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Quaboag Current
Newspaper

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Friday, October 6, 2023



Cade Broadbent of Hubbardston shows off his "Stranger Things" inspired facepainting at the Theatre Guild of North Brookfield's booth.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA OUIMETTE

State's 'right to shelter' law causes strain for town

By James Russell
Correspondent

STURBRIDGE – Town officials say they are struggling to serve a mix of about 140 migrants and existing homeless people, who are being housed in local motels and hotels, and are part of about 20,000 homeless in Massachusetts.

Gov. Maura Healey cited rising homelessness, including "rapid and unabating increases" in the number of migrants entering the state this summer, which caused her to declare a state of emergency on Aug. 8.

The count for homeless school-age children is about 5,000, according to state officials, and about 40 school-aged children so far have been placed in Sturbridge, according to town officials.

State education officials

say their efforts now include "a focused look at what more can be done for English learners." On Aug. 31, the governor deployed Massachusetts National Guard soldiers to help the migrants.



Gov. Maura Healey

Sturbridge officials allege the governor's administration has not adequately communicated with them about the new arrivals, nor done so in a timely manner.



Ed Augustus

Local officials further claim the governor's scramble to house families caught the school district by surprise. The municipal government lacks the resources to deal with the additional students, and has not been getting meaningful state guidance, which has left officials frustrated.

Healey administration officials say they are doing the best they can and appreciate

Please see **MIGRANTS**, page 13

Willkommen to Oktoberfest

Fundraiser gives a toast to the Town House

By Paula Ouimette
pouimette@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – For the second year, the Friends of North Brookfield Town House hosted a fes-

tive Oktoberfest at Common Ground Ciderworks, bringing fun for the whole family.

On Sept. 30, Oktoberfest kicked off with traditional German music performed by the Das Lustige Streifenhorchens (or The Happy Chipmunks), along with games such as cornhole and the "weiner toss."

Proceeds from the event go toward restoring the Town House, an iconic downtown structure, which had been the hub of the community for many generations, and continues to be, as many residents, organizations and businesses took part in Saturday's event.

Please see **OKTOBERFEST**, page 7

Historical Society speaker shares 'Stories from the Flats'

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

STURBRIDGE – The Sturbridge Historical Society started the 2023-2024 year last month with "Stories from the Flats," a presentation about the Westville Lake and dam by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers volunteer Brian Phelps.

Originally from Connecticut, Phelps has lived part-time in a travel trailer on top of the dam since he answered an advertisement seeking a volunteer to stay at the property in 2015.

"It's the best kept secret

in this area," Phelps said of the Westville Lake Recreation Area.

Phelps said his boss at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had asked him to write a detailed history of life around the dam prior to the 1955 flood, and he has spent a year interviewing anyone who has a memory to share.

"The little tidbits of history, the stories...I found some amazing stuff," he said.

Phelps said all of the information he is gathering for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Please see **HISTORICAL**, page 5

CMRPC gives update on Mt. Pleasant Street project

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
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NORTH BROOKFIELD – A representative from Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission gave the Board of Selectmen updates about the Mt. Pleasant Street Improvement Project.

The design for the project has been fully funded through the Community Block Development Grant Program for comprehensive design and phase one of the two-phase construction project. He said

phase two construction will require future CDBG funding.

"The need to do this project on Mt. Pleasant was identified in the West Side Neighborhood Infrastructure Planning Study...the project limits will include then entire length of Mt. Pleasant Street from North Main Street to High Street. The design will address the current substandard conditions in drainage, water, as well as pedestrian and road system improvements," the representative said.

At the Sept. 26 meeting,

Doug Bush of Haley Ward Engineering said phase one construction will install new water mains, water service lines and hydrants, as well as temporary road surface repairs. Sewer and drainage will be part of phase two of the construction project.

The CMRPC representative said construction for phase one is expected to start in the spring.

Flooding

Ray Baillargeon of Conroy Avenue said he has been deal-

Please see **CMRPC**, page 8



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- community -

The American Wood Turner

Frank White prepares for opening reception Oct. 13

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

WEST BROOKFIELD – Over 30 years ago, Frank White was looking to sharpen his self-taught whittling and carving skills by signing up for a wood carving class, but found wood turning instead.

Now, his wood turnings will be featured in his first solo show at West Brookfield Art & Frame, 10 East Main St., “The American Wood Turner”, with an opening reception on Friday, Oct. 13 from 5-7 p.m.

Wine and cheese will be available during the reception, and the show will be on display through October, giving people a chance to start their holiday shopping early.

“After one session, I got hooked on it,” White said of wood turning.

Since completing the wood turning class at the Center for Crafts in Worcester, White has been creating a variety of wood



Frank White displays his wood turned items in his barn, while he prepares for the opening of his show, “The American Wood Turner” at West Brookfield Art & Frame, 10 East Main St., West Brookfield with an opening reception on Friday, Oct. 13 from 5-7 p.m.

turned items, from practical bowls and platters to whimsical sculptures and hollow turnings.

The hollow turnings are decorative, with many made from burls, a rounded tree growth that is filled with small knots and dormant buds, which create a swirling, unusual grain in the wood.

Many times, White chooses to leave the burl’s natural edge, providing a contrast to the smooth finish of the turned wood.

The time it makes to turn

wood varies, White said, but it’s a matter of hours when working with dry, seasoned wood.

Turning green wood is more of a process, and this is what White uses to make functional pieces, like bowls.

First, White completes a rough turn of the green wood, creating the shape, before letting it season for about a year, allowing the wood to dry. With any luck, it will dry without cracks or “checks.”

Checks can occur as the sapwood, the outer part of the



Frank White turns a variety of woods into all kinds of items, ranging from practical bowls and platters to sculptures.

URLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA OUIMETTE

tree, dries around the heartwood, the center of the tree.

Once seasoned, White puts the bowl on a lathe and brings it down to its final level of thickness before sanding and staining.

Many of White’s turnings have intricate designs carved into them, from cattails to woven patterns.

“I used to carve designs by hand,” White said, but now he uses power tools after laying out the designs on the wood with pencil. After power carving, he cleans up the design using hand tools.

“I like to do texturing on decorative pieces,” he said.

White also uses exotics, like rosewood and African blackwood as accents to go with more common woods, like cherry, maple or walnut.

“It gives sort of a more formal appearance,” he said.

Before he dedicated his time to wood turning, White was a curator of Mechanical Arts at Old Sturbridge Village and before that he taught Latin at the Williston School.

When deciding what a piece of wood

will become, White said a lot of times he has an idea of what he wants to make, but other times he doesn’t.

“He likes to get a piece of wood, and see something in it,” his wife Patty said.

The couple has lived in West Brookfield since 1971, with White growing up in Vermont and Patty in New Hampshire.

They met as teenagers, while working on a dude ranch in New Hampshire, where Frank was a baker’s helper and Patty was a maid on the ranch’s Honeymoon Lane.

White’s barn has been featured in the town’s White Christmas celebration, and he’s also been a stop along the Backroads Studio Tour.

About “The American Wood Turner”

Gallery hours at West Brookfield Art & Frame are Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., and Sundays from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

The final exhibition of the year will be the “Small Works Show” opening Nov. 17 with all 22 gallery artists, from 5-7 p.m.

For more information about West Brookfield Art & Frame, or upcoming shows, follow them on Facebook, visit www.westbrookfieldartandframe.com, email yafacceber@hotmail.com, call 508-753-8604 or stop by during open hours.

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Proceeds will benefit the Navajo Indian Nation as well as various local and regional charities.

For more information about the

- community -

Annual homecoming bonfire a 'sweet' success



Anna and Makaylah roasted marshmallows over a grill to make s'mores.



Students were encouraged to write down something that's been bothering them that they wanted to let go of. They then put the paper into a box that was tossed into the fire, symbolizing letting go of whatever it is that's been bothering them.



Q-Drug's Nehr Jenkins tosses the box into the fire.



Assistant Principal for School Culture Jason Gilmartin (second from left) toasts marshmallows with Quinn Geary, Kayla Sherblom, Riley Bassett and Natalia Marchand.



Quabbin students enjoy s'mores.



Quabbin students enjoyed the warmth of the bonfire, a homecoming weekend tradition co-sponsored by Q-Drug and the Quabbin Regional School District with support from the Barre Fire Department and Robinson's Lumber.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY MARY WHITELAW
Quabbin football player Connor Breeds and Assistant Principal for School Culture Jason Gilmartin enjoyed their s'mores.

