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Volume 19, Number 18

A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

September 18, 2026



Lisa O'Keefe and Brad Slater presented a brick to American Legion Post 244 Vice Commander David Tebo to be placed in the walkway during the 9/11 remembrance ceremony.

TURLEY PHOTO BY PAULA OUIMETTE

West Brookfield remembers 9/11

By Paula Ouimette

Editor

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WEST BROOKFIELD – Members of the Adams-Coney-Frew American Legion Post 244 held a 9/11 ceremony to remember the attacks that took place 25 years ago on Sept.

11, 2001.

Post Commander Jeff Nickerson was master of ceremonies, and he thanked those who attended to remember people who lost their lives in the attacks.

“We gather here tonight...to remember, to honor, and never forget,” he said.

Nickerson spoke about the importance of remembering the events of 9/11, which forever changed life in the U.S.

“We believe that some memories must never be allowed to fade,” he said.

Nickerson added that a quarter of a century have now passed since the at-

tacks, and that it “hardly seems possible.”

“The memories of that Tuesday are still sharp,” he said.

For many, Sept. 11, 2001, was just another day to go to work, or go to school. There was no

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Back Roads Studio Tour Oct. 3-4

Area artists and crafters open studios to the public

By Paula Ouimette

Editor

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Since 1994, the Back Roads Studio Tour has given people the opportunity to experience firsthand the creative process of local crafters and artists by visiting their studios across the region.

This year's tour will be held Saturday and Sunday,

Oct. 3 and 4 from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., and includes studios in Barre, Gilbertville, North Brookfield, Petersham, Spencer and Ware.

Founded by the Hardwick Artists Guild, the Back Roads Studio Tour was at first limited to a handful of artists in the town of Hardwick, but later grew to include studios in surrounding towns from the central part of the state.

This year, the tour will include a western Massa-

See BACK ROADS TOUR PAGE 6



TURLEY PHOTO BY PAULA OUIMETTE

This wool applique was made by Lou Meyerdirks of Pieceful Primitives in Spencer. Meyerdirks' studio is one of eight featured on the Back Roads Studio Tour, Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 3 and 4 from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Olde Home Day celebrates town's 275th anniversary

By Paula Ouimette

Editor

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NEW BRAINTREE – For the past year, the town's 275th Anniversary Committee has been planning a series of celebratory events to mark the milestone, including the upcoming Olde Home Day.

Olde Home Day will be held on Saturday, Oct. 3, rain or shine, from 1-8 p.m. and will feature a day filled with family fun and activities, live music, food and

drinks, a bonfire, touch-a-truck and of course, a parade.

The committee consist of members Joe Chen-evert, Jessica Bennett, Dick Reavey, Claire Reavey, Dody Ayer, Deborah Morrison, Joe Salvadore and Amie Lefevre, along with support from Police Chief Kevin Landine, Fire Chief Dennis Letendre Jr. as well as many community members.

“My hope is that we have so many people come out and celebrate,” Bennett

said.

The town's 275th year kicked off with a July 5 concert, which also celebrated the nation's 250th anniversary of its independence from British rule. Community members gathered on the green around the newly built pavilion to enjoy music performed by the U.S. Air Force Heritage of America Band.

“It was really heartwarming to see,” Morrison

See OLDE HOME DAY PAGE 9

Select Board discusses solar bylaw

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis

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STURBRIDGE – The Select Board discussed a solar bylaw that is planned to be put on a special town meeting warrant on Nov. 16, and is currently being worked on by the Planning Board.

Town Planner Aidan Adams was at the meeting, and explained that it first needs to be presented to voters at a public hearing, which is set for Sept. 28.

This bylaw comes after the town passed a moratorium on battery energy solar

systems at a previous town meeting, but the state denied the moratorium, as they did with every other municipality that implemented one, according to Town Administrator Robin Grimm.

She said people from the state gave some input as to what could be put on the bylaw and be allowed, along with what rules could go too far.

Grimm said the new regulations are set to come out on Oct. 1, and any town without a bylaw by that point will have to go by the state's rules until a new one is passed and accepted by the state.

She said since the state did not issue guidelines until the end of August, it was impossible to get a town meeting set before that day, and Nov. 16 was the closest the town could get to the deadline.

Grimm said there are already inquiries coming in for potential sites.

Grimm said with the BESS systems, if they are above 25 megawatts of storage, the state rules apply anyway, and any bylaw passed by the town becomes irrelevant. She said parts

See STURBRIDGE PAGE 10

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- community -

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Flea Market returns to the Common

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
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WEST BROOKFIELD – The flea market on the common hosted by the First Congregational Church of West Brookfield, has been an annual event for over 50 years.

Karen Murphy has been organizing the flea market for the last five years and she credited the volunteers who made it possible this past Saturday. A total of 20 church volunteers helped out in this year's flea market.

Murphy said this year's flea market was a sell out year with 50 vendors and is essential to help the church's mission.

"Our mission is the community," she said.

According to Terry Hall of the First Congregational Church, all the church volunteers "were working as a team" to make this flea market a successful one

The flea market held on Sept. 12, continued many of the same traditions as it has over the decades, and also introduced some new ones.



Tracy Fontaine purchased a display ladder during the West Brookfield Flea Market

This year, the First Congregational Church presented a donation table featuring items donated by members of the church and individual donors.

One of the donors, Wally Connor, provided items that were collected from all over the world.

For many years, a member of the First Congregational Church designed a quilt for the flea market. Mary Deotte made another quilt this year that was raffled off to support the pastor's discretionary fund.

The church had the grill

out in front of the building cooking hot dogs, hamburgers and providing snacks for guests.

You never know what you're going to find at a flea market, and Tracy Fontaine came across a display ladder at one of the vendors, and she knew she needed to have it – not for climbing, but for decorating purposes. A deal was made as Fontaine took the display ladder home.

Boy Scout Troop 118 provided some entertainment with a Gaga pit was set up so children could join in on the fun.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY RYAN DRAGO

Assistant Scoutmaster Greg Bryant was joined by members of the troop to try and welcome new recruits at the flea market. Shortly after the flea market began, the Boy Scouts had two new recruits signed up.

Many vendors in this year's flea market were repeat vendors who come on an annual basis. Ollie Nichols is a tattoo artist from Vibrant Visions in Ludlow, who was in her third year as a vendor for this flea market.

Harry Burgess of Harry's Homemade Crafts of Spencer arrived this year. Burgess has been the owner and operator of Harry's Homemade Crafts for the past year and provides wooden decorations that ship all over the U.S.

His decorations include wood carvings of the American Flag with added features such as seals of military branches, sports teams and town departments.

The day before the flea market Burgess gifted one of his wooden decorations to the retiring Police Chief of Spencer.

The weather for the flea market was perfect as members of the First Congregational Church were pleased to see a great turnout of vendors and customers.



Artist Leslie Tracy is shown alongside a frame of her artwork that customers could purchase prints of.



The First Congregational Church held a bake sale during the Flea Market on Sept. 12.



The quilt made by Mary Deotte was raffled off to support the pastor's discretionary fund.



Homemade patriotic wood crafts were made by Harry Burgess of Harry's Homemade Crafts.

Senior Center lists upcoming events in September

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The North Brookfield Senior Center, located at 29 Forest St., will offer the following programs during the month of September.

Activities and events include: Bingo night on Sept. 18 from 6-7:30 p.m. Music Bingo on Sept. 21 at 11 a.m.; Greendale Friends Retiree Chorus on Sept. 23 at 1 p.m.; Ed Spater (Medicare Counselor) on Sept. 24 from

10 a.m.-1 p.m. by appointment; art class on Sept. 24 at 11 a.m.; coffee and crafts on Sept. 26 at 11 a.m. (registration required); Strength and Flexibility on Sept. 28 from 10-11 a.m.; Registry of Deeds on Sept. 29 at 1 p.m.; and a blood pressure/glucose clinic will be held on Sept. 30 from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Ongoing activities include Interactive Games on Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m.

East Brookfield library lists upcoming events

EAST BROOKFIELD – The East Brookfield Public Library, 122 Connie Mack Drive, listed upcoming events and ongoing programs.

