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Friday, March 20, 2026

The return of **Doolin Lads** celebrated at Merriam Gilbert Library

By Richard Murphy
Correspondent

WEST BROOKFIELD – Last Thursday was a lovely day weather wise, but indoors things would also warm up as it was time for the annual *Doolin Lads* concert upstairs in West Brookfield’s Merriam Gilbert Library.

As 6:30 p.m. approached two fellows carried instruments to the front of the room and began to set up. There would be a short discussion of the Irish connection to the Choctaw and other native people due to native generosity during the famine and Tim, who had studied the native flute, would play his composition, “*Hina Hanta*”, or the Bright Path.

As usual, the Doolin lads, Tim Loftus and John Ebersold, would be introduced by the library’s Holly Takorian.

Then to the evening’s music, and there was a lot of it.

They began with the jig



The Doolin Lads, Tim Loftus and John Ebersold.

TURLEY PHOTO BY RICHARD MURPHY

“*Out on the Ocean*” and then “*Trip to Killarney*”.

Nest would be “*The River Lea*”, a soulful tune introduced by John with reference to the singer Jim Milner. John would perform it with heart.

Of course, the night

would not be complete without the playing and singing of “*The Wild Rover*”. The song about the wastrel life. It would be followed by “*Rolling Home to Ireland*”.

“*South Wind*” would be followed by the lively jig,

“*Haste to the Wedding*”.

The next set would contain shanties and jigs. It would consist of “*Road to Lisdoonvarna*”, “*Swallow-tail Jig*”, “*Drunken Sailor*”, “*Gilligan*” and “*Weller-*

SEE DOOLIN LADS PAGE 6

Superintendent gave update about tuition agreement

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

WARREN – Superintendent Stephen Duff said the North Brookfield School Committee voted to stay as a single town district for the 2026-2027 academic year.

He said they have been in conversation with North Brookfield for about four years, first to look at the possibility of a regional agreement amendment and second to discuss the possibility of a tuition agreement between the districts. At the Feb. 26 School Committee meeting, Duff said he will keep communication channels open with North Brookfield, in the event anything changes.

He said there were differences in the projected cost to provide special education services to North Brookfield students, and he said that was because North Brookfield had the students assigned one-to-one staffing to

calculate future costs.

“When we service kids in special education, if they’re in a small group, every student in that small group does not have a one-to-one teacher, it would be one teacher with five students,” Duff said.

Because of this, Duff said Quaboag Regional School District’s estimate for services was much lower than that projected by North Brookfield Public Schools.

“Our special education numbers and our special education costs I think were very spot-on,” he said.

WBES playground

Duff said the West Brookfield Elementary School PTO has been working to replace the old kindergarten playground that was removed last year due to safety concerns.

“The PTO has raised just about enough funds to complete the project,” he

SEE SUPERINTENDENT PAGE 6

Quaboag Alumni win game against current athletes

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

WARREN – Quaboag Regional Middle High School hosted the Quaboag Boys Basketball Alumni Game this past weekend.

This game was between the 2025-2026 Quaboag Varsity Basketball Team and Quaboag Basketball Alumni. This exciting game was free admission for all spectators, which consisted of dozens of family members, friends, and members of the Quaboag school community. Organizing this event is

Quaboag Basketball Coach and Teacher, Brandon Nichols-Hogan.

This school year was Nichols-Hogan’s first year as coach for the boy’s varsity basketball team, who recently had a successful season. The team had a 10-game winning streak during the regular season and qualified for the playoffs and for the Clark Tournament.

Nichols-Hogan said there have been alumni games hosted in the past, but he wanted this year to be more

SEE QUABOAG ALUMNI PAGE 5



Quaboag basketball players of the past and present were all under the same roof were about to play in the Quaboag gym for the Quaboag Boys Basketball Alumni Game.

TURLEY PHOTO BY RYAN DRAGO

Winter Market continues with arrival of warmer weather

By Richard Murphy
Correspondent

WEST BROOKFIELD – It is still winter here in New England, but spring should be jealous. The weather last Wednesday was as pleasant as July, though certainly not as hot.

One would think people would be sitting on benches on the Common, but there was a very good reason to cross the street over into The First Congregational Church of West Brookfield.

The First Congregational Church is where, from 3-6 p.m. the West Brookfield Winter Farmers Market is in session Wednesdays until spring arrives.

On this day, the market was packed and all were in



Linda Fuchs of Flourish Farm

TURLEY PHOTO BY RICHARD MURPHY



A close-up photograph by Paulette Adams, where a bird is looking at food in the palm of this hand.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS BY PAULETTE ADAMS

‘Life is like a camera’

Photographer Paulette Adams is March’s Featured Artist

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – Photographer

Paulette Adams has been selected as the Featured Artist for the month of March by the Friends of the North Brookfield Town House.

Adams’ journey with photography began while she was working for Marvin Richmond’s Color

SEE PAULETTE ADAMS PAGE 9

Police officers recognized for mutual aid

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – Board of Selectmen Vice-Chair Jamie Gilman read a letter from the Southbridge Police Department recognizing North Brookfield Police Officers Brent Lavoie and John Francis.

The two officers provided mutual aid assistance during a shooting incident in Southbridge last March.

The letter stated that Lavoie and Francis identified the vehicle involved on Prospect Street, in addition to recovering the suspected firearm used in the shooting, as well as two semiauto-

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- community -

Quabbin students having 'snow' much fun

*From the desk of
Quabbin Regional School
District Superintendent
Colleen Mucha*

This winter challenged all in ways that they have not experienced in awhile.

That is true for the Quabbin Regional School District students as well. There have been increased disruptions

to learning including delayed starts and no school days. At the moment, students are thrilled when they think of sleeping in and playing in the snow.

However, with the recent storm Quabbin staff offered their students a Snow Day Challenge. They asked them to be sure to help out their families, neighbors and community with snow

removal or whatever tasks were needed.

Quabbin Regional School District Superintendent Colleen Mucha reported Quabbin students rose to the chal-

lenge. Some students put in a full day's work and had very appreciative neighbors. All students, who participated, will get a Certificate of Community Service.



Hazel Carter in turquoise snow pants shoveled a path to a chicken coop.



Brayden Hurley plowed snow on a 4-wheeler.



Sophia Wilbur was the youngest students to participate in the shoveling challenge.

Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service at Old Sturbridge Village

STURBRIDGE – The annual Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service will be held at Old Sturbridge Village on Sunday, April 5 at 6 a.m.

The service is open to the public.

According to The Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale's pastor, the Rev. David W. Cote, seven local faith communities will gather at the original Baptist Meetinghouse located at the end of the Common at Old Sturbridge Village.

Also participating in this year's service are the faith communities from Bethle-

hem Lutheran Church (Sturbridge), St. Anne/St. Patrick Catholic Church (Fiskdale), Brookfield Congregational Church (Brookfield), Elm Street Congregational Church (Southbridge), Holy Trinity Church (Southbridge), and St. Joseph Church (Charlton).

"The sunrise service is a simple but meaningful way to begin Easter," said Cote. "I believe that this Sunrise Service is a representation of Christ's love for us all. We come together as one body, as the sun rises to celebrate the hope that Easter brings.

All are welcome to join us."

Those planning to attend should enter the Village through the security gate at the top of the parking lot and proceed to the Meetinghouse on the Common. Attendees are encouraged to dress appropriately for the weather.

Food and drink are not permitted, except for bottled water. Old Sturbridge Village will not be open for touring during the event and restrooms will not be available. Guests are asked to leave the Village directly following the service.

Ham radio club meeting on March 30

WEST BROOKFIELD – Local amateur radio operators and the public are invited to the next Quaboag Valley Amateur Radio Club meeting, March 30 at 6:30 p.m. at the West Brookfield Senior Center, 73 Central St.

This month's program features Smitty KC11KA, who serves as a Net Control Station (NCS) for ARES, Skywarn, and CERT – roles that require staying on the air when conditions are at their worst.

Smitty will share a behind-the-scenes look

at how he prepares for storms, power outages, and field deployments. His presentation covers the radios he relies on, the battery and solar systems he built, and the reasoning behind his equipment choices. He'll also discuss situational awareness techniques and multiple methods for maintaining communication when the grid goes down.

Whether you're involved in emergency communications or simply enjoy operating portable from parks, summits, or Field Day sites, you'll come away with

practical ideas you can apply to your own setup. All are welcome to attend.

For more information about the club, upcoming events, or licensing opportunities, visit www.QVARC.com.

The club also will be having a VE session for any hams looking to upgrade or newcomers looking to test for the first time. The exam fee is \$15. Session starts at 5:30 p.m.

Questions? Please email Peter at pbaldracchi@charter.net.

Troop 163 to hold waffle dinner fundraiser April 11

STURBRIDGE – Troop 163 will hold a fundraiser waffle dinner on Saturday, April 11, from 4-7 p.m. at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 345 Main St.