BARRE – The annual homecoming bonfire, co-sponsored by Q-Drug and the Quabbin Regional School District, with support from the Barre Fire Department and Robinson's Lumber, was held following the football game Friday, Sept. 22.

Students, family and faculty all enjoyed the warmth of the bonfire, and some delicious s'mores.



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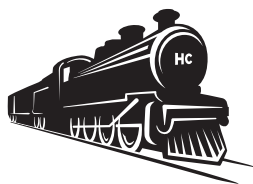
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SOCIAL SECURITY
Matters
By Russell Gloor

I'm 64. When should I claim my Social Security?

Dear Rusty

I am 64 years old and still working full time.

My question is - when should I start my Social Security? I would like to start it in January 2024 and go part time at work, but would I be losing much Social Security by not waiting until full retirement age?

Signed: Trying to Plan Ahead

Dear Trying, to Plan:

You are smart to evaluate the impact of claiming your Social Security benefits early. First, be aware that your full Retirement Age for Social Security purposes is 66 years and 8 months and that is when you get 100% of the SS benefit you've earned from a lifetime of working.

It appears you already know that if you start benefits before your FRA, you'll be subject to Social Security's "earnings test," which limits how much you can earn from working before they take away some of your benefits. But if you go part time at work you can mitigate the earnings test and claim your benefits early - just understand that your payment will be permanently reduced by doing so.

If you claim your benefits to start in January 2024, you'll be taking your Social Security about 18 months early, which means that instead of 100% of your FRA entitlement you'll get about 90% (a reduction of 10%).

The earnings test will still apply, and we don't yet know what the 2024 earnings limit will be, but it will be something more than the 2023 limit of \$21,240.

If your 2024 earnings exceed the annual limit, SS will take away \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the limit. They "take away" benefits by withholding future payments until they recover what you owe for exceeding the limit.

If you work part time and don't exceed the 2024 annual earnings limit, there will be no penalty and you will get every month's SS payment. If you find you will exceed the annual 2024 earnings limit, you can call Social Security and inform them of that and by how much, and they will suspend your benefits for the number of months necessary to avoid overpaying you.

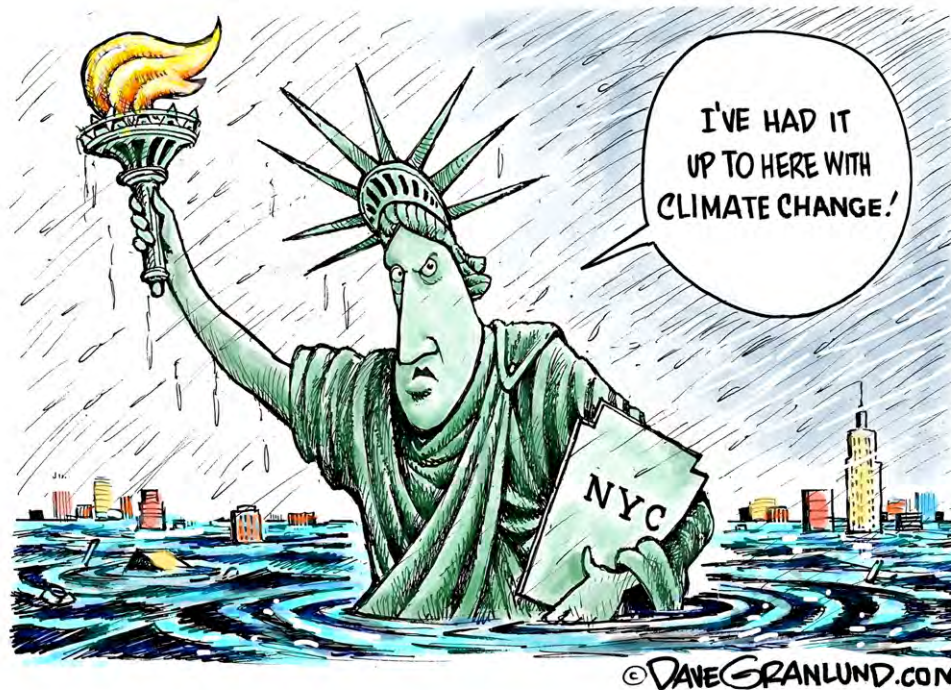
If you don't inform them and you exceed the annual 2024 limit, they will catch up in 2025 when they get your 2024 earnings information from the IRS and issue an Overpayment Notice requiring you to pay back the amount owed, half of what you exceeded the 2024 annual limit by. As you likely know, the earnings test no longer applies after you reach your full retirement age.

So, the decision on when to claim your Social Security benefit is yours to make, and you are smart to consider your work plans - but should also consider your life expectancy and marital status. If you are married and eventually die before your lower earning spouse, your spouse's benefit as your survivor will be based on your benefit amount at the time of your death.

Thus, your age when you claim your benefit may also affect your spouse's benefit as your survivor; the longer you wait up to age 70 the more your spouse's survivor benefit would be. If you enjoy at least average longevity, which is about 84 for a man your current age, then by waiting until your FRA or later to claim you'll not only get a higher monthly payment but also get more in cumu-

Please see **Social Security**, page 9

- opinion -



What I know about Jumping Worms

I recently saw a comment on social media about a woman that had so many night crawlers in her yard she thought she'd go into the fishing bait business.

I question if she really had night crawlers or the Jumping, Dancing or Snake Worm.

This worm has been getting a lot of attention lately and for good reason. It is seemingly showing up everywhere!

Amyntas species are the worms that are a cause of concern. The common name of Jumping, Dancing or Snake Worm is logical due to the fact that these worms thrash about when disturbed; some would even call it violent slithering, hence the snake connotation.

But worms are a good thing, yes? Not in this case.

This particular type of worm differs from the European earthworms that we like to see in our garden, happily aerating the soil and leaving behind nutrient rich worm castings.

Invasive worms live in the first few inches of soil only and devour organic matter at an alarming rate, leaving behind large castings that look like coffee grounds or gravel but are devoid of nutrients and literally soil altering.

If you think about your tomato or marigold plant and the depth of their roots: what organic matter is left for the plant if the worm eats it all?

Likewise, what is left for other, less aggressive worms. Not much.

This time of year, Jumping Worms are easily identified. First and foremost, look for their crazy movements.

If you suspect you have them, pick one up and examine the ring (clitellum). If it is about one-third of the way down from the worm's head, is smooth, whitish and goes all the way around the body of the worm, you've got them.

Earlier in the season the ring will not completely encircle the worm; identification then is a little trickier. Worms tend to be reddish-purple in color with a slight iridescence.

Unlike European earthworms, Jumping Worms do not survive the winter. Beginning in August and going into the fall months, they lay eggs (no mate needed!) in cocoons that do have the ability to overwinter.

The cocoons look like small, round soil aggregates. In a recent experiment where researchers looked at the effect of heat and cold on the cocoons, there is promise that heat will kill the eggs and young in the cocoon.

What does this mean for us? I think a lot about solarization and how to do that effectively. One research document I read indicated that cocoons die at 104 degrees; worms at 85 degrees.

The recommendation was to lay clear plastic (1 mil thickness for a home garden) on the soil for at least two-to-three weeks or until the soil temperature reaches 104 degrees for three days. This is thin plastic, mind you, but it should be OK in most garden settings free from animal visitors.

Weighting it with would prove helpful for windy situations. Clear is better than black for this purpose.

There is little else pesticide-wise that experts are recommending to combat these pests. Hand picking the adults is an option.

The best way to combat them is prevention. Too late for some of us, but for those of you who do not have them or have them in one part of your yard and not in another I can make some recommendations.

Be careful about garden inputs. Plants you pick up at swaps or from a friend may unknowingly have cocoons in the pot.

Compost you bring in or move around your yard may affect areas that aren't infested. Make sure your compost pile gets hot, hot, hot!

Consider unused bait.

A friend thought she was doing a good thing by releasing bait into her garden. In the spring the worms looked like average night crawlers, but they were simply immature invasive worms...talk about wanting to cry.

Since cocoons are in the first few inches of soil, think about your tools, tillers, shoes or wheelbarrows and such. Although the worms are bad for the garden, they are not poisonous to pets or other animals.

It's hard to look at this subject optimistically, but we gardeners are an optimistic lot.

Otherwise, would we do it all over again year after year despite blights and infestations, floods and droughts, early frosts or scourging heat? Of course, we will!

Maybe with a little more caution, but we certainly will.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 31 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.



