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Friday, May 26, 2023

Rain can't stop the fun

West Brookfield Asparagus & Flower Heritage Festival

By Richard Murphy
Correspondent

WEST BROOKFIELD – It had been a week or two of a dry spell as rain had been scant and warnings of fire danger were a constant refrain on weather reports.

However, on May 20, the heavens would open up, slowly at first, and the day would get wetter.

Still, it was an occasion for rejoicing as it was the Saturday of the annual West Brookfield Asparagus and Flower Heritage Festival.

No matter what the forecast, the vendors and attendees were going to make a go of it. At 10 a.m. though cloudy, the festival was packed and the best way to get to the Common was via the shuttle bus that traveled from the end of Central Street.

Exiting the bus from the western end of the Common and walking east, there was Ware's Pig Park BBQ on the right followed by the Leicester Lions and J.B.'s Mobile Cafe, and Street Tacos on the left. It was clear no one would have to go hungry on the day.

Brynne's Bread and Brookfield Orchards, local favorites,

See FESTIVAL | PAGE 10



Amy Dugas was selling asparagus crowns so one could grow their own asparagus. (TURLEY PUBLICATIONS PHOTOS BY RICHARD MURPHY)

Area fire departments train in empty hospital

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

WARE – Thirty firefighters from Ware, Hardwick, Belchertown and West Brookfield attended a training at the former Baystate Mary Lane Hospital building Sunday morning and afternoon.

Using the third and fourth floors of the hospital, firefighters worked in crews to sweep

rooms in search of potential victims. The fourth floor was obscured by thick smoke, supplied by smoke machines.

Ware Fire Chief Jim Martinez said this training happened thanks to the efforts of Lieutenant Jason McNeaney and the town of Ware. The town gave the fire departments permission to use the hospital, along with Baystate Health.

Air Support from Westover

See TRAIN | PAGE 6



West Brookfield firefighters put on their gear. (TURLEY PUBLICATIONS PHOTOS BY PAULA OUIMETTE)

School Committee approves half-day preschool program

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
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NORTH BROOKFIELD – School Committee members revisited the discussion of shifting the school district's integrated preschool program from full days to half days, in order to accommodate more students in need of services.

Director of Student Services Dr. Kirsten Esposito told the Committee at their May

15 meeting, that access to preschool is state mandated for students that have individualized education programs.

In North Brookfield, the model they use for preschool class sizes is six or seven students with IEPs and eight without, with the class size not exceeding 15 total students. Each classroom is staffed with a teacher and paraprofessional.

Esposito said they work with Early Intervention and Child

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Stop and smell the flowers

Tri-Parish Community Church hosts plant and bake sale

By Dallas Gagnon
Staff Writer
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HARDWICK – Community members gathered on the common this past weekend to enjoy baked goods, loaded baked potatoes and even live music while plant shopping in an effort to support the Tri-Parish Community Church.

While the plant sale has "been going on for years and

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Shown are volunteers Bonnie St.Cyr and Tammi Chisholm selling loaded baked potatoes. (TURLEY PUBLICATIONS PHOTOS BY DALLAS GAGNON)

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- community -

First ever holy mass held at St. Mary's Church

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

WARE – History was made for Massachusetts Knights of Columbus members recently, during a noon mass at St. Mary's Church.

For the first time ever, a Procession of Masters of the Fourth Degree and "Blessing of the Swords" were held together on Sunday, May 7, followed by a luncheon with Honor Guard Certifications.

The Fourth Degree is the highest degree a member of the Knights of Columbus can reach, and its focus is on patriotism and love of country. The Fourth Degree was approved in 1900 and as of 2012, there were 327,415 Fourth Degree Knights.

Representing 10 Knights of Columbus assemblies, 54 members of the Honor Guard lined the center aisle of the sanctuary to have District Friar Rev. Piotr Pawlus, the Church's pastor, bless their swords with holy water.

"This is the first time in Massachusetts' history doing this," Stanley Ciukaj, Master of the Fourth Degree, Massachusetts Knights of Columbus said.

Pawlus gave a sermon about being a "living stone" as referenced in the Bible in the book of Peter.

"Jesus was the rock that was rejected by the world, but became the cornerstone of the new world," Pawlus said. "We are the living stones, we have dignity. We are to build his church."

Holding this special Mass and Blessing of the Swords is something Ciukaj has always dreamed of doing.

"I always wished and as I stated in my resume in 2014 that if I were appointed Master, I would plan a Holy Mass featuring 'Blessing of the Swords' and honor all men that gave of their time and treasure for the Patriotic Fourth Degree of the Order of the Knights of Columbus. Here my promise will be fulfilled," he said.

Ciukaj introduced the various dignitaries, including State Deputy Thomas Butler, who praised the Honor Guard for being staunch, loyal, Catholic men, and worthy members of the Knights.

Deputy Supreme Knight Paul O'Sullivan explained the significance of the sword, and how it's not a weapon of hate, pain or shedding blood, but rather of love.

"Our swords are weapons...not of pain, but of healing," he said. "Like a surgeon's scalpel, it cuts away sins."

The sword also means protecting those who cannot protect themselves, O'Sullivan said.

O'Sullivan said he is often asked why he became a Knight, and he said his answer is this: "I stand for God, his church and his people...this is why I'm a Knight."

Vice Supreme Master Richard McDermott had the Honor Guard stand and raise their right hands to give an oath to serve both God and country, in full truth and loyalty.

Ciukaj joined Pawlus as he blessed each sword with holy water.

Following the mass, all in attendance went downstairs to enjoy a dinner prepared by members of Ware Knights of Columbus Council 183 with help from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Council 11080.

Ciukaj thanked his fellow Knights for their help with this event, as well as his wife, Jean, who arranged the flowers in the sanctuary and hall.

"She's my rock," he said.

Grand Knight Wally Connor of Council 11080 gave a presentation about S.O.N.G.'s (Supporting Orphans Nationally and Globally) efforts to help orphaned children in Ukraine.

Connor and his wife Michele formed S.O.N.G. in 1998 to help children living in orphanages in Siberia. As the nonprofit organization grew, the Connors began helping orphans around the world, as well as children in the foster care system in the commonwealth.



District Friar Rev. Piotr Pawlus prepares to bless the swords with holy water with the help of Master of the Fourth Degree of the Massachusetts Knights of Columbus, Stanley Ciukaj, during a special mass at St. Mary's Church last Sunday. (TURLEY PUBLICATIONS PHOTOS BY PAULA OUIMETTE)

"My heart was really bothered," he said, when he learned about the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. "Some of the children we helped years ago were probably fighting in the Russian army."

By teaming up with Aerial Recovery Group from Tennessee, the Connors and S.O.N.G. volunteers have helped close to 5,000 orphaned children in

Ukraine, along with 89 animals.

Connor said the Knights have also been key in bringing aid to those in need during this conflict.

Following the presentation, Ciukaj presented certificates to the Honor Guard, followed by a benediction and the singing of "God Bless America".



Fourth Degree Knights have their swords blessed.

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Quaboag students rehearse for 'Camp Omigosh'

By Haileigh Swistak
Student Intern

WARREN – Students at Quaboag Regional Middle High School are preparing for their spring show, "Camp Omigosh", written by Wade Bradford.

The middle schoolers and high school freshmen are hard at work perfecting their performance with the help of senior directors Luisa Feeney, Ari Masterjohn, Joey Landon and stage director Lucy Sanelli.

Shipped off to a mysterious summer camp by his mother, Conner (played by sophomore Lucas Nimtz) and his new friends start experiencing strange happenings on the camp's grounds.

Could it have anything to do with the unsolved death of a boy named Billy 30 years ago? Is his ghost trying to communicate with the present kids at camp?

This play is packed with sci-fi, suspense, and comedy that is enjoyable for all ages. The cast and crew have been working tirelessly with rehearsals twice a week to make this show a success.

You can see the performance of "Camp Omigosh" on Friday, June 9 and Saturday, June 10 at 7 p.m. in the School's auditorium, 284 Old West Brookfield Road.



"Camp Omigosh" will be performed Friday, June 9 and Saturday, June 10 at 7 p.m. in Quaboag Regional Middle High School's auditorium. (COURTESY IMAGE)

St. Joseph's Parish to hold strawberry festival

NORTH BROOKFIELD – St. Joseph's Parish, 296 North Main St., will hold its 30th annual strawberry festival on Saturday, June 17 from 5-7 p.m. in their church hall.

The menu includes baked ham, homemade baked beans, homemade potato salad, homemade cole slaw, rolls, coffee, water and strawberry shortcake. The meal will be served family style and take-out is also available.

Tickets are \$15 per adult and \$7 per child aged 5-10 years old. Tickets are available after Masses or by calling the rectory at 508-867-6811.

Massachusetts Sen. Anne Gobi announced as Director of Rural Affairs

BOSTON - Gov. Maura Healey and Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll announced today that Massachusetts Sen. Anne Gobi will join their administration as the new director of rural affairs in the executive office of economic development.

Gobi will start in her new role June 5. She will be tasked with conducting a review of all state grant opportunities, including the Community One Stop for Growth, to ensure that barriers for rural and small towns are mitigated and will host dedicated office hours for rural towns to receive technical assistance to identify and explore grant opportunities. She will also serve as a member of the Rural Policy Commission, which advocates for the vitality of rural communities as well as legislative and policy solutions that address rural needs.

"We are building an economy that benefits all communities, businesses, and people in Massachusetts, particular those that are too often overlooked and underrepresented like rural and small towns," said Healey. "Senator Gobi's fierce advocacy of rural equity, agricultural and small businesses, and conservation initiatives makes her the ideal candidate to help our

rural towns across the state succeed."

"Senator Gobi brings to this new role deep knowledge of the challenges that rural and small-town economies face and decades of experience serving the people of our state," said Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll. "We are excited to welcome her to our administration and look forward to working with her to better reach rural communities and help them grow."

"Massachusetts' rural and small towns have such an important role to play in our state's economy and I'm excited to have a true champion of these communities join Team Massachusetts," said Economic Development Secretary Yvonne Hao. "Senator Gobi has the knowledge, experience, and passion required to connect with the needs of rural towns and plug these municipalities into our state's many economic development resources."

"I am thrilled to take on this important role and grateful to the Healey-Driscoll Administration for elevating our rural communities," said Gobi. "While I will miss the Legislature, I look forward to continuing to work for the needs of small towns throughout the Commonwealth as their advocate in state government."

All Wheels Show returns May 31

PALMER – Palmer Motorsports Park, 58 West Ware Road, is hosting their annual All Wheel Show on Wednesday, May 31 from 4-7 p.m.

Gates open at 3 p.m.

Proceeds from the show will benefit the Palmer Food Share and the Jubilee Cupboard Food Pantry of Ware. Entry fee is \$5 per person or a non-perishable food item.

All cars, trucks, motorcycles, tractors, or anything

with wheels, can be entered in the show. There will be no burnouts, or excessively loud cars or motorcycles.

Lizak Bus will be providing on-track tours. There will be a donation bucket on the bus to benefit the food pantries.

Bruce Marshall of Classic Hits 97.7 will be on site with a remote broadcast and after the event, Sarat Lincoln will be delivering donations to the food pantries.

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Dazed for dahlias

Do you ever get sidetracked? Well, last night I went into my mudroom to assess my dahlia collection in preparation for planting. Besides housing baskets and buckets of dahlia tubers, the mudroom contains a wood box, lots of coats and shoes, and when the temperatures dip into the negative realm, it may house a chicken or two.

Our big, upright freezer is also in the mudroom. Why were the floorboards in front of the door wet?

Upon inspection, the freezer wasn't at temperature and the contents had partially thawed. Just what I needed on a Saturday night.

After the mess was cleaned up and what could be salvaged was, I rewarded myself with some alone-time with my dahlias.

I chuckle when I think that the last time I wrote about dahlias I had four varieties. I'm at 10 in two short years - oops, make that 11 after the tuber I purchased at the plant sale yesterday.

It's hard not to become a collector when they come in so very many flower types and sizes, from a mere couple of inches to the size of a dinner plate.

Read on for a refresher course on dahlia growing, and if you become inspired to purchase a tuber or two, rest easy with the cost; you'll be giving the offspring away before you know it!

Plant dahlias in full sun, in fertile soil amended sparingly with compost and organic fertilizers. Most tubers are planted about 3 inches deep and 1-3 feet away from one another, depending on plant size. Providing enough air circulation between plants will help keep diseases at bay.

Most gardeners install a stake at planting time and attach the dahlia to it as it grows, beginning when it is a foot tall. Subsequent ties are made every 18 inches or so depending on variety. Without the use of stakes, large flowers will likely topple in the wind and rain, sometimes taking a good portion of the plant with it.

Pinching dahlias is another good practice. When the plant has three sets of leaves gently remove its growth tip.

This will encourage more branching and inevitably more flowers. Once blooming starts it is important to cut away spent blooms on a regular basis; tubers will grow stronger because of it.

Dahlias thrive on sufficient moisture, especially since they are shallow rooted. Furnish them with one inch per week during active growth.

As the growing season draws to a close, hold back on water and any supplemental fertilization you have been providing. This will give the tubers a chance to harden off before they are removed from the ground.

Dig up dahlia tubers either just prior to or soon after frost hits. Leave a small portion of stem attached to the tubers - it is a great place to adhere a label.

Take it from me - it is easy to forget a name over the winter months!

Soil should be eased off the tubers with a spray of water before placing in storage. Choose a location to overwinter your tubers that maintain 40-50 degrees temps and 90% humidity.

