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Friday, May 1, 2026

Live sculpture demonstration held at gallery

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

WEST BROOKFIELD – Ware artist John Collins held a live sculpture demonstration at the West Brookfield Art & Frame Gallery, 10 East Main St., this past Sun-

day afternoon. Collins was joined by model Mary Remington, Workshop13's Program Director. Throughout the afternoon, people stopped by the gallery to watch Collins' progress, and ask questions

SCULPTURE PAGE 8



TURLEY PHOTO BY RICHARD MURPHY

Avast ye scurvy scum, the pirates are on the Quinebaug River during the Sturbridge Lions Club All-American River Race.

All-American River Race

Lions Club held paddle race on Quinebaug River

By Richard Murphy
Correspondent

STURBRIDGE – This past Sunday started off well enough. A tad cool, but nothing New Englanders can't handle.

Speaking of New Englanders, a stalwart band of locals would meet in front of the Lincoln House near Sturbridge Village. They had come to that locale to

coordinate their mission as communications team for the annual Sturbridge Lions Club All-American River Race.

The men and women are members of the Quaboag Valley Amateur Radio Club (QVARC). That is, they are amateur radio licensees, or Hams.

After the club members met and had the traditional picture taken, they dispersed to their various posts. The Hams were along the route of the race to keep tabs on the progress and be ready to communicate any

problems that might arise to whomever needed to be contacted.

Your correspondent headed to Turners Field with Hams Deb (KC1RDH), Ken (KB1HXO), and Tim (KC1RZE) who would be point for the beginning of the race.

The capital letters and numbers in parenthesis are call signs. It is how Hams identify themselves on the air.

At the field members of the Sturbridge Lions Club served as registrars for the race. Linda, VP Laurie and

Becca were signing in the entrants.

The Citizens Emergency Response Teams of Sturbridge and Charlton were present in force to direct traffic at Turners Field and at the finish as well. CERT are volunteers who serve under police supervision.

Canoes kept arriving and getting ready. It was not just canoes. There were kayaks and paddleboards, which is a different skill and one that could be tested in these waters.

RIVER PAGE 6



TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA OUIMETTE

Ware artist John Collins worked on a sculpture during a live demonstration at West Brookfield Art & Frame Gallery this past Sunday.

Budget line items reviewed at joint meeting

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Staff Writer
zachf@turley.com

BROOKFIELD – The Select Board held a joint meeting with the Advisory Committee last Wednesday to review multiple budget requests, and get closer to finalizing the budget for fiscal year 2027.

Advisory Committee Chair Jeff Clark started by announcing they are planning for a budget presentation to residents on May 21 at the elementary school at 6 p.m. He said an alternate date would be May 20.

Select Board member Beth Coughlin suggested the Advisory Committee create a flyer going over some of the bigger budget changes, so people can be aware, and can be referred back to the flyer if there are questions. Coughlin and Advisory Committee member Tom Regan are going to create a PowerPoint presentation for the event.

Clark also recommended that a line item for bridge certification should be an article on the town meeting warrant rather than built into the budget. He said the cost of that line item is \$5,500.

Budget discussions

The boards discussed the executive assistant salary jumping 18.9%. Coughlin questioned if the Select

BUDGET PAGE 9

Meet the Candidates: Orsi and Kennan answer questions

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Staff Writer
zachf@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – A Meet the Candidates night was held last Friday night to allow those running for town offices to answer questions and speak to voters directly about their

experience and plans for what they wish to achieve in their positions.

Two candidates on the May 4 ballot attended, including Richard Kennan, who is running for Water Commissioner and Peter Orsi, who is vying for a seat on the Board of Selectmen.

Kennan introduced him-

self, saying he is a long-time resident of the town, and has been involved in local organizations throughout his life, such as the Knights of Columbus, Lions Club, and coaching little league. He said he had previously worked in the North Brookfield water plant, first serving as an operator, before

transitioning to Water Superintendent.

He said he is now retired, so has the time to devote to the position, and has a lot of experience with the plant, such as working infrastructure, supervising operations, maintaining budgets and attending monthly meetings.

Orsi said he is also a long-

time resident of the town, and has also been involved in a lot of organizations in town, like coaching little league, soccer and working with the Boy Scouts. He said he was a firefighter in town for 11 years, and has worked with multiple town officials in town over the years.

CANDIDATES PAGE 9

Hessians of the Revolutionary War discussed

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

STURBRIDGE – The Sturbridge Historical Society welcomed historian Dennis Picard for a presentation of his program "Dragoon, Musketeer, Prisoner: The Hessians of the Revolutionary War in Western Massachusetts."

Picard of Westfield has been doing this presentation since the mid-1980s.



TURLEY PHOTO BY RYAN DRAGO

Dennis Picard presented "Dragoon, Musketeer, Prisoner: The Hessians of the Revolutionary War in Western Massachusetts at the Publick House. Above, samples of Hessian equipment and belongings were provided by Dennis Picard.



The program started after Picard conducted research with another historian. Since the 1980s, Picard had traveled to many cemetery's, historical societies and found more stories from descendants of these Hessian soldiers who fought during the American Revolution.

Picard began his April 23 presentation at the Publick House by sharing a Hessian reference that was made in Washington Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1820). The

backstory of the Headless Horseman was he was a Hessian who was involved in a "nameless battle."

Picard told the audience that the "nameless battle" was the Battle of Long Island in New York.

In August 1776, about 17,000 Hessian troops from Hesse-Cassel arrived in New York. The Hessians represented about one-third of all forces who opposed the American forces.

At the time of the American Revolution, approxi-

HESSIANS PAGE 9

Sowing seeds of change

Grassroots Central Mass hosted skills sharing event

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

SOUTHBRIDGE – Members of Grassroots Central Mass held a Seed Swap and Skill Sharing event to kick-off its recently formed skills sharing group.

The event was held on the Southbridge common this past Sunday, with people bringing seeds and seedlings to share with each other. Participants had a wide selection of seeds, as well as tomato, pepper, squash and strawberry plants to take home and grow in their gardens.

Grassroots Central Mass member Maureen Doyle displayed a potato plant that she grew from the eye of a potato she had purchased over the winter. That single eye had produced a plant with at least four good-sized

SEEDS PAGE 9

Board of Selectmen heard pavement plan proposal

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – Roger Brooks came before the Board of Selectmen to discuss the condition of the roads in town.

At the April 21 meeting, he said he had some ideas about what the town can do to maintain paving and best utilize Chapter 90 funds.

Brooks said the town of Sterling had an independent company come in and evaluate the condition of its roads. He said the evaluation was done in 10-foot increments on every road that received Chapter 90 funding.

“They categorize it and they have five categories... they have a list of every road – the dimensions, widthwise, lengthwise...and what kind of condition the drainage is on the side...all of which impact the roads in town,” Brooks said.

Brooks said the data collected determines if the road falls into one of the categories of “minor,” “minor patch and seal,” “preventative treatment,” “minor rehab” and “major reconstruction.”

He said some of North Brookfield’s roads will need major reconstruction, “from the ground up,” but others could receive less costly pavement treatments such as “mill and pave.”

“We may be able to do more roads due to the fact that their costs would be, let’s say a third of the cost

of full-deck reclamation,” he said.

Brooks said the evaluation would provide a more accurate inventory of the condition of the town’s roads.

“I think we’ll wind up having a more comprehensive and cost effective way of upgrading our roads,” he said.

Brooks said the evaluation cost the town of Sterling just over \$40,000 to complete in 2024. He said the cost can be paid for using Chapter 90 funds.

The board voted to create a request for proposal in order to hire a paving consultant, which would be paid for through Chapter 90.

Mad Brook Road bridge

The Board of Selectmen received correspondence from the Department of Transportation regarding the replacement of the Mad Brook Road bridge.

The letter stated that design and funding are now in place and construction is expected to start this summer.

A recent inspection has shown that the bridge continues to deteriorate and is no longer safe to remain open. MassDOT recommended the town close the bridge immediately and put a detour in place.

MassDOT will provide detour signage for the town to install.

Board of Selectmen Vice-Chair Jamie Gilman said after looking at the condition of the trusses under the bridge, he “understands

their concern.”

Highway Superintendent Randy Morgan said he already received the detour signs from MassDOT and at the time of the meeting, he was just waiting to hear back about posts.

The board voted in favor of closing the bridge, as recommended by MassDOT.

Solar discussion

Gilman said the board received a proposal for a solar project on top of the transfer station from ECA Mass Holding, LLC from Waltham.

He said the company was looking to receive full rights to either install solar panels, and/or a battery energy storage system at the location.

