

# QUABOAG CURRENT

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**NORTH BROOKFIELD**

Democratic caucus this Sunday Page 2

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## Board approves CDBG application to focus on East Side

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
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**NORTH BROOKFIELD** – Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission Principal Planner Joe Ferguson said his organization has been working with the town for a number of years on multiple projects including

One Stop grants, Open Space plans and Community Development Block Grant.

“Tonight’s focus is for the FY 2025 CDBG application round,” Ferguson said at the March 18 Board of Selectmen’s meeting. “The purpose is to propose a motion for the board at the end of my oral presentation to submit a funding application on be-

half of the town, which is due on April 14.”

Ferguson said the Community Development Block Grant program began in the 1970s and is federally funded through the Department of Housing and Urban Development. He said in Massachusetts, there are 11 entitlement communities which are granted larger federal funds

automatically.

“These larger cities, Worcester, Lowell, Lawrence...get a direct wire of funding and they do not have to compete for funding,” he said. “Whereas non entitlements, which is where North Brookfield sits, have to compete on an 18-month basis by submitting funding proposals.”

Ferguson said CDBG projects must meet one of three national objectives including benefitting low to moderate income populations, preventing or eliminating slums and blight and for special circumstances such as natural disasters.

He said elderly and disabled persons are generally considered to meet the low to

moderate income criteria.

“CDBG in my mind, is very important or valuable to these small towns because there’s no match, no municipal budget outlay at all. This is a 100% grant through the federal government that flows to the state and then flows

See N BROOKFIELD  
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## Quaboag Drama gets a ‘Clue’



Quaboag Regional Middle High School performed the high school edition of the play “Clue”. The characters listened through the door after a mysterious murder took place.

Theater club brings classic whodunit comedy to stage

By Ryan Drago  
Staff Writer  
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**WARREN** – This past weekend Quaboag Regional Middle High School performed “Clue: High School Edition”.

This production was presented by the Quaboag Regional Middle High School Drama Club, the Quaboag Regional Theater Department and the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC. The show is based on the Paramount Pictures Motion Picture and based on the popular Hasbro Board Game, CLUE.

The play featured many talented students of Quaboag, and some were going to be performing for

See CLUE PAGE 7

## Board promotes Lombardi to deputy police chief

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
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**STURBRIDGE** – Lieutenant Joseph Lombardi was promoted to the position of Deputy Chief, a position that hasn’t existed in the Police Department for over 30 years.

“It’s reinstatement will greatly enhance our leadership structure,” Police Chief Earl Dessert said at the Select Board’s March 17 meeting.

Dessert said Lombardi has served the department for 24 years and demonstrated “exceptional leadership and professionalism.” In addition to his extensive training and education, Lombardi has recently graduated from the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s National Academy.

Dessert also introduced Paul Guerin, who was appointed as a part-time police officer on the Police Department. Dessert said Guerin is the assistant principal at Burgess Elementary School and is an “outstanding candidate” for the position.

Guerin has worked a part-time police officer since 2011.

**Fire Department report**  
Fire Chief John Grasso Jr. said the call volume continues to trend for the months of January and February, with the number of trips to the city taxing the town’s resources.

“We’re doing everything we can to make sure that we provide the best services possible,” he said.

Grasso said the department received a grant in the amount of \$15,499.99 from the Department of Fire Services to replace outdated radio equipment. He said many of the area communities are switching to digital frequencies and the department will not be able to communicate with its current radio system.

“We’re going to be upgrading some of our frequencies and some of our radios to digital,” Grasso said. Grasso said the department is expecting to receive a secondary grant from DFS for about \$7,500 to purchase additional turnout equipment.

See STURBRIDGE PAGE 8

## Pathfinder Tech proposes budget at annual dinner

By Marcelo Gusmão  
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**PALMER** –Pathfinder Regional Technical Vocational School presented its budget for fiscal year 2026 at an annual dinner.

On March 12, stakeholders from all nine towns serviced by Pathfinder were invited to attend the school’s annual budget presentation dinner. The towns were represented by school board members, finance committees, town administrators and managers, and the budget was presented by Superintendent Eric Duda. Duda opened the ceremony with highlights from the past year, including competitive grants and improvements to the school, such as the new gym floor, which was funded by the town of Palmer.

“We reviewed the competitive grants we’ve received,” Duda said. “One for \$1.25 million for the complete renovation of our horticulture and electrical programs, which was the largest we ever received.”

In addition to this grant, Duda highlighted a grant

for \$100,000 that helped the school upgrade its HVAC program. The school also qualified for two competitive grants, including \$280,000 for the past year, and a grant of \$420,000 that was designated for fiscal years 2025 and 2026.

Duda said that these grants have been used toward building up Career Technical Initiatives, the school’s Adult Continuing Education program.

“Those two grants are paying for training opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed and paying for staffing and for the Director of Programming,” Duda said, and mentioned that the program will be starting programs in groundskeeping and carpentry, after previously running courses on electrical and plumbing.

“On top of that, there’s a list of a dozen offerings from puppy training to art classes,” Duda said, describing these short courses as “low-cost, local interest types of classes.”

“One of the things of

See PATHFINDER PAGE 8

## Theatre Guild presents ‘Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors’



The cast and crew of “Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors”, presented by the Theatre Guild of North Brookfield.

By Ryan Drago  
Staff Writer  
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**NEW BRAINTREE** – The last weekend in March will feature a funny version of Bram Stoker’s legendary vampire tale.

The Theatre Guild of North Brookfield presents “Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors”, a version of Dracula like you’ve never seen before. This comedic version of Dracula is by Gordon Greenberg and Steve Rosen and loosely based on the novel by Bram Stoker.

The Theatre Guild of

North Brookfield brings a lot of laughter to the story that is popular known as a horror story.

The story follows the Westfeldt family and how their lives change when they meet the mysterious Count Dracula. When her sister Mina falls mysteriously ill, Lucy Westfeldt and her fiancé, Jonathan Harker, enlist the help of famed vampire hunter Doctor Jean Van Helsing.

Narrating and directing the show is Missy McDonald, who is directing her first show for the Theatre Guild of North Brookfield. With a

lot of Halloween fans in the community theatre group, the group wanted to put on a show that was more humorous than scary.

While researching, the group decided on a comedy spinoff of the horror classic, “Dracula”. The play consists of 11 different scenes and over 50 props and there are several cast members who will also be playing different characters.

McDonald said this show was a challenge to put together, but it has been a lot of fun for the cast and crew.

See DRACULA PAGE 8

# - community -

## Second Chance hosts mobile adoption unit

By Ryan Drago  
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SPENCER – Klem’s welcomed Second Chance Animal Services’ mobile adoption unit this past week.

This activity takes place once a month where the public can meet the pets looking to be adopted. For this month, the Second Chance Animal Shelter welcomed two young puppies who are looking to be a part of a new home.

The two dogs were Gnome and Edward, both 3 months old. Gnome is a Pit-bull terrier, and Edward is a terrier mix.

Both dogs were excited to meet some of the shoppers who were making their way to Klem’s. Many stopped to check out the mobile truck and got to say hello to both Gnome and Edward.

Second Chance Animal Services is a nonprofit animal welfare organization founded in 1999. Second Chance began as an animal shelter and grew to help more pets in need.

Second Chance operates community veterinary hospitals in North Brookfield, Southbridge, Springfield, and Worcester providing access to the highest-quality veterinary care for all.