These conditions will keep them dormant and healthy until it is time to replant. Many people have good luck using a cold basement or root cellar; small quantities of tubers can

See GARDEN | PAGE 7

- opinion -



Guest Column

Planning for safe celebrations for your teen

By Abaigeal Duda

It's prom and graduation celebration season, which for teens can be both exciting and worrisome.

For parents, this may also be true, but for different reasons.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration suggests that car crashes are a leading cause of death for teens and that one out of three crashes involve alcohol or other substances. In rural areas like ours, when these tragedies occur, they are felt by the entire community. How can we support our young people so that they create positive memories of these milestones?

There are some practical steps that you can take as a parent, or caregiver:

The most important and effective is also typically the most overlooked: Have an honest conversation. How do you feel about underage drinking and other substance use?

If you aren't aware of the negative effects on the development of young brains, it's worth understanding that there can be long-term consequences.

One Choice (saying no to all substances) has a good overview at tinyurl.com/5jzsyhtd. Studies show that encouraging young people to make choices that support their health, wellbeing and long-term success rather than trying to scare them with horror stories to avoid - is the most effective approach.

People tend to overestimate how many other people use substances like alcohol and other drugs. In the Quaboag Hills region, the Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance conducts surveys in our school districts, and it is true of all schools and grade levels that most students are making choices not to use substances.

If you aren't sure how to start a conversation with a child or teen, get examples from "Talk. They Hear You" at samhsa.gov. Another way to have a conversation about driving expectations is to Take "The Pledge," an agreement between caregivers and teens

available at the Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance website at qhsua.org.

Know who is driving your teen. The night of prom or graduation, will another teen be driving?

A parent? An older sibling? A hired vehicle and driver? In our area, we do not have the same transportation options that are available in more urban areas.

If a teen suddenly realizes that his/her/their ride has been drinking, calling for a cab or rideshare is very unlikely to be a viable option.

No matter who is supposed to drive, make sure that your child knows that you are available to take a call if there is any question about transportation safety or any other questionable situation that may arise. You might agree upon a text or emoji to send to you to let you know that you are needed so that he/she/they don't have to have an awkward conversation that might be overheard about unsafe behavior.

If you are hosting a graduation party at your home for your teen, make it a "dry" party.

Be sure to familiarize yourself with the Massachusetts' underage drinking laws known as the Social Host Law. If underage drinking does happen on your property, you could face criminal or civil liability charges.

Make a list of fun activities with your teen and his/her/their friends that they would enjoy doing together to create positive memories that will last a long, healthy lifetime.

Healthy celebrations are celebrations worth remembering.

Abaigeal Duda is STOP Act Grant project director at the Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance. For more information, or if you or a loved one needs help for substance abuse, call the statewide helpline at 1-800-327-5050 (TTY: 1-800-439-2370); the phone line is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can also go to hub.helpline.org/findehelp.

Concerts on the Common return July 7

BROOKFIELD - Concerts on the Common return on Friday nights from 6-8 p.m., starting with Bad News Jazz on Friday, July 7

Other concerts include Sunshine & Blue Skies on July 14 (with a special performance by Henry the Juggler at 5 p.m.); Cold Train on July 21 (Roadside Delights Food Truck will be there); Karaoke on the Common

with Jammin Jablanski on July 28 (come and show your talent, all ages welcome); The Great Escape, Journey tribute band on Aug. 4 (please arrive early at this popular concert, Black Sheep BBQ food truck will be there); 4 Ever Fab, The Beatles tribute band, on Aug. 11; and country band CobbleStone Road on Aug. 18.

OPINION PAGE/ LETTERS POLICY

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Quaboag Current Newspaper

Judith Kalaora presents story of first woman soldier

By Eric Goodhart
Correspondent

RUTLAND – Last month, the Rutland Historical Society and the Rutland Cultural Council sponsored a very special performance at the Rutland Public Library written and performed by Judith Kalaora the Founder and Artistic Director of “History at Play” a theatrical organization with a highly respected national reputation and a growing international one.

Her vision in 2010 was to bring to life the lives of influential but sometimes forgotten figures in history, particularly women.

Following an introduction by Rutland’s Historical Society President, Sheila Jenkins, to an audience of history lovers, Miss Deborah Sampson, played by Kalaora, came into view. Instantly, the audience realized they were about to witness history in the making. Deborah was dressed in the kind of garments worn by women of modest means replete with undergarments under a wool gown. She wore a tight corset molding her feminine form with the obligatory bustle in the back to add fullness and support the layers of drapery underneath. Her lace petticoat was visible in the front.

For over an hour Miss Sampson spoke without a break or word out of place. She would change her clothes three times effortlessly while still engaging the audience with her personal story. A story that was quite remarkable as everyone would soon learn.

Deborah Sampson was born in 1760

in Plympton. One of seven children to parents, who were descendants of pre-eminent Puritan leaders. Her father was related to Myles Standish and her mother was the granddaughter of Governor William Bradford.

That lineage was no advantage in this new world, however. The Sampson family struggled financially. When her father failed to return from a sea voyage, her mother, with little source of income, could not take care of the family. She was forced to place her children in different households. At age 10, Deborah found herself farmed out as an indentured servant to Deacon Thomas, a farmer in Middleborough with a large family. Deborah was their servant until age 18 at which time her obligation was fulfilled.

Though not content with her status, she made the best of it. She told how she would learn as much as she could from the boys, who were being taught in the local school house. She learned to read and write quite well, in fact. She worked on the farm, but also became an accomplished seamstress by the time she was 13. Having done a good job to educate herself she even taught school at age 20 during summer sessions in 1779 and 1780 and doing her weaving at night.

In 1782, the Revolutionary War, which began in 1775, raged on. Besides being intelligent, independent and ambitious, Deborah was seeking adventure. This was her country and she learned through her own experience the value of being independent and self-reliant. Like many soldiers in the Continental Army, she was inspired by the written words of

Thomas Paine.

Since it was a criminal offense in those days to pretend to be a man in uniform regardless of the reason, Deborah disguised herself as a man named Robert Shurtleff. She joined the Fourth Massachusetts Regiment and fought in several battles including the siege of Yorktown. Wounded multiple times, she was always fearful of being discovered. She once went in the woods and used her skills to sew her wound after removing the musket ball that caused it.

She often volunteered to be a scout in front of the infantry to remain separate from the main army as much as possible. As Robert Shurtleff, she received commendations and rank. However, after Yorktown she came down with a fever and put under medical care at West Point. The doctor taking care of her soon realized that, Sergeant Robert Shurtleff was a woman, not a man. Fortunately, he did not tell anyone. But he was able to help get her honorably discharged, as a man.

Deborah went on to marry and had three children with her husband. She did not receive a military pension until two years after the war when she met Paul Revere. Revere was an accomplished silversmith in Boston who attempted to ride to Concord April 19, 1775 to warn the citizens the British were coming. Unfortunately, the British arrested him in Arlington within an hour.

Posthumously, Revere lives on in history because a poet named Longfellow in 1860 took poetic license and wrote “listen my children and you shall hear, the midnight ride of Paul Revere.” It rhymed. Deborah Sampson and others of her day did not know how famous Revere would become. But she appreciated the connections he had.

Revere was her hero because he shared Deborah’s true heroic contributions during the war with Massachusetts governor, John Hancock and was



Judith Kalaora, founder and artistic director of “History at Play,” portrays the first woman soldier Deborah Sampson.

able to get her a state pension for her rank and service of \$4 a month. In 2023 dollars, that would be \$48 a month.

In 1785 Deborah became a very popular speaker in the East often dressed in uniform. She was the first woman to be a regimental soldier in the army and a lecturer in the United States. Though it would be more than a century before women got the right to vote in 1920, no one can dispute that Deborah Sampson’s drive and patriotic commitment to make a difference set off one of the sparks that eventually became a fire leading to independence for all women.

This and other important performances are being performed in towns throughout Massachusetts and the nation year around. Schools, of course, are a terrific venue for them. To check out where and when, people may visit the “Events” page at their website <http://www.historyatplay.com>.



Drawings of Deborah Sampson as a woman and as a soldier. PHOTOS BY ERIC GOODHART

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TRAIN | FROM PAGE 1

Fire Department brought its air compressor trailer to fill the firefighter's air bottles.

Using a rope as their guide, crews assembled up the stairwell to the third floor, following the commands of Martinez, who managed ground operations from the parking lot.

Crew captains gave directions from the floor, offering guidance to firefighters as they navigated the large building on their hands and knees.

Belchertown Captain Jeff Haughey said this the first large-scale training the departments have done together.

Haughey, who has been with the Belchertown Fire Department since 2004 and also teaches at the Fire Academy, said having access to a building of this size provides firefighters with a level of training hard to find anywhere else.

"This is an awesome opportunity to

get in here," he said.

As crew members cleared each room, Haughey explained how the firefighters use the rope to be able to find their way back. In a smoke-filled room, there would be little to no visibility, and it would be easy to get disoriented.

He said a member of the crew acts as an anchor and stays in the hall with the bag of rope, while two firefighters check rooms, making sure to check under beds and in closets and bathrooms.

Once the firefighter's air supply reaches the halfway point, they know its time to retrace their route and exit the building.

"It's a very time consuming and exhaustive search," Haughey said.

After the training, firefighters talked about challenges they faced, and things they could have done differently.



West Brookfield Fire Chief Rich Lapierre, center, directs a Hardwick firefighter through a sweep while Gabriel Allen, right, watches. (TURLEY PUBLICATIONS PHOTOS BY PAULA OUIMETTE)



Crew members deal with an air supply issue.



A West Brookfield firefighter puts on her self-contained breathing apparatus.



Fire departments from Ware, West Brookfield, Hardwick and Belchertown used the former Baystate Mary Lane Hospital for a large-scale training on Sunday.

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Food policy council looks at short and long-term needs

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

WARE – Members of the Quaboag Valley Food Policy Council met for the second time since its formation, and began brainstorming the Council's vision and mission statements.

At the April 19 meeting, Project Coordinator for Community Health Emily Coderre had members break down into small discussion groups to come up with ideas for the statements, before coming back together as a whole to share their ideas.

"We will draft a vision and mission and bring it back to everybody for further input," she said.

Coderre explained that a vision statement is what the Council wants to accomplish in a perfect world, and the mission is more action oriented.

"A mission statement is concise, outcome oriented and inclusive," she said.

The Council was divided into two groups; in-person attendees and remote attendees.

Coderre asked them to create a vision for where they see the Council in the next year, three years and

even five years.

For the first year, members said they would like to identify the nutritional needs and food security issues people in the Quaboag Valley are faced with.

"Wouldn't it be great if we had a really good picture of food efforts going on?" asked Gail Gramarossa of the Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance. "Where are gaps?"

One member of the Council, Jean Smith, said she sees the need in the towns her food pantry services each day.

"Every day I have new families calling me because they are in trouble," Smith said.

Smith's food pantry covers three towns that are located miles from the nearest grocery store, limiting the availability of fresh and healthy food.

Not everyone has the means to travel either, she said.

"There's no public transportation, no public housing, or you're a senior living in a housing authority. There's one bank and two stop lights in three towns. If they want to grocery shop, it's 11 miles one direction or 12 the other," she said. "I'm fighting every day to keep it going."

Government assistance, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, can offer relief for people on fixed or low incomes, but many are unaware if they qualify or not.

The amount of SNAP benefits people receive each month has fluctuated greatly since the start of the pandemic as well, making it difficult to rely on.

One issue, Smith said, was giving too many SNAP benefits during COVID.

"It's a yo-yo," Smith said. "They cut it back so far [after COVID] that it's less than they were getting pre-COVID."

With the cost of groceries and other necessary items going up, along with the cost of utilities and medicine, seniors especially can't afford to meet their basic needs.

"They're living on what I'm giving them," Smith said. "The food pantry is supposed to supplement what they can't afford to buy. Now they rely on me...I've basically become their entire food budget and that's sad."

Smith shared some ways she has pushed back against this rising need in her towns, by contacting legislators, and also organizing a growing program with the local school along with a canned soup drive.

High school students grow plants in greenhouses and then give them out to bring home and plant. Whatever that plant produces, the grower gives to the food pantry.

"We get a lot of fruits and vegetables all summer long with that program," Smith said.

Smith has also sent postcards to legislators, advocating for change.

Group members also looked at creating connections between food sources and building a volunteer base in the coming years.

"We should have a good picture of what is available now," Council member and Senior Outreach Program Coordinator with the Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation Carol Zins said.

Members also talked about hosting cooking classes that focus on creating healthy and affordable meals, as well as increasing community dinners, similar to the Knights of Columbus's monthly meal delivery program.

The nutritional and food needs will need to be understood, as well as the barriers preventing people from access.

Farmers markets are another way to bring fresh food directly to residents.

For the mission statement, Coderre asked the members why the Council exists, who will it serve and how it will serve them.

Gramarossa said this is the first time this kind of group has been organized in the Quaboag Valley and she saw it as an opportunity to speak for the needs of the region.

"This is a chance to represent this often-overlooked area," she said. "They [the Council] can be the voice."

The focus of the mission would be to connect people to existing resources, access to healthy food, share best practices among food pantries and improve on what already works.

"We have both the urgent needs, as well as some longer term improvements to work on," Gramarossa said.

The next hybrid meeting of the QVFPC will be held on Wednesday, May 10 from 9-10 a.m. at E2E, 79 Main St., with Zoom access available.

About QVFPC

The Quaboag Valley Food Policy Council is funded through a grant received by the Town of Ware in partnership with Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation, covering the towns of Ware, Belchertown, Palmer, Monson, Wales, Holland, Brimfield, Warren, Brookfield, West Brookfield, North Brookfield and East Brookfield.

The Council is open to all, and everyone is welcome to join in the discussion.

