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Volume 18, Number 12

Friday, February 14, 2025

Board hears discussion about water/sewer invoices

By Paula Ouimette

Editor

pouimette@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The Board of Selectmen heard from Sewer Department Superintendent Eric Cardenas and Water Department Superintendent Jamie Flamand, about the possibility of combining the two utilities on the same invoice in order to help collect sewer fees.

At the Jan. 28 meeting, Board of Selectmen Chair Jason Petraitis said it may be easier for residents if they received both water and sewer invoices together and in quarterly statements.

“Having the sewer tied to the water, would give you means for collecting the sewer costs,” Petraitis said.

Cardenas said he needs to discuss this with Flamand, but he believes this may help the Sewer Department receive payments from users.

“I think that will help enforce people having to actually pay their

sewer bill,” he said. “Kind of put some repercussions in place if they don’t...I think it makes sense for many reasons.”

Cardenas said many area towns do quarterly or even monthly billing, rather than semiannual as the department currently does.

“I don’t think a lot of people budget six months out in advance...it allows customers to better manage their household budget,” Cardenas said.

Cardenas said the last billing cycle, about 25% or more of sewer users did not pay their bills. He said looking forward to fiscal year 2026, they will need to start paying back the wastewater treatment plant upgrade loan, which is an added cost to users.

“I’m anticipating probably having more people not pay, just from an affordability standpoint,” he said. “We’ve got to find a way to bring in the money we need to operate.”

Flamand said he will discuss this option with Cardenas and organize a meeting between both

departments’ boards.

Cardenas also talked about the need to have a person on the Sewer Department staff with the required licensing and credentials at the wastewater treatment plant. He recommended the town post the job and list its salary to try and bring in qualified candidates.

Kittredge Road property

Brandon Avery read a letter from the Conservation Commission which stated that the town-owned property located at 19 Kittredge Road falls under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 97. Due to this, the commission requested a halt to past practices, including gravel removal.

Avery said in 1962 this parcel was voted at a town meeting to be accepted as town forest along with several other parcels.

“As such, its uses don’t include gravel and soil removal or any other mining activities or to be used as a dump site,” Avery read from the letter addressed to the

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TURLEY PHOTOS BY RYAN DRAGO
St. Joseph’s Church Hall was the site of a St. Valentine’s spaghetti dinner that was put together by Knights of Columbus Council 2381. Guests lined up and prepared to receive their meals.

Knights hosted Valentine’s Dinner at St. Joseph’s

By Ryan Drago

Staff Writer

rdrago@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The St. Joseph’s Church Hall was busy as the Knights of Columbus made a delicious spaghetti dinner this past weekend.

The theme behind the dinner was all Valentine’s Day as many churchgoers and residents arrived after the 4 p.m. Mass at St. Joseph Parish.

This St. Valentine’s Dinner was made by members of the Knights of Columbus Council 2381. Several members kept busy preparing a delicious spaghetti meal featuring meatballs, sausage, salad and a dessert. The dessert options were cheesecake or chocolate mousse cake.

Chris Caputo of the Knights of Columbus said the council used to provide dinners on a regular basis prior to the pandemic. According to Caputo, “these dinners are what get people together.”

There are over 70 members of the Knights of Columbus Council 2381 and Caputo describes them as “one big happy family.” Several members kept busy and helped prepare a delicious meal for residents and guests who attended the afternoon Mass.

The meals were \$15 per person and proceeds were going to support



Door prizes were available for guests who purchased a meal during the St. Valentines dinner at St Joseph’s Church.

charitable causes that the Knights of Columbus support as well. One of the charitable causes the Knights of Columbus puts together is a coat drive for those in need of warm clothing.

Caputo would brainstorm ideas with his fellow Knights on what events they can do to provide fundraisers. After the pandemic, it was a good idea to provide meals again at the church. The Knights cook anywhere from 120 to 150 meals. The spaghetti dinner was available for dining in and takeout.

In addition to the meal, folks who arrived and purchased a meal could participate in a door raffle. The prizes included a handmade pillow made by one of the parish-

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SB appoints acting facilities manager

By Paula Ouimette

Editor

pouimette@turley.com

STURBRIDGE – Current Information Technology Specialist Jeremy Jalbert was named acting Facilities Manager.

At the Feb. 3 Select Board meeting, Town Administrator Robin Grimm said she has called for a personnel committee meeting to be held to discuss combining both the Facilities Manager with the IT Specialist to create one position.

She said if the position is combined, an assistant with IT skills could be hired to assist Jalbert. Grimm said Jalbert will become procurement and Occupational Safety and Health Administration trained.

“I think this is a good next step for the IT department to grow,” Jalbert said.

Building Department report

Building Commissioner and Zoning Enforcement Official William LePage presented reports for the months of September through December.

LePage gave several updates about locations in town, including changes to several businesses.

He said the movie theater is expected to open mid-to-late February due to a delay in receiving curtains. He said a new restaurant, Angelina’s, will be opening at the former Stonewall Grille location.

Mamma Italia Ristorante and the Fish Store have both closed, and now Trail Dusters Tap & Table has opened in that plaza.

The eight-unit apartment building at 505 Main St. is now in its final stages and Interstate Towing at 150 Charlton Road was issued an occupancy permit.

He said the Public House completed roof and siding renovations, as well as stonewall repairs and interior beam restorations.

LePage said final inspections of the Senior Center are taking place, and he will be touring the site with the contractor to ensure nothing else needs to be addressed.

LePage said he has worked on a number of zoning enforcements with the Fire Department, including 453 Main St., which had a dangerous fire escape. He said the property owners pulled permits and are rebuilding the egress now.

Pole hearing

Robert Williams from National Grid came before the board to request approval to install a new joint-owned utility pole on Whittemore Road, along with under-

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Market Spotlight

A maple farm and an abundance of jams from the same town

Editor’s note: The Quaboag Current will regularly feature a spotlight story on different farmers market vendors. Learn about the people that bring food and locally sourced items to your community.

By Richard Murphy

Correspondent

WEST BROOKFIELD – We have transited the winter half way mark and are going downhill, sort of. It was a lovely Wednesday, Feb. 5, but we proceeded to the West Brookfield Winter Farmers’ Market full in the knowledge that the practitioners of the science of meteorology had predicted the next day would not be pleasant.

Oh well, all of humanity knows that tomorrow is not promised, so enjoy today.

And we did.

It was back to The First Congregational Church, 36 North Main St., at 3 p.m., where the warmth is more than temperature, but also in the spirit of the vendors and the shoppers who were glad to be there. This week we are featuring

two vendors.

Thompson’s Maple Farm and Lucky Me Farm & Kitchen

A longtime regular at the West Brookfield Summer Market and at the Winter Market since its inception is Thompson’s Maple Farm. John Thompson could be called a market fixture as he is always at the table.

Based at their New Braintree land since 2000, it is a true local operation, as local as it gets.

In 2003 the Thompson’s tapped a few of their own trees to learn and provide for their own needs. They tapped neighbors’ trees in trade for syrup. Then came an evaporator and next, a vacuum pump, to draw sap through the hoses from the trees. With around 1,200 taps, some mechanization is necessary.

It is not just maple products; The Thompsons have an ice cream maker. As the farm is not a dairy operation, it relies on milk products from Cooper’s Hilltop Farm in Leicester. That said, just about all the other ice cream ingredients rely on inputs grown on farm. Raspberries, strawberries, blackberries, and peaches



TURLEY PHOTOS BY RICHARD MURPHY
John Thompson is shown with his maple coated pecans.

are from family bushes, plants or trees. Other ingredients are traded for with neighbors, bartering ice cream or maple products.

Around 2014, the Thompsons started showing up at farmers mar-



Sara Doubleday displays jams from Lucky Me Farm & Kitchen.

kets and other events. There are the above-mentioned West Brookfield venues, but you can find Thompson’s Maple at Sturbridge and Brimfield.

You can also run into them at the

West Brookfield Asparagus Festival and the Sturbridge Harvest Festival and at other holiday fairs. Thompson’s has also been up at Farmer Matt’s for some evening events.

This year, saw something new mentioned in a previous week, Bourbon Barrel Aged Maple Syrup, but there is also Maple Coated Nuts. The coated nuts are pecans.

Time marches on and we are heading toward maple tapping time in the next couple of weeks. With 40-degree days and around 20-degree nights the sap flows. If it’s bit off, it might take longer, but no matter.

We shall see the Thompson’s Maple Farm back again everywhere next year.

You can visit them on Facebook.

Lucky Me Farm & Kitchen

Lucky Me Farm & Kitchen has been absent several markets. There has been a reason. It may not have been a good reason, but it cannot be argued that it was not a sufficient reason.

Sara Doubleday has a beloved

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- community -

Sturbridge Trails ice sculpture carving event this Saturday



SUBMITTED PHOTO

This photo shows several ice sculpture from last year's contest.

STURBRIDGE – With the winter finally cooperating this year The Friends of Sturbridge Trails (FrOST), with support from the Sturbridge Tourist Association, is holding its annual ice sculpture carving demonstration and contest on Saturday, Feb. 15 starting at 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

This family friendly event will have two live ice carvers putting on an ice carving demonstration as well as some 12 individual blocks of ice carved by local area residents on display along the Grand Trunk Trail, located at the Riverlands, 52 Stallion Hill Road.