“That was a bit of a sore point for it sounds like all of us,” Gilman said. “That made the proposal that much less interesting.”

Gilman said after receiving feedback from the town, the company removed this part of the request from the first section, but it still appears further on in the proposal.

“That is still a bit of an issue with me,” he said. “I am all for putting the solar panels on, but I’m not up for a battery energy storage system in that location. I think it brings a lot of concerns...of the town of North Brookfield really not being equipped to handle any potential incident.”

Gilman said he has been made aware that most solar fields have some battery storage on site, but his concern is

with the lack of description defining what a “battery energy storage system” is in the proposal.

He said they have done research on the proposal, and the town would likely need to put it out to bid.

Selectmen Clerk Ralph Kay said he agreed with Gilman about the proposal’s language needing to be clarified, especially related to battery energy storage systems. Selectmen Chair Jason Petraitis said the board can send its concerns back to ECA Mass Holding, LLC.

The board approved a motion to open a request for proposal for a solar project at the transfer station.

Spending requests

The board approved two spending requests from the Highway Department, one for \$438 to pay for lumber for a platform at the Highway barn and the other for \$4,000 for new springs for the 2005 truck.

The board also approved two spending requests for the Police Department, \$295.11 for light bulbs and \$1,166 for ammunition needed for annual training requirements.

The board approved the Treasurer’s spending request in the amount of \$1,809.65 for pre-stamped, printed envelope for payable checks

Town Administrator job posting

Petraitis said the board reviewed the “unsuccessful external recruitment attempts” to hire a town administrator, and moved to post the position internally instead.

“We have people who are qualified to do the job so I think we should try and post it internally and see what happens,” he said.

The Selectmen voted in favor of this motion.

Pole hearings

The board held pole hearings for Green Road and Ward Street with a representative from National Grid.

The representative said the utility company is looking to install three new joint-owned poles on Green Road to provide electrical service to a newly constructed house.

One pole will be installed on Ward Street to provide service to a backyard accessory dwelling unit.

The board approved all pole locations.

Police Department report

The Police Department responded to over 480 calls for service during the month of March. Police Chief Ryan Daley said at this time, station/lobby visits and telephone are not being tracked.

Daley said officers are completing their annual in-service training requirements online during downtime on their shifts between calls. This is an effort to reduce overtime costs.

Daley said several members of the department have taken part in professional development training as well.

“We remain committed to maintaining high professional standards and ensuring our officers receive the

training necessary to serve the community effectively,” he stated in his report.

Transfer of vehicle Daley submitted a request to the board to transfer ownership of the Police Department’s 2017 Ford Explorer to the Fire Department to use for emergency response.

The board approved the transfer.

Donations

The board accepted an anonymous donation of \$1,000 to go toward the July 4th celebration expenses, and an anonymous donation of a picnic table and approximately 20 bags of mulch for the Parks & Recreation Committee.

The board also accepted the donation of two-dozen American flag kits to replace worn flags in the downtown area.

Recognition

Gilman recognized Petraitis for his service to the town in his role as Selectmen.

“It’s not an easy job,” he said.

This meeting was Petraitis’ last for his term, as he chose not to seek re-election to the board.

“It has been a long road, but I have enjoyed it,” Petraitis said. “It’s been a pleasure serving in this capacity.”

Annual town election The annual town election will be held on Monday, May 4 at the North Brookfield Senior Center, 29 Forest St., with polling hours from 7 a.m.-8 p.m.

‘Bonnie & Clyde’ musical to open this weekend

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The Theatre Guild of North Brookfield brings a new and exciting musical production to life that follows a notorious couple.

This is a production of “Bonnie & Clyde: The Musical”, a story based off the true story of Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow as they became famous during the Great Depression in the 1930s.

Sharing the origin story of how this production came to the area was Missy King-McDonald.

The production is directed by Jay Valencourt and Derek Ingalls with King-McDonald working on costumes and being a part of the creative team for the play. When it came time to schedule shows in 2026, the Theatre Guild of North Brookfield tossed a lot of ideas around and wanted something that hadn’t been done before.

“Give something that people haven’t seen,” King-McDonald said.

Then members of the Theatre Guild of North Brookfield came across “Bonnie & Clyde”, but a musical version of the story. This will be the first time this musical has come to the area

and will be performed on a local level through community theatre.

Both Bonnie and Clyde grow up poor in this time period and seek a better life. Clyde wants a different life and Bonnie seeks fame. The musical will feature both leading characters singing about the Depression and leading them to steal and get a better life they intend to seek.

They fall in love, come together and the rest is history.

King-McDonald, who has been a member of the Theatre Guild for over 20 years, shared that she had a lot of fun creating costumes to fit the period of the 1930s. Other unique elements will take the stage, including a car. Gordon King is the Master Scenic/Set Designer for the show and has done an excellent job setting the stage for this Depression-era story.

The casting for the show went well and over 20 cast members will take the stage for “Bonnie & Clyde: The Musical”. Jay Valencourt, in addition to co-directing the show, will be playing Clyde Barrow.

Valencourt has performed in over 30 shows with the Theatre Guild of North Brookfield. To Valencourt’s understanding this show has never been put on in this area.

Since the early stages of putting the show together Valencourt describes this show as “a great community theater show.”

Valencourt’s son Joe was originally cast as Clyde but soon found an opportunity to move to New York City and had to back out. Valencourt thought he could step in and execute the role of Clyde Barrow.

Valencourt shared that he had heard about this musical years ago and said it had a short run on Broadway. After going over the story, Valencourt fell in love with the music and the story.

When the Theatre Guild of North Brookfield decided on doing this musical, Jay focused on digging further into research to better understand who “Bonnie & Clyde” are. What he found unique was how ambitious Clyde was into becoming well known.

Clyde is someone who strives for attention and wants to pursue a better life. What Valencourt found challenging during his studying of the role was learning about Clyde’s attitude. He is the kind of person who acts differently around different people, such as his family, Bonnie, and obviously how he acts during his criminal activity.

Valencourt describes

Clyde as being someone with a split personality. The music and songs in the show help tell the story. The Depression in the 1930s is the overriding theme in “Bonnie & Clyde”, and this criminal couple is trying to get their way out of it.

One of the great qualities about the Theatre Guild of North Brookfield that Valencourt shared is that they’re very inclusive. Valencourt said there are four families working together as part of the show. Three generations of the same family are involved in the same community theater.

Valencourt looks forward to being Clyde Barrow in “Bonnie & Clyde: The Musical”. Bringing the world of the 1930s to the stage retelling the story of a notorious criminal couple.

Sarah Priestley will be playing Bonnie Parker. This will be Priestley’s fifth show with the Theatre Guild of North Brookfield. Bonnie was a role Priestley auditioned for and was intrigued by the historical persona, while mixing history with music.

Like her fellow castmate Valencourt, Priestley also did a lot of research on Bonnie Parker. What she found unique about Bonnie is that she was well-educated, a good writer and had a pas-

sion for acting.

While getting into the character, Priestley worked on getting into the young adulthood mindset. Bonnie was someone who wanted to become a notable. At the time of the Depression, “Bonnie & Clyde” at one point probably felt invincible.

The musical element for the show is excellent according to the cast. Priestley says the mood of the songs shifts a lot as both characters endure a lot of ups and downs. Bonnie’s love of writing is something Priestley connected to as she studied the role because she also enjoys literature, reading and writing.

Priestley looks forward to recreating the vintage look of the 1930s with “Bonnie & Clyde” telling their story.

“A very cool role,” Priestley said.

Valencourt said Priestley really “embraces her role” as Bonnie.

The show will take place at North Brookfield Elementary School on Saturday, May 2 at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, May 3 at 2 p.m.; Saturday, May 9 at 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday, May 10 at 2 p.m. For tickets and information, visit theatreguildofnorthbrookfield.com and select “Buy Tickets Now” under “Bonnie and Clyde: The Musical Tickets”.


Tag sale on May 9

NORTH BROOKFIELD – A tag sale will be held at Christ Memorial Episcopal Church, 133 North Main St., on Saturday, May 9 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m., rain or shine.

There will be plants (indoor and outdoor), puzzles, books, clothes, kids’ stuff, kitchen and household items, treasures, and more. Name your own price.

Asparagus chowder returns to FCC

WEST BROOKFIELD – On Saturday, May 16 during the town of West Brookfield’s Asparagus, Heritage and Flower Festival on the town common, (10 a.m.-3 p.m.), the First Congregational Church, UCC, 36 North Main St., will offer their famous asparagus chowder from their Chowder Tent located on the church lawn. Hot chowder by the cup, cold chowder by the quart, brownies and cold drinks will be available. Call the church for more information at 508-867-7078.



