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Runners and walkers in the 5K race waved to the camera before starting the event.

Station Loop Ramble

Annual run/walk event celebrates 15th year

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

NEW BRAINTREE – The East Quabbin Land Trust hosted its 15th annual Station Loop Ramble this past Sunday – a family-friendly event that highlights the beauty of the Mass Central Rail Trail.

More than 75 participants took to the trails to compete in the 5 Mile Classic or the 5K Run/Walk. Prior to these events, about a dozen younger runners competed in a 200-foot dash and a quarter-mile run.

The top male and female finishers for the 5 Mile Classic were Nathaniel Henshaw with a time of 29:59 and Abigayle Goudreau with a time of 39:26. The top male and female finishers in the 5K were siblings Walker Larson (19:10) and Hazel Larson (26:06).

See RAMBLE PAGE 6



Young runners took off at the start of the quarter-mile race. TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA OUIMETTE

SB awards water services contract

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Staff Writer
zachf@turley.com

BROOKFIELD – The Select Board met last Wednesday where a water services contract was awarded for East National Company, which is a private company providing water services to the Town of Brookfield.

Town Administrator Ryan Egan said Rebecca Roughley and Water Superintendent took the lead, and all standard procurement standards were followed.

The contract is in the amount of $89,400 annually, and there is a 5% escalator each year. Egan said this is a one-year contract with two possible extensions, and the only difference between them would be the escalated amount.

Line painting

Egan said he has been in touch with Roughley to try and get Gay Road painted before the winter, but there were some bigger bid packages presented to him that would take the town through the end of the fiscal year, and get more roads paved throughout the spring.

Egan said the example

See BROOKFIELD PAGE 3

Board appoints new Highway Superintendent

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Staff Writer
zachf@turley.com

BROOKFIELD – The Select Board continued their discussion on appointing a Highway Department Superintendent last Tuesday, following four candidate interviews on Sept. 30.

One candidate had dropped out since then, so the decision was between Mark O'Donnell, Thomas Degnan and Devin Saunders. The Select Board met on Oct. 8, with one member absent, and the two board members present could not reach a decision.

During the Oct. 13 meeting, Select Board member Beth Coughlin said the Highway Superintendent should have some experience in a supervisory role. She said O'Donnell does not have that supervisory role as a lead mechanic in West Brookfield, but he does have the peer leadership, being the point person on the site of jobs.

Coughlin said Saunders did have that supervisory experience, which is important even in a small department, because it affects how hiring works for example. She said there were painful moments in previous iterations of the Highway Department because of the way the superintendent either ran the department or made hires.

Coughlin also noted there are things that need to be rebuilt in the Highway Department, and met with the candidates to discuss those concerns.

One of the concerns she had with Saunders was that he spoke about getting new trucks, which is not something the town is planning on buying, however she noted that he understood the importance and value of an older fleet. She said O'Donnell could be a good fit to get through the short-term needs, which is the upcoming winter season, and if the decision were being made earlier, she'd focus more on the long-term needs, like managing Chapter 90 funds.

Coughlin noted that the Highway Search Committee, which was made up of experienced personnel from previous Highway Departments, had come to a consensus to choose O'Donnell, and Select Board Chair Sarah Campbell said that recommendation holds weight in the decision of the board, since they gave the committee a job to do, and they did.

Coughlin also had concerns about the leadership style of Select Board mem-

See HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT PAGE 10



The Sturbridge Gravestone Keepers received a request from a member of the Richards family to clean their family stone.

Sturbridge Gravestone Keepers

Volunteers take care of historic gravestones

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

STURBRIDGE – The gravestones in town cemeteries are maintained thanks to the efforts of the Sturbridge Gravestone Keepers.

There are currently six-nine active volunteers who put in time when they can to clean debris, lichen, moss and other vegetation from headstones at the North Cemetery and Old Burial Ground. The volunteers are trained in proper techniques and methods for cleaning gravestones.

The group formed in 2024 with local historian and author Walter "Wally" Hersee serving as the instructor on how to properly clean and maintain the headstones.

At the beginning of this objective, the Gravestone Keepers saw that many of the stones were covered in vegetation or blackened-out with the inscriptions of the stones difficult to read.

One of the first volunteers to join the Sturbridge Gravestone Keepers is Ken Blodgett and his wife Mar-

See GRAVESTONES PAGE 10



TURLEY PHOTOS BY RYAN DRAGO

Standing from left to right are members of the Sturbridge Gravestone Keepers: Amy Gorham, Ken Blodgett, Robin Roberts and Wally Hersee.

- community -



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Members of the Quabbin Regional Hike School Hiking Club and their chaperones pose at the summit of Mount Moosilauke, elevation 4,802 feet.

Quabbin Hiking Club climbs Mt. Moosilauke

By Madeleine Boisselle

Over the weekend of Oct. 2-4, the Quabbin Regional High School Hiking Club ventured north to Benton, New Hampshire, which is nestled on the western side of the White Mountain region.

Fourteen students and four chaperones spent two nights at the Wildwood Campground on the Kancamagus Highway.

While the weather was a bit rainy on the first day, the students and faculty's spirits remained high, as the group was excited to make the most of every second within the wilderness. After pitching their tents on Friday, the club visited the historic Basin in nearby Lincoln, which featured various waterfalls and flumes for all to enjoy.

On Friday night, the club also participated in a "Search and Rescue" presentation hosted by The Pemigewasset Valley Search and Rescue Team, which taught the students valuable skills on how to be safe and prepared when hiking.

Thankfully, on Saturday the rain ended and the group was ready for the tough climb ahead of them. After about ten miles and four hours of hiking, with around 3,500 feet of elevation gain, all 18 members of the club successfully summited Mt. Moosilauke, which stands at 4,802 feet.

From the summit, the views of the fall foliage were breathtaking and students celebrated their hard work by sharing their favorite snacks with one another, something the club does best.



PHOTO BY CHRIS HALEY

The group poses for a photo at the Tunnel Brook trailhead at the start of their hike.

No matter the hike, club members always watch out for each other, continuously growing closer together every step of the way. This kind of experience not only teaches students the power of perseverance, but also the importance of compassion when overcoming challenges and leading a fulfilling lifestyle.

To cap off the day, many students enjoyed a dip in a cool mountain stream, soon followed by a night of campfire stories, laughter, and gooey s'mores.



PHOTO BY CARTER BASSETT

Four hikers head up the Tunnel Brook Trail, surrounded by beautiful fall foliage.

The students would like to especially thank faculty chaperones, Mr. Haley, Ms. Trumbull, Mrs. Frost and Mr. Cammuso, who made the trip happen, giving them an unforgettable opportunity to spend time in nature and connect with one another.

QVARC amateur radio club meeting set for Oct. 27

WEST BROOKFIELD – The Quaboag Valley Amateur Radio Club will hold its upcoming membership meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 27, at the Senior Center at 73 Central St.

Doors open at 6 p.m. with the meeting starting at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome to attend.

The presentation at the meeting this month will be "Using AI to Design a Ham Shack". The presentation will be done by one of the club members, Liam, KC1YRP.

The summary of his presentation will be location topography analysis to antenna optimization to rig recommendations. AI can be a great tool to assist a new, a novice or an experienced ham design his or her shack.

Outline: Brief summary of AI tools selection and AI best practices, site topography analysis, antenna recommendations and design, gear research and selection and shack layout and setup

QVARC warmly welcomes area hams and anyone curious about amateur radio to reach out and get involved. Whether you're a licensed operator, a lapsed one looking to get back on the air, or simply curious what ham radio is all about, there's a place for you in the club as it heads toward its 40th year.

For more information about QVARC, upcoming events, or how to get involved, visit www.qvarc.com or find the club on Facebook at Quaboag Valley Amateur Radio Club.

