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Volume 19, Number 14

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Friday, July 31, 2026

Sunrise A Postpartum Show

Brookfield artist featured in gallery exhibition

By Paula Ouimette
Editor

pouimette@turley.com

WEST BROOKFIELD – One of the most transformative seasons of life is the shift into motherhood, which Brookfield artist Vanessa Varjian has captured in her solo show, “Sunrise – A Postpartum Show,” which opens next month at West Brookfield Art & Frame Gallery, 10 East Main St.

The reception for Varjian’s “Sunrise – A Postpartum Show” will be held on Friday, Aug. 7 from 5-7 p.m., and includes wine and cheese, fine art, friendly conversation and community. The show will be displayed at the gallery through the month of August.

Varjian is a painter who is known for her use of light and shadows to create stunning landscape scenes, many of which she paints plein air.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

This self portrait drawing will be featured in Vanessa Varjian’s exhibition, “Sunrise – A Postpartum Show” at West Brookfield Art & Frame Gallery, during the month of August. An opening reception will be held Friday, Aug. 7 from 5-7 p.m.

See **SUNRISE** PAGE 5

Select Board signs water contracts

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Staff Writer
zachf@turley.com

BROOKFIELD – The Select Board held a joint meeting with the Water Commissioners last Thursday to discuss signing contracts with East National Water LLC for operators and Rebecca Roughley for procurement.

Water Commission Chair Don Taft said he called an emergency meeting for the commission, who voted favorably on the two contracts at the July 16 joint meeting. Taft said the contract with East National Water LLC would be for two months, but will have a couple two-month extensions for a total of six months.

He said the cost per month is \$8,250, and their regular hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Taft said he does not anticipate them being there for the entirety of the regular hours. He also noted there are extra costs if there are emergencies after hours, as the LLC charges

\$80 per hour plus time and a half.

Taft said the LLC would handle repairs as a regular employee would, but they do contract out. The town has already been working with a contractor for water related services though, and the Select Board members said they were comfortable with them.

Taft also discussed how the town got to the point of needing this contract, saying the town hired a secondary operator in December 2025 who handled the system until the end of February. He said they then hired a superintendent who was taking classes for an operator in training, and received a six month certificate from the Department of Environmental Protection that was going to expire in August.

Taft said that the employee’s application as a T1 operator was denied by the DEP, and he resigned as of July 17.

He said the contract with Roughley will put

See **BROOKFIELD**
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BOS, FinCom discuss budget

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Staff Writer
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EAST BROOKFIELD –The Board of Selectmen held a joint meeting with the Finance Committee at its July 13 meeting to discuss the fiscal year 2027 budget process, along with a look ahead at what the FY 28 process may look like, including the possibility of an override.

During the meeting, Finance Committee member Mark Carpentier said there were some things overlooked or done too quickly during the FY 27 budget, including making final decisions the night of the annual town meeting. He said the town cannot afford to do that.

However, he said there

is room for improved communication, and the town accountant will be providing a detailed calendar, so the town can meet deadlines and each employee and board member can understand their responsibilities.

Carpentier also said there is a struggle to present a balanced budget within the limits of proposition 2.5 next year, which was something the Finance Committee noted at the annual town meeting.

He said there needs to be a discussion as to whether the town makes a case for an override next year, and how that process will start. He said other towns spend up to two years educating residents on why they need an override, and the con-

See **E BROOKFIELD**
PAGE 9

Road projects discussed by Select Board

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Staff Writer
zachf@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The Board of Selectmen met Monday where they discussed road projects and chapter 90 financials, including a plan to pave another stretch of North Main Street.

At the July 27 meeting, Chair Jamie Gilman said there is an application with Mass Broken Stone to continue the paving project done earlier this year, which went to Spring Street.

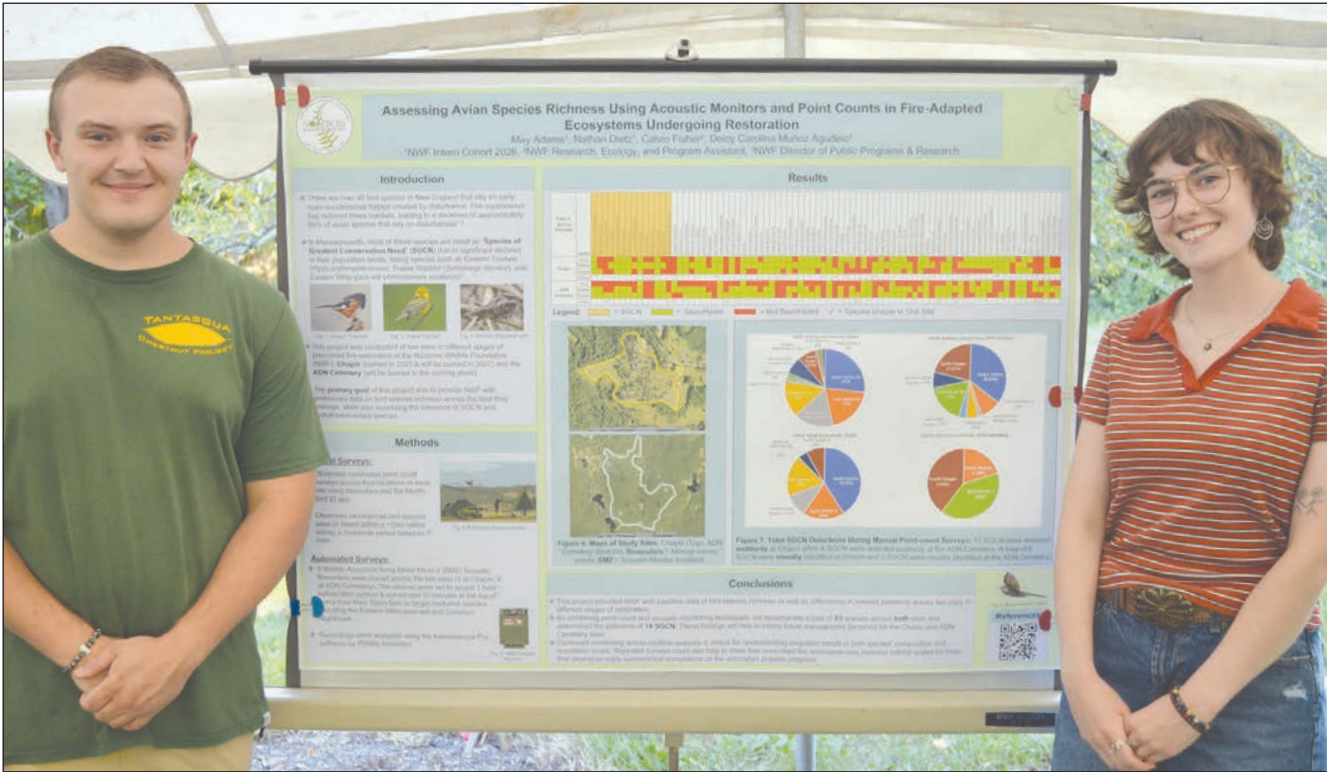
The additional paving is planned to go from Spring Street to past the intersec-

tion of Ward and Gilbert Streets. The cost was estimated to be about \$313,000, including driveway aprons, but Selectman Ralph Kay noticed there was an updated cost of about \$321,000 not including those.

The board instructed the financial team to determine which estimate is accurate, and whether there is a base cost for fuel.

Gilman also went over some unexpected balances, which include money already reimbursed from last year plus expected reimbursements that have not come in yet. The total unex-

See **N BROOKFIELD**
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Norcross Wildlife Foundation interns Nathan Dietz and May Adams presented their research.

TURLEY PHOTO BY KEVIN FLANDERS

Norcross and Opacum co-host ‘Moth Ball’

By Kevin Flanders
Staff Writer

WALES – Continuing to ramp up its offerings in community programming, Norcross Wildlife Foundation hosted an interactive event for guests of all ages last week.

In partnership with Opacum Land Trust, Norcross Wildlife Foundation held the very first Moth Ball program on July 25. Local families enjoyed several educational activities, including presentations from Norcross summer interns, craft sessions, and

special displays.

“We want to give people more opportunities to learn about the restoration work we are doing. These types of programs help connect people with nature in a meaningful way,” said Caro Munoz, the director of programs and research

at Norcross.

During the July 25 program, several interns explained their summer research projects to guests. Meanwhile, Norcross staff leaders were excited to meet people from throughout the

See **MOTH BALL**
PAGE 9

Police, Building departments present reports

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Staff Writer
zachf@turley.com

STURBRIDGE – The Police Department and Building Department presented reports to the Select Board during its July 20 meeting.

Police Chief Earl Dessert said the department

responded to 2,390 calls for service in May. He said of those calls, there were 65 arrests, six operating under the influence, two drug calls, 21 motor vehicle crashes, 203 citations and warnings issued, 546 property checks and five burglaries or larcenies.

Dessert said certain calls, such as property checks are

reduced over last year since there are two officers per vehicle this year.

Dessert also highlighted six motor vehicle crashes between the Walmart plaza and the Xtra Mart, four child seat installations, boat patrols and inspections conducted.

Dessert also said the department is currently op-

erating business as usual, noting a successful 250th celebration and public safety day at Tantasqua Regional High School.

Select Board member Mary Dowling said a resident asked why some details are performed by out of town agencies. Accord-

See **STURBRIDGE**
PAGE 8

- community -

Board of Selectmen discusses audit findings

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Staff Writer
zachf@turley.com

EAST BROOKFIELD – The Board of Selectmen discussed the findings of a fiscal year 2025 audit with town Accountant Donna Couture and town Treasurer Nicole Allen.

The board went over a concern with the audit finding the town got a failing grade on cash reconciliation.

According to Chair Andrew Lynch, the audit found there was no adequate system to track cash flow, which required the treasurer to have to recreate outstanding check listings, but in the process she excluded a warrant of over \$70,000. Lynch said the outstanding checks per treasurer were \$68,000.

Allen said that amount wasn’t actually missed, it was just not added to the correct fiscal year at the time it came out.