The mobile adoption unit from Second Chance Animal Services parked in front of Klem’s in Spencer this past Friday to showcase dogs looking for a new home.

Second Chance also has an adoption center located in East Brookfield.

Last year Second Chance Animal Services helped over 56,000 pets live better lives through full-service veterinary care, spay/neuter services, adoption services, community and educational outreach programs, training and a pet food pantry.

Gnome and Edward had a lot of visitors throughout the day and all you could hear outside of Klem’s consisted of “look how cute they are” or “look at those puppies”. Gnome and Edward are just two of many adorable pets who are looking for a new home.

Operating the mobile adoption unit was Arianna Aiello, who shared information about the great work Second Chance does throughout the region. Aiello said the mobile adoption unit shows mostly small dogs and puppies. However, Second Chance does have cats, rabbits and small animals such as guinea pigs who are looking to be adopted.

The Adoption Center is located at 111 Young Road,



Edward (top) and Gnome were checking people out through the looking glass through the mobile unit.

East Brookfield. More information on the adoption center and the adoption process can be found on [www.secondchanceanimals.org/adoption-locations/](http://www.secondchanceanimals.org/adoption-locations/).

In addition to the mobile adoption unit, Second Chance has events throughout the year that help raise money have changed the

lives of over 49,000 pets annually. Events consist of an annual Auction Gala, The Second Chance Annual Golf Tournament, the Annual Running out of Summer 5K, Cruise for Critters, and Cocktails for Tails.

More information can be found on [www.secondchanceanimals.org](http://www.secondchanceanimals.org).

## Federated Church 2025 Lenten services schedule

STURBRIDGE – The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale announced its 2025 schedule of Lenten services, starting with Ash Wednesday, and culminating in the Easter Sunday celebrations.

Services are held at the church located at 8 Maple St. and the community is welcome to attend.

The Rev. David W. Cote will officiate the services, which began on March 5 with a 6:30 p.m. Ash Wednesday service and continue through Easter Sunday on April 20. Refreshments will be served in Fellowship Hall following each of the Sunday services.

On March 29, Good Friday, the congregation will gather in the Chapel at noon for meditation and prayer. An ecumenical Stations of the Cross service will also be held at St. Anne’s Shrine, 16 Church St., Fiskdale.

On Easter Sunday, the community is invited to a special sunrise service at 6 a.m. at the original Baptist Meetinghouse, which is now located at Old Sturbridge Village. Following the sunrise service, participants will return to the Federated Church Meeting House sanctuary at 8 Maple St. for a 9:30 a.m. Easter morning service.

The sunrise service at Old Sturbridge Village is an ecumenical service, with five local churches and different faith communities participating. Area residents who

wish to attend are advised to enter the Meetinghouse by way of the security gate at the top of the parking lot, dress appropriately for the weather and wear sturdy walking shoes.

Food and drink are not permitted, except for bottled water. The village will not be open for touring during this event and restrooms will not be available.

The Lenten season includes the following services: 9, 9:30 a.m. - First Sunday of Lent; March 16, 9:30 a.m. - Second Sunday of Lent; March 23, 9:30 a.m. - Third Sunday of Lent; March 30, 9:30 a.m. - Fourth Sunday of Lent; April 6, 9:30 a.m. - Fifth Sunday of Lent; April 13, 9:30 a.m. - Palm Sunday; April 17, 6:30 p.m. - Maundy Thursday Service; April 18, 12 p.m. - Good Friday, Meditation and Prayers (Federated Church) Ecumenical Stations of the Cross (St. Anne’s Church); April 20, 6 a.m. - Easter Sunday Sunrise Service, Old Sturbridge Village Meetinghouse; April 20, 9:30 a.m. - Easter Sunday Service

The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale joyfully celebrates Christ’s presence and God’s grace in our lives. Community members are always welcome to join in worship on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. Services are also live-streamed on the church’s Facebook page.

For more information, call 774-304-1021 or visit [sturfed.org](http://sturfed.org).

## Democratic Town Committee’s annual call to caucus this Sunday

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The North Brookfield Democratic Town Committee will hold its annual call to caucus on Sunday, March 30 at 7:30

p.m. Registered democrats from North Brookfield are invited to join, please visit [www.nbdemocrats.org](http://www.nbdemocrats.org) for more information.

## Krispy Kreme donuts back at East Brookfield library

EAST BROOKFIELD – Stop by the East Brookfield Public Library now until April 29 and pay \$15 to reserve your box of Krispy Kreme donuts.


The donuts will be delivered on Thursday, May 13 between 9 a.m.-5 p.m., which is also the town’s voting day. On voting day, the library will have fewer than a box and even single donuts on sale.

## 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.



Edward is a 3-month-old terrier-mix who got to say hello to some visitors and is looking for a new home.



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## - community -

### Annual All Region Art Show celebrates student talent from Tantasqua

FISKDALE – Tantasqua Regional School District's All Regional Art Show will be held on Tuesday, April 1 from 5-8 p.m. at Tantasqua High School, 319 Brookfield Road.

This event showcases the artwork of student artists from grades K - 12 throughout the district.

The Annual All Region Art Show provides an opportunity for students from all of the district's schools, including Brimfield Elementary, Brookfield Elementary, Burgess Elementary, Holland Elementary, Wales Elementary, and the Tantasqua Regional Jr/Sr High Schools,

to display their creative talent. The exhibition will feature a collection of 2D and 3D artworks, displaying the diverse range of art made in the district.

Highlights of the show include the senior showcase which celebrates artwork created by graduating seniors, immersive elementary art presentations, coffee/tea and treats available for purchase from the Art Department's Roasted Almond Cafe, face painting, and activities for all ages. Additionally, raffles and prizes will be offered to Tantasqua Regional students attending the event, with a chance to win

art supplies.

"This event provides a wonderful opportunity to not only showcase our students' creative efforts from the year, but also offer to our community how the Arts support and enhance student learning and growth," said Trisha O'Brien, TRHS Art Teacher.

All members of the community are invited to attend the All Region Art Show and witness the wide range of artistic accomplishments of Tantasqua's students.

For more information, please contact Trish O'Brien, Skyler Nupp or Katy Taricano at 508-347-9301.

### 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 life-

time, 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](http://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-certification-course>.

### Scouts BSA Troop 163 hosts waffle dinner fundraiser on March 28

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.

### Library offers story time on March 31

NEW BRAINTREE – The New Braintree Public Library, 45 Memorial Drive, is offering a story time program for preschoolers on Monday, March 31 beginning at 9 a.m.

The program's focus is on spring. The readings will include "and then it's spring" by Julie Fogliano and "What's in the Dirt?" by Martha E. H. Rustad. This is a reading and crafts

program. Parental supervision is required.

People may call the library at 508-867-7650 during regular business hours for more information.

## - public safety -

### East Brookfield Police Log

During the week of March 3-9, the East Brookfield Police Department responded to 144 building/property checks, 156 directed area patrols, eight traffic controls, eight radar assignments, nine emergency 911 calls, one citizen assist, three assist other agencies, one complaint, two investigations, one motor vehicle investigation, two motor vehicle accidents, one complaint, two animal calls and 34 motor vehicle stops in the town of East Brookfield.

