

# QUABOAG CURRENT

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## 14th Annual Trail and Road Race benefitted EQLT

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
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NEW BRAINTREE – For the 14<sup>th</sup> year, the East Quabbin Land Trust held its annual trail and road race event, the Station Loop Ramble.

Over 70 runners and walkers gathered at the site of the former New Braintree Railroad Station, to compete in one of the event's many races to help raise money to support this section of the Mass Central Rail Trail.

The Mass Central Rail Trail follows 104 miles of railroad line that was shattered by a hurricane in 1938, spanning from Boston to Northampton.

In 2007, the East Quab-



Brian Farmer finished the 5-Mile Classic in 9<sup>th</sup> place overall, with a time of 36:30.



Nicole Keleher was the first female finisher at the East Quabbin Land Trust's Station Loop Ramble 5-Mile Classic with a time of 40:52. This year's Classic was on a new, slightly shorter, course due to bridge construction on Creamery Road.

See RAMBLE PAGE 5



Luann Mckean and Betty Ann Casey of Twin Knitters & Crochets attended this year's Craft Fair at the East Brookfield Public Library.

## Library held annual craft fair

By Ryan Drago  
Staff Writer  
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EAST BROOKFIELD – The East Brookfield Public Library held its annual craft fair this past Saturday.

This is the fourth year the library has hosted a

craft fair and has always taken place in the fall. There were five vendors who arrived at this year's craft fair and were ready to share their work.

Library Director Carolann MacMaster had a booth of her own repre-

See CRAFT FAIR PAGE 9

## Pathfinder unveiled expansion plan to meet growing needs

By Abigail McCoy  
amccoy@turley.com

PALMER – Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School is preparing for what local leaders are calling the most significant expansion in the school's history; one that could add up to 150 new seats, create multiple new programs, and help close the skills gap across Western Massachusetts.

During an announcement held at the school's restaurant on Oct. 3, Superintendent Eric Duda and his administrative team outlined plans to acquire and repurpose the Cold Spring School in Belchertown, which is scheduled to close in 2026. The move would allow Path-



Caitlin Phelps



Eric Duda

finder to increase capacity, launch new programs, and ensure that students from all nine member towns have access to career and technical education.

"This is personal," said Duda, a Pathfinder graduate who has served as teacher, principal, and now superintendent in his 19 years at the school. "I believe in the power of career technical education. The demand is

through the roof, and we need more capacity. This expansion will allow us to deliver that without raising local taxes."

Pathfinder has already secured over \$2 million in competitive Skills Capital Grant funding in recent years, used to rebuild the electrical program, upgrade horticulture equipment, renovate HVAC labs, and establish a plumbing program. Caitlin Phelps, part of the expansion planning team, credited the state legislature for its strong commitment to funding career and technical education.

"These initiatives have already had a huge impact on

See PATHFINDER PAGE 11

## Porsche on the Mountain

Event drew rare and one-of-a-kind cars to Palmer

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
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PALMER – Over 300 Porsches of all years and models arrived at Palmer

Motorsports Park on Oct. 5 for the highly anticipated return of the Porsche on the Mountain event.

This is the first time the track has held the event since the pandemic, and it was clear that it was deeply missed by automobile enthusiasts.

"We had a good turn-

out," said Al Sandy, Club Director at Palmer Motorsports Park. "We had people waiting at the gate."

Sandy said this year's event featured several rare and unique Porsches, even a "Horsche," which was custom-built featuring a Porsche chassis with a Ford Mustang body.

"There were some very, very special cars there. One-of-a-kinds, lots of special paint colors...in the past Porsche was able to build a car for you and they'd paint it in any color," Sandy said. "It was very unique, very fun to see."

One unique car was a 1986 930 Turbo with a rare white gold metallic paint color. The 1986 was the first year Porsche was able to bring a turbo engine back



Ron Savenor provided laps in his 911 Cup racer at the Porsche on the Mountain event held on Oct. 5.

See PORSCHE PAGE 6

## Artist Terrence Kiernan exhibits work at Joy of Beans

WEST BROOKFIELD – Following a month-long exhibition at the Palmer Public Library, West Warren artist Terrence Kiernan now has his paintings on display at Joy of Beans.

Kiernan is known for his impressionist and en plein air style, with work that reflects nature-inspired themes. His paintings convey emotion through rich color palettes and expressive textures.

In addition to his own artwork, Kiernan curates exhibitions at Lost Towns Brewing in Hardwick, where his pieces are featured alongside those of several local artists.

This is one of the many paintings displayed by artist Terrence Kiernan.



West Warren artist Terrence Kiernan is exhibiting his paintings at the Joy of Beans in West Brookfield.



## 11th Safe and Healthy School Summit held at GCC

By Ryan Drago  
Staff Writer  
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GREENFIELD – Greenfield Community College hosted the 11th Safe and Healthy School Summit this past week.

This year's topic focused on schools in the age of digital distraction. The Northwestern District Attorney's Office welcomed teachers, school administrators, coalitions and workers in youth services from various counties in western Massachusetts to focus on social media and its impact on kids and their developing brains.

Various speakers and panels arrived to share various studies found in surveys and see what schools have found in the current distractions caused by social media and artificial intelligence. District Attorney David E. Sullivan said this year's Safe and Healthy School



Shown from left to right, Northwestern District Attorney David E. Sullivan, Dr. Michael Rich, Executive Director of Children's Advocacy Center of Hampshire County, Kara McElhone, and Executive Director of Children's Advocacy Center of Franklin County and North Quabbin, Carol Conragan at the 11th Safe and Healthy School Summit.

Summit is focused on social media. This summit is a resourceful professional development to give school leaders some idea on how to work with parents and the community as they handle the large distractions of cell phone use and social media in schools and how they can

minimize those distractions. Sullivan sees this topic as an educational opportunity to explore the good information within social media and how we see the world in many eyes, but still know the dangers on the internet. As part of the introduction, Executive Director of the

Children's Advocacy Center of Hampshire County, Kara McElhone, spoke first on how this summit will run and hopes to try to minimize online dangers that kids can be exposed to while having access to the internet

SUMMIT PAGE 11

# - community -

## Historical Commission presents Jacob Knight exhibit in November

WEST BROOKFIELD – The West Brookfield Historical Commission is proud to present “A Jaunt with Jacob, New England Through an Artist’s Eyes,” a retrospective exhibition honoring the artistry and legacy of renowned local artist Jacob Knight.

