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Quaboag Current
Newspaper

NEW BRAINTREE <i>Library lists story times</i> p2	WEST BROOKFIELD <i>Knights host spaghetti dinner</i> p13	REGION <i>Button show is April 13</i> p15	Editorial/Opinion 4 Police Logs 6 Sports 9	Classifieds 14 Legal Notices 15
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Volume 17, Number 18

Friday, March 29, 2024

School district recognizes student achievements

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

WARREN – Andrea Franz and Peg Hall, school counselors at Warren Community Elementary School, attended the School Committee meeting students who are members of the school's Kindness Club.

At the March 18 meeting, sixth graders Mack, Aria, Ben and Callie shared their experience being a part of the Kindness Club, which is now in its second year. The club meets every Monday during lunch and recess to help spread kindness throughout the school.

"We chose to participate in Kindness Club because we

like to be leaders in our school and to encourage others to be kind," Mack said.

Aria said one of the first things the Kindness Club did this school year was to organize a food drive, which collected over 500 pounds of food which was donated to a food pantry in Ware. She said the club also made gifts for 75 staff mem-

bers.

"We also visited all of the classrooms to talk about acts of kindness," Aria said. "Each student wrote about their own act of kindness on a heart which we collected and made a kindness tree with all of our hearts."

Ben said the Kindness Club will continue to visit classrooms

to spread kindness and do fun activities with the students. Club members will also team up with kindergarten and first grade students to read books and draw pictures.

"With one of our first grade classrooms, we were able to join gym class and play a ball game with them," he said.

See **SCHOOL** | PAGE 12



Once the structure of the sock was completed guests got into the characterization aspect of the puppetry class featuring eyes, noses and hair. TURLEY PHOTOS BY RYAN DRAGO

Library hosts Homeslice puppetry class

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

STURBRIDGE – The Joshua Hyde Public Library welcomed Eric "Homeslice" Weiss of Homeslice Puppetry recently, to lead a class on puppetry. Weiss is a puppet builder

and teacher who offers puppetry classes in custom made puppets in many forms. The class featured teens and adults who wanted to craft something interesting that really stands out.

This class by Homeslice taught participants how to make deluxe sock puppets with

a more advanced step by step process. Many elements go into the design of a deluxe sock puppet: there are mouth plates that represent the mouth of the puppet, foam to represent the skull and then comes characterization.

Weiss is a self-taught artist
See **PUPPETS** | PAGE 8

MAP assessment shows district-wide growth in math

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – Superintendent Timothy McCormick shared Measure of Academic Performance assessment results from fall to the winter.

At the March 18 School Committee meeting, he said

students are tested three times a year to look for growth and achievement. Students are measured against students across the country.

McCormick said there were "bright spots" in the data, but not all of the students in the high school completed the test, so the growth data only accounts for half of the students.

See **MAP** | PAGE 12

Listening Wellness Center welcomes new executive director

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
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BARRE – After celebrating its 20-year anniversary four years ago, Listening Wellness Center is ready to turn the page on its next chapter with a new executive director at its helm.

Barre resident Beatriz Arroyo has recently filled the role, following the departure of longtime Executive Director Laura Dusha Nelson.

Arroyo and her boyfriend moved to Barre with her sister, purchasing their dream home near the idyllic common. With the first year spent making the old house into a home, Arroyo

See **DIRECTOR** | PAGE 8



Barre resident Beatriz Arroyo has been named Listening Wellness Center's newest executive director. SUBMITTED PHOTO



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- community -

Eddie Forman band plays for playground

KofC sponsors first major fundraiser of the year

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

WARE – The St. Aloysius Catholic School in Gilbertville is working to raise money through several fundraisers to construct a playground for the students to enjoy at recess.

The school's Financial Manager and Enrollment Coordinator, Roberta McQuaid, has been working with the members of the school's PTO and the Ware Council 183 Knights of Columbus to bring this playground into being.

"The playground is for the school, for our elementary school students. For them to actually have playground equipment will be wonderful," McQuaid said.

The Joe C. Knight Memorial Playground will be built in memoriam of a beloved community member. With the fence built first, it brings safety as the school awaits the final construction of the play equipment.

"Joe and Jen Knight were founding parents of the school in 2016, and Joe was a board member up until his pass-

ing two years ago," McQuaid said. "His mother, Kathy Knight teaches second and third grade at the school."

The first major fundraising event this year will be a Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser on Saturday, April 6 at St. Mary's Church hall on South Street. Ware Council 183 Knights of Columbus is sponsoring the event, and they will be using the hall to host and the kitchens to cook.

Keeping toes tapping and the beat going at the dinner is the renowned Eddie Forman polka band. The band is donating their performance for the entire event.

"The families have been contributing and helping by selling tickets, and contributing items for themed baskets that will be raffled off at the end of the night," McQuaid said.

The next fundraising event will be a 5K held at Grenville Park the first weekend of May. "Many of our families participate in the 5K – you can walk or run," McQuaid said.

The school and community are looking forward to the construction of this playground, and it will bring fun and enjoyment to the children for many years to come.

New Braintree Library hosts story times

NEW BRAINTREE – The New Braintree Public Library, 45 Memorial Drive, is offering three Story Time programs in April on Mondays, April 1, 15 and 29, each will begin at 9 a.m.

The focus of the April 1 program will be on eggs and will feature "Peep and Egg" by Laura Gehl, "Egg" by Kevin Henkes and "Whose Egg?" by Guy Troughton and Lynette Evans.

The April 15 program will focus on bugs and will feature "Back Yard Bugs" by Jill McDonald, "Bugs for Lunch" by Margery Peckham and "How Does A Caterpillar Change?" by Eric Carle.

The April 29 program will have an Earth Day theme and will feature "The Curious Garden" by Peter Brown.

This reading and crafts program for preschool children is typically held twice a month on Mondays at the library. Parental supervision is required.

People may call the library at 508-867-7650 during regular business for more information.

Community choir presents 'Raise the Crown'

EAST BROOKFIELD – The Christian Community Choir presents "Raise the Crown," a musical for Easter on Sunday, April 7, at 3 p.m. at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, 131 Blaine Avenue.



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- community -

Organist Peter Krasinski celebrates America's pastime

Accompanies silent film 'Speedy' at Stone Church

HARDWICK – Organist extraordinaire Peter Edwin Krasinski will present “Speedy”, a 1928 baseball-themed silent film on a theater-sized movie screen with live improvised accompaniment on the historic instrument at the Stone Church Cultural Center, 283 Main St., Gilbertville, at 7 p.m. on Saturday, April 6.

Harold Lloyd, Ann Christy and Bert Woodruff star in this Oscar-nominated comedy classic, with cameo appearances by Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig. Hosts Friends of the Stone Church will serve free popcorn and snacks.

Tickets are \$20 at the door or online at <https://buytickets.at/friendsofthestonechurch/943723>. Youth under 18 are admitted free.

Group tickets for families of more than three will be capped at \$60 for the group.

Nominated for an Oscar in 1928, “Speedy” is the story of a Yankees fan who saves from extinction New York City’s last horse-drawn trolley, operated by his girlfriend’s grandfather.

Krasinski’s unique live accompaniment will take the audience on a captivating journey into the Roaring Twenties, a golden age for American sports fans.

To integrate sound and silent pictures, Krasinski memorizes each film. His spontaneous performances seamlessly reflect the films’ actions and characters’ states of mind, bringing productions to life with relevance and compassion. In recognition of his talent and creativity, he received the First Prize in Improvisation from the American Guild of Organists National Competition.

House Organist of the Providence Performing Arts Center, Krasinski was named last year as the official House Organist at Mechanics Hall, Worcester. A past Dean of the Boston Chapter AGO, Krasinski is active as Organist at First Church of Christ Scientist in Providence, accompanist at Beth El Temple Center in Belmont and he has presented Master Classes at the Sibelius Academy, Helsinki, Finland.

Krasinski appeared in 2023 in his own cameo for an Oscar-nominated film “The Holdovers”, set and filmed in New England.

“Speedy” will be Krasinski’s seventh family film concert in the Silents Are Golden series in Gilbertville. Home viewers can hear excerpts from his Let Joy Resound! organ concerts, re-opening the landmark Stone Church in 2016, and two of his best accompanied silent films, the 1924 original “Peter Pan”, recorded in 2021 with no audience, due to the pandemic, and the 1929 film “It”, starring Clara Bow, recorded in 2022 with live audience.

Tune in via the FOSC website: FriendsoftheStoneChurch.org/music/.

Spring 2024 Concerts at the Stone Church Cultural Center are sponsored by Boston Financial Management and many FOSC donors. Additional support comes from the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency, and from the Cultural Councils of Barre, Oakham and Petersham, which are supported by the Mass Cultural Council.

FOSC is pleased to be participating in the Mass Cultural Council’s Card to Culture program by extending discounts to EBT, WIC and Connector-Care health plan insurance cardholders. Eligible participants may request up to two free tickets at the box office on the day of the event. Bring EBT, WIC or Connector Care health plan card for 2024.

About FOSC

Friends of the Stone Church, Inc. is a public charitable corporation and community group organized in 2015 and open to all. Its mission is to preserve and protect the Gilbertville Stone Church Cultural Center and to make it available as a place of community enrichment.