According to Allen, the more than \$70,000 had

been in the balance sheets since 2023, but Couture disputed that. Couture said had it been there, the auditors would have found it in the audit they did before 2025.

Couture also alleged that Allen submitted differing figures to the auditors than she reported with the state.

Board of Selectmen member Amber Kowalczyk brought up concerns that there were similar findings in an audit from 2020, and none of the solutions have been put into motion six years later. Kowalczyk said the process should be coordinated better, and the accountant and treasurer need to work better together.

Kowalczyk said the original variance on the document of \$98,000 was “mind boggling,” and if an override will be asked for, residents are going to see this information.

According to Couture, an email about that \$98,000 had been sent in January, but Allen never responded

to it. Allen said she did not know it was something that was addressed to her.

Couture said one of the consequences of the miscommunication between her and the treasurer can lead to free cash being limited. The board discussed implementing a policy to better the communication between the two departments.

Water treatment project

The board approved a change order for the West Street water treatment plant project, for well 1 redevelopment at a cost of \$41,524 and internet/phone improvements at a cost of \$18,967 for a total of \$60,491. Lynch said the total contract is now at \$8.317 million.

Lynch said there are also two paving options for the plant, with segment A going from the plant to the well including a turnaround for \$132,546 and segment B from the plant to West Street for \$178,572, and if they were combined it

would be \$301,568. He said that cost could potentially now or in the future come from chapter 90 funds.

Administrative items

Board of Selectmen member Robert Button said he reached out to Tighe and Bond to inquire about a grant application for small bridge repairs on Podunk Road. Button said they came back and told him they’d do it for free, as opposed to a recommendation last week from Water Superintendent Jake Allard to use Howard Stein Hudson for \$4,500.

The board also approved invoices from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission for \$3,150 for grant administration and \$13,412 for labor and application preparation.

The board also sent and signed a letter to the East Brookfield Baptist Church at 267 E. Main St. to express their interest in acquiring their Harrington Center property.

Registration open for Lions Club golf tournament

NORTH BROOKFIELD – Registration is now open for the 2026 Brookfields Lions Club golf tournament, according to event chair, Marc Kokansky.

The annual event is taking place on Saturday, Aug. 22 at the Quail Hollow Country Club, 1822 Old Turnpike Road, Oakham. The four-person scramble tournament begins with registration at noon, followed by a 1 p.m. shotgun start.

The entry fee is \$100 per golfer, which includes 18 holes of golf, cart, skins competition, closest-to-the-pin contests and a meal following the tournament at Quail Hollow Country Club.

Proceeds from the tournament will benefit the Brookfields Lions Club’s charitable programs and community service projects throughout the area. Through fundraising events

such as this tournament, the club supports local organizations and individuals while carrying out the Lions’ mission of serving those in need.

To register a team or obtain additional information, contact Kokansky at 508-847-9843. Registration is open now through Aug. 15.

About the Lions Club

As the world’s largest, youngest and most active service organization, the mission of Lions Clubs International is to empower volunteers to serve their communities, meet humanitarian needs, encourage peace, and promote international understanding.

Members of the Brookfields Lions Club are dedicated to service and support in the communities of Brookfield, East Brookfield, North Brookfield, West Brookfield, and New Braintree.

East Brookfield library lists upcoming events

EAST BROOKFIELD – The East Brookfield Public Library, 122 Connie Mack Drive, will host Celebrating America from the Beginning: Part 2 “World Turned Upside Down” on Monday, Aug. 10 at 5:30 p.m.

Come learn about how the National Parks played key roles in the Revolutionary War. Enter for your chance to win a book, view a musket and pick up the National Commemorative Stamp and coin that tells the history of the National Parks. Refreshments from the Revolutionary War will be served.

All ages are welcomed; however, the program should hold the interest of people from 12 and up.

Vincent Kordack is an East Brookfield resident with more than 38 years of experience as a National Park Ranger. He was assigned to 16 of the 18 National Parks that revolve around the Revolutionary War.

Magic show

Ed Popielarczyk will perform a magic show on Thursday, Aug. 13 at 10:30 a.m.

All ages are welcome to attend, come see Ed do magic tricks and create his balloon art.

Ed also has a flea circus to show you. Ed has been doing magic shows for nearly 35 years. Come to the library and enjoy the show.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Blind Tiger Swing Posse will perform on Sunday, Aug. 2 from 2-5 p.m. as part of the Spencer Parks & Recreation Commission’s 2026 Summer Concert Series.

Blind Tiger Swing Posse performs Aug. 2

SPENCER – The Spencer Parks & Recreation Commission’s 2026 Summer Concert Series continues from 2-5 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 2 at Powder Mill Park, corner Smithville and Meadow Roads, with Blind Tiger Swing Posse.

Blind Tiger Swing Posse is seven pieces of hard-driving swing and

rock made up of some of New England’s most seasoned professionals.

Band members include Doug Moore on vocals and lead guitar, Pete Levesque on saxophone, William Fanning on trumpet, Jeff Galindo on trombone, Jim Heffernan on piano, Joe D’Angelo on bass guitar and Billy MacGilvray

on drums. Each musician brings their unique skill set that delivers a timeless mix of jazz, blues, swing, pop, soul and rock.

Next up in this series that runs through Aug. 23 will be Gold Dust Refugees on Aug. 9.

The concert series is proudly sponsored by Cornerstone Bank.

Summer concerts continue on Thursdays

EAST BROOKFIELD – The East Brookfield Bandstand Committee is once again bringing live music to Connie Mack Field this summer with free Thursday evening concerts celebrating local talent, classic rock, and community traditions.

Organized entirely by volunteers, the committee relies on sponsorships, food sales and donations to make the annual series possible.

This year’s lineup features a variety of musical styles, including Beatles tribute 4Ever Fab (Aug. 6), the rotating ensemble ‘Dentity Crisis’ (Aug. 13) and the Brookfield-based rock trio Moonlight Saints closing the season on Aug. 20. Highlights include ‘Dentity Crisis’s special performance celebrating the 45th anniversary of The Rolling Stones’ rehearsals at Long View Farm in neighboring North Brookfield, as well as the farm’s connections to The J. Geils Band and Aerosmith..

The East Brookfield Summer Concert Series continues to provide an opportunity for neighbors and visitors alike to gather, enjoy live music and celebrate the community. All are welcome to attend.



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- community -

Lake Wickaboag to get herbicide treatment

WEST BROOKFIELD – The Lake Wickaboag Preservation Association has announced that on Monday, Aug. 10, Lake Wickaboag will receive a spot herbicide treatment for selected nuisance aquatic vegetation.

An algacide application to treat for algae may also occur on that day. This treatment is being conducted pursuant to Massachusetts MassDEP WM-04 permit.

SOLitude Lake Management, the contractor hired by the LWPA to apply the herbicide and algacide, has requested that the use of the lake be temporarily restricted as follows: Swimming, fishing and boating for one day, Aug. 10; livestock watering for two days, Aug. 10 and 11; direct drinking for four days, Aug. 10, 11, 12 and 13; and irrigation for six days, Aug. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15.

The LWPA will notify boaters and swimmers by placing signs on streets leading to the lake and by placing red flag buoys on the lake, indicating that the lake is closed. As part of their education program, they will also send a reminder to residents by email and post on their Facebook page before the application begins.

If you need additional information, please feel free to contact SOLitude Lake Management, at 508-865-1000 or email LWPA at lwpa01585@gmail.com.

Sons of A.L. host scholarship golf tournament

WEST BROOKFIELD – Sons of the American Legion, Post 244, West Brookfield is hosting its 21st Annual “Scholarship Scramble” Golf Tournament on Saturday, Aug. 8 at Quail Hollow Country Club in Oakham.

The 18-hole tournament will have a 8 a.m. shotgun start. Chicken dinner, raffles and prizes to follow at the Legion Post 244 in West Brookfield.

The registration fee is \$120 per person and must be received by Aug. 1. To register, contact Kevin at 774-230-3262 or Gary at 508-450-8643.

Vendors wanted for Flea Market on the common

WEST BROOKFIELD – The First Congregational Church of West Brookfield, UCC, 36 North Main St., has been hosting their Flea Market on the town common for more than 50 years.

This year the Flea Market will be held on Saturday, Sept. 12 from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. (vendor check-in 6:30-8:30 a.m.). Sellers of all kinds are welcome – flea folk, antique dealers, crafters, product vendors and those emptying out basements and attics.

No food vendors, please.

Spaces are available for \$40 for a 20 x 20 grassy spot.

BROOKFIELD FROM PAGE 1

services out to bid, which is a contract not to exceed \$3,000.

The Select Board authorized both contracts.

Sidewalk ramps

John O’Leary, a representative with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission along with a representative from Weston and Sampson presented the final plans for sidewalk improvements throughout town.

The representative from Weston and Sampson said there are about 30 throughout town, which are mainly focused on installing truncated domes for accessibility. He said there are three alternate locations that may require road reconstruction.

He also said the request would be to close the roads the work is being done on, since they are quick projects.

O’Leary said this is from a 2022-2023 Community Development Block Grant that was for \$1.2 million,

of which there is still about \$210,000 for the sidewalks. He said the rest of it was used for infrastructure improvements on Kimball Street, which is substantially complete.

Assessor appointment

The Select Board also had a joint meeting with the Board of Assessors, as both Chaffee and member Beth Coughlin also serve on that board. The boards both approved the appointment of Eric Nugent as an Assistant Assessor.

Nugent introduced himself, saying he has a bachelor’s degree in emergency management along with a

master’s in public administration.

Town Administrator Blythe Robinson said she interviewed him and determined him to be a good fit.

Administrative items

The board approved change orders for the culvert project on Rice Corner Cross Road. Robinson said this is because there have been delays in getting the actual culvert.

The board also ratified year end transfer request signatures for transfers from the town hall improvements line item to tax title, and from the veterans’ case work line item to electricity.

Library lists upcoming family programs

WEST BROOKFIELD – The Merriam-Gilbert Library, 3 West Main St., will be hosting two family friendly programs in August.

