

# QUABOAG CURRENT

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Quaboag Current Newspaper

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Friday, January 5, 2024

## New Year's Day walk rings in 2024

EQLT celebrates start of 30th year with annual event

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
pouimette@turley.com

**NEW BRAINTREE** – Since 2012, the East Quabbin Land Trust has started each year with a New Year's Day group walk along the Mass Central Rail Trail, renewing the organization's dedication and commitment to protect open space.

Held on Jan. 1, the group walk has seen all weather conditions ranging from cold to warm temperatures, with some years even having snow. Participants are invited to travel

the trail in a variety of ways, including on foot, wheels, skis, snowshoes or horseback; dogs are always welcome.

Now in its 30th year, EQLT is preparing for a year of events to celebrate this momentous milestone, including the Gala Dinner and Auction scheduled for Saturday, April 20.

"2024 is a special year for us," Executive Director Cynthia Henshaw said before the start of the walk.

EQLT has a lot to celebrate, including continued efforts to expand and improve the Mass Central Rail Trail, with segments from New Braintree to Wheelwright, New Braintree to Creamery Road in Gilbertville, Ware River Park in Gilbertville, near the Ware-Hardwick

See **NEW YEAR** | PAGE 12



Many dogs also participated in the New Year's Day hike, including Dottie. TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA OUIMETTE

## Friends' annual senior Christmas luncheon a jolly good time

**NORTH BROOKFIELD** – Christmas came early to North Brookfield seniors this year.

On Dec. 20, the Friends of the North Brookfield Council on Aging hosted a fun-filled

luncheon for all to enjoy. An anonymous, generous donor subsidized the meal of prime rib or fish and Common Ground Ciderworks skillfully catered the filled-to-capacity

event.

Highlights included raffles, games, and a door prize. Sue Lewandowski won the 50/50

See **LUNCHEON** | PAGE 3



Filled to capacity, the North Brookfield Senior Center was recently the site for a delicious complimentary Christmas luncheon catered by Common Grounds Ciderworks and a fun-filled afternoon. SUBMITTED PHOTO

## Superintendent gives update on sewer upgrade project

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
pouimette@turley.com

**NORTH BOOKFIELD** – Sewer Department Superintendent James Nyberg gave the Board of Selectmen an overview of the wastewater treatment upgrade project that began earlier in 2023.

At the Dec. 19 meeting, Nyberg said it has been about six months since the project began, and he provided photos and a brief update about the progress.

He said the project was driven by mandates from Environmental Protection Agency and

See **PROJECT** | PAGE 8

## Flooding on New Boston Road caused by clogged culvert

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
pouimette@turley.com

**STURBRIDGE** – Department of Public Works Director Heather Blakeley presented reports from the months of October and November.

At the Dec. 18 Board of Selectmen meeting, she said sev-

eral large storms had brought many trees down and caused washout damage to the edges of certain roadways.

Blakeley also gave an update on flooding at New Boston Road, which has been caused by a clog in a culvert pipe, presumably caused by beavers. The

See **FLOODING** | PAGE 12



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# - community -

## Deep Roots welcomes Tasteless Jack

By Ryan Drago  
Staff Writer  
rdrago@turley.com

STURBRIDGE – Deep Roots Distillery USA welcomed acoustic performer Tasteless Jack to the stage.

A passionate music artist and songwriter based out of Worcester, Tasteless Jack is a returning performer to the Deep Roots Distillery USA. Previously performing during an open mic, Tasteless Jack was welcomed for live entertainment.

“He is a great performer,” said Tom Cane, co-owner of Deep Roots Distillery USA.

2023 was a special year for Tasteless Jack as he returned to the art of musical performances after a 10-year hiatus. Wanting to get back into performing, Jack has been performing mostly as a solo performer, but is slowly building a band.

It all started when Tasteless Jack came across a couple of bands in Worcester. Joining a growing community, Tasteless Jack found a way to share the spotlight and help himself and his fellow music comrades get more gigs and do multiple performances in the area.

“Artists can be the audience and the audience can be artists,” said Jack. “It’s all about creating a community of performers and putting shows together.”

Tasteless Jack has been involved with performing for 17 years and has written over 40 songs. A combination of original songs and covers is what Tasteless Jack has to offer on stage. One of his original songs, “Sounds of my Regret” was a song he wrote back in October of 2022 that influenced him to return to performing.

Another popular original by Tasteless Jack is “The Sweeter Things”, a song about working hard and feeling like we deserve more.

One of Tasteless Jack’s influences to pursue music and performing was his history



Tasteless Jack is a rising acoustic performer who tours regularly in central Massachusetts.

teacher. During spare time, his history teacher taught him how to play guitar. At one point, Jack’s history teacher helped him record his earliest demos.

At this point, Tasteless Jack has over 70 songs to perform. Many of these songs were inspired by people in his communities.

The cover songs Tasteless Jack performs consist of various styles. Most common covers are from groups and artists such as Sublime, Dave Matthews Band, Justin Timberlake, The Eagles, Simon & Garfunkel, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Mumford and Sons, The Animals, Linkin Park, Cyndi Lauper and many more.

One popular song Tasteless Jack performs is a cover of “Simple Man” by Lynyrd Skynyrd. On the acoustic guitar and simultaneously performing behind the microphone, Tasteless Jack adds a unique element to the covers he performs.

For his stage name, Tasteless Jack came

from not putting himself into a specific genre of music. Playing a variety of genres, Tasteless Jack never had a particular taste in music he favored more than others.

At some point, Jack believed his music was nobody else’s music. Therefore, Tasteless Jack was the name and music performing was the game.

“I don’t want to box myself into one particular genre,” said Jack.

Tasteless Jack’s next performance will be at the Starlite in Southbridge. The event is called “What the Folk” Show on Feb. 2 at 7 p.m. Several other groups will be performing as well.

To talk with Tasteless Jack, reach out to him on Instagram at @tastelessjack. His songs can be heard on YouTube, Spotify and Instagram. To learn more about Tasteless Jack, visit tastelessjack.com.



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- community -

# Steinhilber joins Farmer Matt's Restaurant as Executive Chef

NEW BRAINTREE – Farmer Matt's Restaurant is pleased to announce the appointment of Executive Chef John Steinhilber, a New England Culinary Institute alumnus.

Steinhilber's extensive culinary background is anticipated to enhance the dining offerings at the restaurant. A 2002 graduate of the esteemed culinary institute, Steinhilber has earned recognition in the culinary field for his contributions and achievements.

He soon took on the position of owner/executive chef of a classic French bistro, Chez Fish. His early career also included time in the coastal kitchens of John's Island, South Carolina, particularly as a fishmonger, emphasizing his commitment to fresh, local ingredients.

Steinhilber's professional journey includes a notable period at the Seabrook Island Club, where he served as an Executive Sous Chef. There, he managed culinary operations for three distinct dining venues within the exclusive community.

Following this, he led Hanna Devine's Restaurant and Bar as an Executive Chef, skillfully navigating the establishment through the pandemic's challenges with creative culinary solutions.

Matt Koziol (Farmer Matt himself) expressed his confidence in this new collaboration, noting, "John's appointment as Executive Chef is part of our ongoing

effort to enhance our menu offerings and dining experience. His skillset, especially in farm-to-table cuisine, aligns perfectly with our restaurant's philosophy."

Steinhilber also shared his enthusiasm about joining Farmer Matt's.

"I am excited to contribute to Farmer Matt's menu, particularly in introducing a new weekly special that emphasizes locally sourced ingredients and our own farm-produced proteins and vegetables," he said.

Steinhilber's culinary expertise, especially in sourcing quality, local ingredients, is expected to further strengthen Farmer Matt's commitment to fresh, high quality food. This approach aims to offer diners a unique culinary experience, showcasing the region's best produce.

Guests can look forward to a variety of new dishes crafted by Steinhilber, including pasta Bolognese with farm-made pappardelle, traditional Yankee pot roast, and farm-made short rib truffle ravioli. These additions are part of the restaurant's commitment to providing a diverse and seasonally inspired menu.

Further information about the new menu offerings, including weekly specials, can be found on Farmer Matt's website (FarmerMatt.com) and the restaurant's Facebook page. Farmer Matt is located at 860 West Brookfield Road.



Executive Chef John Steinhilber joins the team at Farmer Matt's Restaurant in New Braintree. SUBMITTED PHOTO

LUNCHEON | FROM PAGE 1

raffle and Deb Welch won the door prize, a lovely floral arrangement.

