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Friday, January 9, 2026

Ringling in the New Year

First Night celebrated in North Brookfield

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – It was a townwide celebration as North Brookfield held its First Night on the final day of 2025.

There were plenty of places to go and plenty of activities to do on New Year's Eve in North Brookfield as the community came together to wrap up 2025. First Night 2025 was sponsored by the North Brookfield Cultural Council and North Brookfield Parks & Recreation.

At the Haston Free Public Library, the theme of their First Night celebration was the 250th anniversary of the United States of America. As you walked through the front door you saw the library featured red, white and blue décor including a large banner featuring the U.S. celebrating its 250th birthday in 2026.

In the reading room there were Colonial themed snacks and games as well as a raffle being held. The prizes for the raffle were donated by Friends of the Haston Free Public Library and library staff.

Youth Services Librarian Brianna Lamb said this was



Shown from left are President of the Friends of the Library Dawn Sedlier, local author Jack McClintock, Kathleen McClintock, and Ducati Sedlier celebrating First Night at the library and the theme was America's 250th anniversary.

the first raffle hosted by the library and a total of 20 prizes were donated.

Local author Jack McClintock was at the library for a meet and greet and shared some of his published works. McClintock and his wife Kathleen dressed for the occasion related to the 250th Anniversary of the U.S. theme. Kathleen and Jack dressed as a couple from the colonial period.

McClintock had copies of

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Local musician Sue Lyons performed at the Herard Estates Common Room in North Brookfield during First Night.



Sewer Department Superintendent Eric Cardenas pointed to a filter and explained how it worked during a recent tour of North Brookfield's Biological Nutrient Removal Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Tour highlighted upgraded wastewater treatment plant

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – As part of the town's First Night activities on New Year's Eve, the Sewer Department led a tour of the recently upgraded Biological Nutrient Removal Wastewater Treatment Plant located at 59 East Brookfield Road.

Over a dozen people joined Sewer Department Superintendent Eric Cardenas and Operators Michael Mercandante and Kyle Notre for a tour of the facility, which uses three types of wastewater treatment processes: physical, biological and chemical.

Cardenas has worked for the town's Sewer Department for the past 10 years,

taking on the role of Superintendent almost two years ago.

The tour started in the Administrative Building, which contains a lab to test the wastewater throughout the various stages of treatments. In the lab, Cardenas showed samples of the liquid streams, starting with the influent (raw sewage with some septage mixed in) to the final product, effluent, that is ready for discharge.

He said it takes about a day for the influent to go through the full treatment to discharge as effluent.

"It's all dependent on the flow," he said.

The flow changes season-to-season, with the pro-

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Children's table is returned to Little Park

NORTH BROOKFIELD – A group of volunteers met at Little Park this past Saturday, to permanently install the children's picnic table and returning it to the spot where it has been since 2019.

The table was removed

recently over concerns about a chain connecting it to the adjacent table posing a tripping hazard.

The table has now been permanently secured to the pavers, and will continue to provide a place to sit for the town's youngest residents.



John Tripp is shown sitting on the children's picnic table at Little Park this past Saturday, after the table was permanently installed.



Ernie Grimes and John Tripp secured the children's picnic table at Little Park.



The East Quabbin Land Trust celebrated the start of 2026 with its annual New Year's Day walk along the Mass Central Rail Trail. Participants trekked to the Ware River (bordering Grenville Park), starting from Church Street in Ware.

EQLT celebrated New Year on the rail trail

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

WARE – More than 30 people enjoyed a walk through the first snow on the first day of the New Year last week.

This annual walk was hosted by the East Quabbin Land Trust and this year, it was held on the Mass Central Rail Trail on Church Street, heading toward Grenville Park.

The walk, which was just under two and a half miles, first stopped for a group photo along the loop trail at the Ware River. The loop trail is located in a pitch pine grove; a species of tree that thrives in heat and was

resistant to the fires caused by sparks from the trains using the former railroad tracks that the trail is built on.

From there, participants walked to another point of the river, adjacent to Grenville Park.

Last year, the town finalized a purchase of the Pelski property, which runs between the trail and the park. This purchase will allow the town to develop 1,500 feet of 10-foot wide, stone dust-packed accessible trail to connect the trail and the park.

East Quabbin Land Trust Executive Director Cynthia Henshaw said the project would be completed by the end of June, through the use

of a grant. She said volunteer days would be held to build the trail, including a 20-foot bridge.

Henshaw said there would also be a study to construct another bridge, connecting the Robbins Road section of Mass Central Rail Trail to the area of South Street.

"We'll be able to connect to Grenville Park when that bridge is done," she said.

As the group of participants reached the end of the trail before turning around and returning to the parking lot, land trust volunteer Bud Pratt gave a quick history on winters in New England, and a glimpse into what they were like 250th years ago, in the midst of

the Revolution.

"This winter is more like winters of long ago," Pratt said, with low temperatures, high winds, and frequent snowstorms.

Pratt said from the 1500s to the 1800s, there was a little ice age.

He said during this time, the rivers would freeze solid, and would be used to travel upon. He said when General George Washington was at Valley Forge; it was "one of the harshest winters" on record.

"Back then, winter was winter," he said.

This New Year's Day walk was part of the East Quabbin Land Trust's series

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- community -



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Over 20 people enjoyed a First Day Hike with the Friends of Sturbridge Trails on New Year's Day.

Sturbridge Trekkers enjoyed First Day Hike

STURBRIDGE – The annual Friends of Sturbridge Trails (FrOST) First Day Hike was held on Jan. 1 and enjoyed by 21 participants who braved the chilly winds and freshly fallen snow, traveling the easier trails on the Leadmine Mt. Conservation Lands.

The hike was led by Dave Peterkin, an avid hiker and member of the Trails Committee, and assisted by Trail Committee members Dave Vadnaise and Jen Scherer.

This Friends of Sturbridge Trails event is the first of several that will be



First Day trekkers stopped by a frozen pond on the Leadmine trails.

held throughout 2026. Upcoming events include the annual meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 20 at 7 p.m. at the

Public House and the always-fun ice sculpture contest in mid-February.

To learn more about

joining FrOST, its upcoming events and the Sturbridge Trail system visit: www.treksturbridge.org.

Learn to bake at the library

EAST BROOKFIELD – The East Brookfield Public Library, 122 Connie Mack Drive, is offering a fun program for those who love to bake.

Come learn how to decorate cookies, cupcakes and cakes at the library and expand on your baking experience. The library is looking for supplies for this program, which include cupcake wrappers, and cake decorating supplies such as decorating tips, bags, sprinkles, cake mixes, cookie mixes, confectioneries, sugar, and food coloring.

This program will be

held on the last Tuesday of the month at 1:30 p.m. starting in February. Donations for this program are greatly appreciated.

Registration is required for this program and should be done one week prior to the program. Contact Library Director, Carolann MacMaster, for more details.

The East Brookfield Public Library strives to provide comprehensive programs and a diverse collection in a welcoming environment. The library can be contacted at 508-867-6769 and can also be followed on Facebook.

Town Clerk announces annual election information

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The North Brookfield Annual Town Election will be held on Monday, May 4.

The last day to submit nomination papers is Monday, March 16, 2026, at 5 p.m.

The following offices are up for election: Board of Selectmen – one seat, three-year term; Board of Assessors – one seat, three-year term; Board of Assessors – one seat, two-year term (to fill a vacancy); Board of Assessors – one seat, one-year term (to fill a vacancy); School Committee – two seats, three-year terms; School Committee – one seat, one-year term (to fill a vacancy); Water Commissioner – one seat, three-year term; Water Commissioner – one seat, two-year term

(to fill a vacancy); Board of Health – one seat, three-year term; Cemetery Commissioner – one seat, three-year term; Library Trustees – two seats, three-year terms; Planning Board – one seat, five-year term; Planning Board – one seat, four-year term (to fill a vacancy); Housing Authority – one seat, five-year term; and Southern Worcester County Regional Vocational School District (Bay Path) – one seat, three-year term.

