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Friday, March 21, 2025

Irish music comes to town

The Doolin Lads return to the Merriam Gilbert Library

By Richard Murphy
Correspondent

WEST BROOKFIELD – March 13 was not a Friday in 2025. Rather, it was a lucky Thursday the 13th.

The annual Doolin Lads concert upstairs in West Brookfield's Merriam Gilbert was back and the audience, after waiting a year, was ready.

So were the lads. Introduced by the library's Holly Takorian, they talked a bit about who they are and then got into the music.

Well, who are they?

Originally known as the Boys of the Town, Tim, John and Hunter are, when the stars align and they can come together, the trio performing as the Doolin Lads. John plays guitar, Hunter is a fiddler and Tim is versatile on



Tim, John and Hunter of the Doolin Lads performed their annual concert in West Brookfield.

the flute, bodhrán drum, and whistle.

Tim began the evening by playing a tune on the Native American flute he mastered. His composition is “*Hina Hanta*”, or the Bright Path. The song celebrates the con-

nection between the Irish and the Choctaw nation.

The Choctaw, had been exiled from their homeland in the Trail of Tears. In spite of that, when the famine struck in Ireland, the Choctaw people raised funds to contribute

to the relief.

Next, on the same instrument, Tim played a Navajo “*Closing Prayer*”, with the words read by Michelle. This

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Town looks at budget shortfall and staffing needs

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
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NORTH BROOKFIELD – As town departments and boards and committees work to develop the budget for fiscal year 2026, Board of Selectmen Chair Jason Petraitis shared some insight about the town's financial outlook and needs.

Budget and override

Petraitis said all of the departmental budgets have been received, and there is a considerable gap to fill. He said every budget in town has a shortfall.

“Right now, we’re well over what we have that can be allocated to everything. So that makes it difficult,” he said.

Petraitis said this includes the school district's budget, which is needing an increase greater than what is allowed with Proposition 2 ½. The proposed FY 26 budget for the school district is about 17% or \$1.2 million greater than the current fiscal year.

“We just don’t have it,” Petraitis said.

Petraitis said there has been talk of seeking an override to bridge the fiscal gap, but he said he can’t put that article on the town meeting warrant in good conscience, due to its potential impact on taxpayers.

“You’re looking at what would potentially be a 25% increase in taxes,” he said, of which more than half would go toward the school budget alone.

This potential increase in taxes doesn’t include sew-

See **N. BROOKFIELD**
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Celtic Celebrations



Old Sturbridge Village held its Celtic Celebrations this past weekend with cultural heritage through music, dance, storytelling, and poetry. Eric is shown performing with the bagpipes inside the Bullard Tavern.

OSV celebrates Irish heritage with weekend event

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
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STURBRIDGE – Old Sturbridge Village hosted a Celtic Celebration this past weekend highlighting Celtic heritage.

These highlights of Irish immigrants from the early 19th Century included music, storytelling, dancing and poetry. Throughout the day, there were Celtic plant coloring sheets available for kids.

This coloring sheet featured a picture of foxglove, a Celtic plant commonly found in early New England. Copies of the sheet were found in the Richardson House.

On the common, many kids gathered to play some popular games that were commonly played by Irish children. The first game was a game of Rounders, a bat-and-ball game similar to baseball. The kids had fun as many family members sat on the side benches to watch the rounders game.

Many of the children

who played were sporting green shirts and Irish themed attire while playing.

The Salem Towne House near the common was busy with Celtic Celebrations. There was a read aloud children's story with an Irish theme, “How to Catch a Leprechaun”. There was also a series of “Irresistible Irish Tales” told inside the lower kitchen.

These stories were folk tales from the Emerald Aisle.

The Towne House also hosted the reading of Irish poetry. Many poems that

were read were from the 8th Century to the 19th Century.

For music, the Center Meetinghouse hosted Celtic musicians and their music of the 1830s. One of the participants who was singing to a piano tune was Aidan Griffith. The meetinghouse was flooded with guests as they enjoyed the celebrated Celtic music.

At the Bullard Tavern, there was a demonstration of bagpipes and highland pipes. A couple musicians

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The Old Sturbridge Village Dancers welcoming guests to the common for some dancing. Flute player Art Martin is shown giving instruction



TURLEY PHOTO BY ABBY MCCOY

Photographer Bruce Arnold is shown with Workshop13's Executive Director Marie Lauderdale at the opening reception for his exhibition at ArtWorks Gallery, 69 Main St., Ware.

Exploring the world of infrared photography

March exhibition features the work of photographer Bruce Arnold

By Abby McCoy
Correspondent

WARE – Local photographer Bruce Arnold is captivating visitors with his latest exhibition, showcasing the intriguing world of infrared photography at ArtWorks Gallery, located at 69 Main St.

The exhibition, which opened earlier this month, will be open to the public every Saturday and Sunday through March 30.

Marie Lauderdale, Executive Director of Workshop13, was on-site for the opening, where she shared the gallery's rich history.

Workshop13 was found-

ed 10 years ago when two local artists purchased a dilapidated church at 13 Church St., transforming it into a cultural hub. The space is dedicated to providing quality art programs and experiences to the community, including art classes, concerts, and art exhibitions.

Lauderdale explained that the gallery was a natural extension of their mission to foster creativity and provide a place for local artists to showcase their work.

“We offer a space for cultural experiences, not just for artists but for the entire community,” Lauderdale said. “In addition to the gallery, we host art classes, open mics, and live model drawing sessions every Monday evening.”

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Chess at Joy of Beans



TURLEY PHOTOS BY RICHARD MURPHY

Robert and young Wyatt enjoy a game of chess.

By Richard Murphy
Correspondent

WEST BROOKFIELD – Chess returned to Joy of Beans on Saturday, March 15 as it is becoming a thing.

This in spite of lovely weather that would entice people out of doors. It was thus a tribute to the competitive spirit of the players.

There was Robert and a young high school student, Wyatt, playing off to the side while John and Jim would compete in front of the picture window.

One might want to say the competition was fierce, or spirited or any number of descriptions, but that is not easy to do as, generally speaking, chess players do not scream or shout during the process of the game. As anyone who has ever played a hard-fought chess match knows, however, the event



Mary the singer and E.Stef the poetess visited the Joy of Beans during chess club.

does not lack emotion and intensity.

Jim and John would contest a board and see every piece taken except each man's queen and king. It should have ended in a draw, but one man was left standing as the dénouement arrived.

Joy Hinton, the proprietress was kept busy, but was able to observe the

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- community -

Students learn about dating violence and relationships



Female students in grades nine-12 at North Brookfield High School participated in a dating violence awareness and prevention workshop with the Vanessa Marcotte Foundation and Worcester County District Attorney's office.

Submitted Article

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The month of February was Teen Dating Violence Awareness.

The month is dedicated to increasing awareness about dating abuse within teenage relationships and the resources that are available for teen survivors. To support our students, North Brookfield High School worked with the Worcester County District Attorney's office to provide assemblies and workshops around healthy peer relationships and teen dating.

Students discussed healthy relationships during their flex block classes during the month of February and then had assemblies with Hope Rudzinski from the Worcester County District Attorney's office. Rudzinski spoke to the students about healthy peer relationships, teen dating violence, and resources available for all students.

