off the evening with a 108.

In game two, The Blue B's won a close second game by a score of 366-364. In game three, Blue B's won the last game

by a score of 401-368.

The Champs R Here won total pinfall by a final score of 1120-1117. Each team received two points.

Team BK bowled against the winners of round one, Compression. In game one, Team BK won the first game by a score of 380-358. Paul Nothe of Team BK led the team with a 104. In game two, Team BK won again by a score of 394-356. Nothe continued bowling consistently by leading the team again with a 108.

In game three, Team BK won the last game for a three-game sweep by a score of 357-342. Team BK won total pinfall by a final score of 1131-1056.

The second round of the Tuesday Night Commercial Elks League will conclude on Feb. 13.

### Thursday Night Mixed League

As of Feb. 1 there is a tie for first place

in the Thursday Night Mixed League.

Team Five and Team One are tied at 15-9, Team Six is at 14-10 for third place, Team Four is 13-11, Team Two is 8-16 and Team Three is 7-17.

In one match, Team Three bowled against Team Four. In game one, Team Four won the first game by a score of 419-403. In game two, Team Three responded with a win of their own, 429-399. Jesse Danek of Team Three led his team by bowling a 106.

In game three, Team Four won the last game of the evening 404-388. Team Four won total pinfall by a final score of 1222-1220.

Team One bowled against Team Two as they are in a #1 seed race with Team Five. In game one, Team Two won by a score of 446-421. Danny Fennyery of Team Two led his team by starting off the evening with a 125.

In game two, Team Two continued

staying ahead of Team One by salvaging another win, 423-407. Fennyery bowled a 100 in game two.

In game three, Team One managed to win the last game of the evening by a score of 422-401. Team Two won total pinfall by a final score of 1270-1250.





- sports -

# Offense struggles for Pathfinder



**P A L M E R**  
 – Last Tuesday night, the Pathfinder Regional girls basketball team suffered a tough defeat against St. Mary’s 39-30. The Pioneers struggled in the middle of the game, limited to just 10 points in the second and third quarters. The defense did a good job holding St. Mary’s to under 40 points, but the offense could not catch up. Addison Doktor had 11 points and Greenly Lagimoniere had 10 points in the loss. Pathfinder is 8-7 and needs at least one more win to qualify for the state tournament.

Greenly Lagimoniere passes on the run. TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Megan Clark approaches the hoop from the side.



Addison Doktor makes a rebound and looks for another approach to the hoop.



Desiree Croteau is pushed out of bounds.



Victoria Stephens looks for a teammate to make a pass.

## Justin Bonsignore opens season with second-place finish

NEW SMYRNA, FL – Justin Bonsignore drove the No. 51 Phoenix Communications modified to a second-place finish in Saturday’s NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour opener at New Smyrna Speedway.

Bonsignore qualified fourth and ran inside the top-five for the duration of the race. After a pit stop in the final 20 laps, Bonsignore raced from fifth up to second, trying to chase down Ron Silk in the final laps. Although he closed in, he had to settle for second.

The run opened the 2024 season for Bonsignore, who will chase his fourth NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour title in the Ken Massa Motorsports machine this season.

“We were just a little bit too snug on

both sets of change tires,” Bonsignore said. “All in all, it was a really good night to start the year. We have to thank Phoenix Communications for everything they do for our team and Ryan Stone and the pit crew for a great job with a brand new car they built over the winter. It takes a lot to come down here to Florida to open the season. We will try and build off this and get better with this new car.”

Justin Bonsignore will return to the track driving the No. 30 for Rette Jones Racing in the ARCA Menards Series season opener at Daytona International Speedway on Saturday, February 17. The NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour is back on track at Richmond Raceway on Friday, March 29.

### The Southbridge Softball league is now enrolling teams and players for the 2024 season.

Games are played at Henry Street Field (located off Rt. 169) in Southbridge. We have 3 levels of Mens Leagues (A, B & C) that play weeknights starting @ 6:30 PM, a Mens JB draft league (for players age 39 by Sept. 30th) that plays Sunday AM starting at 9 AM and a COED league (5 & 5) that plays Sat & Sun evenings starting @ 6 PM. The potential for a Women’s league or a weekday COED league (6 & 4) exists depending on the number of teams we receive – a minimum of 4 teams would be required for either to be considered.