A lucky winner at each table got to take home a colorful holiday centerpiece. Tabby LeBlanc provided great music for the event, including his beautiful rendition of "Mary, Did You Know?"


The Friends would like to thank the countless volunteers who helped the afternoon run smoothly, Common Ground Ciderworks for the delicious meal, and all of you who make their season bright.


The Friends wish all a happy and healthy 2024.

For more information about the Friends of the North Brookfield COA, follow them on Facebook @NorthBrookfieldSenior Center, and learn more about their upcoming Annual Souper Bowl, scheduled for Feb. 10 at the center.



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# - opinion -



## Native plants often need to be coaxed into germinating

Are you interested in starting your own perennials from seed this year?

This column, straight from the archives, will be of use to you! Sadly, not all seeds sprout as quickly and easily indoors as tomatoes do.

Some seeds can be a bit tricky to germinate, and we must go through extraordinary measures to get them to sprout. In the grand scheme of things, you will learn that this is actually a good thing.

Take the Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) for example, and imagine what would happen if this late bloomer dropped its seed on the ground in October and the seed came up immediately? Likely, the seedlings would be so small and tender that they would not survive the winter.

On the other hand, if germination occurred in early spring (and it does!), success could almost be guaranteed.

The Cardinal Flower, along with many other native plants, has a built-in dormancy that is broken only by a period of moist-cold. Until “winter” has passed – either for real or simulated by us, these plants will simply not sprout.

In addition to Cardinal Flower, Columbine, Delphinium, Gas Plant, Great Lobelia, Lupine, Iris, Monkshood, Border Phlox, Primrose, Purple Coneflower and probably more that I am unaware of, all benefit from what is called “stratification.” The term, which admittedly sounds a bit intimidating, refers to the practice of “stratifying,” or storing seeds in layers alternating with moisture-holding material and exposing them to cold temperatures.

This can be accomplished both indoors and out, and I will go through the pros and cons of each.

No doubt the easiest way to expose seeds to a period of moist-cold is to sow them outdoors in the fall in a nursery bed or cold frame. They will go through the winter and when conditions are right (cross your fingers!) germinate neatly in their rows.

But because you are outside, seeds can sometimes disappear thanks to ants, rodents and birds. Weeds can also pop up in the seed bed, making it hard to tell which plant is which!

The elements can likewise take their toll and unless the beds are protected, soil can either dry out or get completely waterlogged.

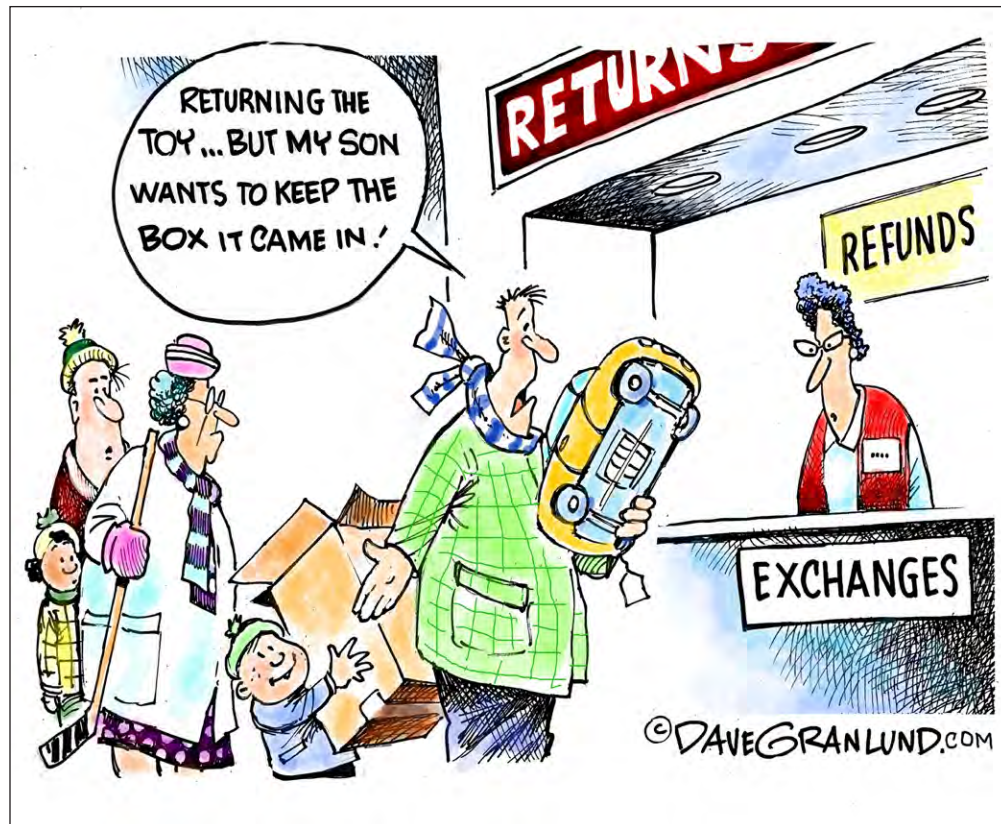
Another way to stratify seeds outdoors is by using the milk-jug method. Taking a gallon size clear milk container and starting just below the handle, cut it almost all the way across.

If you begin just after the handle on one side and end up just before the handle on the other, you will make a hinge. Punch a few drainage holes in the bottom and a couple more on the sides, up and down from the cut so that you can “twist-tie” the jug shut after you are done.

Fill the bottom half with well-moistened seed starting mix and plant the seeds according to the directions on the packet – if they are tiny don’t cover; simply press them into the soil. Connect the two halves of the jug with twist ties (or just use duct tape) and label with pencil.

Keep the cap off to provide ventilation, then place in a spot protected from hard

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## Hamilton on Foreign Policy

### As Americans, we have a duty to respond to disasters

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

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

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

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

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

- In February, two powerful earthquakes hit southern Turkey, killing more than 50,000 people in Turkey and war-torn Syria and leaving hundreds of thousands homeless. They were the deadliest quakes in Turkey’s modern history.
- In September, a massive Mediterranean storm dumped heavy rain on Libya. Two dams collapsed, resulting in floods that killed more than 11,000 people and displaced tens of thousands. It followed a string of deadly floods in China, Brazil, Greece and elsewhere.
- Also in September, an earthquake struck the High Atlas Mountains in Morocco, killing nearly 3,000 people, injuring over 5,000 and leaving many homeless in remote areas.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The world sees the U.S. as a leader in humanitarian relief. We respond to dozens of international disasters every year.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## OPINION PAGE/ LETTERS POLICY

Letters to the editor should be 250 words or less in length, and guest columns between 500 and 800 words. No unsigned or anonymous opinions will be published. We require that the person submitting the opinion also include his or her town of residence and home telephone number. We authenticate authorship prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions deemed to be libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks, or defamation of character.

**Send opinions to:**  
Letters to the Editor, 80 Main Street, Ware, MA 01082 OR e-mail to [pouimette@turley.com](mailto:pouimette@turley.com). Deadline for submission is Monday at noon for the following week’s edition.

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# - community -

## NBPS posts special education child find notice

**NORTH BROOKFIELD** – Under federal and state special education regulations, North Brookfield Public Schools has a duty to locate, identify, refer, evaluate and, if eligible, provide a free, appropriate public education to students with disabilities who reside in North Brookfield.

For parents or guardians of children ages 3-21 years of age who have a disability or developmental delay, and who would like more information, please contact: Ann Knapp Interim Director of Student Services and Child Find Coordinator at the following: Ann Knapp, Interim Director of Student Services, 10 New School Road, North Brookfield, MA 01535 or call 508-867-3166.

### Parent's Notice of Procedural Safeguards brochure

A special education Parent's Notice of Procedural Safeguards is available from the Office of Student Services.

This brochure is available in a number of different languages at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb>.

### §504 Child Find Notice

Pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination in publicly funded activities the North Brookfield Public Schools has a duty to identify, refer, evaluate, and if eligible, provide access to public education to students with impairments in its jurisdiction.

For additional information about the rights or parents of eligible children, or for answers to any questions you might have about identification, evaluation and placement into Section 504 programs, please contact the District's Section 504 Coordinator at the following: Ann Knapp, Interim Director of Student Services, 10 New School Road, North Brookfield, MA 01535 or call 508-867-3166.