It is strongly encouraged that anyone interested in serving to become familiar with the work and responsibilities of these boards, committees, and commissions.

Nomination papers are available from the Town Clerk's Office.

Lions Club 37th annual ice fishing derby to be held Jan. 31

BROOKFIELD – The Brookfields Lions Club will host its 37th Annual Ice Fishing Derby on Saturday, Jan. 31, at Quaboag Pond in Brookfield.

The event remains the largest single-day ice fishing derby in Massachusetts, attracting anglers and families from across the region.

A \$20 entry ticket qualifies participants for more than \$15,000 in cash prizes, including the \$5,000 Grand Prize, \$5,640 in “every five minutes” cash drawings, and \$4,375 in fish categories. Every ticket holder is automatically entered into the major cash drawings whether they choose to fish or not.

Derby headquarters will be located at the Quaboag

Pond boat ramp in Brookfield. Weigh-ins will take place from 7 a.m. until the derby closes at 3:30 p.m., with the children's division ending at 2 p.m. and youth prizes awarded at 2:30 p.m. The \$5,000 cash drawing for all ticket holders will take place at 4 p.m., and a complete announcement of all derby winners will air on The Valley's Classic Hits 97.7 FM and 1250 AM (WARE Radio) at 5 p.m.

In the event that no safe ice exists by Thursday, Jan. 29, the derby itself will be cancelled, and all drawings will be held at the North Brookfield Legion Post 41, located below Subway in North Brookfield. No fish prizes will be awarded, but

all tickets will still be valid for the five-minute cash drawings and the \$5,000 Grand Prize drawing.

As is customary for this derby, there is a “one fish per category per ticket” rule that helps ensure broader distribution of prizes and encourages a fair, community-minded competition. All qualifying fish must be caught within the Central Wildlife District.

Children up to age 12 compete separately using state minimum lengths, while young anglers who meet the adult minimum lengths may also qualify for the main leaderboard.

Tickets for the derby are available from any Brookfields Lions Club member,

and at many longtime partner locations including: K&S Bait Shop (Barre), Central Package (Brookfield), R&R Sport Shop (Belchertown), 308 Lakeside Restaurant (East Brookfield), Fred's Variety & Package Store (Fiskdale), Granby Bait Shop (Granby), Ben's Bait (Leicester), Red Ridge Bait & Tackle (Ludlow), Still Hart's (North Brookfield), Nick's Sport Shop (Palmer), Glenda's and River Town Bait Shop (Warren), Mathieson Bait Shop (West Brookfield).

Following the derby, all winners will be posted at www.brookfieldslionsclub.org, and at all ticket vendor locations.

For additional information, please contact the Brookfields Lions Club at brookfieldslionsclub@gmail.com, or visit the Club's Facebook page at facebook.com/BrookfieldsLionsClub.

Census, dog licenses and Recycling Center stickers

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The Board of Health and the Town Clerk's Offices are partnering this year to mail the annual census together with Recycling Center and dog license renewal information in one combined mailing.

This collaboration results in significant cost savings for both departments and, ultimately, for the taxpayers.

These materials will be mailed at the beginning

of the year. If applicable, you may return multiple items in the same envelope. Multi-family properties must pay for Recycling Center stickers in person at the BOH office. Dog owners may include their dog license renewal.

Please note that payments for the Board of Health fee and the dog license fee must be submitted separately. If payments are combined, they will be returned.

Bill Tremblay Poetry Prize winners announced

SOUTHBRIDGE – The Jacob Edwards Library is pleased to announce the winners of the first annual Bill Tremblay Poetry Prize.

Earning first place was Stephen Campiglio of Stur-

bridge; second place, James Spaulding of Brookfield; and third place, Terrance Lanier of Warren.

Judge for the contest was poet Bill O'Connell from Amherst.

A poetry reading and

celebration of the winners will be held at the library on Thursday evening, Jan. 29 from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

The reading is free and open to the public to celebrate this inaugural event.

2026

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- community -



TURLEY PHOTOS BY RYAN DRAGO
Kathleen and Jack McClintock dressed up as a couple from the Colonial period at the Haston Free Public Library.



The library hosted a raffle featuring 20 prizes donated by the Friends of the Library and library staff.



Professor Sorghum performed his Good Time Music Review at the First Congregational Church.

FIRST NIGHT FROM PAGE 1

his book available for visitors and was happy to join the library on New Year's Eve during first night.

Down the street was the North Brookfield Town House and visitors got to tour the historic building on New Year's Eve. Across the street from the Town House was DJ Tabby Leblanc providing music throughout the center of town for First Night.

The North Brookfield Historical Museum was open to the public and had an activity for kids and adults to do during First Night.

Maps for a scavenger hunt were provided and were laid out in a quiz format. It was a map of a "Downtown Walking Tour" with stops in town listed. Prize bags were collected after players turned in their completed scavenger hunt map.

Various stores in downtown North Brookfield were open to the public, including the unique store, The Dragon Stones. This store features specialty crystal carvings, jewelry, geodes, and spiritual items. The Dragon Stones has been opened for over two years, and North Brookfield has been a good community for them to be a part of.

Staff at the Town Offices were busy welcoming guests and sharing displays of the history of North Brookfield. There were snacks and hot cider available inside.

Town Clerk Tara Hayes shared that a fundraiser was being held for the local dog



A banner highlighted the United States of America's 250th birthday, which will happen in the New Year, 2026. The banner is up at the Haston Free Public Library in North Brookfield.



Ravenwood performed at the North Brookfield Senior Center.

kennel. Donors who brought items such as dog food, treats, paper towels, collars, leashes, or toys were entered into a raffle for a chance to win a Tag #1 dog license.

Hayes said, "There were many donations, even from non-dog owners."

The office received ap-

proximately \$475 in monetary donations in addition to the products that were donated to the kennel.

Music was a big activity during First Night. At the First Congregational Church, music was played by Professor Sorghum, who gave a Good Time Music Review. The church also had a display of art that was done by local artists.

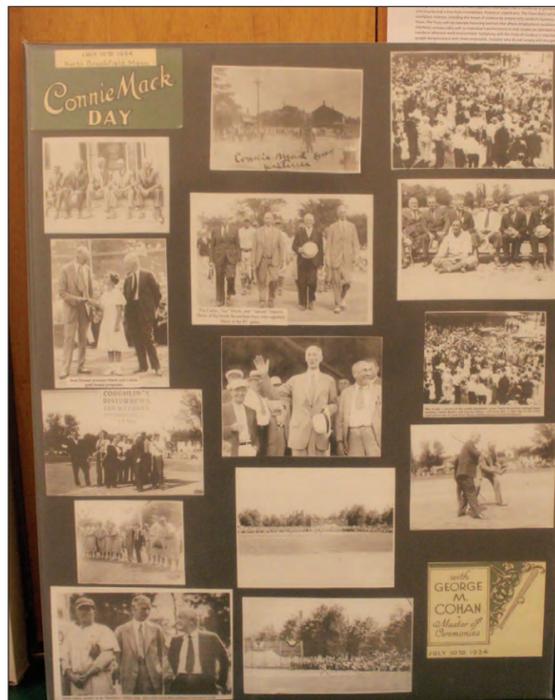
The Senior Center off Forest Street hosted the music group, Ravenwood. Seniors got to relax and listen to some great music while enjoying a hot chocolate that was served at the Senior Center.

At the Herard Estates Common Room, music was played by local musician Sue Lyons. Guests enjoyed games, snacks, heard a poetry reading, and got to hear the soothing music by Lyons.

Later in the night, the Town Common would host

a bonfire to wrap up First Night. JARS Café & Bakery were open and served hot chocolate and cookies for guests.

It truly was a First Night of celebration as 2025 ended and North Brookfield celebrated the arrival of 2026.