Auxiliary hosts Fall Harvest Festival and Bake Sale

NORTH BROOKFIELD – American Legion Auxiliary Unit 41 will host its annual Fall Harvest 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 vendors/crafters. This event is open to the public with no admission fee.

Please contact Andrea at adupell@charter.net for more information.

Cultural Council hosts Pumpkinfest on Oct. 24

BROOKFIELD – The Brookfield Cultural Council will host Pumpkinfest on the common on Saturday, Oct. 24 from 4:30-7 p.m.

The event begins with Halloween stories by Scoutmaster Jay and Troop 238, followed by games, hay rides, face painting, apple cider and apple cider donuts from 5-7 p.m.

Pumpkin carving entries are due between 5-6 p.m. You may enter as many pumpkins as you'd like.

Judging for the contest starts at 6 p.m.

Age categories for the pumpkin carving are under 5, 5-8, 9-12, 13-17 and 18+. There is also a People's Choice Award and Business Award.

Children under 5 have a painted category.

Music by Tim Loftus and John Ebersold will be performed from 6-7 p.m.

To enter your pumpkins, email lytlej1234@gmail.com with your name, age, phone number, email and how many pumpkins you are entering.

Haston Haunted House to be held on Oct. 23

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The Haston Free Public Library, 161 North Main St., will host the Haston Haunted House on Friday, Oct. 23 from 6-8 p.m.

There will be a child friendly floor, scare floor, refreshments, tarot readings, raffles and music.

Suggested donation is $5 per person or $10 per family. All proceeds benefit the Friends of the Haston Free Public Library.

Trunk or Treat to be held on Halloween night

NORTH BROOKFIELD – North Brookfield Parks and Recreation is please to announce Trunk or Treat will be held on the town common, located on Grove Street, on Saturday, Oct. 31 from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

There will be music, candy and free hot dogs (generously donated by Hannaford's Supermarkets) on the common. The Fire Department and Police Department will be there to ensure safe celebrating.

If you want to set up a trunk, please arrive by 4:45pm.

The North Brookfield Senior Center, located at 29 Forest St., will hand out free cookies.

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- community -

Brookfield groups present new films on New England Indigenous cultures

BROOKFIELD – The Friends of the Merrick Public Library and The Friends of Brookfield will present "New England's Hidden Landscapes: Acknowledging and Incorporating Our Indigenous Cultures" on Saturday, Nov. 14 from 1-3 p.m. in the sanctuary of the Brookfield Congregational Church, 8 Common St.

The program is free and open to the public. It is the latest in the Robert Wilder Memorial Presentation series, begun in 2023.

The program features two new films by T.W. (Ted) Timreck, a Peabody Award–winning documentary filmmaker known for his biographies of Thomas Eakins, the sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Frederick Law Olmsted (designer of New York's Central Park), and the composer Charles Ives, among many others, including a series of contemporary interviews for the Kennedy Center.

Timreck's films have been featured on PBS and other networks around the globe.

In addition to his work in biographical films, Timreck is known for his anthropological documentaries on prehistoric civilizations in North America, including the widely viewed "The Mystery of the Lost Red Paint People", a special on the Viking explorations to North America produced for NOVA, and the current series "Hidden Landscapes."

Timreck has been affiliated with the Smithsonian for more than four decades and is a Research Associate of its Arctic Studies Center.

The first film, the hourlong "Acton", premieres in Acton on Tuesday, Nov. 10 sponsored there by the Friends of Pine Hawk. The film continues Timreck's "Hidden Landscapes" series and highlights new developments in the discovery of Native American ceremonial landscapes in the Northeast.

Collaborating with archaeologists and tribal representatives, Timreck presents multiple lines of evidence for early migrations; stone prayers, structures and markers; and astronomical and cultural sophistication, suggesting that New England's Indigenous cultures are far older and more complex than popularly believed. Rather than offering definitive conclusions, the film points to promising directions for further investigation.

In the second film, the 20-minute "Crossroads New Lebanon", Timreck, recently appointed Town Historian of New Lebanon, New York, proposes a vision for the town's economic future built on its heritage of Indigenous knowledge and culture.

This memorial series honors the work and memory of Robert (Bob) Wilder (1933–2015), a Brookfield resident, author, historian, cartographer, Old Sturbridge Village interpreter, U.S. Marine Corps veteran and, for 25 years, an aerospace engineer. "Bob Wilder's dedication to studying and teaching history inspired many of us to continue his work. He worried history would be forgotten," said Dan Hamilton, actor and Emmy-winning director, who helps present the series. "We hope these presentations will remind us of Brookfield's place in early America, and of its significance as home to Native people who have lived here for thousands of years. I think the Town of Brookfield, which is also facing questions of how best to honor its own Indigenous sites and cultures, could profit from the examples shown in these films."

First Congregational kicks off jazz concert series on Oct. 30

WEST BROOKFIELD – The First Congregational Church of West Brookfield, UCC announces a series of jazz concerts that will be performed in October, December, and in the spring of 2027.

The first in the series will be held on Friday, Oct. 30, at 7 p.m. Please join the church for this rare opportunity to listen in depth to jazz piano by Stephen Page.

Page has performed up and down the eastern seaboard, with top names in the jazz world. Experience the delight of the music, the excitement of his playing, and songs to entertain and inspire you.

Refreshments will be served after the program. All of these concerts are free of charge, sponsored by a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

The second concert in the series is scheduled for Dec. 21. The church is wheelchair accessible.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Jazz pianist Stephen Page will perform at the First Congregational Church of West Brookfield, UCC on Friday, Oct. 30 at 7 p.m.

For more information, call the church at 508-867-7078.

Grassroots Central Mass to host skill sharing workshops

First workshop teaches 'How to Make a Fabric Origami Butterfly'

BROOKFIELD – Grassroots Central Mass., a local citizens' organization, announces new quarterly workshops focused on teaching specific skills, promoting self-sufficiency, and building community.

Each workshop will feature one skill presented by a member of the community with the goal of teaching that skill to anyone who wishes to learn.

The first topic will be "How to Make a Fabric Origami Butterfly" and will be taught by accomplished textile artist and seamstress, Sandra Riccio Holmes of West Brookfield. In the workshop, attendees will learn how to make a fabric origami butterfly that can be worn as a pin or used as an appliqué on a garment.

The workshop will take place on Saturday, Oct. 24, from 10-11:30 a.m., at the Brookfield Library Barn, 18 Common St.

"As a maker, I see sewing as a skill set, a creative outlet and a place for peace of mind," said Holmes. "Sewing is a true passion of mine, and I am looking forward to sharing this skill with my friends and neighbors."

There is no fee for the workshop; however, a donation of $5-10 made directly to the instructor to cover materials is suggested. Space is limited, so pre-registration is recommended by visiting https://bit.ly/OragamiFabric.

Premiere of 'The American Constitution' film

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 Constitution-Movie.com.

New Braintree Library lists preschool events

NEW BRAINTREE – Preschool Story Hour takes place Monday, Oct. 26 at noon in the New Braintree Public Library, 45 Memorial Library, 45 Memorial Drive, New Braintree.

There will be a story, craft and independent playtime.

On Monday, Nov. 9 at 10:30 a.m. the New Braintree Public Library hosts a CFCE MOC coordinated science playgroup at the New Braintree Library. The target age group is six years and under.

The playgroup will visit Kip's Christmas Tree Farm across the street from the library to explore how trees grow. They should dress for the weather. All are welcome and parental supervision is required.

On Monday, Nov. 23 at 11:30 a.m. the library holds their November monthly preschool story hour. There will be a story, craft and independent playtime.

On Monday, Nov. 23 at 11:30 a.m. the library holds their November monthly preschool story hour. There will be a story, craft and independent playtime. All are welcome and parental supervision is required.