### McKinney-Vento Child Find Notice

If your family lives in any of the following situations: in a shelter; in a motel or campground due to the lack of an alternative adequate accommodation; in a car, park, abandoned building, bus, or train station; or doubled up with other people due to loss of housing or economic hardship, your school-age children may qualify for certain rights and protections under the federal McKinney-Vento Act.

There also may be support available for your preschool-age children

If you believe your children may be eligible, contact the North Brookfield Public School's McKinney-Vento liaison to find out what services and supports may be available. The District's McKinney Vento Liaison is: Ann Knapp, Interim Director of Student Services, 10 New School Road, North Brookfield, MA 01535 or call 508-867-3166.

## Quabbin Visitor Center offers outdoor programs

**BELCHERTOWN** – The Department of Conservation and Recreation's Les and Terry Campbell Quabbin Visitor Center will offer several free outdoor programs now through March.

To register for any of these events, visit [www.mass.gov/locations/quabbin-reservoir/events](http://www.mass.gov/locations/quabbin-reservoir/events) and follow the link in each program description.

Please dress appropriately for the weather and bring water. For more information email [QuabbinVisitor.Center@mass.gov](mailto:QuabbinVisitor.Center@mass.gov).

### Exploring the Ware River Watershed

Join DCR staff for a 4.4-mile lollipop loop hike in the Ware River Watershed on Saturday, Jan. 6 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. The route climbs/descends roughly 200 feet in elevation.

Participants will meet at the Mass Central Rail Trail parking area located on Route 122 in the town of Rutland. The hike begins/ends on the MCRT with a loop in the middle consisting of Camel's Hump, Long Meadow Road, and Prison Camp Road.

Visit the following website for additional information on the route: <https://www.trailforks.com/route/4-mi-inner-loop-near-rutland-state-park/>

(<https://maps.app.goo.gl/dg-zSozmffyz7NFJr7>)

### Explore the Road to Dana Common

On Saturday, March 2 from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. explore the road that leads to Dana

Common. Along the old road to Dana Common are foundations, walls and trees that tell the story of the towns now long gone.

Join DCR staff on this 1.8 mile (3.6 round trip) hike to Dana Common and discover what life was like in the Quabbin Valley and how the landscape has changed since the reservoir was built 84 years ago. Please dress appropriately for the weather and bring water and a snack.

Participants will meet at Gate 40 on Route 32A in Petersham. Dogs are not allowed.

(<https://goo.gl/maps/d4RxN91vsy-HUzhEE6>)

### Rutland Prison Camp

Fresh air, three home-cooked meals a day, comfortable sleeping quarters and a private hospital - sounds like a delightful retreat for a prison?

Join DCR staff as they explore the remains of this surprisingly successful social experiment at Rutland Prison Camp on Sunday, March 31 from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Ticks may be active, so protection is advised. The terrain is uneven.

Participants should be in the main parking lot of Rutland Prison Camp, 299 Intervale Road, Rutland.

(<https://maps.app.goo.gl/J1iuV7QG-B3rEAbxJ9>)

### GARDEN | FROM PAGE 4

winds. As seedlings emerge in the spring you can flip back the top on nice days, but remember to replace each night and water as needed.

If you prefer to start your seedlings indoors you can mimic winter by placing your seeds in the refrigerator to "chill." Don't put them in there in their seed packets, though, since they must also be kept moist.

If you have enough room in the refrigerator, you can simply sow them in their flats, cover the flat with a loose plastic bag and place it inside for the recommended length of time, usually anywhere from one to three months. Afterwards, set them out to germinate as you normally would, with supplemental light and bottom heat (in other words, fake spring this time around!).

Most folks don't have a spare refrigerator to fill up with seedling flats. In this case put a small amount of moist seed-starting medium in a tiny plastic bag and sprinkle in the seeds.

After "winter" has elapsed, sprinkle the contents on to the top of moistened soil in your container and firm down. Large seeds can be covered with an additional sprinkling of growing medium. Proceed as above to promote germination.

If you plan to order perennial seeds by mail, do so soon, so that you can stratify and have them sprout at the normal time. This may sound tricky, but it's really pretty simple, and the pay-off is lots of new plants for your perennial border!

*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](mailto:pouimette@turley.com) with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.*

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Sponsored by the Western Mass Fly Fishermen, the Ludlow Elks Lodge 2448 and Turley Publications are starting January 11th, 2024.

Held at the Ludlow Elks Lodge located at 69 Chapin St. Ludlow Mass.

Thursday nights for eight weeks from 7PM to 9PM.

The classes are open to the public with children 8 years and up accompanied by an adult.

Classes are geared to the beginner or novice.

Course materials and tools will be supplied.

Should you have your own tools, feel free to bring them.

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- community -

# Smola supports comprehensive \$1.02 billion tax relief package

BOSTON – State Rep. Todd Smola (R-Warren, Ranking Member, Ways & Means Committee) has joined with his colleagues to approve a comprehensive tax package that will provide significant financial relief to Massachusetts residents and businesses.

House Bill 4104, “An Act to improve the Commonwealth’s competitiveness, affordability, and equity,” offers a phased-in approach to a series of tax reforms that is expected to produce \$561 million in savings for taxpayers this fiscal year and an estimated \$1.02 billion in savings once the changes are fully implemented in 2026.

The bill, which represents a compromise negotiated over the last three months by a six-member conference committee, received preliminary approval by the House of Representatives on a vote of 155-1 on Sept. 27.

“House Bill 4104 reflects our responsibility to strengthen Massachusetts’ economic landscape while increasing the financial stability of our hardworking residents. I am thankful for the cohesive effort from the House of Representatives and believe that this tax relief package will improve the well-being of our constituents and businesses,” Smola said in a press release.

Smola noted that the final tax package provides for increases in the child and dependent tax credit, the rental deduction cap, and the Earned Income Tax Credit. It also doubles the Senior Circuit Breaker tax credit while raising the estate tax threshold from \$1 million to \$2 million and increasing the amount seniors can deduct from their property taxes when participating in the Senior Property Tax Volunteer Program.

House Bill 4104 also authorizes a reduction in the short-term capital gains tax rate and implements a single sales factor for companies beginning Jan. 1, 2025, to encourage economic growth and help maintain Massachusetts-based businesses. In addition, the bill triples the maximum allowable Title V tax credit for homeowners repairing or replacing their septic tanks, while also expanding the lead paint abatement and taking steps to promote more housing development across the state.

According to Smola, House Bill 4104:

- Combines the child and dependent tax credits into one while eliminating the existing cap and increasing the credit from \$180 to \$310 in FY23 and to \$440 in FY24, which will benefit over 565,000 families;
- Increases the rental deduction cap from \$3,000 to

\$4,000, which will assist approximately 800,000 renters;

- Raises the Earned Income Tax Credit from 30% to 40% of the federal credit, which will benefit approximately 400,000 taxpayers earning less than \$60,000;
- Doubles the maximum Senior Circuit Breaker tax credit from \$1,200 to \$2,400, indexed to inflation, to assist nearly 100,000 seniors with their housing costs;
- Eliminates the estate tax for all estates valued under \$2 million and allows for a uniform credit of \$99,600, effective Jan. 1, 2023;
- Allows municipalities to provide up to \$2,000 in property tax reductions for older residents participating in the senior work-off program, which is currently capped at \$1,500;
- Reduces the tax on short-term capital gains from 12% to 8.5%;
- Replaces the current three-prong sales tax apportionment for Massachusetts-headquartered businesses that incorporates property, payroll and sales with a new system that only factors in sales;
- Increases the maximum tax credit for septic tank repairs or replacement under Title V from \$6,000 to \$18,000 and also increases the amount that can be claimed to \$4,000 per year;
- Doubles the lead paint abatement to \$1,000 for partial abatement and \$3,000 for full abatement;
- Raises the statewide cap on the Housing Development Incentive Program from \$10 million to \$57 million for one year before setting the annual cap at \$30 million moving forward;
- Raises the annual authorization for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit from \$40 million to \$60 million;
- Allows cities and town to adopt a local property tax exemption for renters whose income falls below a certain level set by the community;
- Increases the statewide cap on the Dairy Tax Credit from \$6 million to \$8 million to assist local farmers impacted by reductions in milk prices;
- Makes public transit fares and certain other expenses eligible for the commuter expenses tax deduction;
- Expands the number of occupations eligible for the workforce development tax credit;
- Exempts employer student loan payments from being counted as taxable income by the state; and
- Increases the maximum amount of alcohol that hard ciders and still wines may contain from 6% of alcohol by weight to 8.5%, which will allow more of these locally produced products to be taxed at a lower rate.