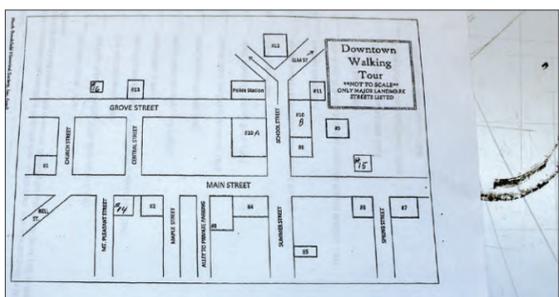
The history of North Brookfield was displayed in the halls of the Town Offices. Connie Mack Day is a notable celebration in the Brookfields.



"Sunday Afternoon on the Buzzell Farm" was made by local artist Russ Buzzell.



Artwork by Carol Hawkins was displayed inside the First Congregational Church.



This was the scavenger hunt map that both kids and adults could play during First Night. Maps were picked up at the North Brookfield Historical Museum.

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

We invite you to join us Friday afternoons from 1-2:30 pm to explore these topics and more.

This group will be held in zoom, is educational, confidential, and free.

Please contact Pat James 413-726-8661.

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USDA INSP. FROZEN PORK TENDERLOIN.....	\$2.66 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF ROAST OR STEAKS	\$4.99 lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN CHICKEN THIGHS TRAY PAK.....	66¢ lb
SLICED IN OUR DELI		USDA INSP. FROZEN PORK RIBS.....	\$7.99 lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN FULLY COOKED CORN DOGS.....	\$1.99 lb
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By Russell Gloor

About remarrying and benefits from an ex-spouse

Dear Rusty:
I am almost 57, divorced after a 14-year marriage. My former spouse is 15 years older than I and made significantly more money than me. I am required to retire from my job at age 60 but expect to keep working in some capacity.

I have a girlfriend of a similar age to me. She did not earn as much as her former husband as she mainly raised their children. She is also divorced from an older spouse who made more money than she did. I am trying to figure out if we will be penalized if we marry or if it matters if we wait until after we reach 60 years of age. Can I claim my own benefits when I become eligible at 62, then claim survivor benefits later, whenever my former spouse passes? Is that affected if, or when, I remarry? I do not want to give up my potential survivor benefits from my ex-spouse. Are those affected if I remarry?

If I understand correctly, if I remarry even after 60, we would both forfeit divorced spousal benefits, is that right? Given that my girlfriend's former spouse probably made more money than I, would she be forfeiting her former spousal benefits if we were to marry, even after age 60?

Lastly, I am considering retiring abroad as an expat. Any suggestions about how that would affect our Social Security benefits?

Signed: Starting Over

Dear Starting Over:

With certain exceptions, benefits from a living ex-spouse cannot be collected if you remarry (regardless of your age when you remarry). So, from what you've shared, whenever you remarry both you and your new wife will forfeit eligibility for benefits from your respective ex-spouses while they are living (FYI, there are exceptions for those who are disabled).

However, the rules are different for a surviving ex-spouse: if you remarry before age 60, you will forfeit your surviving ex-spouse benefit. But if you remarry after age 60, you retain eligibility to collect survivor benefits from a deceased former spouse. So, if you and your girlfriend remarry after you are both age 60, you will both still be able to claim survivor benefits based on your former

spouses' records.

And, yes, it is possible for you to initially claim your own SS retirement benefit at 62 and claim your surviving ex-spouse benefit later after your former spouse dies. Provided you remarry after age 60 you do not lose that option, but if you were to claim a surviving ex-spouse benefit before reaching your Full Retirement Age, the monthly payment amount would be reduced, all SS benefits taken before FRA are reduced.

Note too, that if you plan to continue working after you are first eligible for SS benefits, Social Security has an "earnings test" which limits how much you can earn from working while collecting early benefits. The limit changes yearly for 2025 it is \$23,400 and if exceeded, SS will take back \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the limit. And, as you likely know, claiming at age 62 will also mean a benefit payment of about 30% less than available at your FRA of 67. So, if you plan to work after age 62 and plan to claim early SS, you should take the "earnings test" into consideration. FYI, the earning test no longer applies after you reach your Full Retirement Age.

Now, regarding retiring overseas, be aware that Social Security has limits on where you can collect U.S. Social Security benefits. I suggest you use Social Security's Payments Abroad Screening Tool to find out if benefits are payable wherever you plan to retire abroad. That SSA tool can be found here:

https://www.ssa.gov/international/payments_outsideUS.html

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

- opinion -

TLC for overwintering plants

Have you taken a good look at your tender plants lately? Maybe you have a Gerber daisy, coleus, fuchsia or geranium that you are attempting to overwinter because you loved it so much this past summer.

Perhaps the flower color or leaf shade was perfect in a patio planter and you thought if you could get through the winter you wouldn't have to buy it new this spring. Or maybe you intend to use your overwintered plants as stock plants.

Soon you'll be taking cuttings and making your own new plants. Likewise, maybe you brought in some tender herbs in hopes of growing your own seasoning year round.

Whatever the case may be, closer examination of each plant at this point in the winter might be a smart idea.

What I have noticed almost across the board, especially with my Gerber daisy, fuchsia and geraniums is that there are a lot of older leaves turning yellow or showing discoloration. To me, that indicates that fertilizer is needed.

The fact that this coincides with the lengthening of the daylight hours is no accident. And all three plants have continued to bloom inside, which certainly has taxed their nutrient reserves.

I will start watering with half strength fertilizer twice a month now through mid March. I sure bet that old foliage will start to perk up and new growth won't be too far behind.

Don't push growth by fertilizing more than what I recommended or growth could become lanky and weak — just what aphids are

plants using a mild dish detergent and hosed them off in the shower.

One pest in particular attacks the herb rosemary and is especially troublesome. I noticed stippling on the leaf tips and clear winged insects flying away when I brushed by the plants. After placing sticky yellow monitoring cards nearby I learned it was leaf hoppers!

As carefully as I could I carried the lighter plants outside and gave them a good shake to dislodge any eggs or nymphs (and to make me feel better) then I doused them to the point of run-off with insecticidal soap. I will have to be careful here, because tiny 3 mm size, wedge-shaped (adult) insects can transmit viruses from plant to plant.

I'll put out new monitoring cards near the rosemary plants to check if the population is decreasing. Regardless, I am glad I caught this situation early.

With the pests under control and a proper fertilization regimen, these plants will be in great shape come springtime, and ready for new adventures in the landscape.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 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.



looking for.

Speaking of pests, if you notice distorted foliage, webbed areas or stippling on the leaves, take a closer look at your plants. There are many tiny bugs with mouthparts that suck plant juices. Even in your sunny window spider mite, mealy bugs, aphids or white fly might be becoming more active.

Spider mite cause webbing, and are usually indicative of hot, dry conditions. Dousing with cold water will really set them back.

Mealy bug show up as a cottony blob usually on growth tips or at the junction of leaves and stems. Rubbing alcohol on a swab applied directly to the blob will dissolve that protective layer and the insect underneath.

Aphids are usually green and congregate in clusters on stems or leaf ribs. White fly usually hang out on the underside of leaves. They fly around if disturbed.

Both insects are best stopped in their tracks by use of an insecticidal soap. Safer's Soap or M Pede as it's known commercially work well. I've even soaped up my



DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

A different kind of concierge medicine

The rise of concierge medicine shows no signs of slowing down. Frustrated with long wait times for appointments, waiting room delays and only brief conversations with their doctor, those who can afford it are shelling out hundreds of dollars each month for faster care and attention, 24-hour access and personalized health programs.

It's understandable that, in our fractured health-care system, people would start looking for alternatives. There are some drawbacks to concierge care, however.

Many don't accept insurance, in order to keep their own costs low. You will still need to pay for insurance in case a serious illness or injury requires hospitalization or a specialist. And not all concierge docs have hospital privileges, which may complicate care coordination — especially important for someone with multiple chronic illnesses.