East Brookfield library lists fall events

EAST BROOKFIELD – The East Brookfield Public Library will play the movie "It's the Great Pumpkin Charlie Brown" at the library, 122 Connie Mack Drive, on Thursday, Oct. 29 starting at 3:30 p.m.After the movie, children in costumes can then Haunt the Town Hall.

Thanksgiving Center Piece

Come to the library to make and create your own centerpiece Thanksgiving Center Piece Display on Thursdays, Nov. 5 and 12 at 3:30 p.m. This project will take two weeks to complete; you must be able to attend both programs.

All adults are welcome to attend. Sign-up at the library is required.

Movie Time

Stop by the library with your lunch and enjoy a block buster movie and meet new friends. The next movie is "The Librarian" on Tuesday, Nov. 10 at 1 p.m.

A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving

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

BROOKFIELD FROM PAGE 1

bids were ones that other communities had put together, and he will update the scope of work. He noted that there was an article at the annual town meeting that allocated approximately $9,000 for the purposes of line painting.

Disposition of property

The board voted to send a piece of property at 56 West Main St. to an appropriate real estate agent or broker to be listed for sale. The property is a small landlocked parcel bordered by 17 West Brookfield Road, 54 West Main St., 244 East Main St. and 240 East Main St.

Select Board member Beth Coughlin said the entire parcel is likely wetlands.

Egan said the town is operating under the disposition of foreclosed property law, which requires it to be sent to a broker or realtor within 100 days of the judgment, and if there are no buyers from the listing after a certain period of time, it can go up for public auction.

Appointment

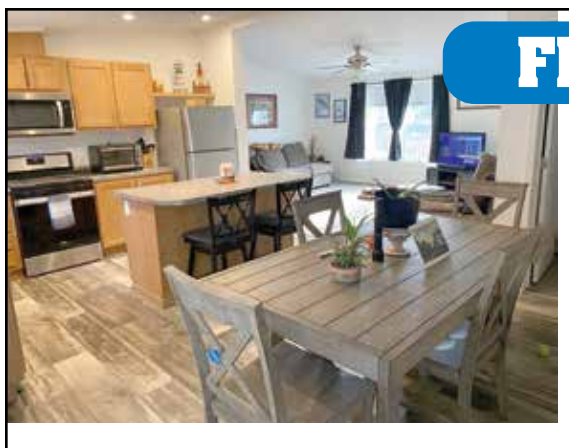
The board appointed Daniel Dugan as a transfer station monitor.

Administrative Items

The board signed the Nov. 3 state election ballot, and Select Board Chair Sarah Campbell gave a reminder that it is two pages this year.

Several minutes were approved including July 22, Aug. 4 and 13 and Sept. 9, 16 and 23.

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- opinion -

The next steps for frost tinged dahlias and glads

I finally came inside at 6:45 p.m. with a flashlight in hand.

It was my own fault. I started a project much too late in the day for the work that it entailed.

You see, we had a frost last night. The first one of the year, for me, anyway.

The temperature just hit the 32-degree mark, so the tips of certain plants were hit. Leaves that were under the cover of other plants looked pretty good.

I probably could have left the gladiolus and dahlias in the ground for a bit longer based on the upcoming, warmer forecast, but I decided to seize the moment and get them dug up and moved indoors.

Read on to learn the specifics of how to overwinter these summer loving, tender bulbs.

As mentioned, dig up dahlia tubers either just prior to or soon after frost hits. I typically use a shovel or pitchfork, starting a foot or so away from the stems.

Once the soil is loosened up a bit, the stem should lift up easily with the tubers intact.

Soil should be eased off the tubers with a spray of water before placing in storage. Leave a small portion of stem attached to the tubers – it is a great place to adhere a label.

Once the tubers have air-dried for a bit, you can even write on the tubers themselves with a permanent marker. Take it from me – it is easy to forget a name over the winter months!

Placing tubers in damp peat moss, saw dust, shredded leaves, or even ventilated plastic bags will help to prevent shriveling.

Choose a location to overwinter your tubers that maintain 40-50 degrees temps and 90% humidity. These conditions will keep them dormant and healthy until it is time to replant.

Many people have good luck using a cold basement or root cellar; small quantities of tubers can be stored in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator. Be sure to check on your tubers every couple of weeks throughout the offseason.

In the Garden by Roberta McQuaid



Should you see shriveling, mist them with clean water and re-dampen the medium in which they were placed. If you see mold, bring down the temperature and humidity level.

Some growers like to get a jump-start on the season by pre-starting dahlias indoors.

We have done this occasionally at Old Sturbridge Village and I am always amazed at just how fast the plants grow, and how quickly they outgrow their pots and become leggy. If you attempt it, four weeks prior to the last spring frost would be soon enough.

Similarly, around the time of our first frost gladiolus corms should be lifted from the ground with a spading fork or shovel. Never just yank the plant out by pulling on the stem!

Once out of the ground, cut the stem from the corn as closely as possible. Rinse under running water and allow to dry in a frost-free airy location for two-three weeks.

Check the corms regularly, and when a corky area develops between the mother corm and the new corm break off and discard the mother. After drying is complete, store on trays or in mesh bags in a well-ventilated area at temperatures between 38 and 58 degrees. The lower the temp, the better.

Inspect throughout the winter months and throw away any corms that begin to rot.

Typically glads are planted directly in the ground, with no pre-starting needed. You can stagger when you plant, though, so that all of your flowers are not borne at once. Plant a few every week of June for color throughout the late summer through frost.

By harvesting your bulbs now, you are protecting your investment for years to come! Only get out there and do it before you run out of daylight!

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.

QUABOAG CURRENT

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- letters to editor -

Resident is fed up with statehouse inaction

To the Editor:

I am so tired of our statehouse doing nothing! We are now rated the least effective legislature – 50th! – dead last, in the nation in terms of how many bills are produced in a legislative session.

0.25 of over 10,000 bills introduced are enacted. (https://bit.ly/47WseE9) Many of our state senators and reps have been re-elected for years and frankly, I think they don't care. But Shannon Teabo certainly does!

I have seen young folks who want to get involved give up because of this sluggishness, and it pains me to think that our next generation is withdrawing from citizen involvement due to discouragement and disillusionment.

We need a state senator who is motivated to change the shameful inactivity on Beacon Hill –

and that candidate is Shannon Teabo! Ms. Teabo is enthusiastic, full of energy to help citizens have lower cost of living in all the ways that matter most right now: housing, health care, child care, and food.

She is dedicated and a hard worker. She is tenacious and impervious to bribes or peer pressure. Her integrity is unassailable.

Please vote for Teabo for state senator, on or before Nov. 3 to help our community restore a manageable cost of living, and to have real, dedicated representation at the statehouse!

Respectfully,

Sherry Zitter
Brookfield

Ware Republican Town Committee endorses 2026 candidates

Members of the Ware Republican Town Committee voted recently to endorse several candidates in the upcoming Nov. 3 election.

The Committee voted to endorse incumbent Worcester and Hampshire District State Senator Peter Durant, R-Spencer, and Peter Warren of Monson, a candidate for State Representative in the 2nd Hampden District.

"Peter Durant has proven himself time and again on Beacon Hill, fighting to lower taxes and bring funding to rural communities," said Michael Fountain, chairman of the Ware Republican Town Committee. "Peter Warren will be a voice of reason in Boston, looking out for the taxpayers of Massachusetts when he is elected."

The group also endorsed John Deaton for U.S. Senate, noting that Deaton will bring change to Washington fighting for accessible and affordable healthcare, and responsible energy options.

Anne Brensley received the Committee's endorsement in her run for Secretary of State. Brensley seeks to improve Massachusetts by encouraging business growth and protecting our elections.

For Governor, the group endorsed Mike Minogue, with the confidence that he can help solve many of the problems facing Massachusetts. They also endorsed Shawn Oliver for Lieutenant Governor.