These programs are funded by a grant from the West Brookfield Cultural Council, a local agency, which is supported by Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

At 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 4, the library welcomes the Springfield Symphony Orchestra’s Musical Petting Zoo. An assortment of instruments will be presented. Participants will then be encouraged to pick up and play the instrument(s) of their choice and make some music.

On Thursday, Aug. 13 at 4 p.m., the Riverside Reptile Education Center, a non-profit Conservation and Education Reptile Rescue, will present their “Living Dragons” program. Come meet these fascinating lizards in a hands-on educational experience.

Registration is required. Please call 508-867-1410 or stop by the library to reserve your spot.

Town Clerk lists Special Election information

WEST BROOKFIELD – Town Clerk, Klarissa Rose, announced that nomination papers are now available for the upcoming Special Town Election to be held on Sept. 1.

These papers must be filed with the Board of Registrars, in the Town Clerk’s office, for certification on or before July 28 at 5 p.m. Final day to withdraw as a candidate is July 30 at 5 p.m.

Appearing on the ballot will be the following: Select Board member, two-year term.

Last day to register to vote before the Special Town Election is Friday, Aug. 21 from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Town Clerk’s office at 2 East Main St.

Family fun at St. Aloysius Parish BBQ on Aug. 2

HARDWICK – St. Aloysius Parish invites families from across the area to its Summer BBQ on Sunday, Aug. 2 with dinner served noon-1 p.m. at the South Barre Rod and Gun Club, 2626 Barre Road.

The afternoon is planned with every age in mind, from grandparents to grandchildren.

The meal is a half chicken dinner served with baked potato, corn on the cob, salad and watermelon. Children and adults alike can join in the games, and raffles and prizes will run throughout the afternoon.

Tickets are \$20 each and are available by calling the rectory at 413-477-6493. This is a fundraiser to benefit the Parish Renovation Funds.

All are welcome to join in the fun.

About St. Aloysius Parish

St. Aloysius Parish serves the villages of Gilbertville and Wheelwright, from two worship sites, St. Aloysius Church (64 Church St., Gilbertville) and St. Augustine Mission (98 Church Lane, Wheelwright).

A parish of the Diocese of Worcester, it is home to St. Aloysius Catholic School and is served in collaboration with St. Francis of Assisi Parish in South Barre. Learn more at stalloysiusstaugustine.com.

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Tryout # 1: Friday, July 31, 2026

Location: Oxford High School
100 Carbuncle Dr., Oxford, MA

- Boys & Girls Grades 4th-6th 5:15 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
(3rd grade can try out with 4th grade)
- Boys & Girls Grades 7th & 8th 6:30 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.
- Boys & Girls Grades 9th-12th 7:45 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Tryout # 2: Thursday, August 6, 2026

Location: North Brookfield High School
10 New School Dr., North Brookfield, MA

- Boys & Girls Grades 4th-6th 5:15 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
(3rd grade can try out with 4th grade)
- Boys & Girls Grades 7th & 8th 6:30 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.
- Boys & Girls Grades 9th-12th 7:45 p.m. - 8 p.m.

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in the

Garden

by Roberta McQuaid

The joys of harvest season

It's been a fun week in the garden! I love it when the harvest starts to roll in.

This week I picked broccoli, kale, green beans and zucchini. I also replanted a few crops in hopes of a second harvest prior to the first frost.

Read on to hear about my adventures.

You may remember my column from a few weeks back, where I was having a hard time getting “into it” this year. I guess like building any relationship, the more time you spend, the more time you may want to spend as things start to progress and go well.

Anyway, I am happy with my garden again and it feels good to spend time out there. Back to the harvest.

I enjoy harvesting broccoli. It's always fun to see just how big you can get the heads to grow before they want to flower.

The first one I cut was maybe six inches in diameter. Not bad, but the second one was closer to nine inches.

More heads will be ready in the coming weeks. After that I will be harvesting side shoots.

This year, cabbage moths were kept at bay by using a tightly woven bug netting draped over the plants and supported by wire hoops and secured at the base by old wooden planks or stones. So far so good; no worms of any kind in the water left over after steaming.

Kale is broccoli's cousin and is subject to the same pests. Because of that I also grow it under the netting.

I've been harvesting the kale for well over a month and we already have several bags of it in the freezer. I am starting to rethink my use of plastic baggies, but for now the leaves are washed, patted dry then ripped into pieces and stuffed into baggies pushing out as much air as possible. When my husband makes his vegetable juices and stews, all he does is empty the contents into his creation.

I noticed that the older leaves of the kale were starting to have a yellow cast, so I got out the organic granular fertilizer and gave the plants a sprinkle and a good watering. Hopefully that will reinvigorate the plants for picking well into the fall.

My bush bean seeds got planted late; well after Memorial Day. The harvest is just starting. I will be sure to pick often to keep the plants producing.

I have been saving my own bean seeds for a few years now. It's easy, just harvest the dry pods of “the ones that got away.” Make sure they are crispy dry.

Break open the seed pods and store the seeds with a packet of desiccant (usually in a bottle of vitamins or with leather shoes) in a jar. If you are growing open pollinated or heirloom, non-hybrid varieties you will reliably get the same variety back again. They don't cross pollinate with neighbor beans.

This week I was happy to harvest four zucchinis with more coming. It's funny that already I see freebies at the end of driveways on my commute. I truly hope I have an abundance.

To avoid “boat-sized” squash, pick them small, say six to eight inches long. The seed cavity won't be too big that way and you will encourage the plant to keep producing.

No doubt the vine borer will do in my early sowing soon enough, but never fear, I have sown additional seeds under cover to hopefully have a later harvest once this one expires. I try and keep them covered until the plants bloom, at which time the cover needs to be removed so that the flowers can be pollinated and fruit can form.

I hope you are enjoying the start of the harvest season as much as I am.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 34 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.

- opinion -

- letter to editor -

Second Chance thanks golf tournament supporters

To the Editor:

On behalf of everyone at Second Chance Animal Services, I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the many golfers, volunteers, donors, sponsors, and community members who made our 14th Annual Charity Golf Tournament such a tremendous success.

When a community comes together, amazing things happen for pets in need. The funds raised will help provide affordable veterinary care through our Community Veterinary Hospitals, ensuring more pets receive the medical care they need while staying with the families who love them.

We are especially grateful to our generous sponsors whose support helped make this event possible.

Our sincere thanks to Tito's Handmade Vodka, Teddy Bear Pools & Spas, The Republican, and Herlihy Insurance Group for their leadership support. We also thank Cornerstone, Embie Industries, IDEXX, Southbridge Credit Union, and SEM (Security Engineered Machinery) for their valued partnership.

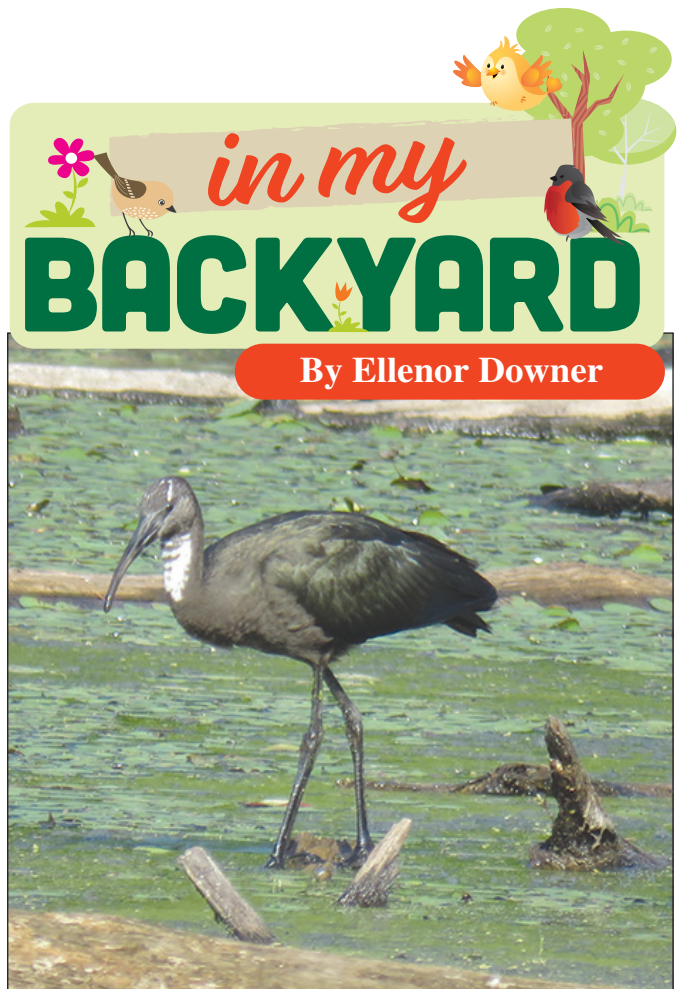
We're equally grateful to the businesses and individuals who donated auction and raffle items, the volunteers who gave their time, Cold Spring Country Club for hosting another outstanding tournament,

and everyone who chose to spend the day supporting our mission.

Together, you are helping ensure that families facing financial challenges can still access quality veterinary care for their beloved pets. Your generosity truly makes a difference, and we are honored to have such compassionate supporters standing beside us.

Thank you for helping pets receive the second chance they deserve.

Sincerely,
Lindsay Doray
Chief Development Officer
Second Chance Animal Services



Juvenile glossy ibis.

PHOTO BY DOUG MOORE

A Belchertown resident shared this photo of a glossy ibis he took at Lake Wallace.

The glossy ibis is a medium-sized wading bird, 18.9 to 26 inches long, with compact body, long neck, long legs and long, curved bill.

The plumage appears dark, almost blackish, at a distance or in poor light. Up close, the body is maroon with wing coverts showing a metallic green, bronze and violet tones.

Juveniles are a duller brown color with some white streaking on their neck

Glossy Ibis occur in flocks, both at nesting colonies and when foraging. They typically feed by lowering the bill into water, mud or soil, to feel for prey.

In addition to consuming animal matter, plants may constitute a major portion of their diet during some seasons.

They frequent almost any wetland environment with shallow water or exposed mud and also readily feed in farm fields or open areas where soils are moist.