Principal John Diorio stated, "We want our students to understand that we want them to be safe in school and out of school. We don't stop

worrying about our students when the day ends. Students' mental health and safety are a priority at North Brookfield High School."

Then on Friday, Feb. 28, the high school girls attended a workshop on dating violence awareness and prevention, sponsored by the Vanessa Marcotte Foundation. The Vanessa Marcotte Foundation partners with organizations and schools to provide educational programs and self-defense classes that promote female empowerment and gender equity.

The goal of the program is to reduce violence against women in our society.

According to their website, "We're achieving our goals by partnering with organizations that provide educational programs and mentorship opportunities to promote female empowerment and gender equality. We believe these efforts will ultimately help reduce violence against women in our society. We are just getting started! By joining this important cause, we can work together to make a difference. And we know that



Female students participated in a self-defense class.

Vanessa would want us to do so."

Female students in grades nine-12 participated in discussions around dating violence prevention and healthy relationships before moving into self defense classes.

"The students were really engaged in the workshop. It was great to see so many students participating in the workshop," according to a NBHS Teacher Shelly LaCaire.

Sarah Moshin, NBHS ju-



Male students in grades nine-12 attended a presentation and fitness class with Anthony Bizzotto from Revive of the USA.

Bizzotto from Revive of the USA. According to Bizzotto, Revive of the USA is a non-profit community outreach program that passionately collaborates with youth and adult substance-abuse recovery and mental health facilities, seamlessly integrating movement and nutrition as potent therapies.

It focuses on fostering holistic well-being by unleashing the transformative power of physical empowerment for mental and emotional health.

Bizzotto shared his own journey as a high school and college student/athlete who struggled with substance abuse and how he was able to overcome his struggles. Bizzotto told the students to "Lean on your family. Lean on your friends. If you don't have good support at home, find it somewhere else. Don't forget, asking for help is not a weakness. It's a superpower."

Bizzotto ended his talk by adding, "So here's my challenge to you: Find a healthy outlet. Find movement. Find community. And never let life's struggles take away your strength. Real freedom

comes from helping others without expecting anything in return."

After he spoke to the students he led them through a fitness routine that included sandbag pulls, boxing drills, and cardiovascular exercises.

According to Diorio, "This was an important event for our high school boys. We wanted to show them there are healthy ways to deal with their challenges."

Student Brody Traska stated, "I learned a lot from the presentation by Mr. Bizzotto. It was very relatable and helpful."

NBHS freshman Fran Cotter said, "I think the way he says things is just straight up, and it's easier for kids who have been through stuff to understand and relate and talk to somebody who's been through the same."

Student Spencer Davis added, "I like how he was understanding and let people talk. Not that everything is ok, but the way he encouraged us helped a lot."

All in all, it was a great day for the North Brookfield students.

Library hosted owl program

NEW BRAINTREE – The New Braintree Library was filled with children and adults, who enjoyed a Saturday afternoon of fun learning about owls.

Kathy Kennedy from Massachusetts Audubon brought wings, claws, photos, and skulls for everyone to pass around. This program was supported by a grant from the Hardwick/New Braintree Cultural Council. A local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a State agency.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The highlight of the interactive owl presentation was the dissecting of an owl pellet to see what bones could be found beneath the layers. Timothy, Skylar and Vincenzo Gonnola enjoyed finding hidden bones and matching them to a provided chart.

LWPA & MEP sponsor boater safety certification class March 29

WEST BROOKFIELD – The Hanson-Milone Act recently became law in Massachusetts requiring motorized boat operators to pass a boater safety certification class.

For those born after Jan. 1, 1989, the new law takes effect on April 1, 2026, with penalties assessed beginning Sept. 1, 2026. For those born on or before Jan. 1, 1989, the new law takes effect on April 1, 2028.

To avoid penalty once the new law takes effect, boaters will need to carry their certification with them at all times while operating a motor boat. Since Massachusetts boater safety certification is good

for a lifetime, those who are already boater safety certified do not need to recertify.

To help members and the general public complete the certification requirement, the Lake Wickaboag Preservation Association has partnered with the Massachusetts Environmental Police to host a free class, including course materials as follows: Saturday, March 29, class instruction and test from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. (doors open at 7:45 a.m.) at the West Brookfield Senior Center.

There will be a working lunch, so attendees should pack lunch and snacks needed for the day. Coffee, tea and

water will be provided by the LWPA for free.

Ample parking is available at the Senior Center or Town Highway Department barn.

Space is limited to 55 attendees, so pre-registration is recommended. Walk-ins will only be accepted if space allows.

To preregister, visit www.mass.gov/forms/mep-boating-safety-course-online-enrollment-form, and use class ID 5112.

Those who would like to attend a different in-person class or take the class and test on-line should visit <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/boat-safety-certificate-course>.

Friends of Library host herbs for health program

NEW BRAINTREE – On Sunday, March 23 at 2 p.m. at the New Braintree Town Hall, the Friends of the New Braintree Library present Herbal Answers for Common Health Issues with Elaine Griffith.

Elaine has over 50 years experience using and helping others use holistic medicine. She will share her knowledge of how to use herbs, vitamins and other foods to deal with life's unexpected moments and inevitable annoyances.

This program is funded by the Hardwick/New Braintree Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency. This program is free and open to the public.

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- community -

Antique appraisal offered at historical museum on March 22

NEW BRAINTREE – A much anticipated “Antiques Roadshow”- like event has been scheduled at the New Braintree Historical Society museum, 10 Utley Road, on Saturday, March 22 from 1-3 p.m.

Renowned appraiser and auctioneer, Kenneth Van Blarcom from South Natick (<https://kwvbauctions.com/about/>), will conduct an individual appraisal and his-

tory of your item, for all to learn about.

The Society is thrilled to have Van Blarcom’s expertise here in New Braintree. His impressive credentials include antique appraisal positions with Shreve, Crump and Low, Co. and a Boston Directorship at the fine art and antique company of Skinner Auctions. Van Blarcom went on to start his own auction and appraisal

business conducting over 850 auctions over a 40 year period.

So, dust off your favorite treasure, and prepare for some historical entertainment. Limit of two items. Cost per appraisal \$5. No jewelry, please.

Refreshments will be served. For more information, visit <https://newbraintreehistoricalsociety.org/> or call 508-867-3324.

Quabbin Regional High School lists Honor Roll

BARRE – The Quabbin Regional High School lists the Honor Roll for the second quarter.

Grade Nine, High Honors
Brent Benoit, Abraham Brown, Nicholas Carroll, Maya Fontaine, Chloe Howarth, Ellie Poulin and Erin Trottier.

Grade 9, Honor Roll
Nicholas Antonio, Mary Asiedu, Anyiah Bergeron, Josephine Buck, Carlmorisia Campbell, Eleanor Carroll, Brian Colleton, Michael Condry, Aiden Crane, Kayla Curran, Adrien Cyr, Oliver Davis, Aliyah Edouard, Maya Edouard, Andrew Erickson, Audrey Faucher, Samuel Feldman, Sydney Freeman, Daniella Gaudreault, Matthew Labrousse, Alison LaRoche, Emma Lindsey, Lynn Diarra Michel, Niki Nikakhlagh, Anthony Noborini, John Orsini, Moira Powers, Kristen Schur, Ava Sobol, Haley Stoll, Benjamin Thompson, Catherine Tucker and Matthew VanScoy.