The Friends welcome donations toward the ongoing preservation project and the concerts online at www.FriendsoftheStoneChurch.org or by mail to FOSC, P.O. Box 347, Gilbertville, MA 01031.



Peter Krasinski is shown with soprano Maria Ferrante at Mechanics Hall. SUBMITTED PHOTOS



Harold Lloyd as Horold Speedy Swift; Ann Christy as Jane Dillon; Bert Woodruff as her granddaddy Pop Dillon; and Byron Douglas as W.S. Wilton starred in the 1928 silent film “Speedy”.



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NEWSPAPER

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- opinion -



Primroses serve double duty

This week's column was half done when I received a text from a good friend who I haven't seen in a few months.

She had just read last week's article and was reaching out to congratulate me on my impending delivery. What? If I were having a baby, my name may end up in more than just the local paper- try the Guinness Book of World Records.

Anyhow, I accidentally sent an old column in, not the one I revamped in honor of my first born's birthday. I am sorry you all missed out on a few new things I had to say about the Gerber daisy, but I hope this gave you a good laugh.

Another dear friend visited Cape Cod this past week. She left the morning that we had some freezing rain and light snow.

Later in the day I received a picture in a text message that said, "at least it's spring somewhere!" I chuckled as I looked at the pretty Polyantha Primroses (*Primula* spp.) planted outside of an establishment, almost beckoning tourists to jump start the busy season!

I countered her picture with one of my own, a picture of a primrose in my garden, just greening up but still weeks away from flowering. Why not take a closer look at this double duty plant, just in time for Easter giving.

What exactly do I mean by double duty? Pick one up at the grocery store to enjoy indoors this spring and then plant it in the garden.

Better yet, purchase a primrose as an Easter hostess gift and it will be a spring harbinger for years to come – a memory of you! Even though they are usually sold in small pots, it's hard to miss their brightly colored flowers poking up through basal foliage.

They come in almost every color of the rainbow. Like the infamous pregnancy gift from last week's column, primroses also fall into the happy plant category!

Many types of primrose make great garden plants; check the label to make sure the one you purchase is hardy before planting it outdoors. I have had a clump of primroses blooming for years now that originally started out as a potted plant.

If it's been growing indoors for a while, be sure to let it harden off a bit before planting it in the ground; a partly shady spot with moisture retentive soil is best.

Typically, primroses need to be divided every three years or so, evident by die-out that begins in the center of the plant. Simply separate a chunk from the outer portion of the plant and replant it in rejuvenated soil.

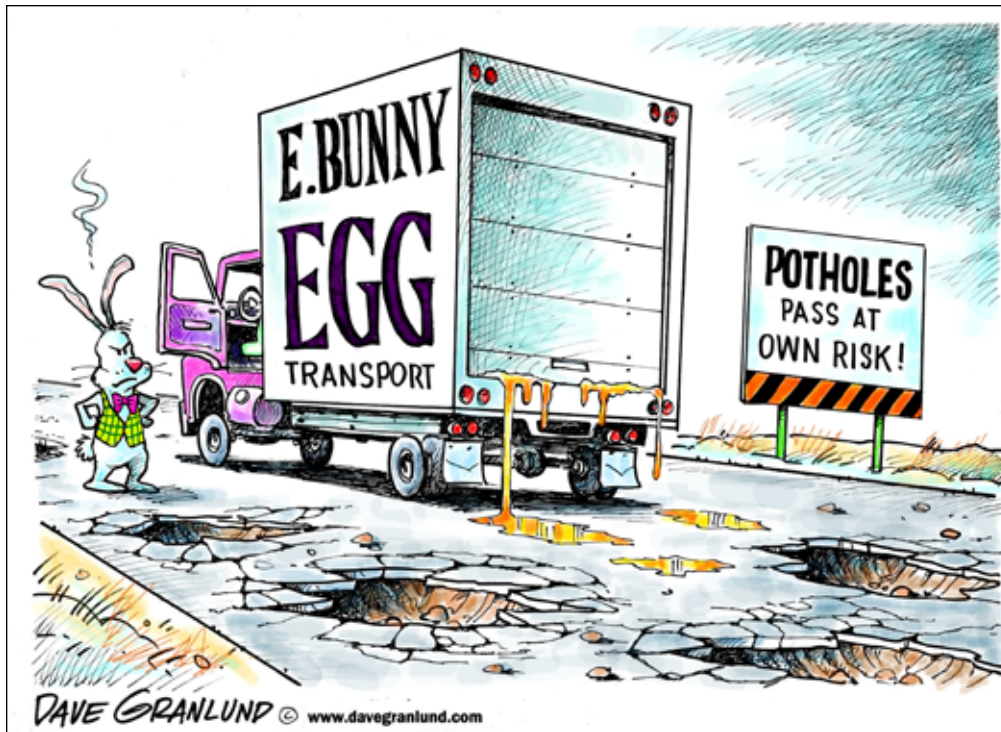
I prefer to do this early in the season, but it can also be accomplished right after flowering has ended. In the heat of the summer, and especially in drier soils, the plant can look a little yellow and ragged.

Keeping it well watered helps.

One year, when money was tight, I divided a plant and potted up one of the divisions and gave it to my sister in law as a hostess gift. She still has it growing in her garden, and every once in a while, will send a picture of it happily blooming.

I've tried in earnest to grow Japanese Primrose (*Primula japonica*) but something in my soil apparently isn't right. I will probably buy another one this year and hope be-

See GARDEN | PAGE 5



SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor

Can someone work while collecting Social Security Disability?

Dear Rusty

If a person is collecting Social Security disability benefits, can they, at any point, work at all? If they can, what is the maximum they can earn and still keep the disability benefit?

I am asking because my husband is still young, but his injuries will not allow him to go back to the job he had prior to his injuries and surgeries. He does not just want to sit at home doing nothing.

Signed: Concerned Wife

Dear Concerned:

Actually, the Social Security Administration encourages those collecting Social Security Disability Insurance benefits to attempt to go back to work and they provide considerable leeway for them to do so. The monthly earnings limit for those collecting SSDI benefits in 2024 is \$1,550 and as long as your husband earns less than the limit while working, his SSDI benefits will not be in jeopardy.

Your husband should contact Social Security's Ticket to Work program directly to protect his disability status and discuss returning to work while collecting SSDI benefits.

The Ticket to Work program assists those now receiving SSDI benefits who wish to test their ability to return to work without putting their SSDI benefits at risk. The program provides considerable assistance, including new career training opportunities and connection to potential employers and it is voluntary and costs nothing.

Here is a link to Social Security's information on the Ticket to Work program: <https://choosework.ssa.gov/>

It's not mandatory for your husband to enroll in the Ticket to Work program but, in addition to other available assistance, he can request a Trial Work Period, which would allow for nine months, over a rolling five year period, during which he can earn any amount even over the normal monthly limit mentioned above without risking his SSDI benefits.

Within the Trial Work Period, only those months he earns over the normal monthly SSDI limit would count as a Trial Work Month. So, for example, your husband could work part time regularly earning under the normal monthly limit and if, in some months (up to nine), he earned more it wouldn't affect his SSDI benefits.

So, your younger disabled husband can, indeed, work while on Social Security disability, for as long as he wishes while earning under the monthly SSDI limit, the SSDI earnings limit changes yearly. He may also wish to enroll in Social Security's Ticket to Work program for assistance with developing a new career.

Plus, he can take advantage of using trial work months in the event his work earnings will, at times, exceed the monthly SSDI limit.

If your husband earns over the SSDI limit for more than the nine trial work months and his benefits are consequently stopped, he can within the five-year Trial Work Period have his benefits reinstated (without again going through the full application process) if his disability, once more, renders him unable to work full time.

For starters, I suggest your husband contact Social Security's Ticket to Work program directly at 1.833-889-0108 to discuss returning to work part time. Social Security will guide him through the entire process.

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 ssadviser@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

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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

- opinion -



By Lee Hamilton

Hamilton on Foreign Policy

As Americans, we have a duty to respond to disasters

The earthquakes that struck northwestern Afghanistan this month were devastating and horrific.

They caused at least 1,295 deaths and injured at least 1,800 people, according to the United Nations. They compounded a humanitarian crisis that has grown worse since the Taliban took over the country in 2021.

Faced with such immense suffering, the human response is to want to help, and we are.

The U.S. Agency for International Development, our nation's primary international disaster response agency, is providing \$12 million in humanitarian assistance. Other nations and private organizations are also providing relief.

But the scale of the world's suffering can seem overwhelming, and 2023 has been an especially bad year:

In February, two powerful earthquakes hit southern Turkey, killing more than 50,000 people in Turkey

and war-torn Syria and leaving hundreds of thousands homeless. They were the deadliest quakes in Turkey's modern history.

In September, a massive Mediterranean storm dumped heavy rain on Libya. Two dams collapsed, resulting in floods that killed more than 11,000 people and displaced tens of thousands. It followed a string of deadly floods in China, Brazil, Greece and elsewhere.

Also in September, an earthquake struck the High Atlas Mountains in Morocco, killing nearly 3,000 people, injuring over 5,000 and leaving many homeless in remote areas.

There have been disasters here at home, including the wildfires that killed nearly 100 people in Hawaii in August as well as floods, drought and more. In the first eight months of 2023, the U.S. experienced a record 23 weather and climate disasters that caused more than \$1 billion in damages.

President Joe Biden has issued dozens of disaster and emergency proclamations this year.