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- community -

DPH deem local communities high EEE risk

Brimfield, Sturbridge, Holland risk levels higher

By Dallas Gagnon
Staff Writer
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BRIMFIELD – The Massachusetts Department of Public Health announced Eastern equine encephalitis was detected in mosquito samples collected in Brimfield on Sept. 13.

According to a press release published by the DPH, the finding raised the EEE risk level to high in Brimfield, Sturbridge and Holland as well as raising the risk to moderate in Wales.

This is in addition to the six communities already at high risk for EEE: Douglas, Dudley, Oxford, Southbridge,

Sutton, and Webster. Auburn, Charlton, Grafton, Millbury, Northbridge and Uxbridge are at moderate risk, it said.

On Sept. 15, Brimfield posted the announcement on the town's official website and sent an emergency communication text via CodeRED to all residents registered to the system.

There were no human cases of EEE in Massachusetts in 2021 or 2022, according to the DPH, and no human or animal case of EEE has been detected in Massachusetts so far this year.

"A lot of communities throughout the Pioneer Valley Region experienced intolerable levels of mosquitoes as a result of the record-breaking rainfall we had in July," said Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District Director John Briggs.

He added precipitation, including snow, has a positive correlation with mosquito abundance.

"The rain increases resources for mosquito larvae, resulting in a higher amount of adult mosquitoes," said Briggs.

According to the Sept. 15 DPH press release, State Epidemiologist Dr. Catherine M. Brown said "the forecast is for cooler temperatures which will start to reduce mosquito activity. However, the risk for spread of (the) EEE virus from mosquitoes to people is still present. Everyone in these moderate and high risk areas should take the recommended steps to prevent mosquito bites."

While cooler temperatures may result in the decrease of the overall mosquito population, Briggs said, some mosquitoes species are capable of sur-

living winter while in the early stages of development, or larval stage.

These species rely on a permanent source of water to survive. "A winter with a lot of snow will likely result in more mosquitoes during the warmer months due to the amount of snow-melt," said Briggs.

He said two species that rely on a permanent water habitat include Culiseta Melanura and Coquillettidia Perturbans, "both of which are vectors for Eastern Equine Encephalitis."

Some recommended steps to prevent mosquito bites include avoiding outdoor activities between dusk and dawn, applying mosquito repellent, wearing clothing that covers the skin and draining standing water around the home.

HISTORICAL from page 1

will be made public and sent to libraries, schools and historical societies to share.

The Quinebaug River is the dividing line between the towns of Sturbridge and Southbridge, and Phelps' trailer sits on the Southbridge side.

"The Quinebaug River has always been the main factor in the area," he said.

Phelps said people that lived in the Westville area prior to the dam being built, were not happy with having to move, much like those who were displaced by the Quabbin Reservoir when their towns were disincorporated.

The area around Westville Lake was a center of industry, well-known for its production of aluminum lawn furniture at Prest-Wheel, Inc. and before that, textile shuttles for power looms at Litchfield Shuttle Works.

Phelps said Litchfield Shuttle Works sold their custom shuttles to textile mills nationally and internationally, and was the number one custom

shuttle maker in the world.

"I didn't know any of this until the past year," Phelps said.

Phelps displayed a Litchfield shuttle, which was made using dogwood or persimmon wood that the company shipped here from down south. Once it arrived at the shuttle works, it would go to the lumber yard to dry out.

"Each shuttle took a week to make," Phelps said. "They made hundreds and hundreds of thousands of these."

After the Litchfield Shuttle Works closed, the building was converted into a chicken farm, with three levels of poultry. This business operated for three years before being sold to Prest-Wheel, Inc.

Phelps said there wasn't a waterwheel to power this industry, but rather a tub turbine.

He said it's possible the dam has a turbine made by C.P. Bradway in Stafford Springs, Connecticut. An expert from Lowell Mills is hoping to be able to positively identify the maker of the turbine, which is covered with mud and water.

Phelps said during his in-

terviews, he learned about the connection between Snell Manufacturing Company of Fiskdale (which made augers), and the USS Constitution. He said a plaque recognizing the company's contribution to the restoration of the USS Constitution hangs in its former factory.

Phelps said the archives for the USS Constitution do not acknowledge this contribution, but he will be providing his discovery to them to update their records.

Snell Manufacturing had footing in the lost village of East Brimfield, as well as Fiskdale in the site that is now the Yankee Peddler.

Phelps said he also learned that there were actually two "Flats," and that houses on the south side of the Quinebaug River had to move for the dam's flood control.

On the south side of the river, there was once a foundry and brass shop.

While researching the Westville area, Phelps discovered a three-foot diorama of Westville Village in the 1800s, created by the late John Boniface of Boni-

face Tool and Die Co.

Boniface had recreated the Westville Village in the 1960s, based on an 1865 drawing of the "Flats."

Phelps found the diorama leaning against the hall in the house located at the dam, next to his travel trailer.

"It was in bad shape," Phelps said of the diorama, and he got permission from his boss to restore it.

Once it's completed, Phelps will photograph the diorama to display in kiosks at the recreation area.

About the Historical Society

Sturbridge Historical Society meetings are held monthly, September through May, at the Publick House. Meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of the month at 7 p.m., and guests are always welcome.

Membership to the Sturbridge Historical Society is \$10 a year and helps to defray the cost of programs and speakers.

Upcoming programs include Oct. 26, "The Militia in Early America," by Michael Piatt, local historian and Old

Sturbridge Village volunteer; Nov. 16, "A Pictorial History of Sturbridge," by Robert S. Arnold and Wally Hersee; Jan. 18, "Needle and Thread: The Art and Skill of Clothing a 19th Century Family," by Derek Heiderman, OSV Director of Collections and Research; Feb. 22, "The Stone Walls of Sturbridge," by Rich Paradise, member of Sturbridge Trails Committee; March 28, "Sturbridge in the Civil War," by Wally Hersee; April 25, "Pistol Pond and the Manufacture of Underhammer Guns in Sturbridge," by Robert S. Arnold, Charles Blanchard and Doug Quigley; and May 23, to be announced.

All programs are free to attend, with refreshments and meeting room donated by the proprietors of the Publick House.

For more information and upcoming programs, follow Sturbridge Historical Society on Facebook.

SOCIAL SECURITY from page 4

lative lifetime benefits.

If, however, your financial circumstances are such that you need the SS money sooner, then claiming earlier may be the right decision, provided you don't substantially exceed the annual earnings limit prior to reaching your full retirement age. I hope the above provides what you need to make an informed decision.

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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TV DEALS 50" Hisense.....\$279 ⁹⁹ (Regularly \$549.99) 55" Hisense.....\$299 ⁹⁹ (Regularly \$799.99) 65" Hisense.....\$399 ⁹⁹ (Regularly \$649.99) 55" Samsung.....\$399 ⁹⁹ (Regularly \$449.99) 75" Samsung.....\$749 ⁹⁹ (Regularly \$799.99) 85" Samsung.....\$1099 ⁹⁹ (Regularly \$1599.99)	FRIGIDAIRE SIDE-BY-SIDE REFRIGERATOR \$1199⁹⁹ WAS \$1,599.99	AMANA WASHER OR DRYER #NED4855EW \$479⁹⁹ WAS \$699.99	MAYTAG DRYER #VEDC48HW \$579⁹⁹ WAS \$699.99	WHIRLPOOL FRENCH DOOR BOTTOM FREEZER \$1699⁹⁹ WAS \$2,699	
MAYTAG TOP FREEZER 18 CU. FT. \$699⁹⁹ WAS \$899.99	AMANA GAS RANGE #AGR153CBAS • Stainless Steel \$599⁹⁹ WAS \$699.99	GE FRONT LOAD WASHER #GFWS05SNWW \$799⁹⁹ WAS \$999.99	20 CU. FT. CHEST FREEZER \$899⁹⁹ WAS \$1099.99	LG SMOOTH TOP ELECTRIC STOVE \$799⁹⁹ WAS \$999.99	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold;">END OF SEASON BIKE SALE</div> WE REPAIR BIKES!

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- sturbridge -



Oktoberfest also featured a cornhole competition.



Brad Gannon's bat charms had a spooky display for Halloween. Each heart shaped charm is made out of an American Samoa National Park quarter, which features the image of two Samoan fruit bats on the back.



Children of all ages could enjoy making giant bubbles at Oktoberfest.



Children enjoyed many free activities, including painting these wooden pumpkins to take home.