#### THE FEES FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

\$425 team roster fee and a \$125 forfeit fee for a total of \$550. If your roster is turned in on or before 3/5 the fee is \$550. If your roster is turned in between 3/5 + 3/12, the fee is \$600.

#### No rosters will be accepted after 3/12/24.

Player fees for 2024 will be \$55 and a \$5 additional fee will be charged to those players playing on (2) or more teams.

Please email [info@southbridgesoftball.org](mailto:info@southbridgesoftball.org) or check out our Southbridge Softball Association Facebook page for more information.



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## PROJECT | FROM PAGE 4

and setting clear boundaries and expectations does have a positive impact.

Another example of an evidence-based strategy is something called the positive social norms approach. This basically means that a lot more young people are choosing not to use substances than people think; teens and adults tend to overestimate how many youth are using substances.

We collect data and then share back some of the good news. If a teen realizes how many of their peers are actually making good choices, it's easier for that person to jump on the positive bandwagon and make a good choice, too.

Youth mental health is another critical aspect of our work. Again, we implement evidence-based strategies to support teens' sense of belonging, inclusion, and safety in their communities.

We support programs and experiences that give teens hope for their future adulthood, as that also encourages healthy choices and mental wellness while being a teenager. It is a large task, but one we know is a pressing need in today's world.

Teen substance use prevention is not just youth work. Sure, we love working with teens and hope to do a lot of it! But this is truly community-wide work, because everyone in the community can play an important role.

Everyone can reduce access to harmful substances by safely storing medications and substances in their homes in a locking medicine box or by storing them up and out of sight. Limiting access is a proven strategy.

The community can host town-wide events which are substance-free. Store owners can post clear signs about carding practices and follow those rules steadfastly.

Adults can make the choice not to provide underage people with alcohol, nicotine or cannabis products or other substances. Everyone can educate themselves about the current substance landscape in order to be a source of knowledge and model healthy choices.

The Drug Free Communities team,

along with the Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance, is here to support individuals, families, schools, and the community at large. We are happy to organize trainings on a wide variety of topics, including parenting, cannabis and the developing brain, nicotine cessation, Youth Mental Health First Aid, how to reverse an opioid overdose, etc.

We take topic requests because we are here to meet your needs. We also can offer TIPS trainings to bars and restaurants who want their servers trained in responsible serving practices. We provide free naloxone, also known as Narcan, to anyone who wants it.

We are looking to grow our network and find more parents/caregivers, teens, and community members to partner with. If anything above interests you or you would like to talk more, please reach out to me, Rebecca Edwards, at [redwards@townofware.com](mailto:redwards@townofware.com).

### About QHSUA

The Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance is celebrating its 10th year anniversary as a coalition in 2024.

The Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance (<https://qhsua.org/>); a regional coalition serving local communities located in Hampshire, Hampden, and Worcester Counties – the towns of Barre, Belchertown, Brimfield, Brookfield, Hardwick, Hubbardston, Holland, Monson, New Braintree, North Brookfield, Oakham, Palmer, Spencer, Wales, Ware, Warren, and West Brookfield. Join them by going to their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/QHSUA/> or website, [www.qhsua.org](http://www.qhsua.org).

If you or a loved one needs help for substance abuse, call the state-wide helpline at 1-800-327-5050 (TTY: 1-800-439-2370); the phoneline is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week; you can also go to the website at: <https://hub.helplinema.org/findhelp>. The 988 Lifeline (call or text) provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States.

## Fundraising for Kids in the Congo to be held March 2

**PALMER** – A pasta and meatball dinner to benefit the Kids in the Congo nonprofit organization will be held at St. Paul's Church of Palmer, 1060 Central St. on Saturday, March 2 at 5:30 p.m.

Kids in the Congo is a local group that works in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to build and furnish classrooms for Congolese children. It is also engaged in farm animal and well building projects.

The dinner will be hosted by St. Paul's Church of Palmer.

Kids in the Congo ([www.KidsInTheCongo.org](http://www.KidsInTheCongo.org)) is based in Fiskdale and provides educational support to children in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In addition, they have provided school sponsorships, uniforms, backpacks and school supplies.

They also raise money to build classrooms, purchase school furnishings and establish libraries. Another current project is the "Farm Animal Project." A future project will entail drinking well creation for two nearby villages.

Lynne Brouillette of Fiskdale, the organization's president, has taken various trips to the Congo. Board members and other volunteers are located in western and central Massachusetts.

