

QUABOAG CURRENT

REGION

Pathfinder Tech expands

Page 2

NORTH BROOKFIELD

Back Roads Studio Tour

Page 3

BROOKFIELD

Apple Country Fair

Page 5

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America's Forgotten Conflict

Renowned author presents lecture on King Philip's War

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

WEST BROOKFIELD –New York Times Bestselling Author Michael J. Tougias will present a free slide lecture about King Philip's War at the West Brookfield Senior Center, 73 Central St., on Sunday, Oct. 4 at 1 p.m.

This lecture is sponsored by the Quaboag Historical Society.

Named after "King Philip," who was also known as Metacom, a Wampanoag chief, the war was fought between the colonies and many of the Native American tribes from 1675-1676.

"Per capita basis, it had the highest casualty rate of any war America was involved in," Tougias said. "It was a major, major event."

One of the most brutal battles that occurred during

King Philip's War took place at a Native American village along the Ware River, in the area now known as the Winimussset Wildlife Management Area, near the Hardwick/New Braintree line.

"The action there is known as Wheeler's Surprise," Tougias said.

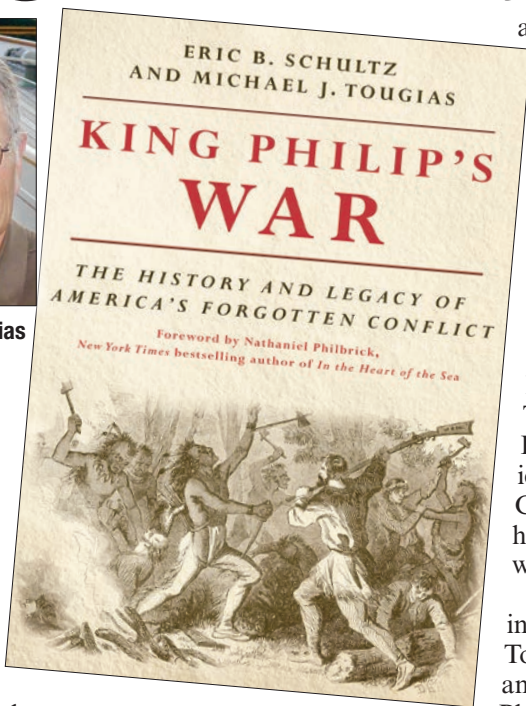
Captain Thomas Wheeler was instructed to go and meet with the local Nipmuck tribe and force them to sign a peace treaty, where he was met with an ambush.

"Wheeler was shot off his horse, but rescued by his son and taken back to the garrison at Foster Hill Road in West Brookfield," he said. "He survived and wrote an account of it."

Tougias said after the



Michael J. Tougias



ambush, the Native Americans followed Wheeler and his men back to the garrison and burned all of Brookfield down. He said they could not get the garrison to burn, because as noted in Wheeler's memoir, "God made it rain," and it wouldn't ignite.

Wheeler later died as

a result of his injuries received during the battle of Brookfield.

Tougias has written two books about King Philip's War; "Until I Have No Country" and "King Philip's War: The History and Legacy of America's Forgotten Conflict", which he co-authored with Eric Schultz.

Growing up in Longmeadow, Tougias developed an interest in King Philip's War, and he learned a lot about it from his father, who was a history buff.

"Where I grew up there's a King Philip's stockade," he said. "Once you know a little bit, you just start craving more and more."

See **AUTHOR**
PAGE 6

Town receives risk management grant

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Staff Writer
zachf@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The Board of Selectmen heard about a risk management grant that the town received during a meeting last Tuesday.

Executive Assistant Mary Beth Kularski said this grant is done through the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association, and they offer a \$10,000 no-match grant every year. She said the town applied for, and received just over \$8,000.

During the Sept. 22 meeting, Kularski said \$3,500 will be used for heating ventilation and air conditioning duct work at the police station to improve air quality since there has not been prior routine maintenance on it, and a condition of the grant was to set up a regular maintenance schedule

for the system.

She said \$767 will be used for two-way radios for the Sewer Department. Kularski said \$1,098 will also be used for the Sewer Department for reflective cones, warning signs, support kits, drums and barricades to establish a visible work zone.

The Water Department will get a multi-gas detector to monitor air conditions for \$2,690 according to Kularski.

Fire chief search

The board gave an update on the search for a new fire chief, saying there were nine applications received, and the Fire Chief Search Committee said only one of the applicants met all of the standards in the posting.

The board deliberated whether to ease qualifications to get more finalists,

See **N BROOKFIELD**
PAGE 6

SB hears departmental reports

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Staff Writer
zachf@turley.com

STURBRIDGE – The Select Board heard from the department heads of the Council on Aging and Police Department at its meeting last Monday.

COA report

COA Director Leslie Wong said one of the challenges the department is facing revolves around fuel assistance, which the COA assists the elderly population along with families in town with. Wong said the center is working with Worcester Community Action to get applications for fuel assistance, and there are some funds left over from a fundraiser last year that raised \$3,000.

She asked about the pos-

sibility of the town looking to see if there is a municipal aggregation program for fuel, similar to municipal electricity, to lock in rates for a number of years.

Other updates from Wong were the senior center is working with Tantasqua Regional School District to set up open swims on Saturdays, they have implemented a new mahjong program, and they have other programs such as exercise, Medicare, foot and other clinics and support groups.

Wong said there was a dishwasher installed at the center and the town is getting \$1,250 for trading in an oven. She also said the center is looking at updating their senior work off policy, since not many people want to or have time to engage with it.

Police Department report

Police Chief Earl Dessert gave the department's June, July and August reports at the Sept. 21 meeting.

There were 2,465 calls in June, 2,871 in July and 2,725 in August. There were 161 arrests, 19 operating under the influence and drug calls and 79 motor vehicle crashes within the three months, along with various other calls for the department.

Dessert said some activities the officers have done include teaching at Green Light Driving School and going to Gillette Stadium to work at the FIFA World Cup. He said the department also received a re-accreditation award.

Dessert said self-generating calls will start to increase as officers are out of

See **STURBRIDGE**
PAGE 6

It's a small town thing

Brookfield holds first Stars Hollow Fest

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

BROOKFIELD – The Brookfield Cultural Council hosted the inaugural Stars Hollow Fest at Brookfield Elementary School.

The event was originally intended to be held on the common but was moved to the elementary school due to the threat of incoming rain.

The festivities on Sept. 26 were inspired by the comedy-drama TV series "Gilmore Girls" and the setting of the show, Stars Hollow, is a small town just



TURLEY PHOTO BY RYAN DRAGO

Brianna Lamb of Night Owl by Bri brought fall vibes and crafts during Stars Hollow Fest at Brookfield Elementary School.

like Brookfield.

Margaret Pensinger of the Brookfield Cultural Council is considered the resident Gilmore Girls expert.

With the weather altering their plans, Pensinger thought her and her fellow

See **STARS HOLLOW**
PAGE 5

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- community -

Pathfinder celebrates expansion with ribbon cutting

By Kevin Flanders
Staff Writer
kflanders@turley.com

BELCHERTOWN – The Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School celebrated a major milestone, with a ribbon cutting ceremony at the district’s new extension campus.

On Sept. 18, local officials joined school leaders at the ribbon cutting for Pathfinder Tech at Cold Spring, the district’s new extension campus located at 57 South Main St.

Massachusetts Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education Pedro Martinez joined Pathfinder Tech Superintendent Eric Duda and local legislators at the ceremony. Additional guests included state Sen. Jake Oliveira and state Reps. Aaron Saunders and Todd Smola.

“Pathfinder Tech is turning opportunity into action,” Smola told Turley Publications. “This expansion means more students can get the practical education they need to build careers, meet critical workforce needs, and give back to their communities.”

Martinez praised the collaboration among school leaders necessary to convert the former elementary school into a vocational technical campus in only two months.

The result is an expansion of Career Technical Education opportunities for students throughout the region.

“This is a tremendous day for Pathfinder Tech, for our nine member communities, and, most importantly, for the students who



Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School leaders celebrated a major accomplishment with local officials. SUBMITTED PHOTO

want access to high-quality Career Technical Education,” Duda said. “What was accomplished here demonstrates what is possible when people come together around a common goal. We took an elementary school that was still serving students in June and, in just eight weeks, transformed it into a fully operational vocational technical campus that welcomed Pathfinder Tech students on Sept. 1.”