Fall Reading program
Continue the Summer Reading program into the fall starting Sept. 1. Come pick up your reading log and bag complete the reading activities and qualify for two Springfield Thunderbirds game tickets, for a game in January 2027.

Books on your reading log must be checked out from the library.

These tickets are not transferable and are picked

up on game day at the MMC in Springfield. Ride on the Fanboni, meet the Thunderbirds Mascot. Additional tickets may be purchased at a reduced price.

New Story Time
A new Story Time for children ages 6 months to 6 years old will be held on Mondays at 10:30 a.m. Children will play games, listen to stories, and create art projects to take home.

Caregivers are required to stay with the child. One adult caregiver is required for every two children.

Movie Time
Stop by the library with your lunch and enjoy a block buster movie and meet new friends. Movies and times

are "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" on Oct. 13 at 1 p.m.; and "The Librarian" on Nov. 10 at 1 p.m.

Cribbage Club
Cribbage Club for all levels of experience will be held at 4 p.m. on Mondays, Sept. 21, Oct. 5, 26, Nov. 2, 16 and 30.

American Mahjongg
Stop by and learn to play American Mahjongg or help others learn together on Tuesdays, Sept. 22, Oct. 6, 20, Nov. 3, 17 and Dec. 1 at 2 p.m.

Haunt the Town Hall/movie
The library will play "It's the Great Pumpkin Charlie Brown" movie starting at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, Oct.

29. Children in costume can then Haunt the Town Hall after the movie.

A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving
The Charlie Brown Thanksgiving movie will be played on Thursday, Nov. 19 at 3:30 p.m. A Charlie Brown Feast will be served.

Tag Sale
A Tag Sale will be held at the library on Saturday, Sept. 26 (rain date Oct. 3) from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Set up starts at 9 a.m.

Reserve your post by visiting the library. Please do not call as library staff want to make sure you understand how and where you will set up. items may be left after the sale.

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Select Board discusses and approves policies

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Staff Writer
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WEST BROOKFIELD – The Select Board discussed financial and police department policies at the Sept. 2 meeting, and also heard updates about the assessing and treasurer/collector offices.

Town Administrator Theresa Cofske gave the board an update on a contract with Regional Resource Group, a firm out of Leominster to help with assessing duties. She said the contract was signed last year, and the work they have done has already paid for the contract.

She said with the group’s help, the town found \$163,000 worth of money that had not been taxed, and will go into the tax rolls, and will raise the levy limit of the town.

Cofske also gave an update on delinquent taxes, saying the town has collected \$202,000 worth, which is 78% over last year’s collection of \$78,000. She said in fiscal year 2024, the town only collected \$10,000 in delinquent taxes.

The board approved a purchase order policy, which Cofske said centralizes purchases exceeding \$500, as they have to be approved.

There is an exception for departments that use the same vendor on a regular basis for services.

Cofske said that the blanket policy goes up to \$3,000.

The board also extended the budget freeze, with Chair Henry Brogna saying it makes sense to keep it in place until the new purchase order policy is running. Cofske said the new policy may help with the reasons the budget freeze was initially implemented though.

The board accepted a certificate of good standing policy as well, which will affect things like electrical and plumbing inspection taxes. Cofske said this policy will be used for all permits and licensing, and allows the boards that control them to be on the same page.

She said if someone owes taxes on their license or permits, they would not be eligible for things like liquor licenses until the tax is paid off.

The board also accepted police department policies around responses to calls and property management. Police Chief Nathan Haglund said calls are either non-emergency, urgent or emergency, and the dispatch center will make that designation, but in cases where calls come in with little information, the officer is able

to make that designation for themselves.

He said the property management policy has to do with the taking and safeguarding of property.

FY 25 audit

Cofske read through the FY 25 financial audit, saying the town has a strong financial team, and the three page audit was one of the shortest she had seen. She said many of the items listed are things the town is already working on, including special revenue funds, as there was a linkage issue that has been resolved.

Cofske also mentioned the cemetery revolving fund, saying receivables are coming in, but the expenditures are not matching, as there are more funds than expenses, so there is no concern there.

Cofske said there were some unnecessary or improperly documented accounts that have been resolved, and American Rescue Plan Act funds are going to be monitored going forward.

Cofske mentioned the water department billing, as they do not bill and collect, but the assessing office can create commitments and authorize the treasurer/collector’s office to send the bills.

Cofske said there need

to be some free cash certification improvements to resolve penalties and timing issues, and the end of year closing of the financial books process needs work. She also noted the single audit threshold has increased to \$1 million of federal funding, up from \$750,000.

New Select Board member

The board welcomed Jordan Brooks as a member of the Select Board, as he won the seat at the Sept. 1 election. Brogna thanked Alan Rose for participating.

White Christmas Committee

A member of the White Christmas Committee inquired about the grand hall in the Town Hall, as there is a hole in the ceiling. She was seeking authorization to do the White Christmas activities in the former West Brookfield Elementary School for this year, which was approved by the board.

Administrative items

The board accepted the meeting minutes of Aug. 18 and signed treasury and payroll warrants.

A one day liquor license was issued to Saint Carlo Acutis Parish/Sacred Heart Church for an event on Sept. 26. The board approved a reserve fund transfer request of \$9,009 to the general insurance fund.

Departmental reports read by Select Board

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
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NORTH BROOKFIELD – The Board of Selectmen read departmental reports from the Council on Aging/Senior Center, Police Department and Highway Department at the meeting last Tuesday.

Senior Center report

The Senior Center report came from COA Director Courtenay Rivera. In it, she reported 361 sign-ins over the month, and an expansion of programs including a coffee and craft event to be added.

The report highlighted inter-generational programming that is being enjoyed by the seniors, but no children have participated yet. Rivera also highlighted the Bemis workshop with 18 participants, a full Quaboag River cruise and the center’s bingo night.

The report stated that the introduction of the expanded newsletter has been pushed back to October.

Selectman Ralph Kay said the software that tracks sign-ins was faulty, so the center is counting people by hand.

Chair Jamie Gilman asked why there were no non-repeating numbers, which are helpful to the board to know whether the programming is working, or if enrollment is declining. The non-repeating numbers show how many individuals signed in, as individuals can sign in multiple times a day or month to different events.

Highway Department report

The Highway Department report came from Highway Superintendent Randy Morgan, and stated they are handling resident requests and inquiries, doing roadside cleanups like weed whacking, mowing and guardrail cleaning.

The department reported grading of roads including Stoddard Court, Downey Road, Murphy Road and Collins Road.

They also reported using 15 tons of mix for ongoing pothole patching, a

brine system setup being initiated, and anticipated Chapter 90 paving projects to be started after Massachusetts Department of Transportation Approval.

Police Department report

The Police Department report came from Chief Ryan Daley, who reported 1,242 calls for service including building checks but not including phone calls or lobby visits. Calls included 42 incidents, 16 arrests, 18 civil citations and three traffic accidents.

He reported that officers attended the National Night Out in East Brookfield, an Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training and an association car show at Brookfield Orchards with 200 vehicles registered.

National Grid

The board received and signed a certificate of liability from National Grid, as the company is working on a substation upgrade at 59 East Brookfield Road, and are wanting to use the space between the salt barn and sewer building for staging.

The liability is up to \$5 million, and was done with Zurich American Insurance Company.

Administrative items

Kay requested a review of the general fund to see an update of spending versus budget so they know early on where the town is over or under budget.

The board also approved a \$600 spending request from the Highway Department for a brine system water shutoff to be installed.

The minutes of the Sept. 1 regular and executive session were approved as well.

Announcements

The board read election information from Town Clerk Tara Hayes, who reported a 22% turnout at the Sept. 1 primary with 854 ballots cast, 213 by mail and 14 early voters.

She also reported the Nov. 3 election is coming up, with early voting starting on Oct. 17, with vote by mail also available for this election.

Exchange Club announces annual ‘18 Under 18’ youth leadership program

For the sixth consecutive year, the Exchange Club of Spencer will in November announce the recipients of their 18 Under 18 awards to those under the age of 18 who reside in the towns Spencer or East Brookfield.

The Exchange Club membership has annually been made aware of young men and women whose impact on their communities may have gone unnoticed.