Grade 10, High Honors
Jacob Bassett, Madeleine Boisselle, Isabel Doty, Tess Dunphy, Kathryn Ford, Anna Hautala, Kirk Kaelin, Ella Reeves and Jennavicia Roseberry.

Grade 10, Honor Roll
Klavdiya Antonian, Skyler Bard, Halo Bissonnette, Makenzie Casey, James Cook, Leah Doucette, Katelyn Durant, Brody Faucher, Grace Flamand, Alijah Flint, Kaylie Howland, Sadie Kennan, Jillian LaMontagne, Audrey Laursen, Anna Metcalf, Mia Miville, Jesse Newton, Samantha O’Connor, Blake Parmeter, Arianna Riendeau, Abigail Rogowski, Emma Ryan, Sienna Shaw, Aubrey Thorpe, Owen Twarog, Grace Vanoudenhove, Brendan Welch, El-lary White, Carlo Zolla and Leanna Zou.

Grade 11, High Honors
Tricia Brusco, Kalina Dyer and Elizabeth Matheson.

Grade 11, Honor Roll
Owen Breuer, Branden

Brooks, Troy Budreau, Micah Cerezo, Kylee Costello, Annabella DiMartino, Madeleine Hardy, Emma Kahlau, Anthony Landry, Collin Lindley, Grace Manna, Hunter McQueston, Parker Proulx, Aaron Rowell, Al-lison Sprankle, Madelyn Stauder, Cameran Vega and Bianca Wilder.

Grade 12, High Honors
Haley Ayer, Jordan Blanchard, Quinn Geary, Isabel LaBelle, Sadie Sheldon, Julia Smith and Jaxon Warburton.

Grade 12, Honor Roll
Eamon Arnold, Benjamin Bibik, Kyle Clark, Ava Conlee, Teaghan Earle, Adam Faulha, Ellie Frost, Ruby Gatulis, Kyra Grummell, Samuel Guertin, Hunter LaBier, Travis LaRoche, Vincent Marinelli, Ethan Salvatore, Sydney Slattery, Isabella Smith, Irene Stogitis, Vanecia Tarquinio, Jake Thao, Kevin Thompson, Richard Tucker and Abigail Ure.

Library Chess Club seeks more players

BROOKFIELD - The Chess Club at the Merrick Public Library, 2 Lincoln St., is looking for more chess players.

Open to all ages and all levels of experience. The Chess Club is held on Fridays from 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Please drop by; no registration is necessary.

New Braintree Police Log

During the week of March 10-17, the Hardwick/New Braintree Police Department responded to 12 building/property checks, 22 directed/area patrols, two radar assignments, two traffic controls, two emergency 911 calls, two citizen assists, one complaint, one animal call and five motor vehicle stops in the town of New Braintree.

Monday, March 10
4:47 p.m. Assist Citizen, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled
4:49 p.m. Assist Citizen, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

Thursday, March 13
6:06 p.m. Complaint/Motor Vehicle Operations, Ravine Road, Negative Contact

Friday, March 14
7:54 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, West Brookfield Road, Transported to Hospital

Saturday, March 15
12:57 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Ravine Road, Citation Issued

Monday, March 17
6:39 a.m. 911 Missing Person, Moore Road, Call Canceled

Quabbin Regional Middle School lists Honor Roll

BARRE – The Quabbin Regional Middle School lists the Honor Roll for the second quarter.

Grade Six, High Honors
Nevaeh Andrews, Jacob Blanchard, Vincent Broten, Jaysen Cassano, Ayla Clark, John Cook, Anna Coomey, Ella Critelli, Joey DeMalia, Matthew Flamand, Andrew Fuller, Lincoln Graves, Colby Hill, Ryan LaRange, Walker Larson, Maishao Lee, Brady Malin, Sawyer Minton, Theodore Minton, Annaleigh Moncoeur, Nolan O’Connor, Aviendha O’Neill, Emily Schur, Liam Shaw, Weston Stukuls Barrieau, Brayden Surprenant, Kenzie Thorpe, Hana Mae Tousignant and Joseph Youngstrom.

Grade Six, Honors
Lyric Alves, Aubrianna Babineau, Asher Baker, Julianna Bienvenu, Ava Blancato, Talasyn Boissoneau, Josie Castell, Cameron Charpentier, Charley Chauvin, Ryan Colgate, Audrey Cutler, Hannah Cutler, Ethan Donaldson, Hannah Dube, Afina Griffith, Joseph Haley, Madilyn Houle, Silas Howe, Adrian Johnson, Colin Kania, Nathan Kearchner, Levi Kniskern, Isabella LaFountain, Kaydence Landry, Adalyn McHugh, Kayla McHugh, Avery Melanson, Lucy Merrill, Havenanna Morley, Owen Nason, Evelyn Palladino, Ximena Palomera-Espinoza, Bentley Parker, Logan Peters, McKenna Rengo, Waverly Rivard, Ava Rodriguez, Lillian Roohan, Ava Sherb-

lom, Sophia Small, Landon Swindlehurst, Regan Toohill, Anthony Wade, Everett Weisman and Brady White.

Grade Seven, High Honors
Saylor Bissonnette, Julia Blanchard, Winter Boyea, Eliza Brown, Emily DeMalia, Brody Despres, Maria Hamm, Emily Johnson, Evelyn Johnson, Mathieu LeBlanc, Ava Maxim, Madeleine Omasta, Sebastian Palomera-Espinoza, Owen Pears, Madeleine Proulx, Autumn Rector, Lily Ryan, Emma Stauder, Katy Twarog and Elizabeth Welch.

Grade Seven, Honors
Albert Afonso, Addyson Barringer, Owen Black, Amelia Breault, Joyce Brown, Davis Burch, Jack Castell, Henry Corbett, Christopher Dallair, Preston D’Amato, Sophia Dittami, Addison Ford, Eden Fortier, Lucas Gaspar, Jaidev Giumentaro, Meaghan Glidden, Nolan Herrick, Gabriel Houle, Aimee Ickler, Pele Johnson, Noah Kelter, Amy Landrin, Theodore Langer, Maggie Leander, Jack Leclair, Mackenzie Levesque, Chiara Manna, Bree May, Cameron McDonald, Valerie Metterville, Brayden Nadeau, Caleb Oliveira, Ashtan Pride, Evelyn Priestley, Thomas Schoonmaker, Andrew Scott, Hannah Shotwell, Madalyn Simons, Bella Spring, Daisy Stevens, Fiona Stevens, Dominic Strickland, Kailyn Traynham, Olivia Vanoudenhove, Lila Wilson, Skylar Wisniewski, Raegyn Wnek

and Milo Zantouliadis.

Grade Eight, High Honors
Alison Baptiste, Kalina Bassett, Hazel Carter, Lauren Colleton, Adalyn Cranston, Jeremy DeMoranville, Fiona Derr, Brynn Dunphy, Xavier Fjeld, Silas Flint, Nathan Gingras, Olivia Gregory, Hayston Hay, Gemma Mullins, Greyson Mullins, Whitney Reeves, Chloe Richardson, Ava Rogowski, Zoey Salvatore, Madisyn Shotwell, Annabelle Silver, Addison Surprenant, Michael Tabares, Robert Tobin, Launa Tran, John Tyler, Robyn Waltz and Jack Wynne.

