

QUABOAG CURRENT

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Quaboag Current
Newspaper

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Volume 17, Number 14

Friday, March 1, 2024

Superintendent presents proposed FY 25 budget

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

WARREN – Quaboag Regional School District Superintendent Stephen Duff presented the proposed fiscal year 2025 school budget.

Duff said the budget subcommittee has met multiple times over the past month to put together a budget proposal, which was presented to the full School Committee on Feb. 12. The budget was presented to the town of West Brookfield on Feb. 15 and Warren on Feb. 22.

“Our goal is to get it in the hands of the towns as quickly as possible,” Duff said of the proposed budget. “This is as tight of a budget as we’ve come in with.”

Duff said the line items in their control came in with less than a 1% increase over last

fiscal year, and contractual obligations like salaries increased by 3%.

Duff shared some of the accomplishments the school district has seen with its programs, including a high number of students attending college after graduation, and a top-

ranked fire service program. The school district will also be offering an EMT program, at no cost to taxpayers.

“That speaks volumes not only to the Fire Department, but also to the school district and our community for putting

See BUDGET | PAGE 8

Death & Taxes

Theatre Guild performs murder mystery dinner theater



The Theatre Guild of North Brookfield performed the dinner theatre show, “Death & Taxes” at Hardwick Crossing Country Club. TURLEY PHOTO BY RYAN DRAGO

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

HARDWICK – The Theatre Guild of North Brookfield performed a murder mystery dinner theater, “Death & Taxes” over two nights at Hardwick Crossing Country Club last weekend.

This comedic mystery featured a mysterious stranger

found dead in Carl and Mattie’s living room in the quiet town of Hardwick. The cast relied on audience participation as the townspeople attending a town council meeting and trying to solve the crime.

This was the first show the Theatre Guild of North Brookfield performed at Hardwick Crossing, with a cast of nine talented actors.

The victim was an out-of-town IRS employee doing research on the town. While investigating unusual activities going on, the man was later found dead in the living room of Carl and Mattie Johansen.

Every character was deemed a suspect as they all encountered this IRS employee, and it was up to the audience to help solve this mystery.

See THEATRE | PAGE 6

Story Time at the Haston library

Children and families enjoy polar bear story and craft

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

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The Haston Free Public Library, 161 North Main St., hosted its weekly story and craft for kids, and this week’s theme was polar bears.

The children’s librarian, Brianna Lamb, or “Miss Bri” to the kids, read the book “Polar Bear Morning” by Lauren Thompson with a polar bear craft to make afterwards.

Lamb has been the children’s librarian since 2021, and since then, has hosted weekly story and craft days on Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m.



Wyatt and his mom, Asha are shown cutting, gluing and practicing their art skills. TURLEY PHOTO BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS

Each week holds a new and exciting craft, and the month

See LIBRARY | PAGE 12

Farmers Market Spotlight

Chairman of the Board and Quantum Breakthroughs at 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 – It seems lately that winter is on our side.

The sun is out and the tem-

See MARKET | PAGE 12



Deb Maclin of Quantum Breakthroughs offers coaching for wellness and holistic healing. TURLEY PHOTO BY RICHARD MURPHY



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- community -

Booster Club offers dinner and a show at Quaboag

By Haileigh Swistak
Student Intern

WARREN – Quaboag Performing Arts Booster Club will host “Dinner and a Show” Saturday, March 9.

The doors open at 5 p.m. and dinner begins at 6:30 p.m. This includes spaghetti, salad, drinks, and dessert. During dinner, The Comical Mystery Tour will perform their PG-13 show “Unhappy Days”.

Because of the age restriction, Quaboag Performing Arts students will be offering babysitting for \$15 per child under 13 years old. The maximum capacity is 40 children and will include dinner, crafts, and games.

The children must be able to separate from their parents and must be potty-trained.

Tickets are \$25 each and are only available on Eventbrite, the link to which is available on the Quaboag Performing Arts Booster Club’s Facebook account. There are 120 tickets available so get them while you can before March 6.

The proceeds of this event will benefit the Quaboag Performing Arts Booster Club, which supports the Band, Chorus, and Drama departments of Quaboag Regional Middle High School.

Merriam-Gilbert library announces March events

WEST BROOKFIELD – The Merriam-Gilbert Public Library, 3 West Main St., lists upcoming events for the month of March.

Doolin’ Lads return

The Doolin’ Lads return to fill the library with their amazing Celtic music on Thursday, March 14, at 6:30 p.m. for this beloved St. Patrick’s Day tradition. Thank you to the Friends of the Library for making this program possible.

Please stop by or call the library at 508-867-1410 to register.

Book launch and poetry reading

Share in the excitement as the library welcomes West Brookfield’s own Jonathan Blake for the launch of his latest book, “In the Kingdom”, on Tuesday, March 12, at 6 p.m. Blake will share poems inspired by his visits to the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont with its rolling hills, wildlife, and stillness needed for dreaming.

Please call or stop by the Library to register. Copies of “In the Kingdom” will be available for purchase and signing.

Solo/Duet Poetry & Jazz series returns

Thanks to the collaborative efforts of Jonathan Blake and the generosity of the West Brookfield Cultural Council, a local agency with support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Library will again host “Solo/Duet”- a delightful series highlighting poetry and jazz artists from the local area.

Poets Bill O’Connell and Ann Love Woodhull will kick off the series reading poems from their books on Tuesday, March 19, at 6 p.m. Jerry Wilfong will perform a solo acoustic bass recital between the readings by the poets.

Books will be available for sale after the reading. Please stop by the library or call to register.



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Dan Hamilton presents ‘The Tapestry of Life’

Historical Society hosts Emmy-winning director on March 15

NEW BRAINTREE – The New Braintree Historical Society presents “The Tapestry of Life” a presentation by Dan Hamilton on Friday, March 15 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. at the New Braintree Historical Society Museum/1939 Grade School, 10 Utley Road.

This is a free presentation sponsored by the New Braintree Historical Society.

A personal journey through historical, genealogical, and DNA research using a live demonstration of online tools, often used reference books, and ample time for Q & A.

Hamilton, a retired professional actor, and Emmy-winning director has spent the last 25 years exploring the genealogy and history of his own family, and that of friends and clients. He is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogy, The National Genealogical Society, and holds an A-Grade Certificate in Genealogical Research from Boston University.

He is a lifetime member of the New Braintree Historical Society, the Quaboag Historical Society, served on the West Brookfield Historical Commission where he produced the Lucy Stone Bicentennial Celebration in 2018, and most recently, produced the Brookfield Historical Commission’s event; “A Robert Wilder Memorial Presentation: Honoring Brookfield’s First Inhabitants.”

He is also a member of the Massachusetts Archeological Society, the Archaeological Society of Virginia, the Planetary Society, and the Mayflower Society. He builds and maintains websites, creates video documentaries on YouTube, and occasionally appears as a speaker.

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- community -

FrOST offer ice sculptures and fun

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

STURBRIDGE – The Friends of Sturbridge Trails, a nonprofit group, held an ice sculpture competition which was found along the Grand Trunk Trail. Jennifer Scherer, a member of the

trails committee for three years, was very excited to help organize and host the ice sculpture contest.

“My favorite part of the ice sculpture contest is the people that take a chance at a unique adventure. Anyone brave enough can carve!” Scherer said. “Carving ice is a form of art and play that many don’t get an opportunity to

explore.”

The ice sculpture contest saw a total of seven submissions this year, and the committee hopes to see even more in 2025. The ice sculpture contest has been going for four years now, and each has a theme.

“The theme this year was birds, last year it was forest critters,” Scherer said.

“2022’s theme was ride, and there was no theme in the first year.”

The Friends of the Sturbridge Trails holds various yearly activities including the first day hike, mountain bike rides, guided trail runs, yoga on the trail, night hikes with a telescope, and so much more. They host Earth Day clean-ups as well.



This penguin ice sculpture has blue marble eyes. TURLEY PHOTOS BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS



This ice sculpture is of a chickadee standing on a branch.



This ice bird is standing guard and looking towards the sun.

Assumption University announces Dean’s list

WORCESTER – Assumption University announced those who have been named to the University’s Dean’s list for the fall 2023 semester.