Waffles, toppings, and sausages will be served, and gluten-free waffles will be available. No tickets are required – pay what you can.

There will also be a si-


lent auction with themed baskets, and Bluey and Bingo will be there for photos.

Troop 163 is a Scouting America troop for girls ages 11-17. The troop is based in Sturbridge but has members across southern Worcester County. Please email troop163sturbridge@gmail.com with any questions.

Senior Center lists March events

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The North Brookfield Senior Center, located at 29 Forest St., will offer the following events and activities during the month of March.

Activities include: Bemis Nursery Workshop (sign up required) March 23 at 1 p.m.; Hip Hop Square Dance sponsored by the North Brookfield Cultural Council March 24 at 1:15 p.m.; Ed Spater Medicare Specialist drop in hours March 24 from 10 a.m.-1 p.m.; and Free Drawing Class March 26 at 11 a.m.



Quabbin

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To schedule a campus visit or for more information please visit our website: www.qrsd.org
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Assistant to the Superintendent
jbennett@qrsd.org
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- community -

Nominations needed for historical society awards

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

Each year, the historical society recognizes its most impressive community leaders and volunteers 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 get 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 Quaboag Historical Society 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 briefly explain why the writer believes the nominee is deserving of the award. The name, address, and phone number of both the nominator and the nominee must be included in the letter.

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.

All award nomination entries should be submitted to the QHS by Monday, April 13.

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

C4R watershed council to meet on March 22

PALMER – We have all heard Carpe Diem-seize the day, well our local rivers need us to step up to care for them as we enjoy their beauty.

Join the Chicopee 4Rivers Watershed, C4R, group as its members seek to continue their efforts to do that.

The first gathering in 2026 will be held on Sunday, March 22 from 2-4 p.m. in the Palmer Historical Cultural Center, 2072 Main St., Three Rivers.

Come hear what C4R has accomplished and how you can help to keep it going.



They will review water quality monitoring, paddling trails, clean ups, trail stewardship, leadership needs, and more.

For more information, email chicopeewatershed@gmail.com.

Solo/Duet poetry and music series starts in April

WEST BROOKFIELD – Solo/Duet, a poetry and music series at the Merriam-Gilbert Public Library will be held on Tuesday evenings in April starting at 6 p.m.

Each evening will feature poetry readings that will book-end a set of chamber jazz music. This program

is made possible by the West Brookfield Cultural Council as supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, in celebration of National Poetry and National Jazz Month

Performances are as follows: April 7, bassist Jerry Wilfong and percussionist-trumpeter Dick

Hummel with poets Glenn D'Alessio and Susan Roney-O'Brien; April 14, bassist Jerry Wilfong, guitarist Mitch Seidman, and Chet Williamson, on harmonica with poets Clair Degutis and Jim Beschta;

April 21, bassist Jerry Wilfong, guitarist Rich Falco and trombonist Rich Ar-

dizzone, trombone with poets Judith Ferrarra and Jonathan Blake; and April 28, solo bass recital by Jerry Wilfong with poets Beth Sweeney and Stephen Campiglio.

Free and open to all.

Please stop by or call the library at 508-867-1410 to reserve your seat.

OSV shares story of Lucy Stone on March 24

WEST BROOKFIELD – On Tuesday, March 24 at 4 p.m., the Merriam-Gilbert Public Library will be hosting a workshop and reading of "One Girl's Voice" by Vivian Kirkfield with Old Sturbridge Village.

In celebration of Women's History Month, Old Sturbridge Village will be

visiting the library for crafts and a story time. Listen to the story of Lucy Stone, an activist for women's suffrage and abolition from West Brookfield. Design and make a pennant flag for a cause you care about.

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

Historical Commission to award annual scholarship

WEST BROOKFIELD – The West Brookfield Historical Commission is pleased to announce its 2026, 15th annual scholarship in the amount of \$2,000.

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

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

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

The Commission will show preference to study plans with concentration on History and History-related areas. Major or mi-

nors 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 will be found on the West Brookfield Historical Commis-

sion website. <http://westbrookfield.org>

Essays are due no later than April 6.

Email info@westbrookfield.org or mail to: West Brookfield Historical Commission, P.O. Box 372, West Brookfield, MA 01585.

The application and details can be found on the Historical Commission website- <http://westbrookfield.org>.

Open House at St. Aloysius Catholic School is April 6

HARDWICK – St. Aloysius Catholic School is hosting an Open House on Monday, April 6, from 3-5 p.m.

Prospective families are encouraged to visit

the school, located at 52 Church St. in Gilbertville, where they can tour the classrooms, meet the teachers and learn more about the rich, faith-filled educational experiences that await.

For more information, please call the school and speak to Roberta McQuaid, Enrollment Coordinator, at 413-477-1268. Or apply on line at <https://www.staloy-siuscs.com/join-our-family/application/>.

Celebrating the Figure at ArtWorks Gallery

WARE – ArtWorks Gallery is hosting the 5th annual Celebrating the Figure exhibition.

This exhibition embraces the diverse ways in which artists approach representing the human form, showcasing pieces that utilize both the clothed and unclothed figure. Submissions should demonstrate an understanding of the human body, whether through the precision of the nude form or the technical skill required to render fabric while still conveying the underlying form.

ArtWorks Gallery is located at 69 Main St. The 5th

annual Celebrating the Figure exhibition will be on display from April 11 through May 9, opening with a reception on Saturday, April 11, from 3-5 p.m. Gallery hours are Saturdays and Sundays from 1-4 p.m.

The juror for Celebrating the Figure is SK Sullivan. SK Sullivan is a figurative painter working primarily in oil. She has held a lifelong fixation with the human body and experience, driven by curiosity and an unrelenting need to create.

SK has exhibited throughout the United States and lives in Connecticut, where her practice

continues to evolve through daily engagement with the figure.

About ArtWorks Gallery and Workshop13

ArtWorks Gallery is Workshop13's gallery on Main Street. This space features numerous art exhibitions each year and is also available to rent for individual or group shows.

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



Submitted photo: Juror for "Celebrating the Figure" SK Sullivan is shown adding detail to her painting.

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- opinion -



Is there income tax on Social Security benefits?

Dear Rusty:
The Trump Administration is saying that now there will be no taxes on Social Security benefits. Since we're getting ready to start our 2025 income tax return, can you explain how this all works?

Signed: Confused Taxpayer

Dear Confused Taxpayer:
You are obviously referring to the so-called "One Big, Beautiful Bill" and how that bill affects income tax on your Social Security benefits. And this is because of the publicity surrounding the so-called "one big, beautiful bill" enacted last year, which claims to "eliminate income tax on Social Security benefits." Well, that bill did, yet technically didn't, fully eliminate income tax on benefits." Allow me to explain.

The OBBB does eliminate income tax on most SS benefits, but it does so in a somewhat unique way – by providing an additional \$6,000 (per person) deduction to your federal taxable income as reported to the IRS. Thus, you will pay less total income tax when you file your taxes with the IRS because of that additional deduction to your taxable income.

The extra deduction is available to those over age 65 and is meant to offset the income tax which will still be levied by the IRS on the SS benefits you received in 2025. Essentially, the rules governing income tax on Social Security benefits have not changed.

The IRS will still levy income tax on your SS benefits if your combined income from all sources (known as your "provisional income") is over \$32,000 as a married couple filing jointly or more than \$25,000 if you file as an individual. If your provisional income is below the threshold for your IRS filing status, you will pay no income tax on your received 2025 SS benefits.

But if your provisional income exceeds the threshold for your IRS filing status, then somewhere between 50% and 85% of your received SS benefits will be taxed (how much SS income to be taxed depends on your combined income in 2025). By now, you should have received form 1099-SSA which advised of your 2025 Social Security income, including any income tax you had withheld from your SS benefits.

This income should be reported when submitting your 2025 income tax return. If your "provisional income" is over \$32,000 as a married couple filing jointly (or over \$25,000 as an individual filer), then your 2025 SS benefits will still be taxed by the IRS. But when completing your 2025 Income Tax Return, you will also be able to claim an additional \$6,000 per person (\$12,000 if you file jointly), which will likely offset any income tax you must pay due to the SS benefits you received in 2025.

If you use a tax preparer or tax preparation software, they will guide you through this calculation. Note, too, that the \$6,000 per person deduction amount will be less if your combined taxable income is more than \$150,000 as a married couple (or more than \$75,000 as a single filer). Be aware, though, that the OBBB is temporary tax accommodation which expires after tax year 2028. And that's because the process used to pass the bill in Congress (a "budget reconciliation" process) didn't actually change SS law; rather it provided a way around it to offset income tax paid on SS benefits.

So, to recap, the IRS can still levy income tax on your received Social Security benefits but, because of the OBBB, you will likely also (depending on your provisional income level) receive an extra deduction which offsets any taxes calculated on your Social Security benefits.