Grade Eight, Honors
Olivia Abbas-Peck, Emma Ackert, Adeelya Andrade, Caleb Conway-Dias, Joseph Cook, Alexandra Cullen, Kalypso DeCologero, Gabriel DelGiudice, Tyler Ellis, Maya Faucher, Finian Fautoux, Tsadiku Fox, Juliana Guilderson, Madison Haley, Sawyer Harmon, Madisyn Hill, Reese Jamieson, Sarah Jean-Francois, Aubrey Lawson, Weston Letendre, Sage McQueston, Lunabelle Moore, Sarah Neal, Owen Newman, Olivia O’Connor, William O’Neill, Dante Orcutt, Quinn Ouimette, Joseph Perrone, Lukas Potter, Kimberly Riendeau, Jillian Rigney, Sophia Rogers, Connor Roohan, Jacob Rosario, Alexis Savary, Madison Scanlon, Deven Skinner, Brianna Souza, Rosalie Stark, Mackenzie Toupin, Halee Vasquez, Maxwell Wade, Isabelle Wentworth and Gareth White.

N BROOKFIELD FROM PAGE 1

er betterment rates for the upgraded wastewater treatment project.

“It’s really tragic the way this happens. There are things that can be done on the state level but that’s nothing I can have control over,” he said.

Petraitis said even though the regionalization process with the Quaboag Regional School District has stopped, he doesn’t believe that it’s outside of the realm of possibility for the future.

“There’s something for a tuition agreement with Quaboag, but we have to wait for the school committees to do the investigating and find out what that would cost,” he said.

Petraitis said in grades nine-12, there are about 50 students in North Brookfield Public Schools, adding that teachers’ salaries (not counting benefits) account for over \$1 million of the budget.

He said the lowest paid teachers are making mid-\$50,000 and the highest paid administrators are earning over \$100,000. He said the average taxpayer in town earns \$34,000 a year, and the average household \$80,000.

“I can’t possibly ask for an override with those kind of numbers,” he said.

Staffing
“All of our other de-

partments are sorely understaffed,” Petraitis said.

This includes the town administrator position, recently vacated by Michael Szlosek, the town’s first ever town administrator.

“We are currently looking for a town administrator,” he said. “In theory, it [the position] will pay for itself if we can find the right fit.

Currently, the town administrator’s salary is funded by money set aside from the American Rescue Plan Act. Petraitis said this money should cover two more years of salary, depending on salary negotiations with the next candidate.

Petraitis said the town has seen some turnover in the Highway Department, and has recently hired a new superintendent. He said there are some vacancies in the department and potential candidates will be interviewed to fill them.

He addressed allegations made on social media, noting that no formal complaints have been made to the town. These allegations “don’t allow for a discussion,” he said.

“It doesn’t allow for the back and forth you can solve a problem with. You don’t have both sides of the story. You don’t have the facts. It’s all hearsay,” Petraitis said.

Water and sewer departments Petraitis said the town is also looking to hire more

staff in the Sewer Department.

“Our sewer and water superintendents are fantastic,” he said. “They are doing the best job they can possibly do under the circumstances.”

Petraitis said the recent upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant were mandated by the Environmental Protection Agency, and not something the town could delay.

“It was something the EPA felt was necessary,” he said.

Annual town election
Petraitis said there are two positions on the Board of Selectmen up for the annual town election, one three-year term currently held by Elizabeth “Brooke” Canada and an unexpired two-year term vacated by Vaughn Schlegel.

Canada is not seeking re-election this term.

Both Jamie Gilman and John Tripp have returned papers for the three-year term and Ralph Kay has returned papers for the unexpired two-year term.

The annual town election will be held on the first Monday in May.

Petraitis said it can be difficult for people to take out papers for the annual town election, partly due to comments on social media that target elected officials.

“They don’t want to deal with the vitriol of being involved,” he said.

Scouts BSA Troop 163 hosts waffle dinner fundraiser

CHARLTON – Sturbridge Scouts BSA Troop 163 is holding a waffle dinner fundraiser on Friday, March 28 from 6-8 p.m. at Charlton City United Methodist

Church, 74 Stafford St.

All are welcome to join the Scouts for a fantastic waffle dinner fundraiser that includes a number of toppings such as fruit, chocolate

chips, whipped cream, ice cream and more. The cost for the dinner is any donation amount and will directly support Sturbridge Scouts BSA Troop 163.



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- opinion -



Grateful for the March garden

I don't know about you, but those first few warmer days do something to my brain. I begin to expect that we are in for nice weather all the time.

It's easy to start dreaming and scheming, but alas, we are not exactly on a fast track to summer just yet, nor should we be. There is much to enjoy about this time of year.

Here are just a few of my favorite things about March.

First on the list is that my however-many-year-old Gerber daisy houseplant gave me a flower, with a couple more on the way. I had three of these plants last year. I gave a two away

in one of my "less is more" moods.

Do they bloom as well as they did when they were a year old? No, but that bright and cheery daisy in seashell pink was just the pick-me-up I needed last week.

Soon, you will see Gerber daisies for sale in the grocery stores and plant nurseries. Try overwintering one in a bright but cool window next winter for your own dose of pre-spring happiness.

After the size 10 foot-print landed on the corner of my front border, in exactly the spot that I planted some tulip bulbs last fall, I made a fence out of apple tree prunings. What a fun

March activity!

I bent each long piece into a U shape and plunged the ends into the ground, starting the next one in the middle of the one prior. That outta keep my husband off the bulbs; I hope at least.

Speaking of prunings, I have started to accumulate "pea brush." I'll be sowing pea seeds in the next few weeks, and although I typically plant the seeds right up against the garden's fence, I am going to need more room this year, and these leftover prunings will be perfect for the tendrils to grab hold of.

I make a wide bed the length of the garden row, insert the prunings in the middle of the row and plant pea seeds four deep up against the branches. In addition to my old stand by, shelling peas, I am going to be sowing sugar snap and snow peas.

My first experience with sugar snap peas came from harvesting some pods while on a weekend getaway at bed and breakfast. It was a cool little place in southern New Hampshire where you could pick the vegetables from the kitchen garden and eat them for dinner.

It'll be fun to grow my own for fresh eating.

"Pea brush" can also be used to support annual or perennial flowers that tend to have weak or floppy stems. The brush blends into the scenery a little better than stakes and twine, and it's easily dismantled when the time comes.

My favorite March bulb is a harbinger of all harbingers, the Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*). Toughened points on the leaf tips make it possible for the snowdrop to push through the crusty soil of late winter.

Two or three strappy leaves grow from each bulb; most often there is just one flower. You'll notice three white outer petals first and upon closer inspection you'll see green tipped inner petals.

The flowers are held on the stem in a nodding fashion and in my experience they stay in bloom for upwards of three weeks. Reportedly they are well adapted for bees, at least those that are brave enough to venture out of the hive in search of pollen during the warmest days of late winter!

Snowdrops will naturalize if happy, increasing in

numbers both above and below the ground! Although we "deadhead" most bulbs, keeping spent flower heads of this genus in place will allow seeds to ripen and new plants to form.