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School celebrates 10th year with BBQ fundraiser

HARDWICK – St. Aloysius Catholic School in Gilbertville is celebrating 10 years.

Please join them on Saturday, June 6 at St. Mary's Church Hall in Ware, from 1-4 p.m., for a chicken barbecue, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Council #183.

There will be a DJ, all sorts of fun for the kids, basket raffles, a 50/50 and more.

Tickets are \$25 for a chicken dinner or \$5 for a hot dog and chips.

Purchase tickets by calling the school at 413-477-1268 or by reaching out to Megan Morrison by phone or text 978-751-1211.

Quabbin District offers budget information

From the desk of Quabbin Regional School District Supt. Colleen Mucha

BARRE – Quabbin Regional School District's goal was to develop a budget for school year 2026-2027 that improves student achievement, is operationally efficient, ensures financial stability and fosters a safe, inclusive and positive culture for students and staff.

In working to develop that budget, the district wanted to ensure that the communities understand how schools were funded, the budget process and the resulting budget being proposed at Annual Town Meetings. During this time of year, many questions arose about how the Quabbin Regional School District funding and why it seemed that there was an increased burden on the communities and the school district to be able to maintain services to support students and communities.

This article and several coming later will attempt to explain some of these factors over the course of the next few weeks as towns prepare for their Annual Town Meetings. Hopefully, community member will find these articles helpful and informative.

K-12 public school districts received funds from both local contributions and state aid. Additionally, federal funds came to schools for specific purposes such as supporting students with disabilities and students from low-income families. The allocation of these federal funds was uncertain in recent years and they declined. Opportunities for competitive grants decreased and programs like Title I, which funds intervention programs for students in K-6, experienced cuts in funding.

Massachusetts K-12 schools received state aid funding using the Chapter 70 Aid formula which determined a foundation budget. This complex formula calculation was on the foundation enrollment of the district,

with students being classified into nine categories then multiplied by rates as assigned to 11 expense categories. By definition, this was the minimum "target spending level" to provide an adequate education. However, over the years there were several reports, which identified the Chapter 70 Aid formula, as it exists, as flawed, did not adequately fund today's costs and did not support school funding in an equitable manner.

Quabbin, as many of the neighboring districts, experienced a decline in foundation enrollment consistently since the 2004/2005 school year. This was due to declining birth rates, high housing and cost of living and an increased desire for alternative education including private school and homeschooling since the COVID 19 pandemic.

When a K-12 public school had declining foundation enrollment from one year to the next, they were deemed in Hold Harmless status. What this meant was

the school district received at least the same amount of Chapter 70 Aid funding as it did the year before. If a district continues to lose foundation enrollment, over time, they accrue "Hold Harmless Debt."

"Minimum Aid" was a component of the Chapter 70 Aid formula since the Education Reform Act of 1993. Reforms to Minimum Aid occurred in Fiscal Year 2007 and again with the implementation of the 2010 Student Opportunity Act. Minimum Aid ensured every district received an increase in Chapter 70 Aid, even districts that experience a decline in foundation enrollment. This aid created Hold Harmless Debt, meaning that the amount of Chapter 70 Aid the district received is greater than the calculated aid for that district.

This year, of the 319 school districts, 236 had declined foundation enrollment, two had no change and 81 increased enrollment. The number of districts in Hold Harmless Debt in-

creased dramatically in the past two years to 272 school districts. Quabbin was in Hold Harmless status since FY 06.

Minimum Aid was not a set amount but rather was decided through the legislative process. In 2024, it was \$60 per student and last year it was at its highest of \$150 per student. The amount anticipated for next school year, as outlined in the Governor's budget, is \$75 per student. While this additional amount of aid did help, it was minimal. At \$75 per student that equated to \$141,975 in new funds here at Quabbin. Minimum Aid did not keep pace with increased costs.

Any questions in regards to this article or anything else school or school budget related email cmucha@qrsd.org. District resident's questions will help inform future articles. Quabbin Regional School District is committed to partnering with families and communities to provide students with a wonderful educational experience.

Country Bank supports QV CDC with \$10,000 donation

WARE – Country Bank, a full-service financial institution serving Central and Western Massachusetts, announced a \$10,000 donation to the Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation to support programs that strengthen local businesses and promote economic de-

velopment throughout the region.

QV CDC plays an important role in supporting entrepreneurs, small businesses, and community members by providing access to resources, technical assistance, and business development services. Through its work, the or-

ganization helps foster sustainable economic growth and opportunity across the Quaboag Valley.

"Every year, Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation applies for state and federal grants, but we still rely on donor contributions from the community to help fund

our work," stated Melissa Fales, Executive Director of QV CDC. "We are very grateful for this generous donation from Country Bank, which will help us offer business development services and promote economic development in our region."

Country Bank remains committed to supporting organizations that strengthen communities and expand economic opportunities throughout Central and Western Massachusetts. Contributions like this help ensure local organizations have the resources they need to continue serving residents, businesses, and entrepreneurs in meaningful ways.

To learn more about the various support programs offered by the Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation, visit www.QV CDC.

About Country Bank Established in 1850, Country Bank has a rich

history of supporting personal and business banking customers through financial solutions with FDIC and DIF insurance for added security.

Country Bank is a full-service \$2.2 billion mutual community bank serving Central and Western Massachusetts with 16 banking centers and two business offices in Ware, Palmer, West Brookfield, Brimfield, Belchertown, Wilbraham, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Leicester, Paxton, Charlton, Springfield, Uxbridge and Worcester. With a commitment to personalized service and community involvement, Country Bank offers individuals, businesses, and municipalities a comprehensive range of banking products and services.

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

COLLEGE NOTES

Local Emmanuel College students make Dean's List

BOSTON – In recognition of their outstanding academic achievement, Emmanuel College has named more than 950 students to the Dean's List for the fall 2025 semester.

The following local students were named to the Dean's List: Lauren Bailey, of Fiskdale, is majoring in Global and Public Health; and Megan Bokis, of North Brookfield, majoring in Nursing.

To earn a spot on the Dean's List, Emmanuel students must achieve a grade point average of 3.5 or higher for a 16-credit semester.



Shown from left to right are Jodie Gerulaitis, First Vice President of Community Relations at Country Bank; Lindsay Aucoin; Melissa Fales, Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation Executive Director; Barbara Deslauriers and Elizabeth Lawrence.

C4R hosts Birding on the Quaboag paddle on May 16

BROOKFIELD – Join C4R for a special Birding on the Quaboag paddle on Saturday, May 16 from 8:30-11 a.m.

The Quaboag Marsh offers a special habitat for spring birds. Participants will listen for and perhaps see the American Bittern.

Meet at the Route 148 state boat launch, then park

nearby. Limit is 15 paddlers.

RSVP required by emailing chicopeewatershed@gmail.com.

C4R is also seeking volunteers to conduct water quality sampling at sites in Wilbraham and Palmer twice a month on Thursday mornings in June, July and August and once in September.



SUBMITTED PHOTO An American Bittern is just one of the birds that could be seen while paddling the Quaboag Marsh.

Senior Center announces upcoming events in May

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

Activities include: Free Drawing Class, Thursdays, May 7 and 21 at 11 a.m.; Free Art Class, Thursdays, May 13 and 28 at 11 a.m.; Medicare Help with Ed Spater, Thursdays, May 7 and

28 from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. by appointment; Coffee and Games, Monday, May 11 at 11 a.m.; Lunch and learn with Christy Mylott: Senior Options and Solutions on Tuesday, May 12 at 11 a.m. (catered lunch); Music Bingo on Monday, May 18 at 10 a.m.; and a Free Hearing Clinic on Tuesday, May 19, from 10 a.m.-noon by appointment

New Braintree celebrates its 275th anniversary and U.S.'s 250th

NEW BRAINTREE – The 275th Anniversary Committee is hard at work planning a spectacular 2026 to celebrate New Braintree's 275th Anniversary and America's 250th Anniversary.

The committee is planning to have three major events to celebrate throughout 2026, and they want you – neighbors, friends, and family – to be a part of every one.

The first event is on July 5 from 3-5 p.m.: Kick off the summer with the U.S. Air Force Heritage of America Band. This free community concert will be held under the newly constructed pavilion. Grab your lawn chairs, blankets, and favorite snacks for an unforgettable afternoon of music.

The second event will be

on Oct. 3: Old Home Day Our classic town celebration will kick off with a parade at 1 p.m., farmer's market, kids' games, live music, and a bonfire in the evening. Enjoy the beer and wine tent and plenty of local food. The committee is seeking volunteers and sponsors to make this day a success. Email us at newbraintree275@gmail.com.