One band member played the spoons.



Chairman of the Board artisan Wayne Boulette stands with some of his wooden cutting boards.



Live music continued throughout the day.

Fall/Halloween/Christmas Craft Fair
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10AM - 3PM
 United Church of Ware
 49 Church Street
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 Soup & Sandwich Luncheon 11:30AM - 1PM
 Table Runners & Quilts
 Stuffed Animals
 Fairy Houses
 Garden Decor
 Table Decorations
 Christmas Decorations

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USDA INSP. SLICED IN OUR DELI TURKEY BREAST \$3.99 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN BEEF CHUCK ROAST or STEAKS \$4.99 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH WHOLE CHICKEN TWIN PAK \$1.49 lb
SLICED IN OUR DELI LAND O LAKES SHARP CHEDDAR AMERICAN CHEESE..... \$3.99 lb	TAILGATE SPECIALS	USDA INSP. FROZEN READY TO COOK PARMESAN BREADED TALAPIA 24 OZ \$6.99 ea
USDA INSP. STORE MADE BOURBON MARINATED BLADE STEAKS \$6.99 lb	USDA INSP. GROUND FRESH DAILY 80% LEAN GROUND BEEF \$3.79 7 LB BAG	USDA INSP. IQF FROZEN 51/60 COUNT COOKED SHRIMP 1 LB BAG..... \$4.99 ea
USDA INSP. STORE MADE ITALIAN MARINATED 1/2 CHICKEN \$2.49 lb		
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- community -

OKTOBERFEST from page 1

Winning the weiner toss, was a team of North Brookfield Jr./Sr. High School teachers, Megan Hanson and Damian Sarrette. Both newcomers to the sport, Hanson and Sarrette made several impressive catches, including a dive Hanson made to clinch the win.

Also, in attendance at Oktoberfest, was North Brookfield High School student Angie Fritz, who was offering chances to play “cow plop” bingo in order to raise money to replace the school’s bleachers.

Fritz said the “Raise the Bleachers” campaign has set a goal of \$30,000 to replace the bleachers in the Julianne Caron Memorial Gymnasium, as the current bleacher tops are cracked and unsafe for sitting.

“We’re not going to have a season without them,” said Fritz, a member of the basketball team. The gymnasium is also used by David Prouty High School’s basketball team, as their school undergoes construction.

North Brookfield artisan and Navy veteran Wayne Boulette sold his cutting boards, rolling pins and more to raise money for an organization that’s near and dear to his heart, the ASPCA.

An animal lover, Boulette has two poodles at home, siblings Minnie and Rascal.

Boulette gets scraps of wood from various sawmills owned by his friends, and begins the process of layering and gluing each type of wood together, to make an eye-catching striped board. Boards can have cherry, ash, and more layered in.

This board is then cut into the desired shape before it is sanded and given multiple coats of food-grade mineral oil to preserve it.

Boulette has been a carpenter his whole life, and started selling his wood crafts, mostly as a hobby.

“I do it to keep myself busy,” he said.

All of the profits Boulette makes from selling his wares go to the ASPCA.

Michelle Marshall began vending at fairs and markets about a year ago, offering a dazzling array of stones and crystals, and just last month she opened The Dragon Stones store at 197 North Main St., not too far from the Town House.

Marshall said she’s learned a lot about crystals since she started selling them, and the various things they can do.

Many of her stones and crystals and cut into animal shapes, or flowers and other plants. Skulls, spiders and owls were the perfect purchases for Halloween.

North Brookfield residents Aubrie and Michael Lazar, owners of The Passing Faire Emporium, shared a table of curiosities, including spell jars, locally foraged mushrooms, sleep sachets and jewelry made from bone.

Michael said the bones were found in the woods, while out foraging for mushrooms. Bones come from the skeletons of deer, fox, coyote and more.

Some of the popular mushrooms The Passing Faire Emporium had to offer included birch polypore and chaga.

“It’s really what I find in nature,” Michael said.

Michael said he just wants to get information out there about the types of mushrooms that grow right in your own backyard, and their health benefits.

The Theatre Guild of North Brookfield offered facepainting, as well as information about the upcoming “Freak N Fright” Trail of Terror to be held at Common Ground Ciderworks, Oct. 27 and 28, starting at dusk. Adults are \$10 and children under 12 are \$7.

Theatre Guild President Joe Chenevert said the event is “guaranteed to be scary.”

The Friends of the Town House hosted a large raffle, with dozens of prizes donated by local businesses and supporters to take chances on.

Local artist and North Brookfield High School senior Nadia Sukharev spent a good part of her summer painting a stunning rendition of the Town House, which was raffled off to a lucky winner.

For more information about the Friends of North Brookfield Town House, follow them on Facebook or visit nbtownhouse.com.



Weiner toss participants get ready to lob their hotdogs to their teammates.



Megan Hanson and Damian Sarrette, both teachers at North Brookfield Jr./Sr. High School, were the winners in the “weiner toss” competition.



The tuba and trumpet gave The Happy Chipmunk’s music that traditional German “oompah” sound.



The drummer of The Happy Chipmunks keeps the beat.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA QUIMETTE



Aubrie Lazar and Michael Lazar of The Passing Faire Emporium offered sleep sachets, bones (including bone jewelry), curiosities and locally foraged mushrooms.



The Dragon Stones, newly opened on North Main Street, offered a variety of stones and crystals, including these owls.



Angie Fritz ran the fundraising booth for North Brookfield High School’s “Raise the Bleachers” campaign.



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- community -

New Braintree Police Log

During the week of Sept. 25-Oct. 2, the Hardwick/New Braintree Police Department responded to 17 building/property checks, 45 directed/area patrols, three traffic controls, four radar assignments, one emergency 911 call, two assist other agencies, one animal call and three motor vehicle stop in the town of New Braintree.

Tuesday, Sept. 26
4:28 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

Wednesday, Sept. 27
2:54 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Me-

morial Drive, Officer Handled

Thursday, Sept. 28
4:20 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, West Brookfield Road, Written Warning
4:22 p.m. Medical Emergency, Tucker Road, Transported to Hospital

Friday, Sept. 29
11:36 a.m. Fire Alarm, Bernard Whitney Road, Investigated
12:57 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Wine Road, Officer Handled
5:36 p.m. Hazardous Incident, Barre Road, Vehicle Towed

CMRPC from page 1

ing with flooding in his backyard since he bought his home 14 years ago. He said he was unaware of the issue when he bought the property, but flooding was a problem even before them.

Baillargeon said there were two grants totaling \$400,000 that he was told could have been used to make the repairs, but the money was used for streets and sidewalks instead.

"I tried getting this thing fixed because it floods my property if I get torrential rain...my whole backyard becomes a lake," he said.

Baillargeon said a previous Highway Department superintendent wanted to create a retaining pond on his property, but nothing has been done.

He has four catch basins around his property, but with this year's heavy rainfall, his basement flooded multiple times. He lost three water heaters and two sub pumps due to the damage.

"I just want it fixed," he said. "I pay taxes for my property, and I can't use it."

Baillargeon said proper catch basins need to be installed, as the four existing ones (installed in the early 1900s) are all illegal.

"Where the pipes are, I can't use that area and half of my property is pipes," he said. He said he also has a hole in his yard, from when the Highway Department had to repair a broken pipe on his property.

Board of Selectmen Chair Jason Petraitis said the Board will keep the discussion going and try to come up with some ideas to remedy the situation.

Electrical aggregation

The Board approved a draft of a letter supporting bill H.3852, an act supporting electrical aggregation programs in the commonwealth. This bill will help municipalities with electrical aggregation programs, offering a reduced electrical rate to residents.

Aggregation programs can also increase the use of cleaner energy.

The letter states that many municipalities have filed electrical aggregation plans with the Department of Public Utilities and have waited years for approval. About half of the municipalities in the commonwealth do not have electrical aggregation plans.

Administrative Assistant Ashley Barre said the town filed an electrical aggregation plan with the DPU in 2019 and it has still not been approved.

ARPA requests

Board of Selectmen Vice-Chair John Tripp read a letter from Jamie Flamand of the Water Department regarding a request for a new water main extension at the new Highway Department on Donovan Road.

The Water Department had also submitted this request to the American Rescue Plan Act Committee for consideration.

The letter said the "existing well

system is not a viable source of potable water."

The water main extension would begin at East Brookfield Road, go up Donovan Road, ending about 150 feet before Town Farm Road. It would include 1,100 feet of six-inch ductile iron pipe, one hydrant, one-inch domestic water service and two-inch utility service into the Highway Barn.