It is interesting to observe the process of a snowdrop self-sowing. Once the flower has gone by a large seed will form; because of its weight, the stem will bend toward the ground dropping its ripe seed at a perfect distance from the mother plant.

Under no circumstances should the foliage of a bulb be removed until it is brown and dry. It may not be the most beautiful to look at, but all the while that it is green it is making and storing food for next year's flowers.

Enjoy these early days in and around the garden.

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.

Fascist soup – the recipe

This is a special dish that is best served cold. Be aware that there is generally a long prep time that requires just the right conditions for cooking. The results are indeed chilling!

The only way to create this soup is with a skilled sociopathic chef! They must have strong Narcissistic tendencies, be willing to combine these special ingredients in just the proper order and painstakingly, continuously stir the pot.

The spices you must include are important. The ones you must avoid are equally, if not more, important.

Spices and ingredients that must be included to create just the right flavors include:

1. A heaping tablespoon each of bigotry, misogyny, and ethnocentrism
2. A full pound of essence of American flag
3. Generous amounts of lies (distributed generously throughout the cooking process)
4. Three full cups of ego-driven willful ignorance - Note: To be effective, this ingredient must be fully immersed in a solution of far-Right media, preferably in a cool basement, for an extended period to be fully pungent when dried.
5. A cup and a half of greed - While this ingredient is necessary, the amount may vary depending on the group for which the batch of soup is prepared
6. A heaping tablespoon of religious fanaticism (optional but highly recommended)

Spices and ingredients that must be avoided at all cost include (in order of importance):

1. Solidarity - this ingredient has the potential to completely alter the tastebuds! Avoid even a hint of this spice anywhere near the preparation of this soup!
2. Empathy - any appreciable level of this ingredient will cause a chemical reaction that could render this soup entirely tasteless, if not disgusting
3. Ethics - This spice is produced and generated by established laws and institutions
4. Truth - Lies are an essential ingredient, as noted above. Fortunately, the taste

of truth takes time to be fully realized but will immediately sour the soup if applied in time.

5 Public and higher Education - This ingredient is an emulsifier of truth and speeds up the process that will lead to souring far more quickly.

Fascist soup is quite complex and requires assistance by willing participants at various levels of the process. Before the other spices are added, the following ingredients must be stirred until the soup produces a roiling froth of hate. The most important ingredients that serve as the base are:

1. Greed - This ingredient is obtained by sycophants of wealth, driven by fear, by their own Oligarchical greed, or both
2. Lies - both large and small, applied in quantities based on need and poured in throughout the cooking and chilling process
3. Fear - the meat-stock and the base ingredient that permeates the soup. This must be added in enormous quantities and stirred vigorously at regular intervals throughout the cooking and the chilling process as well.

It is very important that this soup is stirred at threateningly high temperatures! It must be stirred frequently to avoid burning. This is an extremely critical point in the cooking process!

Note: Some burning may be unavoidable yet may aid in the chilling process. However, it is extremely important to avoid a tipping point with the burning as it can lead to immediate destruction of the entire dish and any possibility of creating this soup in the near future.

Warning: Though many find this soup unbearably bitter, it is very tasty and even addictive to large numbers of people. It loses flavor quickly to all but a select few who share very specific privileges. For those who do not share these privileges this addictive soup will become poisonous and could be fatal.

Nonetheless, the dish is being prepared for you whether you ordered it or not.

Bon appetite
Eric von Bleicken
West Brookfield



SOCIAL SECURITY Matters By Russell Gloor

Can I get extra Social Security for my military service?

Dear Rusty:

Please help, I served from 1964 to 1966 in the U.S. Army.

I have been trying to contact Social Security in order to request extra benefits for veterans. The telephone is a recording and you never get to speak to anyone. The web site at www.ssa.gov is useless to me. I went to the SS office and there was a huge line outdoors in the freezing cold. I am disabled and cannot stand on a line in this cold. Please advise me about my options. Financially, is it worth the trouble?

Signed:
Disabled American Veteran

Dear Disabled Veteran:

My profound thanks for your service to our country.

FYI, the "special extra credit for military service" you refer to does not provide an incremental Social Security benefit amount for military veterans. Rather, it adds an additional amount to your recording earnings for the years you served, which may or may not affect your Social Security benefit. FYI, I've written numerous articles on this topic, one of which you can read at this link: www.socialsecurityreport.org/ask-rusty-older-veteran-asks-about-special-social-security-credit-for-military-service/.

those later higher earnings to calculate your benefit, and your military earnings wouldn't affect your benefit. If, however, any of your military earnings including the "special extra credits" were among the highest over your lifetime, then those higher military earnings would be included when calculating your benefit.

So, whether you will benefit from these "special extra credits for military service" depends largely on your post-service earnings history. If your military earnings were among the highest earning years over your lifetime, and you provided SSA with a copy of your DD-214 when you applied for Social Security, then your current SS benefit already includes consideration of your military service.

Social Security should have asked about your military service when you applied. If you didn't advise SS of your military service when you applied for Social Security, or if you aren't sure, you should contact the SSA at 1-800-772-1213 and ask if you were given those "special extra credits for military service" when you applied. However, if you had at least 35 years of higher earnings after you left military service, your current SS benefit is already based on those later higher earning years, and you will not get anything additional from those "special extra credits" for your military service years.

FYI, we know it is of-

See **SOCIAL SECURITY** PAGE 7

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- community -



Tim is shown playing on the Native flute.

IRISH MUSIC FROM PAGE 1

was in celebration of the Irish contribution to Navajo and Hopi Covid relief.

The lads then went into a reel and followed with a ballad celebrating Cork's own River Lee.

More instrumental sound was followed by the "Wild Rove". It is the story of a young, well, maybe not too young a man reflecting on some wasted years and pledging to reform...maybe.

The Doolin Lads came together in part due to being Eagle Scouts. Recently, there was the tragic death of Eagle Scout, Austin Schepper of Southbridge. In memory of Austin, the three played the lovely slow air, "South Wind".

There is a spot of land in the sea between Ireland and England called the Isle of Man. The Irish language noun, craic, means, according to an English dictionary, "enjoyable social activity; a good time." But what do they know? More accurate would be to define craic as an "insanely wild crazy time." So it was with the tune, "The Craic was Ninety in the Isle of Man".

The band made the annual disclaimer necessitated by the song, "The Wild Rover". It is a rousing bit of music about a hapless crew who, shall we say, mis-sail a ship. Again, we were assured, no dogs drowned in the playing of the song.

The mournful, "Leaving of Liverpool" is the story of a man who must part from his love to sail to the new world to seek fortune on a ship described as a "floating hell."

The next piece would be played in the East Galway style and it is the popular "Gypsy Rover" about a lass who meets the wrong guy who turns out to be the right guy. How often does



Michelle is shown reading the Navajo closing prayer.

that work out?

Then came the cheerful "Hills of Connemara" about the efforts of the locals to make Poitin or moonshine without paying the tax. It is a constant effort to keep ahead of the excise men.

"Johnny Jump Up" is the tale of a fellow who took a bit too much of an extremely hard cider, and suffered greatly for it. Kind of like, "What Do You Do With A Drunken Sailor".

