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Select Board interviews TA candidates

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Staff Writer
zachf@turley.com

BROOKFIELD – The Select Board interviewed three candidates for the Town Administrator position last week, including Andrew Surprise, Charles Kokoros and Ryan Egan.

During interviews conducted on Aug. 4 and 5, each of the three candidates were asked the same set of questions.

Andrew Surprise

Surprise introduced himself, saying he formerly worked with the Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce. According to his LinkedIn page, he was the vice president and CEO from January 2021 to May 2023, an executive director with the Windsor, Connecticut Chamber of Commerce from May 2023 to May 2025, and a city councilor in Westfield from January 2016 to January 2020.

Surprise also works as a consultant.

Surprise said he has been an executive for organizations in transition, and rebuilding boards, and has revitalized programs. He said he worked on the Finance Committee while in Westfield, and advocated legislators to allow bases to receive environmental remediation funding.

Surprise said some of

his focuses are on arts and culture, and revitalizing downtown areas.

When asked how he would approach the position, he said that he never voted for a tax increase, and saw money being wasted or spent where it should not have been spent and said he was responsible for a \$130 million budget. Surprise said he would meet with department heads and recommend and prepare them for budget cuts, and used a zero base budget in Westfield.

The board asked about recruiting a Highway Superintendent, since the town is without one and only has one member staffing the department. Surprise said he would start by getting a timeline of programs and projects that need to be done, and try to hire someone who is qualified, or get them the training they need immediately.

As for highway funds, Surprise said he is not in favor of utilizing chapter 90 money for anything but roads, bridges and sidewalks.

He said that his approach with working with the board would be ensuring he knows his role, and gets training required to avoid legal issues. Surprise said he'd hold regular meetings with the board to

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SUBMITTED PHOTOS
Shelby Hill of the Brookfield Agricultural Commission is shown alongside Elsie the Cow, a beloved mascot historically connected to the town.

Promoting local agriculture

Third annual fair held on the common

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

BROOKFIELD – The 3rd annual Brookfield Agricultural Fair took place this past Saturday on the historic common.

This annual event is organized by the town's Agricultural Commission, which is dedicated to promoting the agricultural community in town. Since its inception, the annual Agricultural Fair has steadily grown in participation and amenities.

Shelby Hill of the Brookfield Agricultural Commis-

sion said new additions to this year's fair included food trucks, food stands, three honey vendors and more local and organic food farms.

"The goal is to spread agricultural awareness in our community," Hill said. "Support the local farms and high-

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The Brookfield Agricultural Fair hosted a youth planting contest. Above, Layne Beaudry won first place for her sunflower. Left, Caleb Allen received a first-place ribbon for his cucumber and squash.

Board holds pole hearing

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Staff Writer
zachf@turley.com

STURBRIDGE – The Select Board held a public hearing for one jointly owned pole to be placed on Gardner Avenue at a point approximately 50 feet west from the intersection with Maple Avenue, as petitioned by National Grid.

At the Aug. 3 meeting, National Grid representative Robert Williams said the project involves removal of a guy wire from a tree, and putting a new section of wires up with a pole in a new location.

The tree is on town property, and was determined to need removal by the Tree Warden Tony Crane.

During the discussion, Select Board member Mary Dowling said there are many poles that are approved that end up attached to the old poles. She said it is a visual blight, and if there was a way to make approval of a pole contingent on the removal of the other one.

Williams said that National Grid is only responsible for installing the pole, and Verizon is responsible for removal, since the poles

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DCR announces \$131,000 grant

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Staff Writer
zachf@turley.com

BROOKFIELD – Priscilla Geigis, Deputy Commissioner for Conservation and Resource Stewardship at the Department of Conservation and Recreation announced a \$131,000 grant from the administration of Gov. Maura Healey and Lieutenant Gov. Kimberly Driscoll during a press conference at the Brookfield Fire Sta-

tion last Friday.

According to the press release, Brookfield received \$3,489.

This grant from the Volunteer Fire Capacity Program is split among 45 fire departments in the Commonwealth for those that serve populations of 10,000 or less, or are 80% or more staffed by volunteers. Geigis thanked state Sen. Peter Durant and state Rep. Donnie Berthiaume during her speech, as they were unable to attend.

Geigis said these grants

are to help fire departments with training and response, and to help them steward and protect the land, citing the immense impacts of wildfires, including in Washington and Minnesota. She said this money comes from the U.S. Forest Service, and said these grants are a good example of federal, state and local governments working together.

DCR wildland firefighter Andrew Regan gave

See GRANT PAGE 9



SUBMITTED PHOTO
The Department of Conservation and Recreation announced more than \$131,000 in grants to 45 rural, call, or volunteer fire departments across Massachusetts through the Volunteer Fire Capacity Program. The program helps smaller departments train personnel, prevent forest fires and strengthen emergency response in their communities. DCR announced the VFC recipients at the Brookfield Fire Station, alongside local elected officials on Aug. 7.

Eagle Scout completes project at Spooner Well

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

BROOKFIELD – Spooner Well, one of the town's most historic, but hard-to-find sites, was the focus of resident Edith "Edie" Simpson's Eagle Scout project.

A dedication ceremony was held at the site, located across from 7 East Main St., on Aug. 8, with many Scouts and community members in attendance.

Simpson, a member of Sturbridge's Scouts BSA Troop 163 for the past five and a half years, said the site of Spooner Well has always been significant to her family. Her mother, Kate, works at the Merrick Public Library, and her father (and Scoutmaster), Bill, plays the fiddle in the band Spooner Well.

"It was always part of the history," Simpson said of the site.

Scoutmaster Simpson shared the story behind the Spooner Well site, where the house of Joshua and Bathsheba (Ruggles) Spooner once stood.

On March 1, 1778, Bath-

See WELL PAGE 5



TURLEY PHOTO BY PAULA OUIMETTE
Eagle Scout Edie Simpson is shown with her father and Scoutmaster Bill Simpson at the dedication of her project, the newly refurbished Spooner Well in Brookfield.

- community -

Fair returns Aug. 29

WARE – The Ware Grange Fair will be held on Saturday, Aug. 29 at the Grange Hall on Route 9, 297 Belchertown Road.

This year's Fair will feature a fun dog show, Kids' Corner workshop, children's field events, games, raffles, bake sale, live music,

a barbecue dinner and an auction. Exhibits may be entered on Thursday, Aug. 27 from 5-7 p.m. or Friday, Aug. 28 from 9-11 a.m.

For more information, details on exhibiting, or to make reservations for the barbecue, call 413-284-1135 or visit waregrange.org.

Sunoco to host Spencer's Bravest Family Fun Day

SPENCER – Support local firefighters and police officers at Spencer's Bravest Family Fun Day on Sunday, Aug. 30 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Sunoco, 73 West Main St.

There will be hot dogs, hamburgers, a lemonade stand, face painting, tem-

porary tattoos, raffles, local vendors, games and more.

Bring your family, friends, and neighbors for a day of fun, community and giving. All proceeds from this event will go to support Spencer firefighters and police officers.

'Town Takeover' benefits police station project



The towns of Hardwick and New Braintree participated in Town Takeover night at a WooSox game on July 22 at Polar Park in Worcester. A portion of proceeds from tickets purchased that night will benefit the Hardwick-New Braintree Police Association, to raise money to renovate the police station on Lower Road in Hardwick. Shown from left are Police Lieutenant Robert Toupin, state Rep. Donnie Berthiaume, Fire Chief Nick Gaumont, Selectman Bill Tinker, Town Administrator Justine Caggiano, Police Chief Kevin Landine, Selectman Jeff Schaaf and Police Detective Patrick Almstrom. Both Gaumont and Almstrom were honored during the game for their exemplary work in public safety.

Registration open for Alex Cordy memorial golf tournament

St. Carlo Acutis Parish, Brookfield/West Brookfield/Warren, is having its 9th Annual Alex Cordy Memorial Charity Golf Tournament at Quail Hollow Golf and Country Club, 1822 Old Turnpike Road, Oakham, on Saturday, Sept. 12.

Registration begins at 7:15 a.m., with a shotgun start at 8 a.m.

Alex Cordy was an integral part of the West Brookfield community for many years. In memory of

his outstanding service to his community, his parish and being a founding member of our Knights of Columbus Council 11080, this tournament will once again benefit the Youth Activities Fund to support the youth in the local community, a cause that was very important to Alex.

The golf tournament organizers were able to award two \$1,000 scholarships this past year from the proceeds of this event to two local high school seniors, as well

as fund many other youth activities.

Consider supporting this event by sponsoring or participating in the tournament individually or with a foursome. Tournament raffle items and general donations to this event are always welcomed and appreciated.

Registration and sponsorships are now available for this tournament. To register, and for more information, please call 413-813-8100 or email wallyconnor122@gmail.com.

Input needed for Open Space and Recreation Plan update

EAST BROOKFIELD – The town of East Brookfield, with assistance from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission is updating its 2006 Open Space and Recreation Plan and is seeking input from residents.

Community members are encouraged to participate in a survey to share their thoughts on open space, recreational opportunities and priorities for the future. Public

feedback will help guide the development of the updated plan, which is required to maintain the town's eligibility for state grant funding for conservation and recreation projects.