This multifaceted exhibit offers a personal and powerful glimpse into Knight’s creative world.

The exhibition will feature prints of Knight’s depic-

tions of local New England towns, some never before exhibited photographs capturing Knight’s world by local photographers and members of his circle, a collection of curiosities and ephemera from his past, video interviews with some of Knight’s family and friends, and audio recordings of his poetry slams and music jams.

This celebration of Jacob Knight will offer a vibrant window into the soul of a beloved artist and communi-

ty member.

The opening and reception will be held on Sunday, Nov. 9, from noon-4 p.m. at the Ruth Wells Center for the Arts, 111 Main St., Southbridge.

Show dates are Saturdays and Sundays, Nov. 9 through Nov. 29 from noon-4 p.m., and weekdays by appointment. Call 508-764-3341 to make an appointment.

All are welcome to attend and encouraged to bring a friend.

## First ever poetry contest open to Worcester County residents

SOUTHBRIDGE – The Jacob Edward Annual Poetry Contest: The Bill Tremblay Poetry Prize is open to all members, Worcester County current and former residents and students, and employees of Worcester County businesses.

Winning poems and poets are honored with a winners’ reading, including a brief reading by Bill Tremblay, to be held on Jan. 29, 2026.

To enter the Jacob Edward Library annual poetry contest, you must be either a resident of Worcester County, or a student or employee of institutions within Worcester County. First Place winners of previous JEL annual poetry contests are not eligible to enter.

Submissions will open on Oct. 1 and close on Nov. 28 for the inaugural Annual Contest. No poems will be

considered with a postmark later than Nov. 28.

**Contest guidelines**

Poems must be the entrant’s original work in English and must not be previously published. Poems composed using AI will not be accepted.

Submit no more than three poems in any form.

Paper submissions must not be stapled or attached in any way and poems must be formatted for 8 1/2 inch x 11 inch paper.

Do not put your name on the individual poems; entrants will be judged anonymously. Include a cover sheet with your name, address, telephone number, email address, and the title of each poem.

Submissions should be mailed to: Bill Tremblay Poetry Prize, c/o Jacob Edwards Library, 236 Main St., Southbridge, MA 01550

Submissions will not be

returned.

Winners will be listed on the JEL website and announced via the library’s Instagram and Facebook pages.

**Entry fee**

There is a modest entry fee of \$10 to submit. Checks or money orders only made out to the Jacob Edwards Library, please. Please note the submission or the contest fee on the check or money order.

**Judging and awards**

First Place is a \$100 prize; Second Place, \$75; and Third Place, \$50. Winning poets will also receive a signed copy of Bill Tremblay’s book, “Southbridge: My Triggering Town”.

Contest winners will be announced in December 2025. The Winners’ Reading & Award Reception will be on Jan. 29, 2026 at the Jacob Edwards Library, at 6:30 p.m.

## Grassroots Central MA to host three-part film series Nov. 8

STURBRIDGE – A free community film series “Regenerating Life: How to Cool the Planet, Feed the World, and Live Happily Ever After,” a movie by John Feldman, will be presented in three parts by Grassroots Central MA at the Joshua Hyde Public Library, 306 Main St.

The first is on Saturday, Nov. 8 from 3-4:30 p.m. and introduces concepts of our ecological situation, providing a solid understanding of the social and environmen-

tal crises that confront us.

Parts two and three will be presented Dec. 6, and Jan. 10, 2026. These two parts continue the examination of the prevailing climate change story and offer new, attainable solutions.

The film covers our understanding of how life regulates the climate through photosynthesis, the carbon cycle, the water cycle, the dung cycle, and the interconnected soil network of fungi, microorganisms and plant roots. The pho-

tography is beautiful, the information is clear, and the information presented welcomes us to rethink everything we do.

A discussion will follow each presentation and light refreshments will be served.

An on-line option is also available. If you would prefer to join virtually, please contact Sherry at sherryzitter@icloud.com for details.

A preview of the movie can be found on link (<https://hummingbirdfilms.com/regeneratinglife/press-kit/>)

## Quaboag Historical Society sponsors program on history of apples

WEST BROOKFIELD – The Quaboag Historical Society is pleased to sponsor a free talk by Christie Higginbottom, a horticultural historian and former noted plant expert at Old Sturbridge Village, entitled “An Infinite Variety of Fruit: Historic New England Apples.”

This presentation will take place at the West Brookfield Senior Center,

located at 73 Central St., on Saturday, Oct. 25 at 1 p.m. Light refreshments will be served. Higginbottom’s talk will focus on the 19th-century history of apples in New England. Hundreds of varieties originated in historic orchards throughout the area and had evocative names such as Westfield Seek-No-Further, Sheepnose, and Maiden’s Blush.

Come by and learn about

the history of heirloom apples and sample some unique varieties.

The QHS is dedicated to promoting and sharing local history through talks, events, and activities. The QHS museum is also a wonderful place to learn about the six towns in the Plantation, which include East Brookfield, Brookfield, North Brookfield, West Brookfield, Warren, and New Braintree.

The organization always welcomes local historians and specialists to share their knowledge and ideas so that they can build stronger community connections through a shared history.

Please register for the event by contacting Ed Londergan at [ed.londergan@gmail.com](mailto:ed.londergan@gmail.com) or 508-864-8685.

## Pumpkin patch returns to Federated Church

STURBRIDGE – The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale is once again bringing the season to life with its 8th Annual Pumpkin Patch, open now through Thursday, Oct. 31.

The church’s front lawn at 8 Maple St., has been transformed into a festive fall destination, filled with pumpkins, gourds, mums, hay bales, corn stalks, and loose hay for scarecrows. You’ll also find cookbooks to spark your fall kitchen creativity. Whether you’re decorating for Halloween, preparing a cozy harvest table, or just looking for the perfect pumpkin, the Patch has it all.

The Pumpkin Patch will be open Monday-Friday: 10:30 a.m.-6 p.m.,

Saturday: 9 a.m.-6 p.m., and Sunday: 11 a.m.-6 p.m. (weather permitting). Payment is easy with cash, credit, Venmo, and PayPal all accepted.