Tripp said the well was fine when they bought the building, but it's not enough for the Highway Department's domestic needs.

Tripp said the Water Department also requested \$100,000 from ARPA to resurface the town's water storage tank.

"These are projects that need to be done," Tripp said.

Tripp said the Tree Warden had also made a request for ARPA funding to cut dead trees back from the side of the roads, citing that downed limbs have caused power outages.

AED pads

The Board approved using ARPA funds to purchase AED pads in the amount of \$531. This is a change from a previously approved request of \$296.

Barre this equipment is for the Town Offices, and they had originally requested adult pads and were told they should purchase additional sizes, such as child and infant.

Asphalt cutting

The Parks and Recreation requested approval to spend \$250 from the budget to cut asphalt on the Common.

Brandon Avery of the Parks and Recreation said a part of the basketball court's asphalt that's "badly broken up" needs to be cut and removed.

Once it's removed, the area could be useable again, and would be a good location for a pickleball court.

Plow valve

The Board approved the Highway Department's request to spend \$400 for a hydraulic valve for the plow from the Snow and Ice account.

Resignation

The Board accepted the resignation of Parks and Recreation member Michelle Thayer.

Pole hearing

A National Grid engineer requested the installation of a new utility pole on Brickyard Road for a newly constructed house. The same pole will be used to supply power to additional houses that will be built next to the new house.

The Board closed the hearing and voted in favor of the utility pole placement.

Contract review

The Board of Health presented a contract to the Board of Selectmen for repairs to the landfill swales. The Board will approve the contract after it has been reviewed by town counsel.

The Board also received the bidding services proposal from the BSC Group for the Downtown Complete Street Project, which will also be reviewed.



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VETERANS DAY SALUTE

Quaboag Current ~ November 3, 2023

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

Please submit a photo of your veteran with his or her name, rank, branch of military and hometown by email to dflynn@turley.com or drop off a photo to **Quaboag Current, 80 Main Street, Ware, MA 01082**
All photos will be returned.

Please submit your photo no later than
Tuesday, October 17, 2023

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 us before to October 10th.

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SPORTS

Cougars suffer setback against Uxbridge



A scrum ensues in front of the Quaboag goal. The Cougars were able to clear it out on this occasion just a few minutes into the match.

WARREN – On a sun-splashed afternoon last Thursday, the Quaboag Regional High School field hockey team suffered a tough defeat against Uxbridge, who came in and overwhelmed Quaboag with offense in an 8-1 decision. Josie Hescocck had the only goal for the Cougars, who are now 4-3 on the season.

Hanna Nemeroff guides the ball up the field.



Lexi Gauthier-Vanderpuye tries to head an Uxbridge player's progress.



Katelynn Swistak clashes with an opponent.



Josie Hescocck attempts to make a play on defense.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Tobin's pair lifts Quabbin



A group of Panthers jump for the ball.

BARRE – Last Thursday afternoon, Michael Tobin scored two goals as Quabbin defeated Littleton for its second win of the year. The Tigers are now 2-6 with a 2-6 mark in the Mid-Wach C League.



Quabbin scores a goal.



Collin Lindley blocks a shot for the Panthers



Seth Twarog cleats the ball supporting a great defensive effort by the Panthers.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY RAY DUFFY
Alijah Flint with a big save for Quabbin.

- sports -

Pioneers keep winning



Seth Mitchell tries to steal the ball for the Pioneers.

PALMER – With the exception of a setback in their season opener, Pathfinder boys soccer has kept on winning. The Pioneers defeated Hampden Charter last Wednesday 10-1 followed by a 1-0 win over Smith Vocational. With a number of postponements last month, the Pioneers still have a lot of games yet to play in October. The Pioneers head to Franklin Tech on Friday, Oct. 6 at 4 p.m.



Basem Yaseen looks for an opening to pass.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHTOS.COM
Seth Mitchell readies a long throw-in.

Owls hold on for first victory

WESTFIELD – Westfield State’s Max Margeson (Littleton, Colo./Mullen HS) and Alec Rodriguez (Westfield, Mass.) combined for a memorable interception return play for a touchdown to lift the Owls to a 17-10 win over Massachusetts Maritime Academy at Alumni Field on Saturday to bring a happy conclusion to Family and Champions Weekend.

Margeson delivered a perfectly timed hit on MMA wide receiver Andrew Brightman (Wareham, Mass./Upper Cape Tech) to jar loose the ball on a catch, with the ball ping-ponging directly to Owls’ linebacker Rodriguez for the interception at the MMA 32-yard line. Rodriguez returned the ball a couple of yards before Brightman snagged him by the ankle, and Rodriguez handed the ball off to Margeson, who rambled 30 yards through traffic for the touchdown to give Westfield a 17-10 lead with 9:07 left in the third quarter.

The Owls hung on down the stretch for the win, improving to 1-4 on the season and 1-2 in the MASCAC. MMA slips to 1-3 overall and 1-1 in the league.

The two teams traded salvos in the first half, with the Buccaneers getting on the board on their first drive of the game with a 7-play, 73-yard march that was capped by a 29-yard TD pass to Brightman on deep post route comple-

tion from quarterback Marc Murphy (Norwood, Mass.).

Westfield answered on their first drive, getting a big 52-yard kick return from Christian Julian (Hingham, Mass.) to set up the drive at the MMA 32. Seven plays later, Westfield’s Jordan Smith (Coventry, Conn.) rumbled four yards up the middle for a game tying TD.

The two clubs traded field goals in the final 10 seconds of the half. MMA got a 24-yard TD from Logan Tsaika (E. Freetown, Mass./Appoquonet) to take a 10-7 lead with eight seconds left in the half.

Westfield got the ball back on the ensuing kickoff, and Owls QB Gabriel Fernandez (Holyoke, Mass.) found Danny Farrell (Milford, Mass.) on a 25-yard completion and a personal foul on the Buccaneers gave the Owls the ball at the MMA 22 yardline with four seconds left in the half.

Westfield State first-year kicker Cooper Harvey (Niskayuna, N.Y.) booted a 39-yard field goal as time expired to tie the game 10-10 at the half.

Neither team particularly threatened the end zone after the big interception return by the Owls. MMA drove the ball as far as the Owls’ 38-yard line with less than two minutes to play, but Tyler Cooley (Randolph, Mass./Arch. Williams) dropped Murphy for a loss on

third down, and Murphy’s long bomb try to Brightman on fourth down fell incomplete to end the threat, and Westfield knelt on the ball three times to run out the clock.

Fernandez finished 14-25 passing for 138 yards. Farrell finished with six catches for 65 yards, and Smith rushed for 77 yards on 25 carries.

For MMA, Murphy completed 12 of 23 passes for 206 yards with a TD and an interception. Daniel Molloy (Franklin, Mass.) led the rushing attack with seven carries for 22 yards, and Brightman finished with eight catches for 96 yards. Molloy added three catches for 54 yards.

Defensively, Cooley led the Owls with 13 tackles, and Cam Danahy (Kingston, Mass./Silve Lake) added nine. Dylan Clark (Bellows Falls, Vt./BFA) came up with two big plays with two tackles for losses of 12 yards.

Liam Hines (Quincy, Mass./North Quincy) led MMA with seven tackles. Owen Shea (Scituate, Mass./Norwell) made five tackles, 2.5 TFL’s and a sack.

Westfield heads into its bye week, before returning to host its homecoming game against UMass-Dartmouth on Saturday, Oct. 14. MMA faces UMass Dartmouth next Saturday, Oct. 7 with a 4 p.m. kick off in North Dartmouth, Mass.

Bonsignore heads for Thompson for big event

NORTH WILKESBORO, N.C. – After 150 laps at North Wilkesboro Speedway, Justin Bonsignore brought his No. 51 machine home in third-place on Saturday night. As the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour made their debut at the North Carolina oval in the Brushy Mountain Power-sports 150, Bonsignore ran inside the top-five for much of the race.

A final green-white-checked finish where Bonsignore lined up in fifth was exactly what he needed in the Phoenix Communications entry. Bonsignore followed fellow championship contender Ron Silk up through the field to finish third, just behind Silk.

In the title battle, Bonsignore will hold a two-point lead heading for the final two races of the season.

“The green-white-checked restart definitely helped get us back to the podium,” Bonsignore said. “We got a good jump on the final restart. It was a good night for us. We were just a bit tight on the second set of tires. It’s going to go down to the end. It’s going to be a championship battle for the ages.”