All this hardship challenges us to respond. It raises an important recurring question: What is our duty to people who, through no fault of their own, have their lives turned upside down by disasters.

In my view, Americans can and should take a leading role in relieving suffering.

We have the resources, and most of us take pride in helping as much as we can. We have a moral duty to step up: it's the right thing to do.

It also provides an opportunity to win favor in the world. It generates a lot of goodwill when we provide assistance.

And we can afford it. Americans consistently overestimate what we spend on foreign aid. In fact, it's less than 1% of the federal budget, and disaster assistance is just a fraction of that.

The world sees the U.S. as a leader in humanitarian

relief. We respond to dozens of international disasters every year.

Our help is more effective when it's delivered in coordination with other countries, of course, often through organizations like the United Nations.

Philanthropic efforts also play a vital role. Many Americans donate generously to organizations like the International Red Cross, the Red Crescent, CARE, Save the Children and many others.

When a disaster strikes, experts typically recommend giving money to established organizations, which have the experience and infrastructure to get help where it's needed.

Of course, it would be ideal if we could prevent disasters, or lessen their likelihood. In some cases, we can.

For example, climate change has increased the frequency and severity of floods, drought and fires. Cutting greenhouse gas emissions and conserving energy can reduce the likelihood that these disasters will continue to grow more serious.

We can't prevent earthquakes, but we can support efforts to build resilient physical infrastructure in regions where quakes are common.

When disasters strike, as they inevitably will, we can respond promptly and generously.

True, Americans can't do all this on our own. But we are the richest country in the world.

We can do a lot to respond to and alleviate human suffering, and we should.

Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar at the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice at the IU O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

GARDEN | FROM PAGE 4

yond hope to eventually end up with a stand of them like they have in the display gardens at Positively Perennials.

The sea of whorled flowers in light and dark pink is arboretum worthy.

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.

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- public safety -

East Brookfield Police Log

During the week of March 18-24, the East Brookfield Police Department responded to 157 building/property checks, 96 directed area patrols, five traffic controls, 11 radar assignments, six emergency 911 calls, one complaint, two citizen assists, one motor vehicle investigation, one larceny/theft/shoplifting, one fire call, five animal calls and 43 motor vehicle stops in the town of East Brookfield.

Monday, March 18

10:09 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, North Brookfield Road, Citation Issued

6:30 p.m. 911 Misdeal, Pond View Road, Services Rendered

Tuesday, March 19

10:24 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Route 49, Citation Issued

6:44 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Cove Street, Transported to Hospital

8:57 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, West Main Street, Citation Issued

9:09 p.m. Radar, Route 49, Written Warning

9:28 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop,

Route 49, Citation Issued
10 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
10:32 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued

Wednesday, March 20

3:49 a.m. Medical Emergency, West Main Street, Transported to Hospital

12:04 p.m. Larceny/Theft/Shoplifting, West Main Street, Report Taken

2:36 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued

4:48 p.m. Assist Citizen, Connie Mack Drive, Officer Handled

6:35 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Podunk Road, Written Warning

Thursday, March 21

7:38 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Harrington Street, Citation Issued

7:47 a.m. Motor Vehicle Investigation, Podunk Road, Spoken To

10:59 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Connie Mack Drive, Transported to Hospital

11:38 a.m. Assist Citizen, Connie Mack Drive, Officer Handled

1:36 p.m. 911 Complaint/Mo-

tor Vehicle Operations, East Main Street, Taken/Referred to Other Agency

7:24 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Route 49, Citation Issued

8:02 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, West Main Street, Citation Issued

8:35 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued

Friday, March 22

10:05 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Route 49, Citation Issued

5:16 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Maple Way, Citation Issued

Saturday, March 23

8:59 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Harrington Street, Citation Issued

11:27 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Gleason Avenue, Summons Issued

Sunday, March 24

8 a.m. 911 Complaint/Motor Vehicle Operations, Route 49, Taken/Referred to Other Agency

10 a.m. Fire/Chimney, Podunk Road, Extinguished

6:06 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Arrest(s) Made

New Braintree Police Log

During the week of March 18-25, the Hardwick/New Braintree Police Department responded to 20 building/property checks, 28 directed area patrols, eight traffic controls, four radar assignments, two emergency 911 calls, one citizen assist, one assist other agency, six safety hazards, one motor vehicle investigation, one identity theft, one chimney fire, one animal call and four motor vehicle stops in the town of New Braintree.

Monday, March 18

5:42 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Barre Road, Written Warning

Wednesday, March 20

1:42 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

Thursday, March 21

6:02 a.m. Motor Vehicle Investigation, Hardwick Road, Spoken To

7:28 a.m. 911 Fire/Chimney, Barr Road, Extinguished

Friday, March 22

4:07 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Ravine Road, Citation Issued

Saturday, March 23

12:33 p.m. 911 Assist Citizen, Gilbertville Road, No Action Required

1:58 p.m. Safety Hazard, Utley Road, Taken/Referred to Other Agency

2:06 p.m. Safety Hazard, Barre Road, Officer Handled

2:39 p.m. Safety Hazard, Worcester Road, Removed Hazard

Sunday, March 24

1:16 a.m. Safety Hazard, Hardwick Road, Checked/Secured

7:58 a.m. Safety Hazard, Pierce Road, Taken/Referred to Other Agency

12:07 p.m. Identity Theft, Memorial Drive, Report Taken

Monday, March 25

6:55 a.m. Safety Hazard, Gilbertville Road, Taken/Referred to Other Agency

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- community -

Rev. Richard and Gail Pryce House opens in Oakham

By Ellenor Downer
edowner@turley.com

OAKHAM – When Rev. Richard Pryce retired from the ministry, he and his wife, Gail, began attending the Oakham Congregational Church.

Thus began the Rutland couples association with the Oakham community and Dismas Farm, located on Lincoln Road. Chris Drolet, who was bringing a meal on Wednesday, to those living at Dismas Farm, asked the couple if they would like to prepare a dish and come with her to supper with the clients at the farm.

They said yes and their long time relationship with those living at the farm began. They not only brought a meal to the clients, who were in recovery, but offered them support.

The Dismas motto is “we are family.” The Pryces are a second set of parents, grandparents and of course, friends to the Dismas Family.

On March 1 the Dismas family honored the couple by dedicating its newest building in town, a home for those who “graduated” so to speak from the farm to apartment living by naming the place the Reverend Richard and Gail Pryce House.

The couple made the ribbon cutting a family affair. Their daughter, Joanne Bedard and her daughter, Abigail were there in support. The couple’s two sons, John and Mark Pryce and two grandsons travelled from out of state to attend the event.

Oakham residents also came out in large numbers. Dismas staff made sure there was plenty of food and even made cookie replicas of the new Pryce House.

Clients and staff made postcards and each visitor received a packet of those to take home. The postcards depicted scenes at the farm such as the tractor, the hoop house for growing plants, crops, a view of the farm and more.

In wholesome relationships, both sides benefit. Not only have members of the Dismas family benefitted from the Pryce’s ministry at Dismas Farm, the people at Dismas Farm ministered to them as well. When the Pryce’s lost their beloved dog, they received comfort and concern from their new “family.”

The next day after the ribbon cutting, the Reverend Richard and Gail Pryce House had six occupants move into their new home.

Dismas purchased the duplex and added two more bedrooms, one on each side of the house. They also added new windows, doors, siding, stairs and deck.

The two units are identical and have a downstairs kitchen, one bedroom, bathroom and living room. The upstairs has two bedrooms and a bathroom.



Richard and Gail Pryce talk to some of the many attendees to the open house and ribbon cutting ceremony at the Reverend Richard and Gail Pryce House, located on 158 New Braintree Road in Oakham on March 1. TURLEY PHOTOS BY ELLENOR DOWNER



The Reverend Richard and Gail Pryce House located on New Braintree Road in Oakham officially opened last Friday. The building owned by Dismas is similar to the other houses the nonprofit owns in Worcester. They also own Dismas Farm on Lincoln Road in Oakham.



These men will be living at the Reverend Richard and Gail Pryce House. They enjoy some snacks and mingling with the guests at the March 1 event. They are shown in the kitchen of one of the two three-bedroom units.



Joanne Bedard of Rutland, daughter of the Pryce's, attended the open house and ribbon cutting along with her daughter, Abigail Bedard and Joanne's two brothers, John and Mark Pryce and family.

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PUPPETS | FROM PAGE 1

in puppetry and has been educating and building puppets since 2005. Shortly afterwards, Weiss started Homeslice Puppetry.

Originally from New York, Weiss now resides in South Hadley and offers puppetry classes and workshops in multiple venues. Most commonly, Weiss offers classes and workshops for puppetry in libraries, school, and camps and loves going on the road to offer his puppetry programming.

“People are just blown away,” Weiss said. “Every little detail that goes into making a puppet, so many you don’t realize.”

Mouth plates are used to represent the mouth component of the puppet. This plate comes in all shapes and is the motion piece of a deluxe sock puppet.

Next is foam for the skull of the puppet. The foam helps make the head of the sock puppet and helps add more to the character of the puppet as well.

What made this workshop special is that March 21 was World Puppetry Day.

World Puppetry Day is celebrated by puppet festivals, donating to puppet organizations, making puppets, or watching a puppet show. For Homeslice, it’s all about teaching the art of puppetry and witnessing crafters of all ages bring their puppets to life.