Finally, be aware that if your first husband also predeceases you, you will then become eligible for a surviving ex-spouse benefit from him, even if he has remarried.

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

On the look out for a nice lawn

I'll be the first to admit that I don't have an especially nice lawn. Looking out the window further proves it.

It is early in the year and all, so the shades of brown I see are pretty common, but there are some lawns that are greening up nicely while mine is definitely not.

My mind always goes to thoughts of green as we approach St. Patrick's Day. I wonder if that's why my Irish dad enjoyed caring for his lawn so much?

One of his spring rituals was to rake it. I remember him out there working his way across the yard a little at a time, making pile after pile of dead grass, leaves and small sticks.

This was the just the first job in a season's worth of work aimed at growing good turf. Chances are that once the ground dries a bit you'll be out there too, clearing the lawn of winter debris and enjoying some long awaited sun on your back.

Find out what else you can do (and I should too) to achieve an attractive greenscape with a minimal commitment.

Don't mow so low, or as often. Mowing at a height of about three inches will encourage a healthy lawn. Why? Taller grass shades out developing weed seedlings.

It also makes large, established weeds more susceptible to mower damage (the more surface area of the weed that is removed, the more weakened it becomes.)

High mowing also fosters deep root growth. Deep roots sustain the lawn

during periods of drought. Keep mower blades sharpened for the cleanest possible cut.

son it should be lime. Grass can't grow well, or fight off diseases or bugs for that matter, if it isn't getting the nutrients it needs.

Many nutrients are bound up until the pH is corrected. Get a soil test and specify on the order form that you wish to grow grass, as results for flower or veggie gardening may differ.

Based on the results of your test, recommendations will be made as to the type of lime to use and at what application rate. For more information contact the UMass Extension or www.umass.edu/plsoils/soiltest. Here are some interesting grass facts: Did you know that according to a poll (sponsored by Briggs and Stratton) 64% of homeowners wish they had a better lawn? Or that 63 million households own at least one lawn mower?

The Professional Lawn Care Association estimates that a well-maintained lawn can increase the value of a home by up to 20%.

This was probably of little concern to Presidents Washington and Jefferson...they were the first to have lawns as we know them today but they were maintained by sheep!

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

Water efficiently and effectively. If you set up sprinklers each season to water the lawn for you, take some time early in the season to position them so that water isn't wasted on sidewalks or driveways.

Mark the location and set up will be a no-brainer each time.

To grow best, grass requires an inch of moisture each week, more if your soil is sandy. Do the tea cup test to determine how much water your sprinklers emit and at what rate. Simply place a tea cup or other container on the lawn and turn on the sprinkler, check every five minutes or so until water reaches the inch mark.

Now you can set a timer, or turn off the sprinklers manually knowing your lawn has gotten its weekly drink. Most people know that early morning is the best time to water the lawn. By watering early in the day less moisture is lost to evaporation.

Grass is also less prone to fungal diseases because it has a chance to dry before nightfall.

Know your soil. A friend of mine who knew a lot about turf once told me that if I were to apply one thing to my lawn each sea-



- guest column -

Community helping community

By Suzanne Y. Lewandowski
Founder & President North Brookfield Hearts for Heat

Heating program thrives with support from sponsors

Community helping community! That is the foundation that has sustained the three Hearts for Heat chapters (North Brookfield, Leicester, and Princeton) for the last 18 years.

North Brookfield Hearts for Heat is a charitable program that helps NB residents who cannot afford to heat their homes during the winter. Emergency home heating assistance is provided to eligible residents for oil, propane, natural gas, electricity, pellets, or cordwood – paid directly to the provider.

NB Hearts for Heat raises money locally and

100% of donations go toward purchasing fuel for households in need.

For NB Hearts for Heat to be successful, adequate funding is essential! Country Bank and North Brookfield Savings Bank have been phenomenal supporters since our first season in 2009 by providing initial capital and both have donated annually ever since. Monson Savings Bank joined our committed team last fall.

We are most grateful for all three local financial institutions for not only the support they have given us, but all their community reinvestment and philanthropic endeavors. Thank you!

Tasse's Oil and Propane offers oil/propane at a reduced rate so clients get more fuel per delivery. Thank you!

Every January the NB Hearts for Heat board hosts a Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser – an amazing collaboration with Hannaford Supermarket, Hayden Masonic Lodge, The Otters (musical ambiance), NB PTO, and students from the NB Honor Society and Valley View School. Thank you!

To complement the dinner and music, a wide variety of raffle items were donated by local businesses: Angel Nails, Barbara Conway (I Spy quilts), Bike House Brewery, Bogey Lanes, City of Smoke, Connect Restaurant, Dragon Stones, Inishowen Farms, JARS Café & Bakery, Jim's Pizza, Joy of Beans, Marks of Asgard, Nancy Wal-

dron (popcorn quilt), NB Liquors, NB Pizza Palace, Shaman's Closet, Spencer Greenery, Strandz Salon, Subway, Wayne Boulette (cutting board), and Whitco. Thank you!

The Boston Celtics contributed two team signed basketballs, the Boston Bruins - a signed puck, and the WooSox – four game tickets and team paraphernalia. Thank you!

The winter of 2025-2026 in Massachusetts has been colder and snowier than in recent years. Additionally, the fuel costs are more expensive.

So far NB Hearts for Heat has provided fuel assistance for 27 local families, almost double our annual disbursements by March 1. As the inclement weather continues, 20 more are anticipated before the heating season concludes. Since 2008, we have assisted 372 families.

Applications can be downloaded from <https://www.heartsforheat.org/NorthBrookfield/> and mailed to the below address or emailed to h4h-northbrookfield@gmail.com. Applications can also be found at the police station, town offices, library and schools in North Brookfield.

Donations can be mailed to: North Brookfield Hearts for Heat, P.O. Box 44, North Brookfield, MA 01535.

I am most grateful to all who have helped support Hearts for Heat. This is community helping community at its best!

QUABOAG CURRENT TEAM



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- community -



The Quaboag Alumni bench consisted of Quaboag basketball players from the past.

QUABOAG ALUMNI FROM PAGE 1

exciting by welcoming the public and families of the players to come watch.

This game also gave the opportunity for former Quaboag students (alumni), who played basketball, to come back and play in a fun exhibition game. Over 20 alumni expressed interest this year and set up for an exciting matchup between Quaboag's alumni basketball players and the current boys varsity basketball team.

Nichols-Hogan graduated from Quaboag in 2016 and played basketball all six years as a student. Nichols-Hogan, representing Quaboag Alumni, was joined by members of his coaching team: Cameron Koss, Nicholas Barrett, Zachary Barrett, and Jackson Grudzien.

There was a lot of excitement within the Quaboag gymnasium as both teams came in early for practice. During the game, many spectators gave donations to the Booster Club.

One excited alumni player was Nicholas Barrett, a member of the Quaboag Class of 2014. Barrett teaches middle school English at Quaboag, who described this alumni game as "a fun event" for both students and alumni.

Barrett got to play the game alongside his younger brother, Zachary, and both are on the coaching staff at Quaboag. Barrett was looking forward to seeing how the varsity team plays against the alumni team.

It wasn't just the students on boy's varsity who participated, several student athletes in middle school also got to play. Will Goodwin, an eighth grade student at Quaboag, was one of several middle school students who got to play in the Alumni Game.

During halftime, Goodwin described the pace of playing against the Quaboag Alumni as "a lot faster than our games."

"Plus, they're a lot taller," he said.

Goodwin had a good showing in the alumni game, scoring a couple three-pointers. This school year, Goodwin played middle school basketball.

In the game, Alumni were wearing black and the students wore the popular school color, maroon. Tip-off had begun and Ryan Fernandez of the Alumni team scored first with a three-pointer. The Quaboag Alumni displayed experience and knowledge as they lead after the first quarter, 22-12.

The Varsity team played hard and displayed excellent communication, passing, and defense to get back in the game. At halftime, Alumni were only leading by six points, 41-35.

During the halftime

break, both Alumni and Varsity players participated in a slam dunk contest. There was an excellent showcase of skill by both teams.

Jack Stevens is a senior at Quaboag representing the Varsity team and put on a great performance in both the game and slam dunk contest. His older brother, Owen Stevens, also participated in the game and contest.

At the conclusion, the Alumni prevailed with a final score of 84-79.

No matter who won, this great community event brought many Quaboag students of various graduating classes together under the same roof. Both Alumni and current student athletes share the same passion, basketball at Quaboag.

"Community! That is the word of the day," Nichols-Hogan said. "It was a fun game."

The coaching staff came together to discuss who they believed were the MVPs of both teams. After an informed discussion, the coaching staff agreed that Chris Paquette was the MVP for the Alumni team and Will Goodwin was MVP for the Varsity team.

After the game, players were greeted by their fans, family members, and friends.