They are not necessarily the highest academic achievers, star athlete or the most popular among their peers. They are those unassuming young adults who demonstrate attributes of leadership, passion, a caring and supportive nature, selflessness and citizenship.

They are making a difference to others and their

communities.

The Exchange Club has acknowledged and awarded nearly 100 young adults with the 18 Under 18 award over the past five years who were nominated by their teachers, employers, school counselors or others who felt they made a difference in their communities. Award recipients were recognized with citations and presented with monetary awards.

This year’s award ceremony will be held during a Worcester Railers game at the DCU Center in Worcester on Sunday, Nov. 22.

The Exchange Club membership is purposefully invested in the present and future of the Spencer and East Brookfield communities.

They wish to highlight

the innate talents that our youth exhibit unselfishly every day in what sometimes seems like the simplest of actions of caring and the ability to relate to others. They believe that curiosity, analytical thinking, dependability and a strong work ethic make the greatest difference where we all live, work and play.

The club’s vision of the future is that these young men and women will carry on the Exchange’s mission of “Unity for Service.”

Application and nomination forms may be accessed on the Facebook pages of the Spencer Exchange Club, Spencer Bulletin Board or at www.spencerexchangeclub.org. Sponsorship forms may also be accessed at those locations.

Spaces available for Sept. 26 tag sale

EAST BROOKFIELD – The East Brookfield Public Library, 122 Connie Mack Drive, will host a tag sale on Saturday, Sept. 26 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Set up time is 9 a.m. Rain date is Oct. 3.

Reserve your post by visiting the library, where staff can answer all your questions.

Please do not call as library staff want to make sure you understand how and where you will set up.

No items may be left behind after the sale.

Ecumenical Service on the West Brookfield common

WEST BROOKFIELD – The First Congregational Church of West Brookfield, UCC, and the George Whitefield United Methodist Church will hold an ecumenical Sunday morning worship service on the West Brookfield town common

on Sunday, Sept. 20 at 10 a.m.

The public is warmly invited to attend. Extra chairs will be available but bringing your own is encouraged.

Instead of a collection, it is asked that items for the Sharing Cupboard Food

Pantry be brought for donation.

In case of rain, the service will be inside the church at 36 North Main St.

Please call the Congregational Church for more information at 508-867-7078.

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- opinion -



A fall blooming vine worthy of merit

On my drive home from work this morning, I happened to notice the flowers of a familiar vine climbing up a lamppost.

It brought me right back to my old house and landscape. It is easy to miss the simplicity of that time in my life and wonder the age-old question of “Where did time go?”

When we moved some years back we left behind numerous plants (the obvious outcome when you sell your house with two feet of snow on the ground). One of my very favorites was the sweet autumn clematis.

Each year, right about now, the vine would explode into clouds of white blossoms. And because the vine grew up a trellis on the gable end of my house, it made a beautiful, tall backdrop for the annuals and perennials still in flower.

I hadn’t really thought about this plant recently, until my drive earlier today. The white blossoms were abundant and beautiful.

Let’s take this opportunity to learn more about a fall plant that is used not nearly enough.

Clematis ternifolia (aka paniculata) is a fast-growing vine that if left to its own devices, can cover several yards in a single season. It does not climb by use of tendrils, rather it has long leaf petioles that bend around neighboring objects for support.

Sturdy trellises are in order here; another option would be to let it sprawl over a fence or large rock.

Leaves are medium green in color; stems are green as well, but turn brown with age. New growth emerges in late spring.

Most experts recommend cutting autumn clematis back to a foot or so tall early in the season to rejuvenate the plant and initiate branching. Flowers buds form on the present season’s growth, so don’t worry that your pruning attempts will sacrifice flowers.

This rule is not absolute with all clematis species, though, so do your homework before tackling other varieties you may have.

Culture, however, is similar: Plant in a location where the plant’s roots will stay cool but where top growth receives ample sunshine. You can accomplish this situation by providing a thick layer of mulch at the base of the vine.

Autumn clematis will tolerate all but the worst of soils and is hardy in zones 4-10.

Panicles of one inch flowers delight the eye and the nose for about six weeks beginning in late summer. Some liken the sweet fragrance to vanilla; others call it the smell of “springtime.”

After blooms have passed, silvery seed heads add another short season of interest to the garden before the leaves fall.

Admittedly, a brown vine is not the most attractive thing to look at during the winter months, but it is a small price to pay for the abundance of flowers you get at a time of year when most other plants are winding down.

I enjoy reminiscing, but I can’t think about it for very long or I’ll miss what is right in front of me; there is plenty blooming here, too.

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.



The war’s silver lining

By Jack Kittredge

For most people the war in the Persian Gulf is an unmitigated disaster.

The battles and bombs are killing innocent people and devastating an important region of the globe. Drone and missile technology is rapidly developing and introducing a new form of warfare around the world.

Blocked shipping through the Strait of Hormuz is driving up fuel prices and limiting the availability of synthetic fertilizer, helium, aluminum and many other materials.

In one way, however, the war is causing a long overdue blessing.

Renewable energy is becoming the cheapest and most widely adopted form of energy on the planet.

According to Politico the cost of utility scale solar has fallen 90% in the last 15 years and it is now 41% cheaper than the lowest fossil fuel alternative. A number of leaders seem to be recognizing solar’s advantages.

Countries that adopt solar power are better insulated from energy shocks, can rely on more decentralized energy sources, and can free themselves from dependence on oil hegemony. This is true throughout the world, wherever the sun shines.

They also can net lots of money. Solar power saved the European Union over 100 million euros a day in just the first 17 days after the war began and more than 3 billion euros by the end of March.

Pakistan saved \$12 billion in fossil fuel imports by moving to solar in 2022 and is projected to net another \$6.3 billion by the end of 2026. Southeast Asia is planning a regional replacement of natural gas to save some \$67 billion.

Even Africa, which currently derives 80% of its power from fossil fuels, is expected to follow suit.

The war did not drive this alone, of course.

Since 2025 75% of growth in global electrical demand has been met by solar. But according to energy analyst Dinita Setyawati: The oil crisis has “introduced a new paradigm of renewables being the center of energy security.”

The major nation benefiting from this transformation has, of course, been China. It produces over 80% of the world’s solar panels and in one month of the Iran war exported a record 68 gigawatts of them.

Its installed capacity already exceeds 600 gigawatts, compared to the U.S. with our 262 gigawatts. China has been encouraging renewable energy for a number of years, while the U.S. has been inconsistent in supporting its development.

The growth in solar power which the Iran war is driving will of course broaden production to more countries as panel technology develops, and renewables gain market share. Eventually solar will become a vital industry here and free us from extracting and burning fossil fuels, which will seem so remarkably foolish.

- guest column -

Residents shares thoughts on empathy

There is a movement afoot in modern society to degrade, discount, and disavow the importance of empathy.

Elon Musk described empathy as the “fundamental weakness of Western civilization.” I wholeheartedly disagree.

I submit that empathy is the engine of ethics. Civil society cannot function without some code of ethics, an ethical code cannot be manifested without the imagery formed by empathic feelings, and an ethical code is the very basis for a fair system of laws.

Unfortunately, Colonialism and deep prejudices fomented by enslavers have played a significant role from the inception of our Democracy. Still, the ideals of Democracy, inspired in large part by the Abolitionist mindset, etched empathy into our Constitution and particularly our Bill of Rights.

Yet, Mr. Musk, and I’ll wager most billionaires, oligarchs, and right-wing leaders see it as a weapon against society. Echoes of those early colonial voices.

Why on earth would they make empathy a bad thing?

If you attempt to see empathy through their clouded lens it is clarifying. With few exceptions, it is safe to say that most billionaires who’ve achieved extreme wealth arrived at that point without a strong sense of empathy.

While we can acknowledge that generational wealth is likely a barrier to empathy, it should not be an excuse.

It is tough to forgive ignorance of human suffering in the face of such excess. Furthermore, in this political climate, overwhelming evidence suggests that powerful right-wing leaders seek control through fear and intimidation.

That is the opposite of empathy.

So, it follows that they believe it must be ignored, even vilified. Empathy is antithetical to their world view and arguably the greatest obstacle to their hold onto power.