They inhabit shallow freshwater wetlands as well as brackish and saltwater wetlands, mangroves, and rice fields. Over much of its range,

When flying, the glossy ibis has its neck stretched forward and legs straight behind it. The glossy ibis does not call often, but may make murmuring sounds while foraging.

During the breeding season, glossy ibises will court one another by preening and touching bills. Males

and females will work together to build a large nest.

Nesting in tight colonies, glossy ibis nests are often no more than 2 feet away from each other. The female will lay three to four eggs and incubate them for 20-22 days.

Glossy ibises can be found across the globe. Their range has greatly expanded in the 20th century in North America.

This species has gone from a rare and local Florida species to regularly breeding as far north as Maine and occasionally along the east coast of Canada. The first Massachusetts nests were found at coastal sites in 1974.

The oldest recorded glossy ibis was at least 21 years old and lived in Virginia between 1971 and 1992.

Sutton birds

Recently, my brother and sister-in-law hosted a pool party. My brother, Ted, puts out grape jelly for the Baltimore orioles and a nectar feeder for the ruby-throated hummingbirds on his deck.

Birds included male and female ruby-throated hummingbirds for the nectar feeder. Baltimore orioles, red-bellied woodpecker, downy woodpecker and a scarlet tanager came to the deck.

They also have a pond that abuts their backyard. They have a pair of mute swans on the pond. They raised a family for several years in a row.

Great blue heron

I often see a great blue heron wading in Long Pond in Rutland. Every time I drive along Route 122 by the pond, I look for the heron.

People may report a bird sighting by emailing edowner@turley.com or calling or texting 774-262-5882.

QUABOAG CURRENT

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- community -



This painting captured a scene in artist Vanessa Varjian's living room.



Brookfield artist Vanessa Varjian painted a series featuring a blue spruce in her front yard.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

SUNRISE
FROM PAGE 1

Since the arrival of her son, Hieronymus, Varjian has shifted her focus from finding the best light and shadows for her paintings, to finding the best time to create them around caring for a young child.

"I would say it has forced me to work much quicker than I am used to and would in the past. You're just forced to make decisions," she said of motherhood. "I used to just paint on a whim...when I was feeling a creative push or the light looked nice. I had so much free time before, which I didn't appreciate until I had my son."

For Varjian, the best time to paint during her son's newborn stage was sunrise, but as he nears his first birthday (which is two days after the show's opening reception), that time has changed.

Varjian said adjusting her creative time around her son's sleep schedule has made her a more efficient artist, and pushed her to plan more. It also caused her to work with what she has in front of her; even if it's just the blue spruce in her front yard or the lighting isn't perfect.

She paints "no matter what the light looks like or what I'm feeling like...because it's the chunk of time I have," she said.

She said it has "made me really appreciative of the long naps and the moments that I do get" and the times when "everything aligns."

Varjian said she is grateful to be able to stay home with her son, and watch him grow and change every day.

"He won't be little like this forever," Varjian said. "It's the season of life I'm in right now."

While the location and timing of her paintings has changed since motherhood, many of her subjects remain



"Sunrise – A Postpartum Show" features subjects captured in different lights.

the same, including the trees around her house. Varjian also featured these trees a couple of years ago in a prior show at West Brookfield Art & Frame Gallery, alongside fellow artist Joanne Talbot Quinn.

She said she paints the same subjects as before, "just a little more abbreviated."

"Two years prior...I was painting the same subjects, the trees around my house, but I could choose my favorite moments of day, the 'golden hour,' the sunrise," she said. "I'm painting the same subjects and the same trees, but I'm painting them middle of the day. The light that I wouldn't choose typically."

Varjian said her focus on a particular tree in her yard reminded her of Monet's haystacks series of paintings, which feature the same subject, but throughout different seasons and times of day.

"I'm like, 'am I really going to paint the same spruce again?' and I think of how

beautiful [Monet's] haystacks were," she said.

Varjian said she was able to enjoy a lot of time painting over the winter, when snow storms blanketed the region and brought life to a brief standstill.

One painting created during late January snowstorms, showcased the blue spruce in her front yard.

"It was sunrise, the snow was covering the trees and the ground; and the way I was able to capture the light, I was excited about," Varjian said.

Varjian said some paintings she struggles through to create, or doesn't like them when they are finished. She wonders if she should show them, or throw them out, but this painting was not one of them.

"This one just came together. It has moments in it that look like watercolor. It basically encompasses everything I attempt to do in a painting. It just kind of flowed out of me," she said.

Varjian has also spent the past year getting back into

drawing, and she will feature a self portrait in the show of a tender moment following the birth of her son. She is working on building up a collection of portraits of mothers and their babies.

Motherhood, she said, is "so special and you don't understand until you go through it."

Varjian will showcase about a dozen works of art in "Sunrise – A Postpartum Show" that can be viewed at the opening reception on Aug. 7, and during gallery hours.

Upcoming events
at the gallery

Upcoming shows at the gallery include "Avian Obsession" featuring guest artist Evan Lipton. An opening reception will be held Friday, Sept. 4 from 5-7 p.m.

A fine art benefit auction will be held on Friday, Oct. 2 from 5-7 p.m. with proceeds going to the Sharing Cupboard food bank in West Brookfield. Artists will be donating their works for a silent auction.

A special "The State of our Union" show will be held and is open to anyone. An opening reception will be held on Friday, Nov. 6 from 5-7 p.m.

The public is encouraged to submit a piece of work. All entries will be hung unless they are inappropriate for children.

Artwork must meet the following requirements: the theme of the art is "The State of our Union;" the format is six inches by six inches; and the artwork must be mailed to West Brookfield Art & Frame Gallery, P.O. Box 102, West Brookfield, MA 01585 or dropped off at the gallery during open hours before Oct. 30.

Artists can use any medium of their choosing.

Gallery owner Rebecca Fay said, "You don't have to be an 'artist' or an adult to participate, and it doesn't matter what you like or don't like. All work submitted will be respected."

The "Tiny Works Holiday Group Show" will close out the year with a reception on Friday, Dec. 4 from 5-7 p.m. This annual show features small works by gallery



This is a painting of a rose in a jar of water.

artists just in time for the holiday gift giving season.

About the gallery

For more information and a complete listing of gallery happenings, call the gallery at 508-753-8604, email yafacceber@hotmail.com, visit westbrookfieldartandframe.com or stop by the gallery during open hours, Thursday and Friday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.



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- community -

Reinstein shares historic stories for the 250th

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

STURBRIDGE – As part of celebrating the 250th anniversary of the U.S., the Sturbridge Senior Center welcomed journalist and author Ted Reinstein.

For nearly 30 years, Reinstein has been reporting around New England and is a Chronicle Reporter for WCVB-TV, Channel 5. His presentation, “Greetings from Breed’s Hill,” was developed specifically for the nation’s sesquicentennial.

This was a return visit to town for Reinstein, who has given presentations at the Senior Center in prior visits. These stories Reinstein shared were intriguing and many included some memorable laughs.

The presentation began with the “first steps” from the years 1770 to 1775. The British occupied Boston in 1768, but what people tend to forget is there were other major cities throughout the U.S., which were colonies at the time.

Other cities include New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Trenton and many others.

The main question was why Great Britain chose Boston to occupy the most. According to Reinstein, Boston was further along in organizing and advocating for independence.

As Reinstein puts it, “Boston had the biggest mouth.”

This was not ideal for the British to have any of their colonies eradicate themselves from British rule. Reinstein would go into detail on who was the “biggest mouth” in Boston.

One notable advocate for independence in Boston was Samuel Adams (1722-1803), who was the most wanted man in the colonies. Adams was one of the founders of the Sons of Liberty, who attended Harvard at age 14, and was once the Governor of Massachusetts.

Adams was also part of the most famous family in Boston at the time. There was John Admas, Abigail Adams and John Quincy Adams.

On the familiar beer label, Samuel Adams, it says “Brewer, Patriot,” which are both true when it comes to the actual Samuel Adams. His father was a brewer who had a brewery in Boston and Sam worked at

the brewery.

Samuel Adams and John Adams were second cousins, and both had the determination to advocate for independence, despite the risks that need to be taken. John was more of the brains of the pair and Samuel had the biggest passion.

According to Reinstein, you need both passion and intellect to declare independence.

Reinstein shared pictures of some of the historical locations in Boston that are still present over 250 years later. The Green Dragon Tavern was founded in 1774 and is still operating on Marshall Street in Boston.

This historic tavern, the oldest still operating, was the home of the Sons of Liberty and is where the Boston Tea Party was planned. Across the street is the Bell in Hand Tavern, which is the second oldest tavern still operating.

Reinstein also talked about the Granary Burying Ground, the oldest burial ground in Boston. Samuel Adams and Paul Revere (1735-1818) are buried at this historic cemetery.

Revere was described as “a man who wore a lot of hats.” He is most known for being an express rider, but he has done so much throughout his life.

He was also the father of 16 children.

Revere’s house is a wooden structured building in Boston that tourists can see today. Before his historic midnight ride, Revere got some attention regarding a printed image that described the incident of the Boston Massacre on March 5, 1770.

This image was not originally engraved by Revere, but he still made copies and published the work as his own. The original creator, Henry Pelham, was furious about Revere’s actions and wrote an angry letter to Revere, but he did not sue him.

Reinstein would then talk about the night of April 18, 1775, which was a time Revere used as an opportunity to redeem himself.

There were two main reasons why the British were going to the towns of Lexington and Concord. Their priorities included seizing weapons that belonged to the militia, and to capture Patriot leaders Samuel Adams and John Hancock.

If the British were to get Adams and Hancock in Lexington, they would’ve had them arrested and most likely executed for treason against the British crown. The purpose of the midnight ride was to go warn them that the British were on their way.

Revere’s ride was iconic, but there were other riders who participated. There was William Dawes and Dr. Samuel Prescott. One hidden fact about Prescott was that he was the backup rider and he wasn’t even home where people originally thought he was supposed to be when the midnight ride was happening.