Local students making the Dean’s list are: Jamison Howland of New Braintree, Angelina Riendeau of North Brookfield and Meadow Taylor of New Braintree. Students named to the Dean’s list must achieve a grade point average of 3.5 for a five-class, 15-credit semester to be included on the list, which is announced at the completion of the fall and spring semesters.

Are you having difficulty communicating with your partner, struggling with boundaries, and healthy relationships?

We invite you to join us Friday afternoons from 1-2:30 pm to explore these topics and more.

This group will be held in zoom, is educational, confidential, and free.

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- opinion -



Get a head start the old-fashioned way

Just about a week ago I was presenting a Seed Starting Workshop for members at Old Sturbridge Village, and someone asked a question about how seedlings would have been pre-started in the mid-1800s.

It was a logical question considering we have heat cables, supplemental light and greenhouses at our disposal these days. We can grow any number of plants pretty much any time of the year.

How then, did innovative gardeners of old get a head start? Cold frames and hot beds, of course! These season extenders continue to be useful today.

Read on to learn how these are constructed and used successfully.

The easiest way to describe a cold frame is this: a rectangular box fitted with a window sash. It can be as simple as an old storm window on top of hay bales.

Better yet would be to construct your cold frame to capture as much passive solar energy as possible. We achieve this by angling the window sash 35 to 45 degrees to catch the sun.

The window sash you obtain will determine the size of the frame. Keep in mind that you have to be able to reach inside to work; therefore, it is recommended that you make the box no deeper than three feet.

Construct the frame using rot resistant woods like cedar or redwood. Pine is an inexpensive and readily available option, but should be painted with exterior paint prior to assembly to ensure years of use.

White paint will not only make an attractive cold frame, but one that will reflect light to the plants growing in it. The walls should be at least an inch thick, preferably two inches, to further insulate the plants growing inside.

Locate your cold frame in full sun, facing south or southeast. The soil under the cold frame is a “mini plot” that should be enriched as I would any other part of the garden by incorporating an inch or two of compost and a sprinkling of lime and balanced organic fertilizer into the soil prior to use.

The window sash will likely stay shut on overcast days. On sunny days, however, be sure to prop open the window to ventilate the space – it can get quite hot inside and young seedlings could easily be harmed.

The sash can be opened completely (or removed altogether) on very warm days. Don't forget to provide water within the frame – if it is covered it is exempt from the rain.

The cold frame is a great place to start spring greens. There are other uses as well.

Some plants prefer to germinate at cool temperatures and simply won't grow well inside the house, even off the heat cables. Try growing flats of cole crops like kale, broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower right in the cold frame – they'll be the sturdiest plants you ever grew!

Likewise, start small pots of sweet peas, pansies, forget-me-nots and bachelor's buttons inside of it; they germinate better in cool soil. Many native perennials need to chill for a month before they are able to germinate – “stratify” these seeds in the cold frame and then move them to the border once they are off and growing.

You can also harden off plants that were started indoors inside the cold frame.



Letter-to-the-Editor

Resident recommends making rail stop in Brookfield

The MassDOT decision to put a West-East rail stop in Palmer is driven by politics, and certainly not logistics or the best interests of the Commonwealth to reduce traffic congestion in central Massachusetts.

The best place for a passenger rail stop between Worcester and Springfield would be Brookfield as that location would alleviate MassPike traffic. The intersection of Routes 90 and 84 in Sturbridge is the most congested section of the MassPike so locating a rail stop in nearby Brookfield would allow commuters to take the train instead of driving.

Mill Street in Brookfield was a major stop for rail freight in the 1800s and early

1900s.

Placing a passenger rail station on Mill Street across from the town highway garage would be ideal for commuters as that site affords easy access off Route 148. A station there also affords ample parking, which is critical as commuters have to park their cars to take a train trip.

Instead of looking for a solution that would reduce traffic congestion and benefit the central Massachusetts region overall, the MassDOT chose a stop to meet the political interests of a select few. The decision needs to be reconsidered.

James Cooke
Brookfield

Dale's Corner

Chocolate...Luscious indulgence or food for the gods?

By Dale Gonyea

There were only two mornings each year that I was allowed to eat chocolate for breakfast: Easter and Christmas.

The Easter basket and Christmas stocking were the place to find my holiday treats for each of those days. There was always one treat in particular that stood out from the rest: chocolate.

Just the name brings images, memories and even the delicate aromas alive! But what is in a name? Where does chocolate come from and how do you make it? Why is it so irresistible and indulgent? What mysterious properties does it have?

The history of this delectable chocolate is very old – 4,000 years old.

Etymologists trace the origin of the word “chocolate” to the Aztec word “xocoatl,” which referred to a bitter drink brewed from cacao beans. The Latin name for the cacao tree, *Theobroma cacao*, means “food of the gods.”

I find that title absolutely appropriate!

About 70% of the world's cocoa beans come from four West African countries: Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon. The Ivory Coast and Ghana are by far the two largest producers of cocoa, accounting for more than 50% of the world's cocoa.

The process to grow, refine and make chocolate is lengthy so I shall summarize.

Cacao beans are harvested from the trees in pods. The pods are disassembled, and the beans are roasted and cleaned leaving the cacao nib.

Nibs are then ground and then separated from the cocoa butter. The heat generated by grinding causes the cocoa butter or fat to melt and form a fine paste or liquid known as chocolate “liquor”.

After conching, tempering and adding flavors to the liquor, you are left with chocolate which can be molded. Depending on the sugar added in relation to cocoa solids, you are left with distinctive different forms of chocolate.

For dark chocolate lovers, bars with 70% cacao or higher are ideal. Dark chocolate is a rich source of antioxidants and minerals, and it generally contains less sugar than milk chocolate.

Some research suggests that dark chocolate may help lower the risk of heart disease, reduce inflammation and insulin resistance, and improve brain function. Happy Day!

This chocolate can also be called bitersweet. If we reduce the solids to around 60% we would call it semi-sweet.

For me, milk chocolate is where it's at! Milk chocolate contains not less than 10%

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. Deadline for submission is Monday at noon for the following week's edition.

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Quaboag Current
Newspaper

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 prefer-

ence 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 or mailed to West Brookfield Historical Commission, P.O. Box 372, West Brookfield, MA 01585.

CHOCOLATE | FROM PAGE 4

by weight of chocolate liquor, not less than 3.39% by weight of milk fat, not less than 12% by weight of total milk solids and the remaining percent by weight of sugar and/or spices.

It is a creamy and luscious confection, that excites and animates the senses and mind. Whichever your chocolate favorite, this creation melts invitingly on the tongue, longingly on the mind and deliciously from start to finish.

The “other” chocolate we haven’t discussed yet has a locally fascinating history.

Is white chocolate real chocolate? This is a frequently asked question and a hot debate.

The FDA said to be called white chocolate, the candy must have at least 20% cocoa butter, 14% milk solids, and 3.5% milk fat – and no more than 55% sugar or other sweeteners. Vanilla is added for flavor, and a fatty substance called lecithin is in there as an emulsifier.

White chocolate is first recorded to be used in Europe around 1930 by the Nestle Corporation in Switzerland. A fascinating fact is that local candy maker, Hebert Candies in Shrewsbury, is credited with bringing this new chocolate to our country!

I had the privilege of having a conversation with Tamara Beland, Retail and Community Engagement for Hebert Candies. Tamara was so gracious and accommodating as we discussed Hebert’s history, products and status.

Hebert’s has been a New England staple since 1917, as one of the first roadside confectioners. The original chocolatier, Frederick Hebert, was the first to introduce white chocolate to this country after bringing the recipe back from Europe around 1955.

Tamara confirmed that this recipe has been and still is in very strong demand with customers. Hebert’s has indeed survived the COVID threat so far. Tamara reports strong holiday sales and shoppers still frequent the mansion, despite COVID restrictions.

We are indeed fortunate here in central Massachusetts to have Hebert’s as a chocolate staple. Many of us can recall visiting the mansions and watching the candy being made.

I am reminded of the film “Chocolat”. Juliette Binoche plays the mysterious woman that comes to the French village and sets up a chocolate shop.

Soon, the residents have pushed a sort of reset button with their lives, the dreamy and intoxicating chocolate creations have unlocked secret yearnings and desires. Does chocolate have this power?

Chocolate is perhaps the world’s best escape. The French believe that food is an experience, not just a necessity.

When enjoyed, one should not be in a hurry. One should slow down and allow the experience of the food to take them wherever it wishes.