Dante Ortiz of the Alumni had a great time cheering and shouting both on and off the court. Ortiz graduated from Quaboag in 2017 and is familiar with playing these exciting games with the alumni.

Ortiz says in the past Quaboag Alumni usually got together during the basketball season and played a game during the holiday break. After this fun experience, Ortiz says he will return to Quaboag to play another Alumni game.

With a successful Alumni game in the history books, Nichols-Hogan said this is an event the Quaboag basketball community can commit to doing again in the future, maybe once every other year.



Zachary Barrett with a layup during the fourth quarter of the Alumni Game.



Ryan Fernandez of the Alumni team, participated in the slam dunk contest during halftime.



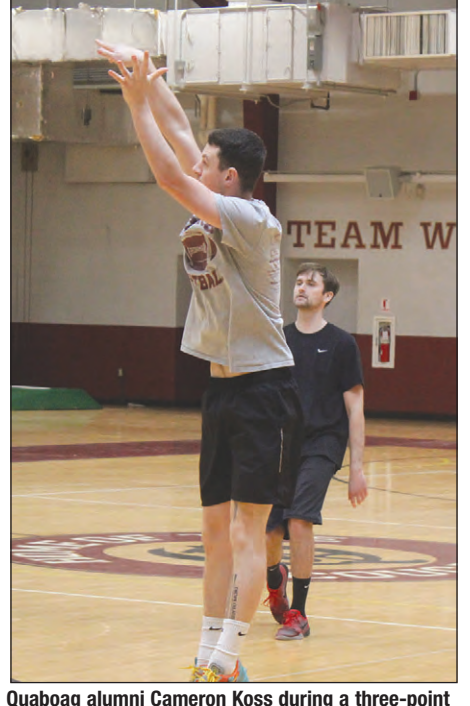
Jacob Toomey of the Quaboag Boys Varsity Team prepared to find an opening to shoot.



Quaboag senior Jack Stevens with a slam dunk during the slam dunk contest.



Nick Barrett with a pass to Cameron Koss as the Alumni were in the lead.



Quaboag alumni Cameron Koss during a three-point shot attempt.



Quaboag's basketball coaching staff, Cameron Koss (left), Nicholas Barrett, Brandon Nichols-Hogan, Jackson Grudzien, and Zachary Barrett all represented Quaboag Alumni during the game.



Isaac Cowher of Boys Varsity attempted a three-point shot.



Boys Varsity Coach Brandon Nichols-Hogan practiced his layups before the game.



Sporting the maroon were the basketball players of Quaboag, including players currently enrolled in Middle School, Junior Varsity, and Varsity basketball.

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- community -

East Brookfield Police Log

During the week of Feb. 9-15, the East Brookfield Police Department responded to 161 building/property checks, 63 directed area patrols, 21 radar assignments, 13 traffic controls, seven emergency 911 calls, six citizen assists, three assist other agencies, one safety hazard, three disturbances, two utility issues, one motor vehicle accident, one complaint and 26 motor vehicle stops in the town of East Brookfield.

Monday, Feb. 9

2:33 a.m. Disturbance, Draper Road, Officer Handled
 4:39 a.m. Welfare Check, Putney Court, Transported to Hospital
 9:43 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Connie Mack Drive, Officer Handled
 11:20 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Putney Court, Negative Contact
 2:40 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Putney Court, Negative Contact
 3:20 p.m. 911 Hang-up/Abandoned, Adams Road, Officer Handled
 4:30 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Harrington Street, Citation Issued
 4:40 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Harrington Street, Citation Issued
 5:11 p.m. Directed/Area Patrol, North Brookfield Road, Citation Issued
 5:15 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, North Brookfield Road, Citation issued
 8:56 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Harrington Street, Citation Issued

Tuesday, Feb. 10

12:10 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Putney Court, Merge
 2:47 p.m. Assist Citizen, Flag Road, Spoken To
 4:03 p.m. Assist Citizen, Connie Mack Drive, Officer Handled
 5:08 p.m. Assist Citizen, Prospect Street, Officer Handled
 5:09 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 5:52 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Harrington Street, Citation Issued

Wednesday, Feb. 11

10:53 a.m. Assist Citizen, Connie Mack Drive, Officer Handled
 2:16 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, West Sturbridge Road, Transported to Hospital
 3 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 5:35 p.m. Utility Issues, Paula Circle, Referred to Other Agency
 9:19 p.m. Disturbance, East Main Street, Negative Contact

Thursday, Feb. 12

9:33 a.m. Assist Citizen, Connie Mack Drive, Services Rendered
 10:11 a.m. Complaint, Harrington Street, Services Rendered
 1:18 p.m. Assist Citizen, Stone Road, Investigated
 7:54 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Harrington Street, Citation Issued
 7:56 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued

Friday, Feb. 13

4:32 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, North Brookfield Road, Citation Issued
 5:20 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Harrington Street, Citation Issued
 5:39 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Harrington Street, Citation Issued
 11:26 p.m. Safety Hazard, East Main Street, Services Rendered

Saturday, Feb. 14

12:03 a.m. Suspicious Activity, Podunk Road, Spoken To
 12:47 a.m. 911 Disturbance, Podunk Road, Negative Contact
 4:58 a.m. 911 Motor Vehicle Crash, East Main Street, Transported to Hospital
 8:39 a.m. Utility Issues, East Main Street, Dispatch Handled
 9:19 a.m. Traffic Control, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 9:21 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 9:29 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 9:53 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 10 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, East Main Street, Patient Refusal
 10:55 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Route 49, Written Warning

Sunday, Feb. 15

3:28 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Blaine Avenue, Patient Refusal
 4:25 p.m. Medical Emergency, Draper Road, Transported to Hospital

New Braintree Police Log

During the week of March 9-16, the Hardwick/New Braintree Police Department responded to 16 building/property checks, 30 directed/area patrols, nine radar assignments, one traffic control, three emergency 911 calls, one safety hazard, one motor vehicle accident, four citizen assists, three assist other agencies, one harassment, one parking complaint and five motor vehicle stops in the town of New Braintree.

Monday, March 9

8:18 a.m. 911 Motor Vehicle Crash, Old Turnpike Road, Written Warning
 10:21 a.m. Safety Hazard, Thompson Road, Services Rendered

Tuesday, March 10

7:03 p.m. Suspicious Activity, West Road, Officer Handled

Wednesday, March 11

9:42 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled
 5 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Memorial Drive, Spoken To

Thursday, March 12

9:29 a.m. Assist Citizen, Memorial Drive, Dispatch Handled
 9:31 a.m. Assist Citizen, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled
 9:35 a.m. Assist Citizen, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled
 1:32 p.m. Harassment, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

4:10 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Hardwick Road, Citation Issued

5:47 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Ravine Road, Citation Issued

6:34 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, West Brookfield Road, Transported to Hospital

Friday, March 13

1:35 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

1:37 p.m. Assist Citizen, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

5:06 p.m. Parking Complaint, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

Monday, March 16

7:15 a.m. Medical Emergency, West Brookfield Road, Services Rendered

Serenity Ayala competed on Regis College's basketball team

WESTON — Serenity Ayala, Class of 2026, and the Regis College Women's Basketball team recently completed the 2025-2026 season.

The Pride concluded their season in the Great Northeast Athletic Conference

quarterfinals with an overall record of 12-14 and 9-3. The Pride are led by five-year head coach, Samantha Crough.

"As our winter seasons come to a close, I want to congratulate our student-athletes on their hard

work and determination," said Dean of Athletics Pam Roecker. "The growth they've achieved through competition, discipline, and teamwork will stay with them well beyond the season."

DOOLIN LADS FROM PAGE 1

man". Most of them heavy with tradition, but there is one that some might think a tad out of place. "Gilligan" is the theme song for the American situation comedy, "Gilligan's Island" that was a staple of TV for years.

It was composed by George Wyle, whose name does not sound at all Celtic, but what the heck, it fit in with what the lads were doing, and Gilligan is an Irish name.

As is tradition, the lads played "The Wild Rover", the song about a young lady who falls in with a musical

gypsy who turns out to be a wealthy nobleman. It may not always work out that way in reality, but one can dream.

The next set began with the hornpipe, "Off to California", followed by the reel, "Flowers of Edinburgh", ending with another hornpipe, "Whistling Mike".

The lads explained that the title, "Flowers of Edinburgh" is not about blossoms, as there were not many in that capital city of Scotland, back in the day, but referred to the pervasive scent of sewerage with a bit of sarcasm.

The slow air, "Dear Irish Boy" would be next, fol-

lowed by the jig, "Hole in the Boat".

The program would end with the song of exile and emigration known as "The Leaving of Liverpool" and then the "Hills of Connemara", which is the tale of the making of Poitin, that is the Irish word for moonshine, and the efforts of the excise men to collect the tax in far west Ireland.