The third and capstone event will be on Dec. 31: The 275th Anniversary Gala from 6 p.m.-1 a.m. - Dust off your dancing shoes and get your fancy clothes ready. The committee will close out the anniversary year with a New Year's Eve Gala in the Town Hall. It's the ultimate way to ring in 2027 and celebrate the legacy of the special town and people who call it home.



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7pm-11pm

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Upcoming Events

Saturday, May 16th
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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 ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

Alternative to airport TSA lines ...



"Beets," me

I was so happy to finally get into the vegetable garden this past week.

My peas seeds are sown! Yippee!

Next on my list is beets. I have to admit that I am no beet aficionado. In fact, I began eating beets only a few years ago.

Who knows what turned me off in my younger years. Maybe it was the fact that I only knew beets by way of a can – we never grew them in our home garden. They honestly didn't look or taste all that yummy, especially to a kid who ate a total of two other vegetables; that is, of course, if corn counts.

Anyway, I think what finally convinced me to include beets in my garden was the fact that the plants are multipurpose (you can eat both the greens and the roots) and beets themselves are wonderful "keepers." Lately, there is a lot of talk about the benefits of eating them in relation to heart health.

Let me give you a brief run down on how to grow beets.

Beet seeds are unique in appearance. I can only describe them as multi-faceted "orbs."

The orb is a grouping of seeds. You can go through the trouble of trying to separate them by way of wax paper and a rolling pin, but most folks don't bother.

Because the orb is thick, however, and moisture must penetrate it in order for it to germinate, a good soaking is beneficial. Although you can try starting beets nearly as soon as the soil can be worked in spring, it is probably best to wait until two weeks before the last expected frost.

In our location that translates into the first or second week of May. This timeframe will give



In the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



for its large and sweet reddish-purple leaves. "Early Wonder Tall Top" is another oldie – prized as much for its early beet greens as it for its beets.

Looking for less leaf and more beet? Try "Detroit Dark Red Short Top." Well over one hundred years old, this late variety is great for canning.

Beets also come in a wide array of colors. For a dependable and tasty yellow beet try "Touchtone Gold." Another interesting heirloom beet is "Chiogga" (aka "Bassano").

Cercospora Leaf Spot of Swiss Chard, Beets, and Spinach is a common fungus that appears as circular rings on the leaves, making them unsightly and barely edible. There are a number of tactics that claim to help if this is a problem for you. Water at the base of the plant, and do it early in the day so it dries out by evening, especially in the summer months when humidity heightens the spread.

Likewise, if you make successive sowings, space them a distance apart from one another. There are organic and chemical means of control that are worth investigating.

If that's not for you, give growing these plants a break for two-three years and likely you'll be in the clear to attempt trying again. Some companies offer disease free seed, too. It's worth looking into.

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

them the most desirable soil temperature (sixty degrees plus) for germination.

Be sure that you keep the seed bed moist until the seeds pop up, and continue to provide at least one inch of water throughout the growing season if Mother Nature does not. Steady moisture will keep your beets sweet and crack-free.

I should also mention that beets prefer a soil that is slightly alkaline, and well-drained but fertile. In other words, sprinkle some lime and work a couple inches of compost into the soil!

Beet seeds should be sown an inch or so apart – my theory is to sow once and sow heavy. Because multiple plants may come from one "orb" it is critical that you thin your plants: first to one and a half inch spacing and then, when beets are the size of a marble, to a final spacing of three inches apart.

Don't feel badly when you are thinning – you are honestly doing your plants a favor. Beets that are grown too close together will never develop to their full potential.

Instead of letting the thinnings go to waste, make a salad and be grateful for some early season greens. Even when beets are at their final spacing I will rob the patch of some leaves every now and then for the very same reason. As long as I am prudent, no harm will be done to the developing roots.

Some beet varieties are grown especially for their greens. Try "Bull's Blood," an heirloom variety known



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EDITOR
Paula Ouimette
pouimette@turley.com

ADVERTISING SALES
Dan Flynn
dflynn@turley.com

SPORTS EDITOR
Greg Scibelli
sports@turley.com

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WEB
quaboagcurrent.turley.com



PHONE
(413) 283-8393



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- sturbridge -

Behavioral Concepts welcomes families to their new location

STURBRIDGE—Behavioral Concepts (BCI), a provider of LEARN Behavioral, officially opened its doors with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at its new Sturbridge Learning Center, 179 Main St., Suite 2.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony hosted by the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce was held on March 26.

During the ceremony, state Rep. Todd Smola and Amanda Hellyar, District Director for Senator Ryan Fattman, shared greetings and remarks. Erika Burrows, President of the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, and Town Administrator Robin Grimm also shared remarks.

Members of the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce and other guests were in attendance.

Ribbon-cutting attendees were able to tour the facility, enjoy light refreshments, and meet BCI's leadership team, Annaleisa Delgado, BCBA, LABA, Regional Clinical Director, and Tiffany Zayas, M.S., BCBA, LABA, Senior Regional Clinical Director.

"We're proud to bring compassionate, high-quality ABA therapy to families in the greater Sturbridge area," said Delgado. "At BCI, we

tailor our services to each child and family-offering age-appropriate, engaging learning experiences rooted in science and guided by care."

BCI is Sturbridge's premiere contemporary applied behavior analysis provider of

center-based autism services for children ages 1-12 years. The Sturbridge Learning Center provides center-based ABA therapy, parent education, diagnostics, Early Intervention, and Social Skills Programs. Outside of the center, the Sturbridge team offers in-home ABA therapy.

Delgado continued, "Our new space was designed to support both individual growth and peer collaboration. It's a place where children can gain essential skills-and where their journey toward success in school and life begins. We're honored to be part of this community and grateful to offer life-changing services right here in Sturbridge."

The Sturbridge Learning Center offers after-school treatment hours to accommodate busy family schedules. There is no waitlist. The center is conveniently located near Old Sturbridge Village, I-84, and US-20,



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Shown at the grand opening of Sturbridge's Behavioral Concepts location were from left, state Rep. Todd Smola; Robin Grimm, Town Administrator; Annaleisa Delgado, Regional Clinical Director of the Sturbridge Learning Center (cutting the ribbon); Britney Catron; Amanda Robitaille; Irene Barajas; Tiffany Zayas; Makenzie Holm-Brien; Amanda Hellyar, District Director for Senator Fattman; and Erika Burrows, President of the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce

and easily accessible for families in the region.

For more information or to enroll a child at the Sturbridge Learning Center, call 508-363-0200 or visit <https://bciaba.com/locations/sturbridge>.

About BCI

BCI, part of the LEARN Behavioral network, is one of the nation's leading providers of compassionate au-

tism care. For more than 20 years, BCI has been delivering evidence-based services, helping children with autism find success and reach their unique potential.

In addition to the Sturbridge Learning Center, BCI has existing Learning Centers in Beverly, Brockton, Fitchburg, Framingham, Lawrence, Littleton, Lowell, New Bedford, Newton,

Springfield, Taunton, Wilmington, two locations in Worcester and one location in Nashua, New Hampshire.

About LEARN Behavioral

LEARN Behavioral is a national leader in autism treatment, offering comprehensive diagnostic services and contemporary applied behavior analysis therapy for children with autism

spectrum disorder. With a nationwide network of ABA providers and more than 100 Learning Centers across the country, LEARN delivers the highest standard of evidence-based care-customized to meet the unique needs and interests of each child and family.

For more information, visit learnbehavioral.com.

Tantasqua presents 'Shrek the Musical'

Four showings this weekend

STURBRIDGE – The Tantasqua Drama Club will perform "Shrek the Musical" at four showings this weekend.

They will be held at Tantasqua Senior High School on Friday, May 1 at 7 p.m., Saturday, May 2 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., and Sunday, May 3 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for general admission and \$12 for students/seniors, and may be purchased online or at the door.

"Shrek the Musical" was originally produced on Broadway and is an adaption of the Dreamworks movie. Come support the cast and crew as everyone's favorite grumpy green ogre Shrek and his sidekick Donkey rescue Princess Fiona and team up to save the swamp from Lord Farquaad, with lots of laughs and music along the way.

Wings of Song presents 'Spring and Summer in the British Isles'

STURBRIDGE – The community chorus Wings of Song is known for taking its audiences on musical expeditions.

Chorus and audience have visited northwest France to celebrate a Breton Christmas; gone international to explore the challenges posed by climate change; sailed around the world and returned to home port in "Rough Seas, Safe Harbor"; and journeyed into the American past to explore the many meanings of home.