Kids in the Congo is partnered with the Augustinians of the Assumption (Assumptionists), a religious order with priests and brothers working in parishes throughout Congo

The Democratic Republic of the Congo with a population of 112 million people is one of the poorest and most dangerous countries in the world.

In a report by the Global Conflict tracker "the DRC is home to nearly 7 million people who have been internally displaced due to the threat of vio-

lence and atrocities, extreme poverty, and mining expansion. The displaced population urgently needs security support, medical aid, and other humanitarian aid." Since 1996, conflict in eastern DRC has led to approximately six million deaths.

Fr. Salvator Musande, who is one of the cofounders of Kids in the Congo said "the education of Congo's young people is the key to lifting Congo out of poverty. Education opens doors for the student, his/her family, their village and eventually the broader community. It brings hope where otherwise, there is only a bleak existence."

According to Rev. Steven Sousa, minister of the dinner's host St. Paul's Church said, "The overarching purpose of the dinner is to benefit an important local non-profit organization that is helping children in one of the most impoverished and dangerous areas of the world. We can make a small yet significant impact in people's lives, who may live a continent away, yet are an intimate part of our human family."

Tickets for the Kids in the Congo dinner are only available in advance by calling 413-283-8185, or online at [www.StPaulsPalmer.org](http://www.StPaulsPalmer.org) "Events" page. Ticket prices are \$15 per person, \$25 per family and children are free.

The dinner begins at 5:30 p.m. with hors d'oeuvres served before the meal. A presentation by Lynn Brouillette of the Kids in the Congo, will follow the meal.

About St. Paul's Church of Palmer: Since 1937, St. Paul's has faithfully served the greater Palmer community through various outreach and spiritual avenues. At its heart is the message of grace, acceptance, and love.

## St. Mary's Church hosts Polish plate dinner on March 9

**WARE** – St. Mary's Church, 57 South St., will be having a pre-order take-out dinner on Saturday, March 9.

The dinner will consist of four pierogi, one golombek, kielbasa, kapusta and rye bread. The cost of the dinner is \$20.

The dinner will be cold and will need reheating. Place your order by calling Sylvia at 413-436-9268 or Diane at 413-967-5207 from noon-7 p.m. starting Wednesday, Feb. 14 through Saturday, Feb. 24.

Curbside pickup will be available between 11:30 a.m.-noon for anyone with a handicap card. Please let them know when you call in your order.

All other orders will be picked up in the church hall. You will be given a time between noon-2 p.m. for your pick up when you call.

Please put your money in an envelope with your name, number of dinners and pick up number. St. Mary's Church thanks you for your continued patronage.

## Worcester State University announces fall Dean's List

**WORCESTER** – Worcester State University announces the Dean's List for the fall 2023 semester.

Local students making the Dean's list are: Connor E. Dufault of Brookfield, Peyton A. Fellmeth of Brookfield, Noah M. Genest of Brookfield, Sairsha N. Kurilova of Brookfield, Cayleigh L. Peterson of Brookfield, Abigail R. Rossi of Brookfield, Karyn J. Scott of Brookfield, Jennifer Sutton of Brookfield, Emily E. Anderson of East Brookfield, Emma J. Bain of East Brookfield, Emily E. Brown of East Brookfield, Erin Donahue of East Brookfield, Aidan L. Joyce of East Brookfield, Timothy H. Paine of East Brookfield, Marcos Pereira Jr. of East Brookfield, Rebecca A. Chilton of New Braintree, Lauren E. Olson of New Braintree, Aiden R. Brunelle of North Brook-

field, Nashaya R. Campbell of North Brookfield, Jessica L. Frigo of North Brookfield, Christopher M. Halvorsen of North Brookfield, Sophia Hearnlaye of North Brookfield, Isabella S. Hope of North Brookfield, Olivia A. Valeri of North Brookfield, Elias W. Berthel of West Brookfield, Matthew L. Kopacko of West Brookfield, Faith O. Leddy of West Brookfield, Hannah R. Manzano of West Brookfield, Dallas J. McDonnell of West Brookfield, Sarah R. Niedzialkoski of West Brookfield and Jillian M. Routhier of West Brookfield.

Dean's list honors are awarded to matriculated undergraduate students who have earned a 3.5 GPA or higher. Full-time students must have earned a minimum of 12 credits and part-time students must have earned a minimum of six credits.

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# QUABOAG CURRENT

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Friday, February 16, 2024

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