When you experience your chocolate, does it take you away? What does it make you long for? As long as the delicate flavors and smells take over your senses, the escape and pleasure are a wonder.

Chocolate is many things. It is mysterious, elegant, majestic and complex.

When you bite the head off that Easter bunny, pop in a Lindt truffle or sit down with a Godiva sampler, allow yourself the luxury and moment to savor and escape. You never know, you may have just shared a piece of food that gods enjoy.

Dan Hamilton presents ‘The Tapestry of Life’

Historical Society hosts Emmy-winning director on March 15

NEW BRAINTREE – The New Braintree Historical Society presents “The Tapestry of Life” a presentation by Dan Hamilton on Friday, March 15 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. at the New Braintree Historical Society Museum/1939 Grade School, 10 Utley Road.

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He is also a member of the Massachusetts Archeological Society, the Archeological Society of Virginia, the Planetary Society, and the Mayflower Society. He builds and maintains websites, creates video documentaries on YouTube, and occasionally appears as a speaker.

GARDEN | FROM PAGE 4

What about getting a head start with heat-loving vegetables, such as tomatoes or peppers? Or even herbs like basil or flowers such as celosia, marigold or amaranths? Here is where the hot bed comes in.

If you have access to free, fresh manure, you are all set. The general idea is to build a mound about two feet tall of manure and bedding materials not older than six weeks and top it with soil you will be growing your seedling in, then top that with one of the frame set-ups described above.

The heat generated from the manure will warm the soil and the surrounding air. Seeds should germinate easily and readily.

It’s important not to set up your hot bed too early – mid April to early May is perfect because you will still need to be past the frost free date before planting the seedlings you’ve grown into the garden. Hot beds take a little trial and error, but are worth the experiment.

When we used them at OSV, the seed-

lings grown within were always greener and sturdier than those I provided from our fancy greenhouse!

It was fun to think about getting a head start. Soon enough, soon enough!

Over the last decade, tremendous gains have been made in rose breeding, resulting in rose bushes that blend well into landscape plantings and require less maintenance for the homeowner. I still enjoy my heirlooms, and grow the Rugosa to remind me of the beach.

Still others prefer climbers or hybrid teas. Whatever your sweetheart may fancy, indulge this Valentine’s Day in a gift that will keep on giving!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 31 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.



Quabbin Regional School District
Should be **YOUR CHOICE** for School Choice.

Quabbin Regional Middle High School is hosting a
Prospective Middle and High School Students
School Choice Open House for Grades 6-12
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20TH 6:00 - 8:00 PM

The night will feature information on:

- **IB (International Baccalaureate)** World School Diploma Programme
- **AP (Advanced Placement)** Courses
- Comprehensive World Languages including American Sign Language
- Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (NJROTC)
- Opportunities for paid & unpaid internships
- Athletics, Clubs and Activities
- **Innovation Pathways Program including Advanced Manufacturing, Information Technology and Business & Finance**
- **Rich STEM offerings including robotics, biotechnology, cybersecurity, Project Lead The Way, horticulture**
- Award winning performing and visual arts programs including music, drama, arts, video production and digital design

Families new to Quabbin please

R.S.V.P. to

Jessica Bennett, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

jbennett@qrdsd.org

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EOE: Quabbin Regional School District's Policy of nondiscrimination will extend to students, staff, the general public and individuals with whom it does business; and will apply to race, color, national background, religion, sex, disability, economic status, political party, age, handicap, sexual orientation, gender identity, homelessness and other human differences.

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 or check out our Southbridge Softball Association Facebook page for more information.

THEATRE | FROM PAGE 1

“Death & Taxes” was written by Pat Cook in association with Dramatic Publishing and directed by Jay Valencourt. Producer of “Death & Taxes” was Joe Chenevert and Paula Hinerth served as stage manager.

Starring in “Death & Taxes” was Ruth Honthumb portraying Kathleen Lyles, the mayor of Hardwick and one of the Town Council members suspected of murder.

Chenevert played the role of Eddie King, the editor of the Hardwick Herald newspaper. Although deemed a suspect, King is also working on a big story regarding this mysterious murder.

Shelley Ingalls played Lydia Kleft, a sweet old lady who serves as secretary of the Town Hall. The audience will try to find out if Lydia is really a sweet old lady or if she is the culprit behind the mystery.

Derek Ingalls portrayed Wesley Thorne, the sheriff of Hardwick. Thorne can’t solve this case alone and must rely



The banquet hall of Hardwick Crossing Country Club had a big turnout of guests enjoying the show and a dinner during intermission of “Death & Taxes”. TURLEY PHOTOS BY RYAN DRAGO



Cora Sedgewick, portrayed by Missy McDonald, was the nosy neighbor in “Death & Taxes” and made her way through the dining hall during dinner time and intermission.

on his fellow Town Council members, even though they’re all suspects.

Valencourt played Carl Johansen, citizen of Hardwick and a suspect to the murder. The body was found in his living room.

Amber King played Mattie Johansen, Carl’s wife.

Missy McDonald played Cora Sedgewick, a nosy neighbor and member of the Town Council who is considered the “eyes and ears” of Hardwick. With a beer in one hand, binoculars in the other, Cora is determined to find the murderer, unless she’s putting on an act and is the murderer herself.

Greg Afton played Dr. Efreem Bishop, the town doctor of Hardwick. All in good time, the audience will figure out if Bishop is a good doctor or an evil doctor.

Anne Adams played Evelyn Martindale, a drama teacher who takes the responsibility of notetaker and investigator and asks all the interesting questions.

During intermission, the audience

enjoyed a chicken parmigiana dinner or rice and veggies as the main course. Salads and bread rolls were the appetizers and chocolate chip cookies were the dessert.

During the dinner portion of the dinner theatre, guests got to tour around the stage area to find clues and determine who might be the murderer. Guests would then ask questions during part two of “Death & Taxes”.

Towards the end of the show, guests received ballot cards to vote for who they thought the suspect was. For those who chose the correct guilty party, were entered into a drawing to receive a prize to go see the next show presented by the Theatre Guild of North Brookfield.

The cast really enjoyed their first time performing at Hardwick Crossing Country Club and they always seek new locations to perform in.

“We roam wherever the audience expects us,” said Valencourt.

The Theatre Guild of North Brookfield usually performs two dinner theatre shows a year and intends to return

to Hardwick Crossing.

The most common performance spot for the Theatre Guild of North Brookfield is the auditorium of North Brookfield Elementary School. The school is mostly used for musicals.

The theatre group also performs at Common Ground Ciderworks in North Brookfield and the North Brookfield Sportsman’s Club.

According to Valencourt, one of the best parts about performing with the Theatre Guild of North Brookfield is its everlasting bonds of friendships.

“The friendships that are formed over the years is the best,” said Valencourt. “We always love welcoming new talent.”

The next production from the Theatre Guild of North Brookfield will be the musical, “Mamma Mia” during the first couple weeks of May. Shows will take place at the North Brookfield Elementary School Auditorium on May 3 and 4 at 7:30 p.m.; May 5 at 2 p.m.; May 10 and 11 at 7:30 p.m.; and May 12 at 2 p.m.




Guests enjoyed a chicken parmigiana dinner during the intermission of “Death & Taxes”.



The scene was set as the characters were in a town council meeting to discuss a mysterious murder that happened in town.



The cast was interacting with the audience throughout the entire evening.



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- community -

Joan Wilkinson Burkhardt announces candidacy

Dear North Brookfield Community,
It is with great humility that I present myself as an independent candidate for Board of Selectmen.

I was raised in North Brookfield. I remember being "poppy girl" one Memorial Day, wearing my first communion dress as I placed flowers in a wreath on the Haston Library lawn. On summer days, I trekked into the woods with my friends to finally find the smallpox cave.

I donned my blue apron as I started my first job at Victory Supermarket.

In Gene Caille's U.S. History classes, I learned the importance of community involvement and civic responsibility. This led me to run for and secure my first office: President of North Brookfield High School Class of 1990.

When I entered the "adult world," it was with stability, common sense, and the open-mindedness that comes from being raised in a small town.

I went to Clark University on the Worcester County Alumni Scholarship. My experience at North Brookfield High School was so impactful that my senior year at Clark, I nominated my former history teacher, Leslie Munns, for their prestigious "Outstanding Secondary Educator of the Year" award, and you know what? She won.