#### Monday, March 3

8:28 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, North Brookfield Road, Citation Issued

10:07 a.m. Investigation, Out of Town, Services Rendered

12:28 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, East Main Street, Services Rendered

#### Tuesday, March 4

1:57 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Out of Town, Services Rendered

6:51 a.m. Motor Vehicle

Accident, Baker Hill Road, Investigated

8:12 a.m. Motor Vehicle Accident, East Main Street, Report Taken

1:02 p.m. Investigation, East Main Street, Report Taken

2:49 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Draper Road, Services Rendered

3:39 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Howe Street, Citation Issued

3:56 p.m. Radar, Podunk Road, Citation Issued

3:59 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Podunk Road, Written Warning

4:28 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Howe Street, Citation Issued

#### Wednesday, March 5

12:28 a.m. Assist Other Agency, East Main Street, Services Rendered

6:55 a.m. Alarm, West Main Street, Investigated

12:33 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Harrington Lane, Transported to Hospital

7:45 p.m. Motor Vehicle Investigation, East Main

Street, Officer Handled

#### Thursday, March 6

7:42 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Route 49, Citation Issued

7:52 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Route 49, Citation Issued

8:22 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, West Main Street, Citation Issued

8:58 p.m. 911 Suspicious Activity, Blaine Avenue, Officer Handled

11:03 p.m. Complaint/Motor Vehicle Operations, East Main Street, Unfounded

#### Saturday, March 8

8:39 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Podunk Road, Services Rendered

4:11 p.m. Assist Citizen, Connie Mack Drive, Services Rendered

#### Sunday, March 9

12:07 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Written Warning

6:49 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Route 49, Citation Issued

### New Braintree Police Log

During the week of March 17-24, the Hardwick/New Braintree Police Department responded to 10 building/property checks, 14 directed/area patrols, four radar assignments, five traffic controls, nine emergency 911 calls, three citizen assists, two safety hazards, one fire, three motor vehicle accidents, two animal calls and two motor vehicle stops in the town of New Braintree.

#### Monday, March 17

11:13 a.m. 911 Assist Citizen, Old Wine Road, Spoken To

4:09 p.m. Safety Hazard, North Brookfield Road, Taken/Referred to Other

Agency

#### Wednesday, March 19

3:35 p.m. 911 Found/Lost Property, Hardwick Road, Officer Handled

10:53 p.m. Fire/Chimney, Sibley Road, Extinguished

#### Thursday, March 20

2:32 p.m. Motor Vehicle Accident, Barre Cut Off Road, Vehicle Towed

8:13 p.m. 911 Welfare Check, Unitas Road, Services Rendered

#### Friday, March 21

2:42 p.m. 911 Assist Citizen, Moore Road, No Action Required

6:06 p.m. Assist Citizen, Hardwick Road, Services

Rendered

#### Saturday, March 22

12:27 p.m. 911 Motor Vehicle Accident, Old Turnpike Road, Merge

12:27 p.m. 911 Motor Vehicle Accident, Barre Road, Services Rendered

9:58 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Moore Road, Services Rendered

#### Sunday, March 23

5:09 p.m. Suspicious Activity, Barre Road, Officer Handled

6:42 p.m. Medical Alarm, Barre Road, Services Rendered

6:42 p.m. Safety Hazard, Goodfield Road, Taken/Referred to Other Agency



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USDA INSP. FROZEN GOAT MEAT ..... <b>\$6.99</b> lb	SALE DATES: 3/27/25-4/2/25	USDA INSP. FROZEN NAKED SEAFOOD BACON WRAPPED SHRIMP 16.5 OZ BOX ..... <b>\$7.99</b> ea

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- opinion -



By Ellenor Downer

Sandhill cranes



I received an email from a Worthington resident, who saw two sandhill cranes on Sunday, March 16.

It most likely was just a coincidence. However, the next day March 17, I spotted a pair of sandhill cranes in my hayfield, a first ever sighting at that location.

Several people reported seeing sandhill cranes at various locations in town last year. There is a breeding pair, who successfully raised young, in nearby Hardwick.

The sandhill crane is a tall, 45," gray, heron like bird. It has a dark red patch on its forehead and a black bill. Some of the feathers on the sandhill crane's back are iron stained due possibly to preening from mud rich in that mineral.

Immature cranes are grayish with more rust stained feathers. They keep this plumage for two years. The female sandhill crane lays one to three olive eggs with dark marks in a mound like nest of weeds, grasses and marsh like plants placed on the ground or in shallow water. They migrate in flocks, feed on agricultural fields and roost in the center of shallow lakes or rivers. They display courtship behavior of jumping off the ground during their migration. They feed on seeds, agricultural grains and small animals.

Common mergansers

I received reports of seeing common mergansers. My daughter saw common mergansers in Hardwick. A Hubbardston couple also saw common mergansers. A Brimfield resident, who sends bird reports on a regular basis, saw common mergansers at a pond in Warren last week. There was a large section of open water. He also saw lots of mallard, Canada geese, a few black ducks and a hooded merganser.

Bald eagles

The Brimfield resident in an email on March 8 said, "Yesterday in Ludlow I visited an eagle's nest on the bank of the Chicopee River. Eagles have nested in this area for over ten years with four different nest locations. I first found a nest across the Chicopee Riv-

er in Springfield that was visible from Ludlow. Then the nest was on the Ludlow side of the river for one year. I lost track of the nest for a few years when it was in a tree that subsequently fell down. I was told about the fourth and current nest three years ago. If the bird on the nest is the female that has been nesting in this area and had at least one young two years ago she is banded and is 20 years old."

Two of my grandchildren and I saw a mature bald eagle perched in a tree at the edge of my hayfield on Saturday, March 15. I stopped the car and my granddaughter, Lizzie, got out of the car to take a photo with her cellphone. I said the eagle will probably fly away. As she approached, the eagle turned its head to watch her. As she approached it bent down, opened its tail feathers displaying the white feathers and then took off. She got a photo of its white tail.

The Brimfield resident saw two bald eagles at a pond in Warren, an adult and an immature. The immature eagle flushed up some ducks while flying around the pond. On another day he saw four eagles, two adult and two immature. An Oakham resident also saw a bald eagle recently.

Other birds

The same person saw a great blue heron, hooded mergansers, three ringed bill gulls and a small flock of red-winged blackbirds. Earlier this month, he said, "Two fox sparrows showed in the afternoon, always nice to see them. A pair of blue birds are irregular visitors as are sharp-shinned hawks. Last week an adult chased juncos into a quince bush without success. And this week an immature sharpie was in the yard for awhile."

He said he takes in his feeders at night as bears should be out and about. He read an article that the skunk cabbage is up and is a sign that so are the bears. Black bears eat skunk cabbage leaves in the spring when they first emerge from the dens to "kick start" their digestive system. They also return to their favorite feeding grounds, often back yard bird feeders.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.



Early spring questions for the Garden Lady

Lisa, who gardens in Belchertown, had this question for the Garden Lady: "I saw a video online of someone using a weed whacker to cut down their raspberry plants. Why would they be doing that now? Aren't they cutting off all of the fruiting buds?"

It's sure interesting that you mention this particular topic! My husband and I stared at our raspberry plants and talked about getting out there to prune as well.

Before you grab the weed whacker and head out, though, you have to know your raspberries. Do you have "summer bearing" or "ever-bearing?"

If you have raspberry plants that bear one crop each summer, you would not cut them down to the ground now because you would be removing all of the fruiting buds. The berries grow on canes that are a year old.

All you would do to summer bearing raspberries now is prune out the canes that fruited last year if you haven't already done so. They will look old and the bark will be shedding a bit. Another giveaway is that when you cut into them there is no green "living" tissue.