In addition to viewing the ice sculptures, there will be family/kids' games of ice golf, ice bowling and an ice obstacle course. The ice carving demonstration will take place

from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

The residents carved ice blocks will be set out on Saturday, Feb. 15 from 8-10 a.m. Volunteers will be available to assist in set out.

Judging the ice sculptures and carving demonstration will start at 11 a.m. Ice sculptures will be on display until they melt. The grand prize is a gift card to a local restaurant. Please direct all questions to Jen Scherer at jenchris27@aol.com

The Friends of Sturbridge Trails is a local 5013c group formed to support enjoyment of the Sturbridge Trail system. For more information on how to join FrOST and support its mission please visit the trails website at www.treksturbridge.org or email froststurbridge@gmail.com.

cutting will begin at 12:30 p.m. with a blessing of the building to follow.

Come for a tour, light refreshments and meet the Senior Center staff and learn about its programs. This event is free and open to the community.

Federated Church announces Irish Feast coming March 10

STURBRIDGE – The Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale invites the community to its annual Irish Feast on Monday, March 10, at the historic Publick House Restaurant.

This long-standing tradition benefits both the Federated Church and the Harrington Hospital Auxiliary.

“We’re grateful to the Publick House for their continued generosity in hosting this event,” said event chair Ken Benson. “It’s a wonderful opportunity for the community to come together while supporting two important local organizations.”

Pastor David Cote added, “This dinner is about more than just good food – it’s about fellowship and reinforcing the connections that make our community stronger.”

Guests will enjoy a buffet-style Irish meal, featuring corned beef and cabbage, boiled potatoes, carrots and turnips, dinner roll and Irish soda bread, choice of beverage and a cupcake for dessert. The dinner will be served in two seatings, 4:30-6 p.m. (early seating),

and 6:30-8 p.m. (later seating).

Tickets may be purchased by cash, check, credit card or Venmo at the Sturbridge Federated Church, 8 Maple St., Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m.-noon. Adult tickets are \$17 each, and tickets for children aged 4-12 are \$7 each.

Tickets must be purchased by Friday, March 7. No tickets will be sold at the door.

Tickets may also be purchased electronically @Federated-Church using Venmo. Please be sure to include the number of meals and your preferred seating time. Tickets purchased using Venmo will be held for you at the door.

For more information or to purchase tickets, contact the Church Office by calling 774-304-1021 or Ken Benson at 774-230-3848.

The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale joyfully celebrates Christ’s presence and God’s grace in our lives. For additional information, please visit the Church website at sturfed.org or send an email to churchoffice@sturfed.org.

Nomination papers for town elections now available

WARREN/WEST BROOKFIELD – The Town Clerks’ of Warren, Laura Stockley, and West Brookfield, Heather Gough, announce that nomination papers are available for the Annual Town Election, which will be held on Tuesday, May 6.

Office hours in the town of Warren are Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. and Thursday from 1-6 p.m.; and for the town of West Brookfield, Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Quaboag Regional School Committee nomination papers will be available for pick up on Tuesday, Feb. 4 at the Quaboag Regional Middle High School front office between the hours of 8 a.m.-3 p.m. School Committee positions open are: two members from Warren for a three-year term and two members from West Brookfield for a three-year term.

The Joy of Chess at the Joy of Beans Feb. 15

WEST BROOKFIELD – On Saturday, Feb. 15 chess will be in session in West Brookfield at the Joy of Beans at 12 East Main St.

At 3 p.m. experts, rank amateurs and anyone in between is welcome to seek a game. Joy of Beans is mostly known for that morning cup of gourmet coffee, but it will be available if one needs caffeine to up their game.

Blood drive to take place at QRHS Feb. 27

BARRE – A blood drive will take place on Thursday, Feb. 27 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Quabbin Regional Middle High School, 800 South St., in the high school gymnasium.

Ellie Frost, a senior at Quabbin Regional High School, is putting on a blood drive at the high school in partnership with the Rhode Island Blood Center.

Walk-ins are welcome if space permits, but they ask people to sign up at ribc.org/drives and use sponsor code M102.

Sixteen year old donors need parent/guardian permission. Permission slips are available at ribc.org/permission.

Donors should eat, drink and bring ID with their name and photo. Blood donation takes about an hour. People may also call 800-283-8385.

Senior Center open house to be held March 1

STURBRIDGE – The town of Sturbridge invites the public to the Senior Center Open House. Please join them as they celebrate the opening of the newly renovated Senior Center on Saturday, March 1 from 1-3 p.m. at 480 Main Street. A ribbon

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Quaboag Current

- community -

Party and raffle drawing to be held at the gallery on Feb. 21

West Brookfield Art & Frame celebrates 10 years

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

WEST BROOKFIELD – West Brookfield Art & Frame Gallery, 10 East Main St., is celebrating a major milestone this year, reaching 10 years in business on the historic town common.

Owner Rebecca Fay is a “one woman show,” juggling the gallery and custom frame shop, while continuing to create as an artist.

“Time has flown by, and I can’t believe it’s been 10 years,” Fay said.

Fay first opened her frame shop in her newly built barn back in 2008, serving several corporate clients as well as local clients. When her son began school full time, she began looking for a storefront to grow her business, and she decided to share a space occupied by her friend and fellow artist, Jennifer Geldard.

“She was here where I am now, half was her own studio, and the other half a gift shop,” Fay said.

As Geldard dedicated more of her time to focus solely on her artwork and stepped back from her storefront studio, Fay was given the opportunity to utilize that space as well and create the unique local art community that continues to grow to this day.

“I didn’t need all this space for the framing, which made me come up with the idea of the gallery,” she said.

Unlike many other galleries, Fay does not earn commission from the gallery artists’ sales, allowing them to keep 100% of their profits. Instead, the artists pay a low monthly rent to display and sell their work.

Artists are also able to have shows at the gallery, which occur monthly throughout most of the year. Fay also offers discounts on framing for the gallery artists and promotes each one through her website and social media, as well as in the gallery.

“I hand out the artists’ business cards,” Fay said. “It’s very pro-business here...that’s my own little brainchild to run the gallery that way.”

Fay said one of her goals when she opened the gallery was to start an artists’ community and support local artists and culture.

“That is my end goal...everybody feeds off each other,” she said.

Framing continues to be the mainstay of Fay’s business, and keeping the gallery open despite the challenges of the pandemic and being a small, woman-owned business in a difficult economy.

“It’s allowed me to keep my doors open,” she said.

Fay said through her framing, she gets to see a variety of unique items, including an original painting by famed West Brookfield artist, Jacob Knight.

Fay also credited the unwavering support from the community for allowing the gallery to continue to grow and be successful.

To celebrate West Brookfield Art & Frame Gallery’s 10th anniversary, Fay will host a party and art raffle on Friday, Feb. 21 from 5-7 p.m.

Raffle tickets are \$10 each or six for \$50; and are available at the gallery now through the day of the party, when the winning tickets will be pulled. Ticket holders do not have to be present at the drawing to win.

The raffle will feature 16 items created by gallery artists, and include pottery, jewelry, paintings, a wood-turned bowl and prints. All proceeds from the raffle will go to the Sharing Cupboard located at the First Congregational Church of West Brookfield, serving residents in West Brookfield, Warren and West Warren.

“All of the artists have donated a piece,” Fay said of the raffle.

The party will feature a live acoustic set by Fay’s daughter and well-known musician Adelaide Fay, who released her second album last year. Adelaide will perform a mix of cover songs as well as originals from both of her albums.

Guests will be well-fed at the party, with a variety of sweet treats, wine and cheese, and a charcuterie board.

Happenings at the gallery

The celebration continues all year long, with a variety of events and classes offered at the gallery, including a five-week watercolor class taught by Fay starting on Thursday, Feb. 20 and running through Thursday, March 20. Classes are held each Thursday from 5-7 p.m.

This class will teach participants the basics of painting with watercolor, and you’ll go home with several mini paintings and a final project landscape painting. The cost is \$150 per person and all materials are provided.

Fay is also teaching decoupage clock making classes on Thursdays, March 27 and Nov. 20 from 5-7 p.m. This is a great class for people of all ages and the cost is \$40 with all materials provided.

Gallery artists will also offer classes, including ceramic bird making classes with potter Lisa Cohen on Thursday, April 3 and June 5 from 5-7 p.m. The classes will include all tools, materials and clay and your piece will be glazed and fired by Cohen.

Open to teens and adults, the cost of this class is \$30.

Artist Vanessa Varjian will host hand-carved stamp making workshops on Thursday, Feb. 13 and May 15 from 5-7 p.m. Each workshop is \$30 and is open to mature teens and adults.

Plein air painting with gallery artists will



West Brookfield Art & Frame Gallery, 10 East Main St., is celebrating its 10th anniversary in business this year, with a special party to be held on Friday, Feb. 21 from 5-7 p.m.



Gallery owner and artist Rebecca Fay has donated her piece, “The Corner Store”, to the 10th anniversary raffle, with all proceeds to benefit The Sharing Cupboard food pantry.



Petersham artist Abigail Rorer has donated this wood engraving of a pigeon to the gallery’s raffle.



Artist Cheryl O'Donnell has donated this print for the raffle, which will benefit the local food pantry.

return to the common on Saturday, May 3 starting at 10 a.m.; this year inviting the public to join in the fun. People of all ages are welcome to bring their art supplies and create a work of art outside while enjoying the beauty of spring in New England.