Residents can complete the survey online at <https://tinyurl.com/yv7b23fy>.

Hard copies are also available at Town Hall, the East Brookfield Public Library and the Senior Center.

The town encourages all residents to take part and help shape the future of East Brookfield's parks, recreation resources and open spaces.

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.

Moonlight Saints perform at Connie Mack Field

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.

The Brookfield-based rock trio Moonlight Saints is closing the season on Aug. 20. Concerts are held from 6-8 p.m.

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.

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, craft

ers, 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. Vendors must bring their own tables and tents.

The church will sponsor a food tent with grilled food, cold drinks and sweet treats. Email to fccofwb-fleamarket@gmail.com for an application or call Karen at 508-801-7692.

Ware Grange hosts barbecue dinner Aug. 29

WARE – The Ware Grange is holding a barbecue dinner at the annual Grange Fair on Saturday, Aug. 29 at 4 p.m.

The menu includes pulled pork, chicken, brisket, baked beans, coleslaw, cornbread, drink and dessert for \$25. Eat outside under the tent or take your meal to go.

Ware Grange is holding a barbecue dinner at the annual Grange Fair on Saturday, Aug. 29 at 4 p.m.

The menu includes pulled pork, chicken, brisket, baked beans, coleslaw, cornbread, drink and dessert for \$25. Eat outside under the tent or take your meal to go.

Bluegrass Gospel Service will be held Aug. 30

WEST BROOKFIELD – The George Whitefield United Methodist Church will host a Bluegrass Gospel Service at 10 a.m. on Sunday, Aug. 30 at 33 West Main St.

The program will feature traditional bluegrass instruments and voices performing old time Gospel favorites and other toe-tapping tunes in the bluegrass style. These services have been very well received and are back by popular demand.

West Brookfield – The George Whitefield United Methodist Church will host a Bluegrass Gospel Service at 10 a.m. on Sunday, Aug. 30 at 33 West Main St.

The program will feature traditional bluegrass instruments and voices performing old time Gospel favorites and other toe-tapping tunes in the bluegrass style. These services have been very well received and are back by popular demand.

Special Town Election will be held on Sept. 1

WEST BROOKFIELD – A Special Town Election to elect a Select Board member for a two-year term will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 1.

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.

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Button welcomed to Geisinger College’s School of Medicine

SCRANTON, PA – Geisinger College of Health Sciences’ School of Medicine held its 18th annual White Coat Ceremony for the Class of 2030 on Aug. 7 at Marywood University.

John Button of East Brookfield received a white coat at the ceremony.

The Class of 2030’s 126 future doctors participated in a ceremony held in common with virtually every other medical school in the nation. White Coat ceremonies welcome new medical students into the profession by taking an oath acknowledging their responsibilities as future physicians and their obligations to future patients. The high point of the ceremony is when each future physician is cloaked with a white lab coat – the mantle of the medical profession. The Stanley J. Dudrick, MD and Alan G. Goldstein Endowed Fund provided the white coats.

Of the 126 students entering the class, 81 are Pennsylvania residents, including 35 from counties within Geisinger’s service region. The class also includes 35 Abigail Geisinger Scholars, reflecting the school’s commitment to educating future physicians dedicated to serving communities across the region.

Beyond academic excellence, members of the Class of 2030 have already demonstrated a strong commitment to service and patient care, making them a perfect match for Geisinger’s community-focused care.

Before applying to medical school, these 126 students collectively contributed more than 30,000 medical volunteer hours and 36,000 non-medical volunteer hours. They also completed more than 92,000 research hours,

another hallmark of a Geisinger education.

“The White Coat Ceremony is an inspiring welcome to our new students at the School of Medicine. It marks the beginning of a sometimes difficult but always rewarding journey of turning eager learners into compassionate healers. They will serve the people of our communities and beyond,” Geisinger College’s president and medical school dean, Julie Byerley, MD, MPH, said. “It will be a great joy to watch this class grow into their roles as future physician leaders.”

Amanda Caleb, PhD, MPH presented the Dr. Lester Saidman Memorial Lecture, named in honor of the respected physician and educator from Luzerne County. Dr. Caleb is a professor of Medical Humanities at the School of Medicine’s Center for Medical Humanities.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Silverbacks will perform at Powder Mill Park on Sunday, Aug. 16 from 2-5 p.m. as part of the Spencer Parks & Recreation Commission’s 2026 Summer Concert Series.

Silverbacks band performs at Summer Concert Series

SPENCER – The Spencer Parks & Recreation Commission’s 2026 Summer Concert Series continues from 2-5 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 16 at Powder Mill Park, corner Smithville and Meadow Roads, with the Silverbacks.

The Silverbacks celebrate all things rock ‘n roll.

A few of the members have performed in stadium shows worldwide as mem-

bers of the bands of Joe Cocker, Tina Turner and Robert Palmer. Others performed in regional bands including Albatross and the American Standard Band.

Band member Glenn DiTommaso resides in Spencer and is looking forward to performing in his hometown. Band member Jim Perry was also instrumental in organizing this

year’s concert series and coordinating the entertainment schedule. Other members include Michael Lynch, Cliff Goodwin, Deric Dyer and Bill MacGillivray.

Following the Silverbacks, next up in this series that concludes on Sunday, Aug. 23 will be Miss Fairchild.

The concert series is proudly sponsored by Cornerstone Bank.

- sturbridge -

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. 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 troop163sturbridge@gmail.com with any questions.

St. Anne – St. Patrick Parish offers Faith Formation program

FISKDALE – St. Anne – St. Patrick Parish is making it easier for families to participate in both Faith Formation and Sunday Mass with a newly redesigned class schedule for the 2026-2027 program year.

By intentionally centering its Faith Formation schedule around the 10 a.m. Sunday Mass, the parish hopes families can more easily worship together while also having more time back in their Sundays.

“At St. Anne – St. Patrick Parish, we want to remove obstacles that make it difficult for families to practice their faith together,” said Fr. Salvator Musande, Pastor of St. Anne – St. Patrick Parish. “Our new schedule allows children to grow in their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith while making Sunday Mass something families can attend together. We warmly invite both return-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Faith Formation students are shown with leaders in the Parish Center.

ing and new families to join us.”

Registration is now open for Faith Formation for students in kindergarten through grade 11. Families are encouraged to register online by Sept. 6, which will help with class planning, although registration

will remain open after that date.

The new class schedule is: grades K-six, Sundays, 8:45-9:45 a.m., before the 10 a.m. Mass; and grades seven-11, Sundays, 11:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m., after the 10 a.m. Mass.

Faith Formation pro-

vides children and teens with age-appropriate instruction in the Catholic Faith, Sacred Scripture, Prayer, Christian living, and preparation for the Sacraments.

Online registration is the preferred registration method and is available on

the parish website. A paper registration form is also available for families who need one.

For more information or to register, visit www.StAnneStPatrickParish.com or call 508-347-9353.

About the parish

St. Anne – St. Patrick Parish & Shrine is an active parish community serving the Sturbridge area and beyond, offering daily Masses, religious education, and community ministries.

The shrine grounds welcome thousands of visitors each year and feature St. Anne Shrine, Stations of the Cross and Crucifix, Hall of Saints, Russian Icon Exhibit, Generations Statue, Angel of Hope Monument, Memorial for the Unborn, Votive Chapels, weekend Masses celebrated in the outdoor pavilion during the summer, and a religious gift shop open daily from 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

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ATTENTION NORTH BROOKFIELD WATER USERS

HYDRANT FLUSHING September 1-30, 2026

The North Brookfield Water Department will be flushing water mains throughout town beginning Tuesday, September 1 through Wednesday, September 30, 2026. Flushing is performed between the hours of 7:30AM and 3:30PM.

The purpose of the flushing is to remove sediment buildup in the mains. The flushing may result in temporary discoloration of the water, caused by small particles dislodged during the flushing. This discoloration might stain your laundry, especially white materials.

If you would like additional information, please call the Water Department at (508) 867-0207.



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- opinion -

SOCIAL SECURITY
Matters
By Russell Gloor

Why don't they just create individual Social Security accounts?

Dear Rusty:
Regarding Social Security's financial issues, three people contributing to Social Security for every one beneficiary sounds to me like a surplus.

If they had given workers their own accounts, similar to a 401k, where they could manage their own money, it would have worked out more favorably for retirees. President George W Bush suggested these changes, but it was shot down by Congress.

The average worker now pays a 6.2% Social Security tax. If the government had bumped it up to say 7%, I don't believe that me or anyone else would have cried too hard.

There are ways of correcting this before the SS reserves are depleted and, hopefully, Congress will address Social Security's financing soon.

Signed: Skeptical Senior

Dear Skeptical:
Believe it or not, putting SS contributions from payroll taxes into separate individual accounts is not really a good idea.

For information, most people get back all payroll taxes they contributed to Social Security within about five years of receiving SS benefits. Even with decent public market returns, some individual separate accounts would eventually run out of money, causing some to lose Social Security benefits before they die, meaning they would likely live in poverty.

People are now collecting benefits on average for decades and the current SS format means that even those who contribute only a small amount will collect benefits no matter how long they live. Remember, the primary purpose of the SS program is to reduce poverty in America.

FYI, President Bush's plan had opposition in the 2005 Congress largely because of the cost to transition to that plan and

the fear that investments in the public markets subjected individual retirement savings to unacceptable risk.