Very thin canes, or canes that are growing closer than six inches apart can also be cut down to the ground.

Pruning is a bit different for those of us that have "ever-bearing" raspberries. You must decide if you want two smaller crops - one in the summer and one in the fall or one bumper crop in the fall.

Chances are that the video you saw was of someone turning their "ever-bearers" into "fall bearers" instead, by cutting the canes that fruited in the fall all the way down to the ground. New canes will grow and in late August-early September they will fruit, in abundance, hopefully.

If you like the idea of two crops, then do not prune away the canes that fruited last fall, but do cut off the tops of these canes. You'll see evidence of old berry clusters. Cut just below that point, leaving the rest of the cane.

New buds will form here, and these will be your first, summer crop. Do also cut away any remaining dead canes, and thin or too close together canes as mentioned above.

Christi wrote in with this question about her Rhododendrons, "I noticed that

parts of my rhododendron (as well as others in my neighborhood) are curled and perhaps dead. They normally curl when it gets really cold, but unfurl when it gets warm. Today is 65 degrees and parts have still not unfurled. I was wondering why this happened and what suggestions you might have."

Rhododendrons curl their leaves in the cold as a defense mechanism to reduce the overall surface area of the leaf in an effort to curb moisture loss. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't work as well.

Take, for example, if the plant was already stressed when it entered winter; then this process may not have the same effect. Perhaps we didn't have sufficient rain and supplemental water wasn't provided, then the plant's efforts of curling their leaves may not get them through the winter unscathed, especially the incredibly windy winter we had.

Once the ground thaws, give the shrubs a drink and if indeed these branches don't respond as spring weather continues, it may be time to do some corrective pruning. Oftentimes, stems that are cut back to well within the shrub respond with new growth that will rejuvenate the rest of the plant, making it look better and better. Good luck!

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.

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SOCIAL SECURITY Matters By Russell Gloor

Dear Rusty:  
Is there any way I can get out of paying the \$185 I am told will be taken out of my Social Security for Medicare Part B when I turn 65? We pay for Medicare all our working lives, and now I have to pay a monthly premium for insurance that only covers 80%. Signed: Disheartened Senior

Dear Disheartened:  
For clarification, the money you paid into Medicare while working during your lifetime was for Medicare Part A, inpatient hospitalization coverage. The Medicare taxes paid while working entitled you to free Medicare coverage for Part A, inpatient hospitalization coverage, but they do not entitle you to Medicare coverage for outpatient services coverage for doctors, medi-

cal tests, etc.. For that coverage from Medicare, you must enroll in Medicare Part B, for which there is a monthly premium (\$185 per month for 2025). If you wish to have Medicare Part B coverage, you must enroll in Medicare Part B at age 65, unless you have other "creditable" healthcare coverage from an employer.

The Medicare Part B premium will be automatically deducted from your Social Security payment when you enroll in Medicare and there is no way to avoid it if you wish to have Medicare healthcare coverage for outpatient medical services. But, if you currently have "creditable" healthcare coverage from an employer, you can delay

enrolling in Medicare Part B (thus avoiding the premium) until your employer coverage ends.

If you don't enroll in Medicare Part B during your initial enrollment period at 65 or in a Special Enrollment Period following the end of your creditable employer healthcare coverage, then you will incur a penalty for enrolling in Medicare Part B outside of the prescribed enrollment periods. That penalty is a permanent increase in your Medicare Part B premium. FYI, "creditable" is an employer group plan with at least 20 participants.

We do not advise going without outpatient healthcare coverage, so you should carefully consider enrolling in Medicare Part B when you turn 65. If you are already collecting Social Security benefits, you will be automatically enrolled, but you can opt out of Part B if you wish - it's just not advisable, unless you have current creditable healthcare coverage from an employer. So, to recap: the Medi-

See SOCIAL SECURITY PAGE 8

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.

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## - community -

# 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](mailto: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>.

### N BROOKFIELD FROM PAGE 1

down to these towns," Ferguson said.

Ferguson said the state assigns a "needs score" to towns, with North Brookfield receiving a score of nine, which makes it more competitive for funding than surrounding towns.

Ferguson said a CDBG forum was held last month to present an eligible project for this year's application.

He said they did due diligence to try to qualify some streets from the West Side neighborhood, but they found out those projects would not qualify.

"In coordination with the town departments and the community, we switched our focus to the East Side neighborhood or around the town common area," he said. "We are looking at proposing a design/construction improvement on the entire length of South Common Street."

Ferguson said they are also proposing design/construction improvements between Grove and Forest on South Common, as well as the entire length of St. Claire Avenue.

"Based on conceptual estimates and knowing the funding limit for the FY 25 application is \$850,000 we think this is a right sized project," he said. "Right now, it does fit within that budget."

Ferguson said the FY 25 funding would pay for plan design and engineering, as well as putting out a bid for construction. The cost of the project is earmarked at \$725,000 with \$125,000 for grand administration costs by CMRPC.

The board moved to support and approve the FY 25 CDBG application as presented.

#### Change orders for Mount Pleasant Street

Ferguson presented the board with a change order for the Mount Pleasant Street project. The engineer's change order was for \$31,000 and the contractor's for \$27,072.06

He said on a high level, the need for change orders is based on delays with the project, but also due to the performance of the contractor. The change order for the contractor includes almost 100 additional hours for police details.

"Based on my analysis with the grant account, with these change orders in play, there is still grant funding leftover," Ferguson. "There is still a balance of approximately \$40,000 in grant funding that's available for use that has not been claimed or obligated at this point."

Ferguson said the contractor has three pay applications in play, of which the first two have been paid. He said 5% has been retained from each of those.

"If pay app. three is approved, we're holding 5% retainage out of that," he said. "Right now, that retainage amount is approximately \$21,000, which the town should hold onto...I would try to address that at the end of the project through the retainage we're holding."

Board of Selectmen Chair Jason Petraitis said he has a "real problem" paying for the additional police details due to the contractor's time de-

lays with the projects.

"Just because it's a grant doesn't mean that they should still get it, it's still taxpayer money," he said.

A motion to approve the engineer's change order passed, but a motion to approve the contractor's change order failed with Petraitis voting in opposition.

#### Change orders for Fire/Highway upgrade

Jamie Gilman said there are four potential change orders for the Fire/Highway building upgrade project.

He said there had been delays with getting the heating system going, which put the project behind substantially. He said the town's response with getting the fuel tank in place has set it back about eight weeks.

"That fuel tank, connected to the oil system, allowed the building to get heated and the contractor to finish their work," Gilman said.

Gilman said the building committee has been reevaluating the uncompleted parts of the projects, in order to save the town money.

"To try to get it financially

under control," he said.

Gilman said a substantial amount of contingency funds were used in the former Huck's building, which is the newest of the three buildings.

He said one of the change orders looks at mini piles around the new apparatus building.

"The money wasn't in there to do the proper engineering...to demonstrate that the 20-foot, 15-foot piles were going to be effective," Gilman said. "We don't know if there's going to be true value to the town...it's a couple hundred thousand dollars, it just doesn't make sense."

Gilman said there has been some settling of the new apparatus building over the years, but they can't be responsible for spending money without evidence of its value.

This change order would save the town \$195,650.

Another change order was the elimination of the second floor kitchen in the old fire building. He said there is a kitchen on the first floor and having two kitchens wouldn't be necessary.

This change order would save an additional \$33,619.