It's that coordination, or "wraparound care," that sets private patient advocates apart from concierge



When you feel the hospital medical staff isn't hearing you: It's not uncommon for patients and patients' families to feel like their concerns are being overlooked or, worse, dismissed. A medically trained patient advocate speaks the language and can build bridges, mediate conflict and dial back the drama.

When your insurance claim is denied: Insurance documents can be wildly confusing. It helps to have someone on your side who can read through the mumbo-jumbo and explain whether an appeal may be successful. A patient advocate can also help prepare an appeal.

When a "simple" medical procedure turns into a nightmare: One of my clients was a 75-year-old gentleman who developed complications after a procedure. Unfortunately, the hospital and his physicians didn't meet the standard of care, leading him to have a stroke, internal bleeding, dehydration and a

doctors. Both offer concierge-style service, but a patient advocate goes above and beyond. When you pay for a patient advocate, you can expect them to be there when you need them, anticipate your needs, cut through red tape and run interference with hospitals and insurance companies.

Here are some scenarios where I think the concierge services of a nurse patient advocate may exceed those of concierge doctors.

When an aging loved one is on their own: Very often, patient advocates are hired by family members trying to care for an elder who lives far away and may not have family close by. We are their boots on the ground, their eyes and ears, and their go-between with the medical professions caring for their loved one.

QUABOAG CURRENT TEAM



EDITOR
Paula Ouimette
pouimette@turley.com



ADVERTISING SALES
Dan Flynn
dflynn@turley.com



STAFF WRITER
Ryan Drago
rdrago@turley.com



SPORTS EDITOR
Greg Scibelli
sports@turley.com

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WEB

www.quaboagcurrent.turley.com

PATRICK H. TURLEY
CEO

KEITH TURLEY
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Quaboag Current



Tour participants reached the final part of the wastewater treatment process, where the disinfected liquid flow (effluent) is discharged into Forget-Me-Not Brook.

TREATMENT PLANT TOUR
FROM PAGE 1

Peak flows typically occur during large rain events. A recent rainstorm nearly doubled the plant's flow rate.

Cardenas said there is an approximately 22-foot difference in elevation from the start of the wastewater treatment process to the finish.

"This treatment plant is pretty unique, so everything flows by gravity," Cardenas said. "You don't really have to pump anything up to the next process."

Cardenas explained the role bacteria plays in the wastewater treatment process. The bacteria are part of the biological treatment that takes place in the aeration basins.

"We constantly look at how much bacteria we have, how much do we have to remove from the system," he said. "It's a pretty unique process. It's constantly changing, it never stays the same...we work seven days a week here."

The bacteria also help to remove heavy metals from the wastewater.

Cardenas said the bacteria are affected by the temperature, and that they work slower in the cold.

After aeration, the flow then moves to the secondary clarifiers, which are now 35 years old need to be replaced. Cardenas said they were not replaced during the plant's upgrade due to the high cost.

"Everything's obsolete, so we can't buy the parts anymore so you have to just replace it," he said.

Cardenas said the clarifiers are essential for keeping bacteria from leaving the treatment plant.

The tour next stopped at the building where the raw sewage enters the treatment plant.

Septage haulers can connect directly to the discharge hose of the building and each hauler is given a card and a pin number, which opens a valve to allow for the discharge to take place.

"Below the ground there's two 20,000 gallon holding tanks, so we have a capacity of 40,000 gallons," Cardenas said.

The town's wastewater

vides essential revenue.

"It's a fantastic source of revenue for the town," Cardenas said. "It's vital that we keep that revenue source going."

Once the septage enters the building, it goes through a rock trap (to collect rocks and heavy grit), then to flow measurement. Then the septage is processed through screens, where the liquid is diverted to holding tanks.

Cardenas said the screens collect rags and other materials that could clog the treatment plant's pump propellers.

"We want to keep all of these rags out of the treatment process," he said. "They really wreak havoc."

The tour then moved to the headworks, where raw sewage comes in from the town's 14 miles of sewer lines, propelled by three pump stations. The sewage goes through a similar process as the septage, with screens collecting rags and other debris.

He said the rags screened from the septage and sewage are collected and hauled to a landfill every few months.

After the rags are removed, the sewage goes through an auger to remove grit.

Cardenas said the grit is abrasive and can wear out the treatment plant's pumps, which is why it needs to be removed.

Once this process is complete, the sewage (now called influent) flows to a splitter box before moving to the aeration basins and then to the two clarifiers.

"This is where all the biological treatment happens," he said.

The aeration basins are where 80% of the treatment of wastewater takes place.

Cardenas said the basins are divided into zones, with one removing total phosphorus, another to remove total nitrogen, and others that help with the bacterial treatment.

"Most of your pollutants that come in here get converted to new bacteria," he said.

Cardenas said the treatment plant is fully automated, and the machines that aerate the basins will speed up and slow down based on the concentration of pollutants entering the facility.

After treatment, the re-

vides essential revenue. "It's a fantastic source of revenue for the town," Cardenas said. "It's vital that we keep that revenue source going."

Once the septage enters the building, it goes through a rock trap (to collect rocks and heavy grit), then to flow measurement. Then the septage is processed through screens, where the liquid is diverted to holding tanks.

Cardenas said per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances are another challenge with the disposal of sludge.

At the Operations Building, the treatment plant houses polyaluminum chloride, a chemical that is used to remove phosphorus from the influent. Excess phosphorus can lead to algae growth and blooms in waterways, which can impact water quality and be toxic to aquatic organisms.

Cardenas said of the commonwealth's hundreds of treatment plants, North Brookfield has one of the top five most stringent discharge permits, due to the small size of Forget-Me-Not Brook.

"The limits that we are allowed to discharge are very low," he said.

Due to the brook's limited capacity to dilute treated liquid flow or effluent, the quality of the discharge leaving the facility is critically important, he said.

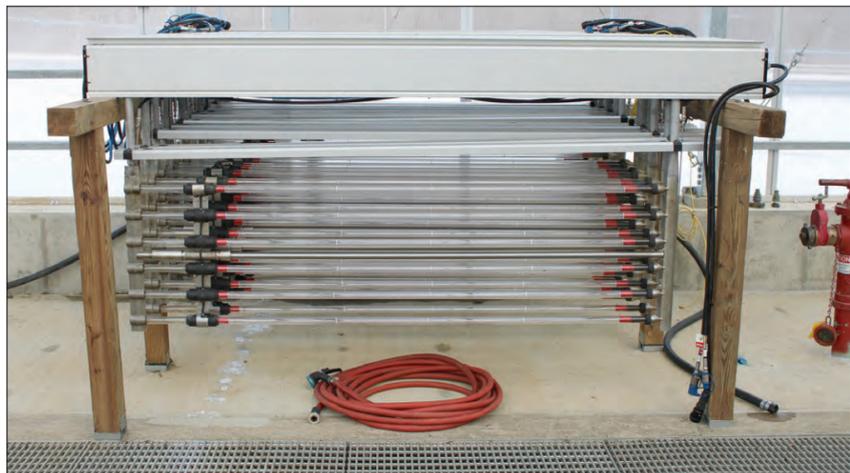
Cardenas then led the group to the pump room, and explained that each pump is color coded to show its purpose. The pipes leading in to and out of the pumps are also colored to match.

The group then stopped at the clarifiers, to see how they work to separate sludge and liquid flow. The sludge settles at the bottom and the liquid flows over weirs to the next step in the treatment process.

The final stop on the tour was the Cloth and Media Filter Building, where the liquid flow is filtered for the final time and then disinfected using UV lights before it is discharged into Forget-Me-Not Brook. Cardenas said the treatment plant operators are only required to disinfect the effluent from April to October.

"It doesn't kill the bacteria, but it destroys their DNA and prevents them from reproducing," he said.

After disinfecting, the effluent runs over a fish



UV lights are used to disinfect the effluent and prevent any bacteria from reproducing after it is discharged.