Yet, it is not enough for the greedy and the power-hungry simply to vilify it. They must work to erase it.

So, they go to the source that fuels the engine, the stories that show truth. Stories represented in history, literature, and personal experiences; accounts told through the Arts: Theater, Music, and Poetry.

Note that today our history is being rewritten and/or buried, our literature is being white-washed or banned, and our performances are being censored. All the doorways to empathy are being blocked.

For their plan to work it is important to recognize that misogyny, bigotry, racism, ethnocentrism. Fascism must be brought to bear on the “others.”

Prejudices and fears must be exploited and enemies created. That requires a cessation if not the complete elimination of empathy.

This is incredibly serious. It is not hyperbolic to admit that the capacity for empathy is essential to humanity.

So, winning the fight against the erasure of it is absolutely necessary. But how?

The path for us to overcome is clear: more empathy.

Tell the stories. Teach the truth. Recite the poetry. Sing the songs. Paint, perform, and film the truth of history and the pain of now.

Mock the hate in comedy and illuminate it in tragedy. Hold up the mirror. We know that the power of empathy is rooted in the capacity for love.

Stand up and show them,

Eric von Bleicken
West Brookfield

QUABOAG
CURRENT

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THE QUABOAG CURRENT (USPS# 10860) is published every Friday by Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069. Telephone (413) 283-8393, Fax (413) 289-1977. Periodical Postage Prices are Paid at Palmer, MA. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069.



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Palmer, MA 01069

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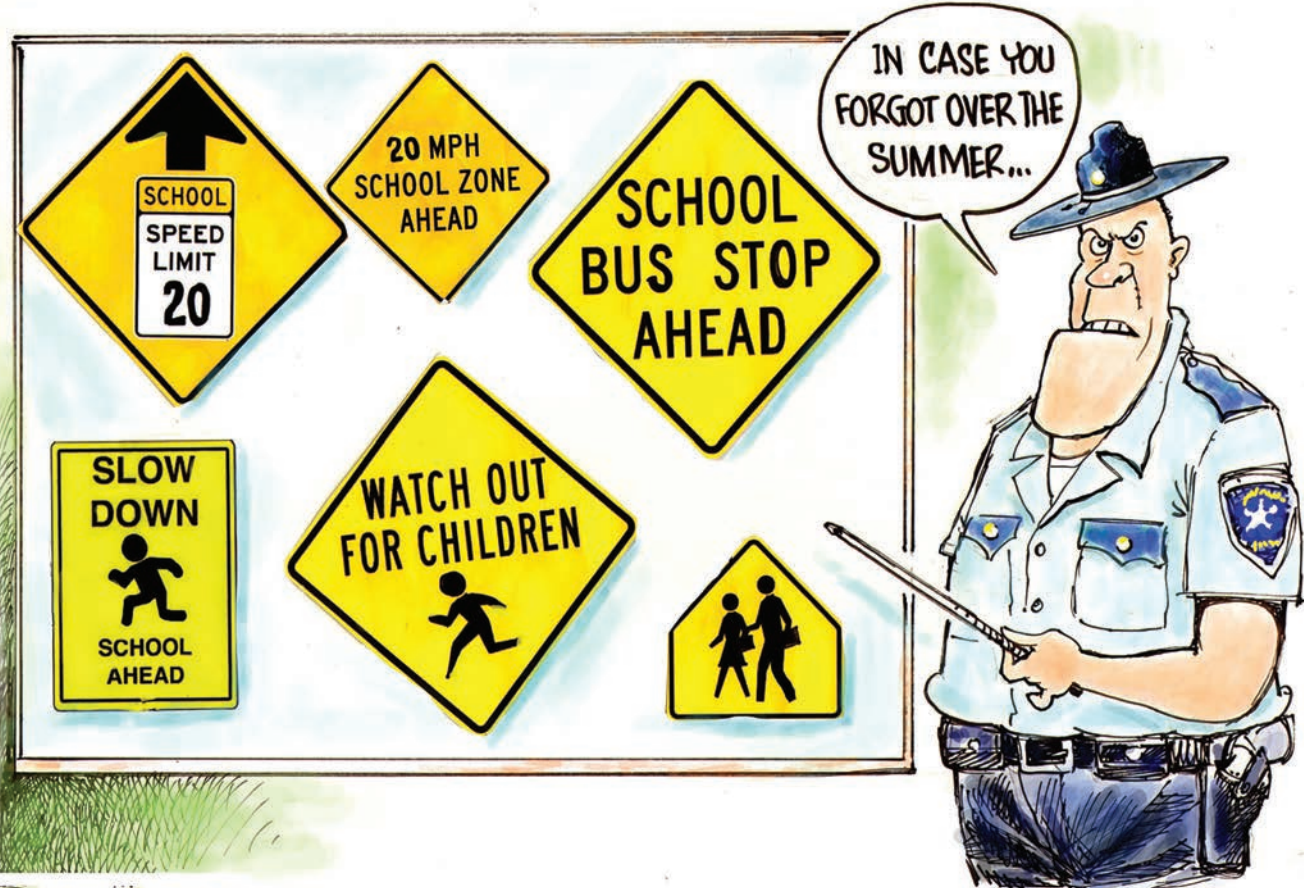
One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

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Back to school refresher course ... for drivers ...



DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

- community -



American Legion Post 244 Commander Jeff Nickerson led the ceremony to remember the 25th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA OUIMETTE
Rev. Miguel Pagan of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Church gave a prayer.



Members of the West Brookfield and Brookfield fire departments participated in the 9/11 ceremony

West Brookfield remembers 9/11

911 FROM PAGE 1

warning that the American way of life was about to be permanently altered by the terrorist attacks.

“We remember where we were,” Nickerson said. “We remember who was beside us...watching the impossible happen before our eyes and realizing America was being attacked. It was not an ordinary day.”

Nickerson described that day as one of the darkest days in U.S. history.

He said almost 3,000 people lost their lives on that day. Nearly 400 firefighters and police officers also gave their lives in response.

“That is courage, that is sacrifice, that is service,” Nickerson said.

He said firefighters were climbing up the stairs of the World Trade Center towers as people were running down; police officers ran toward the danger instead of away from it.

“They simply saw another human being that needed

help and they helped,” he said.

Nickerson said the veterans of Post 244 understand the call to service answered by first responders, as they have answered the same call. He said that after 9/11, thousands of Americans joined the armed services to protect our country, and many of them never came back home.

He said while West Brookfield is a small community in the commonwealth, its residents always come together when there is a need.

Nickerson said each year, a brick is dedicated to a veteran and placed in the walkway that leads to the American flag at the legion post. During the ceremony, Lisa O’Keefe and Brad Slater presented a brick to Vice

Commander David Tebo.

This year’s brick recognized the service of Kent Shorette, a U.S. Army veteran.

Nickerson also read the names of American Legion and Auxiliary members who passed away since last year’s ceremony, sharing a memory of each one.

Members remembered were Joe Gadbois of Brookfield, Harriet DeJesus of Warren, Robert Potvin of West Brookfield and Michael O’Keefe of Warren.

After Nickerson read the names, a moment of silence was held to remember those who lost their lives during 9/11.

“Today, 25 years later,

let us make a promise as members of this American Legion post...let us do what we have always done...carry this story forward,” Nickerson said. “25 years ago we learned how quickly life can change and how important it is to stand together.”

Nickerson encouraged everyone to “take a moment and remember” the events of 9/11, and its great loss of American lives.

“As long as we teach the next generation, this sacrifice has meaning,” he said. “We will never forget.”



Lisa O’Keefe and Brad Slater carried Kent Shorette’s brick together.



The color guard presented the flags for the ceremony held this past Friday evening.



Firefighters saluted the American flag during the National Anthem.



The firing squad provided a salute.



The West Brookfield Fire Department laid out a uniform to represent firefighters who lost their lives during 9/11.



A brick to recognize Kent Shorette’s military service in the U.S. Army was added to the walkway.



The color guard presented the flags to start the ceremony.



A bugler played “Taps”.