The Pumpkin Patch supports the church and local ministries. A portion of proceeds helps the Navajo Nation in Farmington, New Mexico, where the event’s supplier, Pumpkins USA, employs more than 700 Native Americans each harvest season and maintains a full-time, 100% Native American staff year-round.

For additional details on the Pumpkin Patch or other upcoming events, visit [sturfed.org](http://sturfed.org) or contact the church office at 774-304-1021 or [churchoffice@sturfed.org](mailto:churchoffice@sturfed.org).

## Trunk or Treat will be held on Halloween

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The North Brookfield Parks and Recreation and the North Brookfield Emergency Management Agency will be hosting a Trunk or Treat event on Halloween, Friday, Oct. 31 from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

The Trunk or Treat event will be held on the town common. If you want to set up a trunk, please arrive at the common by 4:45 p.m.

There will be hot dogs, candy and music. Snacks will be available at the Senior Center, 29 Forest St.

## Grange hosts annual pumpkin carving event

WARE – Ware Grange’s Annual Pumpkin Carving will be held on Monday, Oct. 27, at 6 p.m. at the Grange Hall at 297 Belchertown Road.

At the final Kids’ Corner for this year, families will enjoy the art of carving and decorating pumpkins. Kids will learn about the life cycle of pumpkins, composting, and giving back to the soil.

The event will also have a family-friendly Halloween story. Bring your own pumpkin and join the fun.

Visit Ware Grange on Facebook or at [waregrange.org](http://waregrange.org) for more information.

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## - community -

# Register for Rotary's annual TREK Sturbridge Halloween 5K, 1K & Fun Walk

STURBRIDGE – The Rotary Club of Sturbridge has announced that pre-registration is now open for its popular TREK Sturbridge Halloween 5K, 1K, and Fun Walk, which is slated to return on Sunday, Oct. 26, according to club president and race director Klaus Hachfeld.

Participants who pre-register by Oct. 21 will get a free 2025 TREK Sturbridge Halloween 5K T-shirt.

All activities begin at the OSV Education Center on Old Sturbridge Village Road (not to be confused

with Old Sturbridge Village Academy at the main entrance to the village). Parking will be available in the Education Center lot.

The family-friendly event offers two timed races, including a 5K Trail Run & Fun Walk, and a 1K Pre-Teen Run. In the spirit of the season, participants are encouraged to come in costume. The event also includes free children's game starting at 9 a.m. at the Education Center.

The timed 1K Pre-Teen Run (\$20 registration) starts at 9:15 a.m. This is for the

12 and under crowd, and the course is accessible for anyone with mobility challenges.

The timed 5K Trail Run (\$35 registration) & Fun Walk (\$30 registration) will start at 10 a.m. using Old Sturbridge Village Road and the Arbutus Park Trail in the Leadmine Mountain Wildlife Conservation Lands.

An awards ceremony will follow at 11:15 a.m. starting with a competition for best Halloween costume for all registered runners and walkers. Judging will be by

popular choice.

On-site registration will also be available starting at 8:30 a.m. on the day of the race.

The Trek Sturbridge Halloween 5K and Fun Walk is a Sturbridge Rotary Club fundraiser, with all profits going to the organization's community needs projects. For additional information, or to sign on as an event sponsor, email the race director at [laserklus@gmail.com](mailto:laserklus@gmail.com). Or visit the Sturbridge Rotary Club website at <https://sturbridgerotary.com>.



## Benefit spaghetti dinner will be held on Oct. 25

WEST BROOKFIELD – The Knights of Columbus Council 11080 and the Mary Martha Sodality are sponsoring a Spaghetti Dinner on Saturday, Oct. 25 in Dugan Hall, Sacred Heart Church, 10 Milk St.

Proceeds from this event will benefit the Blessed Carlo Acutis Parish. Dinner includes pasta fagioli, garden salad, meatballs and sausage, spaghetti and sauce, Italian bread, dessert, water, soda, and coffee.

Cost is a \$15 donation and \$10 for children under

12 years old. Take-out is available at 6 p.m. and sit-down dinner is served at 6:30 p.m. Admission tickets are also good for entry for a special door prize.

Raffle tickets for a 50/50 Raffle and more will be available.

Advance ticket purchase is encouraged and appreciated. Tickets are available from any Knight or Sodality member or by calling 413-813-8100 or by emailing [wallyconnor122@gmail.com](mailto:wallyconnor122@gmail.com). Tickets will only be available at the door while they last.

## Vendor space available for Christmas in New Braintree



NEW BRAINTREE – Christmas in New Braintree will be held on Saturday, Dec. 6 in the New Braintree Grade School and Town Hall, sponsored by the Tri-Parish Community Church. Space is still available for \$30 for a eight foot by eight foot area. To reserve a space, call 443-835-7530 by Oct. 31.

SUBMITTED PHOTO  
Christmas in New Braintree will see Jean Bears as one of the craft vendors on Saturday, Dec. 6.

## Electronics recycling event to be held Oct. 25

STURBRIDGE – The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale will host an electronics recycling event with Green Day Recycling on Saturday, Oct. 25 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. in the church parking lot, 8 Maple St.

Residents of all towns are welcome to bring their electronic items to be recycled, and the event will be held rain or shine.

The following items can be recycled for a cost: \$5 – computer towers, laptops, DVD players, VCRs, small printers, stereos, radios, alarm clocks, speakers, video game consoles, table lamps, fans, hair dryers, curling irons, projectors, paper shredders, power tools, drills, cameras, clocks, trophies, frying pans, holiday lights and other small electronics.

For \$10 – small household appliances, vacuum cleaners/Roomba, toaster ovens, ceiling fans, floor lamps, air fryers, electric grills, hot plates, small radiators, keyboard pianos, coffee makers, ice makers, small garbage disposals, sewing machines and car seats.

For \$20 – flat screen computer monitors, micro-



waves, dehumidifiers, air conditioners, water coolers, large printers/copiers, leaf blowers, chainsaws, heat lamps, artificial Christmas trees, fire extinguishers and empty propane tanks.

For \$25 – TVs up to 26 inches, CRT monitors, outdoor grill and dorm sized refrigerators.