These clarifiers will need to be upgraded, as parts are no longer available for repairs and maintenance.

ladder, which adds oxygen to the flow before it enters the brook. From there, the brook flows to Quaboag Pond, the Seven Mile River, the Connecticut River, Long Island Sound, and eventually the Atlantic Ocean.

Cardenas said there is a lot that goes into wastewater treatment and that he never stops learning as the superintendent of the Grade 6 facility, which used to be a Grade 5 prior to the upgrade. He said there is a lot of on the job training working in wastewater treatment, and that a passion for the work is necessary.

"We recently had a DEP [Department of Environmental Protection] inspection and got bumped up to a Grade 6 facility," he said. "Anybody that manages a place has to have the highest license in the state."

He said the plant is designed to treat 800,000 gallons of sewage a day, and at this time, it is running at half capacity.

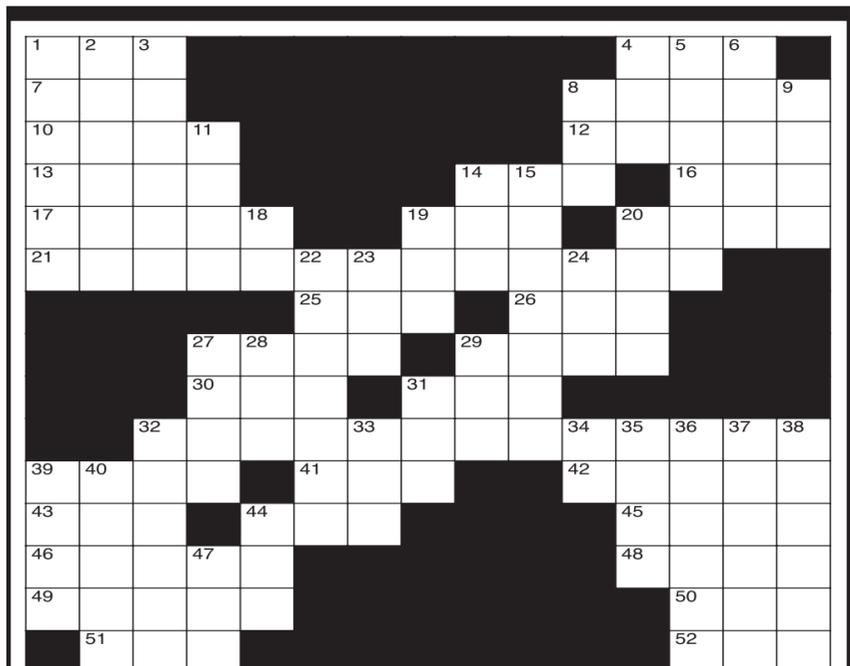
The town currently has 950 sewer customers, including residential and commercial. Cardenas said the town has about three industrial sewer customers.

"The lower the custom-

er base we have, the higher the sewer bill," he said. "If we could add some new customers to that to make up that budget...it only helps everybody and we have plenty of capacity."



These soft filters collect any remaining solids before the liquid flow is disinfected.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Former CIA
- 4. Language
- 7. Constrictor snake
- 8. Demand
- 10. Rich man
- 12. Short-tailed marten
- 13. Zoroastrian
- 14. Superconducting super collider
- 16. International group of countries within the Americas
- 17. Sacred state for Muslims
- 19. Shock therapy
- 20. Engrave
- 21. Localities
- 25. Paddle
- 26. Periodical
- 27. Dishonestly gained money
- 29. Gain possession of
- 30. Actor DiCaprio
- 31. High schoolers' test
- 32. Mr. October
- 39. Sign of healing
- 41. One's grandmother
- 42. Entrap
- 43. One who simultaneously buys and sells
- 44. ___ Francisco
- 45. Web-based data provider of marine life
- 46. Type of snake
- 48. Dark mark or stain
- 49. Member of the Sallii

- 50. Former measure of length
- 51. CNN's founder
- 52. Witness

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Acquire
- 2. Console
- 3. Hunting expedition
- 4. Pie ___ mode
- 5. Simple shoes for peasants
- 6. Eurasian shrub
- 8. Reciprocal of a sine
- 9. Work together in harmony
- 11. Grenade
- 14. File extension
- 15. Minute pores in a plant
- 18. Medal of Honor
- 19. Make a mistake
- 20. Advance slowly, as if by inches
- 22. Sandwich meat
- 23. An awkward stupid person
- 24. Strong tree
- 27. Commoner
- 28. Electro-encephalograph
- 29. ___ Mahal
- 31. Congressman
- 32. Disorderly crowd
- 33. 007's creator Fleming
- 34. Atomic #55
- 35. Part of a door
- 36. Short-tail martens
- 37. Baltimore ballplayer
- 38. Cuddle
- 39. Gang in "The Outsiders"
- 40. Of Croatia
- 44. Body cavity
- 47. Get free of



This photo shows the outside of the Administrative Building at the town's wastewater treatment plant.

TURLEY PUBLICATIONS PHOTOS BY PAULA OUMETTE

- community -

East Brookfield Police Log

During the week of Nov. 23-29, the East Brookfield Police Department responded to 163 building/property checks, 84 directed area patrols, 18 radar assignments, seven traffic controls, nine emergency 911 calls, two citizen assists, seven assist other agencies, one complaint, four parking complaints, one chimney fire, one motor vehicle accident, one animal call and 66 motor vehicle stops in the town of East Brookfield.

Sunday, Nov. 23
 1:13 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Lakeview Avenue, Transported to Hospital
 1:17 a.m. Parking Complaint, Connie Mack Drive, Citation Issued
 1:54 a.m. Parking Complaint, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 3:10 p.m. 911 Fire/Chimney, Daniels Drive, Services Rendered
 5:24 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Harrington Street, Citation Issued
 5:32 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Harrington Street, Citation Issued
 5:48 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Harrington Street, Citation Issued

8:16 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Harrington Street, Citation Issued

Monday, Nov. 24
 9:04 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Pleasant Street, Transported to Hospital
 9:12 a.m. Complaint, East Main Street, Officer Handled
 9:48 a.m. Assist Other Agency, West Sturbridge Road, Officer Handled
 3:05 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, West Main Street, Citation Issued
 3:14 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 3:26 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, West Main Street, Citation Issued
 3:39 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, West Main Street, Citation Issued
 4:17 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 4:23 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 4:25 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 8:03 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued

8:24 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Harrington Street, Citation Issued

8:56 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Harrington Street, Citation Issued
Tuesday, Nov. 25
 6:03 a.m. Serve Warrant, Harrington Street, Arrest(s) Made
 7:12 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Stone Road, Arrest(s) Made
 8:37 a.m. Assist Other Agency, West Main Street, Negative Contact
 4:56 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Out of Town, Services Rendered
Wednesday, Nov. 26
 1:06 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Baker Hill Road, Transported to Hospital
 2:18 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Podunk Road, Dispatch Handled
 3:51 p.m. 911 Motor Vehicle Crash, Pleasant Street, Services Rendered
 3:55 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Route 49, Unfounded
 4:28 p.m. Directed/Area Patrol, Podunk Road, Citation Issued
 4:45 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Podunk Road, Citation Issued

5:51 p.m. Assist Other Agency, East Main Street, Services Rendered
 6:26 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Spencer Police, Services Rendered
 8:49 p.m. Radar, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 8:51 p.m. Building/Property Check, West Main Street, Citation Issued
 8:53 p.m. Radar, West Main Street, Citation Issued
 8:59 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, West Main Street, Citation Issued
 9:2 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
Thursday, Nov. 27
 6:39 a.m. Assist Citizen, East Main Street, Dispatch Handled
 9:06 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Lane 4, Transported to Hospital
Friday, Nov. 28
 9:35 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 9:44 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 9:54 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 10:23 a.m. Motor Vehicle

Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 10:34 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 10:47 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, North Brookfield Road, Citation Issued
 11:22 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 11:31 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 12:04 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 12:18 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 12:46 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 12:57 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Lashaway Drive, Citation Issued
 1:15 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, East Main Street, Transported to Hospital
 1:18 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 1:51 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 1:52 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Ci-

tation Issued
 2 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 2:02 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 2:08 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 2:13 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 2:23 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
 2:50 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, West Main Street, Citation Issued
 3:27 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Stone Road, Transported to Hospital
Saturday, Nov. 29
 1:17 a.m. Parking Complaint, East Main Street, Written Warning
 2:03 a.m. Parking Complaint, Pleasant Street, Citation Issued
 1:34 p.m. Assist Citizen, West Sturbridge Road, Voice Message Left
 9:32 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Harrington Street, Citation Issued

St. Aloysius Catholic School annual fund drive

HARDWICK – St. Aloysius Catholic School in Gilbertville has launched its Annual Fund Drive with a pledge of \$40,000 in matching funds from an anonymous benefactor.