- community -

Sturbridge Rotary presents \$13,000 to food pantry

STURBRIDGE – The Rotary Club of Sturbridge presented a check for \$13,000 to the St. John Paul II Food Pantry at its Sept. 1 meeting at the Publick House Historic Inn.

Rotary Club President Tim Gresenz and Rotarian R. Austin Jenkins, chair of the club’s annual charity golf tournament, presented the check to Father Carlos Ruiz, pastor of St. John Paul II Parish. The donation represents proceeds from the club’s Annual Charity Golf Tournament, held Aug. 24.

“This generous donation from The Sturbridge Rotary Club to our parish food pantry is not simply a donation it is a blessing and a tangible expression of God’s love that gives hope,” said Father Ruiz. “Every gift in the hand of

someone who is hungry becomes a reminder that they are not forgotten, that their community cares, and that they are part of the family of God. I sincerely thank all those who contributed to this beautiful ministry and I promise to keep them all in my prayers “

The St. John Paul II Food Pantry serves families in Sturbridge and Southbridge, providing food assistance to approximately 230 local families representing 800 individuals. Among the households served are 95 senior families.

“The success of this tournament really reflects the generosity of our entire community,” said Rotary Club of Sturbridge President Tim Gresenz. “Our golfers, sponsors and volunteers came together to raise \$13,000, and we’re proud to put those dol-

lars right back into the community by supporting the St. John Paul II Food Pantry and the important work it does for local families.”

Forty-three golfers participated in this year’s tournament. The first-place foursome included Bruce Kingman, Steve Kingman, Justin Tesene and Bob Howland. Finishing second were Chris Wszolek, Ron Murphy, Adam Sgariglia and Peter Kazlawkiss. Third place went to Al Hargrave, Greg Hassett, Mike Contreras and Tony Zannotti, while Kate Theodoss, Tony Theodoss, Maria Torres and Romon Torres finished fourth.

This year’s tournament, the ninth consecutive of 30 annual tournaments, was supported by major donors bankHometown, Country



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Rotary Club of Sturbridge President Tim Gresenz (right) and tournament chair Rotarian R. Austin Jenkins (left) presented a check for \$13,000 to Father Carlos Ruiz, pastor of St. John Paul II Parish, to benefit the St. John Paul II Food Pantry. The funds were raised through the club’s Annual Charity Golf Tournament held Aug. 24.

Bank, Dave’s Pest Control, Daniel T. Morrill Funeral Home, Dexter-Russell Inc., Four Seasons Maintenance, McCarthy Hargrave Wealth Management, Militia Admin-

istrative Services Inc., Paul’s Automotive Machine, Power Specialist, Safety Source, Savers Bank and Southbridge Credit Union.

The annual tournament

is one of the Rotary Club of Sturbridge’s major fund-raising efforts and supports the club’s commitment to addressing needs in the local community.



Sue Morello’s baskets come in all shapes and sizes.

BACK ROADS TOUR
FROM PAGE 1
chusetts studio for the first time.

Sheldon Farms Baskets
Back Roads Studio Tour President Sue Morello makes handmade baskets at her studio, Sheldon Farm Baskets, located at 587 Sheldon Road, Barre. She has been a part of the tour for about 15 years.

Morello has been making baskets for 35 years, thanks to a gift card she received from her husband for the Back Door in North Brookfield.

“I learned everything I needed to learn from her and took classes for quite a while,” Morello said.

Morello now offers basket making classes herself at area libraries, Brookfield Orchards, Petersham Art Center and her studio.

Morello was a teacher for more than 30 years in East Brookfield, where she met her friend and fellow artisan, Lou Meyerdierks.

“I’m going to continue doing baskets for as long as I’m able. It truly is very rewarding...I love what I do,” Morello said.

Her baskets are made with premium reed, and the handles are made by the Amish.

“There all handmade and hand dyed,” she said. “I have hand-painted panels on the front of a lot of them.”

Morello’s studio also has handmade soap, beeswax and Christmas ornaments.

“It’s more than just baskets. I wanted small things in case somebody just want-

ed to buy something small,” she said.

The week leading up to the Back Roads Studio Tour weekend, Sheldon Farm Baskets will be open Wednesday through Friday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Morello’s studio is also featured in the Country Roads Holiday Tour Nov. 7-Dec. 6. Leading up to the holiday season, Morello’s studio will be open week-ends or by request.

Dragonbelly Ceramics
Lisa Janice (LJ) Cohen’s Dragonbelly Ceramics studio is located at 183 Mechanics St., Gilbertville.

Cohen has been a potter for about 20 years, and this is her second year participating in the Back Roads Studio Tour.

“I’ve always worked with my hands, ever since I was very little,” she said. “I like to keep my hands busy.”

Cohen described creating pottery as a meditative art, and she enjoys knowing that people use her artwork in their daily lives.

“I like the thought that someone has their morning coffee in a mug that I made,” she said.

Cohen works out of her home studio, and glazes/fires her work at Workshop13’s ClayWorks Studio in Ware, where she can work alongside other artists. Cohen is also ClayWork’s glaze tech.

When she’s not throwing clay, Cohen is either working on her latest novel, transforming fibers into fashion, or volunteering in her community by helping



These woodturned bowls were crafted by Jeff Palmer of Jeff Palmer Designs in North Brookfield.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS
Sue Morello of Sheldon Farms Baskets in Barre features handmade baskets; many with hand-painted panels on them.

to run the oldest agricultural fair in the U.S.

Brookfield Paperworks
In its second year, the Back Roads Studio Tour expanded to feature nine studios, including Elisabeth Hyder’s Brookfield Paperworks located at 23 High St., North Brookfield. She is the longest-participating artist in this year’s tour.

Hyder creates a decorated paper known as “paste paper” in her studio, which she said she is fortunate to have. Paste paper has a variety of uses, from making collages to folded paper boxes that are ideal for holding keepsakes.

She said she likes to create “art that can be used.”

A native of Switzerland, Hyder has lived in the U.S. for 50 years, and shares her studio space with her husband’s print shop.

When people tour Hyder’s studio, they will have a chance to make their own paste paper.

Buck Hill Studio
Russell Buzzell creates his realistic oil paintings, watercolors, pen and ink and scratchboards at Buck Hill Studio, 25 Tucker Road, North Brookfield. His artwork captures the farm life he remembers from his childhood.

“I like doing what I do,” he said.

Buzzell attended the Art Institute in Boston and he is also known for his book illustrations.

This is Buzzell’s second year on the tour, and he said he liked talking to people who visited his studio last year.

“I really enjoyed meeting the different people that came,” he said.

Buzzell will be joined at his studio by his sister-in-law, Diane Buzzell, who published a book about the Buzzell family (“The Artist, the Farmer, the Hunter and the Good Guy”), which features his artwork.

Jeff Palmer Designs
Jeff Palmer and his wife Brenda are the team behind Jeff Palmer Designs, located at 14 Mill Road, North Brookfield. Palmer creates woodturned items and makes fine furniture.

A lifelong craftsman, he has also done stair work and kitchen remodels.

“This [furniture making] is what I really like to do,” Palmer said.

Palmer began making wooden furniture in his basement with his dad when he was just 12 years old.

“I’m 60 and still going,” Palmer said.

He works with a variety of wood, including cherry, black walnut, maple and elm.

Petersham Leathers
Sylvia Brown of Petersham Leathers, located at 202 Popple Camp Road, Petersham, creates classic leather handbags, as well as garments, belts, bags, briefcases and luggage.

Pieceful Primitives
Lou Meyerdierks’ studio, Pieceful Primitives, is located at 36 Donnelly Cross Road, Spencer, where she creates wool applique, rug hooking, needle punch and counted cross stitch works of art.

Meyerdierks grew up in East Brookfield and she has been a part of the Back Roads Studio Tour for about 15 years.

She said she has a deep appreciate for the craft techniques that she uses, and she



This wooden spoon and box were made by North Brookfield craftsman, Jeff Palmer.



This table is an example of the fine furniture created at Jeff Palmer Designs.



Russell Buzzell’s family farm is featured in a lot of his artwork.

likes to work with her hands.

Meyerdierks spoke about the tour, and shared some of her favorite memories, including during the pandemic when artists had to set up in tents outdoors.