We won - Ms. Munns, North Brookfield High School and North Brookfield.

Though I moved to a city out-of-state for several years for graduate school and to pursue a career in education, I chose to move back to North Brookfield to raise a family. I missed small-town culture, in which community and family are at the heart of our home.

As I watched my daughter, Julia's confidence bloom on Tabby LeBlanc's basketball team and my son, Gavin's self-assurance grow as a youth soccer referee, I was reminded why I came home.

My experience as a K-12 public educator and nonprofit university professor for the past 28 years has taught me many things. Most importantly, I have learned the value of being an independent ear who enters conversations and considers issues with an open mind.

In town government roles, impartiality and non-partisanship are crucial. As a Board of Selectmen member, I would take this approach to gain your trust and respect.

From our early history in shoe manufacturing and rubber products to our Town House renovation and restoration project, North Brookfield serves as an example of ingenuity and resilience.

As we hire our first Town Administrator, this is an exciting time. We have the opportunity to tap into our Administrator's expertise and build a future that is both fiscally stable and socially responsible.

I would very much like to be part of that effort.

As part of a community with such a rich history, my goal is to respect our past while helping build a future that makes Julia and Gavin want to raise their families here, too.

My goal as a select person is to offer an even-keeled, independent voice to our community.

I have been a lifelong independent and enter this opportunity wanting to hear different perspectives. My mission as your selectperson will be to represent and promote what is best for the people of North Brookfield.

We should all have a home our children and grandchildren want to come back to.

I humbly ask for your vote on May 6. Learn more about me at <https://vote-joan.org>

With gratitude,
Joan Wilkinson Burkhardt

Introducing Vaughn Schlegel for Selectman

In the Jan. 19 edition of Quaboag Current I announced my candidacy for Selectman in North Brookfield, because I love this town and want to both strengthen and preserve it.

As a longtime neighbor but relative newcomer to local politics, it only seemed proper to introduce myself further.

My name is Vaughn Schlegel, and I've lived and worked in and around North Brookfield my entire life. I'm the proud father of a 3-year-old daughter, loving husband to a beautiful wife, a Christian, and a working man. Although I grew up in Spencer, New Braintree, Warren, and Ludlow, North Brookfield is where my family and I have planted our stake, and moving is not on the agenda.

And while any place in the world could be improved in some way, sometimes preventing bad changes to wonderful places is half the battle for a sincere public servant.

Growing up, I was a Boy Scout and served in NJROTC. I graduated from David Prouty High School before undergraduate studies at Quinsigamond Community College, UMASS Dartmouth, and finally Becker College, where I graduated with a degree in Criminal Justice. Although not a Harvard man, I trust you won't hold that against me.

My professional career has spanned the economy like so many of us, from retail management to volunteer fire-fighting, from tree trimming to insurance investigations, and finally landed here as a City Letter Carrier for the North Brookfield Post Office, as well as

Shop Steward for the National Association of Letter Carriers. Because I feel strongly about the future of our town, I also serve proudly on our Finance Committee and Planning Board.

In my free time I love nothing more than spending time with friends and family. But I am also an avid outdoorsman with a passion for hiking, water sports, weightlifting, and anything else that keeps me in shape for my appointed rounds.

While history and politics have always been academic interests, I now hope to put them into practice for the benefit of our community.

Although we live in challenging times of political division and serious problems both here and across the United States, my approach to service in North Brookfield is simple and straightforward: do what is right by our people, with full honesty and candor, while preserving our many attributes but also addressing what needs fixing.

If you meet me on the campaign trail or just out and about in town, you might notice I'm not a polished politician with canned talking points. But you also won't suspect I'm anything but a proud family man, patriot, and advocate for our interests.

I would be honored to receive your vote on May 6, and more importantly, go to work for you and North Brookfield. Please visit my Facebook campaign page "Vaughn Schlegel for Selectman" for campaign updates, positions on the issues, and ways to help the effort.

Vaughn Schlegel

Brookfield Democrats to elect delegates to state convention

BROOKFIELD - Democrats in Brookfield will meet on Saturday, March 2 at 10:30 a.m. in the Brookfield Town Hall to elect two delegates and an alternate to represent the town at the 2024 Massachusetts Democratic Convention.

"For those interested in the 2024 elections, your local caucus is a great way to learn about the political process and meet candidates and activists at the grassroots level," said Brookfield Democratic Town Committee Chair Danielle Kane in a press release.

All registered and preregistered Democrats in Brookfield who are at least 16

years old by Feb. 15, 2024, are eligible to vote and run for the seats. Youth (ages 16-35), people with disabilities, people of color, veterans, members of the LGBTQ+ community not elected as delegates or alternates at the caucus are encouraged to apply for add-on seats by visiting massdems.org/massdems-convention.

The convention, which will vote to endorse its U.S. Senate candidate and to amend the party's charter, will be held June 1 at the DCU Center in Worcester.

For more information about this and future events, please visit brookfielddtc.org or email brookfield.dtc@gmail.com.

Lauren Gay joins EXIT Real Estate Executives

SPENCER - EXIT Real Estate Executives is pleased to announce that Lauren Gay has joined its growing team of dedicated real estate sales professionals.

EXIT Real Estate Executives, located at 130 West Main St., is a proud member

of EXIT Realty New England's rapidly expanding network of independently owned and operated brokerages across the region.

For more information, please visit www.exitrealty.com and www.joinexitrealty.com.

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- community -

News from the Quabbin Regional School District

From the desk of Colleen Mucha,
Superintendent of QRSD

100 days of learning

Students across the Quabbin Regional School District recently celebrated 100 days of learning, which means 100 days of building skills, 100 days of making friends, 100 days of doing hard things and 100 days of coming together as a community.

This milestone is typically celebrated in our elementary schools with students engaging in learning activities that help them develop a deeper understanding of the “value” of 100. It can be working with 100 objects or even dressing as if you were 100 years old.

This year our students and staff brought their best “100” game forward as evidenced in the photos.

For our older students, this marks the mid-way point in the year. They are thinking about their academic success and/or struggle. They wonder about what is the right path for them? What might they want to do upon graduation?

Many fear making the wrong choice or a choice that may not fit with what might be expected of them. When they see this article, they may yearn for the days of discovering the “value” of 100.

Many may even embrace dressing like they were 100!

It is normal for many high school students, especially underclassmen, to not know what career they are interested in beyond high school and which path is right for them. Students benefit



These Quabbin elementary students dressed like they were 100 years old. SUBMITTED PHOTOS

from participating in internships, employment and other opportunities.

This allows them to learn about themselves – do they enjoy working as part of a team, do they prefer to interact with others in a social way, or do they like hands-on work?

Students can get these experiences here at Quabbin and they can partic-

ipate in internships both within the school setting and outside in our community. We held a career fair on Feb. 28. Our students had the opportunity to learn about a variety of careers and talk to employers about possible opportunities for jobs and internships.

This time of year is important for our rising grade nine-12 students as they begin to choose courses for next year. The majority of students report that their family members have the greatest influence on their post graduation plans.

I encourage you to take a moment to pause and reflect with your child, grandchild, neighbor, etc. - no matter what age they are. Acknowledge what you notice that is a strength and unique to them. Recognizing their ability to make others feel at ease or that they are artistic can help them to gain a sense of confidence and allow them to see their own strengths more clearly.

Ask them which classes they enjoy most and why? Finding little moments over the years to talk about their interests and their strengths will go a long way in helping students as they consider

careers beyond high school.