All too soon the evening of music and humorous banter would have to end. The audience and the performers would linger in conversation.

One hopes it is only 12 months until the lads return.

SUPERINTENDENT FROM PAGE 1

said. "We have purchased all of the playground equipment and it's already at the school."

Duff said the PTO does not have enough funds to purchase the entire rubberized mat to cover the playground surface, but they are able to move forward with installation this summer.

"When kids return to school in the fall, we'll have a new kindergarten/first grade playground," he said.

Superintendent's report

Duff said the Washington, D.C. trip will be held March 17-20 for eighth and ninth grade students. He said this trip was approved by the School Committee last year.

Duff said many community members sponsored students to ensure that all students who wanted to attend the trip would be able to go. He said 100 students and 10 chaperones are attending.

Duff said they are looking at adding additional solar panels to some of the school district's buildings.

"We will look at that over time," he said.

Duff said they will also look at solar credits to help offset the cost.

Duff said they are also

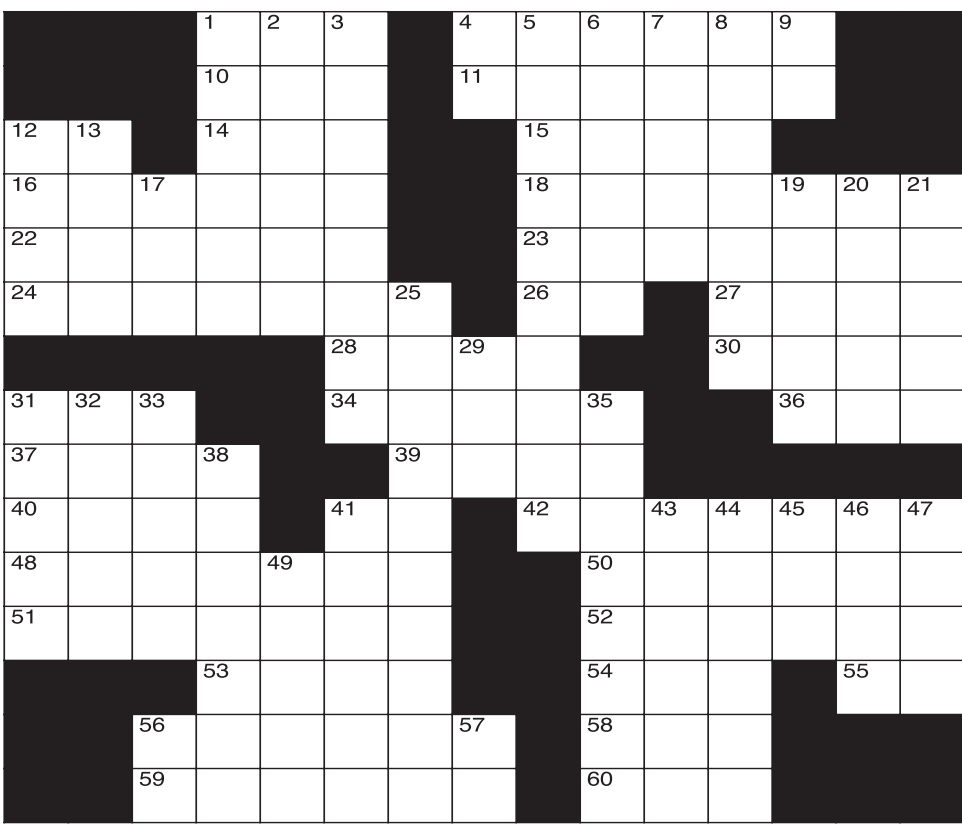
looking into a grant that would allow the school district to purchase electric landscaping equipment, heat pumps in some of the offices, as well as a new electric stove for the kitchen. He said this is not a matching grant and would be a cost-savings to the school district.

Duff said the grade six leadership, Project 351 ambassadors, Student Advisory Council and High School Principal's Council will present at the March 12 School Committee meeting.

Visitor's comments

Ray Kopacko said the Warren Finance Committee will be meeting on March 12 at 2:30 p.m. to continue discussion about the fiscal year 2027 budget.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER



CLUES ACROSS

1. Inclined to do
4. Sketches
10. Book of Chronicles (abbr.)
11. Atomic #58
12. Dorm official
14. Small Eurasian deer
15. Southern constellation
16. Workers' groups
18. Former
22. Excellent
23. Romance language related to Spanish
24. Reference
26. Equally
27. Dirty towels
28. A cargo (abbr.)
30. Ammunition
31. You get one in summer

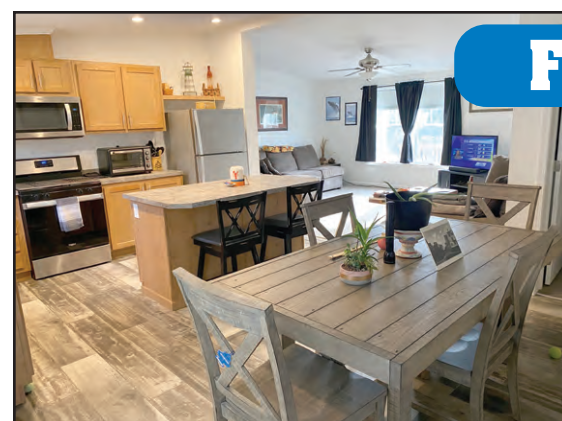
34. Slang for trucks with trailers
36. Swiss river
37. Exchange rate
39. British School
40. College teacher
41. Foreign Service
42. Horse gear
48. Cost to fly
50. A salt or ester of boric acid
51. Mocking
52. One who bird-watches
53. Concluding passage
54. A major division of geological time
55. Sodium
56. A way to produce
58. Soak
59. Laughed loudly and harshly
60. Affirmative

CLUES DOWN

1. Moth species phalonia ___
2. Quantum of energy
3. Break the law
4. Location of White House
5. Official cancellation of a decision
6. Where rockers work
7. Cut of beef: ___ mignon
8. Nocturnal burrowing reptile
9. Atomic #62
12. Genus of evergreen subshrubs
13. Flowering plant of the legume family
17. Inches per minute (abbr.)

19. Tropical fruit
20. Hot fluid beneath the earth's crust
21. James ___, painter
25. Popular dessert
29. Payment (abbr.)
31. Cuisine style
32. Genus of true flies
33. City in western France
35. Arrogance
38. One holding a position of command
41. Weekday
43. An evening party
44. Print errors
45. Not good
46. Egyptian Sun god
47. East German town
49. Olfactory property
56. Atomic #37
57. "Pollock" actor Harris

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SPORTS

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Casavant shines for swim team this season

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

PALMER—The seventh and eighth grade students at Palmer High School can take swimming as part of their gym class.

When Harper Casavant was in the eighth grade, Kellie Murphy, who's a physical education teacher at Palmer High, thought he had the potential to be a very good swimmer. One day, Murphy encouraged him to join the Panthers swim and dive team, which is coached by Brittany North-Marek.

"I played several sports growing up, but I never swum competitively," said Casavant, who's currently a sophomore at Pathfinder Tech. "When I was in the eighth grade, Mrs. Murphy told me that I was a very good swimmer, and I should think about joining the swim team. She's the main why reason I decided to join the team."

At the end of his first season on the swim, Casavant



Harper Casavant competes in the 200 freestyle during an event this year.

qualified for the Western/Central Mass. championships as a member of three relay teams.

"I didn't perform very well at the beginning of that season, but I was able to pull it together during the second half of the season," Casavant said. "I improved my skills with the help of coach North-Marek. She's a very

good swim coach and is always very positive."

North-Marek, who's an eighth grade math teacher, gave her thoughts about Casavant's abilities in the pool.

"Harper works extremely hard in practice and is a dedicated student-athlete," North-Marek said. "He's also a leader on our team



Harper Casavant goes for a win the medley relay.

and consistently demonstrates excellent sportsmanship. His growth as a swimmer has been truly impressive."

Prior to the start of his freshman year, Casavant transferred to Pathfinder Tech. He was still able to compete for the Palmer boys' swimming team because the neighboring high

schools have a co-op.

"I thought that I would have more opportunities academically here at Pathfinder Tech," Casavant said. "I was also interested in learning a vocation. I'm currently taking HVAC. It has been an awesome experience and I'm very grateful to still be a member of the Palmer swim team."

During his first semester at Pathfinder Tech, Casavant took eight one-week exploratory classes. He had to rank his top five favorite classes and HVAC was his top choice.

"As well as Harper does for his swim team, he's equally as strong academi-

SEE CASAVANT PAGE 8

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

Wrestling season nets many championships in region

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

The high school wrestling season has come to an end, with many individuals and teams in Western and Central Massachusetts bringing home titles.