“It’s nice to have people come,” she said.

John Collins Studio
John Collins is the first western Massachusetts artist to be a part of the Back Roads Studio Tour. His studio is located at 29 Beach Road, Ware, next to the picturesque Beaver Lake.

Collins creates fine art through oil painting and sculpture, specializing in portraits of people, pets and “prized possessions” – such as cars.

Lately, Collins has been focused on sculpting the likeness of his fellow artists, as well as working on collaborative art projects.

Over the summer Collins worked with other artists

to create a towering Lady Liberty puppet, which was featured in his town’s U.S. 250th events (including a parade) and the Hardwick Community Fair. The puppet measured over 12 feet tall.

Collins sculpted Lady Liberty’s head out of foam insulation, which was covered in mortar.

“It was all new to me,” Collins said of the experience.

More about the tour
Morello said the tour is something the artists look forward to, and it gives people a chance to purchase a one-of-a-kind piece of art with a story to tell.

“You can’t get them at a store or the mall or anyplace else.”

For more information about the Back Roads Studio Tour and the featured artists and crafters, visit backroadsstudiotour.org.



Lisa Janice (LJ) Cohen of Dragonbelly Ceramics in Gilbertville enjoys creating artwork for every day use.



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SPORTS

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Cougars suffer shutout loss in opener



BELCHERTOWN – Last Friday night, Belchertown High School football was back on its grass field, and hosted Quaboag Regional in an independent matchup in the season opener for both teams. The Orioles scored early and often and scored a 38-0 shutout win over the Cougars. Coming up, the Orioles will travel to Ware while Quaboag will have its home opener against Quabbin. Both games are scheduled for 7 p.m.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY
WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

Riley Douglas goes for a tackle.



Thomas Belizzi drops back to pass.



Kristian White attempts to strip the ball away.



Grieco Keegan tries to fend off a Belchertown defender.



Braiden Bradley goes for a tackle.

Panthers offense scores big win in opening match

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

BARRE—The Quabbin girls' varsity soccer team pulled out a pair of close victories over the West Boylston Lady Lions a year ago. There wasn't very much suspense in the first meeting of the 2026 regular season between the Mid-Wach D League rivals.

The Lady Panthers, who held a 3-0 halftime advantage, coasted to a 6-0 shutout victory in their home opener, last Thursday afternoon.

"West Boylston gave us a couple of hard fought battles last year, but I thought

we played very well in today's game," said Quabbin head coach John Gillis. "Once we took the lead in the first half, I was able to get the younger players some playing time. A couple of those players scored their first varsity goals."

Quabbin, who finished with an 11-5-1 overall record a year ago, kicked off the 2026 regular season with a 3-3 draw at North Middlesex two days earlier.

The Lady Panthers senior captains are Kennan Sadie, Maya Putnam, Grace VanOudenhove, and Ailey Majoy, who's sidelined with an injury.

One of Quabbin's



Sienna Shaw fends off the opponent and delivers the ball upfield.



Sylvia Ellery lines up a power shot that goes in for a score.



Sage McQuestion fights in close quarters for possession.

younger players is sophomore Adalyn Cranston. She entered the home opener for the first time in the middle of the opening half, and she wound up scoring a pair of goals.

"This was Adalyn's first varsity game, and she almost had a hat-trick," Gillis said. "She has been working very hard. She has a very bright future."

Quabbin took a 1-0 lead during the sixth minute of the opening half.

The scoring play began with freshman Saylor Bissonnette delivering a pass to sophomore Allie Lipiec, who finished off the play by firing a shot into the back of the net past West Boylston sophomore keeper Isabella Tokarz.

Lipiec had a couple of more scoring chances during the next 15 minutes, but the contest remained 1-0.

During the 34th minute, Cranston, who was a member of the j.v. squad a year ago, ripped a shot into the left corner of the net for her first varsity goal. Freshman Ellery Sylvia was credited with the assist.

Two minutes later, Sylvia received a pass from

See **PANTHERS**
PAGE 8



Caleb Crum sends a kick through the uprights.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Pioneers win big over Ludlow in opener

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—Aside from committing a couple of penalties, everything went very smoothly for the Pathfinder Tech football team in their season opening game against the Ludlow Lions.

Junior quarterback Grayson Griswold completed three touchdown passes and scored a rushing touchdown, as the Pioneers cruised to a 43-0 victory before a large crowd at the Ludlow Sports Complex, last Friday night.

"This is a really nice win for us, but it's only the first step of an 11-game season," said Pathfinder Tech head coach Bill Darling. "We came out very focused at the start of tonight's game."

It was the first time that the two teams had squared off on the gridiron since the 2017 regular season.

The Lions had won the last three games of the series by outscoring the Pioneers, 80-12.

The last time that Pathfinder Tech celebrated a victory in the series was a 27-0 shutout in 2012.

The Pioneers also hadn't won their first game of the regular season since posting a 33-6 home victory against cross-town rival Palmer on



Cassian Kowalik lumbers through the Ludlow defense.

September 9, 2023.

A year ago, the Pioneers began the regular season with a 0-4 record before getting into the win column following a 28-8 home win against Smith Vocational on the first Friday of October.

"We got off to a slow start last year because we had a couple of new assistant coaches and a few new players. It just took us a while to put the pieces together," Darling said. "I thought we executed very well in this year's season opener."

The Lions, who only have

See **PIONEERS**
PAGE 8



Grayson Griswold takes a high snap.

- community -

25 years later



The late Roselind Ryder, formerly of Barre, submitted these photos she took from her New York City apartment on Sept. 11, 2001 to the Barre Gazette. This past Friday marked the 25th anniversary of the attack.

FILE PHOTOS

PIONEERS FROM PAGE 7

four seniors listed on this year's varsity roster, finished with a 3-9 overall record a year ago.

"We just didn't execute very well tonight," said Ludlow head coach Ray Saloio. "We just made too many mistakes. You can't afford to fall behind early in the game."

After the Pioneers forced the Lions to punt on the

opening drive, it didn't take the visitors from Palmer very long to score the first of their six touchdowns.

Griswold, who's the Pioneers second-year starting QB, capped off the seven play drive by completing a 28-yard touchdown pass on a fourth down play to sophomore Jimmy Sem with 5:58 remaining in the first quarter.

Junior Caleb Crum made the extra point attempt.

Less than two minutes later, the Pioneers took a 14-0 lead when Griswold connected with junior Mason Baer for a 39-yard TD completion.

On the first play of the second quarter, Griswold hooked up with Sem once again for a 40-yard touchdown pass.

"I worked a lot with my receivers during the off-season, and we've built a very good chemistry. It was very

important for us to take an early lead," Griswold said. "It feels very good to win our first game of the season. We really want to have a winning season."

The extra point attempt sailed wide right.

The Lions offense, which is led by first-year starting QB Connor Sylvestre, finally picked up a first down with the help of a personal foul penalty during the next series. They were eventually forced to punt.

The Pioneers held a commanding 23-0 halftime lead following a 28-yard Crum field goal on the final play of the first half.

Pathfinder Tech junior Cassian Kowalik took over the spotlight during the third quarter with a pair of rushing touchdowns.

Kowalik's first rushing TD came on a five yard dash into the end zone, which increased Pathfinder's lead to 29-0 with 9:42 left in the third quarter. The extra point attempt was blocked by senior Giovanni Perez.

Then following a fumble recovery by senior Peyton Kularski, Kowalik carried the ball four times, which included a 12-yard run into the endzone with 3:37 remaining in the third quarter.

Following another punt by Ludlow, the home team got the ball back when sophomore Mason Bartolucci intercepted a pass at the 34 yard line on the final play of

the third quarter.

It was the only time that Ludlow was able to move the ball into Pathfinder territory.

Because the Pioneers were leading by more than 30 points at that point, the entire fourth quarter was running time.

Griswold capped off the scoring with an 8-yard touchdown run on the final play of the game.

While the Pioneers will be looking to improve to 2-0 against Commerce in the home opener on Friday night at historic Legion Field in Palmer, the Lions will be looking to get into the win column when they play at Smith Vocational on Thursday night.



Jimmy Sem makes an easy reception.