When the crafters complete their range of motion and movement to their sock puppets, it is time to pick out their socks and get creative with their puppets. This step will lead to adding character to the sock puppets.

According to Weiss, the details are helpful to making puppets more lifelike. However, creativity comes in all forms and overloading on details are not always necessary.

“More details is not necessarily bet-

ter,” Weiss said prior to crafting during his class.

Weiss provided socks of all colors and guests got to pick out their own colored sock and features to add on to them.

The nickname “Homeslice” was given to Weiss earlier in his puppetry endeavors. The name clearly stuck as it is incorporated in his puppetry programming.

In addition to deluxe sock puppets, Weiss also hosts classes for crafters to make their own foam puppets. These foam puppets are of similar style to the familiar Muppet characters.

Weiss uses similar patterns to help crafters make their puppets similar to the style behind the Muppets.

The sock puppets were slowly coming to life as Weiss shared some of his techniques and stories behind his journey in puppetry.

Weiss learned puppetry from Stan Winston and BJ Guyer, teachers of character arts including puppetry. Ever since starting Homeslice Puppetry, Weiss has traveled all over the country to attend puppetry festivals and gets to connect with fellow puppeteers who love to share their creativity.

“There’s a lot of puppeteers who collaborate and share ideas,” Weiss said.

These festivals have been a positive experience for Weiss and he has a lot in store for the future. Weiss will be attending a national puppetry festival that will be taking place at the University of Connecticut.

He will also be attending The Northeast Regional Festival, The Puppet Homecoming in Ithaca, NY this coming fall. According to Weiss, the puppets you see at this festival are gorgeous.

For the summer, Weiss will be attending a lot of camps to provide his Homeslice Puppetry programming and



Eric “Homeslice” Weiss taught a deluxe sock puppet class at Joshua Hyde Public Library. Turley Photos by Ryan Drago

inspire young crafters to take up puppetry. Weiss hopes that his students will leave his classes knowing that puppet making is fun but also a process.

“It is a process, more than you realize,” Weiss said.

To learn more about Homeslice

Puppetry, visit homeslicepuppets.weebly.com or visit their Facebook page, Homeslice Puppetry. Homeslice can be reached by emailing eric.weiss@homeslicepuppetry.com or calling 845-499-0655.



Teens and adults tested out their sock puppets after the class led by Homeslice.



The process of making puppets involves a lot more detail than most people realize.



Several attendees got into the spirit of puppetry and made more than one deluxe sock puppet.

DIRECTOR | FROM PAGE 1

decided it was time to look for a new career path.

Having followed Listening Wellness Center on Facebook since she moved to town, Arroyo decided to take a chance and apply for the executive director position.

“Something kind of nudged me to just send it. I sent it in, and they contacted me for an interview. I felt really good about it,” Arroyo said. “It’s really a dream.”

Now, she has a job she can walk to and from every day, taking in the beauty of her neighborhood.

“You can tell that people love it [Barre] and that makes me love it too,” she said.

Originally from south Florida, Arroyo attended Florida Gulf University in Fort Meyers, Florida, where she studied sociology. Following graduation, she moved back home and took a part-time job at Whole Foods.

“That was supposed to be a little hiatus and ended up turning into a career,” Arroyo said.

Food is something that ties in closely to wellness, Arroyo said, and it becomes a shared experience for people from all

cultures and backgrounds.

“Food is the unifier for all people,” she said.

Arroyo had planned to stay with Whole Foods for her career, but following a change in ownership the culture of the company shifted.

It’s the culture of Listening Wellness Center that made Arroyo want to apply for the executive director position, something that is very important to her.

“I wanted to do something really meaningful to me, and impactful,” Arroyo said. “Everything kind of lined up.”

Arroyo is ready to immerse herself in Listening Wellness Center’s programming, especially the cooking, yoga and children’s classes. She is also ready for the community building that encompasses this role and the center in general.

“We’re gearing up for our spring program for the kids and the community. That’s the stuff that I’m really excited about,” Arroyo said. “I want more programs and access to the community. Barre is such a great community.”

Listening Wellness Center is looking to offer cooking classes for people that are older, teaching them how to cook for one or two people. Other ideas include

cooking classes for college students living on their own for the first time.

Juicing and smoothie-making would be another topic, along with finding fun ways to incorporate vegetables into your diet.

These classes would be about “meeting people where they’re at,” then adding more diverse culinary classes.

Arroyo has been listening to feedback from the community and beyond, to meet the center’s growing needs.

“We’ve had a lot of requests from the community for more yoga, and yoga options,” Arroyo said of the center’s yoga program. Listening Wellness Center has numerous yoga instructors leading a variety of classes for all skill levels and abilities.

She’s also been in touch with a non-profit veterans yoga movement based out of California, to organize at least one veterans yoga event.

“Their instructors are either veterans who have gone through the training, or yoga instructors who have been through trauma informed veterans training,” Arroyo said. “I’m hoping that it kind of opens up a door for them.”

Mental health is also just as important to wellness as physical health, Ar-

royo said, as is “flexing our social muscles.”

“Humans need activities to bond and build our social networking in the community,” she said. “Physical and mental health are singular...[community events] bring in all different types of people and make bridges that wouldn’t necessarily be there.”

Dusha Nelson is working alongside Arroyo as she transitions into her new role.

“I am very excited for the future of Listening,” Dusha Nelson said. “I’ve been working with Bea doing some training and some transitioning and it’s been a pleasure to get to know her and I can see myself continuing to work with Listening in the future in my own new endeavors.”

Arroyo welcomed people from the community to stop in and meet her at Listening Wellness Center, located at 35 South St.

“If you see me around say ‘hi,’” she said. “I want people to feel comfortable coming here and reaching out.”

For more information on Listening Wellness Center and its offerings, visit listeningwellness.org or follow them on Facebook and Instagram.

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SPORTS

Quabbin baseball nears season opener



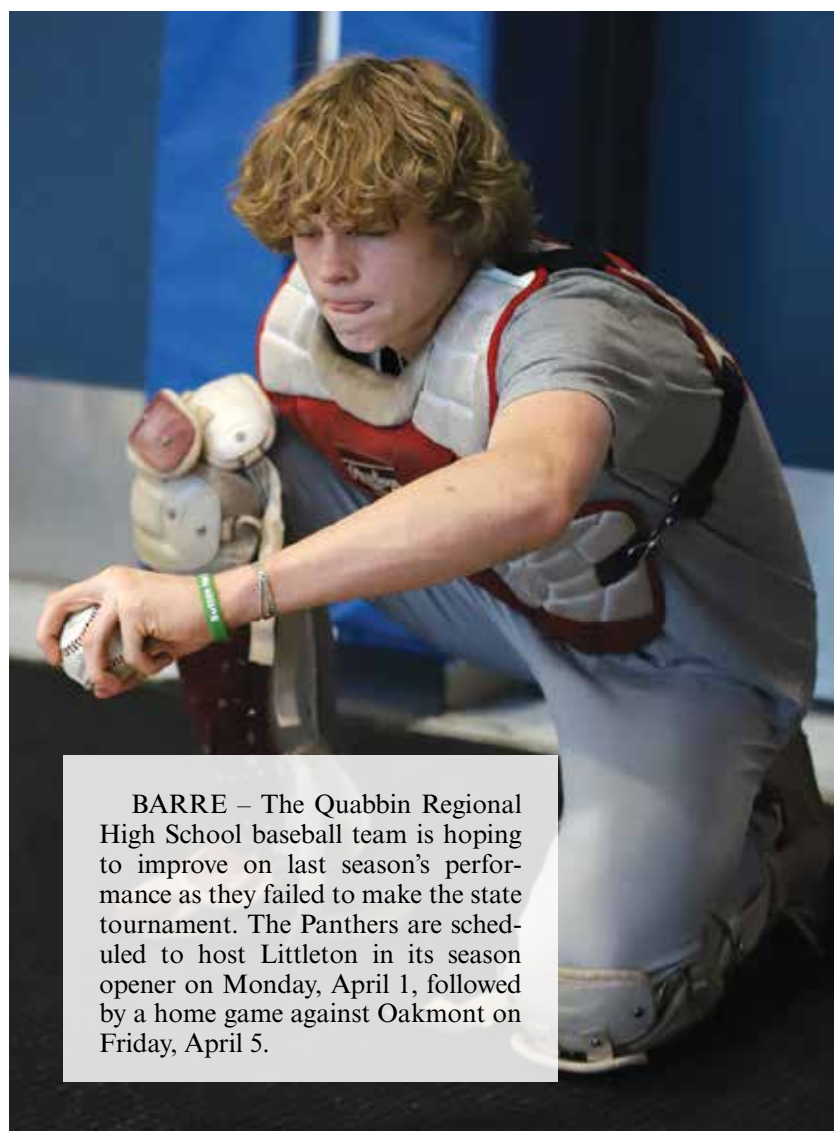
With muddy conditions, the Panthers used the gym to work on infield drills. TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Quabbin Regional baseball works out in the high school gymnasium Monday afternoon.



The Panthers did not have any scrimmages scheduled this week.



BARRE – The Quabbin Regional High School baseball team is hoping to improve on last season's performance as they failed to make the state tournament. The Panthers are scheduled to host Littleton in its season opener on Monday, April 1, followed by a home game against Oakmont on Friday, April 5.