At the All-State Tournament held on Mar. 1 and 2 right in Springfield at the MassMutual Center, Agawam High School girls wrestling captured the All-State title with 86 points. Ludlow was 11th overall at 46 points. Stella Christopher captured the All-State title at 165 pounds, defeating Jordyn Reynolds of Greater Lawrence. Gabriela Ramos was a runner-up at 145 pounds. For Ludlow, Ella Libiszewski was the runner-up at 114 pounds. In the mixed-gender all-state event, Agawam would place 16th with 33.5 points. Minnechaug scored 26 points and both teams crowned an all-state champion. Jordin Agosto was Agawam's all-state champion with a top finish at 144 pounds. Minnechaug's Kai Ly also took an all-state title at 138 pounds.

Ludlow High School captured the Division 3 state girls wrestling championship with 97.5 points, crowning four state cham-

pions. Quabbin Regional High School was ninth overall with 36 points. South Hadley finished with 18 points and Holyoke with 16 points in the meet.

Ludlow's champions were Libiszewski at 114 pounds, Samantha Bertini at 120 pounds, Ellianna Williams at 145 pounds, and Riley Morais at 152 pounds. Quabbin had one champion with Kailynn Schuster scoring the win at 138 pounds.

Agawam took second place in the Division 2 state girls tournament, scoring 94.5 points. Christopher had the big performance by placing first in the 165-pound bracket. Ramos placed second at 145 pounds and Madison Minalga also had a runner-up finish at 185 pounds.

In the Division 2 state championship, Agawam was the second-best finisher from Western Mass., finishing fourth overall with 96 points, and crowning one runner-up in the field. Minnechaug was a distant 14th with 52 points. The Falcons' Ly won the state championship at 138 pounds, while Agawam's Ryan Sexton placed second.

SEE WRESTLING PAGE 8



Annastacia Dixon sends a pass away.



Tatiyana Zuniga heads across the court.



Mileidy Rosado heads into the paint.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Women's basketball season comes to a close

HOLYOKE – Earlier this month, Holyoke Community College Women's basketball saw their stellar season come to a close on Sunday afternoon, Mar. 1, falling to top seed CC of Rhode Island in the New England (Region XXI) championship game. The #2 seed Lady Cougars played well in their attempt to win a regional title but were on the wrong end of the 86-51 final score.

Holyoke had a tremendous season overall, finishing in second place in the regular season New England standings before their runner-up finish in the regional championship tournament. Their postseason



The Cougars face off with Bristol Community College early in the playoffs



Johnays Andrades gets the open layup.

and title game appearances were the program's firsts since the 2010-11 campaign. Women's basketball fin-

ishes the year with an 11-4 regional record and a 15-8 overall record. They were 13-4 against fellow NJCAA

teams. Eight players from this year's squad can return to play next season.

SEE T-BIRDS PAGE 8

SEE QVB PAGE 8

T-Birds inch closer to .500 with big comeback

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (24-27-6-2) rode their veteran forwards to a thrilling, come-from-behind 4-3 win over the Providence Bruins (45-12-1-0) on Sunday afternoon inside Amica Mutual Pavilion.

After potting seven in a win over Hartford a night ago, the Bruins wasted little time adding to their potent offensive weekend as Matthew Poitras cleaned up a rebound in the blue paint after Georgi Romanov made an initial save off of

Ty Gallagher. Poitras' 12th goal of the year made it 1-0 Providence just 2:10 into the contest.

The Springfield power play provided a good response for the visitors at 9:34 when Juraj Pekarcik shuffled a rebound past Simon Zajicek following a Marc-Andre Gaudet slapshot, tying the score, 1-1.

Unfortunately, the Bruins would restore their lead in short order when Matej Blumel surprised Romanov with a long slap shot just 1:18 later to make it a 2-1

game. Springfield's special teams continued a strong first period, as the mandown unit successfully fended off two Providence advantages to keep the deficit at just one goal heading into the second.

With a carryover power play to begin the second, Dillon Dube nearly got Springfield even with a one-time slapshot that beat Zajicek but caught the iron. Romanov, meanwhile, had a strong showing in the period, especially early in the

period, keeping his team within a goal by making nine stops in the period.

Zajicek and the Providence penalty kill stiffened on a third man-down scenario near the midpoint of regulation, and the 2-1 score remained intact heading to the third.

The third period began with Springfield penalty kill once again answering the bell on back-to-back Providence power plays to keep the score at a manage-

Registration now underway for Quabbin Valley Baseball

SOUTH HADLEY – Registration has opened for the Quabbin Valley Baseball League, an over-28 recreational league, held its first meeting of 2026 to prepare for the upcoming season.

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

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

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

Those elements will return along with a 16th game with an opponent to be determine as the league's board explores possibilities for interleague matchups with another league in the region.

For returning players to

- community -

Second Chance seeks foster homes for cats and kittens

EAST BROOKFIELD – Second Chance Animal Services is urgently seeking foster families to care for cats and kittens in need.

The nonprofit is especially looking for homes willing to take pregnant cats, kittens, cats recovering from surgery, or timid cats who need time and patience to build confidence before finding permanent homes.

“Our greatest foster need right now is cat and kitten fosters,” said Lindsay Doray, Chief Development Officer for Second Chance Animal Services. “In recent years, our kitten season seems to extend all year long. With more cats requiring temporary care throughout the year, every new foster home allows us to help more vulnerable animals and give them the individualized attention they need.”

Foster homes provide a calm, safe environment where cats can heal, give birth, or adjust to people at their own pace. Second Chance supplies everything fosters need, including food, medical care, supplies, and guidance from the organization’s veterinary and shelter teams-fosters provide love and a temporary home.



Moo Cow and her kittens are thriving in a foster home, where they will stay until the kittens are eight weeks old and ready for the next step in their journey.

“Fostering is one of the most impactful ways someone can help,” Doray added. “It gives cats and kittens the chance to recover, grow, and prepare for adoption, while freeing up space in our shelters so we can continue helping all pets in need.”

Foster commitments vary depending on the animal’s needs. Pregnant cats stay with the foster family

through the birth until the kittens are eight weeks old, while cats recovering from surgery or needing socialization may only require a few weeks. No prior experience is required.

Those interested in fostering a cat or kittens can learn more and complete a foster application at www.secondchanceanimals.org/foster-care/.

WINTER MARKET FROM PAGE 1

a good mood as no one was hiding at home due to cold or storm.

As usual, as one comes in the door, to the right were the brilliant colors of the tulips of Robyn Scott, and her Blair House Blooms.

Next to Robyn is Gail of Autumn Leaf Farm. This is Gail’s first year, and she has microgreens and locally grown varieties of mushrooms. Also, she has lovely eggs from Golden Comet chickens.

After Gail is someone who has been coming to the market forever, or so it seems, and this week we are highlighting her:

Linda Fuchs and Flourish Farm

Linda Fuchs of Flourish Farm is also a stalwart participant in the town’s summer market.

With the usual microgreens, ginger, turmeric, and garlic, this market she had on display, cilantro, dill, broccoli, Red Tatsoi, purple kohlrabi, purple mizuna, Tokyo Bekana, and that’s just the living microgreens. The cut varieties covered the rest of the table.

All grown with sun, not artificial light.

Later, in coming markets, she will have salad bowls that are growing now.

Linda’s fans look forward

to seeing her on the West Brookfield Common come summer. She is also getting ready for the return of the Brimfield Farmers Market, where she was a founder.

Linda informed us, Brimfield is also looking for new vendors due to the loss of Jim DiMaio and the well-loved Hunt Road Berry Farm, as he passed away last year.

Turning the corner, we met Faith at the Kelly Homestead Apiary table. Faith is the daughter of the farm and was there with a plethora of honey and wax related products and she reported that on this lovely pre-spring day, the bees were out and active.

Next Bucha Bros partner, Ryan Laurie, was displaying and sampling the healthy probiotic-rich kombucha the bros make.

After Ryan was Rich Laba and Farm46 with all the flavorful pork products they are known for.

At the corner was Golden Grain Artisanal Bread. Bryan was there with the scratch made sourdough and other loaves and cookies they are bringing weekly.

After Golden Grain we came to JARS Café & Bakery down from North Brookfield, with pastries, soups and their “gifts in a jar.”

Then there are couple of

mischievous lads who work in wood, but their personalities are anything but wooden.

Wayne Boulette is known as The Chairman of The Board. No, not a corporate officer, but a woodworking artisan renowned for his cutting boards and other examples of craftsmanship. Bernie Wilson of B&D Enterprises, is a guy “too cheap to buy wood.” Thus, he uses recycled pallets to make pens and other products.

The market has a maple syrup guy up next. John Thompson represents his family’s Thompson’s Maple Farm that has all of that you could want, but also, great ice cream.

Still Life Farm took up the whole center of the room, but in a good way. Halley Stillman brought what there can never be enough of in winter, veggies, and with the farm’s winter greenhouses producing, there was an adequate supply.