In any case, few have since advocated investing Social Security funds in the public financial markets because of the risks and the political backlash. And adding a small amount to the FICA/SECA payroll tax rate only somewhat mitigates the problem; it doesn't completely solve it. I'm afraid that Social Security's financial issues are more complex than that and can't be fully solved by a small increase in SS payroll taxes.

You are right Congress can and, we are confident, will address this and hopefully soon. For its part, the Association of Mature American Citizens and the AMAC Foundation have been evaluating this issue for years and have developed a Social Security reform plan for Congress to consider.

And we are actively promoting our reform plan in Washington, D.C. Please know that we share your concerns about the future of Social Security and will continue to work hard to ensure the program is here for many generations.

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



Midsummer questions for the Garden Lady

Karen, who has a vegetable garden in Hardwick, is concerned over her tomatoes cracking and is asking the Garden Lady for some advice.

“With all the rainstorms we’ve had, one measuring over 5 inches last week, my cherry tomatoes, and even some of my paste types are starting to crack. Is this a normal occurrence and if so, is there anything I can do to prevent this from happening in the future?”

This is a timely question, Karen, and one that I am sure a lot of readers can relate to. I know I can.

It’s always exciting when the tomatoes start ripening and then this happens.

Fruit cracking around the stem, either in rings or radiating downward is caused by overwatering; we or Mother Nature can be at fault. This year I will blame her for some of it.

A week ago many gardeners in the area received an inch or more of rain in two separate deluges. Keep in mind that most veggies require about an inch per week.

Adjust your irrigation to accommodate for the excess.

Mulches do well to moderate soil moisture; if you mulch, you can water less often. If cracking ends up being a big problem for you, consider scouring the seed catalogs for varieties that are resistant to it.

As long as the cracks are fresh, and haven’t begun to

show mold, I use the fruit anyway. Watering issues can also affect other plants. Sometimes gardeners complain that their cucumbers look funny, bent in the shape of an apostrophe.

This effect is also from uneven watering. Besides making necessary adjustments, trellising can also help them to grow straight.



This question came in from Frances who reads the column in the Ware River News: “I have some thornless blackberry plants that produce huge fruit. Occasionally some of the segments on the berries are not colored deep purple or black; they are more of a tan or white color. I was curious why this happens? Years ago when I grew red raspberry bushes I also remember sometimes having this problem. Is it something with my soil? Are the berries safe to eat? I am hopeful it is not some type of mold or fungus.”

Although I do not have a picture to be one hundred percent certain, I believe what you are describing is “druplet disorder.” The lighter areas on your berries are from sun scald. A reaction simply caused by too much heat.

And yes, they are safe to eat.

Some people comment that the berries with this disorder are a little tough or flavorless. It doesn’t really bother me.

Moldy berries would look furry and the area would be raised.

Bill is growing basil for the first time and he had this question for the Garden Lady: “My basil was slow to take off. I came back from vacation and it is in flower. While the bees seem to enjoy the flowers, I was hoping to harvest some of the leaves. Do you have any advice as to how to get it out of flower mode and into leaf production?”

Yes, I do. It involves giving the basil a hair cut. Sure enough, your plant needs to be rid of those flowers.

Once you do that, provide some nitrogen to get them greened up and growing. This could be by the addition of a little blood meal at the base of the plant or a foliar feed of fish emulsion or compost tea.

In no time your plant will rebound. Just be sure to keep those flowers trimmed off.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 32 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.

My daughter, Paula Ouimette, took this photo of a juvenile brown headed cowbird watching her run laps with her dog, Jo Jo.

The young cowbird perched on a fence near the driveway of the elementary school in Hardwick.

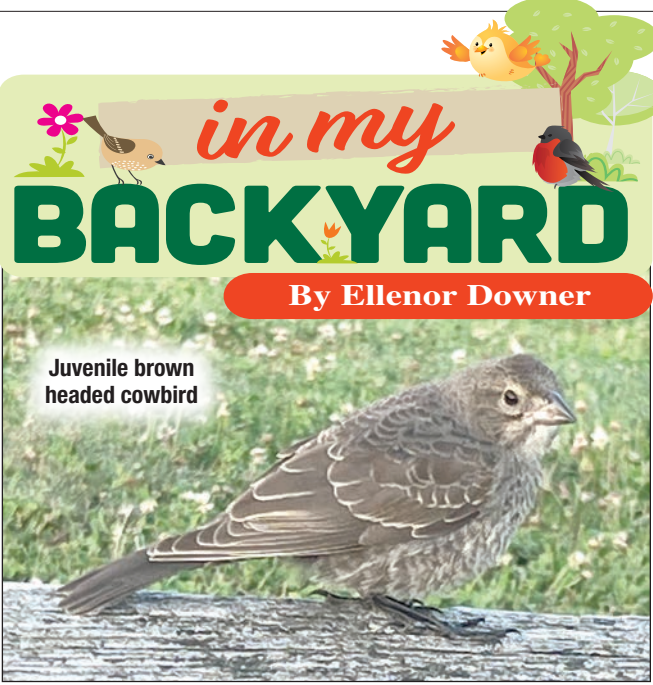
My daughter used the Seek app by iNaturalist to get the identification. It stayed there for about 20 minutes before flying off.

She said there were no other cowbirds around, but cowbirds lay their eggs in nests of birds smaller than then in hopes they will raise their young.

Obviously, this young cowbird looks well feed. I wonder what bird raised it, often at the expense of their own offspring.

Warblers and vireos are the most common cowbird hosts. Their nestlings weight less than half as much as the cowbird nestling.

Some species will either push the cowbird egg out of their nest or leave that nest and start another nest.



The brown-headed cowbird is a stocky blackbird. The females do not build a nest and instead produce up to three dozen eggs per summer.

They lay the eggs in the nests of other bird species and let them raise their young, know as brood parasitism.

Brown-headed cowbirds are native to North Amer-

ica, but many people consider them a nuisance bird because of their parenting style.

Cowbirds destroy the eggs and young of smaller songbirds and have been implicated in the decline of several endangered species, including Kirtland’s warbler and black-capped vireo.

Adult male cowbirds have glossy black bodies

and brown heads, hence their name. In poor lighting, the male’s head looks brown.

The female is brown with the head lighter brown than the body. She has fine streaking on the belly/ Both sexes have thick, conical bills and black eyes.

They are 7.5 to 8.7 inches long. They feed on the ground and can be seen walking behind livestock to eat what their hooves stir up.

They are found in open habitats such as fields, pastures, meadows, forest edges and lawns. They also perch on a prominent branch high in a tree.

They are primarily seed-eaters and insectivores, adapting their diet based on availability and season, often gleaned from the ground or by following grazing animals. They will come to feeders as well and prefer sunflower seeds and millet.

Other Hardwick birds

My daughter, Paula, saw lots of bluebirds, swallows, robins and one hen turkey with a poult. She said there

were probably more underneath the hen turkey, but only one was brave enough to come out.

Red tail hawks

I have several red tail hawks in Barre, New Brain-tree and Oakham. Recently, one flew off and the sunshine showed off the hawks red tail. They are often seen by freshly mowed fields in hopes of catching some rodents, who stand out on a newly cut field.

Great blue heron

Long Pond in Rutland is a popular spot to find a great blue heron “fishing” in the shallows along Route 122.

Meal worms

I continue to have catbirds come for the mealworms I leave them on the picnic table. The other day I heard a catbird make its meowing call. Males use the call to establish territory and females for communication and alarm purposes.

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

QUABOAG
CURRENT

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OPINION PAGE/
LETTERS
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Letters to the editor should be 250 words or less in length, and guest columns between 500 and 800 words. No unsigned or anonymous opinions will be published. We require that the person submitting the opinion also include his or her town of residence and home telephone number. We authenticate authorship prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions deemed to be libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks, or defamation of character.

Send opinions to:

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

Quaboag Current
OBITUARY
POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph.

Death Notices & Paid Obituaries should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

WELL FROM PAGE 1

sheba is said to have orchestrated the murder of her husband, by enlisting the help of three soldiers. These soldiers attacked Joshua after he returned from a night of drinking at Cooley's Tavern and threw his body down the well.

The crime was quickly discovered the next day, and Bathsheba and the soldiers were sentenced to death by hanging, which occurred on July 2, 1778 in Worcester. Five thousand people attended the execution.

This was one of the first capital murder trials to take place in the young nation, and Bathsheba was the first woman to be executed following the reading of the Declaration of Independence.

"It made national news," Scoutmaster Simpson said.

Bathsheba was pregnant at the time of her death, and she and the baby are buried somewhere in Green Hill Park in Worcester, on land once owned by her sister and brother-in-law. Joshua is buried in Brookfield Cemetery.

Simpson spoke about her Eagle Scout project, and the work that was completed at the site. She thanked everyone involved for their support of her goals.

The project included the removal of vegetation and poison ivy, refurbishing the stones around the well and the steps leading to it, as well as putting up an informative sign, a bench and landscaping around the marker at the site.

The removal of the poison ivy was no easy task, requiring Simpson and her team of volunteers to wear hazmat suits for protection, which earned them many curious looks from passers-by.