Despite being captured, Revere and the midnight ride got the message delivered which would then ignite the start of the American Revolution. Revere actually filed an expense report for being in the midnight ride.

“The ride was not free,” Reinstein said, in Revere’s point of view.

This expense report is part of the Massachusetts State Archives and calculates to be around \$2,200 in today’s money.

Reinstein talked about the “battle after the battle” between the towns of Lexington and Concord.

The two towns, that were part of the first battle of the American Revolution, are still feuding about what the battle meant that day of April 19, 1775, and what town was the “rightful birthplace of American Liberty.”

Reinstein said both towns make compelling arguments, however, the town that ultimately left with the win was the neighboring town of Sudbury, because it received the patriotic ZIP code of 01776.

Reinstein shared the back story of Bunker Hill and Breed’s Hill. The colonial militia were on a mission in Charlestown to figure out a way to threaten and sink the British ships that were currently occupying the Boston Harbor.

Originally planned to set a fortification on Bunker’s Hill, a higher hill, someone came up with the “bright” idea to move to the smaller Breed’s Hill due to the fact they could see the British ships a lot better.

Therefore, the fortification was set at Breed’s Hill prior to the battle that was misnamed immediately back in 1775. The misnaming started with Abigail

Adams and her son John Quincy Adams observing the battle from their home across Boston Harbor.

Abigail would send a letter with “Bunker Hill” written to her husband, John Adams, who was in Philadelphia serving as a delegate for Massachusetts in the Second Continental Congress. This letter’s message would be carried throughout all 13 colonies.

Because of this misnaming of a battle, Bunker Hill received national attention with Breed’s Hill almost left in its shadow. Examples of Bunker Hill branding shared by Reinstein included Bunker Hill Community College in Boston, and even a chili sauce brand.

In the early decades of the 20th century, state legislature managed to put up a plaque on Breed’s Hill, which recognizes the location as the site for the battle that happened on June 17, 1775. When Reinstein shared a picture of the plaque, it includes a written sentence that reads, “Site of the Battle of Bunker Hill,” an additional indication that this misnamed battle has overshadowed a key location during the early days of the American Revolution.

Reinstein talked about meeting Jed Breed back in 2014, who wanted to gain new and updated research on the historic battle. The two met again in 2025 at Breed’s Hill and learned of two members of the Breed family who fought in the battle back in 1775.

Reinstein said Breed is dedicated to educating people about the historic battle if it comes up in conversation.

In his presentation, Reinstein also wanted to highlight the heroines of the American Revolution. Margaret Corbin, who was at Fort Washington in New York, took over her husband’s cannon during the battle, and is recognized as a war hero.

Many of these stories were collected by Reinstein while he was reporting throughout New England.

Reinstein is the author of five books, with a sixth on its way. His books include “Wicked Pissed: New England’s Most Famous Feuds”, “Before Brooklyn”, “Travels Through the Heart and Soul of New England”, and “New England’s General Stores: Exploring an American Classic”.

Go/Baduk club kicks off at library on Aug. 11

WEST BROOKFIELD – All are welcome to check out the West Brookfield Go Club, held at the Merriam-Gilbert Public Library, 3 West Main St., on Tuesdays, Aug. 11 and 25 from 5-8 p.m. on the second floor.

Go (also known as Baduk or Weiqi) is a 4,000-year-old board game of strategy, capture and territory. It is simpler to learn than chess, yet offers endless possibilities.

The West Brookfield Go Club is a relaxed, friendly space dedicated to playing, teaching and sharing the love of this ancient game

right here in the Quaboag Valley.

All boards, stones and learning materials are provided.

All of the club’s calendar details, meeting reminders and event RSVPs are coordinated through its official Facebook group, “West Brookfield Go Club.” RSVPing helps club coordinators set up enough tables ahead of time.

Go can be played by children, teens, adults and seniors alike. Minors should be accompanied by an adult.

Country Bank announced new chair and vice chair of board

WARE – Country Bank announced the appointments of Ted Noonan, President of Noonan Energy, as Chairman of the Board, and Steve Musso, former COO of FinPro, as Vice Chair of the Board.



Ted Noonan

Both appointments reflect the bank’s continued commitment to strong governance, strategic leadership, and long-term stability.



Steve Musso

Noonan succeeds James Phaneuf, who has served as Chairman of the Board for the past four years. Phaneuf will continue serving on the board, providing valuable institutional knowledge and ongoing leadership support.

“Ted’s appointment as Chairman brings thoughtful, steady leadership at a time when community banking continues to evolve,” said Mary McGovern, President and CEO of Country Bank. “His experience and deep understanding of our mission position him well to guide the board as we continue to focus on growth and on delivering on our strategic plan.”

As Vice Chair, Musso will support the board’s leadership and governance, leveraging his experience and perspective to advance the bank’s strategic priorities. “Steve’s collaborative leadership style and industry knowledge make him an excellent choice for Vice Chair,” said Phaneuf. “Together, Ted and Steve will help ensure continuity, strong oversight, and alignment with our long-term vision. I am confident these two appointments will strengthen the Board and the Bank for years to come.”

The board also recognized Phaneuf for his 29 years of leadership and

service on the Board, including four years as Chairman, and noted his role in guiding the bank through a period of change, growth, stability, and strategic focus.

“Jim’s leadership has been instrumental in strengthening the bank’s foundation,” said McGovern. “We are grateful that he will continue to serve on the board and share his experience as we move forward.”

These leadership appointments underscore Country Bank’s commitment to sound governance and to being Made to Make a Difference for its customers, communities, and stakeholders.

About Country Bank

Established in 1850, Country Bank has a rich history of supporting personal and business banking customers through financial solutions with FDIC and DIF insurance for added security.

Country Bank is a full-service \$2 billion mutual community bank serving Central and Western Massachusetts with 15 banking centers and two business offices in Ware, Palmer, West Brookfield, Brimfield, Belchertown, Wilbraham, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Leicester, Paxton, Charlton, Springfield, Uxbridge and Worcester.

With a commitment to personalized service and community involvement, Country Bank offers individuals, businesses, and municipalities a comprehensive range of banking products and services. Country Bank is a member of FDIC, DIF, and the SUM network.

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SPORTS

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Quabbin Area Little League competes in playoffs

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

BARRE—Nine of the 13 players on the Quabbin Area 12U Little League All-Star roster are headed for the full-size baseball diamond next spring.

Even with two losses in the state sectional tournament, Quabbin walked away with moments the players and coaches won't soon forget.

Because neither Leominster nor Athol/Orange were able to field All-Star teams, the District 3 tournament wasn't held this year. Quabbin automatically advanced into the sectional tournament for the first time as the District 3 representative.

"We didn't get to compete in the District 3 tournament, but I think we have enough talented players to win it. We've been building to get to this point during the past couple of years," said Quabbin manager Matt LaPointe. "We received our championship banner a couple of days ago. We took a team picture with the banner before tonight's game. We hosted a sectional state tournament game for the first time and I'm very proud of these kids."

Quabbin hosted Holden at Felton Field in a first round game of the double-elimination tournament



Dylan Mace makes a throw to third.

Holden, who scored four runs in the top of the first inning, celebrated a 6-0 victory.

One of Quabbin's 12-year-old players is Richie Valcourt, who was the starting pitcher against Holden.

After allowing four runs on five hits in the opening frame, the righthander only allowed two runs (one earned) on seven hits during the final six innings he was standing on the mound. He struck out two.



Richie Valcourt fires home with a pitch.

"They're just a powerhouse team and they were able to take the lead in the first inning," LaPointe said. "I thought Richie did a fantastic job of keeping them off balance after the first inning. We also made a couple of very nice plays defensively."

Following the game, Valcourt, who's been playing baseball since the third grade, talked about playing in the state sectional tournament for the first time.

"We're a very good team

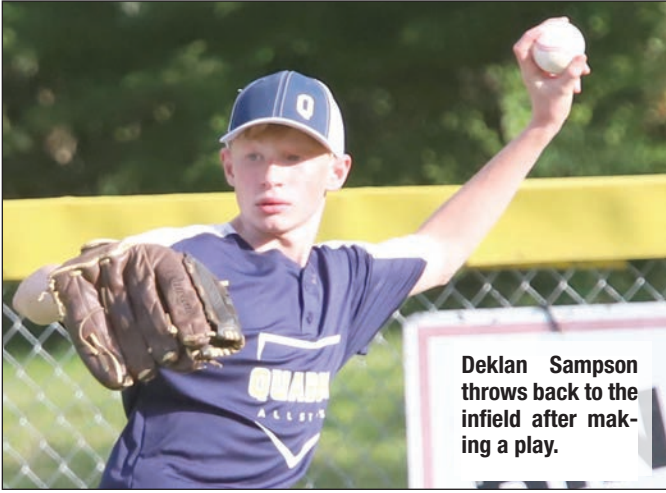
and it's very exciting playing in this tournament for the first time," he said. "I was nervous before the start of the game. I'm excited to be moving up to the bigger field next year, but it's going to be challenging."

The other 12-year-olds listed on the Quabbin All-Star roster are Clayton Cranston, Noah Currier, Lukas Lance, Michael Leslie, Dylan Mace, Hunter

See LITTLE LEAGUE
PAGE 8



Hunter Mitus fouls off a pitch.



Deklan Sampson throws back to the infield after making a play.

Blue Sox nearing end of regular season

HOLYOKE – The Valley Blue Sox went 1-for-2 in a doubleheader against the Mystic Schooners on Saturday. Entering Saturday's doubleheader against the Schooners (22-17) Valley sat at 16-18-1, sixth in the South Division and outside the playoff picture, trailing both Danbury and Bristol for one of the division's postseason spots. The Blue Sox (17-19-1) responded with a convincing 10-3 victory in Game 2 to split the twin bill and remain in the postseason hunt.

Mystic struck first in the first game and opened the inning when Bryce Detwiler lifted a sacrifice fly to right field after consecutive singles from Jack Harley and Anthony Belisario put runners on the corners.