For \$30 – TVs between 26 inches and 35 inches, white goods, washing ma-

chines, dryers, stoves, dishwashers, large appliances, large yard equipment, treadmills, exercise equipment, snowblowers, lawnmowers, rototillers, large generators, motors and water tanks.

For \$35 – TVs over 36 inches, large refrigerators and ride-on lawn mowers and for \$40 – projector TVs.

Cash is preferred, but payment via Venmo or

check (over \$30) is also accepted.

The following items will be accepted for free, with cash donations appreciated: bicycles (reusable), cell phones, keyboards, tablets, video game media and accessories, wires, cables, batteries, chargers and VHS/DVDs.

For more information, email [greendayrecycling-ma@gmail.com](mailto:greendayrecycling-ma@gmail.com) or

## NB Senior Center lists events in October

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The North Brookfield Senior Center, located at 29 Forest St., will offer the following events and activities during the month of October.

Oct. 28, A.I. for Seniors at 11 a.m.; Oct. 29, Hallow-

een Party at noon; and Oct. 30, Free Drawing Class at 11 a.m.

Medicare Help will be available every Thursday, beginning Oct. 16. Please call 508-867-0220 for an appointment.

## RTC hosts 'Meet and Greet' with governor's candidate

STURBRIDGE – The Sturbridge Republican Town Committee will be hosting a Republican Meet and Greet on Tuesday, Oct. 28 at 6:30 p.m. at the Sturbridge Senior Center.

The keynote speaker will be Republican Candidate for Governor Mike Minogue. The committee will

also hear from Republican National Committeeman Brad Wyatt and local State Committeewomen Elizabeth Groot.

Please attend to meet your neighbors and enjoy conversation with like minded folks in a relaxed atmosphere. Light refreshments will be served.

## Program teaches seniors about artificial intelligence

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The North Brookfield Senior Center will be hosting a program called "AI for Seniors" on Tuesday, Oct. 28 at 11 a.m.

at the senior center, 29 Forest St.

The program will explain what Artificial Intelligence is, how it can be useful, and the dangers as well.

## Christmas Fair on Nov. 1

NORTH BROOKFIELD – St. Carlo Acutis Parish will host its Christmas Fair on Saturday, Nov. 1, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at St. Joseph Church Hall, 296 North Main St.

This Christmas Fair features beautiful hand-

made craft items, homemade baked goods, a jewelry table and plenty of raffles.

A luncheon featuring homemade soups, sandwiches, and delicious apple pie will be served from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

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# - opinion -



By Ellenor Downer

On Monday, Oct. 6, an Oakham resident watched a kettle of 28 black vultures circling above the Harrington Hospital in Southbridge.

He said, "As you may know, the species is expanding its range northward into Massachusetts." A kettle is a large group of vultures circling in a thermal, using the rising air to conserve energy during migration.

The black vulture has sooty, black plumage, a featherless black head and neat white stars under the wing-tips.

Turkey vultures are lanky birds with a teetering flight. Their cousin the black vultures are compact birds with broad wings, short tails and powerful wingbeats. Turkey and black vultures often associate together. The black vultures have a poor sense of smell, but by following turkey vultures by following them to carcasses. They often soar high in the sky in search of lower soaring turkey vultures. When the turkey vultures descend on a carcass, the black vultures follow them.

Black vultures are highly social and share food with relatives, feeding young for months after they've fledged. In the United States black vultures are more plentiful than turkey vultures. Black vultures lack a voice box and their sounds are limited to hisses and grunts.

The oldest black vulture on record was a least 25 years, six months old when it was found in 1965 in Louisiana. It was banded there in 1940. They may live even longer in captivity.

### Brimfield resident

On Sunday, Oct. 5, I received an email from a Brimfield resident commenting about my seeing a moose in Oakham. He said, "Seeing a moose in Massachusetts is exciting. My wife and I saw a moose in Canada, it ran across the road in front of the car and disappeared into the woods. My wife said "look a horse with no rider, similar to your reaction."

### Eagle sighting

On Wednesday, Oct. 1, I received an email from a reader. He said, "I was in my car last evening around 6:30 when I saw a huge, black-winged bird come over Main Street in Barre Plains. When we were kids it was called Canal Road. It was flying low over the street and was trying to gain altitude. The bird appeared just before Rich's Pond and it had what looked like a recent kill in its talons. It accidentally dropped the dead animal, which appeared



Black vulture

to be a rabbit, onto the road and what I thought was a vulture turned out to be an adult Bald Eagle."

He said, "Its stark white head and white fanned tail, along with its bright yellow feet and beak were clearly seen and it was startling to be only 25 or 30 feet away from it. The eagle's wing span was enormous. It made an attempt to recapture its prey by diving quickly back to the road and it had to widely fan out its tail feathers to slow its descent and gain flight control."

He said, "The Bald Eagle then flew high up into a tree along the road near the pond and was waiting for me and all cars to pass before descending on its prey. It was breath taking. We never saw such things as kids."

### Cedar waxwings

The Barre resident said on recent warm September days he also has been seeing a small flock of cedar waxwings in Gilbertville, along the Ware River, taking bugs in midair over the river and also working trees and bushes that still have some fruit on them.

### Helping birds

People may also help birds by keeping their cats indoors. Many birds are killed by cats. It is safer for people's pet cats to kept indoors as they also succumb to predation. If a cat is an outdoor cat, people may put a bell collar on their cat with a quick release mechanism if their pet's collar should get hung up on something.

### Dark-eyed Juncos

An Oakham resident reported seeing a dark-eyed junco in his yard last week. I saw a small flock of juncos along the road where I live on Oct. 13. Their white tall feathers identified them as they flew up from the side of the road. It was my first sighting this fall.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.

## More review; what worked what didn't

Last week I wrote about two new winter squash varieties I grew in this past summer's garden, as well as a Barbie doll sized melon.

According to Mom, it made for a good read. Let's keep the momentum going with more "new to me" varieties in this column.

As dedicated readers may remember, this past summer's garden was to accomplish the goal of growing more food, food that would cut down on the grocery bill and feed the family through the winter. I took my chances growing a hybrid paste tomato by the name of Plum Regal. Its accolades were many: late blight resistance, moderate resistance to early blight, a the promise of a good yield and a tasty outcome.