After the vegetation was removed, Simpson and her crew installed weed blocker, and put in gravel, mulch and plants with the help of Babe's Landscaping.

"They made a big donation," Simpson said. "Very generous."

The beneficiary of Simpson's project was the Friends

of Brookfield, which was represented at the dedication ceremony by Don Taft. Taft said the Scouts were the "future workers of our country," and he praised Simpson for her efforts to improve "an iconic Brookfield location."

To start the project, Simpson needed permission from property owners, Donald Faugno and Donna Sullivan, who live across the street from the well in a home that Faugno has lived in his entire life.

"We've lived across it for years...and there as no way for them [people] to find it," Sullivan said of Spooner Well.

She said it was a great project and that they both appreciated Simpson's hard work.

Faugno said he has regularly helped people find Spooner Well over the years, which is mainly only known by locals. The clearing of the site and installation of the sign will make that job much easier.

Spooner Well was also once a geocaching site.

Sullivan thanked Simpson for choosing the site of Spooner Well for her Eagle Scout project, and for recognizing its significance to the town.

"She wanted to make people more aware of Brookfield history," Sullivan said at the dedication.

Sullivan said she and her husband knew Simpson would be successful when she arrived at the site with her team in the hazmat suits.

"We said, 'this woman is prepared,'" Sullivan said.

Bring prepared is part of what Scouting America is about, with the rank of Eagle Scout being its highest honor; something that only about 4% of Scouts attain.

"One of the culminations of Scouting is the Eagle project," Scoutmaster Simpson said.

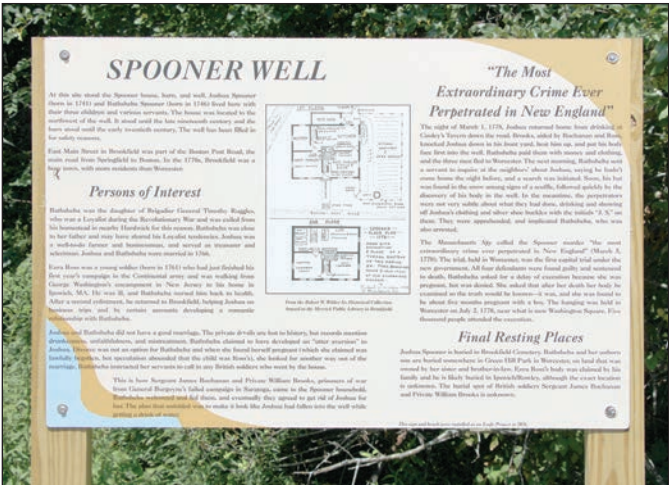
The dedication concluded with refreshments (including cookies decorated to look like Spooner Well), and music by Spooner Well band members Scoutmaster Simpson and Gregg Ackerman.



Edie Simpson's Eagle Scout project included landscaping around the Spooner Well historic marker.



Donna Sullivan spoke about Edie Simpson's Eagle Scout project. Sullivan and her husband Donald Faugno live near the Spooner Well site.



This sign explains the significance of the Spooner Well site, and includes a floor plan of the home of Joshua and Bathsheba (Ruggles) Spooner. This floor plan is from the Robert W. Wilder Sr. Historical Collection housed at the Merrick Public Library in Brookfield.



Shown is Spooner Well, where the body of Brookfield resident Joshua Spooner was hidden on March 1, 1778.



Don Taft spoke on behalf of the Friends of Brookfield, the project's beneficiary.



Spooner Well band members Bill Simpson and Gregg Ackerman performed during the dedication of Edie Simpson's Eagle Scout project.



There is now a clear walkway to the Spooner Well site.



VETERANS DAY SALUTE

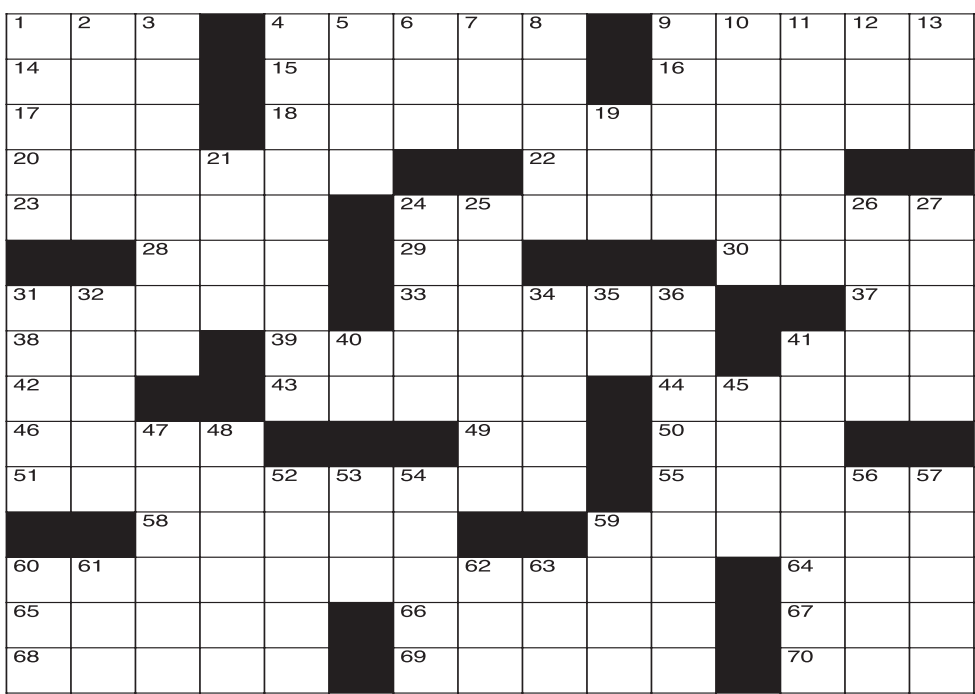
Quaboag Current ~ November 5, 2026

Quaboag Current will be saluting our local veterans (from all wars and branches, including honoring deceased veterans), reservists, active duty U.S. Military members.

Please submit a photo of your veteran with his or her name, rank, branch of military and hometown by email to dflynn@turley.com or drop off a photo to **Quaboag Current, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069**
All photos will be returned.

Please submit your photo no later than Monday, October 20, 2026.

There is no cost to submit a photo. No photos will be accepted after deadline. If you would like to use a prior submitted photo, please contact Dan Flynn no later than October 13th (413) 297-5886.



CLUES ACROSS

- Midway between south and southeast
- Fathers
- Wine grape
- Al Bundy's wife
- Derived from ammonia
- Venezuelan state
- Interest rate
- Experts
- Vascular tissues
- Smooth and glossy
- Administrative region in S. Korea
- One from Damascus
- Special interest group
- It cools your home
- Oh, God!
- Intestinal pouches
- Men
- Twelfth star in a constellation
- Former CIA
- Arrange in grades of size
- A baglike structure in a plant or animal
- "The Great Lakes State"
- Having earlike appendages
- Momentarily stop
- Ancient kingdom
- Of I
- White clerical vestment
- Songs to one's beloved
- Charges
- Computer application originator
- A place to dock a boat
- One guided by reason
- Slang for cigarette
- Sailboats
- "Jerry Maguire" actor Zellweger
- Screen type
- Country legend Haggard
- Puts together in time
- When you anticipate arriving

CLUES DOWN

- Involuntary muscular contraction
- Eastern US transit agency
- Leaves a place
- Cease to participate
- Current units
- Cease to exist
- General's assistant (abbr.)
- Earth vibration
- Very strong winds
- For each one
- A bog
- The creation of beautiful or significant things
- Affirmative
- Pie __ mode
- Nonclerical
- Indonesian island
- Educational environment
- Namibian peoples
- Bring out or develop
- Moves into a place of thought
- Out of the way
- Loads a ship
- Beloved Hollywood alien
- Distinguishes
- The ancient Egyptian sun god
- Secondary or explanatory title
- Relating to a wing
- One who gives a speech
- In the middle
- Loop with a running knot
- Airborne (abbr.)
- Sweet persons
- Put into play
- Small cattle breed
- Millisecond
- Revolutions per minute
- They __
- Moon crater
- A place to stay the night

Hardwick Fair

264th COMMUNITY





Schedule of Events

FRIDAY, AUGUST 14

- 4:00 PM – 10:00 PM Food Trucks: Big T's, Trolley Dogs, Potato Potato
- 4:00 PM – 10:00 PM Beer Garden: Fieldcrest Brewing
- 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM Tri-Parish Church baked potato bar
- 6:00 PM Opening Ceremonies & Fair Dedication (FLAG POLE)
- 6:15 PM Lumberjack Contest
- 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM Historical Society Opens (EXHIBITS)
- 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM Exhibit Halls Open
- 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM Blacksmithing & Pottery Demonstrations
- 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM Timber Framing Demonstration
- 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM Antique Tractor & Implement Exhibit
- 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM Entertainment (THE OTTERS)

For a complete list of events, exhibits, rules and instructions, visit hardwickfair.com.

Please remember, NO DOGS are permitted at the Fair unless they are a service animal. Owners must provide appropriate tags or certification reflecting that registration and vaccines are current.

Parking: Parking is available at the field on 32A south of the common and at Eagle Hill School, 242 Old Petersham Road, Hardwick.