The Schooners added another run in the fourth as Chris Walsh lined a two-out single before Adam Troch followed with an RBI double down the left-field line, giving Mystic a 2-0 advantage. Valley answered im-



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Trey Spees swings and makes contact.

mediately in the bottom half; however, Chris Cancel launched a solo home run to left field to cut the deficit in half.

Andrew Oppenheimer kept the Blue Sox within striking distance throughout his six-inning start, allowing three runs, only two

earned, while striking out four. But Mystic manufactured what proved to be the decisive run in the sixth after a hit batter, a walk and a Valley error loaded the bases. Walsh singled to center to score Detwiler and extend the lead to 3-1.

Valley mounted one final rally in the seventh. Chris Carson doubled to center before pinch-hitter Alex Hill delivered an RBI single to trim the deficit to one. With the tying run aboard, Mystic closer MJ Bollinger recorded the final two outs to preserve the 3-2 victory. Despite matching the Schooners with seven hits, the Blue Sox came up just short.

The Blue Sox wasted little time putting the loss behind them in the nightcap.

Nick Tomasetto ignited the offense with a solo home run in the first inning before Michael Iannazzo added a sacrifice fly later in the frame to give Valley a 2-0

See BLUE SOX PAGE 8



Nick Tomasetto looks to turn a double play during recent action last week at Mackenzie Stadium

Saints beat rival PeoplesBank

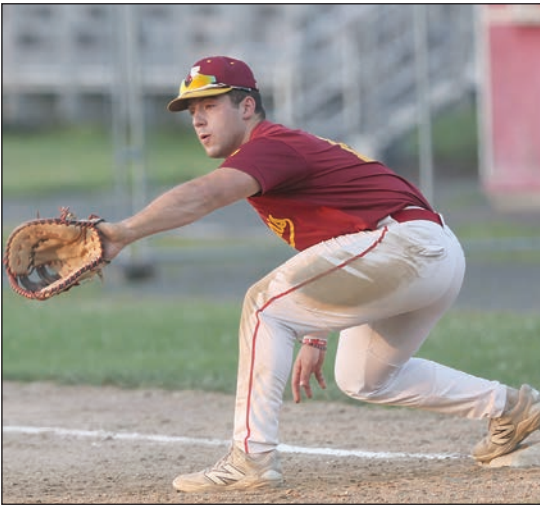
HOLYOKE – Last Thursday night, the pennant race stepped up with rivals PeoplesBank and St. Joe's matching up at Mackenzie Stadium. While PeoplesBank trailed early in the game, they nearly came all the way back, but St. Joe's prevailed 9-7. The playoffs are on the horizon in the league with St. Joe's and PeoplesBank likely drawing top seeds for the six-team playoffs.



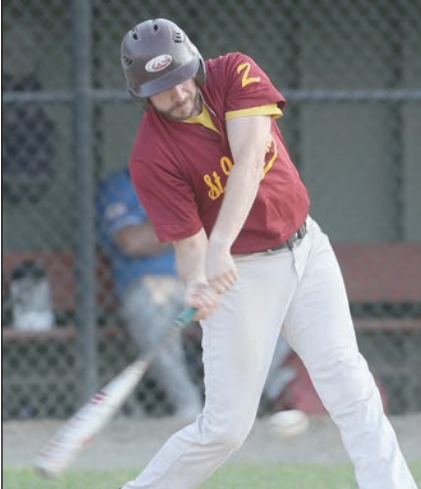
Jake Jachym fires home for the Bankers.



Tre Yesu, of Monson, fires home for St. Joe's.



Joe DeMichele makes a catch at first.



Brandon Magni swings and connects for the Saints.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Dave Clark sends a throw to first for PeoplesBank.

- community -

CASA Project Worcester County receives national grant

WORCESTER – CASA Project Worcester County has been awarded a \$33,043 grant from the National Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian ad Litem Association.

CASA recruits, trains and supports community volunteers who advocate for the best interests of children who are involved in judicial proceedings related to abuse or neglect. Volunteer advocates are trained to support children through regular visits, information gathering, court reporting, and continuous case monitoring until the child/youth has a permanent home, preferably with their family of origin whenever safely possible.

The National CASA/GAL Needs Based Grant will enable CASA Project Worcester County to focus on supporting targeted volunteer recruitment outreach efforts.

“This grant will positively impact generations within our community,” stated Julie Bowditch, Executive

Director of CASA Project Worcester County in a press release. “These vital funds provide an opportunity to expand our volunteer recruitment and retention efforts, strengthen our unique and specialized advocacy services, and advance our life changing mission throughout central Massachusetts. We are very grateful for this show of faith in our program and region through this investment by the National CASA/GAL Association.”

There are 939 CASA/GAL state organizations and local programs operating in 49 states and the District of Columbia. This funding is provided under the OJJDP FY24 Court Appointed Special Advocates Training, Technical Assistance and Subgrants Program (CFDA #16.756) to manage a national grant awards program on behalf of the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention primarily for the purpose of increasing the number CASA/GAL

volunteers to advocate for the best interest of children who have experienced abuse or neglect and are the subject of civil court child abuse and neglect proceedings. National CASA/GAL administers the grants program under a cooperative agreement with OJJDP, which is authorized pursuant to the Victims of Child Abuse Act, 34 USC §20323.

About CASA Project Worcester County is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to advocate for the best interests of abused, neglected and vulnerable children, amplify their voices in court, and support them on their paths toward a permanent home. For 45 years, the organization has been dedicated to the training and supervision of CASA volunteer advocates who play a critical role in investigating and advocating for the best interests of children in the child welfare and juvenile court systems.

For more information, visit thecasaproject.org.

STURBRIDGE FROM PAGE 1

ing to Dessert, this is because the department cannot always fill that role with their staffing.

The second report came from the building commissioner William LePage. He said there were 6,000 open permits being worked on, of which about half were closed out as of April 29, and there is a new online payment option for building related costs, which is more convenient for homeowners and contractors.

He said there is also an online portal for communication.

LePage said there were 337 permits in the months of April to June, which is consistent over last year.

He said the department has started the inspections of schools, churches and hotels early.

LePage said there are some new construction sites including 660 Main St., an eye care center on Hall Road and a dental office on 57 Main St. He said Walmart is doing an interior restoration and Stop and Shop just finished theirs and Cracker Barrel is renovating their parking lot.

Town Administrator’s report

Town Administrator Robin Grimm presented citations to members of the 250th Committee and the public who assisted with putting the celebrations on.

She also said the Sturbridge Opioid Support committee has established a \$500 essay contest open to students who have graduated high school and are moving on to college. Grimm said the prompt is about the effects of addiction, and can be either personal or a report on a book, and essays are due Aug. 20, and the top four will be decided by the committee on Aug. 31.

Grimm said there is a

non-profit called Guided Addiction Access Points, or GAAP, that is offering to do a six week trial with the town to support addiction recovery. She said it was founded by Raymond Marsh, who works for Recovery Services of America.

According to Grimm, this service would support more than just when the police are called for an overdose, but residents can call for help as well, and get placed into a treatment facility immediately.

One officer with the Sturbridge Police Department said there were 14 calls in a one month period that could have benefited from this service. Grimm said they would evaluate the need for the town based on call data, and are set to start the trial on July 31.

The last item under Grimm’s report was a discussion about a boat lift owned by James Wiseman of 12 Birch St. brought up by Cynthia Fugere of 10 Birch St. Fugere said the lift is “rather unsightly,” and is obstructing the view from her home’s windows.

Wiseman said he has lived at the property for 36 years and had a ski boat with a lift since 1991, before taking it down for a few years and getting a new one installed a week before the meeting.

Wiseman said he thinks the lift is entirely on his property, but is going to try to push it more onto his property to ease the concerns of Fugere. He said the majority of the structure is in the water, but there are some protrusions.

According to Grimm and members of the Select Board, the town does not have any regulations for boat lifts, only docks, ramps and moorings, meaning the lift is out of their purview. They also said there are many homes with boat lifts on Cedar Lake. The board

did not take action on the dispute.

Action items

The board voted to change a job title in the planning department from Administrative Assistant to Land Use and Development Coordinator. Grimm said this title more accurately reflects the work of that position.

She said the personnel committee reviewed the job description and graded it a five.

The board appointed Joan Chamberland, Tim Bardsley, Deb Morse, Beverly Spreeman, Pat Roy, Marie Dubrey, Sandra Gibson Quigley, Sharon MacDonald, Michele Moran, Susan Schwartz, Diane Trapasso, Elisa Krochmalnych, Cheryl Economous, Nancy Fors, Brian Towns and Doris Towns as election workers. The board also appointed Jeff Smith and Constantino Economous as constables for the September primary and November election.

The board voted to authorize the Select Board Vice-Chair Chase Kaitbenski to sign an agreement with Arketi Group (Sperling) LLC for digital social media marketing and promotional services for a term of Aug. 3, 2026 through July 30, 2027. The board also authorized Grimm to sign a contract for town wide paving preservation project to Sealcoating Inc. doing business as Indus as the lowest bidder for \$762,747.25.

The board authorized the establishment of a committee to evaluate landfill closure options and develop recommendations for a plan.

The board accepted the resignation of Ken Talentino from the Finance Committee effective July 20.

The Select Board will meet next on Aug. 3.

N BROOKFIELD FROM PAGE 1

pected balance for North Brookfield was at \$928,000 per the state.

According to a spreadsheet presented at the meeting, there is about \$55,000 of approved reimbursements from sources including payroll, Complete Streets, Mad Brook Road bridge and Mill Road repair estimate. The spreadsheet also shows about \$346,000 in filed reimbursements, which have not been received yet through Mass Broken Stone and Murray Paving.

There are additional earmarks totaling about \$59,000 for aprons on Brickyard and Donovan roads plus a road survey engineer. The \$313,000-\$321,000 cost will also come out of the estimated available funds left of

about \$467,000.

Financial items

The board approved three spending requests from the Highway Department including \$400 to the vendor North County Signs for lettering of a trailer, \$773 to vendor Power Wash Sales/Power America Heavy Duty Lifts for lift inspections in the highway barn and \$2,070 to vendor Axel Surgeon for spindle repairs on a 2005 International.