I typically only grow heirlooms, so this tomato really had to prove itself. My only dilemma was that I sometimes have issues with blossom end rot, and specifically on paste types.

I tried a new fertilizer formulated specifically for members of the Solanacea family, aptly named "Tomato Sauce." You know what? It worked.

No blossom end rot and a freezer full of sauce, tomato chucks and roasted tomato blends. I will be ordering both the seeds and the fertilizer from Fedco (fedcoseeds.com) in anticipation of next year's garden.

With every success comes not quite a success. I'll call Muskmelon "Melonade" one of those adventures. I was intrigued by the description in the Fedco catalog, "firm orange flesh is tart, punchy and refresh-



ing," and had hoped it would keep our family in melons for a month or so. Not exactly.

I couldn't get over the fact that what looked like a cantaloupe tasted like a lemon! No one in the house liked it. I'm not going to call it a failure, because if anything, I learned that I could grow a muskmelon successfully.

I worried I would harvest them too early, or too late, but I harvested them just right, and they grew exceeding well on black plastic down the middle of my heat retaining rock wall raised beds. Next year I will search for a variety with a more typical flavor and it could just be a win-win.

I have always wanted to grow Indian corn as a fall decoration, but was leery of the space needed for such an endeavor. The experts talk about growing corn four rows deep for proper pollination and kernel formation.

I threw caution to the wind and decided I'd grow a popcorn. I enjoyed the commentary in the Fedco catalog in the description of a variety named "Calico:" "you can hang it on your door in fall and pop the very same batch come Thanksgiving." Sold.

I grew only eight plants, set out in a four by two pattern. Shucking the corn felt a lot like Christmas morning with the surprise factor involved. Will the kernels be gold, blue, mottled or

bronze?

I ended up with enough to decorate with and come Thanksgiving I will indeed try and pop some. I've had some experience popping eared corn

before.

At our family vacation my sister in law tried it out. She put the dried ear she had purchased in a paper bag and folded it shut, placed it in a microwave on high for about 3-4 minutes and yum!

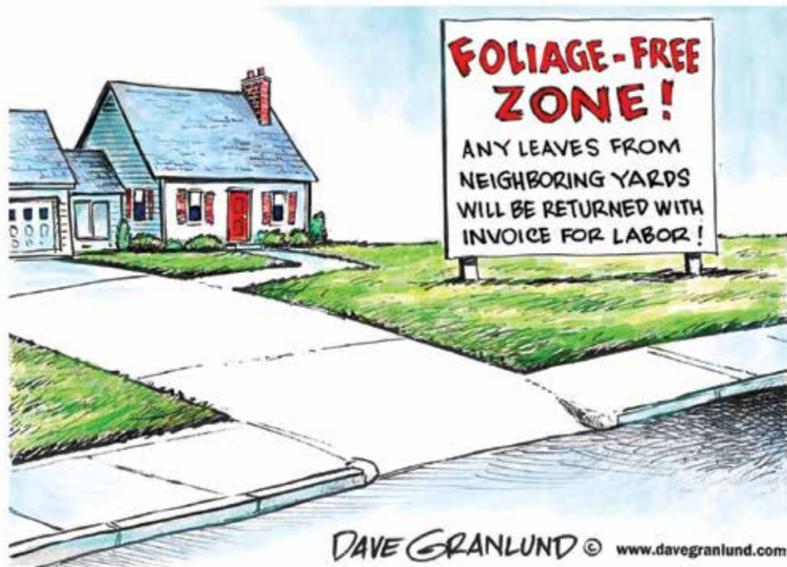
What else worked out well in my garden this year? The succession planting of green beans seeded immediately after my garlic was harvested worked out superbly. No additional fertilizer required.

I was able to freeze a lot of beans from that second sowing. I guess I always wish there are more to freeze, so maybe next year the row will be longer.

I didn't utilize the wide row method this year. Two parallel rows with a walking row down the middle made the harvest easy.

I hope you had your share of successes this past summer, and if you are anything like me, you are already scheming next year's veggie garden.

*Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 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.*



DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

## Should I take Social Security now or at age 70?



**Dear Rusty:**  
I was born in April 1958 and my plan has been to take my Social Security at age 70.

However, my sister-in-law says that it is smarter to take it now while I am still working. I will be 70 in 2.5 years. Her husband collects his SS and has kept working. She believes their strategy will net more money than mine due to the fact he has continued to pay into the system and she believes it has super boosted his monthly benefit. What say you? BTW, Lord willing and the creek don't rise I plan on living at least till 87.

Signed: Questioning My Plan

**Dear Questioning:**  
You have already reached your SS Full Retirement Age, so you can earn as much as possible without your SS benefit being negatively affected by Social Security's Annual Earnings Test. In fact, if your current earnings are among the highest over your lifetime, your SS benefit amount will continue to increase because of your higher current earnings. You are now also earning Delayed Retirement Credits, which will improve your monthly amount by 67% for each month (8% for each full year) you delay. That means that if you wait and claim at 70 you will get

about 127% of what you would have gotten had you claimed at your FRA of 66 years and 8 months plus you'll also get all COLA increases which occur between now and then. So your life expectancy is key.

It usually takes about 12 years to break even money wise by claiming at age 70 vs. at FRA. In other words, if you claim at 70 instead of FRA, you'll have received the same amount of SS money after you are 82. Thus, if your life expectancy is greater than age 82, you'll get more in cumulative lifetime benefits by

SEE SOCIAL SECURITY PAGE 9

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**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.

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# - community -

**RAMBLE**  
FROM PAGE 1

bin Land Trust purchased 3.2 miles of the corridor in New Braintree and Hardwick. This section of trail contains three unique bridges, which have been restored and maintained by the land trust and volunteers.

The East Quabbin Land Trust continued its efforts to preserve the railroad corridor, and in 2018 it purchased Frohloff Farm in Ware and expanded another section of the trail. In 2022 another 2.3 miles was added, connecting the trail through Gilbertville.

Just last year, voters in the town of Ware approved the purchase of a plot of land that will connect the Mass Central Rail Trail from Frohloff Farm to Grenville Park.