This May, the chorus will be taking a deep dive into rural England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales in the 13th-20th centuries, as it sings of "Spring and Summer in the British Isles." Everyone's invited to come along. The concerts will be on Saturday, May 16 at 7:30 p.m. in St. Joachim Chapel, 16 Church St., Fiskdale (part of Sturbridge), and on Sunday, May 17 at 3 p.m., at Elm Street Congregational Church, 61 Elm St., Southbridge.

Admission is free, with a freewill offering taken at intermission. As always, socializing and yummy refreshments will follow each concert.

British traditions to welcome and celebrate spring and summer are numerous and varied. For example, in

Bedfordshire, England on the eve of May Day, young people used to go into the woods and spend most of the night picking "branches of May" (newly-leaved or flowering sprigs from bushes and trees), which they carried back to their villages in the early morning to serve as decorations – bringing some of the woods into the town.

Wings of Song will present the charming tune "May Day Carol" from Bedfordshire, which describes this practice.

On the first of May in Helston, Cornwall (this is the Celtic southwestern part of England), for centuries and to this very day, the townsfolk form an immensely long line and execute a simple and stately line dance that moves through the entire village, following ancient traditional paths that sometimes take the dancers right through people's back yards. The song they sing and step to is "The Helston Furry": "O we were up as soon as day For to fetch the summer home-a..."

The program includes this tune as well.

Some of the most rousing songs of spring and summer come from medieval and Renaissance Britain. "Merry It Is" ("Mirie it is while sumer ilast [lasts]"), dating from ca. 1225, is said to be the earli-

est surviving secular song in English. "Sumer is i-cumen in" is a well-known round of the mid-13th century. "Now is the month of Maying," first published in 1595, is perhaps Thomas Morley's most famous madrigal. "O lusty May" is a 17th-century part song. All these early chestnuts, and more, will be heard.

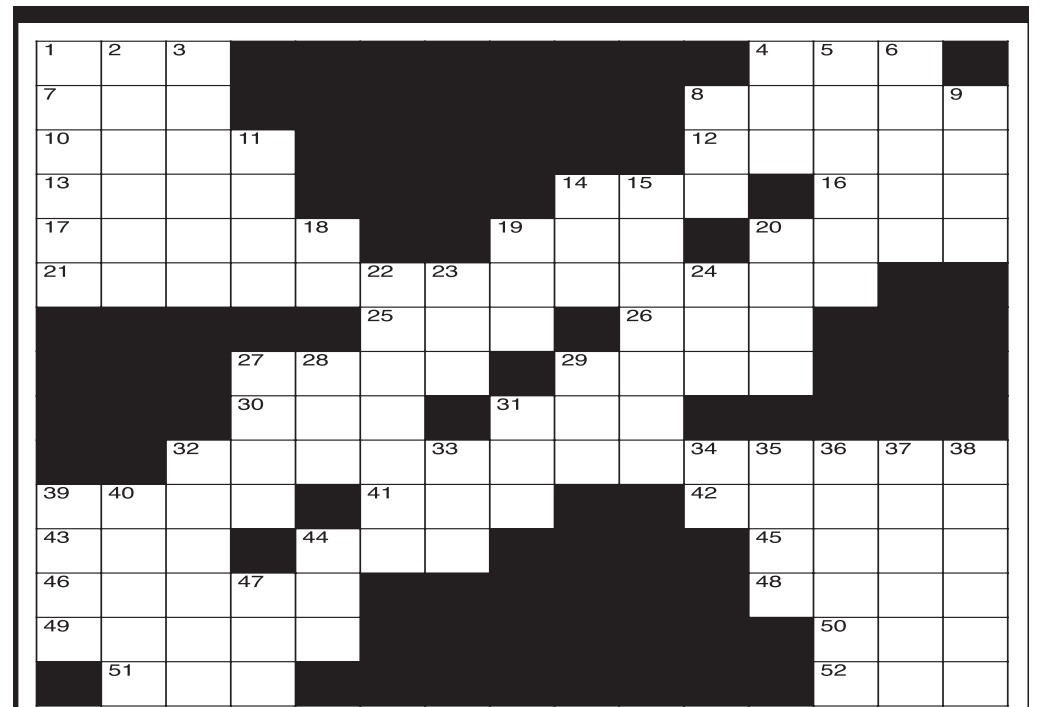
The 20th century is well represented.

Ralph Vaughan Williams's jubilant hymn tune "Sine Nomine" (1906), usually sung with the text

"For all the saints..." but performed here with Don Cohen's more recent text "The leaf unfurling in the April air," will end the concerts. Another hymn tune, "Jerusalem," with words by visionary poet and painter William Blake and a stirring tune written in the middle of World War I by Hubert Parry, may remind some listeners of the movie Chariots of Fire, where it makes a notable appearance. (King George V felt that this tune should be the British national anthem.) From the later

part of the century come two real winners: George Harrison's well-known "Here comes the sun" (1969), and John Rutter's charming setting of the hymn text "For the beauty of the earth" (1978).

As always with Wings of Song, there's something here for everyone. Also for everyone is the sweet balm of tuneful melodies, and sylvan and pastoral scenes. Perhaps we all have need of this gentleness and peace and beauty – a kind of refuge or haven in these times.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Purchase
- 4. British news organization
- 7. Midway between northeast and east
- 8. Language specialist group
- 10. Fancy automobile
- 12. Small loop or series of loops
- 13. Exploiter
- 14. Don't know when yet
- 16. Group of languages
- 17. One who's finished
- 19. After B
- 20. Angled
- 21. A place to adopt pets
- 25. Swiss river
- 26. Young boy
- 27. Unexciting
- 29. American comedian Vidale
- 30. Peyton's little brother
- 31. Corporate higher-up
- 32. "All in the Family" star
- 39. Strike something forcefully
- 41. Up in the air (abbr.)
- 42. Clay earth pigments
- 43. Means to record brain activity
- 44. Small constellation
- 45. Embraces
- 46. Brief description
- 48. Exclude
- 49. White (French)
- 50. Insect
- 51. A major division of geological time

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Type of whale
- 2. In tune
- 3. A citizen of Yemen
- 4. Actress Ling
- 5. One who supports
- 6. Circus performer
- 8. Yearly tonnage (abbr.)
- 9. Quantitative fact
- 11. Utah city
- 14. Where a golfer begins
- 15. Attendant
- 18. The ancient Egyptian sun god
- 19. Book of Chronicles (abbr.)
- 20. Benedictine monk
- 22. Not turbulent
- 23. Car mechanics group
- 24. Buffer used in chemistry
- 27. Fall heavily
- 28. Pie ___ mode
- 29. The Brits love it
- 31. Children's TV channel (abbr.)
- 32. Jacksonville footballer
- 33. Helps little firms
- 34. ___ and behold
- 35. A way to resemble
- 36. Fingers
- 37. Excessive indulgences
- 38. You might be an "empty" one
- 39. "How the West Was Won" writer
- 40. European river
- 44. They begin the alphabet
- 47. The body's messenger

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RIVER FROM PAGE 1

Before the race, a day or so, the Corps of Engineers opened one of the dams on the Quinebaug River so the water was moving swiftly, and one could say, forcefully.

Contestants set up toward the river, and they all worked to make sure everything was in order with their gear.

One vessel had a large, inflated sack in the canoe that took up more than half. It was explained that it was to provide buoyancy in case of capsizing.

Certainly, everybody had their own story, and we were curious to know about the man and woman team wearing tutus. Though one might be tempted to think them a tad frivolous, they compete in 18 to 20 races a year, which is a lot and they are tracking 300.

Anyway, a bit of good humor was welcome on the day. As a team, they called themselves SYOTR. It stands for See You On The River, and why not?

One canoe flew a huge jolly roger flag. No reports of attempting to board another craft.

Contestants, for the most part wore helmets, and some wore GoPro cameras attached. According to the company, a "GoPro is a compact, rugged, and waterproof action camera designed for capturing high-definition video and photos during active, outdoor, or underwater adventures."

That "underwater adventures" could have become the operative part if a craft capsized or a man or woman overboard incident occurred. It could have been quite the interesting short movie.

Fortunately, there were no such incidents reported.

11:01 is launch time when the first craft enters the river from a side stream. After that, there is one launch every minute.

As they take off, Ken, Deb and Tim swing into action. Deb and Tim radio over to Ken the boat that has taken off and he calls to the next station to watch for it.

From there, each checkpoint will take up the watch.

After the last boat took off, sweeper canoes went in the water. Their task was to make sure nothing had happened that some contestants had been left behind. Again, this year, no reported prob-



The Quaboag Valley Amateur Radio Club was ready to communicate during the river race.