The gallery will team up with neighboring business, The Joy of Beans, for its second annual outdoor Summer Solstice Party on Friday, June 20 from 6-10 p.m. This fun event is guaranteed to be a great evening of art, music, food and the finest coffee concoctions around.

The gallery will also be hosting jewelry making classes, tarot card readings and much more.

For a complete list of this year’s events and classes, make sure to visit the “Events” page on the gallery’s website at www.westbrookfieldartandframe.com.

About West Brookfield Art & Frame

Gallery hours at West Brookfield Art & Frame are Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays

from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., and Sundays from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

For more information about West Brookfield Art & Frame Gallery, or upcoming shows, follow them on Facebook, visit www.westbrookfieldartandframe.com, email yaf-aceber@hotmail.com, call 508-753-8604 or stop by during open hours.



This wood-turned bowl created by West Brookfield resident Frank White is included in the raffle.

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- opinion -



Roses or carnations, you chose!

With St. Valentine's Day coming up, my thoughts turn to flowers.

I am not a "rose girl" so to speak. It is probably because I am frugal and roses cost an arm and a leg this time of year.

Get me a carnation and I am happy. They don't bend at the neck or pick you with thorns. They even smell nice, to me the fragrance is that of cloves.

So this will be a combo column. First, it will give our rose lovers out there the best chance of keeping their admirer's big investment healthy for the longest possible time. Then, I will do the same for the humble carnation.

Perhaps you will be the lucky recipient of roses on Friday. I have a couple tricks up my sleeve to help you increase their vase-life. First, remove the roses from their box and give each one a fresh cut on a forty-five degree angle.

If you can do this under water, all the better to prevent what I call "bent head" or "limp neck" syndrome-an air bubble clogging the stem.

You should also remove any foliage that will be underwater - it will rot and make the water stinky and full of bacteria. Leaves on the top third of the stem can remain as long as they look pretty; unbeknownst to me, these will continue to photosynthesize, making food to help the rose color up to its full potential.

We all have had a few "bent heads" or "limp necks" in our day - a shame, considering how expensive roses are, especially when purchased on a holiday. If you catch this situation early there is a way to remedy it: recut the stem of the rose or roses in question and soak them horizontally, under water for a half-hour or so.

This technique is contrary to what one might think is good for a many-petaled flower. I would argue that water trapped within the petals would breed fungi and shorten vase-life, but I guess if the rose is doomed to the fate of a bent head, it's worth a shot. Regular folks have tried it in the bathtub and have been successful.

How about those carnations? They aren't as fussy as their more expensive counterparts, but here are a few helpful hints. Recut their stems to just above a node (the bump where leaves come from) and place in floral preservative.

If you don't have floral preservative, you can make your own. Here is a recipe that, just like the professional blends, contain the three necessary components for fresh flower health and longevity: carbohydrates, a biocide and pH adjuster.

- 1t sugar
- 1t bleach
- 2t lemon or lime juice (strained)
- 1 quart water
- Alternate version:
- 1-12 ounce can decaf lemon/lime soda
- 3 cans water
- 1T bleach

Mix and stir to flatten. Each of these preservatives should be stored in the refrigerator with contents labeled.

Sometimes, carnations come very tightly budded. If you want them to open quickly, without waiting days, you can up the sugar content in the preservative to force bloom.

Do expect that you won't get to enjoy them as long in the vase if you do this, though, since their energy will be spent.

Cut flowers are sensitive to ethylene gas, and carnations are especially sensitive. Rotting foliage, ripening fruit, cigarette smoke and exhaust all release ethylene gas, which acts like a hormone that triggers maturation and death. For that reason we avoid storing flowers in the household fridge.

I had my own firsthand experience. I had arrangements to make at work, but had jury duty the day they were needed. I made them a day early and cleared out one of the coolers. Wouldn't you know it that someone put an apple inside without my knowing. Sure enough everything was ruined.

Whether you are a rose lover or a carnation lover, or enjoy any flower in between, I hope that you either treat yourself, or are treated by someone else, either on St. Valentine's Day or sometime soon!

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.

PEOPLE/MILESTONE NEWS

As a free service for our readers, we will print all births, weddings, engagements, milestone anniversaries, major birthdays, military achievements, honors and awards. We have a "people news" form available for you to submit these listings. This material is provided to us by our readers and local institutions and we do not charge to print this content. For more information, or to submit people or milestone news for the Quaboag Current, please email pouimette@turley.com.

- letter to editor -

Schlegel announces resignation from Board of Selectmen

To the citizens of North Brookfield, I want to thank all of you that put your faith in me, to elect me to this prestigious office to help oversee and manage our beloved town.

I cannot thank you enough for the trust and support you have all given me. I also want to thank everyone who works for the town, who have helped to make North Brookfield a better place to live and who I have had the pleasure of working closely with in this shared vision.

However, due to a certain individual who has harassed me both in my elected role and my personal job by contacting my employer to force my hand, I have made the difficult decision to step down as your Selectman. As many of you know I work for the Post Office and as a federal employee there are certain regulations under the Hatch Act Law that prohibit certain political activities by federal employees.

Although being a Selectman in itself is a non-partisan position and thus allowed under the Hatch Act. Participating in any discussion with even so much as a resident or sending an email to a town employee while I am working is strictly prohibited and could cost me my job at the Post Office. Or worse.

Technically I can participate in my elected role after hours, however I would not

find myself able to effectively stay engaged and communicate with town employees in a timely manner. If I cannot give being a Selectman my all, then I do not want to take up this position where someone else can give it more time and effort.

I would like to thank the rest of the Board of Selectmen for making working with them productive and agreeable in the best interests of the town.

I will still continue to serve North Brookfield as a Letter Carrier for the Post Office and I will continue to stay active and engaged as a citizen. I look forward to seeing you all out in the public. I've enjoyed my time in this role you've entrusted me in, the difficult challenges, and helping our residents overcome their difficulties.

I am optimistic about the coming changes to our town that I have helped to be a part of, that will soon start taking place in the months to come and the positive changes I played a role in for our many departments.

It has truly been an honor. I can only hope that my replacement will share the same love and ambition for this community. May God Bless you all, and God Bless North Brookfield.

With respect, your neighbor,
Vaughn Schlegel
North Brookfield

- opinion -

District News from Pathfinder's Superintendent

Remembering Dr. Gerald L. Paist

By Eric Duda
Guest Column

It is with sadness that I share the news of the passing of our longtime superintendent, Dr. Gerald L. Paist, who passed away Friday evening, Jan. 24.

Dr. Paist served as superintendent of Pathfinder Tech from shortly after the school opened in 1973 until 2021, when I had the honor of taking over the role. Throughout his tenure, countless changes unfolded locally, regionally, and nationally, and Dr. Paist's leadership was pivotal in navigating these challenges and ensuring our school remained a strong and thriving institution.

I was fortunate to have had Dr. Paist as my superintendent when I was a student here in the late '90s, and he even handed me my diploma at graduation. Over the years, I developed a close relationship with him, and I appreciated all he did for students, our school, and our communities.

In 2006, Dr. Paist hired me as a teacher, and 18 years later, I still reflect on his guidance and support throughout my journey. He also played a key role in my development as a leader.

As I advanced through roles as Vocational Director, Cooperative Education Director, and later as Assistant Superintendent and Principal, Dr. Paist mentored me and helped me grow as a leader. He encouraged me to pursue graduate studies and leadership training opportunities, always offering his wisdom and guidance along the way.

As an administrator for more than a decade, including as his Assistant Superintendent, I had the privilege of working side-by-side with him for many years before his retirement. Together, we navigated

many town meetings and worked through political and economic challenges, always ensuring the school's budget was approved and our students received the resources they needed. The lessons I learned from Dr. Paist in leadership, school finance, and relationship-building continue to guide my work today.

For many of you on staff, I'm sure you have your own memories and stories of Dr. Paist. Although he slowed down in his final years, he remained a steadfast and dedicated leader for decades, overseeing Pathfinder Tech through significant growth.

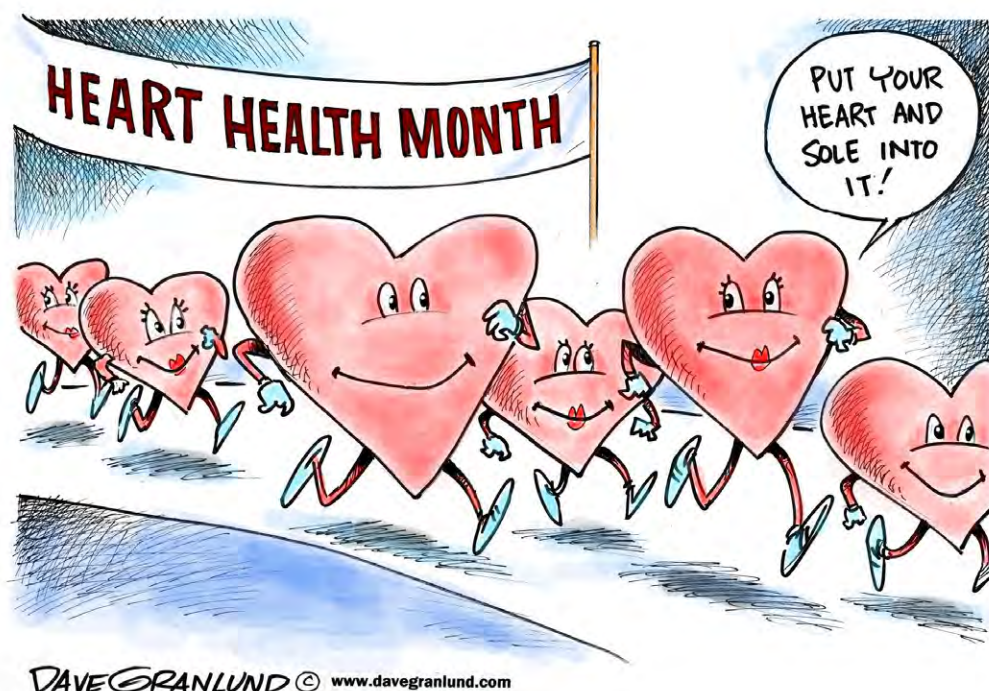
When he began his tenure, our district included just four towns; by the end of his career, it had grown to nine. Under his leadership, Pathfinder Tech underwent a building expansion in the late 1980s that we now know as the Math Wing and West Wing, which enabled enrollment to double in the late 1980s. Prior to these expansions, many of our technical programs were housed in rented spaces across multiple towns.