House Bill 4104 must still be approved by the Senate and enacted in both branches before reaching Governor Maura Healey’s desk for her review and signature.

For additional information, contact Smola by email at Todd.Smola@mahouse.gov or call 617-722-2100.

## Knights host spaghetti dinner on Jan. 13

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

Dinner includes pasta fagioli, garden salad, meatballs and sausage, spaghetti and sauce, garlic bread, dessert, water, soda and coffee. The cost is a \$15 donation and \$10 for children under 12 years old.

Take-out is available at 6 p.m. and sit-down dinner is served at 6:30 p.m.

Advance ticket purchase is encouraged and appreciated. Tickets are available from any Knight or by calling 508-612-1649 or 41- 813-8100 or by emailing bobfalter@gmail.com or wallyconnor122@gmail.com.

Tickets will only be available at the door while they last. Admission tickets are also good for entry for special door prizes.

Raffle tickets for a 50/50 raffle and more will be available.

Proceeds from this event will help provide ongoing support to children orphaned by the conflict in Ukraine coordinated by Supporting Orphans Nationally & Globally (S.O.N.G.) of Brookfield.

Wally Connor, past Grand Knight of Council 11080, and Executive Director of S.O.N.G., Inc. recently returned from Rzeszow, Poland, and Irpin, Ukraine coordinating support for orphaned children in Refugee Centers and for children who have recently lost a parent, and some cases, have lost both parents in the war. S.O.N.G. has been providing ongoing direct support to these children since shortly after the invasion.

## Zonta Service Grants available for 2024

In keeping with Zonta’s more-than-100-year tradition of improving the lives of women and girls, the Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley is currently soliciting proposals from local non-profit organizations for projects that benefit women and/or youth.

Since its inception in 1991, the Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley has contributed over \$150 thousand in cash and in-kind donations to local non-profits.

The Zonta Service Grant Form application can be downloaded at [www.zontaqv.org/service-grant/](http://www.zontaqv.org/service-grant/) or requested by contacting [info@zontaqv.org](mailto:info@zontaqv.org).

Grants ranging from \$100 to \$2,000 will be awarded biannually, in May with a April 1 deadline and November with an Oct. 1 deadline. Proposals must include specific details of the project including the need that will be addressed with the funds.

In reviewing completed applications the committee will give preference for a hands-on component that can involve Zontians and supporters, if appropriate. The club’s efforts to raise funds for these grants included a Calendar Raffle, Golf Tournament and Poinsettia sales. Two-thirds of all profits are used to fund local initiatives; one-third goes to the Zonta Foundation for Women to fund global projects with partners including UNFPA, UNICEF USA, Girls Not Brides, Coalition to End Violence Against Women and Girls Globally and Women’s Empowerment Principles.

2022-2023 grant recipients included: Girl’s Inc of the Valley received a grant to help build new programs at their new Holyoke location.

YWCA of Western MA received a grant to purchase gift cards for individuals in their network to purchase essentials.

Safe Passage of Northampton to offset printing of a program booklet for Say Something - 8-hour skills-focused training program grounded in effective strategies of bystander intervention and empowerment self-defense.

Food Share in Palmer in support of stocking personal hygiene products and other items in short supply for women and girls.

Second Time’s a Charm in Palmer received a grant toward the purchase of different-sized gowns in short supply for teens in need.

Alianza DV Services, Inc. (formerly Womanshelter/ Companeros) in support of a fall showing of the Clothesline Project, a visual display of violence statistics that often go ignored. Each shirt is made by a survivor of violence or by someone who has lost a loved one to violence.

Inquiries can be directed to the Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley, Mary Knight the Communications Chair by emailing [info@zontaqv.org](mailto:info@zontaqv.org) or calling 413-219-8260.

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# - community -

## Nugget gets 'second chance' through Second Chance

EAST BROOKFIELD –Nugget, formerly known as Natty, faced unimaginable pain and adversity when he arrived at Second Chance Animal Services with a severe leg injury.

The dedicated team at Second Chance worked tirelessly to save his leg, but ultimately, the decision to amputate was made to ensure Nugget's comfort and quality of life.

In a heartwarming twist of fate, Nugget caught the attention of Matt and Nellie Zarif, the generous owners of Timberyard Brewing Company and longtime supporters of Second Chance. The brewery, known for its commitment to the community, had not only donated to Second Chance but also hosted events and provided storage for a large donation.

Nugget's story resonated with the Timberyard team, who had just started hosting popular puppy yoga classes to benefit Second Chance, led by the talented yoga instructor Audrey Martinez. The classes, held monthly, include a visit from friendly adoptable dogs available at Second Chance, who romp around the taproom while attendees work on their yoga moves.

Nugget, now thriving after his surgery, found his forever home with the Zarifs, joining a loving pack that includes three young boys and another three-legged dog, Lucy. Nugget's dog-sister wears a prosthetic leg and goes to work with her dog mom, Nellie Zarif, a prosthetist at Hanger Clinic in Worcester, where she helps to inspire people with limb loss.

Nellie considered making a prosthesis for Nugget but quickly realized that he did not need one due to the nature of



Nugget, once known as Natty, came to Second Chance with a severe leg injury and is now the Timberyard Brewery dog. SUBMITTED PHOTO

his amputation and his young age. "He is so fast on three legs that four legged dogs have a hard time keeping up with him," said Lindsay Doray, chief development officer at Second Chance, who expressed admiration for Nugget's resilience. "We were in awe of his determination."

As a proud member of the Timberyard family, Nugget comes to work with Matt Zarif every day and has become a local sensation. The staff from Second Chance, including the veterinarian that performed his surgery, stop by the brewery from time to time to visit him.

"Nugget is the smartest dog that I have ever met," said Zarif. "Like-Lassie level smart; when you talk to this dog, he understands you. He's the perfect

brewery dog, so well behaved, sweet, and friendly. He loves being a part of the action."

Nugget has embraced his role as a dogfluencer, delighting visitors at Timberyard and stealing the spotlight in social media posts.

His favorite gig? Greeting attendees on puppy yoga mornings.

He's even been spotted auditioning with Santa for a chance to be a reindeer, sitting patiently next to Santa for hours during his visits to the brewery, posing for photos with happy families, and helping to fundraise for a local charity. Nugget's journey from pain to fame is a testament to the power of love, resilience, and a community that cares.

## Zonta Club hosts foster care information meeting

LUDLOW – The Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley will hold a panel discussion and dinner on Monday, Feb. 12 at the Ludlow Country Club for anyone interested in learning more about the realities and opportunities in the foster care system in western Massachusetts.

The program will be facilitated by Andrea Bordenca, founder of Lead Yourself Youth and will include representatives from Family Justice Advocates, Department of Children and Family Volunteer Case Review Program and Family Resources, Court Appointed Special Advocates and other organizations that provide services to foster children and families.

The meeting will begin with socializing at 5:30 p.m. followed by a buffet dinner at 6 p.m., then the program. Dinner \$28 is payable by cash, check, or credit card the night of the event, but RSVP to info@zontaqv.org by 2/7 for the caterers.

Contact info@zontaqv.org for information on sliding scale fee.

While the experiences of foster chil-

dren vary widely, some common themes emerge during this critical, formative stage of their lives: trauma, instability and uncertainty, emotional and psychological challenges, and educational disruptions.

Children who are removed from their birth family due to neglect or abuse can be in multiple foster situations for a long time before being reunited or adopted by another family. Due to a severe shortage of foster homes and volunteer advocates, many of these youth are placed in any home with the space, whether or not it is the best match.

For more information, visit zontaqv.org/foster.

**About Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley**  
The Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley has members from the towns of Belchertown, Brimfield, Brookfield, East Brookfield, Hardwick, Holland, Monson, New Braintree, North Brookfield, Palmer, Spencer, Wales, Ware, Warren, West Brookfield, Chicopee, Hampden, Ludlow, Westfield and Wilbraham.



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Go to [www.healthyquaboag.org](http://www.healthyquaboag.org) to find vaccines near you.

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LEARN MORE



# Applications open for young women award

Applications for the 2024 Young Women in Public Affairs Award are available from the Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley.

Applications can be obtained from the high school guidance counselors in local towns and on its website: [ZontaQV.org/scholarships/](http://ZontaQV.org/scholarships/).