As we approached the door, there was as usual Joy Hinton and her Joy of Beans coffee. Gourmet stuff from all over the world.

So, out into the world on a warm winter afternoon. One hopes the weather stays this lovely, but you can never tell in this climate.

CASAVANT FROM PAGE 7

cally,” said Pathfinder Tech Athletic Director Kevin Aldrich. “He’s an honor roll student and is also a member of our student ambassador program. Harper has done a very good job of representing Pathfinder Tech.”

Casavant, who lives in Palmer, qualified for two events at the Western/Central MA Championships as a freshman.

His sophomore season in the pool, which wrapped up in the middle of February, was very memorable. He qualified for the Western/Central Mass. championships in seven of the eight individual events, along

with the three relay races. The only event that he didn’t qualify for at sectionals was the 100-meter breaststroke.

“I was close to qualifying in the breaststroke, but I still need to do a little more work,” Casavant said. “I’m hoping to qualify for that event next year.”

A swimmer is only allowed to compete in two individual races and two relays at the sectionals.

Despite being one of the youngest swimmers at the Western/Central MA Championships, Casavant finished in sixth place in the 200 Freestyle and earned a medal with a time of 1:56.60. He also competed in the 50 freestyle race.

A week later, he competed at the Division 2 state meet, which took place at M.I.T. in Boston. He finished in 16th place in the 200 Freestyle, which is eight laps, with a time of 1:54.83.

“It was such a cool experience competing at states for the first time, he said. “I made a couple of changes with my stroke and was able to take two seconds off my time, which is a lot in swimming. I’m looking forward to qualifying for the states again during the next two years.”

During the regular season, the Panthers boys’ swim and dive squad squeaked out an 83-80 victory over Ludlow High School, which

was held at the Ludlow Boys & Girls Club.

“Our meet at Ludlow was really close, and it came down to the final relay race,” Casavant said. “We were able to win it, which connected us as a team a little bit more.”

If there are six swimmers in a race, the first place finisher gets six points. Second place earns five points, and third place gets four points. Each swim meet consist of eight individual races and three relay races.

Both the boys and girls swim teams normally compete at the same time. It usually takes between two and three hours to complete a swim meet.

Besides his coaches and teammates, Casavant has also received plenty of

support from his parents (Kirsten & Jeremiah).

“Before the start of every race, I look for my parents,” Casavant said. “They’re also the first people that I look for after my races. They’ve always been my biggest supporters.”

Harper’s younger brother, Reese, is a member of the rec swim team. He also has a younger sister, Autumn.

The other members of the Palmer boys’ Swim and Dive team were senior Shane Normoyle, senior Jack Shilsky, junior Simon Tetts, junior Derek Aldrich, junior Robbie Williams, junior Quinn Richardson, junior Jonas Toutant, sophomore Troy Lockwook, sophomore Noah Steinberg, sophomore Eddy Duggan, freshman Joshua Lisek, freshman

Cristiano Garcia, eighth grader Emerie Marsh, seventh grader Owen Mauer, and seventh grader Alex Guryanov.

The members of the Palmer girls’ Swim and Dive team were senior Hannah Roy, senior Scarlett LaRose, junior Neila Lachance, junior Jacklyn McNally, junior Maddy Roy, freshman Akasha Santos-Thomas, freshman Eva Becker, freshman Abigail White, eighth grader Samantha Opielowski, eighth grader Talya Verda, seventh grader Mido Penny, seventh grader Adriana Centeno, and seventh grader Amelia Wentworth.

Verda was the only member of the Lady Panthers swim team to qualify for Western/Central Mass. Championships.

WRESTLING FROM PAGE 7

In the Division 3 state championship, Holyoke placed ninth overall with 69 points, Ludlow was 25th with 28 points, Quabbin 26th with 27 points, and South Hadley and Belchertown also registered points in the competition. Holyoke would place two wrestlers as runners up. Steven Santiago was the second-place finisher at 120 pounds and Parker Brunelle was the runner-up at 285 pounds.

T-BIRDS FROM PAGE 7

Dube, who snapped a perfect shot under the crossbar to give Springfield its first lead, 3-2.

Romanov and the T-Birds’ defense locked things down in the defensive zone, and Alek Kaskimaki hit an empty net after a clutch shot block from Wagner at 18:53 of the third. Blumel would get his second of the night for Providence, but only three seconds remained at the time of the goal, making it too little, too late for the

able 2-1.

As the third passed its midpoint, the T-Birds’ most experienced leaders took over, beginning at the 10:36 mark when Chris Wagner’s torrid weekend continued as he threw a shot off a defender and past Zajicek to tie the game, 2-2.

Just 1:50 later, the T-Birds flipped the game upside-down when Wagner won an offensive zone draw directly back to Dillon

Bruins.

The T-Birds’ comeback marked the first time all season that the Bruins failed to win when leading after two periods. With their victory, the T-Birds now sit in the sixth and final playoff spot in the Atlantic Division with 13 games remaining in the regular season.

The T-Birds take a trip north of the border for their next two contests on Friday and Saturday in Laval and Belleville, respectively.

QVB FROM PAGE 7

the league, the deadline is Mar. 22 at 12 noon to be registered for the 2026 season in order to be guaranteed a roster spot. There will be open practices for all players but specifically targeted at new players scheduled for March 29 and April

4 at times and locations to be announced. The draft is currently scheduled to take place on April 4 following that practice.

The season is currently slated to start on Sunday, April 19 and following the success of the six-team fall league last year, the league

will also have a fall league in September and October this season.

The registration is live at www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org. Players must register and then pay the league dues via Venmo or contact the league leadership if an alternate form of payment is needed.

Aside from the week-night and Mother’s Day games, other games take place Sundays at 10 a.m. outside of Mother’s Day, Memorial Day and July 4 weekends. Playoffs will be in August.

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

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- community -

Workshop13 launches campaign to install vertical platform lift

WARE – Workshop13 Cultural Arts & Learning Center announced the launch of a community fundraising campaign to install a vertical platform lift, a critical accessibility improvement that will allow community members of all abilities to access events, exhibitions, and performances in Workshop13's Grand Hall.

Workshop13 has secured \$100,000 toward the project through a grant awarded by the National Park Service

under the Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant Program, with local administration support provided through the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

The full project cost is \$150,000, and Workshop13 is now raising the remaining \$50,000 to stay on schedule and move forward with construction.

"Workshop13 exists to bring people together through the arts – but right now, one of our most important spaces is

upstairs, and stairs are a barrier for many of our neighbors," said Marie Lauderdale, Executive Director of Workshop13. "This lift will change that. It will open the Grand Hall to seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, and families with strollers, ensuring everyone can participate fully in our community's cultural life."

Workshop13 is a non-profit cultural arts and learning center in Ware offering live music, exhibitions, classes, and communi-

ty events. The organization welcomes hundreds of visitors each month and serves as a key cultural destination for Ware and the surrounding towns.

The new lift will provide lasting, dignified access to the Grand Hall for generations to come. The campaign invites the community to give, share, and participate, through direct donations and peer-to-peer fundraising pages that allow supporters to rally friends and family.

How to support the campaign

Community members can donate online and learn more at: www.workshop13.org, or contact Executive Director, Marie Lauderdale, marie@workshop13.org.

About the grant program

The Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant Program, administered by the National Park Service, supports rehabilitation of historic buildings in rural communities and is designed to foster economic develop-

ment through preservation, often through subgrant programs administered by local partners.

About Workshop13

Workshop13 is a non-profit community arts center in Ware, offering music, visual arts, classes, exhibitions, and events for all ages and skill levels. Workshop13 builds community through creativity and works to keep programming accessible and welcoming for all.

PAULETTE ADAMS FROM PAGE 1

Lab processing business in Worcester. Here she learned how to process slides for color correction.

It was a place Adams enjoyed working at, but soon life changes would come up, and she had to move on.

Adams bought her first camera, a 35mm, while she was in Germany, which is where her husband was stationed while serving in the military. Most of Adams' photos were of landscapes and local architecture, features Adams still takes pictures of to this day.

After coming home, Adams began investing more in her own photography. She would begin by purchasing and using several varieties of cameras. One of her best cameras was a Digital Single Lens Reflex (DSLR) Nikon D90, and she took many pictures of wildlife, architecture, landscapes, and a lot of photographs of her grandson.

In 2007, Adams worked on vintage photos assembled from the North Brookfield Historical Society, photos from her own collection, and those of other long-time residents. After converting



Sheep strolled around the common of Old Sturbridge Village.

sepia-toned photos to clearer crisper black and white, the collection was made for a Historical Society presentation, and later, an Open House at the North Brookfield Town House.

In 2012, during the 200th anniversary of North Brookfield, the collection was exhibited at the Congregational Church's Fellowship Hall.

Adams has enjoyed photography for many years and

has been involved in photo challenges and workshops. Her work has been exhibited in various venues.