For more information, people may email the Council Coordinator, Caitlin Geaghan at cgeaghan@townofware.com or Project Coordinator for Community Health, Emily Coderre at ecoderre@townofware.com.

Second Chance Golf Tournament at Cold Spring Country Club

EAST BROOKFIELD - Second Chance Animal Services 11th annual Charity Golf Tournament will be held at Cold Spring Country Club in Belchertown on Monday, July 24. The event offers golfers a great golf outing on a world-class course and will benefit programs assisting the underserved at Second Chance Community Veterinary Hospitals in Springfield, Worcester, Southbridge, and North Brookfield.

Golfers will be treated to a box lunch and banquet dinner, a bucket of balls for the range and a commemorative gift. The course and team challenges will include prizes for closest to the pin, longest drive, closest to the line, a yellow ball contest and more. The hole in one contest offers a chance to win a spa from Teddy Bear Pools. There will also be raffles and a small silent auction which will begin online a week before the tournament.

Second Chance is inviting local businesses to partner with them in the fight to end pet homelessness through access to veterinary care. The nonprofit is welcoming sponsors for the Second Chance Golf Tournament and is accepting donations for the tournament silent auction and raffle. Information on sponsorships and item donations can be found at secondchanceanimals.org/events/golf/.

Those interested in golfing can purchase tickets online at secondchanceanimals.org/events/golf/. Individuals and foursomes are welcome. Second Chance encourages golfers to purchase tickets early. Check in will be at 9 am and the tournament will commence with a shotgun start at 10 am.

GARDEN | FROM PAGE 4

be stored in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator.

Placing tubers in damp peat moss, saw dust, shredded leaves, or even ventilated plastic bags will help to prevent shriveling. Be sure to check on your tubers every couple of weeks throughout the off-season.

Should you see shriveling, mist them with clean water and re-dampen the medium in which they were placed. If you see mold, bring down the temperature and humidity level.

Some dahlias like to get a jump-start on the season by prestarting dahlias indoors.

We have done this occasionally at Old Sturbridge Village and I am always amazed at just how fast the plants grow, and how quickly they outgrow their pots and become leggy. If you attempt it, four weeks prior to the last spring frost would be soon enough.

It's my hope that you will venture into the land of dahlia growing and love it as much as I do!

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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FESTIVAL | FROM PAGE 1

were found as one continued on the right.

Over on the left was a tiny space where the town's First Congregational Church was selling cold quarts of its famous asparagus chowder. As the church is just across the street, they put up a tent and there was lots of room there to be served hot cups of chowder and sit down and enjoy the dish.

There were other food vendors, too many to mention, but all seeming to do well with happy patrons.

Cider and wines may not be a regional "industry" but are produced locally.

Agronomy Vineyard brought wines as did Hardwick Vineyard. West Brookfield's own Ragged Hill Cider brought its beverage.

The Brookfields and surroundings are well represented by service and charitable organizations that were much in evidence.

S.O.N.G. is not about music but stands for Supporting Orphans Nationally and Globally. Michele and Wally Connor have been working tirelessly for the benefit of orphans for over three decades.

Currently, Ukraine is where the most need is. Wally has gone over there several times to assist in support and rescue efforts.

S.O.N.G. is having its usual calendar raffle. It's not Powerball, but a much worthier cause. There is a shop on North Street in Ware if you did not get to the festival.

The West Brookfield Rescue Squad was there. Three young ladies in uniform had T-shirts on sale, because the ambulance is not without cost.

The Rotary Club of the Brookfields, spanning, from Warren to Spencer, were pleasant to talk to. Dedicated to service, this year they are providing group homes.

The team from the East Quabbin Land Trust was there. Driving on Main Street just east of the Common, you can at times see them working on the "Pocket Park" as it is taking shape.

It is such that the old indigenous name of Massequoockummis could be used again. Try saying Massequoockummis three times fast.

West Brookfield may not have a national seashore, but it has a gem of a pond in Lake Wickaboag. It also has a stalwart band working for it.

A couple of members were at their table to inform folks as to how to create and maintain lakeshore vegetative buffers.

Also, there is the Upper Quaboag River trail guide that is available. There is much to see and do along our river on what is the Blue Trail.

The Quaboag Historical Society was there and one thing West Brookfield and the other Brookfields as well as Warren and New Braintree have is history, more than



(TURLEY PUBLICATIONS PHOTOS BY RICHARD MURPHY)

Joy of Beans Coffee's young crew gets to work helping customers.

360 years of it.

If you did not make it to the festival, there is a museum commemorating the regional story. Housed in the old train depot, the Historical Society's museum is open the second and fourth Saturdays each month from 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Melissa was the enthusiastic volunteer at the Second Chance Animal Services table. Second Chance is an organization that has grown over the years to provide services from adoption to veterinary care in the Brookfields, Southbridge and Springfield.

If you got a dog from Second Chance, or elsewhere, maybe you want to give it a treat. Sue from Sir Barks-A-Lot was close by with her popular dog treats.

If West Brookfield is not the New England capital of coffee, it is not for want of effort by Joy Hinton. Her Joy of Beans coffee has 30 varieties from 20 countries.

The 10 East Main St. shop will be hosting a grand opening on June 10.

Practitioners of varied crafts were present during the day.

On the field together were the tents of ClayWorks Pottery Studio and Workshop13. Both are spaces located in Ware, and we spoke to potter Emily Rodrigue about what happens at the two venues.

ClayWorks is a fully equipped pottery studio offering classes to all ages and studio space to established ceramic artists. At Workshop13 one can learn and practice different arts from painting and pottery as well as classes in different maker crafts.

At the far end of the Common there were a few exhibitors by themselves. They had their share of visitors



Dave and the Slik Pickers kept toes tapping.

who made the trek.

One of the group was a school operating in West Brookfield that, though a long-term resident, I had never heard of, Wildwood Acres Farm and Forest School.

The school is not a full day curriculum, but Wildwood Acres is intended to supplement home schooling. The school provides socialization opportunities and also "teaches children to connect with nature, to challenge their endurance, to solve real world problems, to work in a team, to respect all life, and to be responsible."

Cara and Michael started Free Living Farm in Brookfield, but that was not the beginning of the story. It has been a long odyssey commencing in California and sojourning in other places such as Maine.

The farm is now up in Petersham, but we are glad they are back with their wonderful food raised with deep organic and holistic methods.

The day got wetter but the brave musical acts, Slik Pickers, Livestock and Spooner Well were not deterred.

So how could one rate the day? It was easier to get a parking space as the rain continued, but there were folks still browsing and eating until the end.

Amy Dugas, who supervises the event, was not downcast. She reported that all the asparagus and asparagus crowns had been sold.

Considering the deluge, that was not a bad outcome. Of course, the usual day is sunny and pleasant, and rain is the anomaly.

Let us tell ourselves that as we anticipate the 2024 West Brookfield Asparagus and Flower Heritage Festival. We've only 12 months to prepare.

PRESCHOOL | FROM PAGE 1

Find to determine the needs of incoming preschool students.

She said if they switched to four half-day classrooms, they would be able to absorb nine additional special education students throughout the school year. If they had two half-day classes and one full day, they would only have two open slots for special education students.

Esposito said the preschool program is designed to be fluid to meet the needs of the students and community.

With the shift to half-day classes, the program would become a four-day program, with the fifth day being reserved for meetings, keeping the teacher in the classroom with the students.

School Committee Chair Ron Ryel asked for the average number of special education students coming into the program after the school year started.

Esposito said they had a smaller program last year, and have absorbed all of the empty slots. She said they've had over nine students since January of this year.

"Our districts are seeing greater need of our kids coming through," Esposito said. "We have the staff, we have the classroom space, and we have the ability to provide services for our kids, which is what our families need and they're desperately excited that we can do this for them...I'm hopeful that we can continue to provide the high level of service that we've been able to do."

The School Committee voted to approve the shift to a half-day program.

Reorganization

This was the first meeting following the annual town election, and the Committee reorganized appointing Ryel as chair; John Magario as vice-chair; and Tim Canada as secretary. The Committee also welcomed newly elected member Daniel Riendeau.

Regionalization update

Ryel said there has been a lot of con-

versation about regionalization, but the Regional Agreement Amendment Committee (with the towns of Warren and West Brookfield) has not met since December.

"We have been reaching out...with regard to what's been going on with this. We've not gotten the response that we would like [about meetings]," he said.

Ryel said he communicated with the chair of the RAAC, and the next meeting could be scheduled sometime in June. The possible dates are Tuesday, June 13; Wednesday, June 14; or Tuesday, June 28. Wednesday, May 24; Wednesday, June 14; Tuesday, June 13; or Tuesday, June 28.

Student Representative update

Student Representative Olivia Giangrande said the Student Council hosted a breakfast for the staff, as well as a pep rally and gave gifts during Teacher Appreciation Week.

"It was just our way of saying thank you to our staff and teachers, and our administration, for everything they do for our school and Council," she said.

Giangrande said the Student Council held their elections and their new Executive Board is President, Jake Standrowicz; Vice-President, Shannon Toomey; Secretary, Sophia Giangrande; Treasurer, Mary McGeachie; Historian, Olivia Giangrande; Public Relations Officer, Whitney Reno; Spirit Coordinator, Sophie Dufresne; and School Committee Representative, Peyton Cantwell.

Junior Conference will be held for sixth grade students on May 23.

"It's really a great opportunity we like to have for them to get a taste for how Student Council runs," Giangrande said.

Class Day/Field Day will be held on June 2, starting with the Class Day ceremony at the Elementary School, followed by Field Day, consisting of a cookout, games and activities.

Giangrande said the annual Student Council Lock-in will also be held June 2.

School Committee report

Canada said for the past five weeks he's been attending Finance Committee meetings along with interim Superintendent Tim McCormick to discuss the school district's budget.

"It's been a really good dialogue," he said, thanking the Finance Committee for engaging with them, along with the Board of Selectmen.

"It helped everyone get a better feel for what is involved in the school budget," Canada said.

School safety update

McCormick said they reached out to Valley Communication to look at the school district's internal and external security camera setup.

The initial proposal came in at \$67,500. McCormick said this proposal, which has not been negotiated, would upgrade the existing system and add more cameras.

"We have talked about safety with our staff, our students, from day one," McCormick said, including ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) Training and scenario training.

He said the ALICE Training is geared toward each age group of students.

McCormick said they did apply for the school resource officer grant but did not receive it this round.

He suggested a subcommittee be formed to address safety.

"I think this is a big topic and I think that we need multiple voices," McCormick said, including members of the School Committee.

Recognitions

Ryel recognized Canada for his time as chair of the Committee, acknowledging that it is not an easy role, and it requires many hours.

McCormick thanked all of the teachers and staff in recognition of Teacher Appreciation Week.

"Our teachers do a fantastic job with our students so I can't commend them

enough," he said.

McCormick also recognized the Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization and the High School Student Council for organizing special events and meals for the staff.

"I want to thank both of those groups for their efforts," he said.

He also thanked Lyndsey Bennett of Bennett Hill's Event Services for the use of her estate for the prom, saying it was a "great place to have a prom." He thanked the class advisors for making prom a success.

McCormick also thanked Riendeau for DJing at the prom.

MIAA training

McCormick said he and Athletic Director Garrett Kinnen attended the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association's Addressing Hate in School Sports professional development training over two days.

"This is about building capacity for our athletic director dealing with our coaches, our student leaders, and athletics about making our school community more inclusive," he said. "We walked away with some great insight and some great strategies to help us support our student athletes and our teams."

Exit interview survey

School Committee member Tonya Matthews said she removed a question from the exit interview survey asking families about their overall satisfaction with the district administration, as Committee members felt it was too broad.

Committee members approved the amended survey and copies will be available electronically or on paper.

Upcoming events

High School graduation will be held Sunday, June 4 from 2-4 p.m.

Summer Reading kickoff in the Elementary School is June 15. Students get to "shop" for free books and sign up for library cards with the Hoston Free Public Library.

Memorial Day Tribute

Honoring All Who Served and
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Monday, May 29 • Ceremonies & Events

BROOKFIELD

The town will hold Memorial Day events in memory of veterans of all wars, beginning with a parade at 10 a.m., starting at the Brookfield Elementary School, 35 Central St.

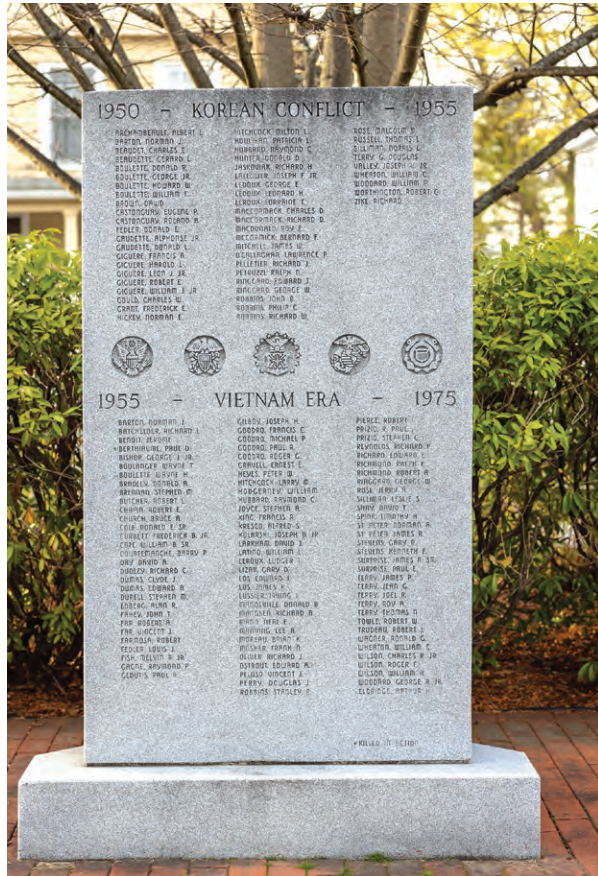
Assembly of all marchers and all units will be in the back parking area of the school. The parade starts at 10 a.m. under the direction of the Brookfield Cultural Council, the Brookfield Selectmen, the Brookfield Fire Department, the Massachusetts State Police and the Brookfield Police Department.