The former Cold Spring School remained an active Belchertown elementary school through June 2026. The building was turned over to Pathfinder Tech on July 1, leaving district officials with a short window to repurpose the facility.

The project included extensive renovations and modernization upgrades throughout the building. Pathfinder Tech instructors, staff members, and

students joined forces with contractors and community partners to renovate classrooms, establish technical learning spaces, move equipment and materials, and prepare the facility for its September opening.

Despite the scope and accelerated timeline of the project, the transformation was completed on time and significantly under budget.

“This extension campus is an investment in students – and in the future workforce of our region,” Duda said. “For years, demand for Career Technical Education has exceeded the number of seats we have available. This project is about creating opportunities.”

Pathfinder Tech at Cold Spring currently serves approximately 100 students and offers five CTE programs: Health Assisting, Medical Assisting, CAD/Pre-Engineering, Electronics Technology and Hospitality Management.

The Cold Spring extension will ultimately increase Pathfinder Tech’s district-wide capacity by 150 student seats, representing the largest expansion in the district’s history.

“When we invest in career and technical education, we are building a stronger workforce, creating new pathways for

students, and strengthening Massachusetts for the future,” Smola added. “Pathfinder Tech is giving students the tools to succeed and Massachusetts a workforce ready to lead.”

The project was made possible by a \$3.5 million CTE Capacity Expansion Grant awarded through the Healey-Driscoll Administration. The funding supported modernization of the Cold Spring facility, equipment and furnishings, the launch of the Medical Assisting program and additional improvements across the district.

Officials commended school leaders for accomplishing the expansion without seeking a debt exclusion or capital infrastructure requests from member towns.

“We did not go back to our nine communities and ask them to take on debt to make this happen,” Duda said. “This is an example of responsible planning, collaboration, and taking advantage of opportunities when they become available. We found a way to substantially expand opportunities for students while protecting our member communities from a major capital expense.”

The repurposing of the Cold Spring facility also created employment opportunities across the region.

New and expanded positions associated with the campus include a building administrator, school

nurse, school resource officer through the Town of Belchertown, cafeteria employees, additional teaching and support staff and other positions necessary to operate the campus and support students.

Duda also recognized Belchertown Public Schools Superintendent Brian Cameron for his partnership throughout the transition. Cameron was an early supporter of exploring the reuse of the Cold Spring building and worked collaboratively with Pathfinder Tech officials throughout the process.

“This could not have happened without the Town of Belchertown and the Belchertown Public Schools,” Duda said. “Superintendent Cameron, Town Manager Steve Williams and the Belchertown Select Board understood very early what this building could become and what it could mean for students throughout the region.”

Additionally, Duda thanked the Pathfinder Tech School Committee for its support throughout the project.

“I am incredibly fortunate to have a forward-thinking and supportive School Committee,” Duda said. “They understood the vision, they understood the need, and they were steadfast in their support as we worked through an ambitious timeline.”

The ceremony concluded with the cutting of the ribbon in front of Pathfinder Tech at Cold Spring. Officials were surrounded by current Pathfinder Tech students who will benefit from the repurposed facility.

The entire building acquisition process, grant program and renovation project took less than a year to complete. Pathfinder Tech officials first announced plans for the expansion in October 2025, then finalized an agreement with the Town of Belchertown in January 2026.

The state grant was awarded in April, just before Pathfinder officials took possession of the building on July 1.

“This building represents much more than renovated classrooms and technical labs,” Duda said. “It represents opportunity. It represents partnership. Most importantly, it represents what can happen when state government, local communities, educators, elected officials, students, and staff work together with a shared purpose.”

The Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School District serves students from Belchertown, Granby, Hardwick, Monson, New Braintree, Oakham, Palmer, Ware and Warren.

The district provides academic and CTE opportunities to students in grades nine-12.

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- community -

Russell Buzzell opens Buck Hill Studio for Back Roads Studio Tour

NORTH BROOKFIELD – For artist and illustrator Russell “Russ” Buzzell, the landscapes, wildlife and history of rural New England have provided a lifetime of inspiration.

This fall, visitors to his Buck Hill Studio in North Brookfield will have an opportunity to see both familiar examples of his work and the beginning of a new series exploring a distinctive part of Massachusetts history – its colonial taverns.

Buzzell will open his studio at 25 Tucker Hill Road for the second time as part of the 32nd annual Back Roads Studio Tour, Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 3 and 4, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

The free, self-guided tour includes eight artists and craftspeople in Barre, Gilbertville, North Brookfield, Petersham, Spencer and Ware.

Among the works Buzzell will introduce during the tour is the first in a new series of pen-and-ink drawings depicting historic Massachusetts taverns, or “ordinaries,” as they were commonly known during the colonial period.

The idea grew from Buzzell’s interest in local history and his discovery of the important role these establishments played in early Massachusetts communities. In 1656, the Massachusetts General Court made towns subject to fines if they failed to maintain an ordinary to accommodate travelers.

More than places to eat, drink and sleep, ordinaries became important gathering places for travelers and townspeople alike.

“Once I learned why there were so many of these old taverns scattered across Massachusetts, I started looking at them differently,” Buzzell said. “They aren’t just interesting old buildings. They’re part of the story of how these towns developed and how people traveled, met and exchanged news. I thought they were worth preserving on paper.”

The first subject in the series is the historic Brookfield Inn on West Main Street in Brookfield, a building with a particularly colorful connection to American history.



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Artist Russell Buzzell will open his Buck Hill Studio to visitors on Oct. 3 and 4 as part of the 32nd annual Back Roads Studio Tour.

According to the Brookfield Historical Commission, President George Washington passed through Brookfield during his 1789 tour of New England. After dining at the Hitchcock Tavern in what is now West Brookfield, Washington and his party continued east and sought lodging in Brookfield.

Local tradition holds that innkeeper Mercy Wheeler Bannister, suffering from a severe headache and not realizing which “president” was seeking accommodations, turned the party away. Washington continued to Spencer, where he spent the night at Isaac Jenks’ tavern.

The incident gave Brookfield its own variation on the familiar “George Washington slept here” claim: George Washington almost slept here.

Buzzell’s original pen-and-ink drawing of the Brookfield Inn will be on display at Buck Hill Studio during the tour, and prints will be available for purchase. He plans to continue the series with other historic Massachusetts taverns.

The project is a natural extension of Buzzell’s work, much of which reflects the farms, forests, wildlife, buildings and history of central Massachusetts.

Buzzell grew up on his family’s North Brookfield farm, where his childhood was spent milking cows,

driving tractors and helping with the daily work of farm life. Art, however, was his first love.

A 1960 graduate of North Brookfield High School, he graduated from the Art Institute of Boston in 1966.

His professional career included several years with the Massachusetts Audubon Society, where he illustrated publications and developed the detailed approach to wildlife and natural subjects that continues to characterize much of his work.

Buzzell went on to illustrate a number of books, including Ronald Rood’s *Animals Nobody Loves*, the Massachusetts Audubon Society’s *The Farm Book* and William G. Sheldon’s *The Wilderness Home of Giant Panda*. He was also a contributing artist for DeCourcy Taylor’s *The Ultimate Fishing Book* and *The Art of Shooting Flying*.

His illustrations have appeared in *Gray’s Sporting Journal* and *Wisconsin Sportsman*, and he has freelanced for the Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife.

Buzzell works in oils, watercolors, pen and ink and scratchboard, with subjects ranging from wildlife and rural landscapes to historical scenes. Among his best-known works are *Sunday Afternoon on the Buzzell Farm* and *Wheeler’s Sur-*

prise, his historical depiction of the 1675 ambush of Capt. Thomas Wheeler’s company by Nipmuc warriors during King Philip’s War.

Russ isn’t the only storyteller in the Buzzell family. Copies of “The Artist, the Farmer, the Hunter, and the Good Guy”, written by Buzzell’s sister-in-law, Diane Buzzell, will also be available for purchase during the studio tour. The book tells the story of Russ and his brothers and their lives growing up in North Brookfield, providing another perspective on the family, community and rural New England life that have influenced so much of his artwork.

And visitors to Buck Hill Studio will get a taste of Buzzell family tradition in a more literal sense. Diane plans to make a batch of her well-known Swedish Brownies from an old family recipe to share with studio visitors during the weekend.