During the summer, Adams' photos will be displayed at the Leicester Library. Her go-to brand for cameras is Nikon, a reliable camera she has been using for 18 years.

Adams said her style of photography has evolved over the years and she always enjoys new challenges.

From her standpoint, "Life is like a camera. Focus on what is important. Develop from the negatives and if things don't work out, take another shot."

Adams resides in North Brookfield and is still taking photographs of the local wildlife and landscapes.

Pictures of her work can also be seen on this link: nbtownhouse.com/all-featured-artists/.



A close-up photograph of a bee in a flower.



A red wagon and firewood parked in a field.

N BROOKFIELD FROM PAGE 1

matic rifles and hundreds of rounds of live ammunition.

"The North Brookfield Police Department should be proud to employ officers of this quality. Officer Lavoie and Officer Francis are a credit to your agency and their efforts are appreciated and admired," Southbridge Police Chief Shane Woodson stated in the letter.

North Main Street parking

At the March 10 meeting, Gilman said he spoke with Highway Superintendent Randy Morgan about installing some 15-minute limited parking signs near the downtown businesses on North Main Street. He said the board will communicate with the businesses about how many parking spots should have time-limited parking.

Mount Pleasant Street extension

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities approved the

town's request for an extension on the Mount Pleasant Street Improvement Project, using fiscal years 2021 and 2024 Community Development Block Grant funding.

The extension will allow the town to apply for FY 26 CDBG funds for the South Common Street Project.

Mad Brook Road bridge replacement

The Department of Transportation approved the construction funding to replace Mad Brook Road bridge through the MassDOT Small Bridge Program at a projected cost of \$1.875 million.

Spending requests

The board approved spending requests from the Council on Aging in the amount of \$561.75 for chefs and catering for the yearly volunteer appreciation luncheon funded by the state formula grant, \$300 for Bemis Farms Nursery for a workshop for seniors funded by the gift account and \$300 for a Laughter is the Best Medicine yoga program

funded by a state grant.

Reserve funding request

The Fire Department requested the use of \$3,254.77 to purchase two new wheels and tires for Engine 2. One of the tires was flat, and the age and condition of the current tires is not safe.

The current maintenance budget for the Fire Department cannot support this expense.

The Finance Committee approved the request at a previous meeting and the Board of Selectmen approved it as well.

Fire Department report

Board of Selectmen Clerk Ralph Kay read the Fire Department's report for the month of February.

The report stated that the 24 members of the department actively train every Monday evening in order to be prepared for emergencies. This includes reviewing radio operations, medical training and tying fire hydrants.

The department responded to 29 incidents in Febru-

ary including two structure fires, one chimney fire, two motor vehicle collisions, one smoke investigation, 10 medical calls, two canceled calls, three malfunctioning alarms, two false alarms, one hazardous investigation, one lift assist and three standbys.

The report stated that fire hydrants continue to be an issue with deep snow blocking access to them. There are 227 hydrants in town, and the department depends on residents to clear snow away from them.

The department has 10 vehicles in its fleet, and several require repairs. Vehicles needing repairs are Car 1, Car 2, Engine 1, Tower 1, Engine 2 and the Hovercraft.

School district report

Kay read a report from Superintendent of Schools Timothy McCormick highlighting happenings in the North Brookfield Public Schools.

McCormick stated that the high school's Student Council was awarded the

Gold Council of Excellence at the annual state conference recently. The council was also awarded the Top 10 Project Award.

The high school recently hosted its annual career day with 20 professionals representing a wide range of fields. The guest speakers met with students and gave them the chance to ask questions and learn about that particular field.

The school district will hold a STEAM Night throughout the entire school district and features hands-on activities for attendees. The elementary school will also hold its annual book fair fundraiser.

Ten staff members are participating in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools training developed by Cornell University. This program on prevention, de-escalation techniques and safe intervention strategies is designed to maintain a supportive and respectful learning environment for students.

Public comment

Shawn Blankenship of Grove Street brought concerns about the Water Department and Water Commission to the Board of Selectmen. He stated he was being stalked, assaulted and harassed by the Water Department Superintendent.

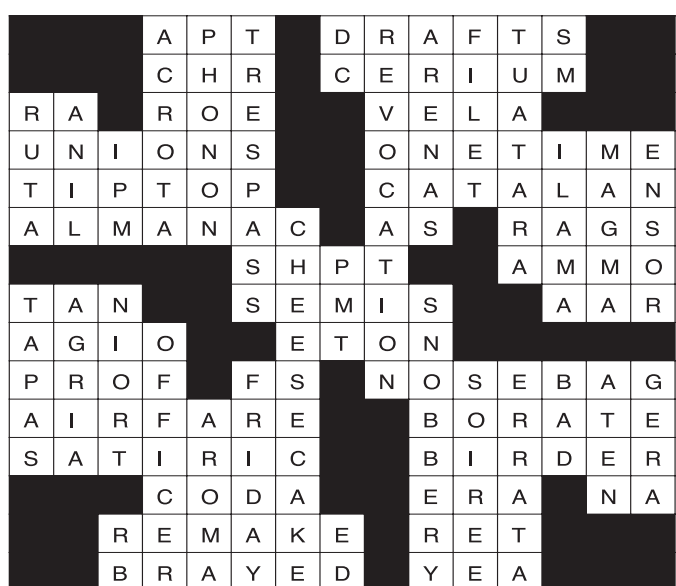
Blankenship said he has tried to share his concerns with the Water Commission, but "they are not communicating with me whatsoever."

Blankenship also shared concerns about a "gang stalking" campaign, that he said is being run by several members of the community.

He said "nobody's doing anything about it," regarding his concerns.

Resignations

The board accepted the resignations of Water Treatment Operator Robert Peterson and Andrew Wiewel from the Conservation Commission and Parks & Recreation Committee.



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- community -

Zonta Club helps women in need with hygiene kits

The Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley announced that 600 feminine hygiene kits were assembled for women and girls in need by some amazing volunteers at the Venture Way Collaborative on Feb. 21.

Special thanks to VVC, Jazzercise Amherst Fitness, Girls Inc. of the Valley, Palmer Public Library, Soul Shine Consignment Boutique, Making Waves Belchertown, The Polished Room, Blush Med Spa, Chamelions Salon, Wilbraham Tanning, Wilbraham Monson Academy and the Skin Studio Wilbraham for their support in collecting product donations. The club also received heart-warming messages and cash to purchase need-

ed products thanks to the publicity from local publications.

Amherst Survival Center was the only non-profit who showed up to get the kits, so they left with hundreds of kits and a trunkload of additional feminine products. Zonta Club members and volunteers will deliver the rest of the kits to the Care Center, Gray's House, local food banks, police departments, etc.

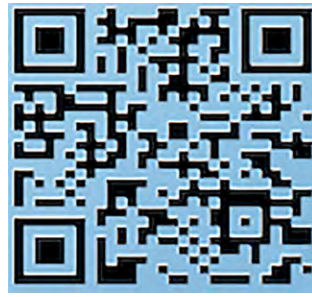


Suicide awareness walk returns to Grenville Park

WARE – During Mental Health Awareness Month, community members and students from Ware Public Schools, will gather at Grenville Park for the third annual Out of the Darkness Campus Walk to benefit the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

The 5K walk will be held at Grenville Park, 73 Church St., on Saturday, May 2, with check-in starting at 9 a.m. and the walk at 10 a.m. People can register at afsp.org/ware or scan the QR code.

This event was established in 2024 by School Resource Officer Jeannine Bonnayer and Ware Public Schools Food Service Manager Kristen Murphy, to help to bring



awareness to and start a conversation about suicide. In March of 2023, Murphy's son Ethan Donnelly died by suicide at the age of 24.

Murphy died in February of 2025, after a brief but fierce battle with a rare and aggressive cancer. This walk fundraiser was a cause very close to her heart, and a way she could honor her son's memory.

- legals -

TOWN OF BROOKFIELD PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 40, Section 15C and Chapter 87, Section 3 of M.G.L., a Public Hearing will be held at 7 p.m., on **Thursday, April 2, 2026 at Town Hall Banquet Room, 6 Central Street, Brookfield, MA.** Anyone wishing to comment may do so at this time.

The Select Board, acting as Tree Warden, has posted the following tree to be removed:

On 18 Common Street, a Norway Maple tree located between the Merrick Public Library and the Library Annex. Removing the tree would make it possible to install a 16' x 16' parking area to provide ADA-accessible parking for the Wood Room/Meeting Room and Barn program space. Without this improvement, ADA-accessible parking at 18 Common Street would not be

feasible.

This notice is also posted on the Town Website; the Brookfield Town Clerk's Office, 6 Central Street, Brookfield, MA; the Brookfield Post Office on Route 9; and a local newspaper.

Brookfield Select Board
selectmen@brookfieldma.us
03/20, 03/27/2026

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



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