In the event of rain, the parade will be in the school gymnasium.

A program at Soldiers' Monument in Brookfield Cemetery will begin at 10:30 a.m. and a program at the town common will begin at 11:30 a.m.



Brookfield



East Brookfield

EAST BROOKFIELD

Memorial Day will be observed beginning with a ceremony at Podunk Cemetery at 9:30 a.m.

Parade line up is at 10:40 a.m. on Connie Mack Drive, with the parade stepping off at 11 a.m. to Evergreen Cemetery and then Depot Square.

All veterans are invited to ride or march in the parade. Transportation will be provided.

NORTH BROOKFIELD

Memorial Day events will start at 8 a.m. at the Walnut Grove cemetery and conclude at the St. Joseph cemetery.

At 9:15 a.m., a parade will depart from the firehouse and proceed north on Grove Street to the intersection of North Main Street. It will then move south on North Main Street to the intersection of Main, Summer and School Streets.

It will then disperse to participate in activities at the Haston Library.

In the event there be inclement weather a condensed Memorial Day program will be held at 9:30 a.m. in the North Brookfield Congregational Church.

Starting at 10:30 a.m. in the center of town (North Main and School streets) a veteran's color guard and firing squad will march to the Haston Free Public Library where they will be posted. They will be accompanied by members of the North Brookfield Jr./Sr. High School band.

Ceremonies will begin at 10:35 a.m. with opening comments and an invocation given by Frank Potter, the chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post. This will be followed by the long-time tradition of reading Lincoln's Gettysburg Address by the junior class president, Jake Standrowicz.

MEMORIAL DAY | page 10



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Preliminary FY 24 budget increases aid to regional schools

BOSTON – The preliminary state budget of \$56 billion-plus for fiscal year 2024 was approved by members of the House of Representatives on a vote of 156-0 on April 26, following three days of debate on 1,566 amendments that were filed by members.

During floor debate, state Rep. Todd M. Smola (R-Warren, Ranking Member, Committee on Ways & Means) successfully advocated for the inclusion of local initiatives for his regional school districts, including \$7,455,148 in direct education aid to Pathfinder Regional. As well as \$10,338,129 in direct education aid to Quaboag Regional, and \$10,943,768 in direct education aid to Tantasqua Regional.

According to a press release, the seven municipalities located inside of Smola's district (Brimfield, Holland, Palmer, Sturbridge, Wales, Ware, and Warren) will receive a combined total of \$33,776,310 in direct education aid and \$7,343,296 in unrestricted state aid.

This excludes the three regional school districts located in the same area, which will receive a combined total of \$28,737,045 in direct education aid.

Early education

In addition to the \$40 million in Millionaires Tax revenues earmarked for the C3 Stabilization Grants, the House budget allocates another \$450 million in non-surtax funding for this program, for a total of \$490 million in Fiscal Year 2024.

The budget requires the Department of Early Education and Care to report on the current C3 grant formula by Oct. 15, 2023, with recommendations to ensure the formula is producing optimal results for families and communities

with the greatest needs.

The budget also includes \$100 million for childcare provider rate increases, along with \$17.5 million in Head Start grants, \$20 million for childcare resource and referral agencies, \$10 million for EEC provider opportunities, and \$5 million for early childhood mental health grants.

It also provides for \$328.2 million for childcare for children involved with the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Transitional Assistance, along with \$385.6 million for childcare for low-income families.

Massachusetts School Building Authority

The House budget increases the limit on the amount of grants the Massachusetts School Building Authority provides to municipalities to assist with school building construction and renovation projects. For fiscal year 2024, the cap will increase more than \$300 million, from \$800 million to \$1.1 billion.

Higher education

The House budget invests in higher education by providing \$327.3 million for the Commonwealth's state universities, \$337.7 million for community colleges, and \$691.9 million for the UMass system. It also commits \$175 million for scholarship funding.

Housing

The House budget allocates \$180.6 million for the Rental Assistance for Families in Transition program and would offer \$7,000 in assistance per household per year, along with \$173 million for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program.

It also allocates \$110.8 million for programs for homeless individuals, \$10

million for shelter workforce assistance, and \$102 million in subsidies for public housing authorities.

Eviction protection

Under the House spending plan, permanent eviction protections would be put in place for renters who have applications pending for emergency rental assistance and are facing an action for summary process for nonpayment of rent.

In such cases, language included in the budget would prohibit the courts from entering a judgement or issuing an execution until the emergency rental assistance application has been approved or denied.

Another \$50,000 has been earmarked for direct legal assistance for tenants' rights through the University of Massachusetts School of Law.

Human services

The House budget invests \$173 million for health and human service workers' Chapter 257 rates, along with \$112 million for nursing facilities base rate increases. Another \$26 million is set aside for rate increases to targeted providers, including non-emergent ambulance services and substance use disorder treatment.

Public health/mental health

The Bureau of Substance Abuse Services is funded at \$208.2 million in the House budget, which also provides for \$42.9 million for the early intervention program and \$1.25 million for prostate cancer awareness, education and research.

Children's mental health services are funded at \$117.9 million, while \$584.9 million is provided for adult support services and \$5 million is allocated for

a loan forgiveness program for mental health professionals.

Brownfields tax credit

In its budget, the House includes language extending the expiring Brownfields tax credit program through 2028, so that eligible taxpayers may claim a credit for certain costs related to the cleanup of contaminated properties to prepare them for redevelopment opportunities.

The current sunset date would be extended from Aug. 5, 2023, to Aug. 5, 2028, and allow for the credit to be applied to costs incurred on eligible projects between Aug. 1, 1998, and Jan. 1, 2029.

Stabilization fund

The House budget proposes transferring \$525 million in excess capital gains proceeds to the state's stabilization fund, also known as the Rainy-Day Fund, which is designed to protect vital state programs and services from being cut during economic downturns.

The fund is expected to have a balance of \$8.5 billion this year, and the proposed transfer would push the balance to over \$9 billion in the new fiscal year.

The budget now moves to the Senate, which is scheduled to begin debating its own spending proposal prior to Memorial Day. The differences between the House and Senate budgets will then be resolved by a joint conference committee, which will produce a final spending plan to send to Governor Maura Healey.

For additional information please contact Smola by emailing Todd.Smola@mahouse.gov or calling 617-722-2100.

MEMORIAL DAY | from page 9

Continuing the ceremony at 10:50 a.m. in front of the town war memorials (Haston Library) includes speeches by honored guests: the Pastor Nate Hayman, of the North Brookfield Pilgrim Baptist Church, will start and be followed by Jason Petraitis representing the Board of Selectmen.

At 11:05 a.m., the Jr./Sr. School band ensemble will play the hymns of the various military branches in order of founding plus "America the Beautiful".

At 11:25 a.m., the names of deceased veterans of North Brookfield will be read starting from the Civil War to the present conflict in the war against terrorism.

WEST BROOKFIELD

The parade will begin at 9 a.m. at the West Brookfield Elementary School, travel to Pine Grove Cemetery, the West Brookfield Common, Sacred Heart Cemetery and disband at the American Legion Post 244, located at 5 Ware St.

This will be the town's first full parade prior to COVID in 2019.



West Brookfield

The Friends of the West Brookfield Veterans are excited to have the William Diamond Junior Fife and Drum Corps from Lexington back to march this year.

The American Legion, the West Brookfield Fire Department, the West Brookfield Rescue Squad, and Quaboag Youth Baseball will also be joining veterans as they march together, honoring and remembering our fallen.

STURBRIDGE

The Champeau-Vilandre American Legion Post 109 cordially invites all residents, youth groups and a special invitation to veterans to participate in the annual Memorial Day Parade.

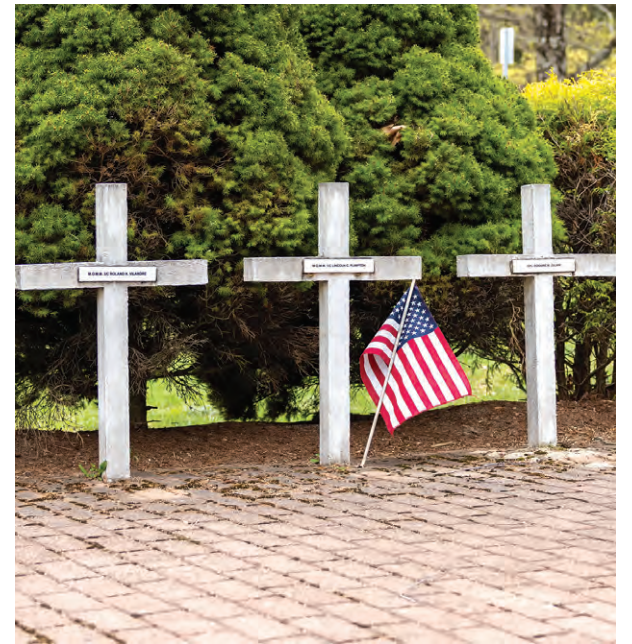
The parade will follow a similar route as in the past, ending on the Town Common. The Honorary Parade Marshal for 2023 is Holland resident Ron Benoit.

Parade start is firm, times thereafter are estimates: 9:30 a.m., parade assembly at the parking lot at the corner of Route 20 and 148; 10 a.m., parade step-off; 10:10 a.m. flag ceremony in front of American Legion on Route 20; 10:20 a.m., parade continues to St. Anne's Cemetery; 10:30 a.m., memorial honors at St. Anne's Cemetery; 10:45 a.m., board buses at Public Safety Complex, Route 131, to North Cemetery; 10:55 a.m., ceremony at Firefighter's monument; 11:15 a.m., memorial honors at North Cemetery; 11:30 a.m., parade continues to Town Hall; 11:45 a.m., flag ceremony at Town Hall; noon, parade continues to Common; 12:10 p.m., memorial honors town Common.


Bus transportation will be provided before the parade, starting at the Town Hall at 9 a.m., Public Safety Complex at 9:10 a.m., Senior Center at 9:20 a.m., American Legion Post at 9:25 a.m. and at the Old Fire Station (Corner of Route 20 and Route 148) for 9:30 a.m.

Bus transportation will be provided during the parade from the Senior Center to the Public Safety Complex, and after the parade from the town Common back to the Old Fire Station with stops at the Public Safety Complex, Senior Center and American Legion Hall.

Any veteran, elderly or disabled person needing a ride for the parade is asked to call the American Legion Post 109 at 508-347-3248 by Friday, May 26.



Sturbridge



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SPORTS

Ware gets better of Quaboag

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WARE—If everything goes according to plan Brady Guimond will be playing at least 50 more games for the Ware High School varsity baseball team.

Brian Guimond, who's currently the varsity baseball coach at Quaboag Regional, is looking forward to watching his oldest son play baseball during the next three years.

The father and son met for the second time in a varsity baseball game last Wednesday night.

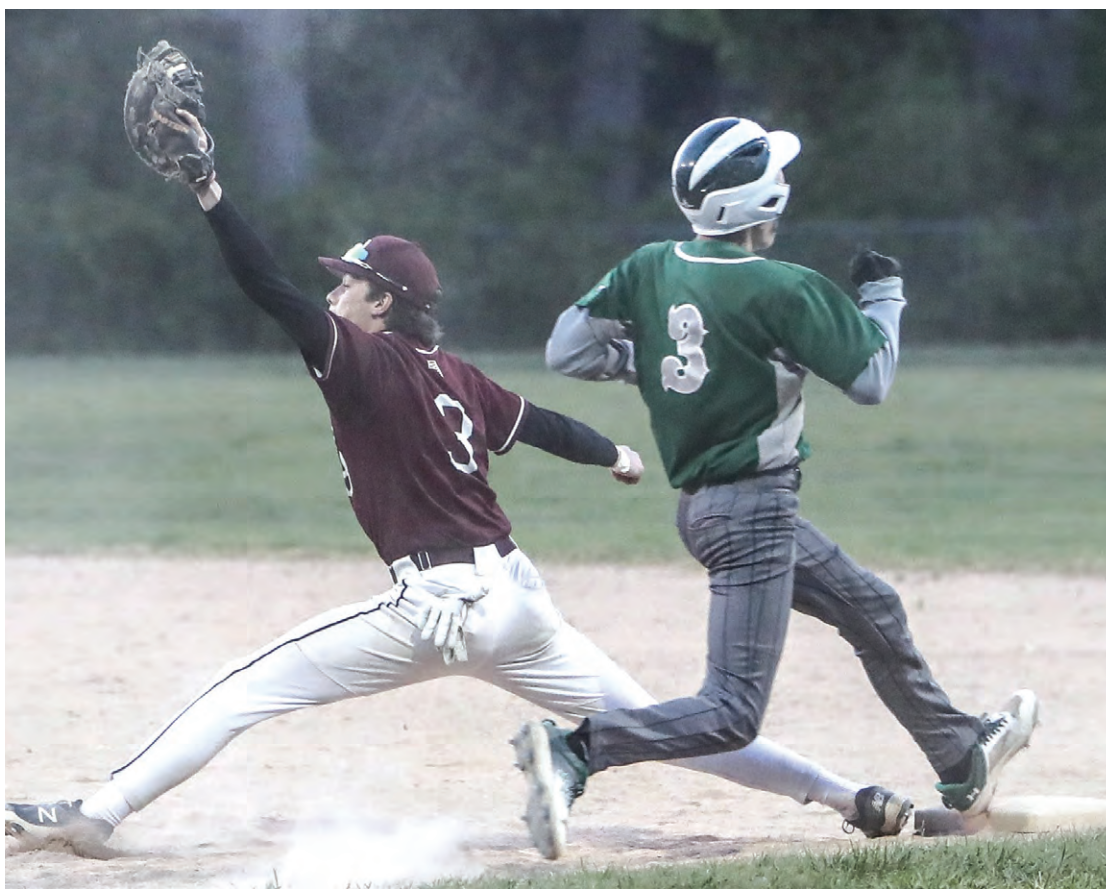
The Cougars, who posted a 5-0 home victory against the Indians a year ago, made the short bus ride to Memorial Field in Ware looking to celebrate another victory.