The fund drive runs through March 15, 2026.

Last year the fund drive raised just over \$95,000 including the match funds.

The School Board implemented the Annual

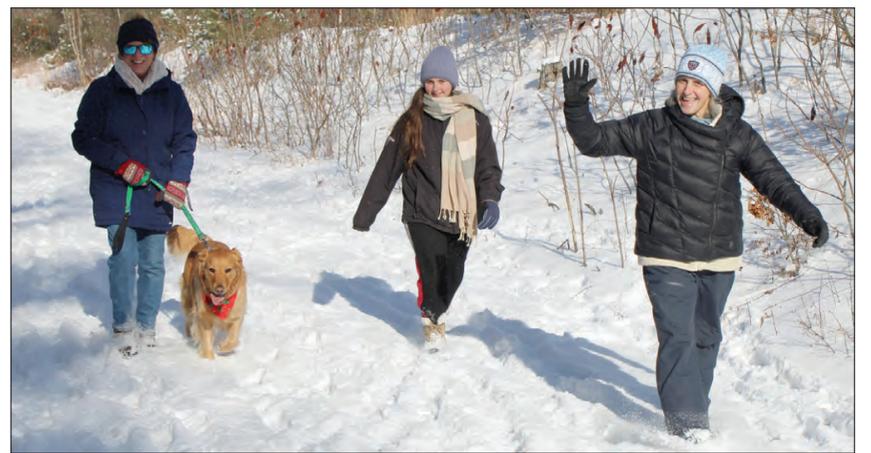
Fund Drive in place of the Scholarship Drive in 2025 to be able to diversify the use of the money earned, and thereby keep tuition affordable for families.

Tuition assistance is also available through the Roman Catholic Diocese of Worcester and from scholarships gifted by private foundations.

For more information about St. Aloysius Catholic School or to make a tax deductible donation that

will be matched dollar for dollar to the Annual Fund please visit www.staloyusiuscs.com/support/. Donations can also be mailed to St. Aloysius Catholic School, P.O. Box 522, Gilbertville, MA 01031, noting "Annual Fund" on the memo line.

An Open House is planned for Monday, Jan. 26, 2026 from 3-5:30 p.m. Prospective families are encouraged to visit the school.



East Quabbin Land Trust Executive Director Cynthia Henshaw waved as she walked along the trail.

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COLLEGE NEWS

HCC announces fall 2025 Dean's list

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College recognizes superior scholarship through the Dean's list.

Local students making Dean's list honors for the fall 2025 term are: Rebecca L. Quevillon of Brookfield, Casey Castenir of East Brookfield, Isabella Dawn Fitzgerald of Sturbridge, Colleen Morin of West Brookfield and Hart William Waz of West Brookfield. A student is placed on the Dean's list if their G.P.A. is 3.2 or higher.

EQLT FIRST NIGHT FROM PAGE 1

of Wellness Walks organized by Amy Trevvett, Program Coordinator. These walks are free and open to all.

Walks can range from one and a half up to three miles in length, and can take an hour to an hour and a half to complete. Well-behaved dogs on leashes are welcomed.

Upcoming walks in the series will be held on Fri-

day, Jan. 23 at 10 a.m., Prince River Preserve, Flaherty Road, Barre; Sunday, Feb. 1 at 4:30 p.m., Full Moon Walk at Mandell Hill Preserve, 660 Barre Road, Hardwick; Saturday, Feb. 14 at 9 a.m., Pynchon's Grist Mill Preserve, 165 Wickaboag Valley Road, West Brookfield; Tuesday, Feb. 24 at 11:45 a.m., Grenville Park to Church Street via Mass Central Rail Trail, 73 Church St., Ware; Sunday, March 8 at 9:30 a.m., Deer

Park Preserve and Coxhall Kitchen Garden, 483 Barre Road, Hardwick; and Wednesday, March 18 at 2:30 p.m., Patrill Hollow Preserve, 1015 Hardwick Road, Hardwick.

For more information about these walks or if you would like to lead one, email atrevvett@eqlt.org.

For more information about the East Quabbin Land Trust, visit www.eqlt.org or follow on Facebook and Instagram.

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CONTACT: DAN FLYNN
 413-297-5886
 DFLYNN@TURLEY.COM

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PUBLICATION DATE
February 18, 2026





A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO
Turley Publications Inc.
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The walk's youngest participant enjoyed the view from her sled.



This sign points to where an extension of the accessible trail will be connected to Grenville Park by the end of June.



Freshly fallen snow covered the trail.

SPORTS

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SEND US YOUR SPORTS SUBMISSIONS

Warriors offense struggles in loss to Chaug

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

FIKSDALE—Putting the ball into the basket was a major factor in the only meeting of the regular season between the Minnechaug Regional and Tantasqua Regional boys' basketball teams.

The Falcons did manage to make 12 two-point field goals and five 3-pointers leading to a 44-26 non-league victory over the Warriors inside the Tantasqua Field House, last Saturday afternoon.

"It wasn't a very pretty game, especially offensively, but we still found a way to walk out of here with a win," said Minnechaug head coach Mike Orzech. "Our half-court offense wasn't very good, but we played very well defensively. We still have a lot of work to do if we want to compete against the better teams in Western Mass this year."

Minnechaug, who won their fourth consecutive game, had a 5-1 overall record following the road win. The Falcons scored 50 or more points in their first four victories of the season. They also scored 48 points in a loss to Amherst in the annual Pioneer Valley Tip-off, which was held at the Mullins Center located on the UMass Amherst campus.

The Warriors (1-4) lost their fourth game in a row since defeating Bay Path,



Jack Nichols sends a pass inside the paint.

57-20, at home in the season opener on December 16. They made eight two-point field goals and two 3-pointers in the game.

"I thought we defended well against them," said Tantasqua head coach Scott Dion. "Our main issue in today's game was that we just couldn't put the ball in the basket. That's something we'll need to fix."

The Warriors faced the Falcons without senior captain Sam Pieczynski, who's their leading scorer. He

missed his second game with an injury. In the three games that Pieczynski has played in this season he has scored a total of 44 points.

"Not having Sam on the court during the past couple of games has hurt us, Dion said. "We're hoping to have him back next week."

Since the first meeting between the two Regional high schools took place on the hardwood during the 2021-22

See **WARRIORS**
PAGE 8



Sean Allen attempts an off-balance layup.



Dariel Correa comes up with a rebound.



Matt Dores tries to get around a pair of guards to shoot.

Cougars suffer loss to Orioles

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WARREN— Sophomore forward Aubrey Klingensmith has enjoyed playing basketball games at the Belchertown High School gymnasium since she joined the Lady Orioles varsity team a year ago.

Klingensmith doesn't have a favorite road gym yet, but a leading candidate might just be the Quaboag Regional gymnasium.

When the Lady Orioles faced the Quaboag Lady Cougars for the first time in a non-league road game,

it took Klingensmith and her teammates a couple of minutes to get used to their surroundings.