It was a great time in anticipation of Saint Patrick's Day. The trio combined fine singing and playing with knowledge, wit and humor and all too quickly it was over. The audience and musicians lingered, but soon it was out into the night to remember the evening and anticipate next year's return.

CELEBRATIONS FROM PAGE 1

played some traditional Scottish tunes and would educate the guests on the different kinds of pipes used for these traditional instruments. One of the players, Eric, has been playing the bagpipers for 50 years.

The Bullard Tavern also featured a delicious menu during the Celtic Celebration. The tavern's café was offering meals such as turkey pot pie, corned beef panini, Irish bangers with onion gravy buttered peas and mashed potatoes, and a triple chocolate bread pudding with Irish whiskey chocolate sauce and whipped cream for dessert.

After lunch, many guests got to join the friendly bunch of the Old Sturbridge Village Dancers. The dancers looked for dance partners to join them in traditional 19th Century dances. Art Martin was one of the flute players helping the guests line up and learn the steps of some of the dances.

Some of the songs the guests were dancing to included "Yankee Doodle", "The Rakes of Mallow" and "Haste to the Wedding". These tunes go well with the 19th Century dance style.

The Visitor Center hosted a step dancing performance by the Lee Irish School of Dance. These award-winning dancers performed a traditional Irish dance this past Saturday.



Aidan Griffith sang some popular Celtic songs inside the Center Meetinghouse.

The Armed & Equipped Militia Exhibit at a historical presentation on the Montgomery Guards. This was the first volunteer militia company in Massachusetts composed entirely of men of Irish decent and formed back in the 1830s.

Giving the presentation was Director of Collections & Research Derek Heidemann. The militia company was named after Military Officer Richard Montgomery who was Irish born.

The Montgomery Guards formed in 1837 in Boston and were forced to disband due to extreme nationalist and anti-Catholic sentiment in the city just one year later. For the safety of the city, Governor Edward Everett ordered the disbandment of the company.

Heidemann had samples of a Montgomery Guards uniform and cap plate. The

American eagle was a symbol on the top of the cap plate and Heidemann mentioned many of the Irish American men who joined the Montgomery Guards showed a lot of spirit and felt they were a part of living as Americans.

"We're not originally of this country...We are very

much American now," as Heidemann described it. "Embracing their own heritage."

Guests got to pass around photos of Montgomery Guards and the cap plate around and documents were placed next to the militia coat. One document highlighted the population of Boston and the Irish population in the capital of the Commonwealth. In 1830, the population of Boston was around 61,000. 7,000 of that population were Irish immigrants and some were second generation immigrants.

Heidemann said the militia reformed in the 1860s with several men serving during the American Civil War (1861-1865).

For more information on programs and events such as Celtic Celebration, visit www.osv.org.



Director of Collections & Research Derek Heidemann explained the history of the Montgomery Guards, the first all Irish militia company in the 1830s. Heidemann held the uniform of a Montgomery guard.

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SPORTS

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SEND US YOUR SPORTS SUBMISSIONS

Auburn hockey co-op falls to Billerica in quarterfinals

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

NORTH BILLERICA —The end of an incredible era.

Prior to the start of the 2024-25 high school hockey season, longtime Auburn head coach Glen Bombard announced that he would be retiring at the end of the season.

The eighth-seeded Rockets were hoping to be one of the teams playing in the Division 2 state finals, which will be held at the Boston Garden on March 16. However, their outstanding season came to an end following a 5-2 loss to the top-seeded Billerica Indians in the Elite 8 held at the Chelmsford Forum on Wednesday, March 5.

“We just got beat by the better hockey team tonight,” said Bombard following the game. “I’m just sad that it’s over.”

The Rockets, who finished their season with an 18-4-1 overall record, advanced to the Elite 8 for the second consecutive year after dispatching 25th-seeded Beverley (5-1) in the round of 32 and ninth-seeded Whitman-Hanson (6-1) in the Sweet 16. Both of those matches were held at the Horgan Arena in Auburn.

Bombard and Auburn High School Principal Daniel Delongchamp both graduated from Auburn High in 1989.



Nathan Dono heads up the ice for the Auburn-Tantasqua co-op during action this year.

“It has been amazing to watch coach Bombard go from being a goalie in high school to becoming the leader of this hockey team,” said Delongchamp, who played soccer and basketball in high school. “Coach Bombard is a lot more than just a hockey coach. All the kids look up to him as a role model. He treats the players like a member of his family. He challenges them, but he’s also a very fair coach.”

One of the Rockets seniors is Austin Dono, who’s attends Tantasqua Regional.



Austin Dono hustles up the ice.

“Playing for this hockey team has been the best four years of my life,” said Dono, who was a member of the Tantasqua golf team last fall. “All of my best friends are on this team and coach Bombard is a great coach. He really cares about every player on this team. I’m really going to miss him and playing for this team next year.”

Since joining the varsity squad, Dono has played on the same line with his younger brother, Nathan, who’s a junior, and senior Ethan McDermott, who attends Auburn High.

“It has been awesome playing on the same line with my younger brother during the past three years. We’re always on the ice together either at a game or practice,” Austin Dono said. “Ethan and I played on the same youth hockey team, so I’ve also known him forever.”

Austin Dono played for the Rockets junior varsity squad as a freshman before making the jump up to the varsity level as a sophomore.

“My varsity hockey ca-



Jake Tully watches for a pass.



Max Sealey comes around the goal with the puck on defense.

See **HOCKEY**
PAGE 7

Hall of Fame names senior all-stars

SPRINGFIELD – The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame announced the team rosters for the 2025 Western Massachusetts Senior High School All-Star Games. On Thursday, March 20, the Hall of Fame will host the 2025 All-Star event on the Jerry Colangelo Court of Dreams at the Hall of Fame. A total of 60 players were selected from different divisions within the region to participate in three games that will showcase the top seniors in their final high school contest.

“We are proud to host the top high school basketball players from Western Massachusetts at our 14th annual All-Star celebration at the Basketball Hall of Fame,” said John L. Doleva, President and CEO of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame. “Residents of Western Mass. are encouraged to join us as we honor these exceptional seniors as they play the final game of their high school careers.”

A committee of local coaches and media members who represent each division on the boys’ and girls’ sides selected the teams. Using the designated classes for the PVIAC Tournament, the players will be divided into six teams: two girls’ teams, two boys’ teams of Class A and B players, and two boys’ teams of Class C and D players. Only graduating seniors are eligible for the All-Star Games. Rosters can be found on the next page.

See **HALL OF FAME**
PAGE 7

Lusitano awards return



The scholarship winners show off their awards.

The Lusitano Club of Ludlow returned to their tradition of giving out awards and scholarships to outstanding soccer players in the region

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—More than 3,400 high school soccer players from throughout Western Massachusetts have been honored at the Lusitano Alumni and Fans (LAF) Awards Banquet during the past 35 years.

Because of the COVID 19 pandemic, the soccer banquet has been a lot smaller, but it’s always a very special event.

Six scholarship winners were honored at this year’s LAF banquet, which was held at the Gremio Lusitano Club in Ludlow on March 9.

The six award recipients

are Thomas Wadas (Ludlow High School), Gabriella Fialho (Pope Francis/Ludlow), Samantha Lowe (Pathfinder Tech), Kylee Gamache (Franklin County Tech), Kennady Marino (East Longmeadow High School), and Burke Warhol (Longmeadow High School).