After taking a 4-0 lead in the bottom of the first inning with a little bit of help from the Cougars defense, Brady Guimond and his teammates were the ones doing the celebrating following an 8-3 non-league win.

"It feels great to beat my father's team for the first time," said Brady Guimond, who was the Indians starting shortstop. "This was a very special night for me and my teammates. My father coached all of us until we got to high school. I could've gone to Quaboag and played baseball for him, but I'm glad that I decided to stay here. All my friends are here, and this is where I feel like I should be."

Brian Guimond, who graduated from Ware High School in 1993, has been coaching the Cougars varsity baseball team for the past 17 years. He's planning to retire at the end of this season. "I love baseball and I love coaching, but it's getting harder and harder for me," Coach Guimond said. "Brady will be a sophomore next year and I would like to watch a few more of his baseball games. Ware plays a lot of home night games, which works out perfectly for me, but I do miss

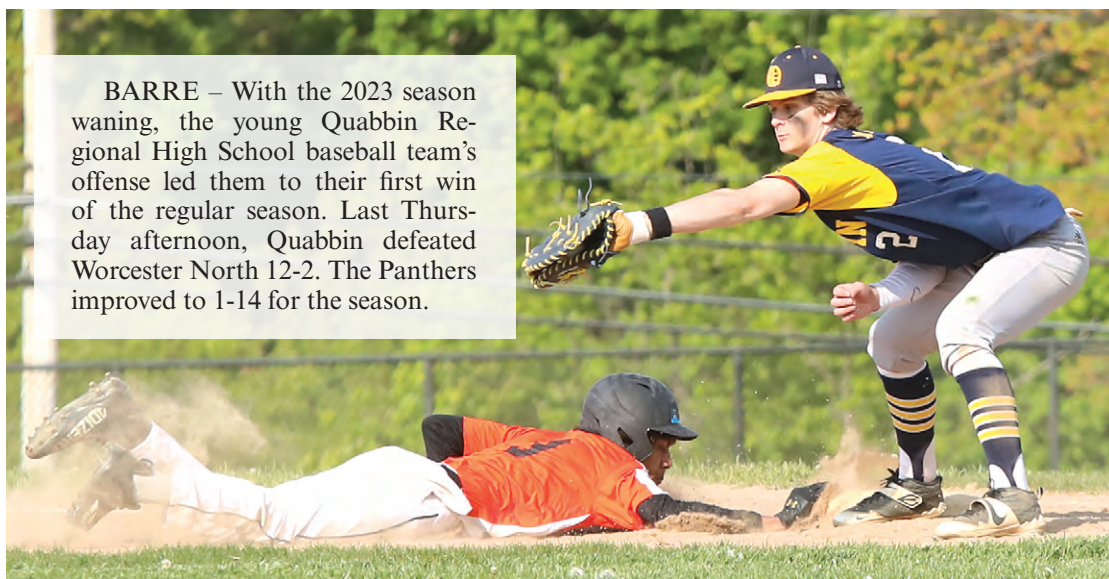
See QUABOAG | PAGE 13



Ryan Fernandez stretches to the extreme at first. PHOTOS BY JACK CASCIO NEAR.SMUGMUG.COM

Panthers notch first win of season

BARRE – With the 2023 season waning, the young Quabbin Regional High School baseball team's offense led them to their first win of the regular season. Last Thursday afternoon, Quabbin defeated Worcester North 12-2. The Panthers improved to 1-14 for the season.



Nick Warburton catches a runner at first base. PHOTOS BY RAY DUFFY



Colton Wells leads off the first with a single.



Matt Sands beats out the play.

Warriors renew rivalry with Falcons

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

FISKDALE—The Minnechaug varsity baseball team outscored Tantasqua, 65-13, in the four games that they played against each other on the diamond between 2016 and 2019.

When the two regional high school's renewed acquaintances after a four year hiatus last Sunday afternoon, the Falcons could have used a few of those runs.

The sophomore duo Miles Blake and Lucas MacNevin combined to hurl a one-hitter, as the Warriors wrapped up the regular season with a 4-0 victo-

ry over the Falcons on a beautiful spring afternoon at Emrich Field in Fiskdale.

"We haven't faced Minnechaug in baseball since before the pandemic started, but prior to that, they would always beat us badly," said Tantasqua head coach Jon Leroux. "We haven't beaten them in a very long time, so this is a very good win for us."

Both baseball teams began their postseason journey this week.

The fifth-seeded Falcons (9-9) were scheduled to face fourth-seeded Westfield in a Western Mass. Class A quar-

See WARRIORS | PAGE 12



Lucas MacNevin slides into second safely. PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

- sports -

WARRIORS | FROM PAGE 11

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Turleysports

Athlete of the Month

NAME: Brasen Sauriol
SCHOOL: Quaboag

In a rivalry game against neighbor Ware, Sauriol would have two hits in the game for the Cougars last week.

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.



terfinal game at Bullens Field in Westfield the following afternoon.

"It's not an easy spot for us to be in, but we haven't played a game since last Tuesday," said Minnechaug head coach Mike Netkovich. "We should have enough pitching for the Western Mass. tournament.

Sophomore righthander Ethan Purcell was slated to be the Falcons starting pitcher in the quarterfinal game.

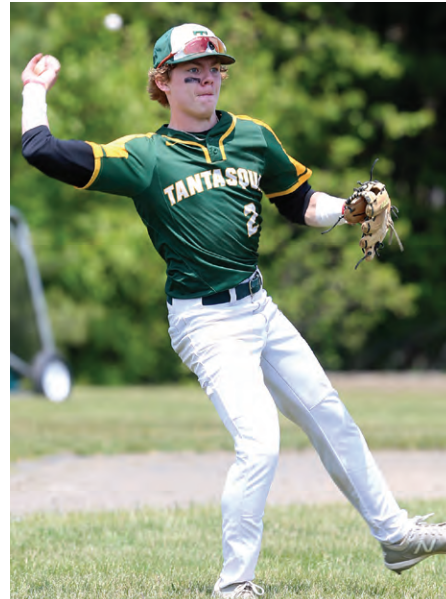
Junior righty Jake Lowe did a very good job of saving the Falcons pitching staff by going the distance against Tantasqua.

"Jake gave us a huge boost today," Netkovich said. "He was able to keep us in the game, but the defense made a couple of costly errors behind him."

Lowe allowed four runs (two earned) on six base hits. He only had two strikeouts.

The Warriors (16-2), who scored all four of their runs against Minnechaug during the first three innings, entered the Central Mass. Athletic Directors Association tournament as the third seed. They were scheduled to host sixth-seeded Westborough in a Class A quarterfinal game on Wednesday afternoon.

"This was a very good way for us to end our regular season," Leroux said. "We're now looking forward to playing in the Central Mass. tournament on Wednesday."



Colm McGrath makes an off-balance throw to first.

Blake, who was the Warriors starter and winning pitcher against the Falcons, wasn't eligible to start Wednesday's quarterfinal game.

"Miles won't be available to start on Wednesday, but if we have a rainout, he could start on Thursday," Leroux said. "Winning today's game was the only thing that matters. We do have a very good pitching staff."

The hard throwing lefty threw a total of 66 pitches in 4 1/3 innings without allowing any runs or base hits. He struck out 11 of the 17 Falcons batters that he faced. He walked one and he hit a couple of batters.

Blake's teammates gave him an early



Devin Krochmalnyck fires over to second. PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

lead to protect.

"The boys helped me out by putting some early runs on the board," said Blake, who hasn't lost a game so far this season. "I just went out there and threw strikes."

Tantasqua junior third baseman Colm McGrath, who walked leading off the bottom of the first, scored the first run following a throwing error. Senior Devin Krochmalnyck, who wound up at second base on the error, scored when senior catcher Henry Blake delivered an RBI single into right field.

Sophomore right fielder Chace Fretette also had a two-out RBI single in the second giving the home team a 3-0 advantage.

Henry Blake, who's planning to play college baseball at MCLA next year, drove home another run in the following frame with a ground ball out to the pitcher.

Miles Blake has enjoyed having his older brother be his catcher the past two seasons.

"Henry is a great catcher and it's awesome having him back there," Miles said. "He has really helped me out a lot during the last couple of years."

Henry's younger brother, who struck out 10 of the first 11 batters that he faced, experienced a little bit of control trouble with two outs in the top of the fourth inning.

Minnechaug junior catcher Vince Chiarizio and junior third baseman Matt Nordstrom were both hit by pitches. Then senior first baseman Owen Gasteyer drew a walk, which loaded the bases.

Following a mound visit by Tantasqua pitching coach Sam Knox, the next batter hit a foul pop up caught by Henry Blake ending the Falcons rally.

"We weren't able to execute at the plate in today's game," Netkovich said. "We just didn't put the ball in play enough. We didn't make the adjustments against their pitchers."

Miles Blake has verbally committed to join the Northeastern University baseball team in a couple of years. The Huskies head coach is Mike Glavine, whose brother, Tom, is a member of the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York.

MacNevin, who had a pair of hits at the plate, replaced Blake on the mound with one out in the fifth.

After MacNevin, who's a righty, struck out five of the first seven batters that he faced, junior Ryan Atkin, who was a defensive replacement in the previous inning, ended the Warriors no-hit bid with a single into right field with two outs in the seventh. Then senior Frankie Graziano, who was also a defensive replacement, walked before the next batter grounded out to third ending the ballgame.

Both baseball teams will be playing in the state tournament, which begins next week."



Lefty Miles Blake delivers a pitch.

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Hall of Fame Classic teams announced

SPRINGFIELD – The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame announced the field of teams for the Basketball Hall of Fame Classic at the MassMutual Center on Saturday, Dec. 16. Florida Atlantic, whose 2022-23 season culminated in a Final Four berth, will join UMass, West Virginia, and St. Bonaventure in an exciting doubleheader.

Saturday, Dec. 16

UMass vs. West Virginia

Florida Atlantic vs. St. Bonaventure

"We are thrilled to welcome these four teams to Springfield in December for what is sure to be an exciting doubleheader," said John L. Doleva, President and CEO of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame. "Since the City of Springfield is the birthplace of basketball, we look forward to providing a unique experience to the teams and their

fans which will include a visit to the Hall of Fame."

The Basketball Hall of Fame Classic is one event in the Hall of Fame's series of collegiate events, which continues to grow in an effort to celebrate the game outside the museum walls. The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame is proud to continue its relationship with LEARNFIELD for sponsorship representation of its portfolio of collegiate events and Position Sports in an event operations, content and communications capacity.

Tickets for the 2023 Basketball Hall of Fame Classic will go on sale Friday, June 2 via massmutualcenter.com and the MassMutual Center Box Office. Game times and television broadcast details will be released at a later date. For more information, please visit hoophall.com.

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Turley Publications sports department has recently joined Instagram. You can find our account by searching "turleysports." We will regularly feature samples of photos that you will see in our publications on a weekly basis. Please follow and share with your

friends and loved ones. We will be featuring photos from all 11 of our sports sections, but as always, you can see all the photos that appear by subscribing to your local paper or picking up a copy in your community.

- sports -

Panthers complete the walk-off against Gardner

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

BARRE—Two weeks after the Quabbin varsity softball team celebrated their first victory of the regular season with a blowout win against the Gardner Wildcats, the second meeting between the Mid-Wach League rivals was a much closer affair.

The Lady Panthers, who were trailing, 5-1, entering the bottom of the fourth inning, battled back on senior day for an exciting 6-5 walk off victory over the Lady Wildcats, last Thursday afternoon.

Senior catcher Tori Brewer delivered the game winning hit with a single into right field with one-out in the bottom of the seventh inning.

“Tori has been a very consistent hitter all season long,” said Quabbin head coach Chris Nosek. “Every time that she steps into the batter’s box, you always feel like she’s going to deliver a base hit. It was her first game winning hit in the two years that she’s been playing for the varsity softball team.”

The Lady Panthers, who are in the rebuilding process this spring, finished the regular season with a 2-14 record. They were scheduled to host Leicester High School in a non-playoff game on Wednesday afternoon.

Brewer, along with classmates, Brynn Adams, who starts in center field, and Sydney Giorgi, who starts at first base, were honored in a ceremony before the start of the Gardner game.

“All three of our seniors have been outstanding captains this year,” Nosek said. “Each of them bring

something different to the team. We’re really going to miss them next year.”

The score was tied 5-5 entering the bottom of the seventh inning.

With one-out, eighth grader Kherington Deschanes, who was a pinch hitter, began the Lady Panthers rally with a double to center field. Then sophomore right fielder Jordan Blanchard hit a pop-up that landed close to the first base line. Instead of letting the ball roll into foul territory, a Gardner player touched the ball on the line putting runners at the corners. Following a walk to junior Mady Breault, which loaded the bases, Brewer (3-for-4) stepped into the batter’s box and ended the game with a base hit.