A third change order has to do with stripping insulation from the building for a cost of \$11,275, completed by the contractor. Gilman said the original order had the removal listed as the town's responsibility, but this change order would save time to keep the project moving.

The fourth change order is another additional cost of \$263 to cover "errors and omissions" for the project.

The board approved the four change orders as presented.

#### Resignations

The board accepted the resignations of the Highway Department heavy equipment operator and town mechanic. The heavy equipment operator stated in his letter that he had found a better employment opportunity in another town and the town mechanic stated his reason for leaving was due to a hostile work environment.

#### Appointment

Highway Superintendent Randy Morgan submitted his recommendation to hire

Dennis Kimball as the town mechanic on the Highway Department.

Morgan stated, "I'm confident in his ability to perform his duties as a mechanic."

Kimball said North Brookfield is his hometown and he wanted to work closer to home. Kimball previously worked at the Providence and Worcester Railroad prior to accepting this position.

#### Bid for old street sweeper

Petraitis said the town of Brookfield has offered to pay \$5,000 to purchase the town's old street sweeper. He said the sweeper is valued at \$10,000.

Morgan said the town does not use the sweeper and it could be put out to bid to try and sell it closer to its value.

The board moved to put the sweeper out to bid.

#### Spending requests

The board approved the following spending requests: \$712.64 to replace batteries in tasers for the Police Department; and \$680 for required in-service and training for POST-compli-

ant internal affairs, investigations and reporting for the Police Chief and Lieutenant.

The board also received a spending request in the amount of \$110.95 for two Fire Department cellphones. The board members will review this request at their next meeting.

#### Cleaning service contract

The board approved a contract with PD Services for weekly cleaning services for the Town Offices. The service would cost \$300 a month.


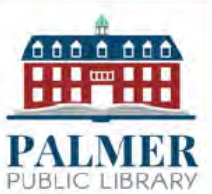
PD Services also provides cleaning services at the Senior Center.

#### Website access

The board approved the Town Clerk's request to review the list of people who have access to the town's website, and to create a policy regarding such access.

#### Public comment

Resident John Tripp shared concerns about flavored tobacco and vape products being sold in town, despite being banned for sale in the commonwealth.

**PALMER PUBLIC LIBRARY PRESENTS:**

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## Gathering

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**(413)283-2606 or [ngauthier@townofpalmer.com](mailto:ngauthier@townofpalmer.com)**

**\*You will always be able to stay completely anonymous at Palmer for Tomorrow, we will never ask or share your name or your story.**

# SPORTS

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## Sun shines bright on 48th Road Race



The participants are off in the 48th running of the Holyoke St. Patrick's Road Race.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

By Gregory A. Scibelli  
gscibelli@turley.com

**HOLYOKE** – For the first time in several years, it was gorgeous weather for the Holyoke St. Patrick's Road Race last Saturday afternoon the city streets.

More than 6,000 people participated in this year's event, with nearly 5,000 participants finishing the 10K, or 6.2-mile course.

This year, it was Samuel Whittaker of Salem, CT, who finished the race in 31:24. Alex Corbett, who placed second in last year's race, came in 23 seconds later at 31:47.

The top female finisher was Angelia Rafter at 34:13 and she placed 12th overall. Rafter is from Glastonbury, CT.

Among local finishers, Matt Provost of Monson was 19th overall at 35:09. Ryan Davis of South Hadley was a close 20th at 35:10. Lind-



The first wave of harriers starts the course on Maple St.

say Smith of South Hadley finished 22nd at 35:12.

While the race course, commonly known as a "hilly" course throughout downtown Holyoke ending with a turn off Beech St. and up the hill on Hampden St. toward the finish line remained largely the same, there was one noticeable change in this year's event.

Presidential Timing took over the official timing duties after 4RUN3 went out

of business last year. Those looking for more results from the events can go to [www.presidentialtiming.com](http://www.presidentialtiming.com) to look at more specific results from the race. Like previous timers, you can look up people by name and bib number to get more specific results.

The road race once again kicked off an excellent weekend celebrating the St. Patrick's Day holiday and also helped to prepare several



Samuel Whittaker crosses the first line first overall.

participants in this year's event for future races in the coming months, including the Boston Marathon, which will take place on Monday, April 21.

See **ROAD RACE** PAGE 7



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

Arianna does a swinging drill.

## Spring preseason underway

**PALMER** – The spring season is underway in high school sports with many teams set to open up the season later this week. More teams will get going early next week, weather permitting as well as if baseball and softball fields are ready for play.



Pathfinder's Carly Juda plays coach during practice last Friday.



Pathfinder softball works out last Friday at Soccer City in Wilbraham.

## Suburban League starts new award in honor of deceased coach

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

**CHICOPEE**— The Pioneer Valley Girls Suburban Basketball League was always very special to Eileen Monaghan.

Growing up in Chicopee, Monaghan played for a Suburban League basketball team. She then coached her daughter's Suburban League teams. In recent years, Monaghan was one of the referees in the league.

Monaghan most likely would've been back on the basketball court refereeing Suburban League games this winter, but she was tragically killed last April.

Suburban League Commissioner Joe Ciejka, who's from Ware, couldn't recall another person who played, coached and was a referee in the Suburban League during the past 40 years.

"I believe Eileen is the first person to play, coach, and has been a referee in the Suburban league," Ciejka said. "Eileen brought an incredible spirit to the Suburban League and the kindness of hearts. Even though her heart has been silenced, we're not going to let her spirit ever die."

The inaugural Eileen Monaghan Sportsmanship Award was given to the Gateway 5/6th grade basketball team prior to the start

of the 5/6th grade Division 2 championship game between Easthampton and Hampshire, which took place at Chicopee Comp on March 9.

"I think the sportsmanship award is very special because it shows how many lives that my mom touched," said Kathleen Brooks, who is Eileen's youngest daughter. "She just loved girls sports, especially basketball. She probably would've been very proud of this award."

Brooks, who presented the sportsmanship award to Gateway, graduated from Chicopee Comp in 2019 where she played soccer, basketball, and lacrosse.

Her older sister, Ashley Rouleau, played two sports at Comp.

The Gateway Suburban League basketball team didn't win any games this season, but the players celebrated small victories and kept a positive attitude on the court.

"Being selected as the first sportsmanship award winner in the Suburban League is very special," said Gateway head coach Peter Sadler. "We didn't have a lot of experienced players this year, but we kept improving throughout the season. We came close to winning a couple of games. We just focused on doing one thing to get better in each game. The girls never gave up and kept a positive

attitude."

The members of the Gateway girls' basketball team are Victoria Barnes, Riley Chornyar, Liv Dulude, Lila Castro, Senavieve Rosseau, Fiona Hallowell, Faith Chretien, Eveyln Sadler, Abigail Sadler, Emma Johnson, and Alyvia Kaynowski.

The Suburban League referees voted for the Sportsmanship Award.

Unlike her daughters, Monaghan graduated from Chicopee High School. She played soccer and basketball for the Lady Pacers. She was inducted into the Chicopee Athletic Hall of Fame in 2013. Monaghan also played soccer and basketball at Western New England College. She was inducted into the WNEC Hall of Fame in 2006.

"My mom was always very humble, but she always told us that she loved playing sports," Brooks said. "She didn't score 1,000 career point in high school, but she did at WNEC. She always worked very hard and that's what she wanted everyone else to do."