"We believe that Mike Minogue will consider the struggles residents are facing and help to bring down the cost of living, address outrageous energy costs and bring families back to Massachusetts," Fountain said.

Also receiving endorsements are: State Representative Todd Smola, State Representative Donnie Berthiaume and Elizabeth Dionne for Treasurer

"We're happy to endorse these candidates and look forward to the upcoming election. Our committee urges everyone to come out to vote Nov. 3 or during early voting if they choose," Fountain said.

The Ware Republican Town Committee meets monthly at the Weir River Social Club, 6 East St., Ware. Their meetings are posted on their Facebook page. New members are always welcomed.

Ware Republican Town Committee
Ware

Did I understand you right - I won't get all my SS benefits immediately?

Social Security Matters By Russell Gloor

Dear Rusty:

I was a little confused with one of your past articles.

This September I hit my full retirement age and for every month I continue to delay, my SS benefit goes up a little more. But reading your article sounds like the extra benefits are only added at the end of the year.

For example, let's say that at my full retirement age in September I get $3,524, and in January 2027 I would get $3,619.

According to the Ask Rusty article I read, if I start my benefits in June of 2027, I will have earned $3,735, but it sounds like I would only get $3,619 up until the end of the year, and then they would adjust it.

If this is the case, would I get retroactive money back for the 6 months I did not get the correct amount?

Signed: Seeking Clarification

Dear Seeking:

Thanks for your inquiry. Your understanding of the previous Ask Rusty article is correct.

If you start your benefits in June 2027 (10 months after your Full Retirement Age or your FRA, in September 2026), you will initially only get the Delayed Retirement Credits you earned through the end of 2026.

The DRCs you earned from January 2027 to June 2027 would not be credited until January 2028 and you would not get any retroactive benefits for the DRCs earned during the January – June 2027 timeframe.

SSA's reasoning for this is somewhat confusing but has to do with your ability to claim retroactive benefits when you claim after reaching your full retirement age.

When claiming after reaching your FRA you have the ability to claim benefits retroactively for up to six months. So, to avoid potentially overlapping benefit payments, SSA defers applying your current year's DRCs until January of the following year.

Thus, you essentially lose the extra 2027 DRC money for the remainder of 2027. And, FYI, the one exception to this rule is that when benefits are claimed mid-year at age 70, all DRCs are immediately paid.

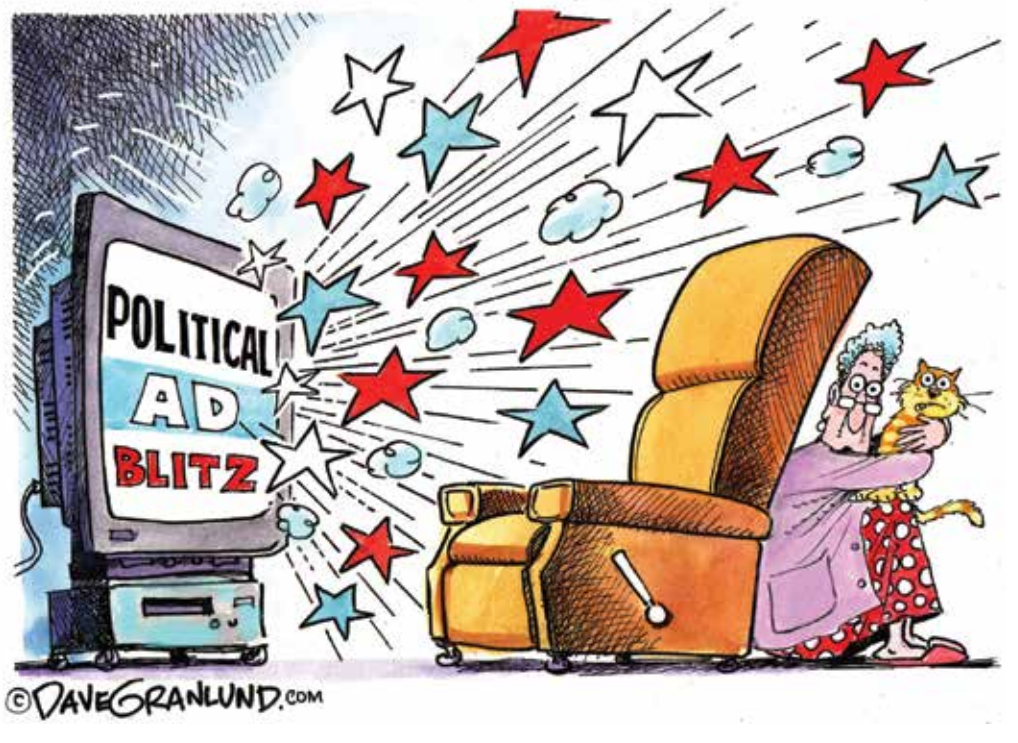
Please understand that I'm not endorsing this SSA rule; only trying to explain how it works and why. Like many SSA rules, there are nuances to how benefits are paid. And this is a classic example. And just remember, as attractive as taking 6 months of retroactive benefits may sound, it also means your monthly amount would be reduced by about 4% for the rest of your life.

As you contemplate when you should claim your Social Security retirement benefits, you should always keep in mind your anticipated life expectancy when making that decision.

If you expect to live at least to the "average" life expectancy for those in their mid-60s (about mid-80s for someone your current age), then waiting longer to claim is usually a better long term financial decision (even considering the DRC issue described above). But if your life expectancy is less than "average," claiming sooner is usually a better choice.

If you have further questions about when to claim Social Security, please contact us at SSadvisor@amacfoundation.org or 1-888-750-2622. There is never a fee for our advisory service because we are a non-profit organization.

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.



OPINION PAGE/ LETTERS POLICY

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

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

Quaboag Current
Obituary Policy

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.
One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.
The other is a **Paid Obituary,** costing $275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph.

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

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

- community -

Professor presents 'The Rise and Fall of the Second American Republic'

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Staff Writer
zachf@turley.com

STURBRIDGE – Professor Manisha Sinha gave a talk at the Sturbridge Historical Society meeting about her book "The Rise and Fall of the Second American Republic," which examines the period from about 1870-1900, which was a time when black Americans received many freedoms and then lost those freedoms just as quickly.

Sinha said the abolitionists, including W.E.B Du Bois, coined the Civil War as the second American revolution.

Sinha said her thoughts on the end of the first republic date back to 1860, and the election of Abraham Lincoln, when South Carolina seceded from the United States, as they did not approve of a president who freed slaves.

Sinha said her book looks at the abolitionist project, which was designed to end slavery and establish equal black citizenship, and the reconstruction area was a time when those abolitionist ideals were being put in place. It also looks at the unwinding of those achievements afterwards.

Sinha said the reconstruction era birthed a new country where people were given national citizenship regardless of race, including four million slaves, but it came at the cost of 700,000 Americans dying in the Civil War and hundreds of thousands of Native Americans dying in other wars.

Sinha said at this time in history, women were still disenfranchised and Asian immigrants were being taken out of the country.

Some of the advances Sinha spoke about include the emancipation starting in 1863 with the proclamation given by Lincoln, but also the process as a whole, starting with the enslaved people working with the union states, congress and the Union Army, ending with the freeing of the last slaves on Juneteenth. This was followed by the 13th amendment which created momentum for constitutional change by enacting emancipation and the creation of the Freedman's bureau, designed to give relief to freed slaves and overseeing the transition from slavery to freedom.

Sinha said at this time, black men were given the right to vote, along with other civil rights laws, and integrated governments started to form.

The 14th amendment also came about at this time, according to Sinha, which established birthright citizenship, which she said is still being debated to this day. This was also the amendment that made one unable to run for federal office if they incite an insurrection. Sinha said many hate groups like the KKK were strongly opposed to this amendment.