A local recipient will receive a \$1000 award, funded by the Zonta Club of the Quaboag Valley and will be entered for the District YWPA award. The District recipient will be eligible for a \$5,000 award from Zonta International.

According to Zonta Club President Dana Burton, the goal of the award is to encourage young women to participate in public and political life by recognizing a young woman's involvement in government, policy-making, and volunteerism.

"The YWPA program looks to the young women of today for leaders of tomorrow and advocates the Zonta International's mission of advancing the status of women worldwide," said Burton.

To be eligible for this award, applicants must be between the ages of 16 and 19, have an active commitment to volunteerism, leadership achievements, and experience in local or student government. Applicants must be pre-university or pre-college students.

Completed application and supporting documentation are due to the Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley by March 8.

## PROJECT | FROM PAGE 1

Department of Environmental Protection to remove more phosphorus from wastewater than the treatment plant could handle, due to its age.

"Almost all of the equipment in the facility is being updated," Nyberg said. "We're going to be automating as much as practical to be able to achieve better energy and operational efficiencies."

Nyberg said the upgrade will start at the septage receiving area, replacing two small tanks totaling 8,000 gallons of storage. He said the average house has a 1,000-2,000 gallon tank, and the town was "extremely limited" in being able to accept household septage.

"That storage was not compatible," he said, with the Department's need to continue to increase its revenue.

Nyberg said during the busy season, the plant takes in 25,000-30,000 gallons of septage. He said the new tanks will provide 40,000 gallons of storage.

He said they have also begun forming and pouring footings for the septage receiving building. Work has also begun on the administration building.

The old steel structure of the administration building was removed, and new footings were poured for the new steel structure.

Nyberg said the project is slightly ahead of schedule at this time.

### Fire/highway project committee

Eric Hevy offered his help to the Board of Selectmen to manage the Fire Department and Highway Department project, and to get a three- to five-member committee formed.

Hevy said he was on the original committee to build a new Fire Station, but the project was taken away from them when the costs to build a new station were

too high.

"I know the Selectmen have got a lot on their plate," Hevy said. "I'm just here to offer my services; to help out. I'd really like to get the committee back together so that when it comes time to make some decisions at the department level, the committee will be there to help out."

Hevy said there are still decisions that need to be made at the department level once the project moves forward.

Hevy said he has experience dealing with projects in town, including acting as co-chair of the Police Station building project.

"I helped build this; managed the project," he said. "We had a lot of challenges in this property [Police Station]. We had a lot to deal with."

Hevy said he has experience dealing with Owner's Project Managers and architects.

"I want to be involved and I'd like to manage it and help you guys move this process through," Hevy said, in order to avoid delays. "I think it would be very beneficial for the town, if we can get this thing out to bid in mid-January."

Board of Selectmen Clerk Elizabeth "Brooke" Canada said forming a committee could be beneficial to the town, and help to keep the project on track. Board of Selectmen Vice-Chair John Tripp said he was concerned that forming another committee would create more bureaucracy rather than keep the project moving.

Canada and Board of Selectmen Chair Jason Petraitis voted in favor of forming a three-member committee.

Hevy and Fire Chief Darin Anderson were appointed to fill two of the seats. The third member would ideally be from the Highway Department.

### Visit from state Senator

Recently elected State Sen. Peter Durant, representing 22 towns in the Worcester and Hampshire District, made an appearance before the Board of Selectmen.

Durant said his office is still filling some of the staff positions, but he encouraged the Board to reach out to the Chief of Staff Ann Gaudreau and Legislative Director Curtis Boucher.

Durant said himself and his staff are trying to keep communication open, especially during budget season.

"We're always here," Durant said. Durant said his team is working closely with state Rep. Donnie Berthiaume on issues that are important to the town.

Durant said his Chief of Staff will be organizing monthly office hours starting in January.

### Spending requests

Anderson requested approval to spend \$375 for two batteries for Engine 2; \$350 for brake replacement on Car 2; \$700 for new tires for Car 1. The Board approved these spending requests.

Highway Superintendent Jason Benoit requested approval to spend \$971 on a power control modulator for the 2011 F350 truck. The Board approved this request as well.

### IT grant

Petraitis said the town received an information technology grant in the amount of \$17,000 to purchase computers and software, thanks to efforts by Town Clerk Tara Hayes.

### Fire Department report

For the month of November, the Fire Department responded to 19 calls including two building fires, one cooking fire, three medical assists, four motor vehicle accidents, one flammable liquid spill, two carbon monoxide incidents, one false alarm, one carbon monoxide malfunction and one smoke detector malfunction.

Anderson reminded residents to clean chimneys twice a year and service furnaces at least once a year. Ashes should be properly contained and removed from the house.

Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors should be checked monthly.

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# SPORTS

## Offense falters in loss to Falcons



Riley West tries to hold on to the ball.



May Gidopoulos looks for an opening to drive to the hoop. TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Nikki Vejak makes her way down the right side of the court.



Sophie Ezzo makes a pass inside the paint.

**WILBRAHAM** – Last Wednesday, Tantasqua girls basketball fell to Minnechaug 36-30. It was a rare power outage for the Warriors, which led in the third quarter before giving up the lead. Maya Gidopoulos had 10 points while Gabby Scanlon added eight points. The Warriors are now 4-2 on the season.



Sophie Webb makes a pass on the run.

## Auburn falls in close match with Minnechaug

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

AUBURN— Auburn High School is one of the six non-league opponents from Central Massachusetts listed on the Minnechaug Regional hockey schedule.

The Rockets, who co-op with both Shepherd Hill, and Tantasqua Regional, entered last Wednesday afternoon's contest with a perfect 4-0 overall record. The Falcons players enjoyed the bus ride back to Wilbraham following a thrilling 3-2 non-league victory at the Horgan Skating Arena in Auburn.

"They're a quality hockey team and this is probably one of the best wins of my coaching career," said Minnechaug head coach Kyle Bousquet. "We put a lot of pressure on them, and we capitalized on



Owen Stattenfield flicks the puck away ahead of pressure. TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

their mistakes. It was a great all-around team effort."

The Falcons (4-1), who also defeated the Rockets, 2-1, a year ago, won their fourth consecutive game since a season opening loss to Longmeadow.

One of the key players in the Falcons victory against the Rockets was senior goalie Gage

Vedovelli, who made a total of 52 saves. He also made 39 saves in the Falcons 2-1 win against West Springfield at the beginning of the regular season.

"Gage played a phenomenal game today, along with our defensemen," Bousquet said. "He made a couple of huge saves

See HOCKEY | PAGE 11

## Quabbin competes at Agawam tournament

AGAWAM – Quabbin Regional wrestling took part in Agawam's Phil Tomkiel Holiday Tournament last Thursday. As a team, Agawam took the crown with an impressive 274.5 points. Natick placed second with 234 points. Also compet-

ing was Chicopee, which placed ninth with 68 points, South Hadley (12th) with 56 points, Holyoke (13th) with 53 points, and Quabbin Regional (14th) with 46 points. Agawam also placed a "B" squad in the meet,

See WRESTLING | PAGE 11



Jack Fors goes for the pin. TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



- sports -

# Pioneers fall after big comeback by Palmer

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

PALMER— After falling behind early in the first quarter, the Palmer Panthers boys basketball team responded by scoring 14 unanswered points and they coasted to a 53-37 non-league victory over the Pioneers in front of a capacity crowd inside the Pathfinder Tech gymnasium.

“This is a really big win for us because a lot of the kids know each other,” said Palmer first-year head coach Missy Roker. “We also held them to less than 40 points, which is one of our team goals in every game. Whenever we’re able to do that, there is a very good chance that we’ll win the game.”

The Panthers headed into the new year with a 4-1 overall record.

The Pioneers (3-1) suffered their first loss of the regular season.

“Obviously, this wasn’t the result that we wanted, but I think we’re heading in the right direction,” said second-year Pathfinder head coach Zac Button. “You just have to give Palmer a lot of credit because they played an outstanding game against us tonight.”

The last meeting on the hardwood between the two high schools, which are separated by less than a mile, took place at Palmer High on February 17, 2021. The Panthers won that contest by 28 points.

Both head coaches are hoping that the series can continue during the next couple of years.

“It would be nice if we could continue playing Pathfinder in the future and make it more of a rivalry game,” Roker said. “I think it’s a very good thing for the community.”

“This was a huge game for us,” Button said. “I’m really hoping that Palmer and Pathfinder Tech can play each other every year. It was a great environment tonight.”