According to the board, the lift inspections are to allow an expert to come in and determine their safety, and if they need extensive repairs, the lifts can be scrapped.

Fire/Highway addition

The board approved an add-on to the fire and highway project of \$2,850 to vendor Anevry for network

upgrades. Gilman said they are using PCs with no backup, and this upgrade will give them a place for backup.

Donation

The board accepted a donation from Karen Farrington of two cases of coffee creamer to the senior center.

Administrative items

The board approved a special town meeting warrant of seven articles, to be held at the police station on Tuesday, Aug. 11 at 6 p.m. The board also signed the state primary warrant, with voting to be held at the Senior Center, 29 Forest St., on Tuesday, Sep. 1 from 7 a.m.-8 p.m.

The board approved the minutes of the July 10 meeting.

LITTLE LEAGUE FROM PAGE 7

Mitus, Deklan Sampson, and Mateo Serra.

The other four members of the squad were Jack Bowen Murphy LaPointe,

Jake Pimental, and Lukas Valcourt, who’s the only ten year old player listed on the roster.

Mace led off the bottom of the first inning by hitting a ground ball to Andrew Charest, who was Holden’s

starting pitcher. Mace was safe at first base with an infield hit and advanced to second base on a throwing error. Charest retired the next three batters.

With two outs in the second, Lesile also had an infield hit against right-hander Ryan Sturrock, who relieved Charest at the start of the inning.

Sturrock, who didn’t allow any runs on four hits in three innings, wound up being the winning pitcher. He also had six strikeouts.

After Holden scored a run in the third, the home team loaded the bases on singles from Lukas Valcourt, LaPointe, and Richie Valcourt with two outs in the fourth.

Sturrock escaped the jam without allowing any runs following a flyball out.

It was Quabbin’s best scoring chance.

Their only other base hit was a single by Pimental in the fifth inning.



Jake Pimental hustles for first base after making contact.

BLUE SOX FROM PAGE 7

lead. Tomasetto drove in another run with an RBI single in the second, and after Mystic answered with one of its own, Valley broke the game open in the third.

Nick Spaventa blasted a solo home run to center before Chris Carson added an RBI single. A wild pitch later scored Michael Iannazzo to cap a three-run inning and extend the Blue Sox’s lead to 6-1. Valley continued to add insurance the rest of the way, highlighted by Tomasetto’s two-run single in

the fifth, an RBI single from Iannazzo in the sixth and Nico Soul’s sacrifice fly in the seventh. The Blue Sox finished with 10 runs on 14 hits.

Earlier, Carson was named an NECBL All-Star, and the outfielder backed up the honor with another productive performance. Carson finished the doubleheader 3-for-7 with a double, an RBI and two runs scored, helping pace a Valley lineup that received contributions throughout the order. Tomasetto led the way by going 3-for-5 with a home run and four RBIs,

while Iannazzo collected two hits and two RBIs. Spaventa also homered as the Blue Sox salvaged the split.

Four Valley pitchers combined to secure the Game 2 victory. Lukas Jachens started before Niall Todd earned the win with two scoreless innings in relief. Jon Shields and Jason Pinsonnault closed out the final three innings as the Blue Sox improved to 17-19-1, keeping themselves alive in the NECBL playoff race entering the final week of the regular season.

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CLUES ACROSS

- Egyptian bull god
- Romanian monetary unit
- Santa’s helper
- Fictional Pink Floyd corporal
- Sea eagle genus
- Broad volcanic crater
- Minneapolis suburb
- Actual commercial worth (abbr.)
- Exchange rate
- Ethnic peoples in Guinea
- Men’s fashion accessory
- Craft material
- Offerings
- Early
- Large room
- Soviet Socialist Republic

CLUES DOWN

- Bridge building degree
- Expression of sorrow or pity
- Large, stocky, lizard
- Rumanian river
- Missive
- Stout-bodied moths
- Brings out
- Bird of prey
- King of Thebes
- Cleaving tool
- African antelope
- Three are particularly famous
- Satisfy
- C. European river
- Dictator
- Portion of (abbr.)
- The 17th letter of the Greek alphabet
- Consume food
- Woman (French)

- Scrape or wear away by friction
- Popular vegetable
- Pacific Standard Time
- Brazilian state capital
- Paddle
- Cause to become insane
- Drier and flakier
- Mimic
- ESPN host Kimes
- Cause to become
- insane
- Drier and flakier
- Sanctuary in Orthodox churches
- Swiss river
- Grayish white
- Engrave
- UNC’s chief rival
- Midway between south and southeast

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- public notices -

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – HIGHWAY DIVISION
NOTICE OF A VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING
Sturbridge-Charlton-East Brookfield Intersection Improvements on Route 49 at Putnam Road, Walker Pond Road & Route 20
Project File No. 611967

A Virtual Design Public Hearing will be hosted on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed project in Sturbridge and Charlton, MA.

WHEN: 7:00 pm, Wednesday, August 12, 2026

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed project. All views and comments submitted in response to the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The proposed project was initiated as part of the Intersection Improvement Program due to the presence of a Top 200 Statewide Crash Location at Route 49 and Putnam Road. Two other crash clusters were identified (although not in the Top 200 Crash Locations) along the cor-

ridor and have been included for safety improvements. Location #1 - Putnam Road at Route 49, Location 2- Walker Pond Road, and Location 3 - Route 20. The targeted safety improvements include construction of a roundabout at Putnam Road, improved sight lines at Walker Pond Road, and slip ramp modifications at Route 20. Bicycle improvements will be included at Location 1 to provide a Shared-Use Path circulating the proposed roundabout, meeting MassDOT Healthy Transportation Policy Directive and applicable design guidelines.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private or public lands. MassDOT's policy concerning land acquisitions will be presented at the hearing.

Project inquiries, written statements, and other exhibits regarding the proposed undertaking may be submitted to Carrie E. Lavallee, P.E., Chief Engineer, via e-mail to MassDOTProjectManagement@dot.state.ma.us or via US Mail to Suite 7550, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Project Management, Project File No. 611967. Statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the hearing transcript

must be emailed or postmarked no later than ten (10) business days (14 calendar days) after the hearing is hosted.

This hearing is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (e.g interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, live captioning, videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT's Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), TTD/TTY at (857) 266-0603, fax (857) 368-0602, or by email (MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us). Requests should be made as soon as possible, and prior to the hearing, and for more difficult to arrange services, including sign-language, CART, or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten business days before the hearing.

This hearing will be hosted, or a cancellation announcement posted, on the internet at https://www.mass.gov/orgs/highway-division/events.

JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR
CARRIE E. LAVALLEE, P.E.
CHIEF ENGINEER
07/31, 08/07/2026

- community -

UMass professor gives lecture on ticks

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Staff Writer
zachf@turley.com

BARRE – The Tewksbury Public Library hosted Dr. Stephen Rich, a professor of microbiology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst to give a presentation about ticks and tick borne diseases.

The presentation was held on Zoom, and offered to many libraries in the state, including the Woods Memorial Library.

Lyme disease

The presentation started with Rich talking about Lyme disease, one of the diseases associated with ticks.

Rich said it was discovered in 1975, because young people were experiencing juvenile arthritis. He said doctors looked into it, and found that the arthritis was being caused by a bacterium that is spread through ticks.

According to Rich, Lyme disease became a reportable disease to the Centers for Disease Control in 1991, and cases in North America have increased since then.

Rich said that as of 2026, Lyme disease is the most common vector borne disease in the continent. He said New England is a common place to find them because of our large population of white-tailed deer, which he said can have thousands of ticks at a time on them.

Rich said historically, Lyme disease was not thought of as something that could affect humans, but more of an agricultural problem. He said people often thought of it as just infecting cows and chickens.

He said a lot of the thought around vector diseases has been around mosquitoes, since they carry malaria, yellow fever and Dengue fever.

He said there are differences in the biology of tick borne and mosquito borne diseases, as tick borne diseases are infections of wildlife that spill over into humans, and cannot be prevented by a vaccine.

Tick life cycle

Rich said the life cycle of a black-legged tick is two years, and it has different stages including egg, larval, nymphal and adult.

He said in each stage of the tick's life other than the egg, they only take one blood meal.

He said if people can prevent ticks from getting onto them, they can help prevent the life cycle of that one tick from completing.

He said a female tick can lay up to 5,000 eggs at a time. Rich said Lyme disease spread is most common in the nymphal stage because it feeds for a long time, and gives more time for anything in the tick to enter into the blood.

Tick behavior

Rich said ticks do not jump, fly or fall from the air, rather they quest. He said questing is crawling to the edge of a surface such as a branch or leaf, and if something comes close enough to it, crawling on it.

He said there are various ticks that live their whole life on one animal.

Lyme vaccine

Rich said there is not currently a vaccine for Lyme disease available to the public, although one is being worked on. He said even if we did have a successful Lyme vaccine, it would just target that one bacterium that causes it, and not target the many other diseases ticks can cause.

He said people should not go backwards in protecting themselves if there is a vaccine for Lyme.

Other diseases from ticks

He said other than Lyme disease, there are diseases called ehrlichiosis and anaplasmosis. He said about 10%+ of black-legged ticks test positive for anaplasmosis, and it is widely known by doctors in the northeast, but not many other places.

Babesiosis is another disease that is spread by ticks, which Rich said is a parasite that infects red blood cells, and does not respond to antibiotics like other tick borne diseases. He said the treatment for this is anti-malarials.

Powassan is a virus spread by ticks, Rich said, which is similar to West Nile virus spread by mosquitoes, and can cause encephalitis. He said most cases of it are in the northeast, and the majority of people who get it do not end up in the severe circumstance of encephalitis.

He said alpha-gal syn-

drome is another disease that can be spread by ticks, and is most commonly known for people infected developing an allergy to red meat. He said it is spread by the lone-star tick, and was discovered in the mid 2000s.

He said there is no test to determine presence in the body, but it is a clinical diagnosis. He said about 450,000 Americans may be affected, but only a small percent of them have the full effects of the disease.