Breault, who started the game at second base, wound up as the winning pitcher.

She replaced eighth grader Abby Rogowski in the middle of the circle with no outs in the fourth inning.

The Quabbin varsity softball coach is looking forward to watching Rogowski pitch during the next four years.

“Abby is a self-taught pitcher,” Nosek said. “She has a high ceiling and I’m very excited about what’s going to happen over the next four years. She always challenges herself to be perfect every time that she’s hitting, pitching, and fielding. Our plan for today’s game was to pitch Abby the first three inning and have Mady pitch the final four. They pitched very well in today’s game.”

While Rogowski allowed five runs on four hits, Breault didn’t allow any runs on only three hits. She

retired the final six batters of the game, which gave her teammates the opportunity to make a comeback.

Gardner (1-15) managed to take a 2-0 lead in the top of the first inning.

Quabbin got one of those runs right back in the home half of the inning when junior Meg Doyle hit a ground rule double to center scoring Adams, who walked.

Just like Brewer, Doyle finished the game with three base hits. She needed a triple to hit for the cycle.

The Lady Wildcats scored another run in the second and two more in the fourth inning.

Trailing 5-1, the Lady Panthers began their comeback in the bottom of the fourth with back-to-back RBI singles from Brewer and Adams.

Doyle leadoff the following inning by hitting a towering home run over the centerfield fence closing the gap to 5-4.

With one-out in the sixth inning, Brewer drew a walk and Adams (2-for-3) hit a blooper into right field for a single. Then a pop-up hit by Giorgi was dropped by the second baseman, but because there was only one out, the base umpire had already enforced the infield fly rule. The batter was automatically out, but the base runners can advance at their own risk. Brewer took off towards third base and she wound up scoring the tying run on a throwing error.

Quabbin did strand two runners in scoring position in that frame, but they managed to take the lead for the first time in their final at-bats.

It was a perfect way to end the Lady Panthers senior day.

QUABOAG | FROM PAGE 11

most of their road games. This could’ve been the final father-son match-up.”

Longtime Ware head coach Scott Slattery never had to coach a game against either of his sons. Devin and Dillon Slattery were both outstanding baseball players at Ware High School.

“It would be very difficult for me to coach against my sons,” Coach Slattery said. “Brian is a great guy and he’s probably one of my biggest assets. He coaches the Ware players during the summer. This is a fun rivalry game.”

Brian Guimond and Slattery were teammates on the 1991 Ware baseball team, which defeated Frontier Regional in the Division 3 Western Mass. championship game. The Indians then lost to Norton High School in extra innings in the state finals.

While Ware has already clinched a berth in this year’s Division 5 state tournament, Quaboag is hoping to be one of the top 32 ranked teams, which will automatically qualify for them the Division 5 state tournament.

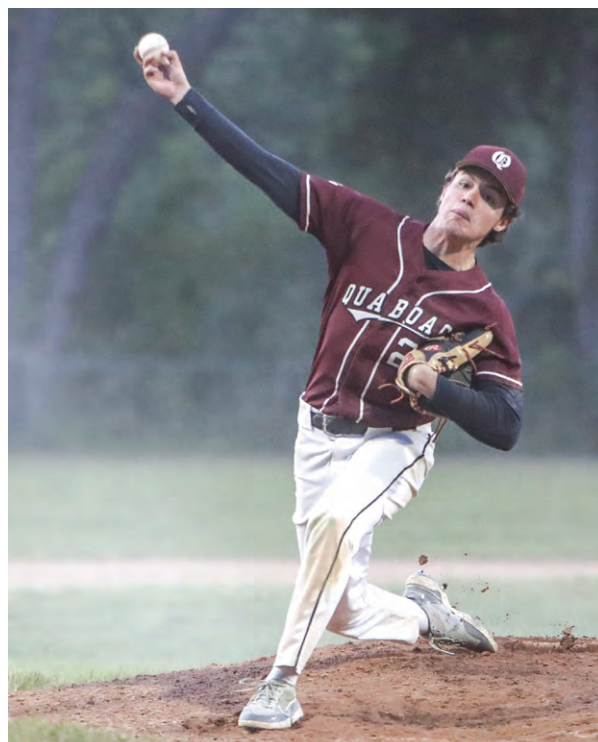
The Cougars (7-9), who are members of the Southern Worcester Country League, were ranked 21st in the latest power rankings. The only other SWCL team in Division 5 is David Prouty.

“This was a very important Division 5 game for us, but we just didn’t play very well” coach Guimond said. “We have three regular season games remaining and we’re hoping to qualify for the state tournament.”

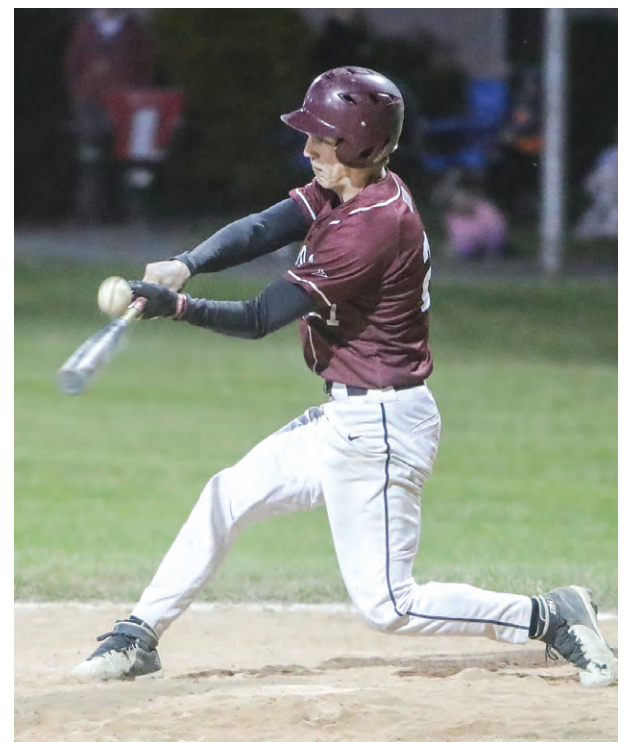
The Indians (14-4), who won their last seven home games, were ranked ninth in the power rankings. They also finished in a three-way tie for first place with Southwick and South Hadley in the Suburban Central league standings.

“Nobody expected us to be 14-4 this year,” Slattery said. “We also get to hang a league title banner in our gym.”

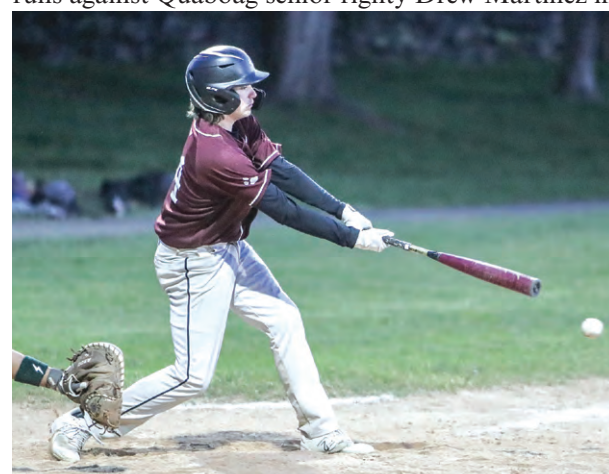
The Indians, who are taking part in the Western Mass tournament this week, scored four unearned runs against Quaboag senior righty Drew Martinez in



Matt Tiberii was in incredible form as he fires from the mound. PHOTOS BY JACK CASCIO NEAR:SMUGMUG.COM



Chase Potvin makes solid contact with this swing.



Brasen Sauriol connects on this swing.

their first at-bats of last Wednesday’s contest, which was played on a cool evening.

Junior John Mumper, who was the Indians starting pitcher, got things started by reaching first base following a fielding error by the shortstop. Then sophomore third baseman Nathan Kaczuwka hit a foul pop-up which wasn’t caught by the first baseman, and he wound up drawing a walk. Junior catcher Dylan Sutkaitis (2-for-3) drove home the game’s first run with a single into left field. Two more runs crossed the plate when junior DH Octavio Cotaj lined a single to left field. Freshman first baseman Kyle Kaczuwka, who also reached base on a fielding error, scored the fourth run on a wild pitch.

“The atmosphere here is a lot different than we’re used to. It was also our first night game of the season,” coach Guimond said. “I told my players all week that they needed to come here ready to play, but it didn’t happen in the first inning. They scored four runs, which put us in a hole right away. You can’t do that against a very good baseball team like Ware.”

Quaboag junior Ryan Fernandez hit a double down the left field line leading off the top of the second. He scored when senior catcher Brendan Burke lined a shot off the shortstop glove for an error.

Burke and Ware senior centerfielder Jack Autcher will be teammates on the W.P.I. football team in the fall. The only other senior listed on the Indians varsity baseball roster is Owen Welsh, who’s the starting left fielder.

The Indians left the bases loaded in the second inning and standard another runner in scoring position in the third.

Martinez suffered an injury with out in the bottom of the third. He was replaced on the mound by junior righty Matt Tiberii.

The home team put two more runs on the left field scoreboard with one out in the fourth inning. Sutkaitis drove home the first run of the frame with a double to right field. Kyle Kaczuwka followed with an RBI single to left field.

The Indians added a pair of runs in the sixth on RBI singles by Nathan and Kyle Kaczuwka.

Other than giving up the unearned run in the second inning, Mumper, who’s the Indians ace, had things under control on the mound during the first six innings. The righty did get himself into a little bit of trouble in the bottom of the seventh. The Cougars plated a pair of runs on back-to-back singles by Tiberii and senior second baseman Chase Potvin (2-for-4).

Sophomore centerfielder Brasen Sauriol also had two base hits for the visitors from Warren. Mumper, who went the distance, wound up allowing three runs on seven hits while recording 11 strikeouts. He issued just two walks.

“I thought John pitched a great game tonight,” Slattery said. “He was getting a lot of strikes with his curveball in the middle innings. He threw mostly fastballs in the final inning. They were able to score a couple of runs against him.”

Reparations long overdue for Quabbin Reservoir

Legislators pitch five bills to the state

By Christal Whelan
cwhelan@turley.com

The Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources convened at the Massachusetts State House last month to consider the testimonies in regard to 34 bills related to waterways, wetlands, water resources and oceans in Massachusetts.

Justice for the towns around the Quabbin Reservoir was high on the agenda with five bills, more than four legislators, and several citizens all testifying in support of some kind of compensation to the communities in western Massachusetts who have lost rather than gained by sharing one of their greatest natural resources – water – with the commonwealth. Collectively, the tone of the legislators was one of moral outrage for the annexation of land, the human cost of flooding a vast and populated plain to build the Quabbin Reservoir, and the continued one-way gain for eastern Massachusetts.

In a swift three-minute pitch, the time allotted to all the speakers, state Rep. Aaron Saunders addressed the uncomfortable issue of regional equity, and recommended a closer examination of how the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority has been operating for decades since the towns of Enfield, Prescott, Greenwich and Dana were first disincorporated and then completely submerged to make this enormous, life-sustaining Quabbin Reservoir.

The bills aim to offer some kind of consideration to the communities that continue to steward the Quabbin watershed. At present, a section of the bill prohibits any consideration of the water.

Said Saunders, “The communities that steward this land, that owned this incredibly valuable resource receive absolutely nothing for the water that has fundamentally built Boston and the sur-

rounding area.”

Although the resounding word of the meeting was equity, the actual proposal was quite modest. The bill would see that the municipal government be charged 5 cents in excise per 1,000 gallons of the water.

“This would create an estimated \$3.5 million for the communities, living in the Quabbin watershed area,” said Saunders, who described how desperately in need they are of support. He elaborated on how such funding might be used for non-profits to provide transit services that do not currently exist.

The bill would also set term limits on the MWRA advisory board and provide representation for western Massachusetts in the decisions concerning the watershed.

“The average Boston household goes through 41 gallons of water a day,” said Saunders. The actual impact to ratepayers would be equal to 6 cents per month.

State Sen. Anne Gobi added another dimension to the Quabbin story. She cautioned that although there were four towns totally erased to make the reservoir in order to “help quench Boston’s thirst,” she said that the creation of the Quabbin tends to overshadow other aspects of the region’s history such as the Ware River.

Tapping into her earlier life as a history teacher, Gobi relished in the details. She recounted how in 1926 the Ware River Act did not submerge or disincorporate towns, but rather several towns lost huge amounts of land to watershed protection.

“Rutland lost north and west Rutland,” said Gobi. “And Oakham lost its main business area which was in the vanquished village of Coldbrook Springs.”

All of those towns had post offices, mills, hotels, and businesses. Farmers also lost their land and with lives totally disrupted had to move elsewhere.

In 1995 local people formed an advisory committee to talk about what mattered to them. They started to meet two years later. But some groups quit while others assumed active roles.

Gobi’s proposed bill aims to remove groups that no longer exist and add three more active players such as a snowmobile association, a local equestrian group, and the New England Mountain Bike Association.

The most impassioned call for reparations in the form of fair compensation to the long-suffering communities came from state Sen. Joanne Comerford who encapsulated in an unbelievable three minutes the history of the Quabbin Reservoir.

She explained how in 1893 the Massachusetts Department of Health was concerned for the sustainability of its port and major city, and sought sources of water for Boston. First they considered Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire, Sebago Lake in Maine, and the Merrimack and Nashua rivers, but ultimately decided to take water from the Ware River and create a massive reservoir in what was then known as the Swift River Valley, largely underwater now.