Bonsignore will move to Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park next on Sunday, Oct. 8 for the Sunoco World Series 150. The NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour is part of a three-day event at Thompson next weekend.

For more information on three-time NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour champion Justin Bonsignore, visit JustinBonsignore.com and follow his Athlete page on Facebook for the latest news and updates, including from the track on race day.

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- community - Cruise for Critters

Animal shelter receives resounding support from locals

By Emily-Rose Pappas
Staff Writer

MONSON – Westview Farms Creamery hosted Second Chance Animal Services for a fundraising event featuring vendors, live music, games and prizes and a raffle with prizes.

The event, which happened this past Saturday, Sept. 30, also had a truck with adoptable puppies and many people also brought their canine friends to enjoy the event and enjoy some treats with their humans.

The puppies available for adoption included Blanche, a 5 1/2 month old German Shepherd mix, Miss Lucy, an opinionated 5 month old Lab mix, and a sweet little 3 month old terrier with floppy ears named Dottie.

The three dogs were available for adoption at the event, and you can also find other animals including cats, hamsters and rabbits to adopt at the various shelter locations.

The puppies' friend, Danielle Bowes, has worked for Second Chance for three years and has loved every minute of it. "It's a passion of mine to help these animals," she said.

Lindsay Doray, the coordinator for Second Chance at the event, wanted to express to the community the hardships that animals have gone through since COVID.

The adoption rate went up during quarantine, but after home rates and everything else went up in price, many families could no longer afford their animals, which filled the shelters back up. The shelters have been struggling and need help from the community to make donations and give these animals a home.

"I have been an employee for 13 years, before then I was a volunteer. It means the world to me to help people find a pet and keep that pet," she said.

Doray hopes to reach out to the community with more fundraising events so these animals can get the care they need.



Blanche, a 5 1/2 month old German Shepherd mix who had many things to say at Second Chance Animal Services' annual Cruise for Critters event.



Hannah, a 2-year-old golden retriever enjoyed the event with her person, Bill Prousseau.



Kimberly Palmucci is shown with two of her best-selling books about loveable pets.

There is also a shortage of pet food and veterinarians are also needed across the state and country. Second Chance wants to emphasize to the community their need for donations of food and other needs for cats and dogs.

"Everything we do is happiness - to bring joy to families," Doray said.

Doray organized a vendor fair in order to raise money and awareness, but to her, it's all about the animals. Second Chance wants people to adopt and experience the joys of having a pet to add to their family.

One vendor pair that shares Doray's love for animals and wants to support them are new business owners Jackie O'Keefe and Bailey Tatro. Their business, which is new, sells bags, hats and cup cozies with original designs.

Their items can be used by a new dog owner, who can wear a baseball hat for sunny or rainy days, use a cup cozie to keep their drinks warm or cold, and use a bag to carry all that you need for your new puppy friend.

For the readers out there, Kimberly Palmucci brought her books about pets, both chapter books and a children's picture book, and donated towards Second Chance with each of her sales.



Missy Croteau, the operator of Dusty's Treats, and her daughter, Amanda show off their all natural and nutritious toppers and treats for dogs.



Best friends Jackie O'Keefe (left) and Bailey Tatro (right) had their first fair set up for their new business.

"This organization does fabulous work on behalf of our community," Palmucci said. Her latest release, "The Door to Fur-Ever" tells of the joys of adoption - tissue box required.

Of course, a new dog in your family needs treats. Owner and operator of Dusty's Treats, Missy Croteau, and her daughter, Amanda, have homemade toppers for kibble and treats made out of all-natural human-grade ingredients

that serve to boost the nutrition of your dog's meals.

Whether you are a cat person or a dog person, always remember that you are that animal's life and person. They are a commitment and an invaluable addition to your family.

Reach out to Second Chance today to see the many cats, dogs, and other animals up for adoption. Give these animals the second chance they deserve, and if you can't, consider donating so they can fund their fur-ever home.

T-Birds make roster moves ahead of opener

SPRINGFIELD – St. Louis Blues President of Hockey Operations and General Manager Doug Armstrong announced today the team has assigned 12 players to its AHL affiliate, the Springfield Thunderbirds, including forwards Mikhail Abramov, Drew Callin, Tanner Dickinson, Andre Heim, and Mitch Hoelscher, defensemen Jeremie Biakabutuka, Joseph Duszak, Marc-Andre Gaudet, Austin Osmanski, and Hunter Skinner, and goaltenders Will Cranley and Vadim Zherenko. In addition, the Blues released forward Nick Ritchie and defenseman Andy Welinski from their professional tryouts.

The Calder Cup quest begins on Saturday, Oct. 14 for Opening Night presented by MGM Springfield. In the team's annual tradition, fans will be treated to a pregame Block Party on the property of MGM Springfield from 4 to 6 p.m. presented by Community Bank N.A. with the support of the Springfield Business Improvement District (BID). The outdoor bash will feature live music, food, and drink. Thunderbirds fans will have the opportunity to get their hands on a plethora of giveaway souvenir items this season, beginning on Opening Night with jersey-shaped rally towels on each and every seat at the MassMutual Center.

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- sturbridge -

Music and axes enjoyed at Deep Roots

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

STURBRIDGE – Since October of 2022, the historical town of Sturbridge has welcomed the Deep Roots Distillery.

Influenced by community, country, family, and friends the team of Tom Cane, Errica Devarenne, and Keith Devarenne learned the ins and outs of distilling and mixing delicious concoctions. Wanting to offer something new to the town of Sturbridge, the three would build and open a business fueled by locally sourced ingredients and supporting other local businesses.

All in good time, Deep Roots Distillery USA was born. The addition to the country's abbreviation was added because the trio wants to dedicate themselves to supporting the country. From rum, bottles, and spirits it's all made in the USA.

Deep Roots Distillery is deeply rooted in the community focusing on partnerships that involve their neighbors. The distillery works with local apiaries and sugar shacks for their spirits and local dairies and farms for their small bites menu.

It's a community effort here at Deep Roots and that's something that will never change. Co-owner, Tom Cane is all about bringing back the old mill charm to the community and brings a locally supportive atmosphere.

"We source local, so you support local," said Cane.



Live music sets the mood at Deep Roots as local musicians reach out to perform at the distillery. Dan Frost performing on guitar and singing during the monthly open mic.

Cane is a woodworking extraordinaire who was behind the creation of the bar and dining area, along with the signs and frames displayed throughout the distillery.

Cane shared that the distillery has received a lot of positive feedback during its first year in business. Patrons come from various communities to enjoy music, drinks, and appetizers at Deep Roots.

Cane's business partners, Errica and Keith Devarenne have been living in Sturbridge for 20 years.

Wanting to add something new to the town, the extension of Deep Roots Distillery would involve axe throwing. The next room over from the bar and dining room offers Into the

Grain Axe Throwing.

A combination of axe throwing, food, and drink truly makes a night of fun for friends and families. You can order food to eat while you play, or you can sit and eat in the dining area before or after your axe throwing booking.

Keith Devarenne realized that there isn't axe throwing offered in any nearby towns. Residents would have to go to either Worcester or Springfield. Having axe throwing in Sturbridge is convenient for locals seeking recreational activities without having to take the longer commutes.

Sticking to sourcing local and supporting local economies, the targets and cage set up for the axe throwing lanes come



The targets in the axe throwing cages are locally sourced trees as Deep Roots enjoys supporting local businesses.

from local tree companies.

Into the Grain has been very active since the distillery's opening as open play, reservations, and leagues take place.

Deep Roots has one co-ed axe throwing fall league on Wednesday nights. Leagues run for seven weeks with the eighth week being the top 16 in the playoffs.

With enough interest in league play, Deep Roots hopes to offer more axe throwing leagues. In addition, Devarenne hopes to include darts and knife throwing in the future for Into the Grain.

Deep Roots' other entertainment source is live music.

Every fourth Saturday of the month, Deep Roots Distillery hosts an open mic event. Musicians who are regulars performing at Deep Roots and newcomers appear for open mics and scheduled live events.

Supporting Deep Roots by

running the monthly open mics is Meli Entertainment. For other music events at Deep Roots, musicians reach out to the distillery and book live music concerts in advance. Cane enjoys the entertainment offered at his distillery and the reception from the public is reassuring.

"It works well, the live entertainment," said Cane.