The Station Loop Ramble showcases the New Braintree and Hardwick sections of the Mass Central Rail Trail and its bridges, with the 5K departing from the former station into the village of Wheelwright and then back again.

Runners and walkers pass over the Ware River, getting a breathtaking view of the area at the peak of foliage season.

The 5-Mile Classic normally includes the challenging hills of New Braintree's farmland, in addition to the fast and flat Mass Central Rail Trail, but due to bridge construction on Creamery Road, the route was changed (and slightly shortened) this year.



Runners and walkers from this year's Station Loop Ramble posed for a group photo after all of the events were completed.

TURLEY STAFF PHOTOS



Logan Holloway was the top finisher in the 13-18 age category for the 5-Mile Classic with a time of 3



Nicole Keleher and Nathaniel Henshaw were the top female and male finishers of the 5-Mile Classic. Henshaw was the overall top finisher with a time of 28:19



Tim Hawley took first in the 70+ age category for the 5-Mile Classic, with a time of 42:03.



This young participant proudly wore his East Quabbin Land Trust shirt during the 200-foot Kid's Run for children aged 5 and under.

nic back roads and up the daunting hill on Wine Road, then finishing past the familiar farms of West Road.

Young runners had two options for races, both of which were entirely on the Mass Central Rail Trail. Children 5 and under could participate in the 200-foot race and children ages 6-12 could race for a quarter mile.

As always, the Station

baked cookies, painted faces, and more.

"It's a wonderful day to be out," Cynthia Henshaw, East Quabbin Land Trust's Executive Director, said. "Thank you to all the volunteers who helped to make this a wonderful event."

This year's 5K Run/Walk results are as follows:

Walker Larson, 23:10; Sean Nagle, 24:08; Josie Andrade, 24:38; Hazel Larson, 27:03; Tim Rodier, 27:53; Carolyn Bressette, 28:17; George Campbell, 28:34; Carlee Rich, 28:50; Gene Rich, 29:36; Jackie Magerowski, 30:39; Clara Campbell, 30:50; Brian Savilonis, 32:02; Lynne Feldman, 33:43; Calia Rich, 34:18; Jenny Guercio, 34:27; Claire Norberg, 37:21; Clayton Larson, 38:14; David Larson, 38:52; Katie Benedetti, 42:33; Ann Neuburg, 43:04; Joseph Siok, 55:43; Rick Dorsch, 56:34; Donna Dorsch, 56:35; Quinn Edwards, 56:35; Lindsay Rowe, 56:35; Gery Benedetti, 59:03; Michael



Hazel Larson and Walker Larson were the top two youth finishers for the 5K Run/Walk. Hazel earned fourth place overall with a time of 27:03 and Walker was first overall with a time of 23:10.



Gene Rich finished the 5K Run/Walk with a time of 29:36. Rich took first male finisher in the 40-49 age category.



Runners who participated in the quarter mile Kid's Run for children aged 6-12 got ready to race.

Runners instead took to Hardwick Road and passed by the Winnimuset Wildlife Management Area, before making their way down sec-

Loop Ramble provided an experience for the whole family, made possible by a number of dedicated volunteers who handed out freshly



East Quabbin Land Trust Executive Director Cynthia Henshaw spoke during the 14th annual Station Loop Ramble held on the Mass Central Rail Trail this past Sunday.



Katie Benedetti and Brian Savilonis were the top finishers in the 70+ age category of the 5K Run/Walk.



Jackie Magerowski and Josie Andrade were the top female and male finishers in the 30-39 age category of the 5K Run/Walk.



Emilia ran alongside her mother during the 200-foot Kid's Run.



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**PORSCHE FROM PAGE 1**

to the U.S., due to stricter emissions laws enacted in the early 1980s.

"This is what Porsche started out with – racing," owner Joanne Rydings said. "They detuned it and let people drive it."

Owned Rydings and Paul Whooten of Middleboro, the couple bought this car 25 years ago after Rydings found it online in the early days of dial-up internet.

"It was a rare color," Rydings said.

Rydings said the car was located in Kentucky, and that Whooten went down to look at it by himself to see if it was worth buying, when he called her.

"He said, 'I bought it, you're going to love it,'" she recalled.

Rydings then flew to Kentucky and drove the Porsche back home to Massachusetts.

The couple has had many adventures in the 1986, even traveling through Canada and facing some language barriers with a French speaking traffic patrolman who pulled them over for speeding.

Porsches are known for being "ridiculously fast" Rydings said with a laugh.

Rydings recalled the pastel blue Porsche Whooten owned when she first met him, and how she had mistaken it for a Volkswagen, like the 1973 bug she drove.

Learning to drive a Porsche was a "really big difference," she said.

Rydings and Whooten have been Porsche Club of America members for many years, and they also own a 2011 Turbo S.

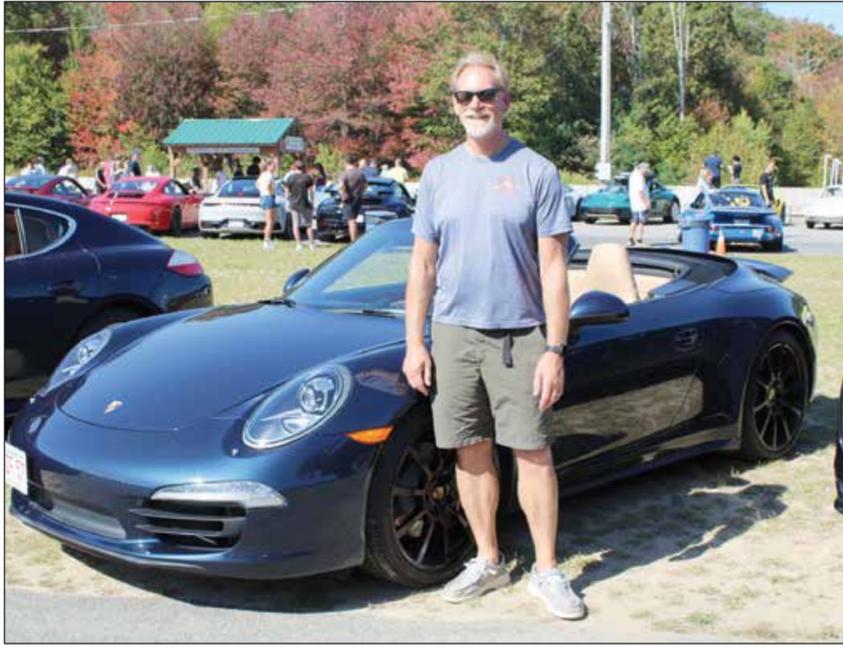
The day before attending Porsche on the Mountain, Rydings brought the 1986 to the Concours d'Elegance at The Elms in Newport, Rhode Island, where it took first place in its category.