A couple of the Panthers supporters who attended the road game were Palmer High School Principal Susan North and Athletic Director Matt Marciniac.

“The players have been working very hard at practice, so it was fantastic for them to have a lot of support at tonight’s game,” Roker added. “I’m hoping that we can keep building our fan support throughout the course of the regular

season. The players really deserve it.” Pathfinder Athletic Director Tyler Simmons, along with several Palmer Police Officers, did an outstanding job of keep everything under control throughout the j.v. and varsity games.

It was a very memorable game for Palmer senior captains Andrew Menard and Shawn Troche.

“It was awesome getting an opportunity to play against Pathfinder for the first time,” said Troche, who scored all seven of his points during the third quarter. “When I was in the eighth grade, a couple of the Pathfinder players were my teammates on a Palmer Youth Basketball team. We won a championship title that season.”

Menard, who was a force at the defensive end, finished the contest with five points.

Palmer freshman Taydem Haley, who’s also a captain, led the way offensively in the road victory with a game-high 16 points, which was also his season-high. He has scored ten or more points in four of the first five games.

“Taydem has been a catalyst offensively for us so far this season,” Roker said. “He has been consistently scoring in double digits. That’s what we’re expecting from him.”

The seven Pathfinder seniors, who were hoping to celebrate a victory against Palmer, are Trevor Allard, Hunter Griswold, Richie Gula, Branden Hnitecki, Luke Magnus, Adrien Moskowitz, and Adam Slonka.

The home team raced out to a 5-0 lead less than two minutes into the contest.

The Pioneers got on the scoreboard on the game’s first possession following a Slonka (10 points) old fashion three point play. Then following a steal by Gula, who led the home team with 12 points, Mitchell (3 points) hit a jumper in the lane.

A pair of inside hoops by Palmer sophomore Gavin Smola (8 points), which were sandwiched around a made free throw from sophomore Dylan Doherty (5 points) tied the score for the first and only time.

With 4:55 left in the opening quarter, a Haley steal and lay-up gave the Panthers the lead and they never looked back after that.

Palmer entered the second stanza



Hunter Griswold takes a free throw.



Adrien Moskowitz takes a shot. TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

with a 14-5 lead following back-to-back lay-ups by sophomore Angel Torres (8 points) and a Haley coast-to-coast lay-up.

A little more than a minute into the second quarter, the Pioneers were only trailing by three points (14-11). Gula buried a 3-pointer from the left side and Moskowitz (5 points) was fouled while making a lay-up. He added the bonus free throw completing the old fashion three point play.

The Panthers closed out the first half with a 13-4 run and headed into the locker room holding a 27-15 lead.

A Troche 3-pointer from the left corner increased the Panthers lead to 31-17 three minutes into the third quarter.

“I didn’t score any points in the first

half, so it felt very good after I made the 3-pointer in the third quarter,” said Troche, who joined the varsity basketball team as a sophomore. “I also scored a few more points, which helped us keep the momentum.”

A put-back hoop by Palmer sophomore Stephen Fredette capped off a 9-0 run and it pushed the Panthers lead to over twenty points (40-19) for the first time.

The Pioneers outscored the Panthers, 17-9 over the final eight minutes of the contest, but they couldn’t get any closer than 16 points.

The two boys’ basketball teams are scheduled to meet again down the street at Palmer High School during the 2024-25 regular season.



Seth Mitchell flies for a layup.



Richie Gula tries to sent a shot over the defense.



Adam Slonka goes after the ball.



# - sports -

## HOCKEY | FROM PAGE 9

during the third period.”

The Falcons senior-laden defensive unit is led by Derek Semanie, Tim Harrigan, Mike Roy, and Jake Klakotskiy, who returned to action after missing a few games with an injury.

Freshmen defensemen Cam Faneuff and Jameson Murray also played in their first varsity games against Auburn.

Even of the players listed on the Auburn varsity hockey roster attend Tantasqua. They are senior Gabe Rice, sophomore Nathan Dono, senior Sam Panek, senior Peter Casine, junior Austin Dono, who’s an alternate captain, senior Owen Stattenfield, sophomore Jake Tully, sophomore Max Sealey, senior Emmet O’Brien, senior captain Braeden Rich, and sophomore starting goalie Ethan LaPlante, who’s also an alternate captain.

“This is probably the most players that we’ve had from Tantasqua during the six years that we’ve been co-oping with them,” said Glen Bombard, who has been the Auburn hockey coach for the past 34 years. “It gives those kids an opportunity to play hockey and it also helps our program.”

LaPlante (6 saves), who’s one of the best goalies in the Quinn Conference, didn’t see as much action as Vedovelli did.

The Rockets outshot the Falcons, 18-3, during the first period, but they were trailing 1-0 entering the second.

“We just ran into a hot goaltender,” Bombard said. “He just stood on his head in today’s game, which was the difference. This is our first loss of the season, but we’ll be fine. We weren’t going to go 20-0.”

Minnechaug senior Gabe Tassinari scored a short-handed goal, giving the visiting team an early 1-0 lead with 11:18 remaining in the opening period.

It looked like the Rockets had tied the score on a goal by freshman Logan Rada just as the power play had expired. The goal was disallowed by the referees because the net had come loose from its pegs prior to the shot attempt.

The Falcons also killed another power play in the first period, which was the only other penalty committed by either



Goalie Ethan LaPlante reins in the puck. Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli



Nathan Dono turns play around.

team for the remainder of the contest.

“We played a game earlier this season where we only had one penalty and the other team had two,” Bousquet said. “I would rather play a game without very many penalties than have a game where they call every little thing. It also allows you to play all your lines.”

A little more than five minutes into the second period, Auburn scored the equalizer on a goal by junior Sullivan O’Brien. The game tying goal was assisted by senior Erik Dupuis, and Emmet O’Brien.

The Falcons retook the lead again two minutes later when Tassinari fired a shot from the right circle for another unassisted goal.

Then a tip-in goal from senior Tristen Hottin at the 10:32 mark, gave Minnechaug a 3-1 advantage.

Junior Brayden O’Sullivan and Klakotskiy were credited with the assists on the Falcons third goal.

Rich scored the only goal of the final period, which cut the Rockets deficit to 3-2 with a little less than ten minutes remaining in regulation. Austin Dono was credited with the assist.



Ethan McDermott makes his way up the ice.

With 2:45 left on the scoreboard clock, Auburn had a golden opportunity to score the tying goal, but a shot attempt sailed wide of the net.

It was the only meeting of the regular season between the two squads, but they could possibly meet again in the Division 2 state tournament.



Matthew Tolman competes in an early round match 190 pounds.



Christian Stolgitis locks up with an opponent in a heavyweight match.

## WRESTLING | FROM PAGE 9

and their squad came in eighth with 79.5 points. Agawam would crown three individual champions and five runner-ups. Holyoke

had an individual champion as well. Holyoke’s Steven Santiago was a champion at 113 pounds, while Agawam was led by Jordin Agosto (120), Nicholas Ugolini

(132), and Ilya Shlemanov (150) led Agawam. There was also a girls tournament that several teams sent competitors to.



Noah Mielt locks up in a match. TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Sam Jamieson competes in a 132-pound match.





Over 60 people joined the East Quabbin Land Trust for its annual New Year's Day group walk on the Mass Central Rail Trail. Participants stopped to pose for a photo along the Ware River, on a newly stone-dusted section of trail in Wheelwright. *TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA OUIMETTE*

**NEW YEAR | FROM PAGE 1**

Covered Bridge, as well as Upper Church Street in Ware.

Henshaw credited volunteers with helping to replace timbers on the decking of the lattice truss and pony truss bridges along the Mass Central Rail Trail.

The volunteers "put in a huge amount of effort to make the bridges safe," Henshaw said.

Volunteers and others also helped to spread stone dust along a newly cleared section of Mass Central Rail Trail in Wheelwright, giving way to a stunning view of the Ware River and the Wheelwright dam.

For more information about EQLT and its mission, visit eqlt.org or find them on Facebook and Instagram.



People of all ages took to the Mass Central Rail Trail from New Braintree to Wheelwright for New Year's Day.



Judith Jones leads her daughter, Susannah, on horseback.



Cordelia Grandinetti gets a lift from her friend Callia Rich.

**FLOODING | FROM PAGE 1**

five foot diameter pipe spans from the I-84 exit ramp to the cemetery near the end of Maple Street.

"There's about 16 feet of water above the culvert," Blakeley said. "The clog is located 11 feet in."