The rest is history and today eastern Massachusetts uses 200 million gallons a day from the Quabbin, and some three million people in the commonwealth drink this pristine water filtered through a watershed of over 100,000 acres.

Comerford explained that the MWRA is now looking to expand its water supply to a dozen communities north of Boston, 10 to the south, and 15 more in MetroWest.

The problem is that the people who do not have access to the water are often those who live closest to it. She cited the children, faculty and staff at the Swift River Elementary School in Salem who drink bottled water because their well is poisoned with polyfluorinated substances while Quabbin’s water flows eastward.

What Comerford and Saunders together are filing “is a modest, really modest pivot toward a necessary new day.” That new day would consist of four key provisions.

The bill establishes a fee of 5 cents for every 1,000 gallons drawn from the Quabbin. The monies would be placed

in a Quabbin community development trust fund that would generate an approximate \$3.5 million fee annually to be distributed to municipalities and nonprofits in the Quabbin watershed. Secondly, the bill rights a longstanding wrong concerning Payments in Lieu of Taxes known as PILOT payments.

Currently the Watershed PILOT Program reimburses municipalities for property tax revenue lost due to non-taxable state ownership of watershed lands.

What it leaves out is the erasure of the four towns required to create the Quabbin.

Their former land was annexed to surrounding towns: Belchertown, Hardwick, New Salem, Petersham, Pelham and Ware. These municipalities receive the PILOT payments for state-owned annexed lands within their borders.

However, for the Quabbin Reservoir land itself that was flooded and is now underwater, there is no payment. The new bill would remove this exception and require payments for land also underneath the waters of the Quabbin.

Third the bill requires representation of Quabbin-area residents on the MWRA, such that three of the 13 board members would consider western Massachusetts home. The bill would also require the MWRA to explore all expansion options.

Opportunities to serve communities that steward the water need to be fully explored. It calls for similar evaluations of expansion into communities in Westfield River, Chicopee River, Connecticut River, and Millers River valley basins.

State Rep. Mindy Domb offered a climate-awareness perspective when she testified in support of the Quabbin bills. “I know from my work on this committee, that the [water] need is probably going to increase – drought, rivers drying up, towns needing water. The towns may say, ‘Oh let’s just go to the MWRA; western Massachusetts can’t do that.’”

Safe Homes Gala Honors LGBTQIA+ Champions

WORCESTER - Open Sky Community Services announced today that its annual Safe Homes Gala held on April 14 at the AC Marriott hotel was its most successful ever, raising more than \$160,000 for the program. Seven individuals and organizations were honored with People of Courage Awards for making a difference in the Central Massachusetts LGBTQIA+ community.

“We have all been faced with so many challenges in the past few years, especially those in the LGBTQIA+ community, but these champions inspire us with their strength and resilience,” said Open Sky President & CEO Ken Bates. “We are excited to be able to gather together again in person to celebrate our Safe Homes program and honor recipients of the People of Courage Awards for leading by example through these difficult times.”

The Safe Homes program offers educational programming, leadership training, free mental health counseling, referrals, recreational activities and emergency supports for the LGBTQIA+ community. It has expanded to two sites, Safe Homes Worcester and Safe Homes North at Fitchburg State University, and has a robust online community. In 2022, Safe Homes Worcester added a Transgender Resource Center, providing trans-identifying individuals access to gender affirming clothing and supplies, as well as peer support and counseling.

Recipients of the 2023 People of Courage Awards are:

Community Champion Award - Joshua Croke (they/them), owner of “Action! by Design,” and the founder of “Love Your Labels

Inspiration & Innovation Award - Laura Marotta (she/her) & Stacy Lord (she/her), co-founders of Creative Hub Worcester.

People’s Choice Award - Sayon Barari (he/they), a former Safe Homes Commonwealth Corps Service Member and current volunteer helped launch the Transgender Resource Center and developed the Queer, Transgender, Black, Indigenous, People of Color.

Social Justice Advocacy & Action Award - Nativity School of Worcester, an independent Jesuit middle school committed to serving youth of diverse backgrounds and faiths, including those who identify as LGBTQIA+.

Volunteer Award - Jay Bry (he/him), a longtime supporter of the Safe Homes program. As CFO at Fitchburg State University helped develop the relationship between the university and Safe Homes to open Safe Homes North.

Young Adult Award - Marvin Nuñez (he/him), an active volunteer at the LGBTQ Asylum Task Force, where he helps new asylum seekers and leads the organization’s marketing efforts.

Youth Award - Quinn N. (they/them), of New Braintree, a Safe Homes youth participant who was selected by



Quinn N. of New Braintree received a People of Courage Award from Open Sky Community Services’ Safe Homes program at the annual Safe Homes Gala. Pictured, from left, are co-emcee Ché Anderson, Assistant Vice Chancellor for City & Community Relations at University of Massachusetts Medical School; Ken Bates, Open Sky President and CEO; honoree Quinn; and co-emcee Jorge Sanchez, Director of Diversity and Inclusion, UMass Chan Medical School/For Health. SUBMITTED PHOTO

staff for this award for their commitment to supporting their peers and the queer community.

Mass General Brigham Health Plan and Spectrum Health Systems served

as the gala’s presenting sponsors. Other leading sponsors include Arbor Associates, Fitchburg State University, FMC Ice Sports, and Hanover Insurance Group Foundation.

Student artists host end-of-year art exhibition

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

WARREN – Last week, art students at Quaboag Regional Middle High School displayed works they had created throughout the school year during an art exhibition.

On May 17, about 300 students added self-portraits, ceramic sculptures, digital photography, fantasy creatures, glass mosaics and more to the exhibition, which spans the hallways of the school.

Students were able to create these pieces under the direction of art teachers Heather Gaucher and Nicole Giguere.

“Every kid has something in this show,” Giguere said.

Giguere is in her fourth year at Quaboag, and teaches Advanced Placement art, ceramics, digital photography and seventh grade art.

“I have my dream position right now...I’m a photographer, a potter... and I get to teach every day,” Giguere said.

Giguere said this was her first teaching AP art and one of her students, Maggie Stevens, has been working on a glass mosaic to go in the window of the hallway to the right of the main entrance.

There are already several glass mosaics there, each one inspired by a famous work of art.

The piece Stevens was working on during the exhibition, is of “The Great Wave off Kanagawa” by Japanese artist Hokusai.

Stevens has been working on the glass mosaic since the winter, and has already dedicated over 50 hours to its creation.

Starting with a large piece of clear glass, Steven uses silicone to adhere each piece of colored glass to it, before grouting it. She said once this mosaic is

grouted, she will add boats on top of it, to give it a three-dimensional effect.

Stevens said she first started working with glass as an art form, after using it in her AP art class for a project to bring awareness to post traumatic stress disorder.

“Toward the end of the year, Ms. Hanson had glass pieces and I helped finish off a panel with [fellow student] Isabelle Aberle,” Stevens said.

Another AP art student, Ari Masterjohn, displayed a mix of two-dimensional and 3D art work, with a strong theme running through them all.

“My interpretation was exploring safe space and why we create them, and the monster we hide from,” Masterjohn said.

Masterjohn said she mainly works with acrylic paints and wash watercolor, and each piece has a natural element in it, as well as a hint of another one of her works.

“One of each piece is alluded to in each other,” Masterjohn said.

Masterjohn will be attending Western New England University this fall, with a major in psychology and a minor in art. She plans to have a career in art therapy after college.

AP art student Rachel McGrath loves exploring light and the effect it has on objects around it. This includes lights reflecting off car mirrors, Christmas lights on shiny ornaments, moonlight on train tracks, streetlights and the sunrise on a windowpane.

McGrath uses acrylic paint, detailed with ink line work.

“I love making paintings for other people and started doing commissions,” McGrath said. “It makes me really happy.”

McGrath is unsure if she wants to pursue art as a career, but said its something she really enjoys doing.

“It’s kind of my safe haven,” she said.



Maggie Stevens stands with a glass mosaic she is working on. Once completed, the mosaic will be displayed in the hallway to the right of the main entrance. (TURLEY PUBLICATIONS PHOTOS BY PAULA OUIMETTE)



A ceramic snake emerges from a coiled pot.



Axolotls were a popular theme in ceramics.



Ari Masterjohn stands with some of her artwork centered around safe spaces. Each of her works alludes to another one of her works.



Seventh grade art students created fantasy creatures.



Rachel McGrath loves to explore light through her artwork.



The outline was created using black glue, and the detail was added with chalk pastel.



An eighth-grade student made this colorful rendition of the “Three Blind Mice”.



The Quaboag Regional High School seniors are shown posing on the West Brookfield band stand for a group photo ahead of prom. (TURLEY PUBLICATIONS PHOTOS BY DALLAS GAGNON)



Jenna Duff and Olivia Bagg are shown smiling as they pose for prom photos.

WARREN/WEST BROOKFIELD – The senior class of Quaboag Regional High School came dressed to impress as they gathered on the West Brookfield town common to celebrate prom Thursday, May 18.

While the event was hosted at the Barn at Wight Farm in Sturbridge, families and friends shared some of the evening's festivities before the event, striking poses and taking photos.

According to class advisor Jen Murray, the prom theme was red-carpet.

Students could be seen wearing anything from mermaid style dresses to full length ball gowns. Though some students wore outfits decked out in shimmer and sparkle, some opted for satin attire.

Attendees enjoyed both a variety of music and a variety of food, with several food stations available for students to choose from.

Murray said the class officers helped decorate the venue the day before the event.

She added she was a seventh grade teacher for many of the seniors in attendance.

"It has been so wonderful to have seen them over the last six years - amazing to see."

See MORE PROM PHOTOS | PAGE 17



Friends Katelyn Fountain and Paige Dion are shown prom ready in full-length ball gowns.



Hailey Samek and Pichie Gula are shown in coordinated green attire.



Adrik Matys and Luisa Feeney strike a pose before prom.



Kaitlyn Osborne poses as she stands before the water fountain.



Carl Quilitzsch IV and Arianna Belen are shown in matching red prom attire.

FLOWERS | FROM PAGE 1

years,” the event is made possible by the contributions of local vendors, donations and volunteers.

Church member Jennifer Pollard said some plants were donated entirely while others were either bought by the church at wholesale price and sold retail, or vendors donate half of the sales profits.

Some plant vendors included local farms such as Inishowen Farms of North Brookfield, Howes Farm and Garden LLC of Paxton and Stillman’s Farm of New Braintree.

Ginny Rich hosted the “home made lovelies” table, offering an entire selection of plants donated by community members, grown from their own yards and homes.

“Because they are grown locally, they will stay healthy and thrive,” said Rich.

She said she has been helping with the plant sale for many years, adding she used to help set up for the event in her younger days.

Rich said a gardening friend of hers donated quite a few plants, ranging from flowers to shrubs, while she also donated a few seedlings.

Money raised from the event goes towards the church’s general funds.

Pollard credited Thomas Clough as “the man behind the scenes,” who “does it all,” including organizing the event and community outreach.

Clough thanked the vendors and said

they are “all wonderful.”

Clough said this is his second year in charge of setting up the event, and he is “glad to help.”

He added the efforts made are “an important part of the community.”

Farmer Matt of New Braintree donated all the ingredients for the loaded baked potato sales, including farm fresh bacon for bits.

The Old Furnace General Store of Hardwick was also recognized for donating boxes which allowed plant buyers to carry away more plants than their arms could hold.

Church member Mary Pollard said she spent nearly three weeks baking treats for the bake sale before she finally finished.

“Anyone here from the church made something,” said Pollard.

Jennifer Pollard said her mother, Mary, stocked an entire church freezer full of treats.

Mary Pollard said her personal favorite was the chocolate cake, and within three hours of the event, it had sold out.

Her apple pies were also a big hit, also selling out within the first few hours.

Jennifer Pollard said the turn out is always “wonderful.”

“There is a lot of support... People come from all over,” said Pollard.

“It’s a great place to come visit and for people to catch up.”



Vendors Martha Bryenton and Tom Meade of Bucket List Maple Syrup based in West Brookfield, are shown selling maple syrup and other treats. (TURLEY PUBLICATIONS PHOTOS BY DALLAS GAGNON)



Farmer Matt of New Braintree donated all the baked potato ingredients for the event, including farm fresh bacon for bacon bits.



Shown are just a few of the bright, blooming flowers available at the Tri-Parish Community Church plant sale.

MORE PROM PHOTOS | FROM PAGE 16



Senior, Rachel Gagnon shares a photo with her mother, Jen Gagnon and father Shawn Gagnon.



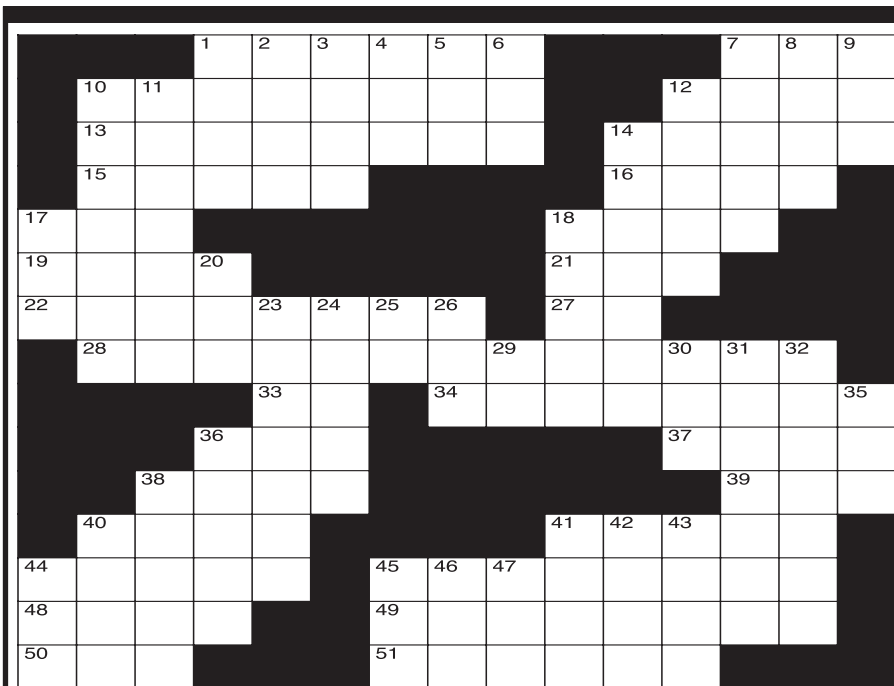
Serenity Kauppila and Bryce Douglas in front of the water fountain.