Klingensmith made three of her six 3-pointers during the opening quarter leading to a career-high 24 points, as the Lady Orioles closed out 2025 with a 56-24 victory on Dec. 29.

"The depth perception behind the baskets in this gym is different than we're used to," said Klingensmith, who scored 23 points in loss at East Longmeadow three days before Christmas. "Once I made my first 3-pointer, I got into a rhythm

and my shots just kept going in. I do enjoy playing home games a little bit better because I'm used to playing in our gym."

The Lady Orioles, who only have two seniors, entered 2026 with a 3-2 overall record.

"I'm proud of the way my team played against a gritty Quaboag squad. They played us very tough," said Belchertown head coach Jason Woodcock. "Aubrey is one of the best shooters in Western Mass. this year. She

See **COUGARS**
PAGE 8

Tough start hurts Pioneers

PALMER – Last Friday night, Pathfinder opened up the 2026 portion of its schedule with a 56-40 loss against Monson. Pathfinder managed just three points in the opening frame and trailed 30-11 at halftime. Monson, which improved to 2-3 on the season,

had a strong second half as well. Pathfinder fell to 1-4 on the season. Cayden Bousquet was a bright spot with 19 points to lead all scorers with the Pioneers. Monson was led by Niko Mathieu with 14 points. Austin Meacham had 12 points.



Cayden Bousquet eyes a teammate closer to the hoop.



Aiden Girard tries to pass out of the corner.



Maddox Baer holds the ball away from his opponent.



Treynce Senquiz tries to get a shot over a Monson blocker.

Panthers place 10th at Tomkiel Tournament

AGAWAM – Last Monday, Quabbin Regional High School wrestling traveled to Western Mass. to Agawam's Phil Tomkiel Holiday Tournament. The Panthers would finish 10th overall as a team in the boys tournament with 83.5 points. Abe Brown picked up a title win for the Panthers with a victory in the 126-pound bracket. In the girls tournament, Quabbin placed seventh. The girls also crowned one champion. Kailynn Schuster won the 138-pound bracket for Quabbin. The Panthers are back in action on Saturday, Jan. 10 hosting several teams for multiple dual meets.

Charlotte Darcey competes in a 132-pound match.



Alex Fors competes in a first-round match at 190 pounds.



Kailynn Schuster locks up against an opponent from Smith Vocational.



Andie St. Clair tries to work out of trouble.



Charlie White faces an opponent from Suffield.



Lucas Proctor locks up with Holyoke's Steven Santiago.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

- sports -

Bruins snap T-Birds winning streak

PROVIDENCE, R.I. - The Springfield Thunderbirds (12-13-4-2) suffered another gut-wrenching defeat late in regulation, 3-1, against the Providence Bruins (23-6-1-0) on Sunday inside Amica Mutual Pavilion.

Springfield's power play got two early reps in the first four minutes of play, and the man advantage capitalized as Matt Luff unleashed his team-leading 11th of the season at 4:32 of the period, making it a 1-0 game off set-ups from Dillon Dube and Samuel Johansson.

The Bruins had a wonderful shift following Luff's goal that nearly tied the score, highlighted by a Victor Soderstrom point shot that rang the post behind Vadim Zherenko.

Eventually, Providence would get even as they also

struck on their second power play of the period, as Dans Locmelis beat Zherenko from the left circle at 13:35 after a Fabian Lysell one-time attempt careened right to the waiting rookie winger.



The Bruins' defense suffocated the T-Birds' attack in the middle period, keeping the visitors to only two shots on net, but Zherenko was tremendous in his own right, denying all 10 Providence shots in the period. Among Zherenko's best pieces of work was a clutch stop on a low-slot tester from Loc-

melis. The 1-1 stalemate carried all the way into the game's dying minutes, but for the second time in three meetings in Providence, the Bruins found a way to break the tie late in regulation when Frederic Brunet uncorked a slapper that eluded Zherenko with just 1:11 remaining.

The T-Birds offense, which managed only 17 shots all night and just seven after the first period, could not get an equalizing response, and Riley Tufte polished off the night with an empty-netter just 13 seconds after Brunet's game-winning goal.

With their win streak snapped, the T-Birds were on the road on Wednesday, looking to start a new one as they visited the Utica Comets for a tussle at Adirondack Bank Center.

WARRIORS FROM PAGE 7

regular season, the Warriors have a slight 3-2 edge in the series. The Falcons' only other victory in the series came at home by the final score of 46-44 on February 1, 2023.

Two of the Warriors three victories over the Falcons were by three points or less.

One of the reasons why the series was started is because Mike Orzech's younger brother, Nate, is the Warriors junior varsity/assistant varsity coach. Nate Orzech is also the varsity football coach at Tantasqua. The Orzech brothers were outstanding athletes at Ware High School.

"We used to scrimmage against Tantasqua before playing them in the regular season," Mike Orzech said. "Tantasqua has had some very good teams in the past and coach Dion is a very good coach. It has been a lot of fun competing against them during the past couple of years."

Nate Orzech's j.v. team suffered a 45-38 loss to the Falcons.

The Falcons varsity team, who won for the first time

at the Field House, held the lead from start to finish in last Saturday's contest.

Things started out well for the visitors as senior Caden Duke (10 points) buried a 3-pointer 15 seconds into the opening quarter.

The score remained 3-0 until Minnechaug junior Darren Duah (3 points) made a foul shot in the middle of the opening quarter.

With 2:45 remaining in the quarter, the Warriors broke the ice following an inside hoop from junior Sean Allen (5 points).

The Warriors wouldn't get any closer than that as the Falcons put together a 7-0 run during the final two minutes of the first quarter. Freshman Cohen Nelson (4 points) hit a short jumper, and senior Andrew Grasso buried a 3-pointer from the left side. Then with 0.3 seconds showing on the scoreboard clock, senior Landyn Eldridge delivered an in-bounds pass from the right sideline to Grasso, who was standing under the hoop.

Grasso, who finished the game with 10 points, managed to get the shot off before the buzzer sounded. It gave the visiting team an 11-2 lead entering the second stanza. The Falcons held a 15-2 advantage less than two minutes into the second quarter following inside hoops from senior Miles Fergus (6 points) and Eldridge, which were his only points of the game. The Warriors outscored the Falcons, 8-5, during the final six minutes of the first half. Trailing, 20-10, at halftime, Tantasqua senior Drew Wright scored a pair of inside baskets at the start of the second half. He finished the game with a team-leading eight points. Then an Allen lay-up closed the gap to 20-16 with 4:35 left in the third quarter. Duke hit a 3-pointer at the buzzer ending the third quarter, which increased the Falcons lead to 29-20 entering the final eight minutes. The Warriors cut their deficit to six points (29-23) following a 3-pointer from Wright before the Falcons finished the game with a 15-3 run.

Monadnock reflects on great 2025 season

Monadnock Speedway competitors and race teams gathered this past Saturday, Dec. 13 at Best Western in Keene, New Hampshire, to celebrate the achievements of the 2025 racing season. The annual awards banquet served as a night of recognition, appreciation, and reflection on a competitive and memorable year at the speedway, while also setting the tone for the upcoming 2026 season.

Champions from each division were on hand to collect their well-earned hardware, highlighting the dedication, hard work, and perseverance required throughout the season. The evening underscored not only championship success, but also the sportsmanship and camaraderie that define Monadnock Speedway.

The All-States Material Group 604 Modified Championship was claimed by Brian Robie, who also earned the Teddy Bear Pools and Spas Triple Crown Championship Award. Robie addressed the crowd following his presentation, sharing his plans for the future. While he intends to compete in select events during the 2026 season, he emphasized his commitment to helping younger drivers in the division grow, learn, and achieve their racing goals.

Dylan Zullo, champion of the Twin State Truck Service Super Streets, also collected his championship hardware along with the Teddy Bear Pools and Spas Triple Crown Championship Award. In his remarks, Zullo noted that he plans to continue racing in certain events, while also exploring a new direction for 2026, leaving fans eager to see what changes may be ahead.