For indoor entertainment, visit Deep Roots Distillery USA at 559 Main St. Unit 209. For more upcoming events this approaching holiday season, visit www.deeprootsdistilleryusa.com/events. For more information on Into the Grain axe throwing at Deep Roots, visit intothegrainaxethrowing.com/book-now.

Deep Roots Distillery will be celebrating their one-year anniversary with a party on Saturday, Oct. 21 from noon-9 p.m.

Sturbridge firefighter nominated for safety award

SOUTHBRIDGE – Firefighter Stephen Joyce of the Sturbridge Fire Department was recently nominated along with four other candidates for the 2023 Fire & Life Safety Educator of the Year during the 28th annual Massachusetts Fire & Life Safety Education Conference.

The Fire & Life Safety Educator of the Year Award honors an individual or a team for their involvement and commitment to making our world safer from fire and other preventable injuries. It recognizes those who have shown excellence in educating their community and demonstrated outstanding leadership, teamwork, creativity, and perseverance.

The Conference brings fire

educators, prevention officers, teachers, care specialists, and others together to share knowledge, build partnerships, and improve safety services in Massachusetts' communities. This year's conference was held at the Southbridge Hotel & Conference Center in Southbridge.

This year's nominees also included: Captain William Paskiewicz of the Billerica Fire Department; Captain Joseph Townsend of the Nantucket Fire Department; Captain Mike Parr of the Maynard Fire Department and Lieutenant Matthew Morin of the Sunderland Fire Department.

State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine announced that Parr received the award this year, for his work to launch a You-

Tube channel for the Maynard Fire Department to reach residents during the COVID-19 pandemic and producing This Old Fire-

house, a video series that provided safety messaging and introduced viewers to the Department's operations.

Parr also revised the Department's annual fire safety presentations to schoolchildren, switching from a large-group format to smaller, classroom-sized presentations that provided age-appropriate safety lessons and maximized communication with Maynard's youngsters.

Maynard Fire Chief Angela Lawless, who accepted the award on Parr's behalf, said that he has also increased the Department's visibility and accessibility to older adults by collaborating with the Council on Aging and senior housing complexes. His presentations to these groups go beyond fire safety and address accident and injury prevention as well.

Davine noted that Parr has achieved these successes in addition to his day-to-day responsibilities as a shift commander.

The award ceremony capped off two days that included 30 hours of workshops that covered topics from safety for older adults to identifying potential active shooter threats.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Sturbridge Firefighter Stephen Joyce was nominated for the 2023 Fire & Life Safety Educator of the Year.

Attendees heard from featured speakers including Jim Pauley, president and CEO of the National Fire Protection Association; Amanda Sandoval, Hillary Dubois Farquharson, and Gabrielle Sullivan from High

Rock Treatment Center; and Lieutenant Matthew Morin of the Sunderland Fire Department, who promoted diversity, equity, and effective communication in fire prevention.

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- community -

Medicare 101 educational event is Oct. 17

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The North Brookfield Senior Center, 29 Forest St., will be hosting an educational presentation on Tuesday, Oct. 17, at 11 a.m. for current beneficiaries and for those who will soon be eligible for Medicare.

The information is specific to Massachusetts. The session will run from 1 to 1.5 hours, including time for questions.

The presentation will be conducted by Ed Spater, a licensed Insurance agent, who will explain the basics of

Medicare including:

Why it's important to evaluate your current Medicare coverage each year.

The pros and cons of each of your Medicare coverage options.

What to consider when deciding which Medicare coverage option is right for you.

Ways to save money and get better Medicare coverage in 2024.

For accommodations of persons with special needs at meetings call 774-271-5199 or 711 for TTY callers.

Post Road Chorus hosts 'Sing, Laugh, Love!' Ladies Night Out

WORCESTER – Women of all ages are invited to join Post Road Chorus for an evening to "Sing, Laugh, Love!" on Tuesday, Oct. 17 at 6:30 p.m. in Briarwood Auditorium, Briarwood Community Center, 65 Briarwood Circle.

The evening will include sips, snacks, and a "behind the scenes" view of the Post Road Chorus a cappella four-part harmony sound. Women with a passion for music are encour-

aged to attend on this special evening to learn about Post Road Chorus.

Visit www.postroadchorus.org to register and learn more.

Post Road Chorus has been an active participant in the Worcester choral arts community for over 35 years. This women's a cappella chorus features full chorus and small ensemble four part harmony with a healthy dose of weekly fun.

MIGRANTS from page 1

Sturbridge's efforts.

A spokesperson at the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities said in an email that the state is prioritizing finding families "a safe place to sleep at night as quickly as possible."

The EOHLC is the lead agency coordinating the state's response, with assistance from Massachusetts National Guard. The EOHLC Secretary is former Worcester City Manager and former state Senator, Ed Augustus.

"We work to provide local officials with notification, but due to the emergency nature that sometimes occurs just before or after families have been placed," the EOHLC email statement said.

According to the Massachusetts Municipal Association, the state is unique in the country with its "right-to-shelter" law providing homeless families guaranteed access to emergency shelter.

Sturbridge officials and residents who spoke on the record said that however well-meaning Healey's efforts may be, there is a growing and perhaps unsustainable cost to taxpayers. They expressed great concern about the impact to their local school district.

They lauded efforts by the Massachusetts National Guard now stationed in town. In a written statement to the newspaper last week, Sturbridge Town Administrator Robin Grimm said: "Mid-August, I received a phone message and then email indicating that a small number of families 'were placed' in a local motel.

At that point I started asking what the plans were so that I could update the public and the Board (of Selectmen). I was also concerned because our (school) Superintendent hadn't been notified and school was within several days of starting. I assumed that if there were families, even a small number, there would be school-aged children. The lack of notification was extremely challenging to accept."

Education, public health services

"Right now, we're just figuring out what's going on," said Selectmen Chairman Jamie Goodwin said at Sept. 18 selectmen's meeting. "The principal obligations are through the education system. As we get more information, we can become more organized." He

also termed the situation frustrating for the community. Tantasqua Regional School District Superintendent Deb Boyd confirmed on Sunday that there are 41 additional school-age students enrolled, via the new homeless arrivals.

The five-town school district includes Sturbridge, Holland, Wales, Brimfield and Brookfield. Boyd said the new students are enrolled at Burgess Elementary School and at Tantasqua Regional Junior High and Senior High schools. "We will receive \$1,000 per student from the State's Emergency Shelter Fund as well as \$104 per eligible student, per day, enrolled in the district, from the state's Supplemental Budget/Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023," the superintendent said. Based on the state's 180 days of school per academic year for a student, this equals nearly \$20,000 per child.

The Legislature approved \$325 million for state's Emergency Assistance program, to address homelessness and related services this fiscal year, though this money could run out by wintertime. A \$250 million supplemental budget request was filed mid-September, which includes school-related expenses.

There are also questions about public health. "Who is overseeing the contracts between the state and private hotels in town? We don't know," Sturbridge Board of Health Chair Linda Cocalis said in telephone interview. She said the BOH is responsible for ensuring living quarters meet the state sanitary code and the minimum standards of fitness for human habitation.

Cocalis also said she has potential concerns about whether there is a system in place, and what it is, to ensure safety of meals being delivered to families at hotel/motels.

"How do we ensure they are meeting their obligations? There's been no guidance," Cocalis said, adding that she has not been provided copies of contracts between the state and local hotel/motels housing the homeless.

Costs and benefits

Long-time resident Reed Hillman said in an email, "Massachusetts communities, including my hometown of Sturbridge, are being asked to shoulder an unsustainable burden in trying to accommodate thousands of migrants lacking jobs, skills, English and trans-

portation. This problem exists in large part because of the crazy state law guaranteeing housing to all comers, together with promises of driver's licenses, free food, clothing, legal assistance, health care and schooling, regardless of legal status." Hillman, professor emeritus of Criminal Justice at Mount Wachusett Community College, is a former state representative and was the Massachusetts state police commander, prior to being elected to the legislature.

But some are more concerned with helping the homeless.

"I have had a number of people contact me with, racism's a strong word, maybe concern that the town didn't organize some type of . . . basically what the National Guard is going to do," Selectwoman Mary Dowling said at the Sept. 18 meeting. One couple in town told her that they "can come up with 10 people who are waiting to volunteer," Dowling said.

Request for federal aid

There "now exists in the commonwealth a state of emergency due to rapid and unabating increases in the number of families with children and pregnant people, many of them newly arriving migrants and refugees, living within the state, but without the means to secure safe shelter in our communities," Healey wrote in three-page letter declaring state of emergency. This was addressed to President Joe Biden's Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas.