Dr. Paist was also deeply involved in many local, state, and national organizations, and I was fortunate to observe his leadership beyond the walls of our school. Through him, I learned invaluable lessons about the political process, school funding, and the importance of relationships with local leaders.

Dr. Paist had a unique sense of humor that those who knew him well truly appreciated. He had a quiet, dry wit that could catch you off guard, often followed by a thoughtful pause before delivering a response. He would say things that, at first, might seem simple or even puzzling, but if you understood his style, they would always make you smile.

A few of his signature sayings that I'll always remember include, "I have this to say

See PAIST | PAGE 9



DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

QUABOAG CURRENT TEAM



EDITOR
Paula Ouimette
pouimette@turley.com



ADVERTISING SALES
Dan Flynn
dfflynn@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
President

DEANNA SLOAT
Graphics Manager



www.turley.com

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Send opinions to:

Letters to the Editor, 80 Main Street, Ware, MA 01082 OR e-mail to pouimette@turley.com. Deadline for submission is Monday at noon for the following week's edition.

NOTICE

ERRORS: Each advertiser is requested to check their advertisement the first time it appears. This paper will not be responsible for more than one corrected insertion, nor will be liable for any error in an advertisement to a greater extent than the cost of the space occupied by the item in the advertisement.

- community -

Quabbin High announces John and Abigail Scholarship recipients



Quabbin Regional High School Class of 2025 John and Abigail Adams Scholarship recipients are first row, from left, Hannah Shepard, Irene Stogitis, Jahzara Tweedell and Alisyn Brusco; second row from left, Ava Conlee, Samantha Carlson, Summer Young, Kaylee Shaw, Sadie Sheldon, Sydney Slattery, Isabella Smith, Adam Fauhla, Vincent Marinelli, Eamon Arnold and Alexandra Pease and third row from left, Principal Purnima DeMoraes, Alexander Bedard, Richard Tucker, Matthew Erickson, Benjamin Metcalf, Kevin Boles, Quin Geary, Christiana Dunn, Ellie Frost, Samuel Guertin, Ethan Salvatore, Jack Fors and Assistant Principal Jason Gilmartin. Missing from photo were Isabel Coviello, Rachel Harrington, Nathen Pride, Julia Smith and Jaxon Warburton.

BARRE – These members of the Quabbin Regional High School Class of 2025 received John and Abigail Adams Scholarships.

The John and Abigail Adams Scholarship is

awarded to high school seniors based on their high academic achievement on their Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System exams. This is a four-year scholarship to a par-

ticipating Massachusetts public institution of higher education, including the four undergraduate campuses of the UMass system, all nine state universities and all 15 community colleges.

NB BOS | FROM PAGE 1

Selectmen. “In addition, in North Brookfield’s Open Space and Recreation Plan, the Kittredge Road parcel is recommended that be restored to forest.”

Petratis said the board will take this letter under advisement, and look into the matter.

Petratis and Flamand said the town has been using it as a gravel pit for decades. Avery said in 1982, gravel was starting to be removed from the parcel, but he found no records that indicate that this was authorized.

Public comment

Resident Karen Farrington requested a public apology, after she was investigated for a complaint alleging that she was taking donated food.

Farrington has volunteered her time with the North Brookfield Community Food Collaborative, and the Senior Center. She said she has lived in town for almost 25 years, and enjoys giving back to her community.

She said she was asked by the director of the Senior Center to pick up vegetables from a local farm, and bring bread from Hannaford Supermarket to the Senior Center.

She said later the director told her that the North Brookfield Community Food Collaborative and the Senior Center were “too intertwined.” Farrington said she then heard from senior citizens, Hannaford’s management and the housing authority that town employees were saying she stole vegetables.

Farrington said she has tried since the middle of October to meet with town officials to resolve this issue, but nobody would meet with her. She said Town Administrator Michael Szlosek filed a criminal complaint against her with the police department.

“I’ve been cleared of any wrongdoing by the police, only because I kept every text between the director and I,” Farrington said. “I was put through hell for three

months and I bring this to your attention to clear my name, and hope that this doesn’t happen to anybody else.”

Szlosek said he did not file criminal charges, but he requested that the Police Department investigate the matter after being notified that food donations did not reach the Senior Center.

Joining Farrington was resident and collaborative volunteer Nancy Waldron, who spoke about how the nonprofit works with organizations and businesses to provide food for residents experiencing food insecurity.

“We support the food pantries in our schools. We have approximately 15 volunteers in our community who help secure and distribute food to approximately 125 families weekly,” Waldron said. “None of our volunteers are paid. They freely give their time, their vehicle wear and tear, and gas to serve our community.”

Waldron said the collaborative will continue to support those in need and the community.

Personnel policies

Petratis said the board is reviewing several personnel policies to determine a way to address the need for nonunion employee raises and a proposal to combine two positions on the Board of Health.

“We’re going to go over those and come up with an equitable pay scale for nonunion personnel based on their responsibilities, their hours, their job level,” he said. “We will be having a meeting within the next couple weeks with all the managers of nonunion personnel to discuss what those are going to be.”

Spending request

The Board of Selectmen approved a request from the Senior Center to spend \$300 to have a premium service for broadcasting by telephone.

The current phone number shows up as spam, with many senior citizens rejecting these incoming notifying calls.

School Committee appointment

The board appointed Ralph Kay, a resident and retired teacher, to fill a vacancy on the School Committee until the annual town election.

“I like to give back to my town, so I want to get involved,” he said.

Senior Center position hours

Senior Center Director Courtenay Rivera said she would like to reduce the hours of the Coordinator Position from 18 hours down to 15. She said she would like to post the position soon in order to fill the position.

Chapter 90 projects

Highway Superintendent Randy Morgan said some of the upcoming Chapter 90 funded projects include work on part of Donovan Road, finishing Town Farm Road, part of Fullam Hill Road and Brickyard Road. He said there is also shoulder work that needs to be completed on roads that had been recently paved.

These projects total about \$400,000, leaving over \$500,000 in Chapter 90 funds.

Earth removal bylaw

The board voted to send a proposed earth removal bylaw to town counsel for review.

Employee evaluations

The board approved the employee evaluation guidelines as submitted.

Board of Selectmen Vice-Chair Elizabeth “Brooke” Canada recommended that new employees be evaluated at 90 days, six months, and then annually after that. Current employees would be evaluated annually.

Historical Commission announces 2025 scholarship

WEST BROOKFIELD – The West Brookfield Historical Commission is pleased to announce its 2025, 14th annual scholarship in the amount of \$2,000.

Qualified students must reside in West Brookfield and may attend Quaboag Regional High School, or be school-choice students, home schooled students, and independent school students.

This award is made possible through the J. Irving and Jane L. England Charitable Trust.

Application criteria

The students must be planning to attend either a four-year college/university program or a two-year college with the intent to a transfer to a four-year college. The commission will show preference to study plans with concentration on history and history-related areas. Major or minors may include political science, social studies, anthropology, archaeology, historical preservation, museum studies, and education in any of these related fields.

Applicants must submit a brief essay based on one of the Notable Persons or Significant Places listed on the application. All necessary information will be found on the West Brookfield Historical Commission website. <http://westbrookfield.org>.

Essays are due no later than April 11 by email to info@westbrookfield.org or mail to West Brookfield Historical Commission, P.O. Box 372, West Brookfield, MA 01585.

The application and details can be found on the Historical Commission website-<http://westbrookfield.org>.

QHMA invites public to Bingo Night fundraiser

PALMER – The Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce, the non-profit organization that promotes business and development within surrounding communities of Hampden, Hampshire, and Worcester counties, has announced its Handbag & Hand Tool Bingo Night fundraiser.

The event will take place on Friday, March 21 at AMVETS Post 74 in Three Rivers. The Chamber will produce 10 exciting bingo rounds, each with a grand prize featuring one of seven designer handbags or one of three premium tools up for grabs.

Tickets can be purchased on QHMA.com. The registration fee is \$40 per person and includes 10 bingo cards, bingo dauber, delicious snack platters, bonus raffle ticket and a cash bar.

Proceeds from the bingo event will benefit the Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce and its on-going mission to assist its more than two-hundred member businesses succeed and grow with programs and initiatives throughout the year.