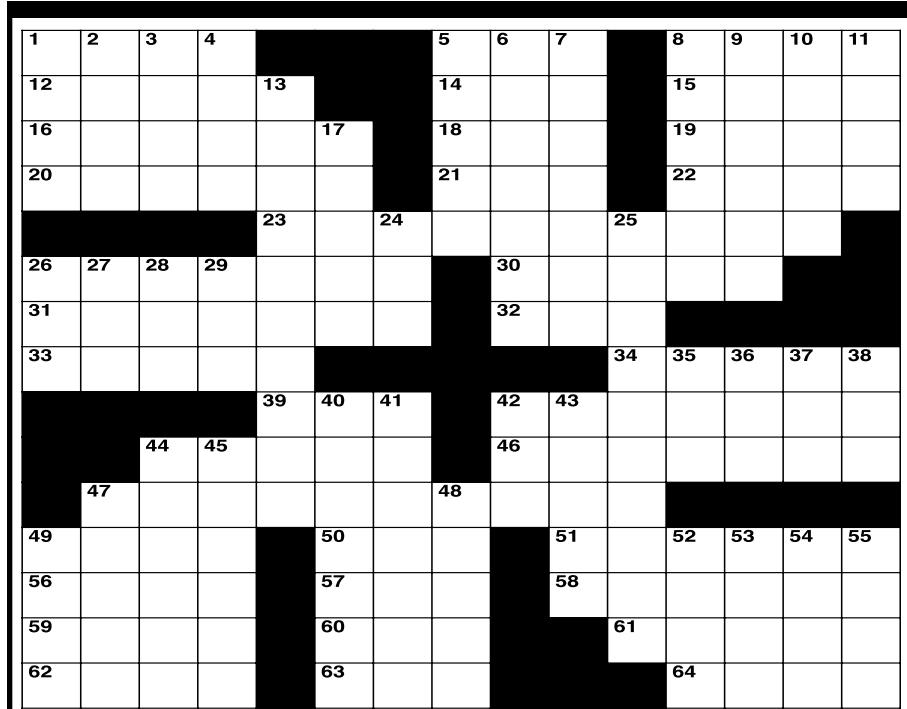
Review the course offerings and talk about what might be a good fit. Sometimes, choosing something unexpected can open a world of possibilities.

One hundred days marks a different moment for our Class of 2024. They are only 72 days away from graduation. Some may feel like they are ready to take on the world and others may feel like they need a little more time.

What is true, is that there is tremendous excitement amongst our Seniors. Some have been speaking with employers, recruitment officers and post secondary institutions.

Our students plan to enter the workforce, join the military and/or pursue college and educational experiences. At this point in the year, our seniors have been accepted into 77 colleges and universities and these notifications keep coming.

Join me in celebrating the growth of all of our students in the Quabbin Regional School District. We can't wait to see what you accomplish in the second half of the year. #BeQuabbin



CLUES ACROSS

1. Home of Iowa State University
5. ___-fi (slang)
8. Mottled green and yellow fruit
12. Capable of thinking and expressing oneself clearly
14. Sports broadcaster Eagle
15. Midday
16. Kinsmen
18. Cable network
19. Simpleton
20. Brunch beverage
21. Fed
22. European capital
23. Native inhabitants
26. Mechanical device
30. Rare geese native to Hawaii
31. Bedroom furnishing
32. The products of human creativity

33. Mass transit option
34. Made a mistake
39. Sacred sound symbol
42. Large N. American reindeer
44. Dull and flat
46. Partner to huffing
47. Written works
49. Monetary unit of Serbia
50. Midway between east and southeast
51. Peninsula of southwestern Asia
56. Widely used multiuser OS
57. Aggressive dog
58. Varnished
59. Hindu queen
60. Time units, abbr.
61. Farm animals
62. Capital of Latvia
63. Where golfers begin
64. Takes to civil court

CLUES DOWN

1. One who graduated
2. An inspired holy person
3. Electronic counter-countermeasures
4. A place to store things
5. Indian instrument
6. Spanish saloon
7. Whole number
8. Not fastened
9. Gives a boost
10. Lounges about
11. Interested in
13. Remove salt
17. Type of sword
24. Naturally occurring solid material
25. Gets involved without being invited
26. Feline
27. Bobby ___, NHL champ
28. “Kill Bill” actress Thurman
29. Hawaiian dish
35. Moroccan coastal region
36. Baseball statistic
37. Long period of time
38. Moved earth
40. Central Netherlands city
41. Take stock of
42. Central processing unit
43. Distinctive qualities one generates
44. Getting stuck
45. Loss of bodily movements
47. Veranda
48. Abrupt
49. What cats do
52. Expresses pleasure
53. Type of cheese
54. Professional STEM organization
55. Automatic data processing systems



Staff at the Quabbin District elementary schools made themselves look 100 years old.



SPORTS

Top-seeded Tantasqua girls win tournament

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WORCESTER—Led by the trio of senior Gabby Scanlon, junior Maya Gidopolous, and Sophie Webb, the top-seeded Lady Warriors completed the win with a 40-29 victory over the second-seeded Northbridge Rams in the girls Large School finals held at the Kneller Athletic Center located in the middle of the Clark University campus, last Saturday night.

“It’s an honor winning the Clark championship title, especially after watching my brother’s team do it last night,” said Webb, who scored eight of her 10 points during the first half. “Being able to win the title in the same year as my brother is a very special thing for my family. “It’s just an amazing feeling. Hopefully, we can win another Clark title next year.”

While Gidopolous, who scored a team-high 11 points in

the finals, and Webb (10 points) will have an opportunity to defend their Clark Large School title next February, it was the only Clark appearance for Scanlon (10 points), along with her classmates Riley West, and Nicki Vejack.

“We’ve played in other tournaments during the past couple of years, but we never won them,” said Scanlon, who’s a tri-captain with Vejack and West. “It feels great to win this tournament for the first time, especially after the boys won their game last night. We supported them and they were here supporting us tonight.”

Sophomore Sophie Ezzo scored seven points off the bench for the Lady Warriors.

“Sophie doesn’t usually play a ton of minutes, but she always plays very hard anytime she’s on the court,” said Tantasqua head coach Andy Haley. “She gave us a spark off the bench in

See **TOURNAMENT** PAGE 11



Tantasqua girls basketball are Clark Tournament champions. TURLEY PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON

Tantasqua takes victory in Clark Tournament



Tantasqua boys basketball captured the Clark Tournament Large School Championship last week. TURLEY PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WORCESTER—Prior to being named as the boys’ varsity basketball coach at Tantasqua Regional, Scott Dion was the varsity coach at David Prouty for 11 seasons.

Winning a Clark Tournament championship title was one of the things that Dion couldn’t accomplish as either a player or coach at his alma mater.

That dream became a reality last Friday night, as Dion guided the sixth-seeded Warriors to a 44-42 victory over

fourth-seeded and SWCL-A rival Millbury in the 83rd Clark Tournament Large School championship game before a standing room only crowd at the Kneller Athletic Center located on the Clark University campus.

“I was the head coach at Prouty for eleven years and when I took the Tantasqua job, I thought my dream of winning a Clark Championship Title was done. At that time, Tantasqua wasn’t eligible for the Clark Tournament. We’re now Clark eligible and winning a championship game is a treat for me personally. Growing up

in Spencer, I know all about the history of this outstanding tournament.”

Before coaching his team in the large school finals last Friday night, Dion watched the second-seeded David Prouty Panthers lose to top-seeded Maynard, 68-55, in the small school finals.

Tantasqua (14-7), who became eligible for the Clark Tournament for the first time in many years a year ago, lost to Grafton High School in the quarterfinals.

Their journey in this year’s Clark tourney lasted a little bit

See **TANTASQUA** | PAGE 11

Panthers take Central Mass. title

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WORCESTER—The fans of the Quabbin girls’ varsity basketball team who attended last Wednesday night’s Central Mass. Athletic Directors Association Class B championship game at Worcester State University witnessed a little bit of history.

The top-seeded Lady Panthers captured the Class B championship title by posting a 35-23 victory over the second-seeded Notre Dame Rebels.

“It took a special group of kids to achieve this champion-

ship,” said Quabbin head coach Evan Barringer. “Tonight’s game is kind of a microcosm of our whole season. It was a very close game until our four seniors and sophomore Mia Ducos, who always plays like a senior, took over. Our senior leadership was probably the biggest difference in tonight’s game.”

The last time that the Quabbin girls’ basketball team won a sectional title was during the 1975-76 season when they were the District 3 small schools champions.

“Winning this champion-

See **PANTHERS** | PAGE 10



Mia Ducos faces off with an opponent as she looks for a path to the hoop. TURLEY PHOTO BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

- sports -

PANTHERS | FROM PAGE 9

ship game is extremely special and it goes beyond just putting a banner on the wall in our gym," said Quabbin senior co-captain Hannah Baxter, who scored nine points in the Class B Finals. "The four seniors have changed the culture of this basketball team for the better during the past couple of years. We've come so far, and we've worked so hard to achieve this championship. I hope this is something that our younger basketball players can strive for in the coming years."