Trevor Alexander kicks off for the Pioneers.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY JEFFREY HAYNES

Larrah Gagne battles for possession of the ball.

PANTHERS FROM PAGE 7

classmate Katharine Porter before netting her first varsity goal, which gave the Lady Panthers a 3-0 lead.

Seven minutes into the second half, Bissonnette scored an unassisted goal by firing a shot into the back of the net.

Cranston added her second goal, which was assist-

ed by freshman Eden Fortier, during the 64th minute making the score 5-0.

Down at the other end of the field, Quabbin sophomore goalie Zoey Salvadore, who's a first-year starter for the varsity team, only had to make two saves.

"Zoey was our backup goalie last year," Gillis said. "She did see some playing time whenever we had a large lead."

Salvadore was replaced in goal by senior Mia Gleason with 14 minutes remaining in regulation. Gleason only made one save preserving the shutout.

With less than ten minutes remaining on the scoreboard clock, Fortier closed out the scoring with a breakaway goal. It was also her first varsity goal.

The Lady Panthers will be looking to sweep the season series against West Boylston for the second consecutive year on Oct. 6.



Sierra Lambert uses body position to win possession.

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10
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55					56				57		58
59					60				61		
62					63				64		

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Egyptian bull god
- 5. A young canine
- 8. North Carolina university
- 11. "Oddbod" actor Tom
- 13. Midway between northeast and east
- 14. A place to shop
- 15. Mysterious "Severance" family
- 16. Single Lens Reflex
- 17. Malaria
- 18. Informal loan organizations
- 20. Twitching
- 21. Holm oak
- 22. Willing to consent
- 25. In an early way
- 30. Stuck it out
- 31. Language in Ghana
- 32. Obtain
- 33. Ancient Greek currency

CLUES DOWN

- 38. One point east (clockwise) of due north
- 41. Popular baseball movie
- 43. Group of islands
- 45. Church building
- 47. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
- 49. Late AC/DC frontman Scott
- 50. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
- 55. Thick piece of something
- 56. Breakfast food
- 57. One mole of solute per kilogram of solvent
- 59. Ancient Greek City
- 60. Bitterly regret
- 61. Don't forget it
- 62. Dishonorable man
- 63. Affirmative
- 64. "___ and flows"

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Bridge-building degree
- 2. Expression of sorrow or pity
- 3. Lizard species
- 4. Turkish leader title
- 5. A way to bother
- 6. Blank
- 7. A fine, closely woven cotton fabric
- 8. Sports broadcaster Ian
- 9. Popular whodunit board game
- 10. Alkali flats mineral
- 12. Large African antelope
- 14. It's delivered most days
- 19. Satisfy
- 23. Water soaked soil
- 24. Of a past era
- 25. Chest muscle (slang)
- 26. Ribonucleic acid
- 27. Doctor of Education
- 28. Coffee receptacle

- 29. Where rockstars work
- 34. International airport in Connecticut
- 35. Russian river
- 36. It's used to make cabins
- 37. OJ trial judge Lance
- 39. A means to persuade
- 40. Short poem
- 41. A way to begin hostilities with
- 42. Multi-function radar (abbr.)
- 44. Joints
- 45. Blatted
- 46. Swedish rock group
- 47. Millisecond
- 48. ___ podrida: Spanish stew
- 51. Doctors' group
- 52. Trunk of a tree
- 53. Tattle
- 54. Metrical foot
- 58. ___ Angeles

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- community -

OLDE HOME DAY FROM PAGE 1

said of the large crowd that attended the event. "We're proud of our town."

Olde Home Day will begin with the parade, which will step-off at 1 p.m. from Barre Cut-Off Road. The parade will travel down Hardwick Road, to Utley Road, before ending at the parking lot on Memorial Drive.

So far the parade has 30 participants ranging from community organizations to local businesses, to bands and public safety officials, in addition to horses, bicycles, cars, trucks and tractors.

The town's pickleball league will join the parade, as well as area fire departments. The Historical Society, Next Step Studio of the Performing Arts and the Barre Masonic Family will also participate.

The Quabbin Marching Band, Quabbin Community Band and the Holyoke Caledonian Pipe Band, the oldest continuously active bagpipe band in North America, will also perform during the parade.

The parade will also feature a new musical act that has been the "buzz" around town – a 20-member kazoo band, featuring people of all ages and abilities.

The kazoo band will perform up to 10 songs from its repertoire, which it has been rehearsing steadfastly to prepare for Olde Home Day.

Claire Reavey said the kazoo band was resident Rory Fitzgerald's idea, adding that, "it's going to be wonderful."

Other highlights of the day include line dancing demonstrations led by J.P. Ellory – with plenty of audience participation – alongside performances by

the Next Step dancers and a wandering clown to entertain younger guests.

Families can also explore a "Touch a Truck" exhibit, traditional children's lawn games, children's obstacle course, as well as a children's scooter/bicycle obstacle course.

You can take a chance with the New Braintree Fire Association's Duck Race as they travel the "river" down Utley Road at 4:30 p.m. Purchase a duck for \$5 to win cash prizes for first, second and third place and for the "Unlucky Ducky" (last place).

Ducks can be purchased at Olde Home Day, or in advance through the New Braintree Fire Department's Facebook page. You don't have to be present at the race to win.

A bustling Farmers Market will be on the grounds showcasing local growers

and artisans. So far 20 vendors have signed up to be at the Farmers Market, including Stillman's Farm, Still Life Farm, Rose 32 Bread, Autumn Leaf Farm, Rock Harvest Farm, 4-H, Barre Assembly 114 International Order of the Rainbow for Girls and more.

Food and drink offerings will highlight local favorites. Attendees can visit the beer and wine tent featuring selections from Lost Towns Brewing and Agronomy, or grab lunch from local food trucks Savage Wraps, and Off the Hook as well as some sweet treats from local bakers

Music and classic festival competitions anchor the afternoon. The band Over the Hump takes the stage from 2:30-3:30 p.m., coinciding with the popular pie-eating contest for children and adults.

Local bakers are also in-

vited to enter their homemade creations into the Apple Pie Making Contest to compete for town honors. Bring your pies to the New Braintree Town Hall, 20 Memorial Drive, from 2-3 p.m. with judging beginning at 3:30 p.m.

All pies must be made from scratch, from crust to filling. Pies must be submitted in a disposable pie plate (aluminum foil recommended) and apples must be the primary ingredient and featured prominently in the filling.

Contest entries must include a list of ingredients due to allergies. A full step-by-step recipe is only required to compete in the "Best Recipe" category.

Winning pies will be announced at 5 p.m.

For more information and contest rules, visit www.newbraintreema.us.

As evening approaches

on Olde Home Day, the energy picks up with a performance by Disco Lemonade from 5:30-7:30 p.m., culminating with an evening bonfire.

Parking for Olde Home Day will be available on the road and field behind New Braintree Grade School, and along Oakham Road. Accessible parking will be available on Memorial Drive.

Get involved

Organizers are encouraging community members to get involved to help make the event a success, and there is still time to sign up to participate in the parade or the Farmers Market.

For volunteer opportunities, contest entry forms, or general information, contact event organizers at newbraintree275@gmail.com or call 413-537-4813.



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- community -

Federated Church Pumpkin Patch returns on Sept. 26

STURBRIDGE – For nearly a decade, the arrival of a tractor-trailer filled with pumpkins at the Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale has signaled the start of a busy October on Maple Street.

This year, the church’s 9th annual Pumpkin Patch opens Saturday, Sept. 26, and continues through Saturday, Oct. 31, with pumpkins, seasonal displays and a growing schedule of activities for the community.

Before the Patch can open, however, there are a lot of pumpkins to unload. The Pumpkins USA truck will arrive early Saturday morning carrying pumpkins and gourds from New Mexico, and the church is welcoming volunteers to lend a hand with unloading and setting up the grounds. Pizza and refreshments will follow in Fellowship Hall for all “Helping Hands.”

Those interested in volunteering should contact the church office at 774-304-1021.

Once the work is done, the front lawn at 8 Maple St., will once again be filled with pumpkins and gourds of all shapes and sizes, along with mums, hay bales, corn stalks and loose hay for scarecrows. Cookbooks will also be available.