Sinha said the creation of the Department of Justice came about too, which was originally designed to protect former slaves. She described these achievements as the foundations of modern democracy, and examined that these rights can be won and lost very quickly.

Sinha spoke of the undoing of these laws, where states started to rewrite constitutions to reinstate segregation, which also culminated in a 1924 law favoring immigrants from western and northern Europe. She said the Wounded Knee massacre was one example of the end of Native sovereignty, and the Spanish Cuban American war culminated in the U.S. taking Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines. Sinha said members of the Wilmington Light Industry overthrew an integrated government in North Carolina in an uprising, and several congressmen were assassinated.

There were also undoings on the national level, with the supreme court disenfranchising black men and calling civil rights laws unconstitutional, along with the courts deeming residents of island territories as not having the same protections as people in the mainland.

Sinha is the Draper chair of American History at the University of Connecticut, and formerly taught at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.



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TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA OUIMETTE

Thomas Garwood and Calia Rich took off to compete in the 5K race at the East Quabbin Land Trust's 15th annual Station Loop Ramble held this past Sunday. Garwood finished with a time of 36:33 and Rich



Runners completing the 5 Mile Classic prepared to turn up West Road.

Station Loop Ramble

RAMBLE
FROM PAGE 1

Other results are as follows for the 5 Mile Classic: Mike Keleher, 30:45; Rain Wilbur, 31:00; Matthew Twarog, 31:52; Jeremy Zglobicki, 33:30; Michael Siok, 34:54; David Larson, 35:55; Simon White, 36:22; Brian Farmer, 36:32; Audrey Snay, 43:31; Jonathan Miganowicz; 43:46; Nicole Keleher, 43:39; Jess Howland, 47:00; Gus Block, 47:19; Kristen Farmer, 49:24; Tess Davis, 51:14; Mike Berrin, 51:41; Michelle Sheperd, 52:24; and Kevin Loggie, 53:40.

For the 5K Run/Walk, results include: Robbie Rostami, 19:17; Lincoln Brown, 22:17; Connor Snay, 22:18; Trey Doane, 23:28; Parker Bottomley, 25:32; Andrew Twarog, 25:41; Pat Lizak, 25:49; Calia Rich, 26:43; Clara Campbell, 26:55; David Maher, 27:06; Bria Duncan, 27:10; Erik Duncan, 27:11; Ryan Bottomley, 27:12; Clayton Larson, 27:14; Timothy Rodier, 27:36; Joao Coleta, 27:45; Patrick Bressette, 27:45; James Prestia, 28:33; Elisabeth Bottomley, 30:17; Freddie Ryser, 30:55; Elise Rodier, 30:58; George Campbell, 31:12; Carolyn Bressette; 31:14; Aaron Graves, 31:28; Brian Savilonis, 31:38; Mason Garwood, 32:45; Leah Larson, 32:59; Lynne Feldman, 35:56; Morin Hanson, 36:13; Thomas Garwood, 36:33; Locke Glissmeger, 36:39; Florian Lavergne-Moore, 37:07; Stuart Beckley, 41:38; Katie Benedetti, 43:17; Ann Neuburg, 44:01; Kerrie Callahan, 44:11; Meghan Rodier, 48:51; Leslie Homzie, 50:30; Robert Wilbur, 52:52; Laurel Wilbur, 52:56; Lauren Monroe, 54:00; Nathan Hamp, 55:33; Doris Farmer, 56:41; William Mitchell, 57:29; Bret Burdulis, 57:29; Jane Campbell, 58:01; Sarah Campbell, 58:02; Theresa Vu, 58:20; Sharon Hanson, 59:19; and Sheila Malie, 59:19.

For more information about the Station Loop Ramble or the East Quabbin Land Trust, visit eqlt.org or follow on Facebook and Instagram.



Walker Larson was the first runner in for the 5K race, with a time of 19:10.



Pat Lizak completed the 5K race with a time of 25:49.



James Prestia completed the 5K race with a time of 28:3



5K participants smiled as they walked down the Mass Central Rail Trail.



Sheila Malie and Sharon Hanson competed as walkers in the 5K race.



Carolyn Bressette was the first female finisher in her age category with a time of 31:14.



David Maher finished the 5K race with a time of 27:06.



Andrew Twarog finished the 5K race with a time of 25:41.



Elisabeth Bottomley gave a thumbs-up as she neared the finish line. Bottomley completed the 5K with a time of 30:17.



Brian Savilonis was the first male finisher in his age category with a time of 31:38.

Station Loop Ramble



Michelle Sheperd finished the 5 Mile Classic with a time of 52:24.



Hazel Larson was the first female finisher overall for the 5K race, with a time of 26:06.



Kevin Loggie completed the 5 Mile Classic with a time of 53:40.



Mason Garwood completed the 5K race with a time of 32:45.



Jerry Reilly was the "sweeper" for the 5 Mile Classic.



East Quabbin Land Trust Executive Director Cynthia Henshaw announced the winners of each race.

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SPORTS

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Late goals lift Panthers to win

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent



TURLEY PHOTOS BY JEFFREY HAYNES

Above, Goalie Silas Stukuls Barrieau makes a diving effort to block a penalty shot. Left, Jacoby Dilling leaps between defenders as the Panthers try to set up a score.

BARRE – It had been six years since the Quabbin boys' varsity soccer team last celebrated a victory over Mid-Wach D rival Gardner.

After the first meeting of the 2026 regular season ended in a 1-1 draw, the Panthers scored twice in the final 10 minutes of regulation to earn a 3-1 victory against the Wildcats in last Thursday's contest at Alumni Field.

"We haven't beaten Gardner since I've been playing for the varsity soccer team," said Quabbin senior Jacoby Dilling. "I also play basketball and we haven't beaten them in that sport either during the past couple of years. It just feels very good to finally get a win against them."

Dilling is one of the Panthers captains, along with junior goalie Silas Stukuis Barrieau, senior Logan Bruley, and Owen Twarog, who's sidelined with an injury. The other Quabbin senior is Nate Cruz.

The second meeting of the regular season between the two rivals was a very intense battle for the entire 80 minutes.

Gardner head coach Dan Forte, who also serves as the Wildcats athletic director, opted not to have his players take part in the traditional postgame handshake line.

"The two games that we played against Gardner were very physical," said Quabbin head coach Bill Crowther. "Both teams were hyped up at the end of tonight's game, and I think not having the postgame handshakes was a good decision. I didn't want to see something bad happen."

The last time that the Panthers (8-2-2, 5-1-1) defeated the Wildcats (5-4-3, 1-4-3) on the soccer pitch was during the 2020 season.

Two days earlier, the Panthers clinched a berth in the Division 3 state tournament with a 6-1 victory over Worcester Tech in a non-league home match. The last time that Quabbin qualified for the postseason tournament was in 2019 with an 8-8-1 overall record.

If the Panthers can win

PANTHERS PAGE 9

Quabbin girls remain undefeated

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

BARRE – The current members of the Quabbin girls' varsity soccer team are trying to accomplish something this fall that has never been achieved since the regional high school first opened its doors in the late 1960s.

The Lady Panthers had an 11-0-1 overall record following a 5-2 victory over Mid-Wach D rival Gardner at Alumni Field, last Thursday night.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY JEFFREY HAYNES

Aviendha O'Neill secures the ball with a catch.

"These girls have learned how to win games during the past several years," said Quabbin head coach John Gillis. "Gardner tested us in tonight's game, but we kept battling back the entire game."

After settling for a 3-3 tie at North Middlesex in the season opener, the Lady Panthers rattled off 11 consecutive victories and remained unbeaten with a flawless 9-0 mark in league play.

Their 11 victories are tied for the fourth-most in program history, matching the total posted by the 2018 squad, which finished 11-4-5. The 2019 squad went 12-5-2, while the 1992 team finished 13-4-1 and the 1995 team set the program's single season wins record with a 15-4 mark. No Quabbin girls' soccer team has ever finished the regular season without a loss.