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation sent divers under the water to assess the culvert and locate the clog.

"They are hoping to put pumps in, and they had to put a pipe across New Boston so that they could discharge the water on the other side," Blakeley said. Hitting rocks and continuous heavy rainfall have caused delays in the project.

Blakeley said MassDOT started the project but had to delay due to the rain. She said the state is paying for the cost of this project and is responsible for salting New Boston Road to prevent freezing as temperatures drop.

"It's in a very critical area and it's very dangerous," Blakeley said of the location of the clog.

**Water Department report**

Veolia's Project Manager for Stur-

bridge Shane Moody said some of the pump stations have been affected by the heavy rainfall that day. His department has been running additional pumps to handle the additional flow.

He said he expects the stations to be able to handle the flow on their own by later that night.

Moody said the reason for ongoing carbonaceous biochemical oxygen demand and biochemical oxygen demand issues isn't clear, but he said it could be caused by leachate.

Moody said he can't say the leachate is the issue, and added that the town is not in violation for CBOD or BOD. He said a third tank will be repaired and turned on in February which will help them determine if that is the issue or not.

"There's not many towns that treat leachate at their own facility," Moody said, as Sturbridge does, adding that it would be costly to send it out for treatment.

**Police Chief contract**

Town Administrator Robin Grimm said Police Chief Earl Dessert requested a five-year contract, which she supports.

"I've worked with a lot of police de-

partments," Grimm said. "Of all the towns I have worked in, this is currently the most functional police department administratively that I have seen."

She said she is very grateful for Dessert's leadership and organization.

Selectman Mary Dowling said Dessert is "the whole package" and she fully supports having a five-year contract. Board members unanimously approved Dessert's contract for a five-year term.

**Appointments**

The Board appointed Leah Corriveau to the position of full-time dispatcher with the Police Department; Matthew Obrzut to the position of heavy equipment operator with the DPW; Jeremy Chenier to the position of laborer/driver with the DPW; and Andrew Corbine to the position of mechanic/equipment operator.

**Resignation**

The Board accepted the resignation of Special Events Committee member Lisa M. Beaudin.

**Town Administrator's report**

Grimm said during the closure of the Joshua Hyde Public Library due to an ongoing HVAC project, some of the library staff have lent their services to the

Town Hall.

She thanked the Fire Department for driving Santa Claus through town over the weekend.

Grimm requested approval from the Board to prepare a license document with Dish in order to present it to the Board to review the placement of an antenna in town. She said it would be a license and not a lease, and the town would be able to end it at any time.

Blanchard said she believes this is a good idea to have Grimm conduct discussions with Dish.

**Surplus items**

Blakeley said there are three vehicles that are nonoperational that can be disposed of or auctioned off. Two vehicles will be scrapped, and a loader will be auctioned for parts only.

The Board voted to approve Blakeley's recommendations for the surplus vehicles.

**Donation**

The Board accepted donations from the Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale in the amount of \$250 each for the Police Department's Youth Account and the Fire Department.



# OLA to conduct ELE review of Quaboag Regional School District

WARREN/WEST BROOKFIELD – During the week of March 4, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s Office of Language Acquisition will conduct a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review of Quaboag Regional School District.

The Office of Language Acquisition reviews each district’s and charter school’s English learner education program every six years to monitor compliance with federal and state ELE laws and regulations. Areas of review will include English learners’ student assessments; identification of English learners; what programs English learners are in; parent and community involvement; curriculum and instruction; student sup-

port services, licensure requirements for faculty, staff, and administration; program plans; and evaluation and recordkeeping.

In addition to the onsite visit, parent outreach is an important part of the review process. The district will send a survey to the parents of students whose records the review team examines.

The survey focuses on key areas of their child’s English learner education program. OLA will review survey results and contribute to the monitoring report.

Parents and other individuals may call Judith Magloire, Office of Language Acquisition Review Chairperson, at 781-338- 5371 to request a telephone inter-

view. If an individual requires an accommodation, such as translation, to participate in an interview, DESE will make the necessary arrangements.

Within approximately 60 business days of the onsite visit, the review chairperson will provide the (district or charter school) with a report with information about areas in which the (district or charter school) meets or exceeds regulatory requirements and areas in which the (district or charter school) requires assistance to correct or improve practices.

The report will be available to the public at [www.doe.mass.edu/ele/cpr/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/cpr/).

# Opioids and Opioid Rescue Training

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*Presented By:*

Kirsten L. Krieger RN, BSN  
Public Health Nurse  
(413) 967-9615

Email: [kkrieger@townofware.com](mailto:kkrieger@townofware.com)

Website: [www.quabbinhealthdistrict.com](http://www.quabbinhealthdistrict.com)

**Please RSVP by 1/12/2024 to:**  
[kkrieger@townofware.com](mailto:kkrieger@townofware.com)

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The Town of Palmer is seeking qualified applicants for the full-time position of Inspector of Buildings/ Building Commissioner. Must have certification as a local inspector by the State Board of Building Regulations and Standards and obtain Certification as an Inspector of Buildings/ Building Commissioner within the time limit allotted in Massachusetts State Building Code 780 CMP Section 110.R7. For a full job description please visit [www.town-ofpalmer.com/jobs](http://www.town-ofpalmer.com/jobs). Qualified and interested applicants should submit their cover letter and resume to Robert Reed [reed@townofpalmer.com](mailto:reed@townofpalmer.com).

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## New Braintree Police Log

During the weeks of Dec. 11-25, the Hardwick/New Braintree Police Department responded to 30 building/property checks, 54 directed/area patrols, eight traffic controls, one radar assignment, 14 safety hazards, one larceny/theft/shoplifting, eight citizen assists, one assist other agency, one investigation, nine emergency 911 calls, two animal calls, one motor vehicle accident and two motor vehicle stops in the town of New Braintree.

### Wednesday, Dec. 13

2:38 p.m. Larceny/Theft/Shoplifting, West Brookfield Road, Taken/Referred to Other Agency

### Thursday, Dec. 14

1:01 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Ravine Road, Written Warning

8:09 a.m. Safety Hazard, Utley Road, Taken/Referred to Other Agency

8:15 a.m. Safety Hazard, North Brookfield Road, Taken/Referred to Other Agency

5:26 p.m. Investigation, Hardwick Road, Officer Handled

### Friday, Dec. 15

5:59 a.m. Safety Hazard, Hardwick Road, Dispatch Handled

### Saturday, Dec. 16

4:54 p.m. 911 Complaint/Motor Vehicle Operations, Hardwick Road, Negative Contact

### Sunday, Dec. 17

11:52 a.m. 911 Motor Vehicle Accident, Barre Road, Removed Hazard

12:52 p.m. 911 Animal Call, Bernard Whitney Road, Services Rendered

### Monday, Dec. 18

6 a.m. Safety Hazard, North Brookfield Road, Negative Contact

6:10 a.m. Safety Hazard, Oakham Road, Dispatch Handled

9:11 a.m. Safety Hazard, Oakham Road, Dispatch Handled

10:33 a.m. Safety Hazard, Utley Road, Taken/Referred to Other Agency

10:34 a.m. Safety Hazard, Wine Road, Taken/Referred to Other Agency

3 p.m. Assist Citizen, Memorial Drive, Dispatch Handled

6:03 p.m. Safety Hazard, Oakham Road, Services Rendered

### Tuesday, Dec. 19

1:22 p.m. 911 Assist Citizen, Moore Road, Services Rendered

3:54 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, McEvoy Road, Transported to Hospital

4:23 p.m. 911 Medial Emergency, Hardwick Road, Transported to Hospital

### Wednesday, Dec. 20

5:50 a.m. Safety Hazard, Barre Road, Taken/Referred to Other Agency

6:47 a.m. Safety Hazard, Unitas Road, Taken/Referred to Other Agency

6:53 a.m. Safety Hazard, West Brookfield Road, Taken/Referred to Other Agency

8:59 a.m. Assist Citizen, Unknown Location, Officer Handled

9:21 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Hardwick Road, Dispatch Handled

9:58 a.m. Assist Citizen, Ravine Road, Officer Handled

10:01 a.m. Assist Citizen, Unitas Road, Officer Handled

12:27 p.m. Assist Citizen, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

### Thursday, Dec. 21

8:28 a.m. Safety Hazard, Horse Rests, Taken/Referred to Other Agency

10:20 a.m. 911 Hang-up/Abandoned, Unitas Road, Spoken To

12:06 p.m. 911 Disabled Motor Vehicle, Hardwick Road, Services Rendered

6:15 p.m. Safety Hazard, Pierce Road, Taken/Referred to Other Agency

6:38 p.m. 911 Hang-up/Abandoned, Webb Road, Transported to Hospital

### Friday, Dec. 22

10:48 a.m. Assist Citizen, Webb Court, Officer Handled

### Sunday, Dec. 24

7:56 a.m. 911 Threat, Sibley Road, Services Rendered

11:49 a.m. Assist Citizen, Unknown Location, Officer Handled

## East Brookfield Police Log

During the week of Dec. 25-31, the East Brookfield Police Department responded to 161 building/property checks, 57 directed area patrols, one traffic control, 19 radar assignments, seven emergency 911 calls, one parking complaint, three citizen assists, four assist other agencies, one threat, two animal calls and 42 motor vehicle stops in the town of East Brookfield.