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. FRESH PORK SIRLOIN CUTLETS.....	\$2.22 lb	2 FROZEN TENDERLOIN STEAKS 4 JUMBO SHRIMP CHEESECAKE FOR 2	USDA INSP. FRESH CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS 10 LB BAG	77c lb
USDA INSP. FROZEN BONE-IN PORK LOIN END CHOPS	\$1.79 lb	2/13-2/15	USDA INSP. FROZEN CHICKEN WINGS TRAY PAK.....	\$1.88 lb
USDA INSP. SLICED IN OUR DELI TURKEY BREAST.....	\$3.99 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN BEEF SHORT RIBS	USDA INSP. FROZEN HANDMADE CHICKEN EMPANADAS FULLY COOKED	\$2.99 lb
USDA INSP. SLICED IN OUR DELI MONTEREY JACK CHEESE	\$4.44 lb	\$8.99 lb	USDA INSP. IQF FROZEN RAW SHRIMP EASY PEELED 31/40 COUNT 2 LB BAG.....	\$9.99 ea
USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN BEEF SHANK.....	\$3.99 lb	USDA INSP. GROUND FRESH DAILY DIET LEAN GROUND BEEF 5 LB BAG		
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- community -

National Baseball Poetry Festival announces third season

WEST BROOKFIELD – The National Baseball Poetry Festival kicks off its third season in February with two national poetry contests.

The first opens to youth grades four-12, and the second open to adults 18 years and older. The adult contest deadline is March 28 and the youth contest deadline is April 16.

The festival culminates May 2-4 in Worcester, with a welcome reception, a youth poetry event, an open mic night, two Triple A baseball games, a fireworks display, and other activities. Prizes will be awarded to 80 poets, 20 in each of the following categories: elementary school, middle school, high school, and adult.

In 2024, Pamela Gemme, a local poet and artist from West Brookfield, was among four dozen poets from around the nation to attend the Festival, and will be featured at its public readings.

“It was wonderful to meet poets from far-and-wide who love baseball, a pleasure to read publicly, and delightful to take part in the festival’s activities,” Gemme said. “I would encourage student and adult poets throughout West Brookfield and beyond to try their hands and make submissions, and then join us at Polar Park in Worcester in May.”

According to Festival founder Steven Biondolillo, the National Baseball Poetry Festival is the first-ever Festival to unite sports and the fine arts.

“For the youth who make submissions and/or attend the event, the festival fosters the appreciation of poetry and the fine arts through the lens of baseball,” Biondolillo said. “In addition to the youth contest and reading event, the festival features the work of baseball illustrators and song writers, including a Worcester-based opera composer.”

Teachers interested in involving their students can visit www.BaseballPoetryFest.org, where a complete lesson plan and contest form can be found. The festival website also features a schedule of activities, videos, and a list of poets expected to attend and perform at the Festival’s open mic night.

Those who are interested can reach out to Pamela Gemme at pamelagemmepoetry@gmail.com or 508-826-1277.

The National Baseball Poetry Festival is a project of the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce and Biondolillo Associates, LLC. Worcester—the birthplace of Ernest Thayer, author of “Casey at the Bat” is the festival’s permanent home and early May, which follows National Poetry Month, its strategic place in the calendar.

EQLT to host ‘Kids’ Wonder Workshop’ on Feb. 20

HARDWICK – The East Quabbin Land Trust will host a Kids’ Wonder Workshop during school vacation week, on Feb. 20 from 1-3 p.m., at EQLT’s office, 120 Ridge Road.

Open to children of all ages, activities will be held indoors and outside and include:

Sap to Syrup – a demonstration of a small-scale “backwoods approach” to selecting and tapping a tree, drawing sap and creating syrup.

Exploring the Forest Play Trail – the Forest Play Trail, created for elementary-aged children, is a discovery trail near the EQLT office that kids can visit anytime, year-round.

Rock Painting – after discovering and gaining inspiration from the Kindness Rocks along the Forest Play Trail, children will have the opportunity to paint their own Kindness Rocks to take home.

Who Goes There? Animal Tracks & Wildlife Sign – see and learn about various animal tracks and specimens indoors, then head outside to look for animal tracks and other wildlife sign.

S’mores Making – creating these timeless treats over an open, outdoor fire. Other healthy snacks will also be available.

The outdoor activities will be held on

the hillside next to the EQLT office in both wooded and open grassy areas. Children should have sturdy, warm footwear, be dressed for the weather...and bring their curiosity!

Please RSVP to atrevvett@eqlt.org if you would like to attend. In the event of inclement weather, the Kids’ Wonder Workshop will be moved to the following day, Feb. 21, from 1-3 p.m.

About the East Quabbin Land Trust

The East Quabbin Land Trust fosters a meaningful relationship with the natural world by conserving, connecting with and caring for the farmlands, woodlands and waters in the East Quabbin region of Massachusetts.

Celebrating its 30th Anniversary in 2024, EQLT was formed in 1994 out of concern for the loss of farmland and wildlife habitat to unplanned sprawl in and around Hardwick. Since 1998, EQLT has expanded its protection efforts to Barre, Petersham, New Braintree, North Brookfield, and other nearby towns.

By working cooperatively with property owners, government agencies, conservation groups and other land trust organizations, EQLT has been able to protect over 6,200 acres in the region.



The spaghetti meal came with meatballs, sausages, a dinner roll, salad and a dessert.

ST. JOSEPH’S | FROM PAGE 1

ioners of St. Joseph Parish. The other prize was a Yankee Candle package.

There was also a dinner raffle taking place surrounded by Valentine-themed gift bags and hearts. Prizes included a gift card to Hannaford’s with a stuffed animal and chocolates. There was also a gift package from Gulf featuring a gift card, washer fluid and additional car maintenance supplies.

The other prize was a gift card to the Hardwick Crossing Country Club with a bottle of wine included. Music was featured during the meal inside the church hall with DJ Tabby LeBlanc.

Love and support were truly expressed during the St. Valentine’s Dinner at St. Joseph Parish. The Knights made a delicious spaghetti dinner and guests had a good time connecting over dinner.



A bottle of wine and a Hardwick Crossing Country Club gift card could be won by a lucky diner during the Valentine’s Dinner.



The dinner also featured a raffle with several prizes including this Gulf package with washer fluid.



A Hannaford gift card along with a stuffed animal was one of the prizes guests could win at the dinner raffle.

SPOTLIGHT | FROM PAGE 1

pet Brown Swiss cow, now retired, that stepped on her hand. Ouch!

No matter, Sara is now back and should be every other Wednesday for the duration.

The farm itself has a lot going on. There is raw milk. They raise hay and silage and beef, but Sara is definitely into making jam with over 30 varieties with interesting names such as Pina Colada Jam, Blue Mule, Fig Jam, and more.

If you’re a jam fan, it would be hard not to find one you like.

Lucky Me spends a lot of time on the road going to markets from Springfield to Boston, so we are lucky to have her here.

Like Thompson’s, she has a Facebook page to keep abreast of what Lucky Me is up to.

The market continues Wednesdays through March 12 during the mid-afternoon. Come and feel the warmth inside the church.

STURBRIDGE | FROM PAGE 1

ground laterals, cables and wires. This pole will be used to support lines for new infrastructure.

“It’s a big project for a commercial customer,” Willaims said. “There’s some infrastructure work that has to be happening and we need a pole location on Whittemore Road to install equipment that’s needed for the service that this customer has put in.”

The board approved the request.

Donation of land

Grimm said a landowner would like to donate a large parcel of land on Brookfield Road to the town. She said the parcel encompasses two towns, with 15.7 acres in Sturbridge and 19 acres in Brimfield.

Grimm said both the Conservation and Planning departments agree that this is a valuable piece of property to accept.

The board moved to forward the offer to the Conservation Commission before it returns to the board for acceptance.

Route 20 traffic signal

Grimm said the Massachusetts Department of Transportation looked at recent traffic counts near Noble Energy, and agreed the area warranted a traffic signal.

She said she’s “very hopeful” that this will be installed in a reasonable amount of time.

Streeter Beach Road update

Grimm said she spoke with the owner of the abutting property, and they are able to meet MassDOT’s requirements by having one opening closure on their side and a new road opening.

“We are continuing now to work with the engineers to get a more detailed design going,” she said.

Appointments

The board approved the appointments of Holice Turnbow and Sara Ponticelli to the 250th Celebration Committee, and Nicole Dahrouj as a part-time dispatcher for the Police Department.

Donation

The board accepted a \$250 donation from the Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale on behalf of the Police Department.

“They’re just wonderful neighbors and do so much for the community,” Select Board Chair Jamie Goodwin said.

Easement for National Grid

Grimm said the board will need to sign an easement agreement with National Grid for the Grand Trunk Trail Extension. She said the easement will require the town to pay \$500 a year for additional insurance, but she is inquiring if an exemption is available.

Letter of support

Grimm said Verizon requested that the board write a letter of support for Verizon’s efforts to expand its fiberoptic network to underserved areas in town. The board approved the request and authorized Grimm to draft a letter.

Resignations

The board accepted the resignation of Veterans Agent Michael Struppa and Assistant Conservation Agent/Field Inspector Erin Carson.



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Mia Letendre looks for a long pass.

SPORTS

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Hurricanes edge out Pacers for win



Brach Applegate angles for a shot on goal.