"We were in Mid-Wach C when I was a freshman and we played a lot more difficult games," said Quabbin senior captain Grace VanOudenhove. "I never thought we wouldn't

QUABBIN PAGE 9

Pioneers secure tourney berth



Elijah Hodge takes the goal kick.

PALMER – The Pathfinder Tech boys soccer team defeated Ware 7-1, and the Pioneers are now headed for the state tournament with a 9-4-1 record. Cayden Bousquet had a hat trick and Owen Pear added two goals for the Pioneers. Pathfinder had one final game this week against Southwick before learning if it makes the Western Mass. tournament.

Owen Marion prepares to receive a pass.

Brodey Williams turns to play the ball.



Mason Ostrout tries to overcome pressure from an opponent.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Mason Kilham makes a play on defense.

Pioneers offense rolls to pair of wins

SPRINGFIELD – Last week, Pathfinder Tech girls soccer picked up two more wins, defeating Putanm Voke and Sizer of Central Mass. The offense scored 14 goals in the two games, started by a pair of goals in 30 seconds to help get Pathfinder going against Putnam. That would lead to a 9-1 win over Beavers, followed by a 5-0 shutout of Sizer. The Pioneers are now 5-2-1 on the regular season.



Abigail Carmody makes a play on defense and heads up the field.



Gwen Ruis tries to steal the ball.



Callie Hawk tries to makes a pass ahead of a defender.



Evelyn Wood makes a pass to her left.



Josephine Boyko heads up the field.

PANTHERS
FROM PAGE 8

two more games this fall, they'll reach double digits in victories for the first time since finishing the 2005 campaign with 11-5-2 overall record.

The first 30 minutes of last Thursday's home match was scoreless.

Gardner broke the ice during the 33rd minute when freshman Anthony Berry fired a shot into the left corner of the net for an unassisted goal.

The Panthers tied the score five minutes later following a corner kick goal.

"We probably would've given up last year after falling behind 1-0," Crowther said. "It's been a different vibe so far this far this year, as we've been able to battle back after falling behind."

Dilling sent the ball into the box from the left corner. Then sophomore Bobby Tobin flickered a header into the back of the net.

Tobin didn't score any goals in the Panthers first ten games before scoring twice in the home win against Worcester Tech.

Dilling, who's one of the leading goal scorers in Central Mass., had several shots on goal during the first 30 minutes of the second half. Sophomore Joe Cook and junior Matt Labrousse also had shots on goal for the home team.

Cook's mother, Jaime, is one of the Panthers assistant coaches, along with Jesse Twarog, and Jeremey Rivard, who's the junior varsity coach.

Jamie Cook is currently the all-time leading scorer (57 goals, 23 assists, 80 points) for the girls' soccer team. Her record will mostly be broken during the next couple of years.

The Panthers took the lead for the first time during the 73rd minute when Labrousse delivered a pass to Dilling, who put a left footed shot into the net.

"Matt and I made eye contact on that play," Dilling said. "He delivered a nice pass to me, and I was able to put it away. It was probably my best goal so far this year."

With less than two minutes remaining in regulation Gardner had the opportunity to tie the score on a corner kicker.

Forte had all eleven players standing in the box on the play. After Barrieau made the save, he launched a long pass to Dilling who streaked down the middle of the field before putting a shot into the empty net for an insurance goal.

"I just used my speed on that goal," Dilling said. "I knew we would win the game at that point. It has been a lot of fun playing for this soccer team. We're also looking forward to playing in the Division 3 state tournament, which is a very good way to end my high school soccer career."

It was the final meeting of the regular season between the two squads, as the Wildcats are trying to clinch a berth in the Division 4 state tournament.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY JEFFREY HAYNES

Logan Bruley takes control of the ball before turning upfield.



Brent Benoit centers the ball for the Panthers attack.



Nathan Gingras stretches in the footrace for possession.



Abraham Brown boots the ball out of the defensive zone.

QUABBIN
FROM PAGE 8

have a loss at this point of the season. We're hoping to go a little bit farther in this year's state tournament and we're also hoping to win the league title.

A year ago, Quabbin entered the Division 3 state tournament as the 39th seed and they lost at 26th seeded Swampscott High School, 4-0 in a preliminary round.

The Lady Panthers, who squeaked out a 3-2 victory at Gardner High School on September 22, were ranked 23rd in the Division 3 power rankings released on October 18.

The other Lady Panthers senior captains are Maya Putnam, Saddie Kennan, and Ailey Majoy.

Just like in the first meeting, Quabbin was trailing 1-0 following an unassisted goal from Gardner sophomore Kendall Gamache during the 37th minute of the opening half.

After a time out, Quabbin scored the equalizer a minute later with a corner kick goal.

The play began with freshman Eden Fortier booting the ball into the box from the left corner. Freshman Saylor Bissonnette, who had several other shots on goal during the first 40 minutes, put the ball into the net tying the match at 1-1, which was the halftime score.

The Quabbin head coach is very glad that Bissonnette is a member of his soccer team.

"This is Saylor's first year playing for us and she's just an unbelievable soccer player," Gillis said. "She always does the little things that people don't normally notice. I'm looking forward to coaching her during the next couple of years."

The Lady Panthers took the lead for the first time at the beginning of the second half when Bissonnette sent a pass to junior Charlotte Wilder, who scored a breakaway goal.

Then the visitors were given a penalty kick following a handball in the box.

Gamache took the PK and lined a shot into the back of the net past Quabbin freshman goalie Zoey Salvadore.

With twenty minutes remaining in regulation, the Lady Panthers were also given a penalty kick by the referees after sophomore Adalyn Cranston was fouled in the penalty area.

"Prior to the PK, coach (Brian) Majoy made a suggestion to me that we should put Adalyn into the game because they were playing very physical against Saylor," Gillis said. "Adalyn isn't as tall as Saylor and when they played physical against her, we got the call. It was a very good decision."

VanOudenhove, who's a starting defender, stepped up to the spot and chipped a shot into the right corner.

"I also made a PK at Leominster in the rain last year," VanOudenhove said. "I always pretend to go to the left side and shoot the ball to the right. I was very excited after making another PK in tonight's game."

VanOudenhove's second varsity goal opened the floodgates for the Lady Panthers, as Bissonnette and Ailey Majoy scored the final two goals of the match, which were both unassisted.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY JEFFREY HAYNES

Daniella Gaudreault wins possession and passes the ball upfield.