A racer finished at Westville Dam.



Penny, a charming Aussie, decided not to race.



Sturbridge Lions Club members Linda, Vice-President Laurie and Becca signed in the entrants.



A daring racer traveled the river on a stand up paddleboard.

lems. It is a timed race of six miles. Contestants will have one mandatory portage and one that is optional. A portage is where participants exit the water and carry their craft and then re-enter the river.

Eventually the course takes the participants to the finish line at the Westville Dam. The crafts and their crews reported no capsizing,

as happened in other years. Thus the day can only be considered well done by all from the canoers and to the Lions staff, communications team and CERT volunteers.

With luck, all will be back 12 months hence for the 2027 Sturbridge Lions All-American River Race.



Paddlers headed down the Quinebaug River during the Sturbridge Lions Club All-American River Race held on Sunday.

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

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TURLEY PHOTOS BY JEFFREY HAYNES
Anna Labrousse takes flight in the long jump.

Girls track victorious

BARRE – In a close matchup last Wednesday, Quabbin Regional High School girls track defeated Groton-Dunstable 79-65. The Panthers are next set to face Oakmont on Tuesday, Apr. 28 at 3:30 p.m.



Abigail Falconi balances on one foot as she prepares to spring into her shot-put throw.



Katy Twarog easily clears the high jump bar.



Maya Putnam sprints in the 100-meter dash.



Whitney Reeves races over the hurdles.

Boys track gets win

BARRE – Last Wednesday afternoon, Quabbin Regional High School boys track defeated Groton-Dunstable 80-65. Following the spring vacation week, Quabbin will host Oakmont on Tuesday, Apr. 28 at 3:30 p.m.



Owen Twarog successfully clears the bar in the pole vault.



Owura Mensah flies down the stretch in the 100-meter dash.



Jinxi Zou jumps the last hurdle on his way to the finish line.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY JEFFREY HAYNES
Zakk Mielnicki prepares to launch the shot put.



Jinxi Zou takes flight over the crossbar in the high jump.

Quabbin Regional Panthers baseball fall to St. Bernard's of Fitchburg

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

BARRE—Things didn't exactly go Quabbin Regional's way in their non-league home baseball game against St. Bernard's of Fitchburg.

The Panthers had runners in scoring position in each inning that they batted but only scored five runs. They also struggled defensively, allowing five unearned runs, which helped the Bernardian's secure a 10-5 victory last Thursday afternoon.

"We left five guys on base in the first three innings.

The defense also made four costly errors," said Quabbin head coach Mark Battista. "We just didn't play clean baseball today and it's very frustrating."

The Panthers, who posted an 8-0 victory at St. Bernard's last April, entered the home contest with a 3-2 overall record. They were hoping to move two games above the .500 mark for the first time this season.

"We just need to start playing better baseball," Battista added. "We now have a week off before playing at Bromfield."

The Bernardian's (5-2)

also stranded runners in scoring position in the first two innings against Quabbin senior righthander Adam Adams, who allowed eight runs (four earned) on seven hits in 3 2/3 innings. He recorded seven strikeouts and issued four walks.

With one-out in the top of the first inning, Adams, who threw 86 pitches, walked both junior third baseman Caden Laverdiere and senior Austin Gibbons, who was the Bernardian's starting pitcher.

Gibbons led his team offensively with three singles and a double. He also

scored a pair of runs.

Adams, who's hoping to play college baseball at Worcester State University next year, escaped the first inning jam with a strikeout and groundball out.

The Panthers, who had six base hits, put together a one-out rally in the bottom half of the frame.

Senior right fielder Andrew Warfield (2-for-4) lined a one out single into left field before advancing to second base on a wild pitch. Adams followed with a walk, but Gibbons retired the next two batters on a strikeout and ground out.

In the following inning, freshman second baseman JR Falconi and senior left fielder Jordyn Guilderson drew back-to-back walks, but the Panthers failed to take the lead.

The Bernardian's scored an unearned run with two outs in the third. Laverdiere, who served a single into left field, crossed the plate following a fielding error by the shortstop on a groundball hit by sophomore shortstop Justin Little.

Warfield poked a single into left field leading off the third inning. After Warfield

stole second base, Adams drew his second walk of the game. Then Warfield was thrown out trying to steal third base by sophomore catcher Ryan Bouchard before the next two batters struck out.

Gibbons recorded a total of ten strikeouts before being replaced on the mound by freshman righty Yaniel Zapata during the sixth inning.

St. Bernard's built an 8-0 lead after scoring seven runs on five hits in the

- sports -

Pathfinder falls to SICS

PALMER – Last Thursday on a sunny, but breezy afternoon, Pathfinder baseball was defeated 14-4 by SICS at Legion Field in Palmer. While Pathfinder was able to get on the scoreboard, SICS was able to score some early runs to get ahead, and the Pioneers could not match the offense. Pathfinder fell to 0-8 on the regular season.



Emerson Boronski delivers a pitch.



Anthony Elliott sends a long throw to third.



Above, Brody Wetnicka winds up for a throw across the diamond. Right, Zachary Smith tries to make throw to first for an out.



Dayne Shanley takes the pickoff throw at first.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI
Zachary Latourelle sends a throw to first.

PANTHERS
FROM PAGE 7

fourth, as they sent a total of 13 batters to the plate.

In the middle of that inning, Adams switched positions with sophomore third baseman Abe Brown, who worked the final 3 1/3 innings. Brown gave up two runs (one earned) on five hits.

Brown, who walked leading off the bottom of the fifth, scored the Panthers' first run when Adams hit a double to left field.

After St. Bernard's scored a run in the top of the sixth, the Panthers clawed back with two runs in the home half of the inning.

Senior centerfielder Chase Talbot led off with a walk and scored on a wild pitch. Warfield also reached first base following a fielding error which scored another run. The Panthers had runners on second and third with two outs when Adams hit a line drive to center field. A base hit would've sliced Quabbin's deficit to 9-5, but senior centerfielder Angelo Barry made a leaping catch for the third out of the inning.

Trailing 10-3 entering the bottom of the seventh inning, the Panthers scored two more runs in their final at-bats of the game.

An infield hit by sophomore Jake Doty, who had replaced Falconi at second base, scored junior catcher Alijah Flint (single). A groundout to the pitcher by senior shortstop Aiden Lapointe plated the Panthers final run.

SCULPTURE FROM PAGE 1

about the process of creating a sculpture portrait, and to view his collection of work, "People, Pets, and Prized Possessions" which is currently on display.

To view Collins' work, stop by the gallery during open hours, Thursday and Friday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Upcoming shows and events at the gallery include Cosmos & The Cosmos on Thursday, May 14 from 4-7 p.m. with Tarot readings by gallery artist Cheryl O'Donnell accompanied by cosmopolitan beverages. This event is \$20 for 20 minutes.

Space is limited and reservations are recommended.

A Plein Air Paint Out and Wet Paint Sale will be held on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, May 15-17.



Model and Workshop13 Programs Director, Mary Remington, is shown next to her likeness being sculpted by artist John Collins.

Join gallery artists painting around town on May 15 and 16 (including during the Asparagus Festival), then stop by the gallery to

purchase these pieces on May 17 from noon-2 p.m. For more information and a complete listing of gallery happenings, stop

by, call the gallery at 508-753-8604, email yafacceber@hotmail.com, or visit westbrookfieldartandframe.com.



John Collins worked the neck area of his sculpture to match his model, Mary Remington.



Artist John Collins pause to look at his progress.



John Collins smoothed the clay on his sculpture.



John Collins added details to the hair on the sculpture of his model, Mary Remington.