Rydings talked about why she has been so loyal to the Porsche brand, which she has loved since she was 16 years old.

"It's just like home to me, this car," she said.

Leicester resident and owner of Bay State Brewing Co., Chip Jarry purchased his 2014 911 Carrera 4S this past July and brought it to its first Porsche on the Mountain event. Previous to this model, he owned a 964 for many years.

The 4S is an all-wheel drive vehicle, with more horsepower.



Chip Jarry is shown with his 2014 911 Carrera 4S.

Jarry talked about the Porsche being a "driver's car," and how versatile it is going from the track to the road.

"Nothing drives like it," he said. "It holds the road." Jarry said Porsches are also reliable and hold their value.

This year's Porsche on the Mountain event was judged by Adam Wright of Unobtainium, a New York-based business that deals in vintage Porsche cars and parts and provides vital resources to those restoring their project car.

"He knew his stuff," Sandy said of Wright.

Sandy said there were 23 awards handed out at Porsche on the Mountain, including one for the dirtiest Porsche.

"A lot of car shows are what are called 'concours' – the cleanest car wins... Here in Palmer, we're about driving, not keeping your car spotless," he said.

Sandy said there was also an award for the highest mileage, which has gone each year to Tom Thalmann, who has an astonishing 700,000 plus miles on his 2003 Porsche 911 Turbo.

Proceeds from Porsche on the Mountain helped to benefit Homes for Our Troops, an organization dedicated to rebuilding the lives of severely injured post-9/11 veterans nationwide.

Sandy thanked the events sponsors, including anchor sponsor Porsche Norwell and co-sponsors Musante Motorsports, Intercity Lines, Kachel Mo-

tor Company and HMS Motorsport.

About Palmer Motorsports Park

Palmer Motorsports Park has been rated "One of the top 10 road courses in North America" by Road & Track Magazine. Its unique setting and challenging road course draws club members and visitors from New England and beyond for racing, research, recreational, and business-related activities.

Upcoming events include EMP's 7th annual Charity Car Show to benefit the Wounded Warrior Project on Saturday, Oct. 18 with gates open from 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

All models and makes are welcomed.

A \$20 donation per vehicle covers entry and car show. Optional Charity Laps (\$20 for three laps) are available to purchase at the park.

For more information or to purchase an Accelerated Lap, visit <https://emp-performance.online/>.

On Sunday, Oct. 19, Mustangs on the Mountain returns to benefit the West Brookfield-based Central New England Equine Rescue, which has been providing care and homes to horses, ponies and donkeys for over 20 years.

For more information about the event visit [www.mustangsonthemountain.com](http://www.mustangsonthemountain.com).

For more information about Palmer Motorsports Park, visit [palmermsp.com](http://palmermsp.com) or follow them on Facebook and Instagram.

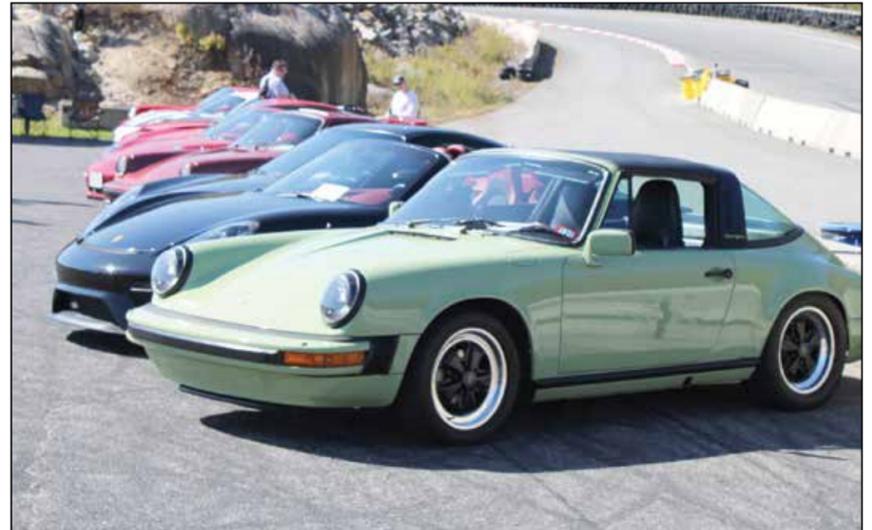


The Lars Anderson Auto Museum raffled off this 2024 Porsche 911 Carrera Coupe.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA QUIMETTE



Joanne Rydings is shown with her rare, white gold metallic 1986 930 Turbo.



Rare and one-of-kind colors were found on Porsches throughout the event.



The red of these Porsches was enhanced by the foliage at the Whiskey Hill track.



Over 300 Porsches were displayed at the Porsche on the Mountain event.

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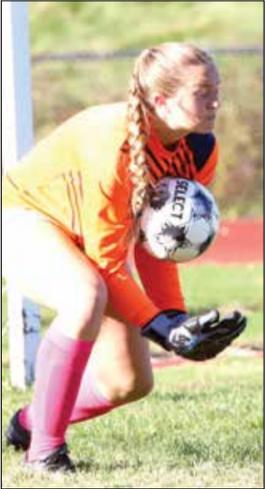
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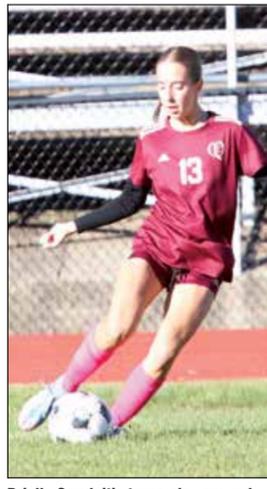
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Persepho Piermarini collects a save.