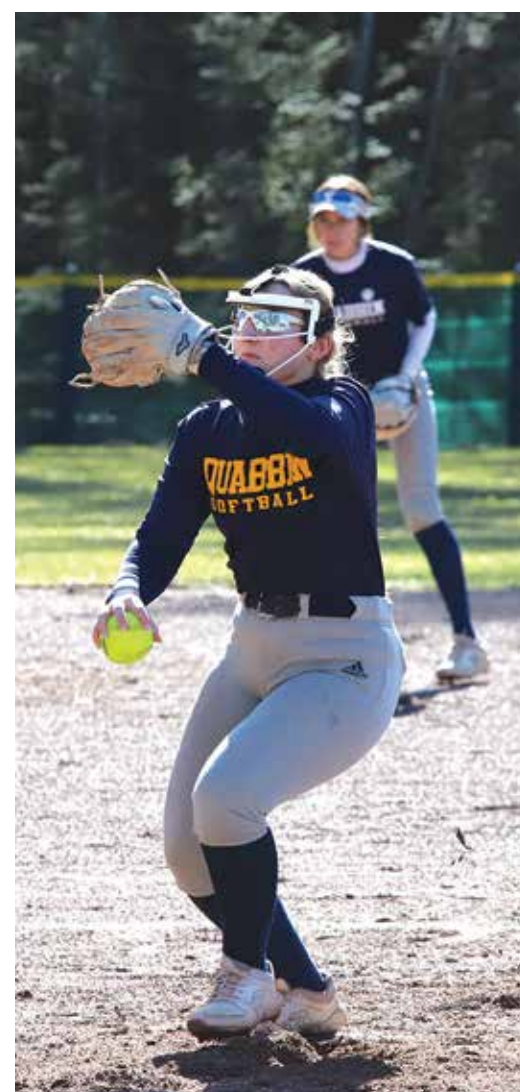
The Panthers are hoping for a better season this year as come back a year more experienced.

Panthers face preseason competition



Meaghan Doyle makes a catch on a pop-up. TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

BARRE – On Monday afternoon, Quabbin softball hosted Athol High School in a scrimmage. With the weather not looking favorable, this could be Quabbin's only scrimmage before the Panthers start their regular season opener on Monday, April 1. The Panthers will host Littleton at 4 p.m.



Quabbin softball faced Athol in a scrimmage on Monday afternoon.



The Panthers get the close out at first base.



The Panthers are racing against the weather to prepare for the regular season.

- sports -

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Athlete of the Month

**NAME: Gabby Scanlon
 SCHOOL: Tantasqua**

Scanlon finished the season north of 300 points scored, and helped lead the Warriors to a win in the Clark Tournament this year.

To nominate someone for Athlete of the Week, contact Managing Sports Editor Gregory A. Scibelli at 413-283-8393 ext. 258 or send an e-mail to gscibelli@turley.com.

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Pioneers getting set to face Sci-Tech



Pathfinder's baseball team gathers at the start of practice. TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



The Pioneers practice their outfield work Monday afternoon.

PALMER – Earlier this week, the Pioneers baseball team continued its preparation for the upcoming regular season. The Pioneers are scheduled to travel to Sci-Tech on Monday, April 1 at 4 p.m., then return home to face Smith Vocation on Friday, April 5 at 3:30 p.m.

Candlepin League News

By Ryan Drago
 Staff Writer
 rdrago@turley.com

Tuesday Night Commercial Elks League

PALMER – The team feeling lucky in the third and final round is Acres who stand in first place at 14-2.

Behind Acres in second place is the Blue B's at 12-4 and in third place is the Champs R Here at 11-5.

The #1 seed Acres bowled against #2 seed Blue B's on league night of March 19. In game one, Acres were victorious over #2 seed by a score of 402-358. Three out of four bowlers on Acres broke the century mark with Kenny Trudel as high bowler of the game with a 109.

In game two, Blue B's bounced back with a win 349-328. In game three, Blue B's won a close game 392-388. Mark Pafumi of Blue B's led the team in the last game with a 109.

Acres won total pinfall by a final score of 1121-1099. Each team received two points.

Compression bowled against Last in Line. In game one, Last in Line won the first game 358-321. Vinny Navarro of Last in Line led the team with a 103. In game two, Compression was the winner 345-330. In game three, Last in Line won 358-349.

Last in Line won total pinfall by a final score of 1046-1015.

Thursday Night Mixed League

This league night was the second to last league night of the season for the Thursday League.

Team Six, the winners of round one, is leading in first place as the season comes to an end. Team Five is five points out of first place and competed against Team Six on March 21.

In game one, Team Five won the first game by a score of 403-402. In game two, Team Six won by a score of 416-381. In game three, Team Six won the last game by a score of 405-390.

Total pinfall scores were Team Six at 1223 and Team Five at 1174.

Team Three bowled against Team Four. In game one, Team Three was the winner by a score of 426-388. Wayne Hughes of Team Three led the team by starting off with a 113.

In game two, Team three won again by a score of 403-387. Jesse Danek of Team Three led the team with a 108.

In game three, Team Three won 397-394 for a three-game sweep. Danek finished with a 106. Total pinfall scores were Team Three at 1226 and Team Four at 1169.

Team One bowled against Team Two. In game one, Kris Rickson bowled a 126 to lead Team One to winning 421-413.

In game two, Team Two won the second game 413-406. In game three, Team One dominated game three with all four bowlers breaking 100 and scoring 493. Dena Rickson bowled 124, Mike Jacobs 107, Sean Comerford 114 and Kris Rickson 108.

Team Two finished with 436 and Cody Allen had his best game of the year, 115.

Total pinfall scores were Team One at 1320 and Team Two at 1262.



A Pathfinder player makes a throw back to the infield after making a play.



A Pathfinder outfielder comes up throwing with the ball.

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- sports -

Pioneers fall in Open Cup



Santiago Blasco Gomez dribbles up the field.



Abdel Talabi sends a pass away ahead of pressure.



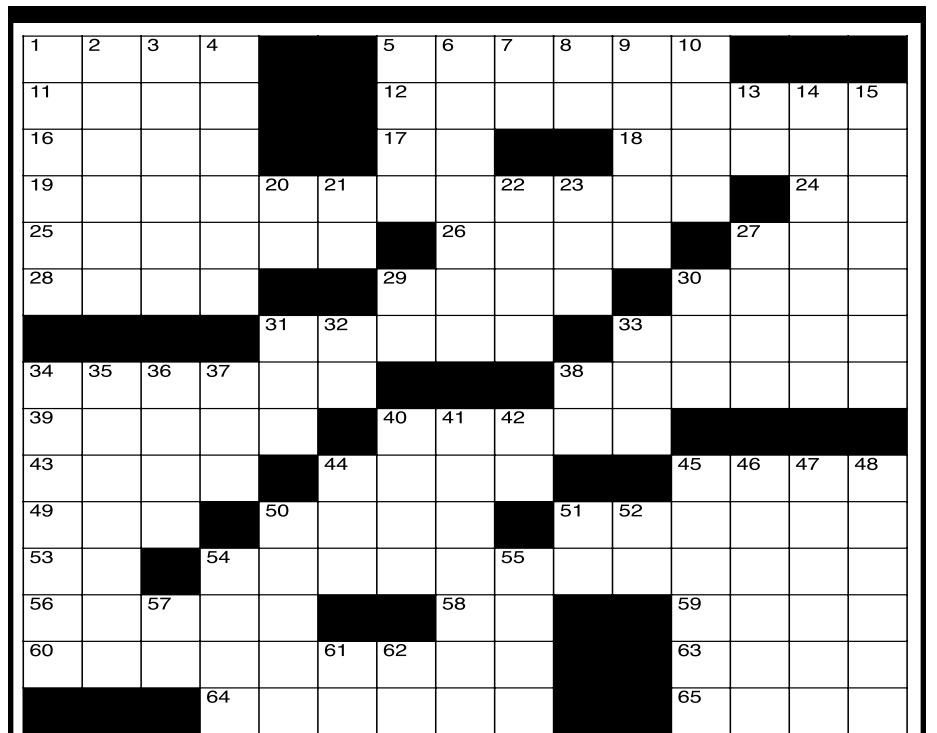
Tomas Duben and Khalid Rose fight to keep the ball with some pressure from the opposition coming on.

LUDLOW – Last Thursday night, the Western Mass. Pioneers opened their season with a matchup in the US Open Cup. The Pioneers faced Union Omaha and unfortunately were shut out by a 4-0 decision. With the loss, the Pio-

neers Open Cup chances have ended after just one game. The Pioneers will now gear their preparations toward the May 18 season opener. The Pioneers will also have an exhibition contest on May 10 against Third Eye FC.