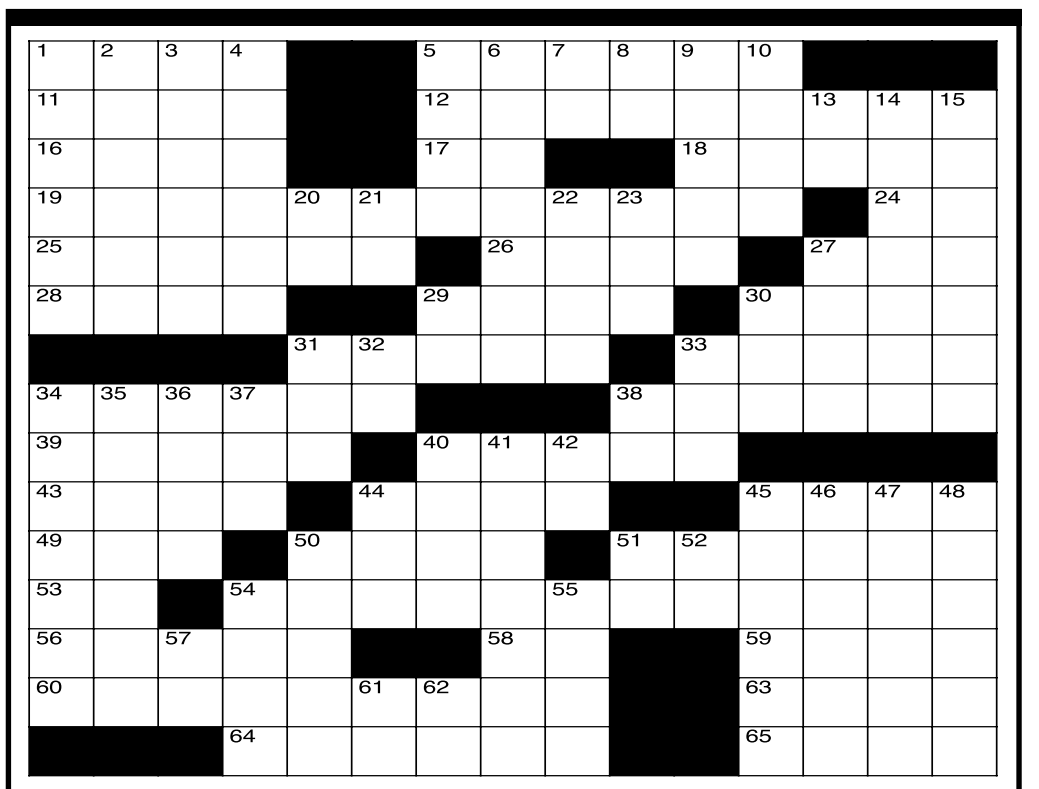
Sadie Kennan angles around a defender and checks her passing options.



Maya Putnam breaks through the defense.



Ailey Majoy races down the sideline with the ball.



CLUES ACROSS
1. Nocturnal rodent
5. Requesting
11. Give temporarily
12. Frivolousness
16. Military arm
17. "Westworld" actor Harris
18. Persian Gulf port city
19. Air hostesses
24. Partner to "Pa"
25. Percussion instrument
26. Raincoats
27. Lower the light
28. Asian mountain range
29. Every one of two or more
30. Lack of difficulty
31. A public announcement of a proposed marriage
33. Reduces in size
34. Make an impact
38. Serviceman
39. A French river
40. Prehistoric people
43. Messenger ribonucleic acid
44. "Layla" singer Clapton
45. Ancient Greek sophist
49. Largest English dictionary (abbr.)
50. "Top Gun: Maverick" actor Powell
51. A way to disentangle
53. Atomic #93
54. Manifesting approval
56. Indigo bush
58. Larry and Curly's pal
59. Off-Broadway theater award
60. Fencers
63. Masses of fish eggs
64. Passerine birds
65. Arrange systematically

CLUES DOWN
1. Colorless part of blood
2. Of a main artery
3. Photog's tool
4. Blues Traveler hit "But __"
5. Grew older
6. Not the leader
7. __ Lang: country singer
8. A driver's license is one
9. Nests of pheasants
10. Antelopes
13. One quintillion bytes
14. Japanese lute
15. A type of cat
20. It cools your home
21. Dorm official
22. Pouches
23. German trigraph
27. Form of Persian
29. __ route
30. Upper body part
31. Bridge building degree
32. Indicates position
33. Political action committee
34. Edible nuts
35. Front part of a quadruped
36. Locate
37. Geological time
38. Of I
40. Northern Utah city
41. They work in the trenches
42. Hammer is one
44. Tall deciduous tree
45. Performers
46. Slang for mistake
47. More open
48. Most slick
50. Provokes
51. Home of the NCAA's Flyers
52. Sodium
54. Large fish of the mackerel family
55. Not one
57. __ and behold
61. Atomic #21
62. "The Great Lakes State"

- public safety -

New Braintree Police Log

During the weeks of Oct. 6-19, the Hardwick/New Braintree Police Department responded to 49 building/property checks, 42 directed/area patrols, 23 radar assignments, four traffic controls, six emergency 911 calls, four citizen assists, three assist other agencies, one disturbance, two trespasses, one harassment, one safety hazard, one motor vehicle investigation, one animal call and four motor vehicle stops in the town of New Braintree.

Tuesday, Oct. 6

9:59 a.m. Medical Emergency, Hardwick Road, Transported to Hospital

12:46 p.m. Assist Citizen, Barre Road, Officer Handled

8:22 p.m. Disturbance, Moore Road, Arrest(s) Made

Wednesday, Oct. 7

7:45 a.m. Trespass, Moore Road, Officer Handled

9:35 a.m. Assist Citizen, Barre Road, Spoken To

2:46 p.m. 911 Disabled Motor Vehicle, Hardwick Road, Vehicle Towed

Thursday, Oct. 8

9:02 a.m. Assist Citizen, Memorial Drive, Spoken To

4:12 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Sibley Road, Transported to Hospital

Friday, Oct. 9

10:55 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

Monday, Oct. 12

6:55 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, McEvoy Road, Transported to Hospital

Tuesday, Oct. 13

8:50 a.m. Trespass, Gilbertville Road, Spoken To

Wednesday, Oct. 14

9:25 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Barre Road, Services Rendered

1:32 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Memorial Drive, Spoken To

Friday, Oct. 16

9:19 a.m. Safety Hazard, West Road, Services Rendered

9:24 a.m. Assist Citizen, Memorial Drive, Referred to Other Agency

Saturday, Oct. 17

5:19 a.m. Medical Emergency, Worcester Road, Patient Refusal

2:26 p.m. Harassment, Unitas Road, Officer Handled

Sunday, Oct. 18

7:34 a.m. Motor Vehicle Investigation, Worcester Road, Officer Handled

3 p.m. Assist Citizen, Wine Road, Officer Handled

Monday, Oct. 19

6:08 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Barre Cut Off Road, Transported to Hospital

- public notices -

LEGAL NOTICE:
TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30A, 18-25, as amended by Chapter 28 of the Acts of 2009, The Wetlands Protection Act, the West Brookfield Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on **WEDNESDAY, November 4, 2026 at 6:00 pm** in the first floor meeting room, West Brookfield Town Hall, 2 East Main Street.

6:00 – Public Hearing:

NOI – Existing Transmission Line Right of Way – New England Power Company – Improvements to access roads and replacement of all structures/wires on the O15N electric transmission line

NOI – 380 West Main Street – Continued - Raymaakers Construction – Staging area

NOI – Wickaboag Pond – Board of Health – Continued - Weed Treatment

10/23/2026

Death Notice

Elliott, Jeanne M. (Picard), 81
Died Oct. 3, 2026
Services Oct. 16, 2026
Varnum Funeral Home

Ayala on Regis College Dean's List

WESTON – Regis College recognized Serenity Ayala, Class of 2026, of North Brookfield, whose academic excellence and commitment to learning have earned them a place on the spring 2026 Dean's List.

To qualify for the Dean's List, students must earn a GPA of 3.5 or higher. First-year students qualify with a GPA of 3.25 or higher.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY RYAN DRAGO

A flat stone at the North Cemetery was recently cleaned.



Eight Civil War veteran stones were cleaned by the Sturbridge Gravestone Keepers.

GRAVESTONES FROM PAGE 1

tha Blodgett.

The couple joined the group three years ago after seeing a Facebook post from Hersee about how to clean gravestones.

Their first session was held at the North Cemetery where Hersee brought materials to teach the volunteers how to clean the stones.

Ken Blodgett said the first thing Hersee did was point to one stone and its condition. The stone was almost completely black, and the markers were difficult to read.

After cleaning the stone volunteers could recognize who was buried in these lots and see the generations of families who were buried in the cemetery.

"You get satisfaction from cleaning these gravestones," Ken Blodgett said.

After learning the process Ken Blodgett found it simple and effective and continued to volunteer as much time as he could to clean the stones at both cemeteries.

One of Ken Blodgett's focuses was the flat stones embedded in the ground of the cemetery. Many of these flat stones had sunk into the earth and became visibly impossible to see thanks to the weather elements.