The Back Roads Studio Tour was founded in 1994 by a group of local artists and craftspeople who wanted to invite the public into their studios to see where and how their work is created. More than three decades later, the annual event continues to offer visitors an opportunity to meet artists and craftspeople while traveling the back roads of rural central Massachusetts.

In addition to Buzzell’s Buck Hill Studio, this year’s participating studios are Pieceful Primitives, Lou Meyerdericks, 36 Donnelly Cross Road, Spencer; Brookfield Paperworks, Elisabeth Hyder, 23 High St., North Brookfield; Jeff Palmer Designs, 14 Mill Road, North Brookfield; John Collins Studio, 29 Beach Road, Ware; Dragonbelly Ceramics, Lisa Cohen, 183 Mechanic St., Gilbertville; Sheldon Farm Baskets, Sue Morello, 587 Sheldon Road, Barre; and Petersham Leathers, Sylvia Brown, 202 Popple Camp Road, Petersham.

For more information about the Back Roads Studio Tour, participating artists and a tour map, visit backroadsstudiotour.org.

Select Board continues Gay Road discussion

By Zacharias Fragiadakis
Staff Writer
zachf@turley.com

BROOKFIELD – The Select Board met last Wednesday to continue discussions on the final portions of the Gay Road project, including resurfacing and paving from the power lines to the town line.

The discussions at the Sept. 23 meeting revolved around where the money would come from to finish the project, with Chapter 90 being one option and a mixture of other funding sources being another.

The board discussed that since the original contract for work ended on June 30, the last day of the fiscal year, all of the work since then has been paid off with pay vouchers, and there may be a need to procure the final portions of work instead of going with the contract with Mass Brokenstone. The Town Administrator, Ryan Egan, was authorized to research that portion.

Select Board member Beth Coughlin said the town voted to use COVID funding followed by funds from the road reconstruction account to put toward the final portion of the road. Coughlin said if there are laws barring the town from using both Chapter 90 and other funds for the same project, they should use the rest of Chapter 90 for Gay Road, but if they can mix and match, to use the named funding first.

The board also discussed getting line painting set up for Gay Road, with Coughlin saying right now, it’s difficult to tell where the edges of the road are.

Select Board member Richard Chaffee said he also wants to look into getting several other roads including Long Hill Road, Molasses Hill Road, Lake Road and Rice Corner Road painted as well. That discussion will be on a future meeting agenda.

The board also discussed the closing out of various Chapter 90 projects from last fiscal year, including resurfacing of Route 148. Egan was authorized to work with East Brookfield to get those documents and get the projects finalized.

Sidewalk ramp contract
The board approved a contract with K and F Construction out of Holyoke for sidewalk ramp improvements for a total of \$140,590.

Appointment
Richard Lariviere was appointed as an election worker.

Transfer station ramp
The board discussed getting a contractor out to do repairs at the transfer station, with Coughlin saying the ramp is getting worse.

Other business
Chair Sarah Campbell said Brookfield Baseball and Softball raised \$80,000 out of a goal of \$100,000 for lighting improvements at Lewis Field, gave thanks to the Cultural Council and vendors for making the 250th celebrations a success and commended officer Ashley Dennison for being present for the residents.

Several meeting minutes were approved including May 20, June 17, July 16 and 29 and Aug. 5 and 10.

Quaboag’s ‘Fight Like a Kid’ game benefits local student

WARREN – Quaboag Regional Middle High School, 284 Old West Brookfield Road, has teamed up with Fight Like a Kid for a special fundraiser home football game versus Worcester Tech on Friday, Oct. 2 at 7 p.m.

Proceeds from the game will benefit Olivia, a local child impacted by pediatric cancer. Donations can be made by scanning the QR code.

Game attendees are encouraged to “dress to impress” for Olivia at this Disney-themed game.



Congregational church hosts Family Fall Festival on Oct. 3

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The First Congregational Church of North Brookfield, 144 Main St., will host its annual Family Fall Festival on Saturday, Oct. 3 from noon-2:30 p.m.

The annual Family Fall

Festival has activities for all members of your family.

There will also be free hamburgers/cheeseburgers, chips, lemonade and apple cider (served hot and cold) for all.

There will be a silent

auction and cake/pie sale. A bouncy house, cotton candy machine, popcorn and games for the whole family, including the famous (or infamous) tug of war between the adults and the children.

Other activities include

horse rides, corn hole, Zumba with Melanie, and the North Brookfield Fire Department Fire Prevention team.

This event is free and open to all. Call the church office with any questions at 508-867-8428

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Garden scurrying

The forecast of a September nor'easter certainly had everyone scurrying about.

Instead of running to the grocery store for necessities, I headed straight to the garden to tidy up a few things. With visions of air-borne pots, soggy containers of compost and ruined produce dancing in my head I got right to work.

First to check off my list was digging up the potatoes. The stems had died down on two of my three rows over two weeks ago and I didn't want the spuds sitting in impending mud when they could be curing somewhere safe and sound.

Speaking of curing, it is important to be intentional with this step, so that your potatoes will be edible well into the winter months. Curing potatoes properly will help to prevent rot, premature sprouting, and toxic greening of the skin and flesh.

By waiting a week or more after the plant has died before digging up the tubers, the skins will thicken and be less prone to injury during harvest. Once they are dug, a week spent in a cool and totally dark space will further firm their skin and change sugars to starch, completing the ripening process.

Never wash potatoes prior to storage! Gently brush off dirt and store in a single layer in the darkness at 55-60 degrees.

Darkness will prevent greening, which renders potatoes inedible. Use any pitch-forked or shovel-marked spuds first, as damage to the skin will invite rot.

Once the potatoes were out of the ground, I applied a two-three inch layer of composted manure and lime to the plot, then worked it in to the soil.

I won't be planting potatoes there next year other wise I would have stayed away from both amend-ments.

After that, I got to task number two, planting a cover crop in the empty ground. I figured with rain coming over the course of

three days it would be off to a great start. In the big garden, where I can use my tiller, I sow winter rye.

It will start growing now, hold the soil in place over the winter, then, as spring ensues, it will grow tall and go to seed. Typically you mow it down or incorporate it into the soil before it gets too big.

Winter rye adds so much organic matter to the garden. Be sure to give the grass time to break down before planting into it; chopping it up/in about three weeks to a month before planting is a good plan.

Another thing that occurred to me while I was sowing the rye was seed saving. I purposely left what was left of my first sowing of green beans to go to seed.

I harvested all of the dried pods and will shuck them later, once I am sure that they are fully dry.

Finally, a bit of house-keeping to finish out my scurrying around. I collected my black plastic mulch, row covers and in-sects netting. I will hose off the black plastic, cinch up holes in the netting, and as-sess what I can salvage of my aging row covers .

I've smartened up and finally labeled what I use for what crop. For example, my number of cantaloupe/ watermelon hills will likely remain the same, so reus-ing the same plastic mulch in that spot next year is a good plan.

With the storm behind us now, I can go back to a less frantic approach to garden clean up. Enjoy the fall foliage as you embark on your own work.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 34 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

- opinion -

Reclaiming peace in the forest

By Julie Midura

I recently went on a solo backpacking trip.

Not by choice. Not to face my fears or challenge my courage.

Rather, because my favorite hiking partner is temporarily sidelined due to a torn rotator cuff. And with several grandchildren going through significant health challenges, the worry, helplessness, and endless stream of uncertainty was beginning to feel heavier than my heart could carry.

I found myself needing the quiet that only an overnight stay in the forest can provide. I needed the fresh air. The company of trees. The steady rhythm of my feet hitting dirt.

So in spite of my hesitation at spending a night alone in the woods, I packed up the gear that Tom and I would normally split between the two of us, and I drove to the Berkshires.

When I arrived at the trailhead on the Appalachian Trail, I shouldered my heavy backpack and began walking.

For seven hours I moved with purpose. With the urgency of someone trying to outrun something.

And perhaps I was.

Each step was taking me further from the noise of the world and inviting me into a place where har-mony reigns.



A place where the air feels lighter and the earth feels softer. A place where nature holds me as surely as the heavens hold the sun in its rightful place in the sky.

I chose to do this trip solo not to feel strong or capable. Rather, to give myself space to breathe... and maybe even to heal some of the parts of me that feel broken.

For the short time I am here, I will allow nature to carry the things I can no longer bear.

At 5:30 p.m. – after hiking 12 miles – I stopped and pitched my tent. Filtered water. Sat beneath the trees with my feet immersed in a cold stream and watched the water curl around my toes.