Gianluca Cersosimo sends a free kick away. TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Database management system
- 5. Medical procedures
- 11. ___ Clapton, musician
- 12. Defender
- 16. Exert oneself
- 17. Indicates position
- 18. Quay
- 19. Atrocities
- 24. A way to address an adult man
- 25. Ends
- 26. Unable
- 27. Taxi
- 28. Gratuities
- 29. A famous train station
- 30. Japanese persimmon
- 31. Sours
- 33. Beneficiary
- 34. Baseball official
- 38. Confused situation
- 39. Unworldly
- 40. Yemen capital
- 43. Type of soil
- 44. Beloved beverage
- 45. Lying down
- 49. ___ Angeles
- 50. Fail to amuse
- 51. Collapsible shelter
- 53. Commercial
- 54. Taste property
- 56. Lordship's jurisdictions
- 58. It cools your home
- 59. Dismounted
- 60. Charge in a court of law
- 63. One less than one
- 64. Spoke
- 65. Famed garden
- 5. Abba ___, Israeli politician
- 6. Observed
- 7. "Westworld" actor Harris
- 8. Belonging to me
- 9. Shoelace tube
- 10. Takes to civil court
- 13. Early multimedia
- 14. Produces anew
- 15. Horse races
- 20. Of I
- 21. Equally
- 22. Changes color
- 23. A town to stay
- 27. Town in Galilee
- 29. Mathematical figure
- 30. Klingon character
- 31. They ___
- 32. Atomic #58
- 33. Showed up extinct
- 34. Loosen grip
- 35. Unpleasant smell
- 36. Innermost membranes enveloping the
- 37. Esteemed college "league"
- 38. Partner to Pa
- 40. Small American rail
- 41. A salt or ester of acetic acid
- 42. Sodium
- 44. Military figure (abbr.)
- 45. Lighted
- 46. Paid to get out of jail
- 47. All of something
- 48. Ohio city
- 50. More abject
- 51. A radio band
- 52. Scientific development (abbr.)
- 54. Monetary unit
- 55. Scored perfectly
- 57. A punch to end a fight
- 61. The Golden State (abbr.)
- 62. The Beehive State (abbr.)

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- community -

SCHOOL | FROM PAGE 1

Callie said the Kindness Club was able to play board games with second grade, and will do the same with third grade later this month. They will have relay races with fourth grade, and give a presentation about the club to fifth graders.

"We hope we've encouraged all students at WCES to be kind," Callie said.

Franz said Kindness Club is open to anyone in sixth grade.

"We wanted something that would be available to all students," she said, and gives students a chance to be role models and gain leadership experience.

Superintendent Stephen Duff thanked both Franz and Hall for their work with the students, and acknowledged Assistant Superintendent of Development Madeline Smola for securing grant funding to make this possible.

Duff told the students that the work they do is "phenomenal."

"When students do kind things for other kids, it's contagious," he said.

Project 351 ambassadors

Eighth grade civics teacher Joe Salvatore introduced Quaboag Regional Middle School's Project 351 Ambassa-

dors. Representing West Brookfield is Caroline Stevens and Warren is Andrew Boudreau.

"These two were selected by their teachers because they exhibit the qualities that they'd want to see in those students...kindness, willingness to help, friendliness, volunteerism," Salvatore said.

MCAS scores

West Brookfield Elementary School Principal Melissa Provost and Warren Community Elementary School Dean of Students Brian Guimond recognized students for "exceptional performance" on the 2023 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System test, reading a letter from the Department of Education's Commissioner.

Six students were recognized and received certificates and gift cards for their efforts.

FY 25 budget

Duff said the transportation amounts came in higher than expected when the fiscal year 2025 budget was initially presented to the School Committee in February.

"The number that they put into the original budget was 100% transportation reimbursement," Duff said. "We

know that we're not going to get 100% reimbursement back."

He said after adjusting the budget, each town's assessment increased by about 1%, which is still less than in previous years.

The School Committee voted to adopt the FY 25 budget in the amount of \$23,387,207.46; consisting of operational expenses in the amount of \$23,148,680.46 and a capital debt expense of \$138,527. The town of Warren has been assessed at \$4,514,258 and West Brookfield at \$4,642,225

RAAC update

School Committee Chair Andrew Schwenker said the Regional Agreement Amendment Committee met on Feb. 28 and reviewed changes from legal counsel. He said these changes were made and sent to the Department of Education for review.

Student Advisory Council update

Student Advisory Council members Hanna Nemeroff and Kendall LaRiviere gave an update on what is happening in the schools.

Nemeroff said the eighth grade is preparing to leave for Washington, D.C. While there, students will visit a number of historic sites, including the Washing-

ton Monument, World War II Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, Korean War Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, the Smithsonian Museum of American History and more.

"We can't wait to hear all about it when they return," she said.

LaRiviere said the Student Council attended the Massachusetts Association of Student Councils conference in Hyannis recently, joining students from across the commonwealth.

Nemeroff said accounting students from Jean DiRico's class went to UMAss to hear speakers from Deloitte's accounting firm. While there, the students won first place in a trivia contest led by Isenburg students.

She said a groundbreaking ceremony was held for a new Project Adventure zip line on March 14, led by Duff.

"This is going to be a great new addition to the course," she said.

LaRiviere said a homework club for grades seven-12 will be held on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 2:30-4:30 p.m. in the middle school cafeteria.

Quaboag National Art and Junior Art Honor Society currently have their work on display at the Merriam-Gilbert Public Library, now through April.

MAP | FROM PAGE 1

For math, the school district is in the 67th percentile for growth.

"We also saw an increase in achievement," McCormick said, reaching 55%.

McCormick said all grade levels are moving toward the higher growth/higher achievement quadrant. He said classrooms in the second year of using Bridges or Illustrative math curriculums showed the most improvement of growth percentiles.

He said the lower student performers have remained low.

"We need to figure out, how do we move our lowest performing students up to the highest performing quadrant," he said.

For reading, growth has reached the 36th percentile, but achievement has remained at 47%.

"We definitely realized that we have some areas of improvement here with our reading and we have been addressing that this year," McCormick said. "We're looking to get some growth like we have with our math."

Elementary School Principal Sarah Priestley shared data from kindergarten through third grade.

"The math growth this year has been awesome, it's just been incredible," she said.

Priestley said the kindergarten students had lower growth compared to other grade levels, which is expected, she said.

"Our kindergarteners come in with varying levels of readiness," she said. "Still, 27% of students are in that 80 or above percentile of growth."

Priestley said teachers and students in the second year of the program have shown the most growth. She said fourth grade piloted this program last year and that 74% of fourth grade students showed growth in the 80% or above percentile.

"We see that it helps create and build a foundation of conceptual understanding for math that carries year to year to year," she said.

Priestley said reading scores were not as strong as math scores, and the staff recognize that their current program is not aligned with the school district's needs. She said the literacy leadership committee is looking to adopt a new

program.

Fourth grade is currently piloting a new curriculum, and has shown the "most promising" data in reading in the MAP assessment.

Priestley said the new reading curriculum has been added to the budget for next year.

High School Principal John Diorio said grades nine and 11 saw both growth and achievement in math, and grades seven, eight and 10 saw growth, but were lower in achievement.

Diorio said there is an algebra support class for grade nine students and there have been lesson studies to build upon the math program with the math coach. He said similar to elementary school students, those in the second year of the math program have shown the most growth.

Diorio said next year his staff will work to improve students' scores by making better use of flex block and encouraging students to make a greater effort during MAP testing.

He said English Language Arts scores were lower than math for high school students. Grades 10 and 11 stayed consistent with achievement and growth, but grades seven and eight "really struggled."

An enrichment block will be scheduled to target ELA instruction and help support those students.

McCormick said he is "very proud" of the school district's improvements in math, which he credited to the curriculum, increased time for math instruction, intervention times and having a math instructional coach.

"The hope with both math and reading is that we're going to see this translate to increased MCAS scores," McCormick said.

Administrators' reports

Diorio said the Wellness Day for students was a "huge success" and focused on mental, social, and physical wellbeing. Students participated in yoga, martial arts, Zumba, dancing, knitting, coloring, board games, origami and more.

Students took part in activities that brought awareness to mental health.

"Students were able to connect with each other and their teachers in a new way that strengthened their relation-

ships," he said.

Seniors took part in several tours to local manufacturers as part of the work-based learning pilot program. These students can then apply for an internship with these manufacturers.

A career day is also planned for grades seven-12 on March 28. Almost 25 representatives from a variety of career fields will speak with students.

On May 8 from 5-7 p.m., John Morrello will perform "Dirt" for students, families and community members.

Priestley said kindergarten enrollment is now open and families of prospective students have been sent notices.

She thanked guest readers who participated in Community Reading Day earlier this month.

The Friday before April vacation, the Elementary School will hold its annual Earth Day celebration, which features a fun-filled day of learning and activities. She said they are looking for donations of empty two-liter bottles.

Director of Student Services Ann Knapp gave an update on English Language Learners, adding that testing has been completed and groupings have been adjusted based on results.

Knapp said the first list for extended year services for special education students has been drafted.

"We all know that this is going to change as IEP meetings come up and different children qualify or come off, but we have a working list to go from," she said.

Knapp said the list will drive program scheduling and staffing needs. Tentative dates for extended year services are July 8 through Aug. 9.

A parent interview questionnaire for parents of incoming preschoolers has been refined, and is receiving positive feedback.

Regionalization update

School Committee Chair Ron Ryel said the Regional Agreement Amendment Committee met and reviewed what the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education had sent to the attorney regarding the regionalization agreement. He said the committee sent back answers to the questions posed by DESE in the correspondence.

Ryel said he hopes the committee will

hear back from DESE prior to its next meeting.

Recognitions

McCormick recognized basketball coaches Caitlyn Malone and Steve Carrington for both being named Coach of the Year and 1,000-point scorer Jose Rivera for being named the Most Valuable Player.

He said of the two basketball teams, four girls and four boys made the All-Star team.