HOLYOKE – Last Wednesday evening, Amherst ice hockey, which co-ops with Pathfinder, defeated the Chicopee five-team co-op 3-2 at Fitzpatrick Rink. Nate Desbien, Alex Marlin, and Pathfinder's Ethan Mooney all scored the goals for the Hurricanes. Chicopee got goals from Nate Robitaille and Tyler Denison. Spencer McDonald made 21 saves in goal. Amherst 9-4-1 and is headed for tournament, while Chicopee is 3-8-2.



Pathfinder's Ethan Mooney looks for a path to the Chicopee goal.



Noah Latulippe works the puck away from the wall.



Eric Chen looks to get past an opponent.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Quinn Geary hustles down the court.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Panthers defeat Orioles in boys basketball action

BELCHERTOWN – Last Wednesday night, Quabbin Regional basketball faced off with Belchertown on the road. The Panthers, which continue to have a strong season, came away with a 59-52 win, while the Orioles fell to 8-8 on the season. The two teams began holding meetings against one another last year, which took place at Quabbin. The boys teams have also met in the state tournament a couple of years ago, which took place in Belchertown. Both teams now look toward the final week of the season and tournament.



Jaxon Warburton shuffles a pass away.



Brady Patchen looks to score in traffic.



Zeke Santoro drives to the hoop.



Kyle Clark passes after making a rebound.

Quaboag scores win over Ware

WARE – Last Sunday night, Quaboag girls basketball scored a win over host Ware as part of a doubleheader between the boys and girls teams of the two schools. Ware fell behind early as Quaboag got a big advantage 16-4 after one quarter. Quaboag got 15 points from Juliette Boos while Reese McKeever had 12 points for the Indians.



Juliette Boos gets around the opposing defense.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Isabelle Manzano holds the ball back before making a pass inside.



Jacoby Labillois goes for free throw.



Parker Tunley struggles to get a shot off under pressure.

- sports -

Candlepin League News

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

Tuesday Night Commercial Elks League

PALMER – The Commercial Elks have concluded their second round of the candlepin league season.

Going into the final week, the standings had Team BK in the first-place position with a record of 22.5-13.5. The Daft Kings are in second place at 20.5-15.5. Daft Kings would have to win at least three points to win the round as long as BK doesn't win any points in the final week of round two. The remaining four teams are mathematically eliminated from winning the second round.

The winner of this round will join Gutter Mouths in the championship roll off at the end of the season. First round winners, Gutter Mouths, bowled against Last in Line. In game one, Gutter Mouths were victorious over Last in Line 340-325.

In game two, Gutter Mouths won again by a score of 361-335. Stephen Manolakakis bowled a 108 in game two to go with his teammate Dino Tessicini's 105. The third and final game was close but Gutter Mouths won again 343-339 for a three-game sweep.

The final score was 1044-999 in favor of Gutter Mouths.

The top seed Team BK bowled against Compression in the final week of round two. In game one, Compression defeated BK by a score of 382-366. Jeff Whyte of BK bowled an excellent game of 113 in a losing effort. David Bowman of Compression bowled a 105.

In game two, Compression was victorious again, taking another win from BK 375-345. In the third and final game, Team BK won the last game, 376-361, to give themselves one point in the final week. Mark Fitzpatrick ended the match with a 108.

The final score was 1118-1087 in favor of Compression.

The pressure was on for Daft Kings who are two points out of first place as they bowled against the Mailmen. In game one, Daft Kings got a victory by a score of 377-371. Ken Trudel of Daft Kings lead his team to victory by bowling a 112. Bryan Surprise of Mailmen bowled a 119 in a losing effort.

In game two, Daft Kings won another close game by a score of 393-392. Matt Bertelli of Daft Kings had the high single score of game two with a 116. Bryan Surprise has a 111 in game two.

In game three, it was another game with a single digit difference as Daft Kings won again 392-385. Dave Cobleigh of Daft Kings was the hero of game three with a 116. Bryan Surprise had the high series on his team with a 325. Matt Bertelli had the high series on his team with a 317.

The final score was 1162-1148 in favor of Daft Kings who won all four points in the final week. As a result, the Daft Kings pull ahead of Team BK and win the second round. Daft Kings will be competing in the championship roll off at the end of the season.

With one final round to go, the Commercial Elks League at Diamond Junction Bowling Lanes will crown one more winning team to join Gutter Mouths and Daft Kings in the playoffs.

Railers drop finale to Atlanta Gladiators

WORCESTER – The Worcester Railers HC (20-20-2-4 46pts) lost to the Atlanta Gladiators (20-22-4-2, 46pts), on Saturday night by the final score of 4-2 in front of a crowd of 7,094 at the DCU Center. The Railers are back on the ice next at the Credit Union of Texas Event Center taking on the Allen Americans on Friday, February 14th at 8:10 p.m. EST.

It was Atlanta who scored first tonight as Cody Sylvester (2-0-2) put the Gladiators up 1-0 19:26 into the first period. Just 31 seconds later Andrew Jarvis extended the Atlanta lead to 2-0 heading into the second period. Worcester got their first on the night off the stick of Matias Rajaniemi (1-0-1) 2:34 into the third period. Atlanta scored back-to-back empty-net goals in the third period from Cody Sylvester and Ryan Cranford (1-0-1). The Railers then made it 4-2 with a goal from Matt Ustaski (1-0-1) 18:41 into the third to finish off the night's scoring.

It took nearly the entire first period for either team to score until Atlanta took the 1-0 lead. It was Cody Sylvester (17th) who put the Gladiators up 1-0. With just three

seconds remaining in the first period Andrew Jarvis (4th) extended the Atlanta lead to 2-0 with a low slap shot to beat Bullion down low. Shots favored Worcester 12-10 in the first period.

Despite power play chances for both sides neither team was able to net one in the second period. The Railers went to the power play twice in the period, first at the 10:02 mark into the second followed by another chance at the 13:38 mark. Atlanta got their power play opportunity 16:17 into second frame, but the Worcester penalty kill held strong keeping Atlanta from jumping out to a three-goal lead. Shots favored Worcester 14-7 in the second.

Worcester made it a 2-1 game early in the third following a goal from Matias Rajaniemi (3rd) 2:34 into the third period. The Railers went to the empty net in an effort to tie the game late, but Atlanta scored twice on the empty net, the first was Cody Sylvester (18th) followed by Ryan Cranford (9th). The Railers then got one back scored by Matt Ustaski (3rd) leading to a 4-2 final. Shots favored Worcester 15-5 in the third and 41-22 in the game.

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Hall of Fame unveils schedule for 2025 enshrinement

SPRINGFIELD – The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame has unveiled its Enshrinement Weekend schedule for the Class of 2025. The celebratory weekend will culminate with the Enshrinement Ceremony on Saturday, Sept. 6, in Springfield—the Birthplace of Basketball. Finalists, as well as select award winners, will be announced on Friday, Feb. 14, during NBA All-Star Weekend in San Francisco, and the Class of 2025 will be revealed on Saturday, April 5, at the Final Four in San Antonio.

Enshrinement Weekend will begin at Mohegan Sun on Friday, Sept. 5, with the Tip-Off Celebration and Awards Gala. The Class of 2025 and returning Hall of Famers will then travel to Springfield, Mass., where they will participate in the weekend's traditional events taking place at the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame and Springfield's Symphony Hall.

First-time candidates for the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame Class of 2025 include Carmelo Anthony, Sue Bird, Maya Moore, Dwight Howard, Doc Rivers, Billy Donovan, Sylvia Fowles, Chamique Holdscaw, Mark Few, Lisa Bluder, Marc Gasol, and Micky Arison.

A limited number of VIP Packages for the 2025 Enshrinement Ceremony will go on sale on Friday, Feb. 14, at 6 p.m. at hoophall.com on the Hall of Fame's Enshrinement Ticket page or by calling the Basketball Hall of Fame at (413) 231-5513.

Individual tickets for the events will go on sale tentatively on Saturday, April 5, at 12 noon.

Details of the current schedule of events for Enshrinement 2025 are as follows:

Friday, September 5, at Mohegan Sun (Uncasville, Conn.)

Enshrinement 2025 Autograph Session

An opportunity to meet the Class of 2025 at their first public Enshrinement Weekend event. A ticket to this event will give fans the opportunity to receive one autograph per class member.

Enshrinement 2025 Press Conference

The official media availability for the Hall of Fame Class of 2025. This availability is only open to credentialed members of the media, along with VIP Package ticket holders, and will be held at Mohegan Sun. The media credential application will open on Monday, July 21, at hoophall.com/media.

Enshrinement Tip-Off Celebration and Awards Gala

The Class of 2025, along with the Hall's prestigious annual award winners, will be celebrated at this televised Enshrinement event at Mohegan Sun. During the event, the Class of 2025 will receive their Hall of Fame rings, courtesy of Baron Championship Rings, and their official Hall of Fame jackets, provided by Reveal Suits. The program will additionally highlight the presentation of the Hall's annual John Bunn Lifetime Achievement Award and the Curt Gowdy Media Awards.

Saturday, Sept. 6, in Springfield, Mass.

Enshrinement Ceremony VIP Reception at Springfield Marriott

Toast the incoming Hall of Fame Class of 2025 at the official VIP Reception prior to the sport's ultimate recognition. The party is limited to select ticket holders for the Enshrinement Ceremony. Shuttle service between the host location and Symphony Hall will be provided if needed. This exclusive party will set the stage for a memorable night on the Red Carpet and at the Ceremony.