Wadas, who’s ranked seventh in the senior class academically with a 4.5 G.P.A., will be playing college soccer at UMass Amherst. He’s also a member of the National Honor Society.

“I’m going to be playing soccer at UMass, which was my top college choice,” Wadas said. “Staying close to home was really important to me.”

A year ago, UMass lost at third-seeded Denver, 3-0, in the Elite 8 of the NCAA Division I tournament. The Minutemen finished with a 13-4-5 overall record.

“UMass had an outstanding season last year,” Wadas said. “I’m just going to try my best to make an



The scholarship winners show off their awards



Samantha Lowe presented Pathfinder Tech at this year’s event.

impact as a freshman. I’m really looking forward to playing soccer at the next level. The college game is a lot more physical and quicker.”

The UMass men’s soccer coach is Fran O’Leary.

Wadas, who’s planning to study business in college, was a four year starter for the Ludlow boys’ varsity soccer team, which is coached by Greg Kolodziej.

“Coach Kolodziej made a big impact on my life both

on and off the field,” Wadas said. “I’m going to do everything that he has taught me at UMass. I’m also going to miss playing soccer for him a lot.”

Wadas, who was a team captain last fall, was selected to the All-State soccer team twice.

The Lions won three out of the past four Western Mass. Class A titles. They also advanced to the Elite 8 of the Division 1 state tournament each year.

“The new state postseason tournament format allowed us to play a few more teams in the Boston area,” said Wadas, who scored 13 goals and had 12 assists as a senior. “I think we did very well against them. We beat Newton South, who was the number one team in the state in last year’s state tournament.”

Fialho has been a high honors student at Pope Francis since she was a freshman, and also has 4.5 G.P.A..

During Fialho’s varsity soccer career, Pope Francis has captured the Western Mass Class title three times.

Last fall, Pope moved up to Class A for the first time and posted a 1-0 victory against Longmeadow in the championship match. They also celebrated 1-0 victories against West Springfield in the quarterfinals and Minnechaug Regional in the semifinals, which was decided in penalty kicks.

See **LUSITANO AWARDS**
PAGE 7

- community -

ARNOLD FROM PAGE 1

Workshop13 opened Art-Wors gallery in 2019, where it often features solo exhibitions by artists like Arnold, but also organizes eight themed group shows each year. The next themed show, “Celebrating the Figure,” invites local artists to submit works that explore the human form, offering many interpretations of this timeless subject.

Arnold’s exhibition takes visitors into the world of infrared photography, a process that captures light wavelengths beyond what the human eye can see. While infrared technology has been around for over a century, Arnold’s work uses this medium to reveal details that are invisible in standard photographs.

Arnold, who has been a professional photographer for 56 years, gave an impromptu lecture during the opening, explaining the science behind his artwork.

“Infrared light has longer wavelengths than visible light, but shorter than microwaves,” Arnold shared. “It’s invisible to the naked eye, but a specially modified camera can capture it.”

The infrared technology was first developed for scientific and military purposes but became popular among photographers in the 1930s when infrared-sensitive film became commercially available. Today, Arnold uses digital cameras that are modified to capture infrared light, replacing the camera’s hot filter with a special infrared filter.

“What we see in infrared is not necessarily how it looks to our eyes,” Arnold explained. “It can reveal hidden details, like fingerprints or

bloodstains on a dark shirt, that are otherwise invisible.”

For example, infrared photography is used in forensics to detect gunshot residue or in medicine to visualize veins and blood flow. The military also uses infrared to detect camouflage and objects in the environment that would otherwise be hidden from view.

Arnold’s infrared photos have a surreal quality, often appearing in unusual color palettes, such as vivid purples and stark contrasts. While the infrared spectrum doesn’t naturally produce these colors, Arnold uses post-processing to create the final look of his pieces.

“Infrared photography is everyday ordinary stuff, seen with different eyes,” Arnold said.

Arnold’s journey as a photographer began in his teenage years. At 14, his brother, who served in the Air Force, gave him an old Argus C3 35mm camera. Arnold’s early work was self-taught, developing and printing his own images in his bedroom.

Later, he worked with local photographers in Worcester, including Joe Bird and Mort Goldfader, learning the trade and refining his craft.

In 1973, Arnold and his wife, Deb, opened a professional photo studio, specializing in portrait, wedding, and commercial photography. Their studio ran until 1986, during which Arnold developed a keen sense for lighting and composition.

In 2001, Arnold’s career took a new turn when he began working for Fujifilm North America as a senior technical product marketing manager. While there, Arnold did not help develop

infrared cameras but rather worked as a trainer, teaching law enforcement, military, and forensic professionals how to effectively use infrared technology in their work.

Three years ago, Arnold retired, freeing up more time to explore his passion for photography. He now uses infrared techniques to create fine art pieces, focusing on nature, architecture, and everyday life.

In addition to showcasing Arnold’s work, Workshop13 is also known for its ceramics studio, ClayWorks, where potters of all skill levels can create and refine their craft.

The studio is also involved in charity work, with students making bowls for the Amherst Survival Center’s annual Empty Bowls Fundraiser, which supports food insecurity across the region. This year’s fundraiser will take place on Saturday, April 5, where people can buy a handmade bowl filled with various foods, with all proceeds going to the community.

Looking ahead, Workshop13 will continue to offer a platform for local artists, showcasing their talent through various exhibitions and themed shows.

“We’re not just a gallery,” Lauderdale said. “We’re a place for the community to connect, learn, and create.”

Arnold’s infrared photography exhibition provides a unique opportunity to experience the unseen world through his eyes. The show will be open to the public every weekend from 1-4 p.m. through March 30, offering visitors a chance to see how the ordinary can become extraordinary when viewed through the lens of infrared photography.

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 bin-

go 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.

CHESS FROM PAGE 1

progress of the competition.

Into the room came a couple of young ladies who were not there for chess. It was apparent that they were there for refreshment, but no matter, Joy of Beans is a welcoming place. Mary Remington is a singer and clay artisan and E.Stef is a poetess. They would continue on afterward for a sojourn at the Rock House.

So, the afternoon would continue, eventually concluding with conversation and discussion on various



TURLEY PHOTOS BY RICHARD MURPHY

Jim and John are shown playing chess.

topics. Jim, a man with a wide-ranging store of knowledge led a discussion on the topic of numerology. Eventually, we all said

good bye and parted, but that only needs to be until next Saturday, March 22. Hope to see you then.

SOCIAL SECURITY FROM PAGE 4

ten difficult to contact the Social Security Administration by phone, as well as trying to visit SSA offices without an appointment, which is why our AMAC Foundation provides this free service). SSA is now allowing in-person visits “by appointment only” and you can call the above number to schedule an in-person appointment at your local SSA office. But before you do, please consider what I’ve said above. And remember that your

SS benefit is based on the highest earning 35 years over your entire lifetime and each year represents only 1/35th of your benefit amount. So, is it worth the trouble? That depends on whether your military earnings, including the “special extra credits for military service,” are among the highest over your entire lifetime. If the answer is “yes” then it is likely worth it; if “no” then perhaps not.