FREE Shuttle service will be available between Eagle Hill School and the Fair on Friday and Saturday at frequent intervals provided by EHS. Handicapped parking will be available at the Universalist Church and adjacent to the Police Command Center at corner of Barre Rd. and Rte. 32A.



Kindly recycle your beverage containers in the labeled recycling bins located around the Common. The Hardwick Boy Scouts and our town will benefit from your care.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15

- 7:30 AM – 10:30 AM Pancake Breakfast
- 8:00 AM Running of the Road Race (NEW START TIME)
- 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM Kids' Adventure Trail (FAIR OFFICE; TOWN HOUSE)
- 9:00 AM Mountain Bike Ride/Race
- 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM Face Painting (PAGE LIBRARY)
- 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM Exhibit Halls Open
- 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM Friendly Farm Animals Exhibit
- 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM Hardwick Fair-y Village (PAIGE LIBRARY)
- 9:30 AM Cattle Judging
- 9:30 AM – 2:30 PM Blacksmithing Demo
- 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM Hay Rides (MAINE-LY DRAFTS)
- 10:00 AM – 2:30 PM Timber Framing & Pottery Demonstrations
- 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM Book Sale (PAIGE LIBRARY)
- 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM Food Trucks: Big T's, Trolley Dogs, Potato Potato
- 10:45 AM Stone Cutting
- 11:00 AM Dance Demo (GET UP AND DANCE)
- 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM Tri-Parish Church baked potato bar
- 11:00 AM – 7:30 PM Beer Garden: Fieldcrest Brewing
- 12:00 PM Children's Parade
- 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM Entertainment (THE OTTERS)
- 12:30 PM Antique Tractor & Implement Parade
- 1:00 PM Central Mass Rabbit Breeders Display & Demo
- 1:00 PM Frog Jumping Contest (NO TOADS)
- 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM Historical Society Opens (EXHIBITS)
- 1:30 PM Horseshoe Contest
- 2:00 PM Children's Games
- 2:45 PM Tractor Pulls
- 3:30 PM Auction of Exhibits
- 4:30 PM Hardwick Adult Bingo (IN BEER GARDEN)
- 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM Hardwick Farmers Guild Burger Bash
- 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM Entertainment (THE OTTERS)
- 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM Contra Dancing (TOWN HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR)

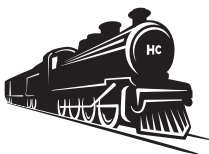


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Warriors finish up season

WILBRAHAM – The Spec Pond Summer Basketball League held playoff last week, utilizing a few sites in addition to the courts at Spec Pond. Tantasqua, a 7-8 team, were involved in a matchup held in Wilbraham at Minnechaug Regional High School.



Madison Peterson struggles to make a layup attempt.



Annabele Creelman starts her way down the court.



Camilla Benitez takes a shot.



Katiein Daboul eyes a teammate down the court.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY
WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Olivia Sujdlon hustles toward the hoop.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
West Side Sports Shop, featuring adult female players from throughout the region, took the PVSSL Women's Championship.

Sport Shop grabs ladies title

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW – Since joining the prestigious Pioneer Valley Summer Soccer League in 2021, West Side Sports Shop has claimed the women's championship title five times.

West Side Sports Shop entered this year's playoffs as the fourth seed. They posted a 2-0 shutout victory over second-seeded W. Mass Xtremes in the women's finals held at historic Lusitano Stadium in Ludlow, last Friday night.

"We might be the fourth seed, but we played very well in the playoffs," said West Side Sports Shop head coach Chris Andre. "We lost to the Xtremes twice during the regular season."

The only year that West

Side Sports Shop didn't take home the championship trophy.

See LADIES PAGE 8



Chapin Jeannotte takes the ball up the sideline.



Sydney Mercier sends a free kick away.



Julianna Beaulieu sends a pass away.



Kaela Mochak heads up the field.

Mount Carmel takes Men's title

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW – Anthony Bourget was an assistant boys' soccer coach under longtime varsity coach John O'Keefe at Minnechaug Regional High School before stepping down at the end of last season.

Bourget was also the head coach of Villa FC, which captured the last two Pioneer Valley Summer Soccer League men's championship titles. Villa FC changed sponsors before the start of the 2026 summer league season and are now known as Mount Carmel FC.

Mason Perham is one of the former Minnechaug soccer players listed on the Mount Carmel roster.

Perham scored a second half goal, which

See MEN'S PAGE 8



Shane Sewell sends a pass away.



Jake Durham plays the ball off his toe.



Deandrae Brown dribbles away from a defender.



Anthony Basile turns play around.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Mount Carmel captured the PVSSL Men's title this year.

- sports -

MEN’S FROM PAGE 7

helped topseeded Mount Carmel FC win the championship title once again with a crisp 2-0 win over secondseeded Rumbleseat before a large crowd at Lusitano Stadium in Ludlow on Friday, July 31.

“We’ve won the last two men’s championship titles with Villa, and this is our first one with Mount Carmel,” Bourget said. “Winning the championship game is something that we expect to do every year. It was a hard fought battle tonight. Rumbleseat played very well against us.”

Mount Carmel FC, who finished the PVSSL regular season with a 10-1-0 record, defeated fourth-seeded CF Ardor, 2-0, in the semifinals.

Rumbleseat, who also lost to Mount Carmel during the regular season, entered the playoffs with a 9-1-1 record. They advanced into the men’s finals for the first time in more than ten years

after knocking off the third-seeded KO Elites FC, 2-1, in the semifinals.

“This is the first time that we’ve made the finals in many years, and it was a fun game tonight,” said Kyle Giroud, who was an outstanding three-sport athlete at Chicopee Comp. “It’s always a great time playing in this league and I’m looking forward to playing again next year.”

Giroud is also a member of the Skidmore College men’s soccer team.

The men’s finals was scoreless at halftime.

Mount Carmel broke the ice four minutes into the second half.

The scoring play began with a crossing pass from Joao Miranda to Deandrae Brown, who fired a shot from the top of the box past Rumbleseat goalie Luke Theroux.

Miranda was selected as the M.V.P. following the match.

About ten minutes later, Perham scored a goal,

which was assisted by Brown.

“It just felt awesome to score a goal in the championship game,” Perham said. “We took control of the game at the start of the second half. We had another great season.”

Perham has been a member of Villa/Mount Carmel for the past four years.

“I’m very happy for Mason,” Bourget said. “He began playing with us the year after he graduated from Minnechaug. We also have a couple of other Minnechaug players on our team. We have a bunch of talented players on this team.”

The other former Minnechaug soccer players listed on the Mount Carmel roster are Kyle Atkin, Nick Cianflone, Chase Henderson, and Cam Rigney.

The members of the Mount Carmel FC are hoping to make it a four-peat in the summer of 2027.

LADIES FROM PAGE 7

phy was in 2024. They beat top seeded Here for Beer in the finals a year ago.

“We’ve set a high strand-ed here,” Andre added. “A number of these players have been playing for me since our first year in this league. We also add a couple of new players each year. The players get along with each other very well and we always have a lot of fun.”

West Side Sports Shop, who finished the 2026 regular season with a 7-4-0 record, defeated the fifth-seeded Lusitano Women, 5-1, in the quarterfinals. Just like they did a year ago, they beat top seeded Here for Beer, 3-2, in the semifinals. West Side Sports also won the regular season match-up Here for Beer.

“Here For Beer is a very talented soccer team,” Andre said. “We played very well against them the other night.”

The West Side Sports Shop captain is Rhiann Ryan, who graduated from Minnechaug a couple of years ago.

“I love being a member of this soccer team,” Ryan said.

“It feels nice to finally beat Xtremes, especially after losing to them twice during the regular season.”

Six other players listed on the Westside Sports Shop roster played soccer for legendary head coach Nundi Goncalves at Minnechaug. They are Emily Howard, Gabby Rita, Lylah Jeannotte, Chapin Jeannotte, Gaby Williams, and Claire Poindexter.

One of the West Side Sports Shop starters in the championship match was Mallory Pereira, who graduated from Ludlow High School.

Julianna Beaulieu, who graduated from Chicopee Comp, was selected as the M.V.P. of the women’s championship game.

“I never expected to be the M.V.P. of this game, but I knew we could win another championship title,” Beaulieu said. “I’ve now won three championships with this team, which is very special. It’s been a lot of fun playing soccer for this team.”

Beaulieu, who played both basketball and soccer at Utica University, scored a pair of goals in the finals.

She got things rolling during the 16th minute of the opening half by putting a shot into the back of the net past goalie Madison Harmon.

“Once the ball left my foot, I knew it was going into the net,” Beaulieu said. “It set the tone for the rest of the game.”

The Xtremes, who went 10-1-0 during the regular season, had an opportunity to tie the score during the 27th minute. Gianna Sakowski, who also graduated from Minnechaug, fired a shot on goal, which sailed high over the crossbar.

Beaulieu scored her second goal early in the second half.

Sara Avery, who was the West Side Sports Shop starting goalie, didn’t have to make very many saves in recording the shutout. Avery lives in Belchertown and she graduated from the MacDuffie School. She’ll be a senior on the AIC women’s soccer team this fall.

The members of the West Side Sports Shop will be looking to win another PVSSL championship title next summer.