Monaghan graduated from college with a bachelor's degree in management. She was the Chief-of-Staff for Chicopee State Representative Joseph Wagner for twenty-one years. She was also the Executive Assistant to Sheriff Nick Cocchi at

the Hampden County Sheriff's Department.

Monaghan was also a summer league soccer coach. Her older brother, John, coached the girls' summer league soccer team at that same time. The two siblings battled against each other several times.

"It was a lot of fun coaching against my sister's summer league soccer team," John Monaghan said. "Having the Suburban League name their sportsmanship award in her honor really means a lot to the family. She put a lot of time and effort into sports. She just wanted to help the kids get better."

A high school girls varsity basketball team will also be receiving the Eileen Monaghan Sportsmanship Award on March 20.

"We had high school Sportsmanship Award for about six or seven years, but then it stopped due to the COVID-19 Pandemic," Ciejka said. "We're going to be bringing the high school sportsmanship award back in Eileen's name at our referee's banquet on March 20."

The Gateway players didn't get to play in the Suburban League finals this year, but it was still a very special day for them.

See **NEW AWARD** PAGE 7



Zaylee Brodeur works on hitting with the tee.



Laylana Patran watches a pitch come in during batting practice.

## Quabbin League holding open practice for new players

The Quabbin Valley Over-28 Baseball League is looking to infuse new talent into its league for the 2025 season.

Coming up this Sunday, March 30, and Sunday, April 6. Both practices are scheduled to be held at Beachgrounds Park in South Hadley and are weather-permitting. Both practices will begin at 10 a.m. and following the April 6 practice, new players will be drafted to teams in the league as the league works to fill its open roster

spots.


Registration for the 2025 season is now open and any interested players can go to [www.quabbin-valleybaseball.org](http://www.quabbin-valleybaseball.org) to get registered, or to seek more information or make inquiries about the league. The league website will also be updated over the next month with information about the upcoming season.

There are many open roster spots available in the league for the 2025 season, which is tentatively


  
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**NAME: Austin Dono**  
**SCHOOL: Tantasqua**

## Athlete of the Month



Dono took part in the Auburn-Tantasqua ice hockey co-op, which made it to the quarterfinals of the state tournament.

To nominate someone for Athlete of the Week, contact Managing Sports Editor Gregory A. Scibelli at 413-283-8393 ext. 258 or send an e-mail to gscibelli@turley.com.

## T-Birds suffer loss as they pursue playoff spot

BRIDGEPORT, Conn. — The Springfield Thunderbirds (30-26-2-4) stumbled on the road and fell to the Bridgeport Islanders (14-40-4-3) by a final score of 4-1 on Saturday inside Total Mortgage Arena.

For a ninth straight game, the T-Birds spotted their opponent a 1-0 lead as 35-year-old Chris Terry cleaned up a rebound off the pads of Vadim Zherenko at 4:36 of the first to give Bridgeport the lead.

The T-Birds answered back thanks to their red-hot power play at 8:21, as Matthew Peca led a streaking Nikita Alexandrov to the blue paint for a backhand that found its way

through Henrik Tikkanen to even the game, 1-1.

Zherenko and Tikkanen dealt with some chaos near their creases early in the second, but the 1-1 tie carried into the midpoint of the game before a costly too-many-men penalty hurt Springfield.

With their first power play of the night, the Islanders struck as Adam Beckman fired a wrist shot to the top shelf just moments after he clanged one off the post, and Bridgeport had the 2-1 lead at 11:27 of the second.

Beckman was not finished with his exploits either, as the newly-acquired Islanders cashed in on 2-on-1 setup from Brian Pinho at

17:09 to give Bridgeport an insurance tally heading into the third, 3-1.

Cam Thiesing added further to the lead just 1:37 into the third, intercepting a puck in the Springfield zone and backhanding a chance past Zherenko to make it a 4-1 game. Springfield managed only seven shots in the final period, and Tikkanen finished a relatively stress-free night with 21 saves in the Bridgeport win.

The T-Birds return home on Friday and Saturday for the first-ever matchups on home ice against the Iowa Wild, with 7:05 p.m. puck drops slated for both nights inside the Thunderdome.

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Family



**NEW AWARD FROM PAGE 6**

scheduled to begin on Sunday, April 27. The league plays most Sunday from late April through mid-August with playoffs following that.

The league plays a 15-game schedule and typically fields six teams each year. Games are usually played at 10 a.m. with fields in Easthampton and South Hadley normally used.

The Quabbin Valley

league is an all-abilities league and all are welcome to join. Eligibility is players who are age 28 and over. You must be 30 to be eligible to pitch in the league. Your age for eligibility is whatever age you will turn in 2025.

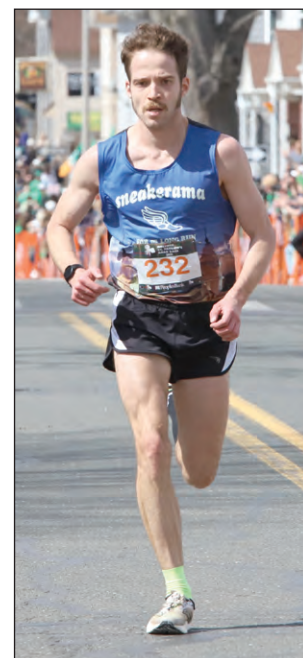
**ROAD RACE FROM PAGE 7**

With the weather being much warmer, there were less participants in costumes, though plenty of harriers were wearing the green tutus that are often a part of each year's race.

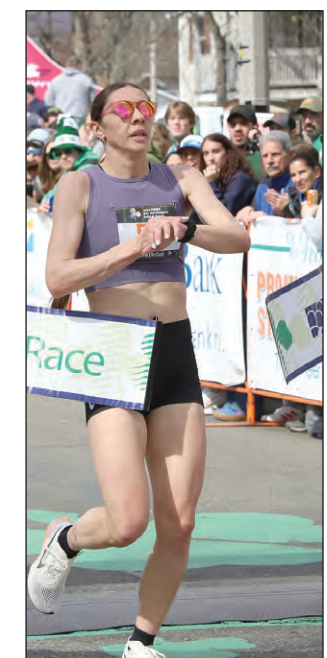
The city also had excellent cooperation from the Holyoke Police Department, Holyoke Fire Department, the Massachusetts State Police, and Cataldo Ambulance, which provided public safety services for the event this year.

The race was kicked with a beautiful rendition of the Star Spangled Banner sung by Kate Caligaris and JFK Award winner and celebrity Bridget Moynahan shot the opening gun.

This year, there were



Alex Corbett takes second in the race for the second year in a row.



Female winner Angelia Rafter crosses the finish line at 34:13.

four waves of runners followed by the fifth wave, which included walkers on the course.

Among the participants, there were nearly 400 participants in the race who were under 18-years-old.

**CLUE FROM PAGE 1**

the last time on the Quaboag stage. The show featured 14 scenes with remarkable stage props, designs and sets. The costumes were designed by Christine Taylor, who also served as the Stage Director.

James Joinville of QRM-HS served as producer and technical director. Joinville shared a note that was featured in the program for the show.

According to Joinville, the school's production of "Clue" featured a lot of firsts.

"This is probably the first time that we have tackled a straight play like this and the first time that we have double casted a show," Joinville said.

The students have worked hard and showed a lot of dedication to put this great show together during the entire weekend. Joinville acknowledged all of the seniors who will be graduating this year, and that "Clue" was going to be their last show as members of the Quaboag Theater Department.