The other three Quabbin senior-co-captains are Meg Doyle (9 points), Riley Bassett (6 points), and Brianna Whitelaw.

"We did start off the game slowly because we hadn't played a game in this type of atmosphere before," said Doyle, who was the Lady Panthers leading scorer during the regular season. "We played much better during the second half, especially in the third quarter. We just played the game at our pace."

Ducos scored nine of her team leading 11 points during the second half.

"All of our points were spread out between several different players," Barringer said. "Everyone did their job and that's why we're champions."

The Lady Panthers, who had a 16-4 overall record, advanced into the CMADA championship game following a 53-41 semifinal home victory over fourth-seeded Blackstone Valley Tech on February 16.

Quabbin also defeated Notre Dame, 50-44, in a non-league road game at the beginning of February. Ducos scored a team-high 21 points while the four Lady Panthers seniors combined to score the other 29 points in that contest.

Just like she has done before home games this season, Quabbin junior Leanna Leger sang the National Anthem prior to the opening tipoff of the Class B finals.

Playing under the bright lights of a college size basketball court for the first time did take the Quabbin players a little while to get used to.

"We were a little bit nervous at the start of the game," Ducos said. "Our main goal was to win tonight's game and we executed a lot better in the second half."

The Rebels (7-13), who lost to Tyngsborough, 54-47, in last year's Class B finals on the same court, held the lead for almost the first three quarters.

Maddie Dugan, who's the only senior listed on the Rebels varsity basketball roster, scored seven points in the opening quarter, which helped her team build an 11-6 lead entering the second quarter.

Dugan finished the game with 11

points and was the Rebels only player to reach double digits.

Notre Dame junior Addison Pong, who entered the Class B championship game as the second-leading girls' scorer in Central Mass. was held to a season low of five points.

"Addison Pong is a great basketball player, but we stepped into the lanes and drew several charges in tonight's game," Barringer said. "We also switched from 3-2 to a 2-3 zone in the second half and we didn't let her have very many shot attempts. We always try to shut down the other team's leading scorer in every game that we play."

A Doyle 3-pointer from the left side and a Baxter base-line jumper, which were Quabbin's only field goals of the second quarter, tied the score for the first time at 11-11 with 3:05 remaining in the opening half.

In the final seconds of the first half, eighth grader Julianne Kelly (5 points) made a free throw sending the Rebels into the locker room holding a slim 12-11 halftime lead.

The turning point of the game took place during the final three minutes of the third quarter and the first three minutes of the final quarter, as the Lady Panthers put together an 11-0 run.

After receiving a pass from Bassett, Baxter made an inside basket closing the gap to 17-15.

Then the score was tied for the second time following a fastbreak lay-up by Doyle.

Ducos also made back-to-back layups giving Quabbin a 21-17 lead with 1:55 left in the third quarter.

Baxter scored the final three points of the Lady Panthers run early in the fourth quarter.

NDA couldn't get any closer than five points the rest of the way.

With 42.9 seconds left on the scoreboard clock, Ducos made a pair of free throws pushing the Lady Panthers advantage to twelve points (35-23), which was their largest lead of the ballgame.

Following a turnover, Ducos dribbled the ball as the final seconds ticked off the scoreboard clock before celebrating with her teammates.

"I knew that we could win this game," Ducos said. "Once we took the lead in the second half, we played with a lot more energy and we executed a lot better."

Quabbin, who won their fifth consecutive game, had a week off before beginning their journey in the Division 3 state tournament. The 18th-seeded Lady Panthers were scheduled to play a road game against the 15th-seeded East Bridgewater Vikings (14-8) in a round of 32 contest on Wednesday night.



Riley Bassett goes for a layup. TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Brooke Austin circles the perimeter.



Meaghan Doyle goes for a jump shot in traffic.



Hannah Baxter tries to get out of the paint after making a rebound.

Candlepin League News

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

Tuesday Night Commercial Elks League

PALMER – The third and final round of the 2023-2024 league season began for the Commercial Elks League.

Finishing in first place was Life is Good with a record of 30-10 to secure a playoff spot at the end of the season. The Champs R Here finished in second place at 26.5-13.5.

Acres finished in third place at 24-16. Team BK finished at 23-17, Compression at 19.5-20.5, Blue B's at 19-21 and Last in Line at 17-23. Life is Good will be joining Compression in the playoffs at the end of the season.

To start off the new round, Life is Good bowled against The Champs R Here. In game one, The Champs took the first game by a score of 371-353. In game two, Life is Good evened up the match by winning the second game 391-373.

Filling in for Life is Good is Bryan Surprise who had a big game in the second scoring 134. In game three, Champs R Here won the last game by a score of 381-372. Champs R Here won total pinfall by a final score of 1125-1116.

Last in Line bowled against Blue B's in week one of round three. In game one, Blue B's won 373-333. In game two,

Blue B's won again 354-352. In game three, Blue B's won for a three-game sweep over Last in Line by a score of 363-358.

Total pinfall was won by Blue B's 1090-1043.

Thursday Night Mixed League

The Thursday Night Mixed League continues in the second round of the candlepin league season. As of Feb. 15, Team One is in a tie for first place with Team Four. Both teams have a record of 19-13.

Team One bowled against Team Three on the night of Thursday, Feb. 22. In game one, Team One took the first game 455-402. Sean Comerford of Team One bowled his best game of the season, 127.

In game two, Team One was the winner yet again by a score of 413-392. In game three, Team One took the third game 430-364. Team One took total pinfall by a final score 1298-1158.

Team Four bowled against Team Six. In game one, Team Six won the first game by a score of 399-369. In game two, Team Six won again by a score of 428-402. Ron Restaino of Team Six led the team in game two by bowling a 109.

In game three, Team Six won the third game for a three-game sweep over Team Four. Team Six scored 430 and Team Four scored 413. Team Six won total pinfall by a final score of 1257-1184.

- sports -

Pioneers fall in finale before playoffs

PALMER – Last week, Pathfinder boys basketball participated in non-playoff action, hosting Mt. Greylock. The Pioneers would be tied at halftime, but ultimately were edged by the Mountie 60-57 last Wednesday night. In the loss, Richie Gula had 27

points while Hunter Griswold scored 17 points. Adam Slonka added 10 points. The Pioneers drew a local matchup for the Division 5 state tournament, and played at Palmer High School earlier this week.



Richie Gula heads for the layup. TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Adrien Moskovitz angles toward the left side of the court as Pathfinder takes over on offense.



Seth Mitchell drives into the paint.



Hunter Griswold one-hands a pass under pressure.



Cayden Bousquet tries to get around a Mt. Greylock guard.

TOURNAMENT | FROM PAGE 9

tonight's game. She just did a great job." Tantasqua junior Maggie Johnson only points of the Clark finals came on a lay-up late in the second quarter.

During the past couple of years, the Lady Warriors (17-4) competed in the Westborough Girls Basketball Invitational Tournament during the February school vacation week. They made their first appearance in the Clark Tournament.

"The girls were here last night for the boys' game, and they watched them celebrate their win in the championship game," said Haley, who also attended the boy's game. "It was an opportunity for them to see how much fun it'll be if we could win tonight's game. It's awesome that the players on both basketball teams support each other."

Tantasqua, who have won seven games in a row, began the Clark Tournament by dispatching eighth-seeded Oakmont Regional, 33-17 in the quarterfinals, which was held at Grafton High School. They then squeaked out a 30-26 win over fourth-seeded Millbury in the semifinals, which took place at the Kneller Athletic Center.

The Lady Warriors will now enter the Division 3 state tournament as the 13th-seed. They're scheduled to host 20th-seeded Dennis-Yarmouth in a round of 32 game at 5pm on Friday night. The boys' team will also be facing Dennis-Yarmouth in the second game of the doubleheader.

It was the third meeting of the 2023-24 season between the Tantasqua and Northbridge girls' basketball teams, who are SWCL-A Division rivals.

The Rams (15-6) pulled out a 45-38 win at the Tantasqua Field House on January 8.

A month later, the Lady Warriors evened the season series with a 38-29 road victory.

A year ago, Northbridge lost to Grafton, 46-27, in the Clark Large School finals.

While the Tantasqua boys' team had to overcome an 11-point second half

deficit to defeat SWCL-A rival Millbury in their championship game, the Lady Warriors never trailed in last Saturday's game.