I ducked into my tent just as the skies opened up in a deluge. I read a book while droplets of water exploded on the rain fly.

When darkness settled in, I prayed for my family. I wept. Then I fell asleep from exhaustion.

It's now 6:30 a.m. I'm lying on my back in my orange two-person tent. A crow is screeching overhead.

Morning light is filtering through the swaying canopy of trees above me, causing leaf-shaped shadows to dance on the fabric of my tent.

I lie still in the warmth of my bright green, down sleeping bag. Outside of my tent, the forest is alive and breathing.

Unconcerned. Unhurried. Unworried. Simply existing.

For a moment, I close my eyes and allow myself the freedom to do the same.

I know that my wet and muddy tent will be heavier on the hike out. But my heart already feels lighter.

Sometimes being strong for everyone else means recognizing when you need to step away for a little while and take care of your own heart, too. Because you can't pour from an empty cup.

I've taken these days for myself not because I don't care, but because I care so deeply that I needed somewhere to put all of these emotions for a little while.

Be assured, going into the woods doesn't erase every burden. But it does reframe them.

I will most assuredly come home with the same circumstances I left with. But perhaps I will carry them differently.

Perhaps my thoughts will be clearer and a bit less crowded.

At the very least, maybe I will return home with a little more peace, a little more strength, and a heart that feels somewhat more prepared to face whatever comes next. Onward!

Follow Tom and Julie's hiking adventures on Instagram @morethanthemountain.

Why change Social Security now? It's a working 'Ponzi Scam.'

Dear Rusty:

Maybe everybody has the same reaction that I do to Social Security insolvency.

I do not understand a system that has been basically run like a Ponzi Scam since its inception; why have you decided (in 2026-2027) that now is the time to change a perfectly good Ponzi Scam.

In all reality, this began with Babylon. I'm sure that if you searched the meaning of the words "Babylonian money magic," you would understand what I'm talking about.

If this is as good as the Earth has, why would you mess with a perfectly rotten thing. Why would you decide to change currencies to some sort of fragile digital currency?

Signed: Skeptical Senior



Dear Skeptical Senior:

You touch on an item that the Association of Mature American Citizens Foundation has dealt with many times over the years, specifically the notion that Social Security has the characteristics of a Ponzi Scheme.

Our position in response to that notion is that Social Security was created and operated with full transparency with its financial status, formulas and long-term deficits completely and publicly documented and reported to the President and Congress annually.

Unlike the infamous Charles Ponzi, the government has a permanent pool of contributors through mandatory FICA and SECA (self-employment) payroll taxes and is designed to remain in operation infinitely as long as there's a taxpaying workforce.

Moreover, the Social Security system is overseen by Congress, specifically the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee, and the Government Accountability Office. The Social Security Administration is subject to routine hearings by these congressional overseers and maintains an independent Office of the Inspector General to ensure the integrity of its financial operations.

Contrary to Ponzi victims, all participants retir-

ing from the workforce and their dependents recover their Social Security contributions via benefit payments, some more than others based on their level of participation in the system. Also, contrary to Ponzi Schemes, Social Security was designed as a social insurance system and has operated successfully in that mode for over nine decades.

What raises the notion of a Ponzi Scheme comparison these days is the looming insolvency facing Social Security just six years from now. This financial problem, however, has nothing to do with fraud.

Rather, it is a function of workforce demographics and the fact that Congress has long deferred corrective action on a problem that has been known for the past four decades.

We sometimes hear well intended, but sometimes uninformed comments from some Washington politicians invoking the Ponzi Scheme reference, but we believe that Congress is finally waking up to the urgency.

And we also believe Congress is now starting to move seriously to set a course for correction in time to ward off the impact of insolvency. AMAC is proud to be a part of the collective thinking currently surfacing, and our Social

See SOCIAL SECURITY PAGE 5

QUABOAG CURRENT

We Want to Hear From You

EDITOR
Paula Ouimette
pouimette@turley.com

ADVERTISING SALES
Dan Flynn
dflynn@turley.com

SPORTS EDITOR
Greg Scibelli
sports@turley.com

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WEB
quaboagcurrent.turley.com



PHONE
(413) 283-8393



ADDRESS
24 Water Street
Palmer, MA 01069

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www.turley.com

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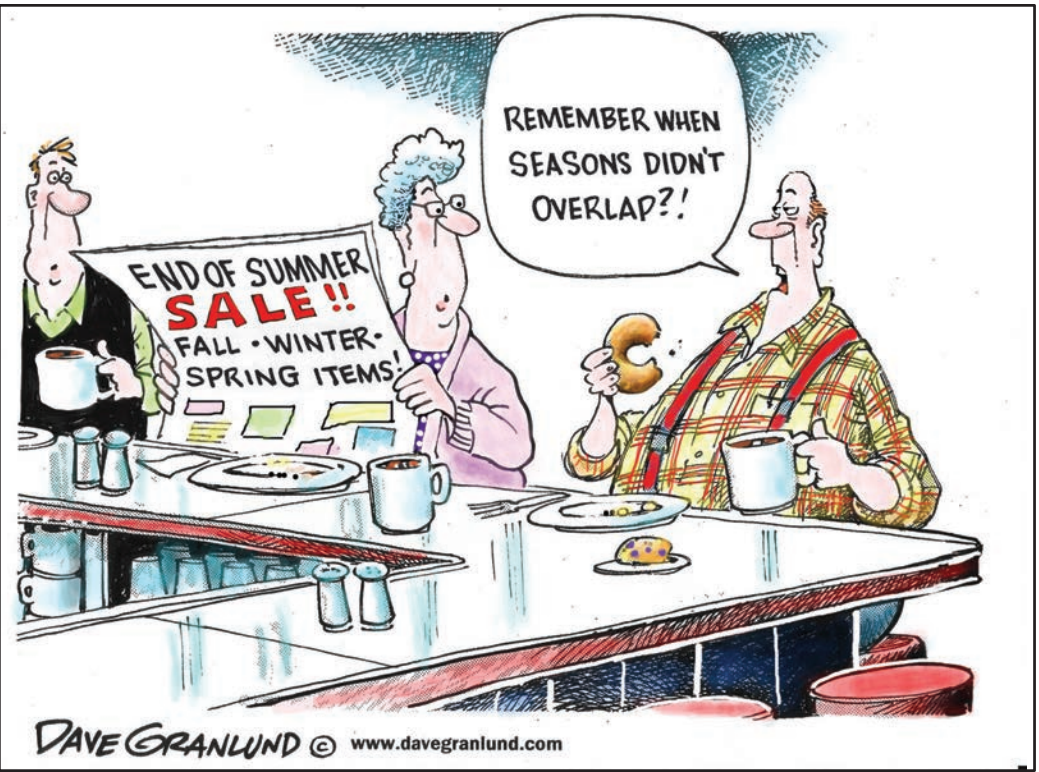
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- community -

Fall tradition continues with the 47th Annual Apple Country Fair

BROOKFIELD – One of Central Massachusetts’ favorite fall traditions returns to the Historic Brookfield Town Common on Saturday, Oct. 10 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Hosted by the Brookfield Community Club, the 47th Annual Apple Country Fair features close to 100 local crafters, artisans and bakers, along with live music, food trucks, lawn games, face painting, raffles and plenty of family fun.

The fair brings together the best of small-town charm with a vibrant marketplace of booths filled with hand-knit clothing, pottery, wooden décor, homemade soaps, pet toys, maple syrups, beaded jewelry, locally-harvested honey and delicious small-batch treats – perfect for early holiday shopping or treating yourself.

But the fair is more than just shopping – it’s a full day of entertainment and activities for all ages. Enjoy live music by local favorites Chuck and Mud and Spooner Well, let the kids enjoy lawn games and face-painting, and dig into delicious bites from a variety of food trucks.

Don’t miss the raffle drawings held throughout the day, including a classic 50/50 raffle and chances to win great prizes like family passes to regional museums, gift certificates to local restaurants and shops, sporting events and the ever-popular community-stitched quilt.

In the days leading up to the fair, be sure to visit the Merrick Public Library to see this year’s themed quilt on display. The quilt is created through the talents and contributions of Brookfield community members, and will also be featured in the fair raffle, giving one lucky winner the opportunity to take home this unique piece of Brookfield community history.