A total of 11 seniors were

a part of the production of "Clue" as Joinville wanted to express how proud he was of all of them.

"You have all grown so much as performers but more importantly, how you have grown into amazing people, and I know that you will all go so far as you venture off into the next chapter of your lives," Joinville wrote.

Joinville also acknowledged the juniors who were part of the cast and crew and believes the future is bright for Quaboag Theater.

Camden Olivo is a junior at Quaboag and he played Wadsworth during the Saturday night show and the Sunday show. The role as Wadsworth was also played by Grace Smart during the Friday night show and Saturday morning show. Smart is also a junior at Quaboag and has performed in many of her school's shows including "The Addams Family", "Beauty and the Beast" and "Camp Omigosh".

Colonel Mustard was a funny character in "Clue" played by Parker Chaffee and Haylee Nash. Chaffee is

a senior at Quaboag and this production of "Clue" was his last show at the school. He has been a longtime member of the theater community and is proud of the work he has done alongside his fellow theater comrades.

Chaffee is known for playing numerous roles throughout his time at Quaboag, including Coach Butkus, Uncle Fester and the dramatic leading role as the Beast in "Beauty and the Beast".

Chaffee's classmate Dante Martino was in "Clue" as Mr. Boddy during two shows. Martino has been performing at Quaboag since the ninth grade. Martino has been a part of school productions such as "The Addams Family", "Beauty and the Beast", and "Freaky Friday".

Abigail Jolin is a senior at Quaboag, and she has been performing in the theater department for six years. Jolin plays Mrs. White for two of the shows of "Clue". Jolin has taken on numerous roles during her time at Quaboag and has been part of the ensemble and has worked

behind the scenes for several shows.

Emily Hubbel played Mrs. Peacock in two of the shows of "Clue". Hubbel is a senior at Quaboag and originally worked in the back of the auditorium, managing the spotlight in several shows. This year, Emily would audition for "Clue" and played a hilarious Mrs. Peacock on stage.

Congratulations to all the seniors: Abigail, Josh, Parker, Dante, Avi, Falon, Emily, Blake, Sebastian, Liam and Toby on a great journey through Quaboag's Theater Department and for performing one amazing final show.

Quaboag will be hosting the Casey Handfield Benefit Concert on Wednesday, April 16 at 6:30 p.m. The concert will take place in the Quaboag Regional High School gymnasium and will feature the Quaboag Regional Wind Ensemble and the Auburn High School Concert Band.

All proceeds go to the Casey J. Handfield Memorial Scholarship. All donations are encouraged and appreciated.



The characters entered the mansion and met for the first time as the story of "Clue" began.



The characters opened up their gifts featuring potential murder weapons as Mr. Boddy, played by Dante Martino, was being questioned by Wadsworth, portrayed by Camden Olivo, far right.

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**Quaboag Current**



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# A.S.B.

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Friday Nights ~ 8pm-11pm

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# - community -

## STURBRIDGE FROM PAGE 1

He said the Office of Emergency Medical Services conducted its annual inspection and the department passed, with a minor repair issue identified on one of the ambulances. He said that repair will be completed the next week.

An in-house pumps and hydraulics class was led by Firefighter Matthew Bonneau to give personnel more training on how to deliver water from the firetruck to firefighters on scene.

He said the new call firefighters have been attending training and responding to calls. Three of the call firefighters are on their way to completing their initial certification training.

### Review of ATM/STM warrants

The board moved to place and support 50 articles on the annual and special town meeting warrants, with the exception of articles 32 and 33, which they took no action on at the time.

Several of the articles on the annual town meeting warrant will focus on historic preservation, including the cleaning of gravestones and cataloging historic

homes in town, and others will help expand the town's trail system.

Article 8 asks voters to allocate \$2,245,000 to construct a trail and bridge at 469A Main St. to connect to the parking lot at 501 Main St. Town Administrator Robin Grimm said this is a really unique project and is beneficial to both residents and tourists.

"I think it's pretty exciting," she said.

Grimm said the town will seek MassTrails grants to help pay for the project, but it will be more likely to receive funding if voters show support through a town meeting vote. Any grants received will reduce the amount being borrowed.

Select Board Chair Jamie Goodwin said he believes the project will "more than pay for itself" in the coming years, due to its boost to the local economy. Select Board member Mary Dowling agreed with Goodwin and noted that half of the cost of the project is coming from borrowing, and the other half from the Community Preservation Committee funds.

Articles on the special town meeting warrant will address the snow and ice

removal deficit, unpaid bills from previous years, and the purchase of a 10-wheel dump truck for \$480,000 and a six-wheel dump truck for \$383,000 – both to be paid for through free cash.

### Town Administrator's report

Grimm said she submitted an expression of interest for the One Stop grant for the Cedar Beach project.

"They give grants up to \$500,000 through MassWorks," she said. "It would be great if we could get some funding."

Grimm said a resident brought her attention to the dangerous intersection of Route 15 and Interstate 84. She said she worked with the Police Department to look at accident numbers, and also included state Rep. Todd Smola and the Department of Transportation to address the concern.

"We're going to see some major changes to that intersection," she said.

Grimm also noted that the town received over \$250,000 in funding from the Green Communities grant.

### Trails Committee appointments

Nathan Lane was appointed to serve as an alternate member of the Conser-

vation Committee. Grimm said he also serves on the Trails Committee and comes "highly recommended."

Grimm said there was another candidate who expressed interest in serving as an alternate.

She said it is likely that a permanent position will open on the Conservation Committee and Lane will then be shifted to a permanent member and the second candidate can be appointed as an associate.

Nicholas Sokol was appointed as an associate member of the Trails Committee. Grimm said he has been an active volunteer and does a lot of work on the trails.

### Election and town meetings

The annual town election will be held at the Sturbridge Host Hotel on Monday, April 14 with polling hours from 6:30 a.m.-8 p.m.

On Monday, April 28 at 7 p.m., the annual town meeting and special town meeting will be held in the Tantasqua Regional High School auditorium.

### Acceptance of donation

The board accepted a \$500 donation on behalf of the Police Department from Tech Dynamix IT Services from Westborough.

## OES to hold designer pancake breakfast

BARRE – Cradle Rock Chapter Order of Eastern Star will hold a designer pancake breakfast on Saturday, April 5 from 7:30-10:30 a.m. at Mt. Zion Lodge Hall, 71 Pleasant St. People may design their

specialty pancake. The menu includes pancakes, sausage gravy with biscuits, bacon, sausage, juice and coffee.

Cost is \$9 per adult and \$5 for children 6 and under. All are welcome.

## SOCIAL SECURITY FROM PAGE 6

care taxes you paid while working only entitled you to free Medicare Part A inpatient hospitalization coverage. You must enroll in Medicare Part B (for which there is a monthly premium) to have Medicare healthcare coverage for outpatient healthcare services. Both Medicare Part A and Part B have deductibles and copayments, for which you may wish to consider getting either a supplemental insurance plan or a Medicare Advantage plan. But, in either case, you must still have both Medicare Part A and Part B to obtain such additional healthcare coverage.

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

## PATHFINDER FROM PAGE 1

high importance that we shared with the towns was that we're seeing a five year trend of increased enrollment," Duda said, and provided graphs showing a 14% increase in in-district students.

The overall budget that Pathfinder proposed will represent a 3.92% increase to

the overall budget, though only 2.23% will be municipally funded, after factoring in state aid and other local revenue sources. The proposed budget for 2026 amounts to \$17,302,239.