BUDGET FROM PAGE 1

Board approved of it. Town Accountant Laurie Bartkus said that was voted at a previous Select Board meeting, where the salary was raised by \$5 an hour, which correlated to the 18.9% yearly increase. Legal services were budgeted at \$75,000 for this coming fiscal year, and Select Board Chair Sarah Campbell said she would reach out to KP Law to get information as to whether that is enough. Bartkus said the town has spent \$62,000 so far this year on legal services. The boards agreed to raise that budget to \$85,000. Bartkus said the Treasurer salary is not budgeted high enough, since the town is working with a firm to do treasury services. She said nobody has applied on the job posting, and the firm's first bill came in at \$12,500 for the month. She said the town is a couple months behind, and hopefully when the firm catches up, the per month price will decrease to around \$5,000. She said there is about \$15,000 left in the Treasurer salary line item this year, and by the end of the fiscal year they could be short \$20,000. The boards decided to budget that salary at \$82,000 for next fiscal year. The boards discussed whether the municipal property maintenance line item should be a warrant article, but Regan ex-

plained warrant articles are usually for more project-based costs. The municipal maintenance is just general maintenance. The Select Board questioned why the police clerk's salaries were increased, and the advisory committee said she was working extra hours. Bartkus said the clerk, Holly Chisholm, is already maxed out at 40 hours across her multiple positions in town, and is unsure if she will be reducing hours in one of those positions. The Advisory Committee said the Fire Department wages are increasing due to more calls, and more requests for mutual aid, since surrounding towns are cutting their fire departments due to overrides. The boards discussed that a contract with North Brookfield Ambulance Services is ending in June, and there are opportunities for negotiating a contract. The Gas and Plumbing Inspector is requesting \$12,000 for his services. Bartkus said he works in East Brookfield in the same role, and told her that is what he makes there. Brookfield is currently paying him \$5,300. The Select Board voted to open the town meeting warrant and add revolving account language so the town can pay him that way, then switch to a fee per permit schedule after this year. The boards agreed to budget the gas and plumbing inspector at

\$10,000 for the time being. The boards discussed the Animal Control Officer, who reached out saying she feels she does not get paid enough for the services she provides, as she comes out for calls at night. The boards said she may be doing more than the job description asks for. The Highway administrative assistant budget is up 134%. The boards discussed this is likely because hours were removed last year, and are being put back. They tentatively agreed to budget that position at 19 hours per week, as anything over that requires benefits. It was originally a 24-hour per week position. Bartkus said the diesel budget is almost out, with only \$4,000 remaining for this fiscal year. The boards decided to fund diesel at \$50,000 for next year. Clark said there is a net change in about negative \$2,500 in the library budget for this coming year. The boards discussed that the Collector is requesting a \$15,000 budget for this year, but it is unclear where that figure is coming from, and are awaiting more information from her about it. She cited postage, but Campbell read an email from her, which did not specify her spending last year. The boards discussed implementing a 3% cost of living adjustment increase instead of 2.8%, which is a difference of about \$4,000 in the budget.

HESSIANS FROM PAGE 1

mately 39 independent countries or city-states made up Germany. Picard described elements that made up the equipment and uniform of a Hessian soldier. Picard talked about the brass cap plates Hessians wore as part of their uniform which made them appear taller. The uniforms also featured copper alloy buttons. Picard had samples of these buttons, shoes, canteens and rifleman trousers. The equipment Hessians carried came from their home country or city-state. Hessian Jägers were riflemen in the Hessian forces. The term "mercenaries" was used at the time by American forces to describe Hessians. However, years later it was learned that many Hessians were drafted by their city-state rulers and would fight under British command. What makes this area of Massachusetts, central and western, connected to the Hessians were a few notable battles. For example, the Battle of Trenton in December of 1776. After the battle, there were a total of 900 Hessians who became prisoners of war. In 1777, the Battle of Bennington happened and 300 Dragoons and Artillerists were taken prisoner. Many of these Hessian POWs wound up in the barracks of Rutland and Cambridge. After these notable Revolutionary War battles, it now connects the dots to why Hessians were notable in the western Massachusetts region. Soon, after these bat-

ties were complete, the Hessians taken prisoner would soon find themselves traveling through western Massachusetts as some were assigned under a work release. This way, many Hessians would be sent to various communities. Picard mentioned four Hessians who made their way to West Springfield. Picard told the story of John Isense (Johann Andreas Isensee) who was buried in West Springfield and was killed by a lightning strike. John Pittsinger (Johannes Petzinger) was captured at the Battle of Bennington and was a prisoner at the barracks of Rutland. The other famous battle with Hessian forces was the Battle of Saratoga, a major American victory which is considered a turning point of the war. This battle resulted in approximately 2,000 Hessian POWs. The prisoners were split into three groups and traveled through western Massachusetts. Picard provided a map to identify the three routes cutting through the region. In addition to Hessian names, Picard also highlighted various historical markers that reference locations of where Hessians located throughout western Massachusetts. There is a tree known as the Hessian Oak that is somewhere on the Westfield-West Springfield border. There is also Hessian Lane in New Salem, where the marker reads "1,000 Hessians passed here" with the date being Oct. 25, 1777. In Brimfield, four Hes-

sians were taken by Major Danielson and were stationed there. Picard brought up the Benton Homestead in Tolland, Connecticut. The basement of the house was used for to house Hessian and English prisoners while the war was still happening. A total of 24 Hessians were located to Northampton. Picard also had a list of deserters, including those who later became Patriots. Johann Becker was a drummer who later joined the Continental Army. John Whitty, who settled in Great Barrington, joined the American forces as well. Picard shared a picture of Whitty's gravestone. According to his research, Picard shared that a total of 535 Hessians were killed, 3,628 captured, 4,983 died of disease and about 6,000 Hessians stayed in the United States at the end of the Revolutionary War. Guests thanked Picard for his presentation and stuck around to ask questions. Guests also went to review samples of Hessian equipment provided by Picard. At the Publick House, Wally Hersee had copies of his two books available, "Common Witness" and "To Defend All That Is Dear: The Soldiers Who Served Sturbridge In The War for Independence". Hersee will be giving a presentation on Thursday, May 28 at the Publick House called "Sturbridge Soldiers in the Revolution." More information can be found on the Sturbridge Historical Society Facebook page.

CANDIDATES FROM PAGE 1

Orsi said he sat on the building committee for the highway and fire complex. He said he has the time to devote to the job of sitting on the Board of Selectmen, and has met a lot of the people he would be working with. **Key requirements** Both candidates were asked what they believe are the key requirements to be

successful on their chosen board or committee. Orsi started by saying he thinks it is important to be able to work with people, listen to them and work together to come up with good ideas. He said he had worked as a project manager in the past, so understands working with people who have different sets of knowledge to come up with solutions. Orsi said he is able to talk to anyone, and learn from them.

Kennan said he understands the position from his time sitting in on monthly meetings. He said the process is to listen, vote your own way, but work together for the best solution for the residents. He said nothing in the facility will get past him because of his experience, and he knows how to work with the Department of Environmental Protection, saying he has sat in on multiple sanitary surveys.

"I know the facility in and out," he said. **Town's top issue** Orsi was asked what he believes is the number one issue facing the town. "I'd be foolish if I didn't say roads," Orsi said. He said many residents have concerns about the roads and how they are maintained. He described this as a "microscopic" view of issues though, saying the bigger issue is maintaining the roads along with equip-

ment, and employees. He said it is important to give employees support so they can be the best asset they can be, and work to retain them. For finances, Orsi said he believes in long term planning, and proactive spending rather than reactive. He said grants take a while to kick in, and there are a lot of people involved. He used the example of the police cruiser which was approved for purchase at the

last town meeting, and that it will likely need to be replaced in 10 years. He said if there is long term planning built into the master plan, even when the board members change, and town office employees change, the living document will still have a concrete plan in place for spending. **Election information** The election will be held on Monday, May 4, with polls open from 7 a.m.-8 p.m. at the Senior Center, 29 Forest St.

SEEDS FROM PAGE 1

potatoes. Doyle said local grocery store, Big Bunny, has a shelf of odds and ends produce at discounted prices, which includes potatoes that have begun to sprout eyes. Doyle said she is focusing on growing her own food as a homesteader, but that she still needs to visit the grocery store at times. "We're not there yet," she said. Doyle also shared advice about choosing the best soil to grow your garden in, whether it be purchasing bags, or creating your own. She said for the beginner gardener, it's often easier to start with bagged soil for the best results. Grassroots Central Mass member Jeana Edmonds said the skills sharing workshops are a new initiative of the organization, which grew out of Brookfield In-

divisible in 2017. The workshops will allow people to share their various talents with others, and teach different ways to encourage sustainability. "We can learn how to repair our clothes, knit and crochet, garden," she said. "We have multiple skills in the group." Edmonds said the organization is also focusing on immigration issues, and has been hosting programs at area libraries that share immigration stories. "We're trying to change the narrative and use music and poetry to tie into immigration stories," she said. "We're going to continue to step up and continue to protect our neighbors." Edmonds said Grassroots Central Mass continues to work hard, and meets regularly. The group also has a number of subcommittees related to climate change, political initiatives,

racial and social justice, as well as a youth council led by Hardwick resident Colin Brown. "The committees take on a lot of responsibility," she said.

Grassroots Central Mass also endorses local political candidates, including two of its own members; Brown, and West Brookfield resident Shannon Teabo. Brown is seeking election

to the Quabbin Regional School Committee as his hometown representative, and Teabo is running for State Senate in the Worcester & Hampshire Senate District.