The governor called for "immigration reform," and more federal dollars, though she did not specify an amount. Healey urged Mayorkas to "use all available executive power to remove the burdensome barriers keeping people from getting work authorizations," claiming that "we have historical demands for workers across all industries." In a press release accompanying Healey's August state of emergency declaration, Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll said: "Our emergency assistance system is designed to be a temporary, emergency safety-net program. It is not equipped to handle the demand that we have seen in recent months. While we have made Herculean efforts to expand capacity as much as possible, we've reached a point where the expansion is unsustainable."

Sturbridge not alone

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities said the Healey administration is now "utilizing approximately 80 hotels in about 50 communities across the state. The town of Sturbridge has been very supportive in helping these families. We are deeply grateful to communities for stepping up to help us meet this moment and ensure families have a safe place to stay."

The number of migrants sent to Sturbridge has not been publicly provided by the EOHLC, nor was an estimate of the number of people the town may be asked to absorb going forward. Healey, in her state of emergency declaration, said there were 5,500 homeless families in total being sheltered in the state, with 1,800 residing in hotel/motels. One recently projected total says by end of September, an increase to approximately 6,600 families, a count the \$250 million supplemental budget is targeted to help address. According to Grimm, "Our own Board of Health did have a number of 139 people" from two weeks ago "as best as they could ascertain, but that number was before the arrival of approximately six (additional) families," she said. The state Department of Public Health "has really been the only health group heavily involved with individuals," she said.

Town working with National Guard

The town administrator, in a letter to selectmen presented at the Sept. 18 meeting, said the municipality and school department are doing what they can.

"Our library has offered to provide computer/internet access to families, provided they can get transportation to the Library," Grimm said the town's public library director indicated that they would coordinate with the (National) Guard to do on-site story hours for very young children, and would embark on literacy and translation efforts where possible.

"Multiple languages," other than English, are spoken by the arriving immigrants; Grimm said this language barrier adds to the challenges.

"I have continued to emphasize to the governor's office that despite the charitable nature of our community, we are not equipped to handle this situation in a manner that will help the people involved as we are not a walkable community, and

we have no transportation services," Grimm told selectmen.

The administrator raised similar concerns in a letter to the board on Sept. 5. "I have also emphasized that: we have, several times during the year, all of our rooms are rented for tourism and events, and (we) need some accountability for the potential revenue loss," Grimm said.

"On September 14 we did have a National Guard meeting here" at the town hall, she said. "They are working very hard to get information on the people. . . they are doing the primary care. . . I am very grateful to those ladies and gentlemen that are doing that work," Grimm said at the Sept. 18 selectmen's meeting.

An Aug. 31 press release from governor states: "Gov. Maura T. Healey today issued an order activating up to 250 National Guard members to provide basic services at emergency shelter hotels that do not currently have a contracted service provider."

"Massachusetts is in a state of emergency, and we need all hands-on deck to meet this moment and ensure families have access to safe shelter and basic services," said Healey. "We're grateful to the brave men and women of the National Guard for stepping up to help us ensure that every family in emergency shelter has their needs met, including access to food, transportation, medical care, and education. While we work to implement a more permanent staffing solution, the National Guard will provide an efficient and effective means of delivering these services and keeping everybody safe," her press release says.

An Executive Office of Education spokesperson on Monday said: "Every child in Massachusetts, regardless of whether they were born here or moved here yesterday, deserves the same chance at a high-quality public education. We are proud to work with, and provide funding for, school districts across the commonwealth who have risen to the occasion and welcomed students whose families are receiving emergency assistance from the state.

Our administration is continuing to review opportunities to expedite and improve supports for school districts as we work together to meet the needs of students, including a focused look at what more can be done for English learners."

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Local businesses add flavor to the Big E

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

WEST SPRINGFIELD – When the Big E comes to town, it highlights the opportunity of getting to know the businesses in your communities.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY RYAN DRAGO
Customers lined up to try Macken's Specialty Sliders out of Southwick.

Food and beverages are by far the most consumed products at the Eastern States Exposition (known as the Big E) as many local restaurants, breweries, farms and culinary artists offered up their work to thousands of people.

Inside the Massachusetts State Building on the Big E grounds was Common Ground Ciderworks of North Brookfield. The brewery set the stage providing delicious refreshments including cider and wine along with branded apparel showcasing the uniqueness of their brand.

Not only does Common Ground brew multiple flavors of cider, but it also brews seltzer, wine and beer. In addition, the Common Ground Brewery located at 31 East Brookfield Road also offers coffee.

Throughout their time at the Big E, Common Ground has gotten a lot of positive reception as Cindy Larson, owner of both Common Ground and Hitchcock Tavern in West Brookfield expressed the uniqueness of their local flair.

"It's a neighborhood thing," said Larson referring to the community based brewery that appreciates and supports everything local.

Having a popular selection of handcrafted hard cider, the one that stands out the most to the customers is the Apple Danish Hard Cider.

Enjoying their second year at the Big E, Common Ground Ciderworks has a lot lined up in the fall. On Saturday, Sept. 30, Common Ground will be hosting the Friends of the North Brookfield Town House's Octoberfest fundraiser.

For Halloween themed fun, the brewery will be having a Spook Walk at the end of October.

Common Ground Ciderworks also supports local organizations including the Michael Pecha Cancer Fund.



Common Ground Ciderworks of North Brookfield is featured in the Massachusetts State Building at the Big E, offering craft cider and more.

Common Ground Ciderworks can be followed on Facebook and on Instagram or by calling 508-637-1059. A new website is in the making for the local brewery.

For a good meal while wandering the grounds of the Big E, a family-owned food truck, Macken's Specialty Sliders was the place to go. Based in Southwick, Macken's Sliders offer specialty sliders from beef, pork, chicken and vegetarian options.

Their food truck travels to various locations, including cities such as Springfield, Hartford, Connecticut and other locations in western Massachusetts. James Macken was running the food truck as they appeared at the Big E for their third year.

Macken and his family established the food truck business in 2016 and was motivated by a family celebration. The view of everyone's enjoyment while cooking on the grill sparked an idea in Macken's mind.

"I thought, how amazing would it be if I could make this into my career," said Macken.

Keeping it local, Macken's Sliders work with local suppliers to get their delicious burgers and their meats are 100% natural. The most common sites to spot Macken's Sliders are local breweries, festivals, parties, and corporate and private catering events.

The headliner of their menu was the legendary Bacon Waffle Cheeseburger. Ingredients include 100% all beef, applewood smoked bacon, topped with cheddar cheese between two Belgian waffles with sugar baked into the waffles. The burger was so popular it received an award for the number one new food to try at the Big E in 2021.

A portion of the proceeds from sales of Macken's Sliders merchandise is donated to Cystinosis Research. Macken's Sliders also offer discounts to active members of the military, police and fire departments.

To learn more about Macken's Sliders, visit them at www.mackenssliders.com or call 413-273-7271.

44th annual Apple Country Fair is this Saturday

BROOKFIELD – The 44th annual Apple Country Fair will be held on the Common this Saturday, Oct. 7 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., rain or shine.

There will be a craft fair, quilt raffle, baked goods, food trucks, live music, lawn games, apples, cider, pie and more.

Proceeds from the Fair support the Brookfield Community Club, a charitable organization that makes grants to enrich community life. For more information, visit www.applecountryfair.com or follow the Brookfield Community Club on Facebook.

Merriam-Gilbert Public Library lists events

WEST BROOKFIELD – The Merriam-Gilbert Public Library, 3 West Main St., features a new art exhibit, "Beauty All Around Us" now through Dec. 28.

Artist Nancy Birmingham from Belchertown is a Quabbin Association artist and board member. Her artwork includes watercolor landscapes and flowers, acrylics and seascape photographs.

Planning for Medicare - Countdown to 65 Seminar will be held Tuesday, Oct. 10 at 6 p.m.

This no-cost seminar will help you understand your Medicare health insurance options outside of employer-sponsored coverage, whether or not you are planning to retire.

Led by a Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA representative, topics will cover: Medicare, Medicare Parts A and B, Medicare enrollment timeline, Medigap supplemental plans, Medicare Advantage plans (HMOs and PPOs), Medicare Part D prescription drug plans and plans/programs available to early retirees, such as COBRA.

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QUABOAG CURRENT

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Friday, October 6, 2023

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