Prevention of disease

Rich said there is not much that can be done to eradicate ticks on a grand scale, and the efforts are individual and localized. He said to prevent disease, it's best to understand the risks of ticks and practice mitigation strategies.

Rich said any tick borne disease starts with a tick bite, and not every tick is affected by a disease. He said the risk of disease increases with feeding time.

Rich said ticks are most active in the spring months and around Halloween, with some peaks in activity in the summer. He said they are not very active in January or February.

He said right now, we are getting close to the time of year where there is a decrease in adult ticks and an increase in nymphal ticks.

Some mitigation strategies Rich presented include wearing light colored clothing, tucking pants into socks, and checking for ticks after being outdoors. He said there are some repellants that have DEET and picaridin, which are safe to use and effective.

He said for topical use of these, they have to be replaced every few hours.

Rich said people can also treat their clothes with acaricide or permethrin, which are toxic to ticks but have low toxicity for humans. He said there are yard barriers, but they have to be replaced and can unintentionally harm pollinators. Rich said natural products may not be safe or effective.

About Dr. Rich

Other than being a professor at UMass, Rich owns a company called MedZu Inc., which provides services to tickreport.com, which is a website that gives risk assessments about ticks.

Smola supports economic development legislation

BOSTON – State Rep. Todd M. Smola (R-Warren, Ranking Member, Ways & Means Committee) recently supported comprehensive economic development legislation aimed at expanding housing opportunities, streamlining local permitting, strengthening key industries, and encouraging private-sector investment across the Commonwealth.

The House of Representatives gave preliminary approval to House Bill 5562 on July 8 by a vote of 148-2 following debate on nearly 700 funding and policy amendments. The legislation is a revised version of an economic development proposal originally filed by Governor Maura Healey.

Smola noted that one of the most significant changes made by the House was the removal of the governor's proposed GlobalMass initiative. This proposal would have required the Pension Reserves Investment Management Board to dedicate \$50 million in pension assets to a new investment fund intended to attract global business investment to Massachusetts.

"I supported this legislation because it makes targeted investments that can strengthen our economy, encourage housing development, and help communities grow while also removing a proposal that would have placed public employee pension funds at unnecessary risk," said Smola. "Economic development should be driven by responsible investments that protect taxpayers and public employees while creating opportunities for businesses and residents across Massachusetts."

Smola also expressed

concern with a provision allowing multifamily housing to be constructed on land owned by religious institutions for at least three years. He noted that if these developments are ultimately deemed tax exempt, then municipalities could face increased demands on local services such as schools, public safety, and infrastructure, without receiving the corresponding property tax revenue needed to support those costs.

The House Ways and Means version of the bill authorizes \$425.1 million in spending, including \$305 million in capital authorizations for economic development initiatives, \$120 million in housing related grant programs, and \$100,000 for local economic development grants.

The bill's major investments are: \$25 million for capital grants to help private businesses construct or expand commercial, industrial, and manufacturing facilities; \$75 million to support the development and application of artificial intelligence technologies in industries including life sciences, health care, advanced manufacturing, and climate tech; \$20 million for capital grants supporting facilities that attract early-stage and high-growth businesses; \$100 million for capital investments and public infrastructure that promote economic growth and job creation within the defense sector; \$10 million to support food science, agriculture, food innovation, and agricultural technology; \$25 million in competitive grants for robotics research, development, commercialization, and workforce

training; \$25 million in competitive grants to strengthen downtowns, main streets, commercial corridors, and other walkable mixed-use districts; and \$25 million in capital grants supporting arts, culture, and the creative economy.

The legislation also provides \$50 million in grants and technical assistance to help municipalities convert commercial properties into residential housing. Another \$20 million is dedicated to the Veterans Supported Housing Initiative, while \$50 million is provided to support housing development on former state-owned properties requiring asbestos, lead, or hazardous material remediation.

To improve the local permitting process, House Bill 5562 establishes uniform statewide standards for municipal site plan review and creates a no-cost training program for members of local planning boards, zoning boards of appeal and special permit granting authorities.

Additional policy provisions adopted during House debate include allowing municipalities to establish housing tax increment financing agreements, strengthening fair housing training requirements for real estate professionals, creating a permanent working group to address double utility poles, and directing the Department of Public Utilities to establish a process by July 31, allowing a single qualified contractor to remove all double-pole attachments during one site visit.

House Bill 5562, as amended, now advances to the Senate for further consideration.

Quaboag Current

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Troop 163 hosts ice cream social/open house

STURBRIDGE – Do you like camping, hiking, swimming, biking, fishing, kayaking, whitewater rafting, sailing, exploring with friends and more? You might like being a Scout.

Come to an ice cream social and open house held by Troop 163, an all-girl

troop of Scouting America, on Sunday, Aug. 30 from 4-6 p.m. at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 345 Main St.

Learn about lassoing and how to use a sling shot and other activities. Families are welcome.

Stop by, have fun, and

learn about Scouting and the troop.

The troop is open to girls aged 11-17, and while based in Sturbridge, is open to residents of any town. Please email troop-163sturbridge@gmail.com with any questions.

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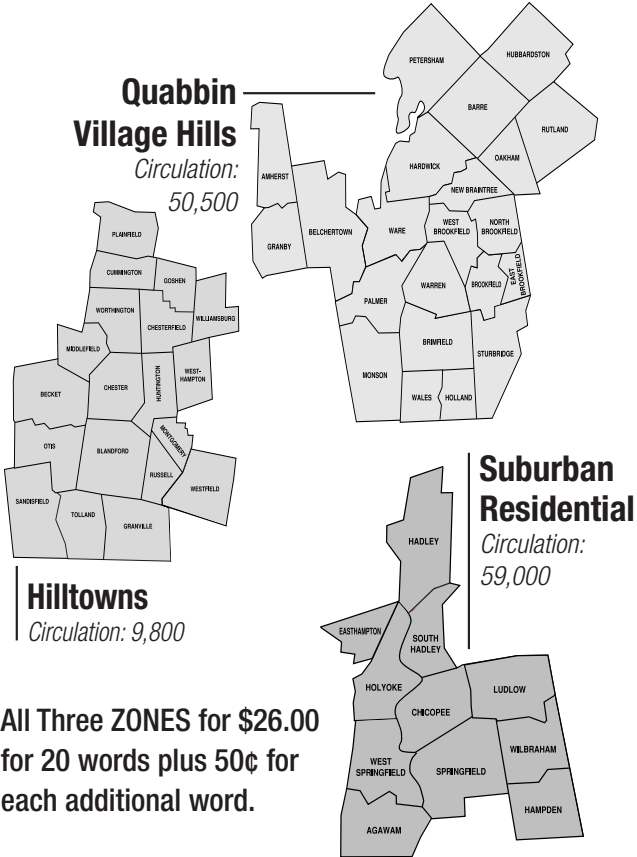
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DEADLINES: FRIDAY AT NOON

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9	10	11	12
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- community -

Second Chance receives ASPCA grant for mobile care vehicle

EAST BROOKFIELD – Second Chance Animal Services has been awarded a \$150,000 grant from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals® to support the purchase of a new Community Support Vehicle, a mobile veterinary unit that will expand access to care for pets and families who may otherwise face barriers to receiving veterinary services.

The grant will help Second Chance Animal Services fund this important capacity-building initiative, allowing veterinary teams to bring preventive and basic veterinary care directly into more communities, assisting pet owners, and supporting programs that help keep pets healthy, at home, and out of shelters.

The mobile veterinary unit will extend the reach of Second Chance’s community programs, serving pets and families across the region.

“Access to veterinary care should never depend on a family’s ability to travel or overcome transportation barriers,” said Sheryl Blancato, Chief Executive Officer of Second Chance Animal Services. “We are

incredibly grateful to the ASPCA for this generous investment. This Community Support Vehicle will allow us to provide basic veterinary care on the road and connect pets needing more advanced treatment to our hospitals. Together, these services help keep pets healthy, with the families who love them, and out of shelters.”

“Lack of access to affordable veterinary care is among the top reasons families are forced to make the heartbreaking decision to relinquish their pet to a shelter,” said Karen Walsh, president of animal relocation at the ASPCA. “The ASPCA is honored to provide Second Chance Animal Services with grant funding for a new mobile veterinary vehicle to expand their life-saving work providing critical veterinary care to the community and helping to keep animals healthy and in loving homes.”

For more than 16 years, Second Chance Animal Services has been meeting pets and families where they are through community outreach programs designed to remove barriers to veterinary care. The new mobile veterinary unit will build



The new Second Chance Community Support Vehicle is shown parked outside the North Brookfield hospital. The mobile unit was made possible by a grant from the ASPCA to help bring veterinary care to pets and families in need.

upon those efforts by tripling the capacity to bring clinics directly into underserved neighborhoods, assisting pet owners who may not be able to travel to veterinary hospitals, and supporting community-based programs that help prevent unnecessary pet surrender.

The vehicle will be on the road at low-cost vaccine clinics across the state.

In addition, it will be instrumental in the non-profit’s Homebound to the Rescue program which brings veterinary care at low-cost or no-cost to senior and low-income communities. By intervening early and providing resources before a crisis occurs, the organization can help keep pets healthy and safely in their homes.

The need for these services is evident in stories like those of seniors and individuals with disabilities who deeply love their pets but struggle to care for them. Through its community programs, Second Chance has helped pet owners access veterinary services that allowed them to keep beloved companions by their side.

The new Community Support Vehicle will make it possible to reach even more families with the support they need before difficult circumstances force them to consider surrendering a pet.

For more information about Second Chance Animal Services, please visit www.secondchanceanimals.org.

Since 2001, the ASPCA has provided more than \$250 million in grant funding to thousands of animal shelters, municipal and government agencies, rescue groups and other organizations nationwide.

Grants are just one example of how the ASPCA is helping animals and communities in need, with funds supporting a variety of programs ranging from increasing pet adoptions to helping communities build strong programs to rescue, shelter, transport, and support animals during natural disasters, improving access to veterinary care, and advancing research that either directly or systemically benefits animals.

For more information about the ASPCA’s grant-making and current initiatives, visit www.aspcapro.org/grants.

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