Enshrinement Ceremony Red Carpet Show at Symphony Hall

The Class of 2025, legendary Hall of Famers, and some of basketball's biggest icons take center stage on the red carpet in a live TV broadcast outside Symphony Hall.

Enshrinement Ceremony at Symphony Hall

One of the most elite nights on the basketball calendar each year, the Hall of Fame Class of 2025 will be formally enshrined into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame in a nationally televised ceremony.

'Ice-O-Topes' score win over Bruins

SPRINGFIELD — The Springfield Ice-O-Topes, née Thunderbirds, (22-17-2-3) rode a four-goal flourish in the final period to a 5-2 victory on Saturday night over the Providence Bruins (25-15-4-1) before a sell-out crowd of 6,793 inside the MassMutual Center. Springfield has still never lost as the Ice-O-Topes, improving to a perfect 5-0 record as their alter ego, while the team also extended its point streak to seven straight games.

It became evident in the early stages that goals would be scarce on this night, as Bruins All-Star netminder Michael DiPietro and Springfield stalwart Colten Ellis showed no signs of blinking in the opening 20 minutes. Matt Luff had two of the better chances for Springfield, but the iron rang on the veteran winger on one attempt, while DiPietro flashed terrific lateral agility to stonewall the Ice-O-Topes forward on another offering.

Not to be outdone, Ellis was timely in his own right, making his brightest save of the frame when he denied a breakaway backhand attempt from Max Jones.

The first three power plays of the night proved unsuccessful, but on their second attempt in the closing minutes of the middle period, the Bruins finally solved Ellis as Jones hit Riley Tufto on a slap feed in the right circle, where the big centerman lifted a shot under the crossbar to make it 1-0 Providence at 18:14 of period two.

In desperate need of a response, the 'Topes got just that in the final seconds of the stanza, as MacKenzie MacEachern and Dalibor Dvorsky combined to work the puck to the edge of the blue paint on a 3-on-

2 rush, with Nikita Alexandrov cashing in with just eight seconds separating the teams from the dressing room.

Alexandrov was far from finished, and at 4:01 of the third, with Leo Loof holding the puck at the left point, Alexandrov dashed to the blue paint, where he deflected Loof's pass in behind DiPietro to hand Springfield the 2-1 lead.

Just 1:41 later, the lead got a boost as Otto Stenberg filled the center lane, receiving a pass from Luff and firing it through DiPietro to make it a 3-1 game at 5:42. The tally snapped Stenberg's eight-game goal drought and also doubled as his first goal on home ice.

The Bruins would not go down easily, and Vinni Lettieri stepped in front from behind the goal line to lift a backhander home before Ellis could get across, shrinking the Topes' lead to 3-2 at 7:45.

Unlike the night before, the T-Birds would not let the Bruins get even this time around, killing off a Providence power play before adding onto their lead once again at 17:48 when Alexandrov fielded a pass out of his feed at the bottom of the right circle before slipping it into the blue paint. Before DiPietro could smother it, Matthew Peca arrived to jam it across the line for his team-leading 17th of the season, giving Springfield a 4-2 advantage.

Dvorsky joined Alexandrov with three-point nights when he threw a puck from center ice into an empty net with 1:29 to polish off a four-goal final period and earn Springfield three of a possible four points on the weekend.

Medicare 101 educational event to be held March 13

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The North Brookfield Senior Center will be hosting an educational presentation on Thursday, March 13 at 11 a.m. at the senior center located at 29 Forest St., for current beneficiaries and for those who will soon be eligible for Medicare.

The information is specific to Massachusetts. The session will run approximately one hour, including time for questions.

The presentation will be conducted by Ed Spater, a licensed Insurance agent, who will explain the basics of Medicare includ-

ing:

Why it's important to evaluate your current Medicare coverage each year

The pros and cons of each of your Medicare coverage options

What to consider when deciding which Medicare coverage option is right for you

Ways to save money and get better Medicare coverage in 2024

For accommodations of persons with special needs at meetings call 774-271-5199 or 711 for TTY callers.

- Community -

Quaboag hosts 4th annual Craft Fair



Girl Scout Arianna Miknaitis was busy selling cookies at the annual Quaboag Regional Middle High School Craft & Small Business Fair and helping out her mom who runs PB&J Designs

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

WARREN – The fourth annual Quaboag Regional Middle High School Craft & Small Business Fair took place this past Saturday.

This year's fair had a great turnout with over 90 vendors and crafters filling the hallways and cafeteria. The setup was possible thanks to members of Quaboag's Student Council, who were in charge of running concessions, running the raffle and helping with the setup of all the vendors.

A total of 10 members of Quaboag's Student Council helped out during the Craft Fair, including Student Council President Parker Tunley.

Advisor to the Student Council, Kayla Hatch said this year's fair had a great turnout with proceeds from the vendor tables and raffles going to support the Student Council's MASC Leadership Conference in Hyannis. Proceeds from the raffle are going towards the QRMHS Student Council Polar Plunge for Special Olympics.

Although it is wintertime and snowstorms could linger, the craft fair still had an incredible turnout.

"Even though there is a snowstorm coming and it's the peek of flu season, it was still a good turnout," Hatch said.

One of the vendors featured photography by Davison's Photography. Alex Davison is a student at Quaboag who recently

picked up photography as a hobby. Davison had many samples of his photographs displayed and some photos were formatted into greeting cards.

When asked how he got into photography last year, Davison said "I just started taking pictures".

The aspiring photographer also had a camera stand in place and took sample photos during his time at the QRMHS Craft & Small Business Fair. Davison is currently a freshman at Quaboag and does photography in his spare time.

For more information, email Davison's Photography at davisonsphotography@gmail.com.

For a tasty treat, a member of Girl Scout Troop 65445 Arianna Miknaitis was selling Girl Scout cookies at the fair. Arianna was also helping her mom out at her booth PB&J Designs.

Many vendors were sticking to the Valentine's Day theme with their products. Labors of Love provided laser cut engraved wood pieces and hand-painted pieces of hearts and other crafty decorations. To see more creative designs from laser cut engraving, email Labors of Love at kathleenmynarski@gmail.com or call 413-345-4802.

Over 40 prizes were featured in the raffle during the craft fair. Members of Student Council did an excellent job organizing the raffle and sold tickets for guests who got to experience the fourth annual Craft & Small Business Fair at Quaboag Regional Middle High School.



Members of Quaboag Student Council kept busy running concessions and raffles during the school's annual craft fair.



Crocheted items were big at this year's craft fair at Quaboag Regional Middle High School and guests could purchase their own emotional support sensory hedgehogs.



Sweets and desserts including dunkaroos could be purchased at the craft fair.



Laser cut engraved and hand painted crafts made by Labors of Love. A tree full of hearts would make a great Valentine's Day gift.

PAIST | FROM PAGE 4

about that" and "Tis a puzzlement." Of course, each of these would be followed by wisdom and guidance. His humor was one of the many qualities that made him so memorable.

I also remember him telling me many stories about his past, his love for music, the shows and performances he had seen, and many other experiences from his life. Some of these stories were shared when we went out for breakfast or lunch together at our local restaurants, moments I always cherished.

I also remember him reflecting on challenging times and telling me stories about events from his past.

One story that stood out to me was when he shared where he was when he heard that JFK was assassinated. He told me he was getting off the Massachusetts Turnpike at the Palmer exit and remembered sitting at the tollbooth when the toll collector asked him, "Is the president still alive?"

The toll collector had assumed he was listening to his car radio – long before cell phones and other methods of communication. He said he started crying as he spoke to the toll collector. He told me that he had never felt the same way again after that day,

until Sept. 11. On 9/11, he said he felt that same profound sense of loss and shock, and he cried again.

He also shared many other significant memories from his personal experiences throughout history. There are so many things I reflect on from what I heard him share that had a profound effect on me.

Dr. Paist's nearly 50-year career as a superintendent is impossible to fully summarize. What I can say is this: he devoted his entire life to Pathfinder Tech and made it his mission to serve this school community. He didn't view his role as just a job; it was a calling, and we were incredibly fortunate to have him for so many years.

I have lost a friend, a mentor, and a guiding light in my career, and we, as a school district, have lost someone whose legacy will continue to shape us for years to come.

In his final years, Dr. Paist lived in an assisted living facility in Pennsylvania, near his only living relative, Susan Hubbell-Whyte. My thoughts and prayers are with her during this difficult time, and I would like to express my gratitude to her for being by his side in his final years.

Please join me in keeping Dr. Paist's memory alive as we honor the incredible impact he had on Pathfinder Tech and on all of us.

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- Public Safety -

East Brookfield Police Log

During the weeks of Jan. 6-19, the East Brookfield Police Department responded to 376 building/property checks, 93 directed area patrols, six traffic controls, nine radar assignments, 18 emergency 911 calls, eight citizen assists, nine assist other agencies, five complaints, three property damages, one fraud, five motor vehicle accidents, one illegal dumping, one animal call and 46 motor vehicle stops in the town of East Brookfield.