PLEASE RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

- public safety -

New Braintree Police Log

During the weeks of July 27-Aug. 10, the Hardwick New Braintree Police Department responded to 29 building/property checks, 47 directed/area patrols, 11 radar assignments, three traffic controls, 10 emergency 911 calls, four safety hazards, three citizen assists, two complaints, one structure fire, one scam, one property damage, two investigations, two motor vehicle accidents, five animal calls and one motor vehicle stop in the town of New Braintree.

Tuesday, July 28
4:03 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Moore Road, Patient Refusal

Wednesday, July 29
1:48 p.m. Assist Citizen, Moore Road, No Action Required
1:52 p.m. Complaint, Barre Road, Spoken To
4:47 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, West Road, Transported to Hospital
5:19 p.m. 911 Fire/

Structure, Pierce Road, Investigated

Thursday, July 30
4:32 a.m. Medical Emergency, West Brookfield Road, Patient Refusal
6:08 a.m. Safety Hazard, Mara Road, Removed Hazard
7:22 p.m. Investigation, Gilbertville Road, Investigated

Saturday, Aug. 1
6:17 p.m. Assist Citizen, Hardwick Road, Officer Handled

Sunday, Aug. 2
6:44 p.m. Complaint, West Road, Officer Handled

Monday, Aug. 3
9:13 a.m. 911 Safety Hazard, Hardwick Road, Services Rendered
11:01 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Moore Road, Transported to Hospital
2:25 p.m. Property Damage, Old Turnpike Road, Call Canceled

8:41 p.m. 911 Safety Hazard, West Road, Referred to Other Agency

Tuesday, Aug. 4
2:11 p.m. 911 Motor Vehicle Crash, Barre Road, Transported to Hospital

Wednesday, Aug. 5
3:50 p.m. 911 Motor Vehicle Crash, Moore Road, Officer Handled
11:11 p.m. Investigation, Worcester Road, Services Rendered

Thursday, Aug. 6
1:55 p.m. Assist Citizen, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled
4:49 p.m. Scam, Memorial Drive, Referred to Other Agency

Saturday, Aug. 8
4:22 a.m. Medical Alarm, Barre Road, Services Rendered

Monday, Aug. 10
7:29 a.m. Safety Hazard, Worcester Road, Services Rendered

Otis Avenue fire displaces 18 residents

WARE – On May 22 at 10:47 p.m. the West-Comm Regional Dispatch received a call reporting a fire at 22-28 Otis Avenue.

A full fist alarm assignment was dispatched and on arrival the first crew found a working fire with heavy smoke and flames pushing form unit 26. A second and third alarm assignment was called for by incident command.

There was initially a report of possible entrapment, it was determined that all the residents had evacuated prior to the first crew’s arrival.

The main body of the fire was quickly knocked down and contained to the unit of origin. The size and construction of the apartment complex required

extensive time to ensure there was no extension beyond the unit of origin.

National Grid was called to the scene, and power was shut off to the structure. Red Cross was also requested to assist the 18 displaced occupants. Many of the residents have been relocated to a temporary shelter at the Town Hall with the assistance of the Red Cross and Town/Emergency Manager Stuart Beckley.

There were no injuries reported.

Building Commissioner Anna Marques has ordered the building to be secured, as it is currently uninhabitable due to extensive smoke and water damage. The State Fire Marshal’s office in con-

junction with Ware Police and Fire departments are conducting an investigation into the cause and it appears currently to be accidental.

Mutual aid was received from Warren, Monson, Palmer, Belchertown, West Brookfield, Three Rivers, Hardwick, Wilbraham, Brookfield, Granby Longmeadow and East Longmeadow and the Massachusetts State Police.

“I would like to thank the Department of Fire Services Support and Rehab unit Red Cross, and the Rehab 78 unit and its canteen for their assistance in not only supporting our efforts but the aid rendered to the building’s residents,” Fire Chief James Martinez stated in a press release.

- public notices -

TOWN OF NORTH BROOKFIELD ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Notice is hereby given that the North Brookfield Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on **Monday, August 24, 2026, at 6:15 p.m.** at the North Brookfield Senior Center, 29 Forest Street, North Brookfield, Massachusetts.

The purpose of the hearing is to consider the application of New England Power Company for a Special Permit and a Variance from the front yard setback for the expansion of an existing electrical substation at 39 East Brookfield Road, North Brookfield, MA.

The application is filed pursuant to the Town of North Brookfield Zoning Bylaws. Section IV, C.1 (Business General District) allows any use permitted under Section IV, A.2, except subsections (f) and (h). Section IV, A.2(e) provides that a power substation is permitted by Special Permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals. Any person interested or wishing to be heard on this matter is invited to attend the public hearing.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the North Brookfield Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40A and the Town of North Brookfield Zoning Bylaw North Brookfield Zoning Board of Appeals 08/14, 08/21/26

TOWN OF NORTH BROOKFIELD ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Notice is hereby given that the North Brookfield Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on **Monday, August 24, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.** at the North Brookfield Senior Center, 29 Forest Street, North Brookfield, Massachusetts.

The purpose of the hearing is to consider the application of John Nurik, 28 Lakeview Road, North Brookfield, MA, regarding property located at 18 Park Street, North Brookfield, MA.

The applicant proposes to demolish the existing camp and construct a garage with a dwelling unit on the second floor. The Building Inspector has determined that the existing structure constitutes an existing dwelling and that reconstruction of the dwelling requires a Special Permit pursuant to the Town of North Brookfield Zoning Bylaws, Section VI, B.4.

Any person interested or wishing to be heard on this matter is invited to attend the public hearing.

North Brookfield Zoning Board of Appeals 08/07, 08/14/2026

TOWN OF NORTH BROOKFIELD ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Notice is hereby given that the North Brookfield Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public

Hearing on **Monday, August 24, 2026, at 6:45 p.m.** at the North Brookfield Senior Center, 29 Forest Street, North Brookfield, Massachusetts.

The purpose of the hearing is to consider the application of Kenneth Epstein, 90 Bell Street, North Brookfield, MA, regarding property located at 90 Bell Street, North Brookfield, MA.

The applicant proposes to relocate the construction of a garage within the required front and side yard setbacks due to the topography of the property. The property is located in the R-30 Zoning District, where the minimum front yard setback is 50 feet and the minimum side yard setback is 15 feet. The proposed garage would be located 40 feet from the front lot line and 7 feet from the side lot line.

The application requests variances from the required front and side yard setbacks pursuant to Section VII, B.3 of the Town of North Brookfield Zoning Bylaws.

Any person interested or wishing to be heard on this matter is invited to attend the public hearing.

North Brookfield Zoning Board of Appeals 08/07, 08/14/2026

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BOARD FROM PAGE 1

are owned by both companies. Select Board Chair Jamie Goodwin clarified that this pole was initiated by the town.

A resident from Gardner Avenue also spoke during the discussion, saying he was concerned about the location of the new pole. The resident said he was concerned whether it would be located too close to the road, since during the winter, he uses the berm of the road to safely navigate it.

The board recommended he look at where the stake is for the new location, and contact the board with any concerns.

The Select Board approved the pole as presented by National Grid.

Town Administrator's report

Town Administrator Rob-in Grimm thanked residents for their feedback and questions regarding the design hearing for the Douty Road project. She said to follow the town administrator's Facebook page for more information.

Grimm said the design will be expensive, up to 10% of the cost of the whole project. She said Community Preservation Committee funds will be going toward the project, and it will be an article on a future special town meeting.

Grimm also said the town is working on a battery energy storage system bylaw as a way to control what comes in. She said if it is a larger scale project, the town does not have control, but if it is a smaller scale project, the town could have some input. Grimm said this bylaw is not meant to encourage the systems in the town.

Abatement

Resident Jennifer Olsen Pratt came to the Select

Board requesting an abatement for a water and sewer bill. She said the water use report spiked in January, went back to normal in March, but she only learned about the issue in April.

Pratt said she first came to the board for an abatement on June 1.

Pratt said she spoke with a contractor about a filtration system she used, and the contractor said if it were to fail, it would not correct on its own, and would leak 1.5 gallons per minute at a maximum, which would add up to 130,000 gallons, which was not close to the reading of over 200,000 gallons. Pratt said there was no evidence of a leak in her home, and she spent about \$1,000 on various repairs to the water system.

She said the water does not flush into a sewer, but into a French drain, and there was no evidence of a washout from the reading of over 200,000 gallons.

The resident said the meter may have been misrepresenting her usage.

Dowling noted the town takes the position that a meter cannot intermittently fail then go back to normal, as Pratt's meter did, but she did some research that suggested pressure from condensed air during hydrant flushing could spin the meter at very high rates.

Dowling said there was a similar incident with another resident in the past, and suggested a partial abatement.

The board discussed what would be a fair amount, noting that the decision from this abatement could set a precedent, and a motion was passed to abate the bill by half.

Appointments

The board appointed Leilani Paul to the Cultural

Council for a term ending Aug. 3, 2029; Barbara Search to the Community Preservation Committee as an at-large member for a term ending Aug. 3, 2029; and Maxine Carter-Lome to the Historical Commission for a term to end Aug. 3, 2029. Lome said she was previously the chair of Egremont Historical Commission.

Administrative items

The board issued a one day liquor license to Oakholm Brewing Company for an event at Pickleball-U on Aug. 21, and also approved a charity wine auction license for a gala at Old Sturbridge Village on Sept. 26.