A favorite fair tradition, the Apple Pie Baking Contest is open to bakers of all ages, with youth and adult categories. Bring your best homemade apple pie and show off your baking skills.

Entries for the apple pie contest will be accepted at the Library Annex (18 Common St.) on the day of the fair until 9:45 a.m. There are three judging categories: children under 12, ages 13-19 and adults ages 20 and older.

The Brookfield Community Club has been organizing the Apple Country Fair since 1979. The money raised at the Apple Country Fair has generated grants for community service projects, including (but not limited to): Supplies for the town’s annual luminary display on Christmas Eve; programs and speakers for Brookfield Council on Aging; equipment for Brookfield Fire Department and EMS; improvements to Brookfield Recreation’s Lewis Field; equipment for Brookfield Scout Troops; programs at the Merrick Public Library; and Diane Martell Community Service Award for a graduating Brookfield senior. The fair is held outside on the common rain or shine.

For more information visit AppleCountryFair.com.

STARS HOLLOW FROM PAGE 1

Cultural Council members were living in an episode of “Gilmore Girls”.

“It feels like an episode of ‘Gilmore Girls,’” she said.

The idea of Stars Hollow Fest was simply inspired by being in a small town and the other purpose of the festival was to bring the community together.

Pensinger and her fellow Cultural Council member Maragaret Aubin said they plan to bring back Stars Hollow Fest next summer.

The Brookfield Cultural Council ran a food booth called Luke’s Café (after the TV show’s iconic eatery). Members were offering chili, pastries and coffee.

The Cultural Council also put together a fall and Stars Hollow themed photo booth for guests to get



Shown at the first Stars Hollow Fest are members of the Brookfield Cultural Council, Margaret Aubin, Doreen Neifert, Jeanne Lytle, Margaret Pensinger, Ana Afton and Tyler Neifert.

their pictures taken.

Several vendors were sticking to the Stars Hollow theme with Gilmore Girl-themed products. Pink Lobster Co. of Brookfield is run by crafters Taylor Plumley and Lauryn Sey.

Pink Lobster Co. makes candles body care products,

TURLEY PHOTOS BY RYAN DRAGO



Lauryn Sey and Taylor Plumley of Pink Lobster Co. were vendors during Stars Hollow Fest.



The Brookfield Cultural Council operated Luke’s Café during Stars Hollow Fest offering chili, pastries and coffee.

fragrances, soap and even Gilmore Girl themed candles.

Whalesong Arts of Brimfield attended Stars Hollow Fest offering watercolor, acrylic, oil and tissue paper art. Owner Carol Mackiewicz Neel has been an artist for 15 years and is also an art therapist.

Made with Love Snuggly Blankets came all the way from Rhode Island to attend Stars Hollow Fest. Amanda Peckham started this business back in 2024 and was inspired after making her daughter a blanket.

Peckham brought blankets and baskets to Stars Hollow Fest.

Brianna Lamb of Night Owl by Bri brought fall vibes to Starts Hollow Fest.



Carol Mackiewicz Neely of Whalesong Arts had watercolor, acrylic, oil and tissue paper art available.

Lamb had jewelry, needle felts, miniature scarecrows, jar grips and much more.

The event featured karaoke, games for kids and shopping bags.

SOCIAL SECURITY FROM PAGE 4

Security Guarantee is in play as a plan to be considered.

We invite you to review our SS reform plan (at <https://amac.us/social-security-guarantee>) and likewise to stay tuned to our Social Security Report website (<https://socialsecurityreport.org/>) where we post regular updates on a variety of matters pertaining to Social Security and retirement.

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.

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- community -

Death Notice

Wright, Ursula
Died July 14, 2026
Celebration of
Life to be held at Sa-
lem Cross Inn in West
Brookfield on Sunday,
Oct. 11 from 1-3 p.m.

AUTHOR FROM PAGE 1

Tougias said meeting fellow author Schultz was a blessing and that they shared the same passion.

“He went to all the sites across New England,” Tougias said.

King Philip’s War is known as America’s Forgotten Conflict, as it is something that few people know about.

“I’ve spoken at almost every town in Massachu-
setts. People don’t know much about this war,” Tougias said.

During the lecture on Oct. 4, Tougias will share maps and show where the battles happened, and what they look like today. He said his lecture will be like watching a documentary

Auxiliary hosts Fall Harvest Festival and Bake Sale Oct. 24

NORTH BROOK-
FIELD – American Le-
gion Auxiliary Unit 41 will
host its annual Fall Har-
vest Festival and Bake Sale
on Saturday, Oct. 24, from
10 a.m.-2 p.m.

The festival will be held
at American Legion Post
41, 163 North Main St.

(located behind Subway).

Join the auxiliary for
local vendors and crafters,
homemade baked goods,
a white elephant table and
great raffles. A few tables
are still available for ven-
dors/crafters. This event is
open to the public with no
admission fee.

and will captivate audience
members of any age; even
children.

“If people want to bring
their kids, they’re welcome
as well,” he said. “Kids are
fascinated by it all.”

Tougias has authored a
total of 38 books over the
course of his career, includ-
ing “The Finest Hours”,
which was made into a Dis-
ney movie starring Chris
Pine and Casey Affleck.

His latest book, “In
Deep Water: A Story of
Sharks, Survival, and
Courage” tells the story of
three recreation fishermen
whose boat sinks off New
Orleans in the Gulf of
Mexico.

“The Coast Guard gave
them a 1% chance of ever
being found,” Tougias said.
“All they had time to grab
is a couple coolers to hang

on to. They make a vow to
stay together and not talk
about why the boat sank.”

Tougias said the fisher-
men thought they would be
rescued within a few hours,
but there were no other
boats on the water.

“Instead of just sur-
viving three hours, they
have to survive 28 hours
treading water through the
night,” he said.

The fishermen faced
the elements, dehydration,
jellyfish stings and a shark
attack.

“They wanted the story
to be told,” Tougias said.
“It’s an absolute off-the-
charts survival story and
rescue too. They should
not be alive.”

For more informa-
tion about Tougias and
his books, visit www.michaelougias.com.

CNEER fall fundraiser benefit dinner Oct. 24

HARDWICK – Cen-
tral New England Equine
Rescue, Inc. will hold a fall
fundraiser benefit dinner at
Hardwick Crossing Country
Club, 262 Lower Road, on
Saturday, Oct. 24.

Doors open at 5 p.m.
and a buffet dinner will be
served at 6 p.m.

Tickets are \$100 each or
bundle two tickets for \$175.
Payment must be received
by Oct. 10.

To purchase tickets on-
line, use the QR code or
visit www.zeffy.com/en-US/

ticketing/fall-fundrais-
er-banquet. Checks made
payable to CNEER can also
be mailed to 96 New Brain-
tree Road, West Brookfield,
MA 01585.

About CNEER

CNEER is a grassroots
rescue located in West
Brookfield. Its mission is to
rescue, heal and restore the
spirit of the horse when it
has been damaged through
abuse, neglect and abandon-
ment.

CNEER is committed to

making a difference – one
horse at a time.

For more information
about CNEER, people may
visit CNEER.com or follow
the rescue on Facebook.



STURBRIDGE FROM PAGE 1

training and they have a full
staff. There was also discus-
sion about a bid for a new
dispatch center, possibly in
Spencer, and the negotia-
tions regarding job transi-
tions for those holding posi-
tions now.

Town Administrator’s eport

Town Administrator
Robin Grimm announced
the winners of a recent opi-
oid essay contest that went
out. The winners were Aigh-
ley Reed and Paige Spooner,
according to Grimm.

She said they had \$2,000,
so each winner got \$1,000

to go toward books and
educational supplies for
college. Grimm said Reed’s
essay was about the social
implications of opioids and
Spooner wrote about the
medical and prescription
side of opioids.

Data center bylaw

The board voted to send
a draft data center morato-
rium bylaw to the Planning
Board for review and to set
up a public hearing. Grimm
said the current bylaws are
silent on data centers, and
this bylaw would put in
writing where they could be
placed and zoned. She said
it will go to a special town
meeting for a vote.

The board also voted
to open the warrant of the
STM and place several arti-
cles on it. The STM is set for
Nov. 16.

Other business

The board approved
a fiscal year 2027 fuel
contract with Fraticelli
Oil, which was procured
through the Central Mas-
sachusetts Regional Plan-
ning Commission. The
board approved Grimm
to sign the Teamsters 170
union agreement.