Monday, Jan. 6

2:50 p.m. 911 Assist Other Agency, East Main Street, Services Rendered
5:47 p.m. 911 Misdial, Adams Road, Spoken To

Wednesday, Jan. 8

10:56 a.m. Property Damage, North Brookfield Road, Report Taken
11:36 a.m. Property Damage, Podunk Road, Report Taken
5:47 p.m. Assist Citizen, West Sturbridge Road, Services Rendered

Thursday, Jan. 9

10:53 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Connie Mack Drive, Officer Handled
12:25 p.m. Fraud, Connie Mack Drive, Officer Handled
2:12 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Route 49, Vehicle Towed
6:33 p.m. Welfare Check, Harrington Lane, Transported to Hospital

Friday, Jan. 10

9:54 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, North Brookfield Road, Written Warning
11:27 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Evergreen Street, Officer Handled
4:19 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, North Street, Criminal Complaint

Saturday, Jan. 11

1:53 a.m. Parking Complaint, East Main Street, Citation Issued
1:57 a.m. Parking Complaint, East Main Street, Citation Issued
12:43 a.m. Motor Vehicle Accident, Route 49, Officer Handled
12:44 p.m. 911 Motor Vehicle Accident, Route 49, Merge
5:01 p.m. Motor Vehicle Accident, Podunk Road, Vehicle Towed
5:15 p.m. Assist Citizen, Connie Mack Drive, Officer Handled

Sunday, Jan. 12

3:44 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, North Street, Transported to Hospital

Monday, Jan. 13

11:03 a.m. Assist Citizen, Connie Mack Drive, Officer Handled
11:33 a.m. Assist Citizen, Connie Mack Drive, Officer Handled
4 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, East Main Street, Transported to Hospital
9:28 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Arrest(s) Made
11:57 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Faith

Drive, Officer Handled

Tuesday, Jan. 14

1:23 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Faith Drive, Report Taken
8:11 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Oakland Drive, Services Rendered
11:03 a.m. 911 Motor Vehicle Accident, Route 49, Report Taken
11:14 a.m. 911 Fire, Podunk Road, Services Rendered
2:45 p.m. Assist Citizen, Faith Drive, Officer Handled
6:01 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Bridge Street, Transported to Hospital
6:30 p.m. Assist Citizen, Unknown Location, Officer Handled

Wednesday, Jan. 15

5:04 p.m. Assist Citizen, Faith Drive, Officer Handled
6:46 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Route 49, Services Rendered

Thursday, Jan. 16

5:33 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued
10:40 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Oakland Drive, Transported to Hospital
4:10 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, North Brookfield Road, Transported to Hospital
11:30 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, East Main Street, Transported to Hospital

Friday, Jan. 17

11:18 a.m. 911 Misdial, Mechanic Street, Spoken To
12:46 p.m. Complaint, Flagg Road, Services Rendered
1:03 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Pleasant Street, Dispatch Handled

Saturday, Jan. 18

3:38 a.m. Parking Complaint, East Main Street, Citation issued
7:57 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Connie Mack Drive, Officer Handled
9 a.m. 911 Misdial, Podunk Road, Services Rendered
11:07 a.m. Assist Citizen, Connie Mack Drive, Officer Handled
1:15 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, North Brookfield Road, Written Warning
2:09 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, West Sturbridge Rod, Citation Issued
6:51 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Out of Town, Services Rendered

Sunday, Jan. 19

4:23 a.m. Motor Vehicle Accident, North Brookfield Road, Vehicle Towed
1:36 p.m. Illegal Dumping, East Main Street, Investigated
4:10 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Faith Drive, Transported to Hospital
6 p.m. Complaint/Motor Vehicle Operations, North Brookfield Road, Verbal Only
6:12 p.m. 911 Property Damage, Harrington Street, Report Taken
6:13 p.m. Gunshots, Harrington Street, Merge

New Braintree Police Log

During the week of Feb. 3-10, the Hardwick/New Braintree Police Department responded to eight building/property checks, seven directed/area patrols, six radar assignments, two traffic controls, two emergency 911 calls, one motor vehicle accident, one motor vehicle investigation, two animal calls and six motor vehicle stops in the town of New Braintree.

Wednesday, Feb. 5

2:40 p.m. Motor Vehicle Investigation, West Brookfield Road, Dispatch Handled
2:43 p.m. 911 Misdial, Hardwick Road, Services Rendered

3:41 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Hardwick Road, Citation Issued
4:08 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Ravine Road, Citation Issued
7:44 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Worcester Road, Services Rendered

Friday, Feb. 7

8:42 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Hardwick Road, Written Warning
10:29 a.m. Welfare Check, Skivira Lane, Transported to Hospital

Saturday, Feb. 8

5:34 p.m. Motor Vehicle Accident, Gilbertville Road, Services Rendered

Smola announces FY25 Firefighter Safety Equipment Grants

BOSTON – State Rep. Todd M. Smola (R-Warren, Ranking Member, Committee on Ways & Means) is pleased to announce that five fire departments within his district were awarded fiscal year 2025 Firefighter Safety Equipment grants.

The recipients and their award amounts are as follows: Town of Brimfield, \$12,500; Palmer Fire District No. 1, \$15,500; Bondsville Fire District, \$12,500; Town of Sturbridge, \$15,499.99; Town of Wales, \$10,436.79; Town of Ware, \$15,408.54; and the Town of Warren, \$11,043.75

Out of 789 individual fire stations in Massachusetts, 273 were named as grantees and share more than \$4.5 million in funding, with awards ranging from \$4,502.88 to \$50,000. All fire departments in Smola's district that applied and attended the mandatory program webinar received FY25 Firefighter Safety Equipment grant funding.

Smola stated, "This grant funding is a

crucial investment into the maintenance and improvement of our fire departments." He continued, "Firefighters risk their lives for the well-being of our communities. It is vital that the legislature continues to support our firefighters and care for their safety, as they so often do for us."

Firefighter Safety Equipment Grants were made possible by the Healy-Driscoll administration, the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, and the legislature.

Fire departments can use this funding to purchase equipment improvements, such as protective gear, thermal imaging cameras, portable radios, hazardous gas detectors, and personnel accountability systems. The grant program also provides reimbursement for over 100 types of eligible equipment including purchase of essential firefighter turnout gear, hoses, nozzles, communication equipment, hand tools and more.

- Region -

Local author presents writing/publishing workshop on March 9

WEST BROOKFIELD – "Everyone has a story to tell," said award-winning author Ed Londergan.

His ninth annual creative writing and publishing workshop will be held on Sunday, March 9, from 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at the Salem Cross Inn.

"The writing workshop aims to help those who want to write but don't know where to start or who have had an idea for a story that's been bubbling in their head for years and finally want to put it on paper. I also help people who have written something and need to know how to move ahead," said Londergan, who provides a full day of information.

"The workshop will cover the entire process of writing and publishing, including idea development and sources of inspiration, drawing from storytelling traditions, developing the story, structure, and flow, conceiving and bringing characters to life, dialogue, editing, short fiction, writer's block, and the publishing process," Londergan said. "The publishing process can be confusing and frustrating. I'll take the group through the various publishing options available. There will also be some fun writing exercises."

Past workshops have been attended by people of all ages and occupations, from 12-year-old students to 75-year-old retirees.

"Five attendees have written books and had them published while others have had stories and articles placed in various publications," said Londergan.

"One of the things past attendees have enjoyed and learned from is the writing exercises," Londergan said. "The writing exercises this year are different than what I've done in the past. I enjoy seeing the creative ideas that come out of them."

"Back-and-forth discussion is always a popular part of the day. Attendees learn from each other. Individual issues or problems anyone has with their writing are discussed, and the group helps them with suggestions and observations. At times, a lot of 'here's what happened to me, and here's what I did,'" he said.

The workshop is limited to 14 participants. The cost is \$110, and lunch is included.

Registration is required, and the deadline is Feb. 28. To register, email ed.londergan@gmail.com or call 508-864-8685.

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Applications and a more detailed job description are available on the Town website: www.wbrookfield.com

Please contact: Jim Daley at (508) 867-1417 or email jdaley@wbrookfield.com

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413-297-5886 or dflynn@turley.com

DCR lists upcoming winter hybrid presentations

BELCHERTOWN – The Les and Terry Campbell Quabbin Visitor Center, 100 Winsor Dam Road, announces the schedule for winter hybrid presentations. All programs are scheduled for 2 p.m. In person seating is limited to 45 people.

In case of bad weather, the programs will only be held virtually.

Please register for any of these events by visiting <https://www.mass.gov/locations/quabbin-reservoir/events>.

History of Rutland Prison Camp
 Sunday, Feb. 16 from 2-3 p.m.
 Fresh air, three home-cooked meals a day, comfortable sleeping quarters and a private hospital - sounds like a delightful retreat for a prison? Indeed, it was!
 This presentation will tell the story of this surprisingly successful social experiment nestled within the Ware River Watershed.

Microscopic world of the Quabbin Reservoir
 Sunday, Feb. 23 from 2-3 p.m.
 What's in the water? Learn about the microorganisms that live in the water, and how they can impact water quality.
 This presentation will cover phytoplankton and zooplankton found in the Quabbin Reservoir with a live microscope demo.
Quabbin Reservoir and Watershed Protection
 Sunday, March 2 from 2-3 p.m.

Engineering, forestry, wildlife and aquatic biology, carpentry, mowing and snowplowing...how do all of these things combine to protect the water supply of over three million people in Massachusetts? How does they benefit the region around the reservoir?
 This presentation from the Visitor Center staff explores how the many different goals of DCR staff all support one goal, Quabbin watershed protection.

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