Representatives from OSV said this is to be held from 5-7 p.m. that night as part of cocktail hour during a raffle portion.

The board also approved the minutes of June 15, 2026 and July 20, 2026.

State Primary

The board signed the warrant for the Sept. 1 State Primary election. Per the website (sturbridge.gov), early voting starts on Aug. 22 from 9 a.m.-5p.m. and the week of Aug. 24-28 during normal business hours.

Voting on Sept. 1 will be at the Sturbridge Host Hotel from 6:30 a.m.-8 p.m.

GRANT FROM PAGE 1

thanks to firefighters in the state, and the state itself, and said this funding better helps to equip communities. Regan said fire stations use the money for personal protective equipment, tools, pumps and radios to name a few.

Director of Rural Affairs Anne Gobi said these grants show support for local communities, and also called out the impor-

and put together a budget. He said some of the jobs, like the Water Commissioners are not the job of the Town Administrator, but did bring up initiating a water treatment plant during his time as Mayor, which started when he was a water commissioner.

When asked how he recovered from something, he said sometimes the town would hire people they thought were qualified, who did not end up succeeding, but always worked through it and corrected it, by employing people in the places that fit them best.

Kokoros said he chose Brookfield because he comes out to the region for work, and saw the opportunity, saying he is passionate about local government. He said that he thought he would be a good fit for the position.

Ryan Egan

Egan was president of the Randolph Town Council for eight months and also works as an executive aid in Gardner.

According to his LinkedIn, he has been a town councilor in Randolph since 2017, was the economic development manager in Braintree from February 2025 to October 2025, and was chief of staff in Marlborough from January 2024 to February 2025.

Egan was also a public information officer in Framingham, and a solid waste and recycling coordinator in Randolph.

Egan said he has done training in the Massachusetts Municipal Association for finance and human resources, and MCPPPO training.

Egan said a lot of the duties of the Town Administrator are the same as the duties as chief of staff, including working with HR, procurement and the day-

- obituary -

John Sauve, 62

WEST BROOKFIELD – John Sauve, a beloved son, brother, and friend, passed away unexpectedly on Aug. 8, 2026, after many health complications, at the age of 62.

Born on Dec. 10, 1963, in California. John was a man whose life was a vibrant tapestry of music, sports, and devotion to friends and family.

John was the cherished son of Geraldine “Gerry” Sauve and the late Richard F. Sauve of West Brookfield, where his mother resides, and where John found solace and joy later in his life. A proud graduate of Longmeadow High School, John embarked on multiple career paths over the years.

John's heart belonged to the world of sports and music. An ardent fan of the Grateful Dead and Jerry Garcia, he found rhythm and soul as a long-time drummer for the band The Wind.

His love for sports was

equally profound, as he enjoyed playing hockey and softball, and he enjoyed cheering for the Red Sox, Patriots, Vikings, and Blackhawks. His enthusiasm also extended to the thrilling world of racing where he attended many Formula One races in Montreal and the Indy 500 over the years. John is survived by his loving brother, Rick Sauve, and sister-in-law, Linda, of West Suffield, Connecticut. Together with his mother, Gerry, they grieve the loss of a son and brother who will be remembered for his infectious smile, his love for music, and his passion for sports.

His spirit will live on in the hearts of all who knew and loved him.

Family, friends, and all those whose lives he touched are invited to honor his memory and



celebrate the legacy he leaves behind services will be held on Aug. 19, 2026, from 10-11:30 a.m. followed by a funeral home service at 11:30 a.m. at Forastiere Smith Funeral and Cremation, located at 220 North Main St., East Longmeadow.

Memorial donations in John's memory can be made to the American Cancer Society, an organization close to his heart. Contributions will support their ongoing efforts in the fight against cancer.

For more details and to share condolences please visit www.forastiere.com.

DEATH NOTICE

Sauve, John
Died Aug. 8, 2026
Services Aug. 19, 2026

INTERVIEW FROM PAGE 1

get on the same page, and give them knowledge of what he is working on.

The board also asked how he would shift jobs that are being done by other employees that could be shifted to the Town Administrator. Surprise said he would not take those items on before he is oriented, but would look for things that others are doing that he could be doing after 90 days of employment.

Surprise submitted a 90 day plan to the board along with his resume.

The board asked how he recovered from a plan that went awry, and he used the example of a sponsorship program put on by the chambers of commerce he worked for. He said in the Quaboag region, there were large organizations that could contribute, but in the Windsor region, most of them were very small, so he reached out to C-suite executives to ask what it would take to get them to join the chamber. He said after some work with bringing ideas to the table, he got over a dozen buy-ins including Amazon and Bradley International Airport.

Surprise said he applied for Brookfield because he likes the region, and was considering work in town administration. He said that he knows the issues, and is looking for stability.

Surprise said he has started his Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official training as well.

Charles Kokoros

Kokoros served as the Mayor of Braintree, and said he has 30 years of experience in municipal government, including serving on a select board and numerous other boards and committees.

According to his LinkedIn profile, Kokoros was the

president of the Braintree Town Council from January 2008 to January 2020, and the Mayor from January 2020 to January 2024, and also works as a consultant.

Kokoros said he understands collaboration, city and town government, and that the town administrator is an advisory position, as opposed to his time as Mayor when he made the final decisions.

Kokoros said in his last position, he was responsible for a lot, including employees, and he said that he was hands-on during critical incidents. He said his experience has made him well versed in dealing with different incidents. Kokoros said that he stays calm and leads others by example.

When asked about the Highway Department, Kokoros said it is a challenge to the town not having staff, and it will take a big effort to fill the positions. He said that in Braintree, they went through personnel loss during COVID as well, and implemented a program to bring in temporary, part-time or casual workers to address the problem immediately.

He said one of the strategies was finding people with Commercial Drivers' Licenses, providing pathways to obtain one, or assigning them labor that could be done without one.

Kokoros said his approach with working with the select board would be to make sure they are front and center in what is happening, knowing what is happening day-to-day, and informing the public. He said all feedback from the public would come through himself.

He said it is important to get some of the jobs not being done by the Town Administrator back to that position so they can understand budget challenges,

to-day operations. He said that he wants to work with boards and be hands-on.

When asked about the Highway Department, Egan said the town would always be ready for the storm if he is the Town Administrator, and plans for nor'easters regardless of the staff, and said he is hands on for events, in the office and community.

Egan said the staffing situation needs to be resolved as soon as possible, with retention, noting he did not see any benefits in the job descriptions. Egan brought up the possibility of paying for specialty licenses or compensating employees for their studies.

Egan said communication is in his 90 day plan. He said that he has struggled to get information as a town councilor, and the board needs to know what is going on in the town.

He said that he'd provide weekly reports, and if there is an emergency, a report immediately. Egan also brought up shared goals.

Egan said that when he was in Marlborough, he was tasked with moving the office forward, and saw that they needed another body in the office, and presented the idea of a communications director to the town council, which they were not supportive of. He said that they fought for it, and could have done a better job with the presentation.

He said grants can go a long way in Brookfield, and he has worked extensively on them, and has put it as a priority in the 90 day plan. Egan said he coordinated a Community One Stop for Growth plan, and said a lot of applications are competitive.

He also noted that legislative earmarks are just as much if not more than grants, and are important to

pursue. He said they can be less restrictive than grants, noting he received an earmark for a dog park at one time.

Egan said that he is looking to put down roots, and is looking for a contract of at least three years in Brookfield, saying the job comes first and if he does leave, he would leave the town on the best terms. He said that it is an in person job, and he would show up, and work on employee morale.

Appointment

In a joint meeting with the town administrator search committee on Aug. 10, committee chair Jeff Clark took a moment to thank the candidates who applied, and the committee for going through the process of applications and interviews.

Clark said all three candidates had their own strengths, and the search committee thought any of the three candidates could have performed the job.

Clark said the interviews were insightful, giving information into how other towns operate, and he noted that the candidates were close together, and they could not rank order them.

During the Select Board discussion, member Rich-

ard Chaffee made the motion to move forward with Egan because of his municipal experience. Chaffee said he answered the interview questions “spot on.”

Board member Beth Coughlin echoed the thoughts of the search committee, saying any of the three could have done the job. She said Surprise's experience in chambers of commerce could have benefited economic development fitting the character of the town, and said he had the raw skills for the job.

Coughlin said Kokoros had a lot of high level experience, but also served on other boards, but his executive position could have made the transition into day-to-day operations difficult.

She said Egan had the most hands-on experience doing the work.

The board voted unanimously to move forward in contract negotiations with Egan, with Chair Sarah Campbell following up with him during the process. Campbell said a draft contract has been provided by town counsel.

Campbell also said that she had reached out to some of Egan's references.