This season was, "a fantastic showing by both basketball teams," McCormick said.

McCormick also recognized Student Representative Olivia Giangrande and the Student Council for a successful Massachusetts Association of Student Councils conference, including earning the Gold Council of Excellence award.

"Only 65 or so schools get recognized out of all the high schools in the commonwealth," he said. "So it's quite an achievement."

Student Council update

Giangrande said the students enjoyed their winter sports pep rally to celebrate the school's basketball teams.

"We were very excited to celebrate the girls' varsity league championship win and Jose Rivera's 1,000 points," she said.

Giangrande said 10 members of Student Council attended the state conference in Hyannis where they participated in workshops and elections, and heard from keynote speakers.

"This conference teaches members new leadership skills and helps us to improve our council as a whole," she said.

Three seniors received the Commonwealth Award for excellence within their council and the Student Council earned the Gold Council of Excellence award.

Spring spirit week will be held the week prior to April vacation featuring different themes for each day and a lip sync competition.

New staff

McCormick said the school district welcomed a new speech language pathology assistant, as well as a new paraprofessional who will start on April 1. He said he is meeting with a teacher candidate as well.

"We're constantly looking to bring new people on," he said.

- community -

Stephen Brewer talks on Abraham Lincoln at Historical Society

By Eric Goodhart
Correspondent

RUTLAND – Fortunately, 52 lovers of history came to celebrate Lincoln's 215-year anniversary of his birth at the Rutland Historical Society.

The frigid windy night did not stop them from coming to listen to Brewer, former Massachusetts state Senator. He began researching Lincoln's life path when he was a sixth grade student in Barre, where he still resides.

On Feb. 12, 1809 a boy was born in a single-room log cabin on Sinking Spring Farm in LaRue County, Kentucky. It has been said, that we are all here for a reason. In a world that is much more complex than it was in the early 19th century, some may take their individual life journeys never knowing what their purpose of existing is.

Understanding the era that Lincoln was born into could reveal hints of what Lincoln knew and thought about his own destiny and purpose in life. He had more than his share of sorrows and challenges even before he became President.

Brewer's talk that evening focused on Lincoln's life leading up to his Presidency and what helped in the forming of his character. He did not get along with his stern illiterate laborer father, who struggled as a farmer and carpenter, but he was close to his mother.

He learned to read by itinerant teachers, common in the day, but mostly was self-taught, reading anything he could get his hands on. His younger brother, Thomas, died in infancy before the family lost the farm they had and had to move to rural frontier Indiana.

There his mother died of an intestinal poisoning from a toxic plant. Abe was 9 and deeply affected by her passing. One day, his father came home with Sarah Johnston, a widow with two children of her own; she was his stepmother and treated Abe and his sister, Sarah, equally.

He later referred to her as his "angel mother."

She and Abe bonded quickly. She encouraged his reading and dealt with the demands his father put on him regularly regarding balancing labor and learning tolerably well.

Times were not easy for anyone in rural western frontier of the new Union.

England had already failed in their attempt in 1812 to take control of the country they lost in 1776. Meanwhile, the country was moving westward.

The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 more than doubled the size of the country. It was called Manifest Destiny.

Lincoln was growing taller; and stronger. He later became quite adept at taking on all challengers in bouts of wrestling.

He was remembered for that in later campaigning days along with his eloquent oratory.

At age 17, he found work on a ferry-boat. He found joy on the river, he built a flatboat two years later and ran a load of farm produce down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. But he dutifully, but resentfully, giving most of his earnings to his father.

It was in Louisiana that Lincoln witnessed widespread slavery for the first time. Though he remained consistent in his belief that slavery was morally wrong, when he became involved in politics as a lawyer and in the Illinois legislature, he did not hold slave holding Southerners at fault.

They faced particular economic cir-

cumstances. Cotton became a much-desired product in England and Europe.

Not so much the northern states. They were not responsible for bringing Africans to the new, but not yet divided Union.

England had entered the industrial age before the U.S. did. It had sparked growth of the British empire and they wanted what the slave states were able to provide.

When Abraham was 21, the family again moved, this time near Decatur, Illinois. He and his father built another log cabin not much bigger than the one they had lived in before.

But once settled, he made more runs down the Mississippi river, but this time as an independent operator. After that he lived on his own, moving to the town of New Salem, Illinois in 1831.

By this time in the presentation, Brewer had fully captured everyone's undivided attention. He was once a high school teacher and there is no doubt in this reporter's mind that his former students must fondly and appreciatively remember the style and enthusiasm in the class room.

He is a very enigmatic and gifted speaker. Perhaps, just as Lincoln was.

Meanwhile, the former senator said it was not all work and book learning for Lincoln. He was not yet 24. There were two women in Abe's life prior to his meeting Mary Ann Todd, in Springfield, Illinois in 1839.

The first was Ann Rutledge, in New Salem in 1832. Sadly, Rutledge died in late summer, 1835. The cause is said to have been typhoid fever.

Abraham, 26 years old at the time, fell into deep depression.

In the early 1830s, Lincoln, now living on his own in New Salem, had met a Mary Owens in Kentucky. He asked Miss Owens in late 1836 if she would move to New Salem. She did; arriving in November.

After a while, they both had second thoughts. Almost exactly two years after Rutledge's death, he penned Owens a letter saying he would not blame her if she ended the relationship. She never replied.

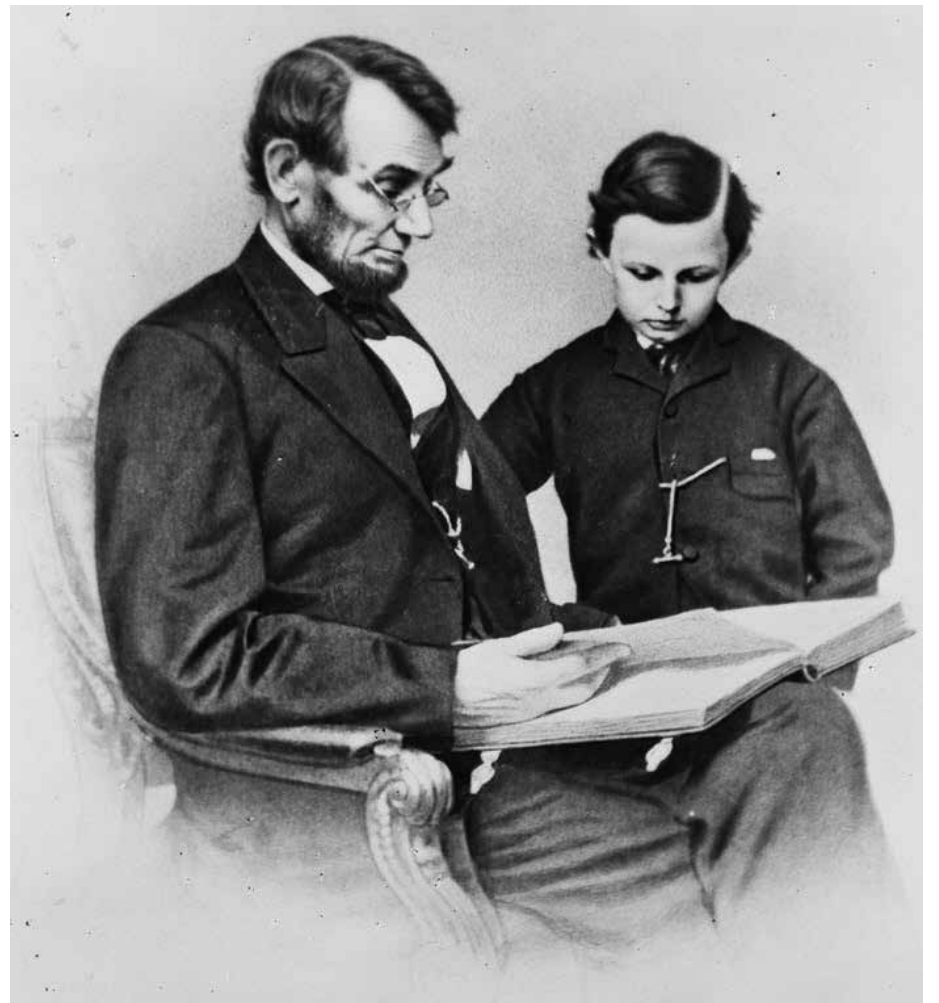
Lincoln soon became very active in politics and elected to the Illinois Legislature. We all may remember the many Lincoln – Douglas debates. In the lead-up to the 1860 election there were many memorable debates between them.

Douglas was a Democrat and Lincoln a Republican. They do not mean the same today. The reader can ask any high school Advance Placement American history student or college student majoring in political science, for a full description of the different political parties in mid-nineteenth century U.S.

In any case, soon after Lincoln won the Presidency, Fort Sumter was attacked on April 1, 1861. The war between the North and the South ignited.

Many were of the consensus that the war would last less than one year. In fact, the first major battle of the war was only 34 miles south of Washington, D.C. The date was July 21, 1861.

It was just north of Manassas, Virginia. It was later called the Battle of Bull Run. The Union army was totally unprepared for the confrontation and lost to the Confederate army. Believe it or not with communication being what it was at that time, citizens, thinking this battle would be interesting to witness, packed food and traveled toward Manassas in carriages, on horses and walked to see the spectacle. Most never got close enough to actu-



President Abraham Lincoln is shown reading to his youngest son, Tad. Former state Senator Stephen Brewer spoke the 16th President to mark the 215 year anniversary of Lincoln's birth. SUBMITTED PHOTO

ally witness it.