Duda enumerated a number of costs that schools and municipal districts alike have been facing, including contract increases, rising health insurance costs, and the cost of busing. He said that the

proposed budget does not reflect level service funding, and anticipates that some staffing cuts may have to be made to meet the budget.

"There are challenges in many of the nine towns this year that the towns are facing, either with other school districts they belong to or with other budgetary concerns," said Duda. "We're dealing with the same challenges."

## DRACULA FROM PAGE 1

"It's fun to challenge yourself and do something different," McDonald said.

Playing the mysterious Count Dracula is Jay Valencourt. Adam Baker will play the role of Jonathan Harker, the fiancé of Lucy Westfeldt. Sarah Priestley returns to the stage to play Lucy Westfeldt. Shelley Ingalls returns to play

Mina Westfeldt, Lucy's sister, and the infamous Dr. Van Helsing.

Derek Ingalls plays Dr. Wallace Westfeldt and the mysterious Renfield. The cast also features Lindsay Caouette, Greg Afton, Mara Ingalls, and Alexis Caouette.

All three shows will take place at the New Braintree Town Hall at 20 Memorial Drive. The shows will be held on Friday, March 28 at

7:30 p.m., Saturday, March 29 at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, March 30 at 2 p.m.

Tickets will be sold at the door at the Town Hall. Tickets can also be purchased online and those interested can go to [theatreguildofnorthbrookfield.com](http://theatreguildofnorthbrookfield.com) and select "buy tickets" under the Dracula show on their home page. General admission is \$15 per person, \$12 for seniors and \$12 for children under 12.

# Job Connection

## HELPING YOU FIND HELP

### The Town of West Brookfield Highway Department is seeking TWO FULL TIME OPERATOR/DRIVER/LABORERS

This position performs manual labor, operates and maintains equipment for the construction, operation and maintenance of town roads and maintains town owned facilities. Must possess current and valid Massachusetts Class B CDL license with an airbrake endorsement as well as current motor carrier medical examiners certificate (DOT card). This is a full time, 40 hour a week position that includes overtime for snow/ice removal or emergencies. Pay is commensurate with experience. Applications and a more detailed job description are available on the Town website: [www.wbrookfield.com](http://www.wbrookfield.com)

Please contact:

Jim Daley at (508) 867-1417 or email [jdaley@wbrookfield.com](mailto:jdaley@wbrookfield.com)

The Town of West Brookfield is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity at all levels of the workforce. EOE

### TOWN OF BARRE Cemetery Clerk

The Town of Barre is seeking qualified applicants for the part-time position of Cemetery Clerk. This position is approximately 10 hours per week and the minimum hourly rate is \$15.00/hour and the maximum hourly rate is \$18.02/hour. A full job description is available upon request. Applicants must have HS Diploma or GED, with a minimum of two to three years' experience in office setting, or equivalent combination of education and experience.

Interested applicants should submit a letter of interest to: Tammy Martin, Town Administrator, 40 West Street, Suite 697, Barre MA 01005 or [townadmin@townofbarre.com](mailto:townadmin@townofbarre.com). For further information, please contact the Board of Selectmen's Office at (978) 355-2504 x135. A.A. / E.O.E.

## 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.

### Town of Warren Full-Time Police Officer Vacancy

The Warren Police Department is seeking a qualified candidate to fill the vacant position of FULL-TIME POLICE OFFICER. The Warren Police Department is a non-civil service department that is seeking individuals who are motivated, proactive and community oriented. All candidates must be at least 21 years of age, be a U.S. Citizen, have a minimum of a high school diploma, possess a valid driver's license, and currently have, or have the ability to obtain a Class A license to carry firearms in the state of Massachusetts. Candidates must have successfully completed a Massachusetts full-time police academy or the equivalent to be considered for the position.

All applicants who move forward in the hiring process will be subject to a background investigation as well as a medical, physical, and psychological examination. All candidates will also be required to meet all requirements set forth by the Peace Officer and Standards Commission (POST). It is preferred that applicants currently hold an unrestricted certification from POST at the time of applying.

The Town of Warren currently offers full-time employees of the Police Department with an education-based incentive. Officers with the Warren Police Department will be required to work a schedule consisting of four (4) consecutive days on followed by two (2) days off and will be assigned to a shift based on departmental needs. All Officers will also be eligible for vacation time, personal time and holiday pay as outlined in the union contract.

All interested applicants are asked to please submit a cover letter and resume to:

Lieutenant Kyle P. Whitcomb, 1 Milton O. Fountain Way, P.O. Box 606, Warren, MA 01083 or E-mail to [Whitcomb@warren-ma.gov](mailto:Whitcomb@warren-ma.gov)

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).

### TOWN OF WARREN Job Opening

## HIGHWAY HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR

Do you enjoy working outdoors?  
Would you like to be part of a thriving, friendly and dedicated team?

The Town of Warren Highway Department is seeking a qualified candidate for the full-time position of Driver/Laborer/Machine Operator. The Town of Warren is committed to equal opportunity, encourages diversity and inclusion, and believes that a positive culture of inclusion in Town governance contributes to the Town's overall qualities as a great place to live and work. We welcome all to apply.

Salary: Starting at \$23.28 per hour with the potential of going to \$24.78 per hour on July 1st.

Hours: M-Thurs., 6:00am – 4:00pm, - April 1 – Nov. 30  
M-F 6:00am – 2:00pm, - Dec. 1 – March 31

Overtime is required for: emergency calls and including during snow and ice storms. Required Licensing/Certification: Possession of a valid 2B Hoisting License and MA Class B CDL.

Applicants: To be considered for this vacancy, please submit a cover letter and resume by no later than **4:00 pm on Thursday April 10th, 2025**. Resumes will be accepted via email to [JeremyOlson@warren-ma.gov](mailto:JeremyOlson@warren-ma.gov), or dropped off to: Town of Warren Highway Department 87 Brimfield Rd, Warren, MA 01083 or mailed to: Warren Highway Department P.O. Box 628, Warren, MA 01083.

For a complete job description please visit the Town's website [www.warren-ma.gov](http://www.warren-ma.gov).





# Project 351 ambassadors list service sites for donation drive

Recently, five eighth graders from the Quabbin Regional School District towns were selected as ambassadors for Project 351, a nonprofit organization dedicated to community service and empowerment.

This honor allows them to play a vital role in unit-

ing their communities and spreading hope throughout the year. The ambassadors will engage in various service projects, addressing local needs and supporting those facing economic hardships.

In Massachusetts, over one in three children aged 12 and younger live in low-income

or homeless situations, highlighting the urgent need for support. The ambassadors will lead the Spring Service campaign, the first of three statewide efforts coordinated by Project 351 for this year.

This campaign aims to support Cradles to Crayons, a nonprofit that has provid-

ed essential items to more than 3.4 million children since 2002. From March 31 to April 11, the ambassadors will set up donation bins at community locations, including Quabbin Regional Middle and High School, where a friendly competition will engage students in donating.

Other participating sites include Oakham Center School, Hannaford Supermarket in North Brookfield, and Wholesome Farmers Market in Barre.

This initiative not only addresses immediate needs but also instills values of social responsibility and kindness

in young people. By rallying their peers and local businesses, the ambassadors embody the idea that every small effort can lead to significant change.

Together, they aim to ensure that every child has access to the resources they need to thrive and realize their full potential.

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