With 5:04 left in the first quarter, Gidopolous was fouled while making a lay-up. She made the bonus free throw giving the Lady Warriors a 6-1 advantage.

Northbridge junior Molly Gahan, who led the way offensively with a game-high 21 points, scored the next five points which tied the score for the first time.

With a minute remaining in the first quarter, Webb made her second 3-pointer, which helped her team keep the lead.

Gahan scored an inside hoop making a one point game entering the second stanza.

Two minutes into the second quarter, Gidopolous was fouled while making a 3-pointer from the right corner. She also made the free throw completing the rare four point play, which gave the Lady Warriors a 17-8 lead.

Just like in the opening quarter, the Rams came storming back.

Senior Erika Dresp (4 points) made a 3-pointer from the left side before Gahan scored her team's five points tying the score for the second time at 17-17 with a little more than two minutes remaining in the first half.

The Lady Warriors, who held a slim 20-18 halftime lead, outscored the Rams, 7-4, during the third quarter. Ezzo scored five of those points and Scanlon also made a lay-up, which hung on the rim for a second before dropping into the net.

Scanlon made two more lay-ups at the start of the fourth quarter, which pushed the Lady Warriors' lead to 31-22.

Tantasqua's lead reached double digits at 37-27 late in the game following a drive by Gidopolous.

Then Scanlon made three foul shots, which allowed the Tantasqua faithful supporters to celebrate back-to-back Clark titles.

TANTASQUA | FROM PAGE 9

longer.

After blowing out third-seeded Westborough, 80-47, in the quarterfinals at Shepherd Hill Regional, the Warriors beat seventh-seeded Oakmont Regional, 52-30, in the semifinals at the Kneller Athletic Center.

"We lost in the quarterfinals last year and for us to win a championship in our second year eligible for this tournament is very special," Dion said. "This is one of the best feelings in the world."

Tantasqua and Millbury (17-6) split the two regular season meetings.

The Warriors took an early 4-0 lead in the Clark Finals following field goals by junior James Sciaraffa (13 points) and junior Elijah Webb, who scored a game-high 15 points.

With the help of two three-pointers each by senior Kenny Donnelly, who scored 11 of his team-high 14 points in the first half, and sophomore Jimmer Donnelly (8 points) the Woolies held a 14-9 lead at the end of the opening quarter.

In the two regular season games against Tantasqua, Kenny Donnelly, who was battling the flu in the Clark championship game, scored 21, and 22 points. He made a total of nine 3-pointers in those two games.

Tantasqua senior Jack Rapose, who only scored two points, did a good job of defending against Kenny Donnelly.

"Kenny scored more than 20 points both times we played Millbury during the regular season," Dion said. "Jack did a very good job of guarding him in tonight's game. He also limited his three points shots. Jack is a very smart basketball player."

The other two Tantasqua seniors are Colm McGrath (3 points), and Bryce Tessier (6 points).

The Warriors continued to struggle offensively in the second quarter, and they were trailing, 28-17, at halftime.

"We knew it was going to be a tough battle for us to comeback in the second half, but I knew that we could do it," McGrath said. "I have a lot of faith in these guys and it's just an awesome

feeling. This is probably the best win of my varsity career. This is a very special tournament and I hope it never ends."

The Warriors began their comeback in the third quarter.

Back-to-back 3-pointers by Webb sliced the Warriors deficit to 30-25 with 5:10 left in the third quarter.

"I just did my job and so did my teammates," Webb said. "I really can't describe my feelings right now. It's just an amazing feeling. I'm hoping we can make it back here again next year."

With 2:30 left in the third, a driving lay-up by Sciaraffa closed the gap to 35-32.

The duo of Sciaraffa and Webb combined to score 14 of the Warriors 17 third quarter points. Tessier also added an old-fashioned three-point play.

Trailing, 39-34, at the end of the third quarter, the Warriors held the Woolies to just three points during the final eight minutes.

The Warriors cut their deficit to 42-40 following a lay-up by sophomore Sam Pieczynski (5 points) in the middle of the fourth quarter.

McGrath made a free throw a minute later, which closed the gap to one point.

After several turnovers and missed shots by both teams, Sciaraffa made the biggest basket of the game. His 3-pointer from the left side with 25 seconds left in regulation gave the Warriors a 44-42 lead for the first time since the beginning of the opening quarter.

"I'm not normally a 3-point shooter, but I was wide open, and I decided to take a shot," Sciaraffa said. "We beat a very good Millbury team. We have a lot of respect for them."

The Woolies had a couple of chances to tie the score or retake the lead down the stretch, but they missed a 3-pointer and a lay-up before the Warriors players celebrated winning a Clark title for the first time.

The Warriors, who are the ninth seed in the Division 3 state tournament, are scheduled to host 24th-seeded Dennis-Yarmouth in a round of 32 game on Friday night.

- community -

LIBRARY | FROM PAGE 1

of February featured an ice skating craft, a “love birds” craft, a bird seed feeder craft last week, and this week, polar bears.

What will March hold for fun crafts to do with friends?

She gets inspiration for crafts from Pinterest, various national holidays, and creates craft ideas that encourage the growth of fine motor skills (like cutting) and learning about something new.

“I love seeing the enjoyment the kids get, and being able to interact with them,” Lamb said.

In the next few months, there will be a new program called “Read, Renew, Repeat” which will include summer reading activities, and themes surrounding nature, animals, and self-love.

“I hope the kids develop an appreciation for nature. I want to get them more in touch with nature through programs and reading books,” Lamb said about the upcoming program.

Lamb enjoys finding different ways to interact with the library’s youth and engage them in new and exciting things.

There will be an upcoming Easter



Children assembled 3-D polar bears. TURLEY PHOTOS BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS

egg hunt, one indoors and one outdoors, with the times and official dates to be determined. Keep a look out for updates.



Miss Bri is shown reading to the group during this past Tuesday’s story time.



Children and their parents put together their polar bear crafts with Miss Bri.



Wayne Boulette, known as the Chairman of the Board is shown with some of his cutting boards. TURLEY PHOTO BY RICHARD MURPHY

MARKET | FROM PAGE 1

perature, though not tropical, was seasonably warm enough as one entered West Brookfield’s historic First Congregational Church for the Feb. 21 Winter Farmers Market.

On turning left and walking to the side, we come upon a man known as the Chairman of the Board.

The great singer, Frank Sinatra, was known as the Chairman of the Board as he crooned his way to the top of the charts. If you expect to hear the voice of the late famous vocalist, you’re in the wrong place.

Instead, there are real boards and the artist who actually transforms them into shapes both interesting and useful.

Wayne Boulette may not have been born to work in wood, but that has not stopped him from making a career of it. Carpenter was his job, having worked for Masiello Construction as a union member.

A bit less than two decades ago, he retired...sort of. He spent a few years building garages, and again retired... sort of.

Since then, he took on a job title that has some meaning, Chairman of the Board, with no singing involved.

Of course, he could have called himself Chairman of the Boards, as there are a lot of them.

There are typical cutting boards, charcuterie boards, rolling pins, specialty shape cheeseboards and butter boards. One unique design that is not for the kitchen, but might encourage saving is the wooden piggy bank on rockers.

All of them were made locally, that is, just next door in North Brookfield where Boulette resides.

The business is veteran as well as dog lover owned. Boulette donates most of the profits to the ASPCA. His dogs are two poodles, Mini and Rascal from the same mother.

He and his wife, Karen, have human children also, with kids and careers of their own.

The Chairman of the Board will be at the Summer Market, and in the fall, at the Apple Country Fair in Brookfield.

Coaching with Deb Maclin

Attending the farmers market, as you enter or leave the Church, there is a small room just off to the side that is separate, but still part of the market.

Why is this so?

A bit of privacy is necessary as coaching is being done, one on one, by Deb Maclin. She is at the market as Quantum Breakthroughs.

Maclin and family dealt with health issues about 16 years ago and since then she has been on a journey of “coaching for wellness with holistic healing tools so that people and even animals can reset, recover and re-claim their natural states of wholeness — health, vitality and creative power.”

The desire to help people make the most of their abilities started small. It was the learning of techniques and attaining of licensure and certifications.

Maclin emphasizes, she is a coach, not a doctor.