But the war that was thought to be short, lasted four more years. More than 620,000 American soldiers were killed over this war that was primarily to save the Union, not over slavery. Lincoln has been documented to saying that.

Even though he believed slavery was abhorrent, he felt a county divided would never survive. It is a good thing to remember that.

The military fatalities, not including civilians and crippled soldiers, were more than the Revolutionary War, the

War of 1812, the Mexican War, World War I, World War II and the Korean War, combined.

Finally, a book Brewer recommends high school students to read was first published in 1947. There are many good books written but Paul Angle's "Lincoln Reader" is a good place to start learning about Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States.

For more information about the Rutland Historical Society, visit <https://rutlandmahistoricalociety.org>.

Knights host spaghetti dinner on April 13

WEST BROOKFIELD – Knights of Columbus Council 11080 is sponsoring a spaghetti dinner on Saturday, April 13 in Dugan Hall, Sacred Heart Church, 10 Milk St.

Take-out is available at 6 p.m. and sit-down dinner is served at 6:30 p.m. Proceeds from this event will benefit Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish.

Dinner includes pasta fagioli, garden salad, meatballs and sausage, spaghetti and sauce, garlic bread, dessert, water, soda and coffee. The cost is a \$15 donation

and \$10 for children under 12 years old.

Admission tickets are also good for entry for a special door prize. Raffle tickets for a 50/50 Raffle and more will be available.

Advance ticket purchase is encouraged and appreciated, and tickets are available from any Knight or by calling 508-612-1649 or 413-813-8100 or by emailing bobfalter@gmail.com or wallyconnor122@gmail.com.

Tickets will only be available at the door while they last.

Library holds Rainforest Reptile Show on April 21

NEW BRAINTREE – Rainforest Reptile Shows, a hands-on traveling animal show, is coming to the New Braintree Town Hall, 20 Memorial Drive, on Sunday, April 21 at 3 p.m.

Children of all ages will have a chance to come into direct contact with live reptiles, artifacts and their incredible stories. This program is presented by the New Braintree Public Library and is sponsored in part by a grant from the Hardwick/New Braintree Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

The program is free and open to the public. Children must be accompanied

by a responsible adult. People may call the library at 508-867-7650 during regular business hours for more information.

Town hosts rabies vaccine clinic April 13

WEST BROOKFIELD – The Town of West Brookfield is having a rabies vaccine clinic on Saturday, April 13 at the Highway Barn, 15 Front St. from 9-11 a.m.

The cost of the vaccine is \$20.

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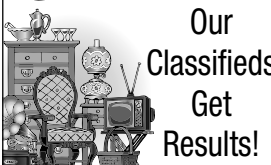
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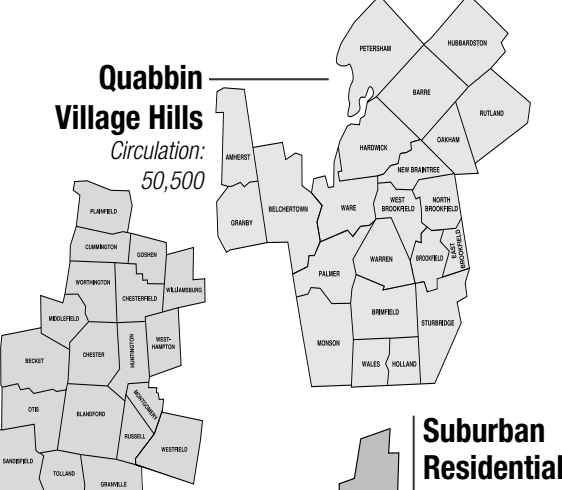
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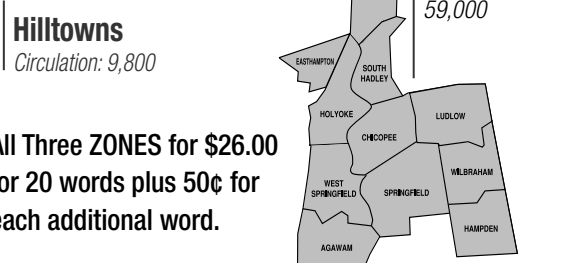
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The town of Hampden Highway Department is seeking to fill a full-time skilled worker/truck driver position. All applicants must possess a valid Class B CDL, 2B Hoisting License, OSHA 10 Certificate of Training, and a copy of current driving record. Applicants must have the skills and knowledge necessary to perform general road and grounds maintenance and the ability to operate and maintain all associated tools and equipment. The capability to perform maintenance/repair on trucks and equipment, welding, and the use of other garage tools, along with light construction and snowplowing experience, would be beneficial. Please call the Hampden Highway Department (413) 566-8842, or email highway@hampdenma.gov for inquiries and application/resume submittals.

HELP WANTED

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

The Town of Brookfield is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Town Administrator. Responsibilities include professional, administrative, supervisory, and technical work. See job description at brookfieldma.us. Salary commensurate with experience. Current appropriation \$89,989.00 Please submit a resume and cover letter to Selectmen@brookfieldma.us. Open until filled.

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ALL REAL ESTATE advertised herein is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination." We will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. All persons are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised are available on an equal opportunity basis.

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This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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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 April 3, 2024 at 6:00 pm** in the first floor meeting room, West Brookfield Town Hall, 2 East Main Street.

6:10 - Public Hearing:

- NOI - 7 Rodman Street - Continuation - Gerald Nichols - Retaining wall reconstruction
 - NOI - 79 Lakeshore Drive - John Glynn - Retaining wall reconstruction
 - NOI - Wigwam Road - New England Power Co - Geotechnical borings
- 03/29/2024

Town of Brookfield Invitation for Bids

Sealed bids for furnishing the following item will be received at the **Office of the Select Board, Brookfield Town Hall, 6 Central Street, Brookfield, MA 01506** until the time specified below at which time the bids will be publicly opened and read.

The Work consists of the installation of a recording studio and related equipment on the second floor of Town

Hall, and all work incidental thereto, in accordance with the Specifications and conceptual plans attached hereto.

Specifications and bid forms may be obtained at the Office of the Select Board, Monday through Thursday between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., or by email at: clarocca@brookfieldma.us.

Bids will be opened in the Banquet Hall of the Brookfield Town Hall on April 24, 2024, at 12:00 p.m. Each Bid must be accompanied by a bid security consisting of a **BID BOND, CASH, or, CERTIFIED CHECK** issued by a responsible bank or trust company in the amount of 5% of the bid price.

Pre-Bid Conference and Site Visit will be held at the Brookfield Town Hall located at 6 Central Street, Brookfield, MA, on April 17, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. It is recommended that all prospective bidders have a representative in attendance.

A performance bond in an amount equal to 100 percent of the total amount of the contract price with a surety company qualified to do business in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will be required for the faithful performance of the contract, as well as a labor and materials bond in an amount equal to 100 percent of the total contract price.

All bids for this project are subject to applicable public bidding laws of

Massachusetts, including, but not limited to G.L. c.149, §§44A-44H, as amended.

Attention is directed to the minimum wage rates to be paid as determined by the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development and the weekly payroll record submittal requirements under the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 149, Section 26 through 27D inclusive.

Selection of the contractor will be based upon bidder qualifications, including evidence of past performance in similar projects, and bid price. The contract will be awarded to the bidder deemed by the awarding authority to be the lowest responsible and eligible bidder.

The bidder agrees that its bid shall be good and may not be withdrawn for a period of 30 days, Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays excluded, after the opening of the bids.

The Town reserves the right to waive any informalities, to accept or reject, in whole or in part any or all bids, or take whatever other action may be deemed to be in the best interest of the Town.

The Town of Brookfield
03/29, 04/05/2024



MSBS hosts button show on April 13

THREE RIVERS - The Massachusetts State Button Society's spring meeting will be hosted by the Monson Button Club on Saturday, April 13, at the Amvets Post 74 on Main St., from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

The public is invited to attend the day's activities and to purchase buttons and button related items from 9 a.m.-noon and from 1:30-3 p.m. There will be

no button sales during the break from noon to 1:30 p.m. as lunch, a business meeting, and auction will take place.

Morning visitors will be treated to coffee and refreshments provided by the hosting club; bring your own brown bag lunch, and dessert will be provided. There is no admission fee, and all are welcome.

St. Aloysius Catholic School lists honor roll

HARDWICK - St. Aloysius Catholic School in Gilbertville lists students named to the second trimester honor roll.

High Honors

Jason Aller

Honors

Dianne Aller, Sophia Adams, Aria Carfagna, Hannah LaRochelle and Christopher Rice.

Tri-Parish hosts Easter sunrise service at EQLT

HARDWICK - Tri-Parish Community Church will hold an Easter Sunrise Service on Sunday, March 31 at 6:15 a.m. at East Quabbin Land Trust, 120 Ridge Road.

All are welcome to attend.

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QUABOAG

CURRENT

NEW BRAINTREE Library lists story times p2	WEST BROOKFIELD Knights host spaghetti dinner p13	REGION Button show is April 13 p15	Editorial/Opinion Police Logs Sports Classifieds	4 6 9 14
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Volume 17, Number 18

Friday, March 29, 2024

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