Quaboag Current

OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

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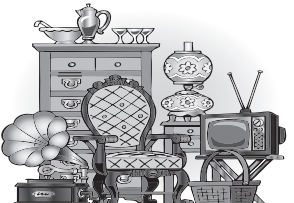
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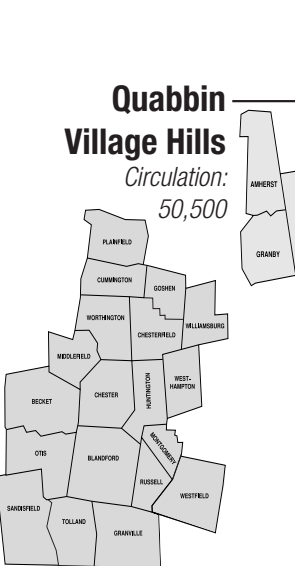
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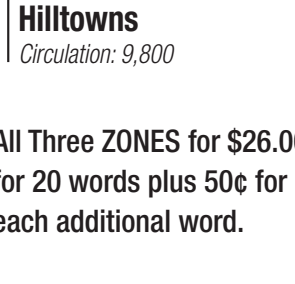
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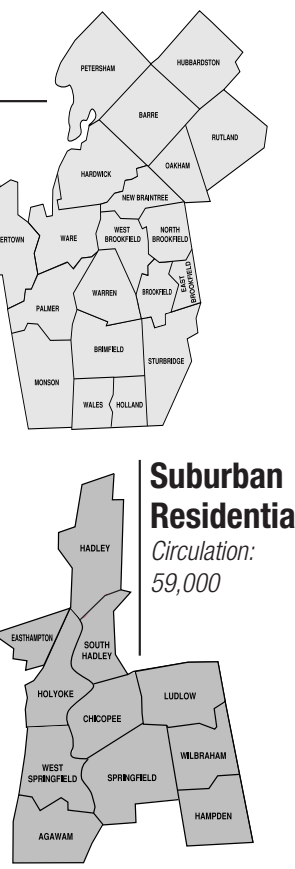
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FAIR FROM PAGE 1

light them, and the small businesses.”

In addition to promoting agriculture, the Agricultural Commission also wanted to give the youth in the area a chance to learn about agriculture. The commission hosted a kid’s planting contest, which drew a total of 15 entrants.

Kids entered flowers and vegetables they grew themselves.

Layne Beaudry received first place for her sunflower. Caleb Allen entered a cucumber and squash he planted and also received a first-place ribbon.

Larry Lewis performed under the gazebo, which was supported by a grant from the Brookfield Community Club.

In continuance to increase knowledge and promote agriculture in the community, the Brookfield Agricultural Commission will introduce a new event on Sept. 19 – a Farm Hop – that will begin at 10 a.m.

The Tip Top Co-Op in Brookfield received a grant for a van so people can meet up and travel to all the different farms in town.

Jennifer Sutton of J. Sutton Studio in Brookfield has been a potter for six years and this was her first year at the fair. Her work consists of mugs, dishes and other practical ceramic items.

Her pottery is seasoned based and nature based. Some of the mugs have hand-painted plants and herbs added to the base of the mugs. She also had bee water cups, and leaf dishes for sale.

Beyond Yoga & Wellness of Spencer hosted a puppy yoga session on the common during the fair. Several puppies provided comfort and relaxation while over a dozen people participated in a yoga class.

There were also rabbits from the American Rabbit Breeders Association. ARBA members Pat and Charlotte Schmidt have 50 rabbits at their home that are shown at events throughout the entire country.

“They’re here to interact with people,” Schmidt said.

Queenie was one of the adventurous rabbits hopping along the table and greeting fairgoers. Baloo was another rabbit who also

enjoyed visits from guests.

Nearby was a 4-H Club out of Belchertown, an animal science club featuring hedgehogs, a ball python, leopard gecko, sand boa, a bearded dragon and Harry the iguana. The group also had 3D prints for guests to decorate.

Oakholt Farm of Brookfield also had some of their farm animals featured at the Brookfield Agricultural Fair. There were two goats, a Nigerian Dwarf and a Nubian cross. Oakholt Farm also had two calves, one a Brown Swiss and the other an Angus cross.

Oakholt Farm also provided tractor rides around the common.

The history of cotton was presented during the fair with several historians and wheel spinners showing off the art of spinning cotton. Debbie Adamczyk of Warren has been spinning cotton for the last 15 years and uses a great wheel from the 1800s.

Adamczyk showed all the hand grip marks on the wheel where the paint is taken off from the constant hand grips.

“Shows how much it’s used,” Adamczyk said.

Adamczyk fell in love with the craft and has had the historic great wheel for about 20 years.



Nick Parker of Nick the Carver of Brimfield is shown alongside his wood carvings of bears and owls.



Above, Debbie Adamczyk shared the history of cotton and demonstrated spinning with the use of a great wheel from the 1800s. Left, Queenie from the American Rabbit Breeders Association was hopping around meeting new friends during the Brookfield Agricultural Fair. Below, Harry the iguana from a 4-H Club in Belchertown was all smiles.



and bears are made out of white pine and birch wood, and some are painted with milk paint. Parker is currently experimenting on designing other animals out of wood and he will soon

be introducing carvings of snakes and cardinals.

Bucket List Maple Syrup of West Brookfield has been in the syrup business for over 10 years.

Tom Meade and Mar-



TURLEY PHOTOS BY RYAN DRAGO
Tom Meade and Martha Bryenton are the owners of Bucket List Maple Syrup in West Brookfield who attended the 3rd annual Brookfield Agricultural Fair this past weekend.



Taima and Hannah of Willow Brook Academy in Brookfield.



Above, Larry Lewis performed under the gazebo in the center of Brookfield Common.

tha Bryenton built their sugar house in 2015 and also added an evaporator to start producing small batches of maple syrup. The pair have also rehabilitated maple trees and bushes during their business run.

Bucket List Maple Syrup now has around 500 taps and provides maple syrup in the local area. Their

daughter Deanna is the artist behind the decorative Bucket List Maple Syrup sign that could be seen at their booth during the fair.

There were also T-shirts at their booth and were designed by their daughter Meaghan.

The agricultural community came together during the 3rd annual Brookfield Agricultural Fair, which will return next summer to the common.

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Send Us Your Community Autumn Events

Turley Publications will print your Summer event FREE OF CHARGE in our Autumn Fest Supplement which will be published September 9, 2026.

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Event Should Be Non-Profit & Open to the Public

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MAIL YOUR LISTING INFORMATION TO: Turley Publications, Attn: Jamie Joslyn, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069 or email* them to: jamie@turley.com *Be sure to indicate "Summer Event" in the subject line of your email.

Event Name _____

Date/Time _____

Location _____

Description _____

Cost _____

Contact name & phone number for more information _____

Please specify if you would like your name and number printed in the paper.

Cultural council sponsors ‘Freedomfest’ on Aug. 15

BROOKFIELD – The Brookfield Cultural Council is sponsoring many upcoming events including the 250th Celebration/Freedomfest on Saturday, Aug. 15 from 10 a.m.-7 p.m. on the common.

All are welcome to come an “party like it’s 1776” on the common.

There will be performances throughout the day, including Spooner Well from 10 a.m.-noon; African Dance from noon-1 p.m.; Haphazard Jazz from 1-3 p.m.; Paras Project from 3-5 p.m.; and East Coast Soul from 5-7 p.m.

In the Children’s Corner, Julie’s Music and Movement will be held from 10:30 a.m.-noon.

Activities and games include Colonial games, hair tinsel, sand art, face painting, American Flag T-shirt making, touch-a-truck and a maze organized by Scout Troop 238.

There will also be vendors, food and beverages offered by Fiore Café, BCC Hot Dogs, Angry Panda, Wandering Buzz, Oakholm Brewing Co., Deep Roots Distillery, Brimfield Winery, Smashing Patties, Thee Taco Dude and Nayomy’s

Small Bites.

Visual displays and interactive art include Blair House Blooms, Commonwealth Vintage Dancers, graffiti art, Tumbao Latin Dance, caricature artist, armed services, National Guard Lancers, Brookfield Orchards and the Library Annex Museum.

There will be contests for the “Best Colonial/American Attire” and “Best American (Red, White and Blue) Dessert.”

Other cultural council events include Friday, Aug. 21 from 6-8 p.m., concert by Chuck N Mud; Sept.

26 from noon-4 p.m., It’s a Small Town Thing/Stars Hollow Fest 2026; Oct. 24 at 5 p.m., Pumpkinfest; Nov. 7 from 6-8 p.m. in the Library Annex barn, Johnny Cash: Songs & Stories; Dec. 5 from 3-5 p.m. in the Library Annex barn, Wreath Making Class; and Dec. 5 at 5 p.m., Annual Tree Lighting.

All events are held on the common unless otherwise noted.

For more information and up-to-date information about these events, follow “Brookfield Cultural Council” on Facebook.

Concerts on the Common continue on Saturdays

NORTH BROOKFIELD – North Brookfield Parks and Recreation, in conjunction with North Brookfield Cultural Council, will be hosting Concerts on the Common this summer season.

A Mass Cultural Council grant is making these concerts possible for all residents to enjoy.

Dates and bands include Aug. 15 from 6-8 p.m. – Stan Matthews, country music with some exceptional Johnny Cash tunes; and Aug. 29 from

3-5 p.m. – the Superchargers, a fun rock and roll band.

All concerts are free. Food will be available for purchase but folks are welcome to bring their own.

Feel free to bring chairs, blankets, bug spray and sunscreen – whatever makes you comfortable.

The playground is right on the common, located on Grove Street in town. There will also be games for families to enjoy and some surprise craft tables during some concerts.

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