The Fabian Fuels Mini Stock Championship went to Jon Fultz, who stepped forward to accept his championship award along with the Teddy Bear Pools and Spas Triple Crown Award. Fultz took time to thank everyone who supported his championship run, including his crew, family, sponsors, and fellow competitors, acknowledging the teamwork behind his successful season.

In the Brattleboro Towing and Recovery Pure Stock Division, Kyle Kenly was honored as the 2025 champion. Kenny enthusiastically addressed the crowd while accepting his awards, revealing that he plans to move into a new division for the 2026 season at Monadnock Speedway, though he did not disclose specific details.

Also recognized was the champion of the Six Shoot-

er Mini Series, Travis Hollins.

Carlos Grenier was in attendance to receive the Teddy Bear Pools and Spas Pure Stock Triple Crown Series Champion.

The Doug's Auto Body Young Gun Division was recognized collectively for its hard work and dedication throughout the 2025 race season. Several individual awards were also presented, with Ella Grabowski earning the Sportsmanship Award, Hunter Duquette recognized for Most Wins, Maya Bell receiving the Best Appearing Award, and Sofia Rego honored with the Hard Luck Award.

Special awards were presented across the weekly divisions as well. In the 604 Modified Division, Tyler Leary was awarded Best Appearing, while Tyler Leclerc received the Sportsmanship Award. The Super Streets Division saw J.D. Stockwell earn Best Appearing, with Eric Smith taking home Sportsmanship honors. In the Mini Stock Division, Kevin Clayton received Best Appearing, and Chris Fultz was awarded Sportsmanship. Rounding out the awards, the Pure Stock Division honored Addison Brooks with Best Appearing, while Michaela Krafve received the Sportsmanship Award.

COUGARS FROM PAGE 7

was the difference maker in tonight's game."

Two other sophomores listed on the Lady Orioles varsity roster are forward Gabriella Slovack, who scored eight points, and guard Kina Roy, who chipped in with seven points. Junior guard Aubrey McCain made two 3-pointers in the second half for her six points.

The Lady Cougars, who like Belchertown only have two seniors, began the regular season with five losses.

"We're a young team and we're playing a tough schedule. I thought we played well in a couple of quarters in tonight's game," said Quaboag head coach Bill Beaugard. "We were able to get some good looks offensively. We just need to keep improving."

The home team was led offensively by eighth grade guard Caitlyn Toomey with seven points. Seventh grade forward Evelyn Potvin made a pair of 3-pointers for her six points. Senior center Madeline Dufresne scored four of her five points before

halftime.

While it was the first meeting between the two girls' basketball teams, Beaugard was the boys' varsity basketball coach at Belchertown High School 10 years ago. Woodcock was also coaching the girls' varsity team at that time.

"When I was coaching at Belchertown High School, coach Woodcock and I would also talk about basketball," Beaugard said. "I wish the results were a little bit different, but it was fun coaching against him for the first time."

The contest was scoreless until Klingensmith hit her first 3-pointer from the right corner with 5:15 left in the opening quarter.

Klingensmith would make two more 3-pointers in the quarter and Slovack added a lay-up, as Belchertown entered the second quarter holding a slim 11-8 advantage.

The duo of Toomey and Dufresne each scored four points for Quaboag.

With 3:51 remaining in the first half, Klingensmith was fouled while making a 3-pointer from the right cor-

ner. She made the bonus foul shot completing the rare four point play, which gave the Lady Orioles a 20-8 lead.

Everlyn Potvin then hit a 3-pointer from the right side, which was Quaboag's only points of the second quarter.

With 40 seconds left in the opening half, Belchertown junior point guard Morghan Litz knocked home a 3-pointer from the right side, which were her only points of the game.

Belchertown finished the first half with a 9-0 run. Klingensmith made her fifth 3-pointer during the final seconds which made the score 29-11 at halftime.

The Lady Cougars made three 3-pointers in the third quarter, but they were outscored, 20-13 and were trailing 49-24, entering the final eight minutes of the contest.

The trio of sophomore forward Cassidy MacLean (3 points), sophomore guard Camilla Adamczyk (2 points), and Slovack made field goals for the Lady Orioles in the final quarter, while senior forward Madison Kapinos (1 point) added a free throw.

YOUR HEALTH FROM PAGE 4

host of problems. He became delusional after days in the hospital and was given anti-psychotic drugs. I was able to intervene with the care team, and his condition improved.

When a patient isn't ready for discharge: Hospitals very often want to get chronically ill patients out of their beds and into a nursing facility. Sometimes this is the right thing to do, but sometimes it isn't. A nurse patient advocate can evaluate a patient and work with the care team to make sure it's the proper

course, and then help with the transition.

When a college student with a medical condition is away from home: It's unlikely that the typical 18- or 19-year-old has the maturity to advocate for themselves in a medical crisis. Parents may not be there to give their student the personal attention they may need to understand their treatment, speak with medical staff and schedule tests and appointments. A patient advocate in the student's location can help.

When there's no one to go with you to a doctor appointment: Doctor appointments

these days can feel rushed, and often patients are confused about what they're supposed to do next, what medications are changing and what prescriptions need to be filled. Anyone can accompany you to an appointment to take notes, but if you're on your own, a patient advocate can explain the details.

The most important aspect of a patient advocate's "concierge service" is that they work for the patient, their client - not the hospital, not the insurance company. If you need help, find a board-certified patient advocate in your area by visiting Greater National Advocates (gnanow.org) or the National Association of Healthcare Advocacy (nahac.com).

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, is a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate and founder of www.NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com, which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. Teri offers a free phone consultation to Turley Newspaper readers as well as to nurses interested in becoming advocates. Reach her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com

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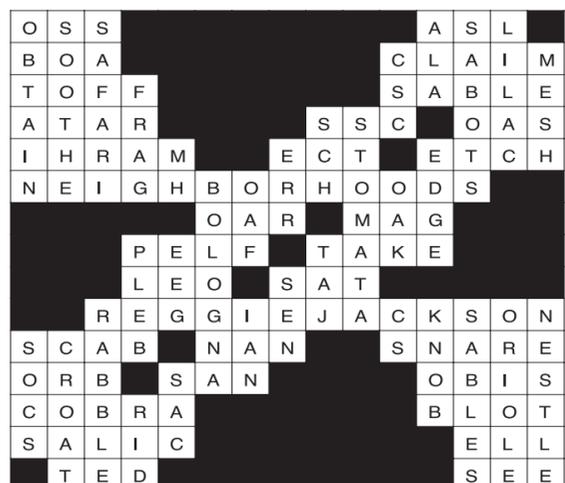
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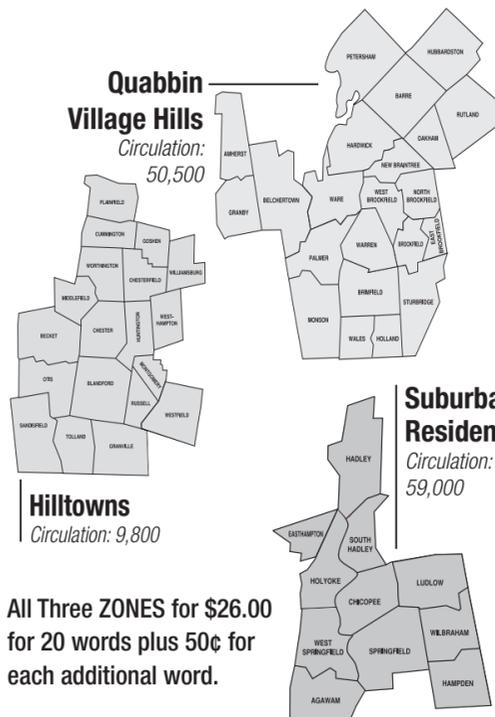
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