The Pumpkin Patch will be open Monday through Friday, 10:30 a.m.-6 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.; and Sunday, 11 a.m.-6 p.m., weather permitting. Payment may be made by cash, credit card or Venmo.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS
The Pumpkin Patch returns to the Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale from Sept. 26-Oct. 31. The front lawn at 8 Maple St., Sturbridge, will once again be filled with pumpkins and gourds of all shapes and sizes, along with mums, hay bales, corn stalks and loose hay for scarecrows.

Visitors will find more than pumpkins during the five-week run. Plans include pumpkin carving, face painting, music and Storytime with Judy, along with a performance by Rock Voices Auburn, with the date to be announced.

The Central Mass Plain Air Painters will also return on Saturday, Oct. 10, setting up their easels around the church grounds to paint the Patch and surrounding autumn landscape.

“The Pumpkin Patch is such an idyllic fall scene it begs to be painted,” said organizer Diane Vanaskie Mulligan in a press release.

“The Pumpkin Patch began in 2018 as a simple fundraiser, but it has grown into something the church and community look forward to every year,” said committee co-chair Paul Medeiros. “It gives people a chance to spend some time together, enjoy the season and, at the same time, help us support the missions and ministries that are important to our church.”

The Patch also has a connection extending well beyond Sturbridge. A portion



Rock Voices Auburn will be returning to perform in the Pumpkin Patch again this year.

of the proceeds supports the Navajo Nation in Farmington, New Mexico, where Pumpkins USA grows the pumpkins and provides seasonal and year-round employment.

What began nine years ago as a seasonal fundraiser has become one of the church’s most visible community traditions – part pumpkin sale, part gathering place and part reminder that a simple fall activity can help support worthwhile work throughout the year.

Proceeds help the Federated Church support a variety of local missions and ministries, including Sturbridge Girl Scout and Scouting America troops, both of which meet at the church, the local Veterans Association and the church’s ecumenical work with other area congregations.

October will be a particularly active month at the Federated Church. In addition to the Pumpkin Patch, the church will host its monthly movie night and ice cream social on Thursday, Oct. 1; a Roots and Relics concert on Friday, Oct. 9, from 7-8:30 p.m.; and the Koinonia women’s group Rummage Sale on Oct. 23 and 24.

For additional information about the Pumpkin Patch, October activities or volunteering to help with unloading and setup, visit sturfed.org, call the church office at 774-304-1021 or email churchoffice@sturfed.org.

The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale, 8 Maple St., welcomes all to share in Christ’s presence and God’s grace. Sunday worship is held at 9:30 a.m.

STURBRIDGE FROM PAGE 1

of the bylaw would include regulations for safety and stormwater regulations, and would be meant to protect the town as much as possible, but not be too extreme.

Solar is already allowed in much of the town, according to Grimm.

Select Board member Mary Dowling said the by-

law should be something that the town likes, not a model bylaw that adheres to everything the state wants.

Select Board Chair Jamie Goodwin said the town still has rights, and they cannot be waived because they could not get a bylaw in time for the regulations, saying “we’ll sue them.” He said the state’s regulations are coming at the expense

of the town’s forests, water, ecotourism and firefighters.

Grimm noted there are concerns with the fire suppression of these systems, saying it is “illogical” to allow a fire to burn in a metal can, but she said the state has determined that the systems are safe because they are self contained.

Fire Chief John Grasso Jr. said there’s not a lot

of research tying fires to BESS systems, but there are challenges with electricity, vegetation restrictions and maintenance. He said the type of vegetation can determine the rate at which fires spread, along with the topography of the area, but the systems themselves are designed to be safe.

Personnel Committee

Members of the Personnel Committee attended the meeting to discuss concerns about the grading system for employees. Grimm said the last classification was finalized in 2019, and their shelf life is about five-seven years, so the town is right at the end.

She said so far, 12 positions have already been re-graded or re-named. The committee had concerns with the point system, and talked about the possibility of a categorized system because the town has specialized positions.

Larry Morrison of the committee said the current system’s value has been exhausted and presents a problem, using the example that a recreation director and health inspector are held to the same number but a different grade.

He said the current system requires the town to treat certain positions un-

fairly because of their grade, and the system also forces salary compression because there has to be some difference to recognize responsibilities.

Morrison said the current system also prioritizes physical ability over mental ability.

Grimm said the town is working by 2019 job descriptions, and this re-grading is not about giving raises, but hiring people at the right step, since there are cases where someone gets brought on at a higher step, but has very little room to increase salary because the position can max out.

Grimm said the re-grading process should take a few months.

Fire Department report

Grasso said call volume is going up in town, with 239 incidents in July and 248 in August, which is the highest volume of the year. He said as of the Sept. 8 meeting, there have been more than 1,700 incidents, and the rate of about 250 incidents per month has not been seen historically.

He said they are getting a few more calls due to a new urgent care in town, but nothing drastic.

Public hearing

The board held a public

hearing for a transfer of a common victualler’s alcohol license for Village Pizza at 487 Main St. to Jarmakani Enterprises LLC doing business as Village Pizza.

Grimm said usually, the town does not approve the transfer of licenses until the bank closes, but the particular bank this company was working with would not close until the license was approved because of concerns it could have been lost in the interim. The board approved the license change.

Contracts and administrative matters

The board approved on-call services for three companies: Premier Fence LLC for an amount not to exceed \$34,000, Collins and Sons Excavating for an amount not to exceed \$79,000 and Morse Engineering for an amount not to exceed \$96,000.

An agreement was also signed with the Massachusetts Division of Standards for weights and measures services for years 2027 and 2028.

A change of officers was approved for the Cracker Barrel. The minutes of Aug. 17 were approved.

Appointments and resignations

The board re-appointed Alix Lane to the Cultural Council for a term to expire on Sep. 19, 2029 and they accepted the resignation of recycling center worker Richard Curboy effective Aug. 29, 2026.

Upcoming events

There will be a 5K road race at Old Sturbridge Academy and Old Sturbridge Village on Oct. 25 from 8-10 a.m., a charitable bingo fundraiser at American Legion Post 109 on Nov. 8 from 1-5 p.m., the Sturbridge Harvest Festival is on Oct. 17 and 18 at the common and the pickleball tournament is Sept. 26.



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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.

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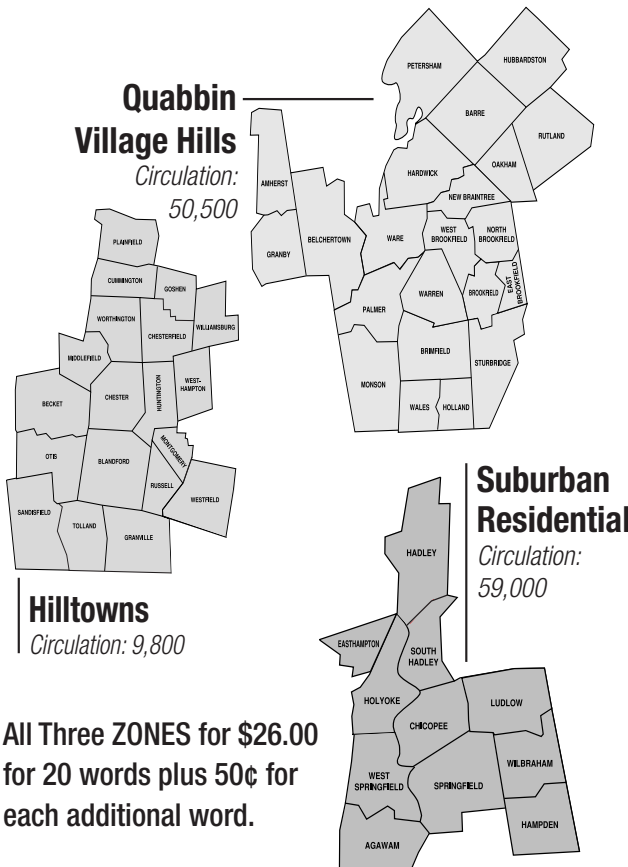
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NEW LISTING -

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NEW LISTING - \$330,000

38 Pleasant Street, Ware

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