The minutes of Sept. 8
were approved. The Stur-
bridge Harvest Festival will
be on the common on Oct.
17 and 18.

N BROOKFIELD FROM PAGE 1

or to simply continue with
the one applicant.

According to Police
Chief Ryan Daley, who sits
on the search committee,
some of the applicants did
not formally put their In-
dustrial Control Systems
certifications in their appli-
cations, but he said they are
basic and it’s likely they do
have them, but the commit-
tee bypassed anyone who
did not complete the appli-
cation correctly. Selectman
Peter Orsi said one of the
requirements on the appli-
cation called Fire Preven-
tion 1 certification was no
longer required by the state.

Jamie Gilman, the chair

of the board, said since
there was an error, it is pos-
sible the town would have to
repost the job, to which Da-
ley requested reaching out
to legal counsel if the board
chooses that option, saying
there is a possibility they
could run into a legal prob-
lem since one applicant met
all of the original require-
ments. Selectman Ralph
Kay said he would not be
in favor of cutting back the
requirements since the chief
should set the standard for
the rest of the department.

Kularski said since the
posting did not instruct
applicants to send proof
of their certifications, she
could send out a blanket
email to all of the applicants
to give them a chance to

produce those documents,
and the board approved of
that option.

Senior Center facilities

The board discussed a
change of facilities request
at the Senior Center, essen-
tially to re-label all of the
restrooms to be gender neu-
tral, which according to Ku-
larski stems from a building
code requirement. She said
since the current configu-
ration has a restroom for
women but not one for men,
it has to be changed because
the code doesn’t allow for
one but not the other.

Currently, there is a re-
stroom designated for em-
ployees, women and a gen-
der neutral handicapped
restroom.

Kularski said part of
the reasoning for this stems
from a Board of Health
inspection last year, where
they determined the center
had to stop cleaning the
mop in a regular sink; they
need to do it in a separate
one specifically for that pur-
pose. Kularski read a gener-
al law that stated the mop
sinks are not supposed to be
in a public facing room, so
that’s why it’s in the employ-
ees restroom.

The restroom that was a
women’s room that will now
be labeled as gender neu-
tral also has multiple stalls,
which raised some concerns
with the board.

Part of the request, ac-
cording to the board, was
to remove the urinal in the
restroom currently designat-
ed for employees since there
are only a couple employ-
ees there. According to the
request, it is leaking and
backing up.

Gilman questioned why
they would not fix the leak
instead of removing it.

Gilman also had con-

cerns that these changes
were already done by the
time the request came into
the board, since the Select-
men are supposed to oversee
and approve major changes.

Council on Aging Direc-
tor Courtenay Rivera was
present, and said they have
been communicating with
at least one member of the
board, that being Kay. Rive-
ra said when the center did
not pass inspection last year,
that information was sent to
the former town adminis-
trator and the board, so she
thought they already knew.

In other updates to the
center, Rivera said they can
now prepare meals in the
kitchen because they in-
stalled a vegetable prepara-
tion sink as required by the
Board of Health, but they
still cannot cook with grease
until the hood systems are
upgraded.

She also said the ovens
will have to be replaced with
commercial ovens in the fu-
ture.

Project updates

The board gave updates

on projects including North
Main Street parking and the
Mad Brook bridge project.
According to the board, the
Massachusetts Department
of Transportation has not
signed off on the municipal
paving project yet for the
parking, and signs will not
be ordered until that hap-
pens.

There has been some cor-
rective action being done in
the past couple weeks ac-
cording to the board.

Kularski said the Mad
Brook bridge project is
part of the Massachusetts
municipal bridge program,
and the first step is getting
easements, so it is currently
stuck with lawyers, and a
town meeting article is being
drafted for it.

Kularski said the Shared
Streets program is going
through paperwork issues,
and once it’s done, a con-
tract can be awarded.

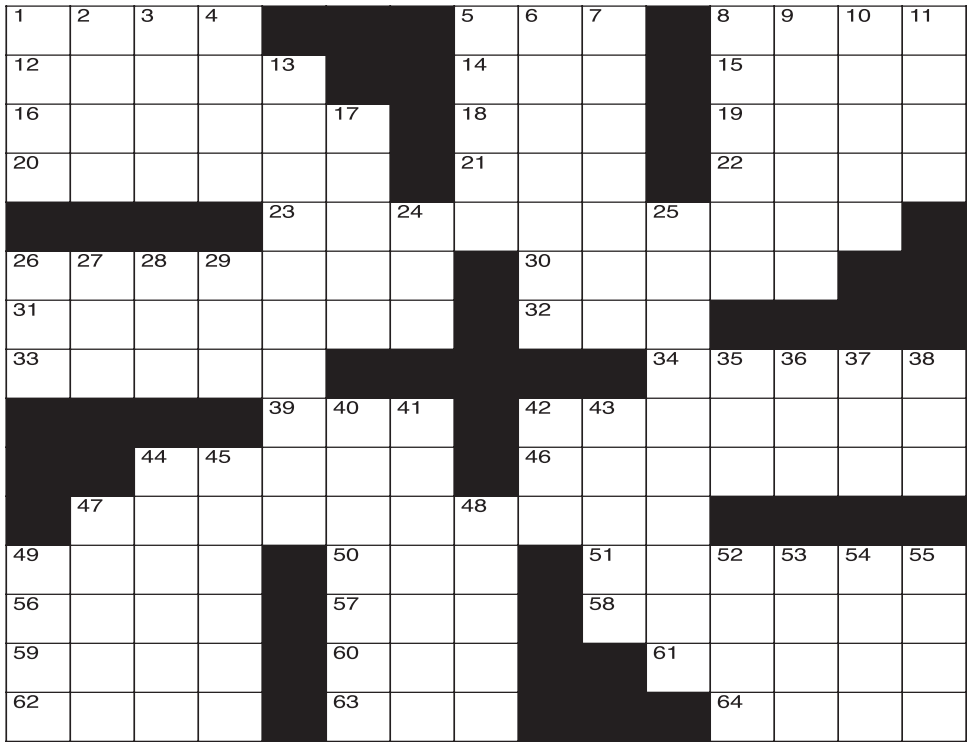
Spending requests

The board approved two
spending requests from the
Highway Department in-
cluding \$881 for backing
plate assembly to a Ford
F450 to vendor Nate Bal-
lard and \$994 for cable and
bracket work on a 1999
dump body to vendor Har-
vey Services from Holland.

Upcoming events

Trunk or treating will
be held Saturday, Oct. 31
on the common from 5:30-
7:30 p.m. by Parks and Rec-
reation and the Cultural
Council.

There is a Decorate Our
Town event scheduled for
Nov. 28 including a tree
lighting and parade from 5
p.m. until about 8 p.m. be-
ing put on by the church
and library.



CLUES ACROSS

1. "Wicker Man" actor Nic
5. Protection
8. Cloth worn over a shoulder
12. Ceramic jars
14. Midway between northeast and east
15. South American hummingbird
16. Platforms
18. Taxi
19. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
20. A citizen of Yemen
21. Military mailbox
22. Nuclear near reach weapon
23. Clears
26. Broken
30. Actress Lathan
31. Avid fan

32. One and only

33. Proceeding
34. River in Portugal and Spain
39. Doctor of Education
42. Defeat handily
44. Less complicated
46. Handyman tools
47. Written works
49. Castle dweller's safety net
50. Honorable title (Turkish)
51. Greatest
56. Can do
57. A place to sleep on the road
58. Member of U.S. Navy
59. 24-hour units of time
60. Actor Horsley
61. In a way, sounds off
62. Formerly (archaic)

63. Eye infection

64. Plundered

CLUES DOWN

1. William __, Buffalo Bill
2. Wings
3. Candle or lantern
4. Freedom from difficulty
5. A type of pie
6. Metrical foot
7. __ Kerr, actress
8. Nap
9. Popular singer Bocelli
10. Immune responses
11. "Mad Men" leading man
13. A citizen of Senegal
17. Philly basketball player
24. Not even
25. Measures wind speed
26. Insecticide
27. Jordan glided through it
28. Bird-like dinosaur genus
29. Expression of satisfaction
35. Big Blue
36. One point east (clockwise) of due north
37. Of she
38. Oral rehydration solution
40. Knocks off course
41. Popular cop show of yesteryear
42. Zhou dynasty state
43. Genus of gulls
44. Onion flatbreads
45. Declare as true
47. Of a lobe
48. Missouri county
49. Produced
52. Volcanic crater
53. Off-Broadway theater award
54. KU hoops coach Bill
55. Check for



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Panthers field hockey continues to win

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

BARRE—During her three-plus decades at the helm of the Quabbin Regional varsity field hockey program, Shelly Zalneraitis has coached countless talented players. None of Zalneraitis' players had reached 100 career points (goals and assists) prior to this season.