The organization is also endorsing South Hadley resident Jeremie Whalen for U.S. Congress in the Massachusetts First Congressional District. Grassroots Central Mass is also actively involved in national politics. Edmonds said a group of walkers and singers took part in a six-mile trek from East Brookfield to West Brookfield as part of the No Kings 3 standout that was organized by Brookfields Fight Fear. Protest songs were performed by Chorus for These Times, led by Nym Cooke. Edmonds said Grassroots Central Mass member Sherry Zitter wrote a song for the event. For more information about Grassroots Central Mass and its various initiatives, endorsements and skills sharing workshops, visit grassrootscentralmass.org.



Members of Grassroots Central Mass were joined by community members for a Seed Swap and Skill Sharing event on the Southbridge common. Participants shared seeds, seedlings and gardening knowledge with each other and talked about different ways to garden.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA OUIMETTE

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- public safety -

New Braintree Police Log

During the weeks of April 13-27, the Hardwick/New Braintree Police Department responded to 35 building/property checks, 46 directed/area patrols, 28 radar assignments, nine emergency 911 calls, seven citizen assists, five assist other agencies, one safety hazard, two motor vehicle accidents, two brush fires, two safety hazards, two scams, one parking complaint, three investigations, one missing person, one animal call and 18 motor vehicle stops in the town of New Braintree.

Monday, April 13
10:37 a.m. Parking Complaint, Moore Road, Officer Handled

3:43 p.m. Scam, Thompson Road, Officer Handled

Tuesday, April 14
1:22 p.m. Assist Citizen, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

3:57 p.m. 911 Fire/Brush, Goodfield Road, Extinguished

4:10 p.m. Safety Hazard, Unitas Road, Officer Handled

7:44 p.m. Fire/Brush, Goodfield Road, Extinguished

8:16 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Moore Road, Transported to Hospital

Wednesday, April 15
7:40 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Out of Town, Officer Handled

Friday, April 17
1:57 p.m. Safety Hazard, Worcester Road, No Action Required
8:22 p.m. Investigation, Gilbertville Road, Services Rendered

Saturday, April 18
3:06 p.m. 911 Motor Vehicle Crash, Gilbertville Road, Merge

3:07 p.m. 911 Motor Vehicle Crash, Gilbertville Road, Criminal Complaint

5:33 p.m. Gunshots, Oakham Road, Unfounded

5:54 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Out of Town, Referred to Other Agency

7:34 p.m. Assist Citizen, Oakham Road, Merge

Sunday, April 19
9:29 a.m. Assist Citizen, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled
10:14 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Hardwick Road, Transported to Hospital
11:45 a.m. Scam, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

Tuesday, April 21
10:14 a.m. Assist Citizen, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

Thursday, April 23
11:32 a.m. Motor Vehicle Crash, West Brookfield Road, Patient Refusal

11:51 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

Friday, April 24
8:03 a.m. 911 Animal Call, Gilbertville Road, Negative Contact
2:03 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

Saturday, April 25
8:01 a.m. Investigation, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

8:07 a.m. Investigation, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

8:41 a.m. Disturbance, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

12:23 p.m. Assist Citizen, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

12:43 p.m. Assist Citizen, Telephone, Officer Handled
5:17 p.m. Motor Vehicle

Stop, Old Turnpike Road, Written Warning

5:36 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Ravine Road, Citation Issued

7:07 p.m. Assist Citizen, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

Sunday, April 26
5:34 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Memorial Drive, Services Rendered

1:59 p.m. Missing Person, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

3:17 p.m. 911 Suspicious Activity, West Brookfield Road, Officer Handled

3:55 p.m. Fire/Alarm, Memorial Drive, Investigated

10:31 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, West Brookfield Road, Patient Refusal

- public notices -

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TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that in accordance with the provisions of M.G.L Chapter 40A, Section 5 Adoption or change of zoning ordinances or by-laws, the West Brookfield Planning Board will open a public hearing on **Monday, May 11th, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.** in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 2 East Main Street.

The following amendment will be considered:

Amend the West Brookfield Zoning Bylaws by deleting language pertaining to minor site plan classifications in Section 5. Special Requirements.

Copies of the proposed amendment are available at the Office of the Town Clerk and on the Town webpage under "Planning Board": <https://www.wbrookfield.com/>.

The Board invites all interested parties to attend and offer comments on the proposed zoning amendment.

Timothy Morrell, Chairperson
04/24, 05/01/2026

PUBLIC NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS LAKE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

The Town of West Brookfield, MA in accordance with M.G.L. c 30B, which governs the procurement of supplies and services, hereby invites sealed proposals from qualified firms for "LAKE MANAGEMENT SERVICES" The requested managed services are for weed, algae management and related services commencing July 1, 2026 and terminating December 31, 2026.

Qualification and bid proposal forms are available beginning April 30, 2026 and may be obtained during regular business hours at:

Town Administrator's Office
West Brookfield Town Hall
2 East Main Street,
Floor Level B
West Brookfield, MA 01585

Or, by request via email to tcofske@wbrookfield.com.

Sealed proposals, clearly marked "LAKE MANAGEMENT SERVICES" must be

received at the Town Administrator's Office, West Brookfield Town Hall, 2 East Main Street, West Brookfield, MA 01585 by **May 18, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.** All bids submitted must be in conformity with all pertinent statutes and regulations of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

A review panel for the services will make a recommendation to the Town Administrator for award of the contract.

The Town reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive any defects, informalities, and minor irregularities; and to award contracts or cancel this RFP.

Theresa A. Cofske
Town Administrator
05/01, 05/08/2026

PUBLIC NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS MANAGED IT SERVICES

The Town of West Brookfield, MA in accordance with M.G.L. c 30B, which governs the procurement of supplies and services, hereby invites sealed proposals from qualified firms for "MANAGED IT SERVICES" The requested managed IT services are for multiple Town Departments commencing July 1, 2026 and terminating June 30, 2029.

Qualification and bid proposal forms are available beginning April 30, 2026, and may be obtained during regular business hours at:

Town Administrator's Office
West Brookfield Town Hall
2 East Main Street,
Floor Level B
West Brookfield, MA 01585

Monday -Thursday 8:00AM-4:00PM:

Or, by request via email to tcofske@wbrookfield.com.

Sealed proposals, clearly marked "MANAGED IT SERVICES" must be received at the Town Administrator's Office, West Brookfield Town Hall, 2 East Main Street, West Brookfield, MA 01585 by **May 18, 2026, at 11:00 AM.** All bids submitted must be in conformity with all pertinent statutes and regulations of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

A review panel for the services will make a recommendation to the Town Administrator for award of the contract.

The Town reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive any defects, informalities, and minor irregularities; and to award contracts or cancel this RFP

Theresa A. Cofske
Town Administrator
05/01, 05/08/2026

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 - **Assistant Treasurer/Collector**
Assistant Treasurer/Collector. Duties and responsibilities include but are not limited to a variety of accounting and administrative functions to assist the Treasurer/Collector in all financial operations of the office. The Assistant provides skilled accounting and computer banking support, including billing and collection activities, account reconciliation, cash management, reporting, and research, as well as other municipal procedures and functions as required. Full-time, benefited, union position, \$25.53-\$26.29 per hour, 35 hours per week
 - **Equipment Operator/Truck Driver**
Equipment Operator/Truck Driver in the Department of Public Works. Duties and responsibilities include but are not limited to Operating various types of motorized vehicles, trucks, dump trucks, sweepers, excavators, snow and ice removal equipment and other miscellaneous equipment, such as loaders, mowers, and chippers; Participating in emergency operations including but not limited to snowplowing, road sanding, snow and ice removal, hazardous materials mitigation, and natural disasters; Assisting with preparation of trucks and other equipment for different seasonal jobs including repairing and maintaining sanders and snow plows; Repairing roadways, sidewalks, pavements, and other surface areas and drainage structures, including excavating trenches, and chain saw operation. Full-time, 40 hours per week average, union position, \$23.32-\$25.26. Applicants are required to have a Class B CDL License with Air Brake endorsement endorsements.
- For full job descriptions visit- <https://www.townofware.com/> Interested applicants please send resume to: Human Resources Department, Town of Ware, 126 Main Street, Ware, MA 01082 or e-mail resumes@townofware.com. AA/EOE

Send Us Your Community Summer Events



Turley Publications will print your Summer event **FREE OF CHARGE** in our Summer Fest Supplement which will be published June 3, 2026.

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Event Should Be Non-Profit & Open to the Public

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MAIL YOUR LISTING INFORMATION TO: Turley Publications, Attn: Jamie Joslyn, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069 or email* them to: jamie@turley.com *Be sure to indicate "Summer Event" in the subject line of your email.

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