Shown are Dylan Segatore and McKenna Childs in coordinated black prom attire.



Seniors Madison Gray and Mary McGeachie share a photo before prom.



- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. Wear away by friction
 - 7. Insecticide
 - 10. Elicited a secret vote
 - 12. Beef
 - 13. Disagreement
 - 14. ___ Crawford, supermodel
 - 15. Jeweled headdress
 - 16. Digits
 - 17. Trillion hertz
 - 18. Snap up
 - 19. Classical portico
 - 21. Residue after burning
 - 22. Large integers
 - 27. Free agent
 - 28. Where ballplayers work
 - 33. Blood type
 - 34. Scottish city
 - 36. Google certification (abbr.)
 - 37. Serbian monetary unit
 - 38. Make a sudden surprise attack on
 - 39. Wood or metal bolt
 - 40. Relaxing attire
 - 41. Famed neurologist
 - 44. Dullish brown fabrics
 - 45. Member of ancient Jewish sect
 - 48. Griffith, Rooney
 - 49. Lawmakers
 - 50. Government lawyers
 - 51. The arch of the foot
 - 4. Consumed
 - 5. The habitat of wild animals
 - 6. Sun up in New York
 - 7. Cygnus star
 - 8. Male parents
 - 9. Talk to you (abbr.)
 - 10. A place to clean oneself
 - 11. Southwestern US state
 - 12. South Korean idol singer
 - 14. Pirate
 - 17. Pituitary hormone (abbr.)
 - 18. Mistake
 - 20. Promotions
 - 23. Prepares
 - 24. Partner to flowed
 - 25. State lawyer
 - 26. Patti Hearst’s captors
 - 29. Pound
 - 30. Electronic data processing
 - 31. Sports player
 - 32. Treats with contempt
 - 35. Apprehend
 - 36. Excessively talkative
 - 38. Highways
 - 40. Ribosomal ribonucleic acid
 - 41. College organization for males
 - 42. Any customary observance or practice
 - 43. Employee stock ownership plan
 - 44. Male parent
 - 45. The 23rd letter of the Greek alphabet
 - 46. Female bird
 - 47. Autonomic nervous system
- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Nonflowering aquatic plant
 - 2. Britpop rockers
 - 3. National capital

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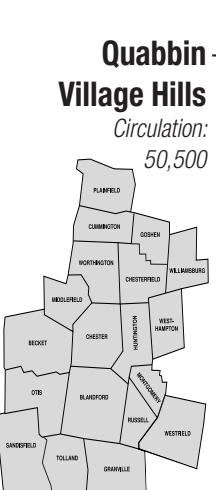
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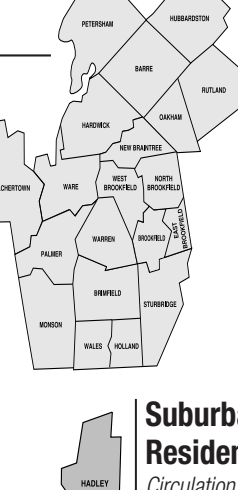
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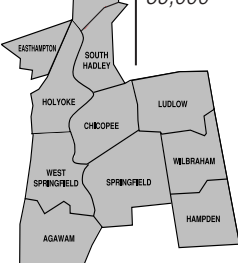
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INVITATION TO BID TOWN OF BROOKFIELD

The Town of Brookfield invites bids to make repairs to and expand the usable area of the upper fields through proper leveling, drainage and grading, allowing for greater utilization of the current soccer field at Lewis Field, Lewis Field, 4 Main Street, Brookfield, MA. Design documents and specifications can be found in COMMBUYS or obtained by emailing Cathy LaRocca at clarocca@brookfieldma.us. Bids are to be submitted addressed to the office of the Board of Selectmen, 6 Central St., Brookfield, MA 01506. Bids will be received in the Board of Selectmen's Office until 2:00 PM, Thursday, June 8, 2023 when they will be publicly opened and read aloud.

The Town of Brookfield reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids in the best interest of the Town. Contractors are required to comply with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Labor and Industries Prevailing Wage Rates in accordance with MGL, Chapter 139, Sections 26 and 27D. The Town of Brookfield is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

All bids for this project are subject to the provisions and minimum wage rates required by M.G.L. c.30, §39M as amended, and M.G.L. c.149, §§26 to 27H, inclusive, or by the federal Davis-Bacon wage rates, whichever hourly rate is higher. The project is also governed by HUD's Section 3 of 24 CFR Part 75, whereas efforts occur to ensure that economic opportunities, most importantly employment, generated by this CDBG program shall be directed to low- and very low-income persons. Bidders on the work shall also make a good faith effort to achieve the goals of the Federal Minority and Women's Business Enterprise (MBE/WBE) policy regarding utilization of MBEs and WBEs in order to be deemed a responsible bidder.

A bid bond with an acceptable surety, or a certified or bank check in the amount of 5% of the total bid shall be submitted with each bid. The successful bidder must furnish a 100% Performance Bond, and a 100% Labor and Material Payment Bond.

The lowest qualified responsible bidder shall be awarded the contract subject to availability of funds under

the PARC Grant program. The Town of Brookfield, the Awarding and Contracting Authority, may cancel this Invitation for Bid (IFB), in whole or in part, at any time that such an act is deemed in its best interest, reserves the right to waive any informality in the bidding or to reject any and all bids in total or in part as may be deemed to serve the best interest of the Town, and will not be responsible for any costs incurred by a bidder in preparing and submitting a bid in response to this IFB.

A pre-bid conference will not be held for this project.
05/19, 05/26/2023

Invitation for Bids North Brookfield Senior Center Improvements

The Town of North Brookfield invites sealed bids for the above-named building project at North Brookfield's Senior Center at 29 Forest Street, North Brookfield, MA 01535, in accordance to bid documents prepared by Clark Green + BEK. The Project consists of roof removal and replacement and has an estimate of \$126,000.

The project will be administered by Clark Green + BEK and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) and is funded by the Town of North Brookfield and by an FY20 Massachusetts Department of Housing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). A completion time of one hundred and twenty (120) days has been established.

General Bids will be received until **03:00PM, Wednesday 06/21/2023** and publicly opened, forthwith.

This project is being Electronically Bid (E-Bid). All bids shall be prepared and submitted online at www.Projectdog.com and received no later than the date & time specified above. Hard copy bids will not be accepted by the Awarding Authority. For assistance, contact Projectdog, Inc. at 978.499.9014.

Bid Forms and Contract Documents will be available electronically or for purchase at www.Projectdog.com on Wednesday, **5/24/2023**; Project Code **855980**.

A pre-bid conference will be held at North Brookfield Senior Center at 10:00 AM, June 06, 2023.

All bids for this project are subject to the provisions of M.G.L. c. 149 sections 44A-M and minimum wage

rates required by M.G.L. c. 149 sections 26-27H inclusive. Federal prevailing wages under the Davis-Bacon and Related Acts also apply.

The Town of North Brookfield encourages, to the extent feasible, the use of minority-, women- and disadvantaged-owned businesses for work under this contract and likewise encourages, to the greatest extent possible, that all bidders take affirmative steps to ensure training and employment for lower-income project area residents and award of subcontracts to HUD-defined Section 3 businesses.

Bids may be changed or withdrawn prior to the bid opening, by submission of such a change in writing in a sealed envelope, identifying the submitting party and indicating that it contains a correction of the bid for the North Brookfield Senior Center Improvement Project.

The lowest qualified responsible bidder shall be awarded the contract subject to the availability of funds through the FY20 CDBG program. The Town of North Brookfield, the awarding and contracting authority, may cancel this Invitation for Bids (IFB), in whole or in part, at any time that such act is deemed in its best interest, reserves the right to waive any informality in the bidding or to reject any and all bids in total or in part as may be deemed to serve the best interest of the Town. The Town will not be responsible for any costs incurred by a bidder in preparing and submitting a bid in response to this IFB.

General bids shall be accompanied by a bid deposit that is not less than five percent (5%) of the greatest possible bid amount and made payable to the Town of North Brookfield. One hundred percent (100%) payment and performance bonds will be required of the successful bidder.

Questions regarding the bid plans and specifications should be directed to Tobias Bernecker, Clark Green + BEK, Inc. tbernecker@clarkandgreen.com. General project questions should be directed to Christopher Dunphy, CMRPC at cdunphy@cmrpc.org or (508) 459-3333.

The Town of North Brookfield is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Woman and Minority-Owned businesses are encouraged to bid.

05/26/2023

Scouts prepare to hike Rocky Mountains

STURBRIDGE – In July of 2023, Scouts BSA Troop 161 will be sending 12 Scouts and four adult leaders to Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico.

Philmont Scout Ranch is the Boy Scouts of America's largest national High Adventure Base, covering 140,177 acres of rugged mountain wilderness in the Sangre de Cristo range of the Rocky Mountains in northeastern New Mexico.

The Scouts are eager for the seven-day trek and the life-changing, unforgettable adventure in backpacking across miles of rugged, rocky trails.

To prepare, the Scouts have been very busy hiking local trails with weighted packs and planning training backpacking trips.

Troop 161 is sponsored by the Champeau-Vilandre American Logion Post 109 and meet regularly on Sunday nights at the Sturbridge Federated church.

For more information about Scout Troop 161, or if your Scout age 14+ is interested in joining the crew for this adventure or if you are able to help the Scouts with their trip, email Jen Scherer at jenchris27@aol.com.



Shown from left to right are Jeremy Mrotek, Quinn Rainville, Jennifer Scherer, Sinead Rainville, Alex Fairbrother, Joe Roderick, Andrew Aloisio and Arakel Kandoyan. (COURTESY PHOTOS)



Shown from the top left to right and bottom left to right are Jeremy Mrotek, Alex Fairbrother, Keenan Scherer, Jonah Scherer, Andrew Aloisio, Mason Gormley and Joe Roderick.

Job Connection

HELPING YOU FIND HELP

TOWN OF WARREN POLICE DEPARTMENT
JOB OPPORTUNITY

Full Time Police Officer and Part Time Police Officer

The Warren Police Department is accepting applications for the position of full time and part time Police Officer. Applicants are preferred to be academy trained and must be willing to work weekends, nights, and holidays.

Responsibilities include responding to emergency and non-emergency calls for Police, Fire and Ambulance services. It is preferred that applicants currently possess valid certification as a Police Officer. Candidates must have strong interpersonal, verbal, and written communication skills. Preferences include an associate degree or higher in criminal justice, serve in the US military, or experience as a Police Officer.

The Patrolmen's contract provides an education incentive and a candidate with prior experience may also be considered to start at a higher step rate of pay.

Resumes and cover letters must be returned no later than Friday June 2nd, 2023, to the attention of Lt. James Early, WPD PO Box 606, Warren, MA 01083 or early@warren-ma.gov.

The Town of Warren is an EOE.

New Braintree Police Log

During the week of May 15-22, the Hardwick/New Braintree Police Department responded to 14 building/property checks, 36 directed/area patrols, three traffic controls, 10 radar assignments, one citizen assist, one complaint, two emergency 911 calls, one motor vehicle investigation, one safety hazard, one investigation, one motor vehicle accident, two animal calls and one motor vehicle stop in the town of New Braintree.

Monday, May 15

5:34 p.m. Assist Citizen, Memorial Drive, Services Rendered

Tuesday, May 16

3:40 p.m. Motor Vehicle Investigation, Hardwick Road, Investigated

Wednesday, May 17

9:47 a.m. Suspicious Activity, Oakham Road, Report Taken

7:43 p.m. Investigation, Worcester Road, Investigated

Friday, May 19

10:57 p.m. 911 Disturbance, Dennis Whitney Road, Services Rendered

Saturday, May 20

11:52 a.m. Complaint/Motor Vehicle Operations, Ravine Road, Negative Contact

Sunday, May 21

3:31 p.m. 911 Motor Vehicle Accident, Mara Road, Report Taken

4:28 p.m. Safety Hazard, Mara Road, Officer Handled

QUABOAG CURRENT



ECRWSS
POSTAL CUSTOMER

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Volume 16, Number 27

Friday, May 26, 2023

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Hours may change
Check Facebook for updates

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NEW SUMMER HOURS BEGIN JUNE 8TH!

OPEN FOR DINNER ONLY ON
Thurs., 6/1: 4-9pm • Fri., 6/2: 4-10pm
Sat. 6/3: 4-10pm • Sun., 6/4: 4-9pm • Mon., 6/5: 4-9pm

FATHERS DAY BRUNCH
SUNDAY, JUNE 18 10 AM - 1 PM
WHISKEY DINNER
TUESDAY, JUNE 20TH 5:30 - 10 PM
CLOSED ON MEMORIAL DAY

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Thursday, August 24 - 4:30 - 8:00 PM

Thursday, September 21 - 4:30 - 8:00 PM

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