Senior co-captain Makenzie Casey entered last Monday's home contest against Narragansett Regional with 96 career points. She came agonizingly close to reaching the elite milestone in front of her home supporters.

Casey recorded her second hat trick of the 2026 regular season, which helped the Lady Panthers remain undefeated with a commanding 5-0 victory over the Lady Warriors.

"I really wish I could've accomplished the milestone on my home field,"



TURLEY PHOTOS BY JEFFREY HAYNES
Makenzie Casey takes a shot on goal through traffic.

said Casey, who has been a member of the varsity field hockey team since the seventh grade. "We're going to be playing a night game at Oakmont on Wednesday. I'm hoping to do it there

because they're one of our biggest rivals. We've always had competitive games with them, so I'm really looking forward to it."

Casey did put her name in the history books by



Olivia Vanhousenhove fights her way through white jerseys.

scoring a goal and adding an assist in the Lady Panthers' 3-0 shutout victory at Oakmont in a Mid-Wach B match-up.

"Makenzie is the first player that I've coached



Abby Rogowski scoops the ball forward.

to reach 100 career points, which is very special," Zalneraitis said. "Only two other Quabbin field hockey players have accomplished the milestone."

The other two Lady Pan-

thers field hockey players who reached the 100 point plateau are Lisa Valardi in 1982, and Christine Har-

See QUABBIN FIELD HOCKEY PAGE 8

Pioneers take down Ware

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WARE— Three of the previous four meetings between the Pathfinder Tech and Ware boys' soccer teams ended in draws. Unlike their recent clashes, the first meeting of the 2026 campaign between the Bi-County East foes was far less suspenseful.

The Pathfinder Tech Pioneers held a 7-0 half-time lead and cruised to a 10-0 victory over the Ware Indians on a cool night at Veteran's Field in Ware, last Tuesday.

"We're hoping to challenge for the league title this year, so this is a very big-league win for us," said Pathfinder Tech head coach David Wilson. "Winning the league title is our first goal. We also want to qualify for both the Western Mass. and state tournaments."

Pathfinder Tech entered this week's action with a 5-1-1 overall record and a 3-0-1 mark against league opponents. The last time they captured the league title was in 2022.

The first meeting of last season between the two squads ended in a 2-2 draw.

It was their first meeting on the soccer pitch since playing a pair of ties in 2022.

Pathfinder Tech, who posted a 4-0 home shut-out victory over Ware in the second meeting of last season, was scheduled to host Southwick at Legion Field on Monday night. The winner of that contest took over sole possession of first place in the Bi-County East standings.

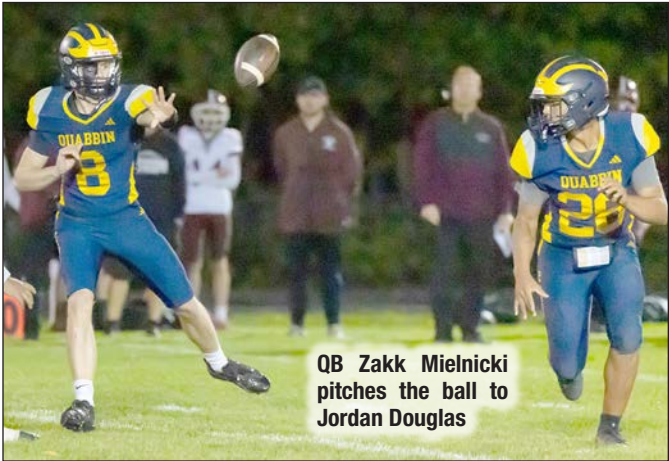
The Indians had a 1-4 overall record and a 1-3

See PIONEERS PAGE 8

Leicester offense too much for Panthers

BARRE – Last Friday night, Quabbin Regional High School football had a couple of early scores, but Leicester came roaring back with four touchdowns in the second quarter and powered to a 56-20 win over Quabbin. The Panthers got a touchdown from Zakk Mielnicki with a 67-yard run and Jordan Douglas had a 21-yard for a score. Late in the game, Isaiah Porter scored on an 80-yard pass play. The Panthers are now 1-2 on the season.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY JEFFREY HAYNES
Jordan Douglas breaks a big run for the Panthers.



QB Zakk Mielnicki pitches the ball to Jordan Douglas



Brady Dennis, left and Jordan Douglas wrap up the runner for the tackle.



Jordan Publicover tries to get around the corner.



Zakk Mielnicki looks for a hole to run through.



Leo Bates attempts to make a touchdown-saving tackle.

Pioneers split another pair

PALMER – The Pathfinder Regional High School girls soccer team remains at .500 after scoring a win and a loss during the past week. Last Monday afternoon on the grass behind Pathfinder, the Pioneers edged Putnam 2-1. Lee would defeat Pathfinder last Tuesday 4-0 for a 2-2 overall record. The Pioneers will travel to Gateway for a Friday evening game on Oct. 3 at 6 p.m. The Pioneers are back home to face Commerce at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 6.



Evelyn Wood looks to cut the ball off on defense.



Ellyana Lavalley sends a shot away.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI
Madison Boulrice punts the ball away.



Aubrey Ortiz tries to steal the ball away.



Megan Clark takes possession.

- public notices -

TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
The Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing on **Tuesday, October 12, 2026 at 6:00pm** in the Assessor's Office, first floor, West Brookfield Town Hall, to act on an application for a Special Permit, for Robert and Jennifer Dold, for the property located at 207 Shoreline Dr, West Brookfield. The applicant wishes to rebuild a house that was demolished due to failing foundation. A Special Permit is required per Section 1.52. Non-Conforming Structures. 09/25, 10/02/2026

INVITATION FOR BIDS FY2027 Paving Materials and Services
Town of West Brookfield - Highway Department
The Town of West Brookfield Board of Selectmen requests sealed bids on the following Paving Materials and Services for various Town Roads in West Brookfield using State Aid Chapter 90 Funds, And other Federal, State and Municipally funded projects in Fiscal Year 2027.
Bids for the Paving Materials and Services in the Town of West Brookfield will be received at the West Brookfield Highway Department located at 15 Front Street West Brook-

field, MA 01585 until 9:00 a.m. Monday October 26, 2026, at which time they will be publicly opened and read. No late bids accepted.
Obtaining Bid Packages: Specifications, general instructions, and Bid Forms must be obtained at the Highway Department located at 15 Front Street in West Brookfield between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday or by emailing jdaley@wbrookfield.com. Bidders are required to submit bids on the Bid Forms provided.
Bid Deposit: All bids over \$10,000.00 MUST be accompanied by a bid deposit in the amount of five percent (5%) of

the bid in the form of cash, a bid bond, or a certified check made payable to the Town of West Brookfield.
Conditions of Contract: All contracts awarded shall be subject to the Special Contract Conditions that accompany this bid package. Successful Bidders will be required to produce a certificate of insurance and security bonds with the signed contract. All work being performed requires 100% Performance Bond and a 50% Payment Bond in accordance with G.L. c.149, section 29. The bidder shall be able to start work under this contract after November 1, 2026.
Wage Rates: All wage

rates will comply with those established by the Commonwealth Department of Labor and Workforce Development, M.G.L., Chapter 149, Sections 26-27G as set forth in the contract documents.
Prequalification: Bidders for all projects that cost over \$50,000.00 must be prequalified by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (formerly Mass. Highway Department). The qualified class of work for this project is PAVEMENT SURFACING with a limit amount of \$1,000,000.00. All bidders shall be subject to Section 34 of Chapter 90, must be prequalified in accordance with 720 CMR 5.00 "Prequal-

ification's of Contractors". This will apply to horizontal construction only. The Awarding Authority reserves the right to extend the contract for two (2) additional twelve (12) month options. Valuation for purposes of MassDOT Prequalification is based on first year, times three (3) to arrive at an estimated total value of all bid items. The estimated value of \$303,500.00 provided in this Invitation to Bid is for one year. Vendors are expected to be able to provide their services over three (3) years at three (3) times the initial estimated value.
James Daley,
Highway Superintendent
10/02, 10/09/2026

- sports -

PIONEERS FROM PAGE 7
league record following last Tuesday's home loss.
"We're a young team this year," said Ware head coach Charlene Vallee. "I just want my players to keep getting better in every game that we play."
The last time that the Indians defeated the Pioneers on the soccer pitch was a 4-3 win during the 2015 regular season.
Two of the players listed on the Pathfinder Tech soccer roster are from Ware. They are freshman Noah Lane and junior Ian LaPete. The duo are reserve defenders, and they saw some action during the second half.