### Monday, Dec. 25

11:04 a.m. Assist Citizen, East Main Street, Dispatch Handled

### Tuesday, Dec. 26

2:46 a.m. Parking Complaint, East Main Street, Officer Handled

2:52 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued

8:51 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Po-dunk Road, Officer Handled

2:47 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Haywood Drive, Services Rendered

3:11 p.m. Assist Citizen, Connie Mack Drive, Officer Handled

4:55 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, East Main Street, Services Rendered

7:50 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued

8:17 p.m. Medical Emergency, North Street, Transported to Hospital

### Wednesday, Dec. 27

9:24 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Po-dunk Road, Services Rendered

1:15 p.m. Assist Citizen, South Pond, Officer Handled

1:22 p.m. Unattended Death, South Street, Death/Unattended

5:52 p.m. Medical Emergency, Baker Hill Road, Transported to Hospital

9:11 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, West Sturbridge Road, Citation Issued

### Thursday, Dec. 28

10:39 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, East Main Street, Transported to Hospital

11:22 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Out of Town, Call Canceled

4:26 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, North Brookfield Road, Citation Issued

9:56 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation issued

### Friday, Dec. 29

9:05 a.m. Threat, Wildwood Road, Investigated

2:01 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued

### Saturday, Dec. 30

9:11 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Written Warning

9:27 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Po-dunk Road, Citation Issued

12:56 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, West Main Street, Citation issued

3:42 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Route 49, Citation Issued

### Sunday, Dec. 31

12:02 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Po-dunk Road, Citation Issued

3:23 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Arrest(s) Made

6:35 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Unknown Location, Report Taken

7:22 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued

9:11 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Stevens Road, Citation Issued

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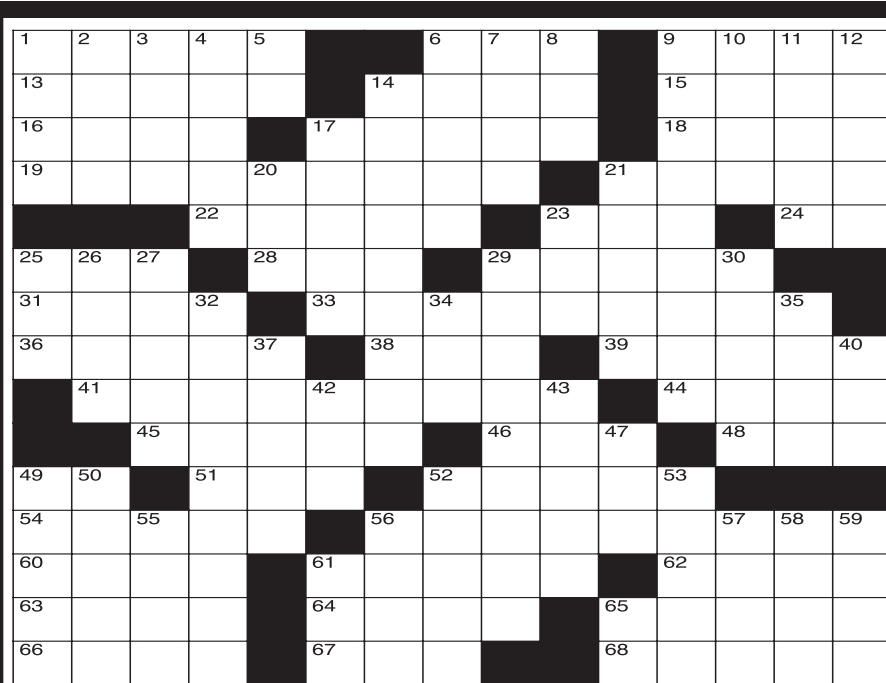
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## Town of Warren, MA Town Accountant JOB POSTING Full-Time – Town Benefited Position

The Town of Warren is actively seeking a qualified professional to fill the position of Town Accountant. The Town Accountant oversees the proper expenditure of all Town funds and the proper recording and maintenance of financial records, approves all financial payments and audits financial records and transactions. The Town Accountant is responsible for maintaining and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of all areas under his/her direction and control. A complete job description can be found on the Town's website [www.warren-ma.gov](http://www.warren-ma.gov).

Recommended minimum qualifications include graduate of a four-year college with a bachelor's degree in finance or accounting with three years of related work experience; or any equivalent combination of education, training and experience which provides the required knowledge of the position. Preferred experience with Vadar accounting module and municipal accounting. The anticipated salary range for this position is between \$56,000.00 to \$66,000.00 based on relative education and professional work experience. Resumes and Cover Letters will be accepted until **January 16, 2024**. Please email your resume and cover letter to Town Administrator, Jim Ferrera, [townadministrator@warren-ma.gov](mailto:townadministrator@warren-ma.gov).



### CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Bleated
- 6. Snake-like fish
- 9. Database management system
- 13. Russian-American violinist
- 14. Wendy's founder Thomas
- 15. Ancient Italian-Greek colony
- 16. Negatives
- 17. Rescued
- 18. Self-immolation by fire ritual
- 19. Assigns tasks to
- 21. Island nation native
- 22. Trade
- 23. Detergent brand
- 24. Famed NY Giant
- 25. Before
- 28. Split pulses
- 29. Extremely angry; highly incensed
- 31. Body part
- 33. American state
- 36. David \_\_, US playwright
- 38. Move one's head slightly
- 39. Secret rendezvous
- 41. Improved
- 44. A place to exercise
- 45. 18-year astronomical period
- 46. Automobile
- 48. You can take it
- 49. A radio band
- 51. Jaws of an animal
- 52. Short-billed rails
- 54. Chinese province
- 56. Shameless and undisguised
- 60. Horizontal passage into a mine
- 61. Adult males
- 62. Fail to entertain
- 63. Dried-up
- 64. City in north-central Utah
- 65. Southern U.S.
- 66. German river
- 67. Oxygen
- 68. Make law
- 1. Curved segment
- 2. Wings
- 3. From pentane (Chemistry)
- 4. Gradually gets into (abbr.)
- 6. Overhang
- 7. Christmas and New Year's have them
- 8. Type of bulb
- 9. Lacking a plan
- 10. Tattle
- 11. Rockers like it "heavy"
- 12. One who's been canonized
- 14. Indicate time and place
- 17. Nobel Prize winner in physics
- 20. The voice of Olaf
- 21. Fragmented rock
- 23. They \_\_
- 25. Master of Philosophy
- 26. Backside
- 27. Landmark house in L.A.
- 29. An act of undue intimacy
- 30. From which a later word is derived
- 32. Equal to 10 meters
- 34. Neither
- 35. Computer language
- 37. Sacred book of Judaism
- 40. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
- 42. A way to dedicate
- 43. Challenges
- 47. British Air Aces
- 49. Large, influential bank
- 50. Portended
- 52. Cavalry-sword
- 53. Vaccine developer
- 55. Napoleonic Wars general
- 56. Italian Seaport
- 57. Hip joint
- 58. \_\_ Clapton, musician
- 59. Insect repellent
- 61. Decorative scarf
- 65. Delaware

### CLUES DOWN



# QUABOAG CURRENT

<b>NEW BRAINTREE</b> Steinhilber joins Farmer Matt's p3	<b>NORTH BROOKFIELD</b> NBPS posts child find p5	<b>WARREN</b> OLA to review QRSD's ELE p13	Editorial/Opinion Sports Classifieds Police Logs	<b>4</b> <b>9</b> <b>14</b> <b>15</b>
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Volume 17, Number 6

Friday, January 5, 2024

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