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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 ssadviser@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

HOCKEY FROM PAGE 7

reer turned out better than I could’ve ever imagined it would,” Austin Dono, who was one of the four Rockets captains this winter. “We’ve qualified for the state tournament every year that I was on the team. We really wanted to win tonight’s game, but they’re a very good team. It has really been a fun season.”

When the elder Dono was a sophomore, Auburn lost to Walpole in the round of 16.

The Rockets advanced to the Elite 8 for the first time last year and they lost to

top-seeded Tewksbury.

The other hockey players from Tantasqua listed on the Auburn varsity roster are freshman Trevor Resener, sophomore Daniel Miedona, junior Jake Tully, junior Max Sealey, and junior captain Ethan Laplante, who was the starting goalie.

“All of them are great kids,” Bombard said. “They’re hard working and are a lot of fun to be around.”

The Rockets were trailing 3-0 against the Indians at the end of the first period.

“We came out a little flat and a little nervous, and they came out flying,” Bombard

added. “We just made too many mistakes in the first.”

Billerica added another goal less than five minutes into the second period before the Auburn fans, who made the trek north on Rte. 495, finally had something good to cheer for.

With 9:13 left in the second period, Miedona put a shot into the net past Billerica senior goalie Stephen MacIntosh. Sophomore Logan Rada was credited with the assist.

Two minutes later, Auburn freshman Colson Caron netted another goal slicing the deficit in half.

“We got the momentum

back with those two goals in the second period,” Austin Dono said. “I thought we still had a chance to win the game at that point. You can never count us out. We just played as hard as we could.”

Billerica (21-1-1) added a goal on a rebound shot six minutes into the final period, which pretty much ended any hopes the Rockets had of making a comeback.

“We still had a great season, and I have no complaints,” Bombard said. “Whoever takes this job is getting a great group of kids that may be back here again next year.”

HALL OF FAME FROM PAGE 7

For the 14th year, the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame will recognize one boy and one girl as the Western Massachusetts Players of the Year. A special presentation will be made for the recipients during halftime of one of the participating games. A panel of local media members selects the award winners, who are recognized for their achievements on the court in addition to their sportsmanship and character off the court.

The three All-Star

Games will be held on Thursday, March 20. The first game of the evening will feature the Class C and D boys’ teams at 5:30 p.m., followed by the girls’ matchup at 7 p.m., and the final game will showcase the Class A and B boys’ teams at 8:30 p.m.

Tickets for the All-Star Games are available at the Hall of Fame box office on the night of the event. Each ticket provides access to all three games that evening (Adults: \$20, Students: \$10). Advance tickets can also be purchased online.

LUSITANO AWARDS FROM PAGE 7

Just like Wadas, Fialho also will be playing college soccer close to home.

“I’ll be playing college soccer at Springfield College next year,” Fialho said. “I’m very happy that I’ll be attending a college and playing soccer close to home.”

The Springfield College women’s soccer team is currently looking for a new head coach.

Kristin Cannon will be stepping down from her coaching duties for personal

reasons on June 30. Fialho is hoping that the current assistant coach Brendon Boates is named as the new head coach.

“I was recruited by coach Boates,” Fialho said. “He has a passion for the sport of soccer, and he has a lot of energy.”

Prior to her freshman year, Fialho decided to attend Pope Francis instead of going to Ludlow High School.

“All of my friends wanted me to go with them to Ludlow High School,” she said. “It was a very difficult decision for me to make, but I’m glad that I decided to go to

Pope. It’s a great school both academically and athletically.”

Lowe, who lives in Ware, played soccer at Pathfinder Tech for four years and she was a team captain the past two seasons.

“I’m really excited to receive the scholarship award,” said Lowe, who’s not planning to play college soccer. “I’m proud of my accomplishments during my high school soccer career. The girls’ soccer team has improved a lot since I joined the team.”

Lowe is planning to pursue a degree in culinary arts

at a local community college.

“When I was growing up, I was always in the kitchen with my mom and we’ve grown a lot of our own food,” she said. “I was also able to get into the culinary arts program at Pathfinder.”

Lowe is currently working at Farmer Matt in New Braintree

“I’ve be working there for two years on April 1,” Lowe said. “They have a store, and we also make homemade soups. Working in a kitchen is just as fun as being on the soccer field. I’m learning something new every day.”

The LAF President is Joseph Jorge Sr., who received a 30 year service award. Jeri Humphries is the Vice President, Luis Vitorino is the Treasurer, and Steven DaSil-

va is the Secretary. The four board members are Joseph Jorge Jr., Richard Oliveria, Teri Myette, and Stephen Scott.

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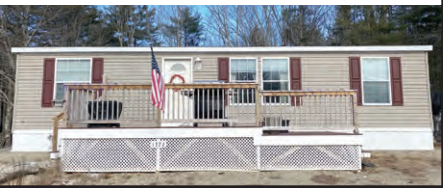
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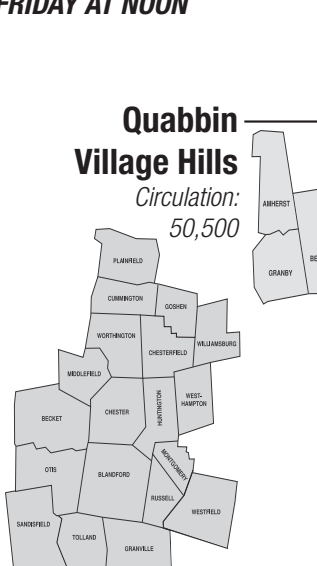
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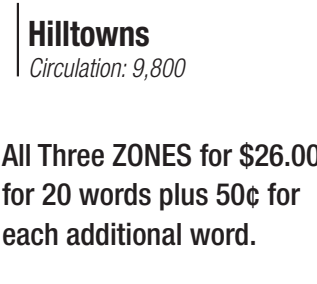
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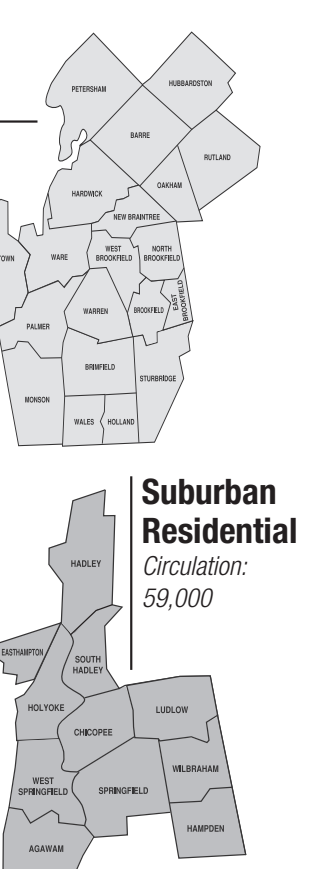
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The deadline for applications is **Friday, April 4, 2025**. Therefore, it is required that the Warren Police Department be in receipt of the candidates resume and cover letter no later than this date to be considered. The Town of Warren is an equal opportunity employer (EOE).



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❖ **Future Events**
Contact us to plan your next private event.
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MA 01535

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❖ GLUTEN FREE OPTIONS
❖ BREAKFAST SANDWICHES
❖ SOUPS
❖ COOKIES
❖ MUFFINS
❖ PASTRIES



Bring in entire ad for one FREE Beverage
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Tues.-Sat. 8am-2pm
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