"This was a home coming game for both Noah and Ian," Wilson said. "They enjoyed playing in front of their family and friends."
The Pathfinder Tech boys' soccer team has maintained a co-op with Palmer High School for the past several years. The three players from Palmer High are sophomore Abees Castillo-Clotter, senior captain Owen Pear, and senior Dylan Holbrook, who's a first-year member of the team.
During the past three years, Holbrook was a member of the Palmer football team.
The Panthers football team celebrated a 21-6

home victory over Ware last year.
Because the Panthers only fielded a j.v. football team this fall, Holbrook decided to join the soccer team.
"I was disappointed when I found out that we weren't going to have a varsity football team this year," said Holbrook, who's a starting defender. "I decided to try something new, and these guys have welcomed me in. It feels very nice to win another game against Ware."
Holbrook also plays basketball and baseball for Palmer High School.
"It's going to be a lot of fun playing basketball and baseball against Pathfind-

er," Holbrook said. "I'm really looking forward to it."
During the fourth minute of last Tuesday's match, the Pioneers scored a free kick goal.
The kick was taken from the right sideline by Pear and Holbrook headed the ball into the left corner of the net past Ware freshman goalie Mason Gagne (23 saves).
It was Holbrook's first goal of the season.
"Dylan is a very coachable kid," Wilson said. "He plays defense, which seems to be a good fit for him. He's back there with his buddy Owen Pear."
The other two Pioneers starting defenders are senior captain Ian Sau-

ri-Nieves and senior William 'Carl' Wright.
Pathfinder Tech sophomore goalie Elijah Hodge made eight saves in posting his third consecutive shut-out.
The visitors from Palmer took a 2-0 lead five minutes later when senior captain Cayden Bousquet bounced a shot into the left corner for an unassisted goal.
Bousquet, who lives in Belchertown, has accounted for 16 of the Pioneers' first 25 goals this season.
He scored two more goals during the first half and recorded his fourth hat-trick.
"We've been playing very well as a team so far this year," said Bousquet, who

finished the match with a season-high five goals. "I've been on a roll offensively and I'm hoping to keep it going. We've never lost against Ware."
The Indians closed out the opening half with two goals by Pear and another one from sophomore Weston Letendre.
Bousquet added two second half goals before a goal from Christian Ribeiro in the 72nd minute gave the Pioneers a double digit lead.
The two rivals are scheduled to play another night game at historic Legion Field in Palmer on October 15.

QUABBIN FIELD HOCKEY FROM PAGE 7
daker in 1991. They're also members of the Quabbin Athletic Hall of Fame.
One of Casey's teammates during the first three seasons that she played for the varsity field hockey team was her older sister, Kylie, who played college field hockey at Worcester State University.
Makenzie Casey, who

has helped the Lady Panthers win more than 60 games during the past six seasons, is also planning to play college field hockey. She has verbally committed to join the field hockey team at Franklin Pierce University, which is in Rindge New Hampshire.
"Franklin Pierce is a beautiful school and it's only 40 minutes from my house," said Casey, who lives in Hubbardston.

"When I spoke with the Franklin Pierce field hockey coach (Marissa Butler), she told me that I would fit in very well. I felt very good after she told me that and I'm very excited about going there."
During last Monday's home game, it took the Lady Panthers 12 minutes to score their first goal.
With three minutes remaining in the opening quarter, a shot attempt from Quabbin freshman Olivia Vanhoudenhove deflected off the pads of Narragansett freshman goalie Savannah Orcutt (10 saves).
Casey was in the right spot to knock home the rebound shot for an unassisted goal.
A little more than a minute later, a shot attempt taken by Quabbin 8th grader Charley Chauvin rolled into the cage for her first varsity goal, which was also unassisted.
Casey scored her second goal on her team's first penalty corner 38 seconds into the second quarter. The ball was inserted from the left side of the cage by junior co-captain Ellie Poulin to Casey.
The Lady Panthers' other co-captains are seniors Violet Kelley and Abby Rogowski.



Violet Kelly takes the ball away from the opponent.

plenty of support from her defense, which is led by sophomore Addison Surprenant, junior Kayla Curran, and Kelley.
Quabbin held a 3-0 half-time lead.
The Lady Panthers had five penalty corners during the third quarter, but the score was still 3-0 entering the final quarter.
Rogowski netted an unassisted goal less than two minutes into the final quarter.
With 2:52 left on the scoreboard clock, Rogowski delivered a pass to Casey, who capped off the scoring in the game with her third goal.
"On my last goal, Abby shot the ball from outside of the circle and I deflected it in," said Casey, who also posted a hat-trick in a 5-0 home win over North Middlesex on September 14. "It was my third goal of the game, and it got me a little bit closer to 100."
The Lady Panthers ended last week with a perfect 7-0 overall record, and they improved to 4-0 against Mid-Wach B foes after pulling out a 2-1 home win versus Marlborough last Friday afternoon. Vanhoudenhove and Casey scored the Lady Panthers goals during the second half.
Quabbin entered this week's action having outscored their opponents, 24-3, in the first seven regular season games.

- community -

Free premiere of 'The American Constitution' film to be held on Oct. 25

Includes Q&A with writer/director and legal expert
NEW BRAINTREE – Explore the origin story of the American system of government at a free public screening of the new documentary film, "The American Constitution", on Sunday, Oct. 25, 2-4 p.m. at New Braintree Town Hall, 20 Memorial Drive.
The film, from award-winning filmmaker David Garrigus, dramatizes the creation of one of history's most

influential documents. Using only the Framers' own words drawn directly from the historical record, an impressive cast portrays the impassioned debates between figures like George Washington, James Madison and Benjamin Franklin.
Following the screening, attendees will have the special opportunity to participate in a live Q&A session with the film's writer and director, and a legal expert.
The event is free and open to all. For more information, visit ConstitutionMovie.com.

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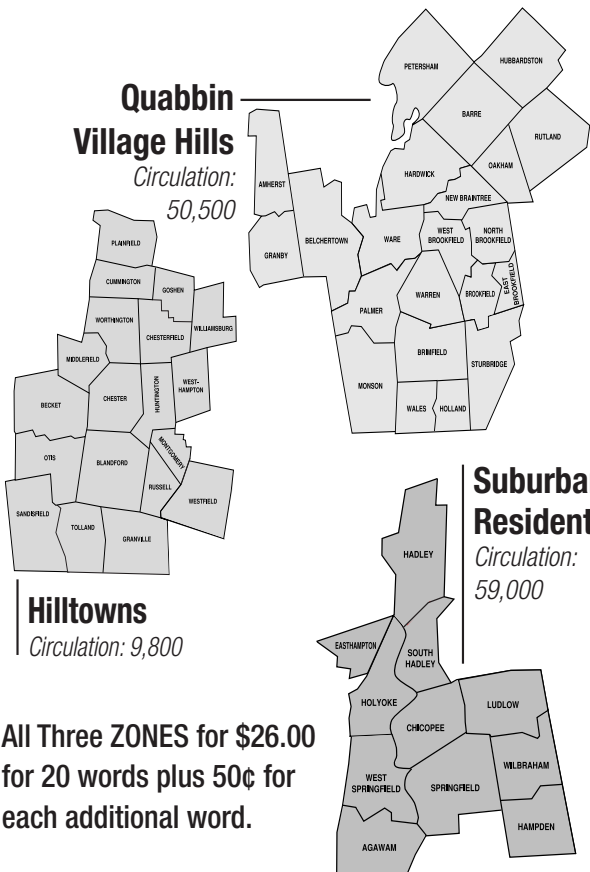
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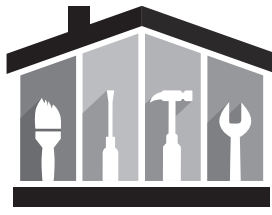
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