He wanted to make them visible again by finding the edges of the stone and trying to clear the vegetation around the stone by digging.

The gravestones are made of granite, marble, and slate and Ken Blodgett makes sure he uses tools to remove lichen without scratching the stones themselves.

The Blodgetts come down about once a week to clean stones as a way to help out the cemeteries and the town.

"We're doing this because we want to do it," Ken Blodgett said.

There have been occasions where people walk through the cemetery during the day and notice the work being done by the gravestone keepers. Ken Blodgett and his fellow volunteers have been given a lot of compliments for what they do for the cemetery.

Robin Roberts is another Gravestone Keeper who has been volunteering since day one. She attended the first day of training and recalled Hersee pointing out a blackened headstone.

After cleaning it, the gravestone keepers learned it was an infant's burial. When learning about the history of this individual stone Roberts was hooked immediately and was dedicated to preserving the headstones at the cemetery.

"If you start something, finish it," she said.

Roberts said she cleaned 20 stones in one day. She estimated that over 1,000 stones were cleaned in the last three years.

Roberts shared that she has ancestors buried at the Old Burial Ground, established around 1740. Having ancestors at these historic burial grounds is a key factor in why Roberts is motivated to continue her volunteer work as a Sturbridge Gravestone Keeper.

Amy Gorham has been volunteering for the last year and a half. Her interest in preserving headstones dates back to when she was growing up in upstate New York.

While going through family history and files, Gorham had a difficult time identifying a family stone. She later found out there was a volunteer group in upstate New York who cleaned and repaired gravestones.

After the stones were cleaned their information was placed on the Find a Grave website. Gorham managed to find the stone of her relative, her third-great-grandfather.

Gorham found out about the volunteer group in Sturbridge and wanted to provided the same work as the volunteer group did in New York.

There are many gravestones dating back to the 1800s at the North Cemetery. Many of them have family burial plots with several generations.

The work behind gravestone keeping requires patience, especially when cleaning. Gorham credited Hersee as a great teacher and also wants to learn about leveling and repairing headstones in the future.

Another major motivation for this work was identifying the veterans buried at these cemeteries. Once identified, flags were placed by their stones.

Eight of the Civil War veteran stones were cleaned at the North Cemetery and are recognized as veterans of Grand Army of the Republic Post 173.

There is a gap in between two of the stones and Hersee found out through town records that one soldier had his wife buried next to him without a stone.

For more information, visit the Sturbridge Gravestone Keepers Facebook page. Those interested in volunteering can visit heritageoakpress.com or contact heritageoakpress@gmail.com.



Wally Hersee demonstrated the products used to clean a gravestone.

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT FROM PAGE 1

ber Richard Chaffee, as she said he's often at the department giving directions, and said that if O'Donnell were hired, he may lack the patience for that.

According to Chaffee, he's only going there to help the lone employee find projects that need to be done by riding the streets of town and finding issues like potholes, for example. Chaffee also said he would have liked the skills test that was talked about following the interviews, so the board could observe how the candidates handled machinery.

Chaffee, who was in favor of hiring O'Donnell as well, said he may have changed his mind following the test, but said the town cannot afford to hire anybody but O'Donnell at this time in the year. Campbell said skills test did not happen because of liability concerns.

After deliberation, the board voted to appoint O'Donnell as the Highway Superintendent. The town also has job postings for an operator, mechanic and administrative assistant to the department.

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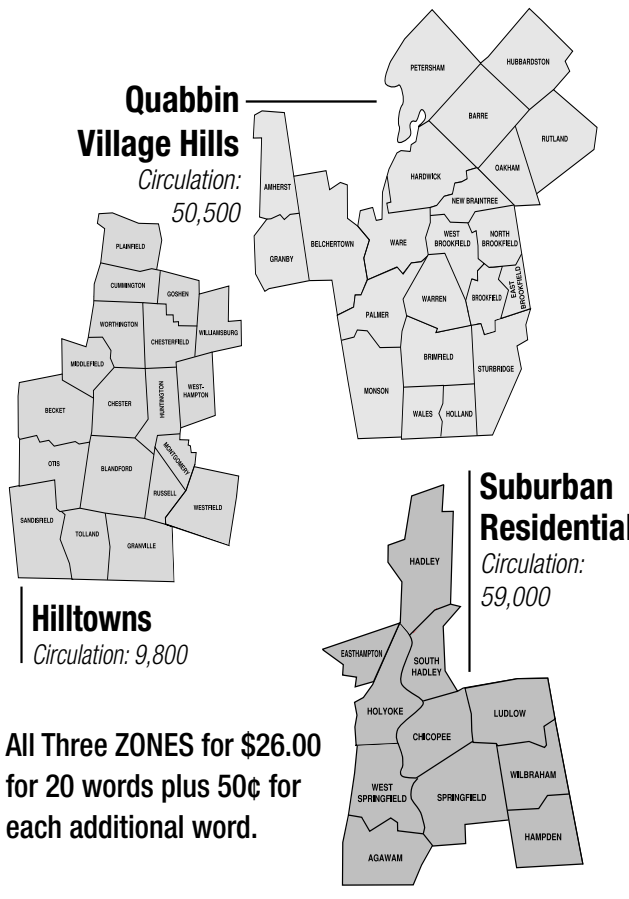
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- community -

Fall Fest Church Bazaar & Bake Nov. 21

BROOKFIELD – Community members are invited to shop, browse, and enjoy the Fall Fest Church Bazaar & Bake Shop on Saturday, Nov. 21 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall at Brookfield Congregational Church, 8 Common St.

Hosted by the church's Helping Hands group, the event will feature a variety of handmade crafts, seasonal decorations, homemade baked goods and unique gifts-perfect for holiday shopping or finding something special for your home.

Shoppers can look forward to wreaths, centerpieces, sewn and crocheted items, ornaments, Mason jar soup and cookie mixes, baked goods, themed gift baskets and much more. Gift basket themes will include popcorn and movie night, pet lovers, gardening and other fun ideas.

The bazaar will also offer opportunities for local crafters and small businesses to showcase their products. Six vendor spaces are available for $35 per table. Interested vendors are encouraged to contact the church office at 508-867-6262 or email bccucc1857@gmail.com for more information.

The Fall Fest Bazaar is a great opportunity to connect with the community, discover handmade treasures, enjoy homemade treats, and get a head start on holiday shopping.

All proceeds from the event will benefit Brookfield Congregational Church's general fund and church repairs.

The entire community is warmly invited to attend and support this special event.

For additional information about the event or vendor spaces, contact the church office at 508-867-6262, email bccucc1857@gmail.com, or visit www.bcc1857.org.

Open poetry series continues Nov. 19

WEST BROOKFIELD – An open poetry reading series meant to provide a venue for writers to share their work as well as the work of established writers they admire will be held at the Merriam-Gilbert Public Library, 3 West Main St., in the upstairs Library Meeting Room.

This room is elevator accessible.

The series will be held on select Thursdays from 4-6 p.m. Generally, readings will occur on the third Thursday of every month, though some schedule adjustments may have to be made around holidays.

Dates include Nov. 19, Dec. 17, Jan. 21, Feb. 18, March 18, April 15 and May 20. The series is open to the central Massachusetts community at large.

For every original poem a person reads they will be asked to compliment that poem by reading a poem of their choosing by another established and published writer: From Shakespeare to Stern, Bradstreet to Bukowski, Yeats to Young, Rumi to Rich and any and all between.

If you have no original work to read but want to offer poems from writers you love, please join us.

The reading will be held in round robin fashion (two poems maximum each time) and the number of turns allowed for each person will be determined by the number of willing participants.

The host ask those who read to be sensitive to other attendees and not present overly long poems that will delay another's turn. One may also participate by attending and simply listening, not reading, if they so choose.

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