Most would agree that a system overloaded by stressors can’t function optimally, and this is where a coach is valuable, helping one to learn to clear stress, and harmonize body mind and spirit.

Different kinds of biofeedback can help to gather information about stress in the mind-body-spirit system. Maclin utilizes a software-based system as well as one of applied kinesiology known as The Wholeness Method.

With coaching, clients can learn to use this feedback to tap into inner strengths, use the body’s energy systems to de-stress, and relax, thus gaining calm, clarity and energy to move forward.

If you are experiencing pain, Maclin is having a special offer. She uses kinesiology working as a licensed Spiritual Health Coach, certified Biofeedback Specialist, and a Stress and Pain Management Specialist, and a Natural Therapies Coach and has been since 2007.

Maclin points out that, though pain is inevitable, suffering is optional. “Whether you feel a little sore or intensely uncomfortable, you can increase your comfort and ease and work toward lasting relief.”

She is also offering a free 15-minute phone consult for those wanting more information and to decide on a pain relief session. One can leave a message by calling 413-559-7153.

Also available at the market are session gift certificates, handcrafted botanicals for body garden and pets. There are also affordable 20-minute sessions.

There is more information at the website: QuantumBreakthroughs.com.



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LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30A, 18-25, as amended by Chapter 28 of the Acts of 2009, The Wetlands Protection Act, the West Brookfield Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on **WEDNESDAY March 6, 2024 at 6:00 pm** in the first floor meeting room, West Brookfield Town Hall, 2 East Main Street.
6:10 – Public Hearing:
•RDA – 7 Rodman Street – Gerald Nichols – Retaining

wall reconstruction
•NOI Continuation – Rte. 9 Reconstruction and Rehabilitation
03/01/24

TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that in accordance with the provisions of M.G.L Chapter 40A, Section 9, and Section 11 Back Lot Permit, of the West Brookfield Zoning Bylaws, the Planning Board will open a public hearing on **Monday March 18 2024 at 7:00 pm** in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 2 East Main Street, for the following application:

Justin Paquette of 103 Rice Corner Rd, Brookfield seeks Special Permit approval to create a Backlot, approximately 6.5 acres at 141 and 143 Shea Road, West Brookfield.

Interested parties may review the plan at the office of the Town Clerk in the Town Hall, 2 East Main Street, West Brookfield. A copy is posted on the display board outside of the Town Hall.

The Board invites all interested parties to attend the public hearing.

Rebekah Cornell
Chairwoman
03/01, 03/08/24

East Brookfield Police Log

During the week of Feb. 19-25, the East Brookfield Police Department responded to 139 building/property checks, 77 directed area patrols, seven traffic controls, 12 radar assignments, six emergency 911 calls, three complaints, one fraud, one identity theft, three citizen assists, six assist other agencies, three investigations, one safety hazard, three animal calls and 45 motor vehicle stops in the town of East Brookfield.

Monday, Feb. 19

1:51 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Investigated
9:56 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, West Main Street, Services Rendered
4:39 p.m. Motor Vehicle Accident, Howe Street, Arrest(s) Made

Tuesday, Feb. 20

8:28 a.m. Investigation, South Pond Road, Negative Contact
9:19 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Out of Town, Spoken To
9:49 a.m. Investigation, Connie Mack Drive, Dispatch Handled
11:57 a.m. Complaint, Harrington Lane, Spoken To
12:56 p.m. Fraud, Connie Mack Drive, Report Taken
3:41 p.m. Safety Hazard, East Main Street, Services Rendered
3:56 p.m. Assist Citizen, High Rocks Road, Spoken To

Wednesday, Feb. 21

11:40 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Unknown, Dispatch Handled
1:30 p.m. Identity Theft, Connie Mack Drive, Officer Handled
4:14 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
4:21 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Route 49, Citation Issued
5:06 p.m. Radar, Route 49, Citation Issued
5:25 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, North Brookfield Road, Citation Issued
5:47 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
8:01 p.m. Complaint/Motor Vehicle Operations, East Main Street, Negative Contact
8:19 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Out of Town, Negative Contact
10:21 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Flag Road, Citation Issued

Thursday, Feb. 22

4:46 a.m. Parking Complaint, East Main Street, Officer Handled
9:10 a.m. 911 Hang-up/Abandoned, Howe Street, Officer Handled
1:30 p.m. Assist Citizen, Unknown, Spoken To
1:40 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Unknown, Officer Handled

1:43 p.m. Assist Other Agency, West Sturbridge Road, Dispatch Handled
2:02 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued

Friday, Feb. 23

9:47 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Mechanic Street, Citation Issued
10:46 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
11:03 a.m. Assist Citizen, Connie Mack Drive, Report Taken
5:02 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Route 49, Citation Issued
8:07 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Route 49, Citation Issued
11:51 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued

Saturday, Feb. 24

2:20 a.m. Motor Vehicle Accident, Podunk Road, Report Taken
8:18 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
8:27 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
8:42 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
9:07 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
9:12 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, North Brookfield Road, Citation Issued
9:24 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
9:37 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Mechanic Street, Citation Issued
10:26 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
10:36 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
10:47 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
11:04 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
11:19 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
11:26 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
3:06 p.m. 911 Trespass, Blaine Avenue, Taken to Family/Guardian
8:46 p.m. 911 Motor Vehicle Accident, Mechanic Street, Negative Contact
9:17 p.m. Complaint/Motor Vehicle Operations, Route 49, No Action Required

Sunday, Feb. 25

9:06 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
9:32 a.m. Investigation, West Main Street, Investigated
11:54 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Route 49, Vehicle Towed
12:30 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, East Main Street, Services Rendered
1:55 p.m. Assist Other Agency, North Street, Negative Contact

BUDGET | FROM PAGE 1

their best foot forward to give our kids these opportunities, which is outstanding," Duff said.

Warren's total operating assessment is proposed at \$4,375,731 (\$21,644 or 0.5% over last year) and West Brookfield's total operating assessment is \$4,560,838 (\$81,386 or 1.76% over last year).

"When you look at the overall net assessment to the town," Duff told Warren Board of Selectmen. "We've never been at .05% before."

Duff credited part of this to regional transportation reimbursement.

Duff said it's also important to note the school district's efforts to be efficient including partnering with the towns for a Green Communities grants which helped fund and HVAC upgrade at Warren Community Elementary School and a lighting upgrade at West Brookfield Elementary School.

Energy and lighting upgrades through National Grid were also completed at Quaboag Regional Middle High School and at each elementary school.

Since these upgrades have been completed, Duff said the school district has seen a decrease in daily heating oil usage. He said the school district will continue to track the gallons used per day to make adjustments to the fiscal year 2026 heating oil line item.

"The total project efficiencies were \$1.5 million that the district took on in one year," Duff said. "We're going from 140,000 to 40,000 kilowatts per hour... [in five years] we're going to see some very significant savings for the towns, both in fuel and electricity"

The total projected cost to local assessments for these efficiency projects is \$56,000 (or \$942 per month) over five years.

Duff said the school district has received a number of competitive grants thanks to the efforts Assistant Superintendent of Development Madeline Smola and Facilities Director Marc Astrella. Total grants received equaled \$1,963,555.

Grants received include Growing Literacy Equity Across Massachusetts, Innovation Pathways, Social Emotional Learning, High Quality Instructional Materials, 21st Century, After School and Out of School Time, Acceleration Academy, Student Opportunity Act and Ignite!

"If you take that and combine it with what we've done in energy efficiencies, you're looking at roughly \$3.4 million in grants and energy efficiencies, which ultimately help impact the local assessment," he said. Duff said the school district is looking at this as a long term solution because it's a six year project.

Duff said the total operating assessment increased by \$103,051, with \$21,644 to Warren and \$81,386 to West Brookfield.

For Warren, the transportation assessment is expected to decrease by \$118,603 and for West Brookfield by \$90,170.

Contributing factors to budget changes for FY 25 include salary increases (an increase of \$357,857 or 3%), Medicaid (\$5,188 or 2.8%), transportation (\$29,191 or 2%), special education tuition (\$117,738 or 7.5%), insurance (\$171,899 or 6.4%), special education transportation (\$8,851 or -1.1%), fuel (\$54,525 or -15%) and electricity (\$83,530 or -26%).

"There's pros and cons," Duff said of these factors.

The School Committee will vote on the proposed budget on March 18.

QUABOAG CURRENT

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