Hayssa Freitas sends the ball deep.



Brielle Gerulaitis turns play around.

## Pathfinder finishes up busy week



Aubrey Oretiz takes the goal kick for Pathfinder.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

## Quaboag girls soccer rallies to earn draw

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

WARREN — Many soccer coaches dread having a 2-0 lead. Just ask longtime Granby girls' varsity soccer coach Bob Weaver.

The Lady Rams took a 2-0 lead early in the second half during last Friday afternoon's road match against the Quaboag Lady Cougars.

The home team battled back by scoring a pair of goals within a five-minute span and the non-league contest ended in a 2-2 draw.

"This result is very disappointing, especially after we held a 2-0 second half lead," Weaver said. "It wasn't one of our better efforts of the season. You just have to give

Quaboag a lot of credit."

The Lady Rams, who are the top ranked team in the MIAA Division 5 power rankings, had a 9-3-3 overall record following the road tie. They were scheduled to finish the regular season with another non-league match at Pittsfield High School on Monday afternoon before the Western Mass. Class D. tournament starts later in the week.

"My players are quickly realizing that when the other team steps on the field, we'll be getting their best effort," Weaver said. "This was a very big game for both teams."

Quaboag head coach Joe Mooney was very pleased with the way his squad per-



Asher Sargeal takes a goal kick.

formed, especially in the second half.

"It was wonderful to see how well the girls responded in the second half," Mooney

said. "We had our chances in the first half, but we never gave up. We decided to move

See **QUABOAG GIRLS**  
PAGE 8

PALMER — Due to several postponements, it was a busy week for Pathfinder girls soccer, as they had three games scheduled last week and one more game remaining earlier this week. Last Friday afternoon, the Pioneers hosted Putnam and suffered a 2-1 loss, falling to 4-7-2 on the season. Right now, Pathfinder is on the outside of the state tournament power rankings, but they still have time to reach .500 for the season to qualify.



Kayleigh Peters dribbles toward the center of the field.



Rielly Ireland sends a quick pass away.



Rielly Ireland sends a quick pass away.



Angelina Miller tries to get around a defender.



Destiny Rodriguez intercepts the ball.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI  
Elizabeth Matheson plays the ball off her knee.

## Panthers win three straight

BARRE — Last week, Quabbin Regional girls soccer racked up two more wins. One matchup was a 5-1 triumph at home against Narragansett. They also traveled to Gardner and turned in a 3-0 shutout. The Panthers are now 8-4-1 and continue their season with an away game at Ayer Shirley on Thursday, Oct. 23 at 4 p.m.



Bianca Wilder makes a stop and turns play around.



Larrah Gagne watches her shot head for the goal.



Bianca Wilder makes a stop and turns play around.



Bianca Wilder makes a stop and turns play around.

## Quabbin field hockey heading into playoffs strong

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

BALDWINVILLE — Since entering the 2019 Central Mass. Division 1 field hockey tournament with a 14-1-3 record, the Quabbin Lady Panthers hadn't won more than eleven games during the regular season.

The Lady Panthers won their 12th game of this season following a 3-1 road victory against the Narragansett Regional Lady Warriors,

last Tuesday afternoon. It was also their fifth consecutive win.

"This is a very big win for us because it's going to help our power ranking in the state tournament," said longtime Quabbin head coach Shelly Zalneraitis, whose husband, Rich, is the Narragansett boys' varsity basketball coach. "It was also very nice to have three different goal scorers in today's game."

The Lady Panthers, who played their final road game

of the regular season, made the short bus ride back home to Barre with a 12-2 overall record. Their only two setbacks this fall were at Westborough and a non-league home loss to Frontier Regional.

Quabbin, who was ranked seventh in the MIAA Division 4 power rankings at the beginning of last week, has qualified for the state tournament in each of the past four seasons.

The last time that Quab-

bin faced Narragansett (12-2-2) was in last year's round of 32 contest. The Lady Panthers posted a 3-1 home win.

All the players listed on the 2025 Lady Panthers varsity roster are very talented.

"We only have 13 players on the varsity team, but all of them are outstanding field hockey players and they're also great kids," Zalneraitis said. "We just want to keep winning games."

The three seniors are Maddy Stauder, Farrah Wo-

jcik, and Alyssa Ebert.

"The seniors are our leaders this year," Zalneraitis added. "None of them have told me if they'll be playing field hockey in college, but they certainly can."

The Lady Panthers annual senior night game was scheduled to be against Leominster on Wednesday night. They're scheduled to wrap up the regular season by hosting Marlborough on

See **QUABBIN** PAGE 8

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## - sports -

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# Turleysports

## Athlete of the Week



NAME: Persepho Piermarini  
SCHOOL: Quaboag

Piermarini made five saves and had a great second half for Quaboag girls soccer to get a 2-2 tie against top-ranked Granby.

To nominate someone for Athlete of the Week, contact Managing Sports Editor Gregory A. Scibelli at 413-283-8393 ext. 258 or send an e-mail to gscibelli@turley.com.

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## Railers suffer pair of losses in opening weekend game

WORCESTER – Worcester's 5-3 loss to Adirondack Sunday afternoon made the Railers 0-2-0 for the season.

Easier said than done, perhaps, but one thing the Railers can do to improve the goals against is avoid turnovers. Sunday, they fell behind by 2-0 and battled back to forge a 3-3 tie heading into the third period. Worcester first deadlocked the score at 2-2, then surrendered the go-ahead goal to allow the Thunder to retake the lead.

It was 3-3 going into the third. Another turnover turned into the game-winning goal for Adirondack.

Railers players have to want to play in the defensive zone, coach Nick Tuzzolino said, and so far that has not been the case. "Guys need to play it the way we want them to play it," he added. "They can't go on their own page. They have to stop and start. They have to be physical."

"D-Zone's not a pretty job, but when you don't do it you give up a lot of goals....it's a full six-man thing, whether it's goal-tending, defensemen or forwards. It's a commitment to play defense, to

kill penalties, and the last two nights we have had no commitment to play defense."

Worcester got its goals from Matt Stief, Cole Donhauser and Anthony Callin. Henrik Tikkanen stopped 24 shots in net. The Thunder scorers were Brannon McManus with two, Dylan Wendt, Justin Taylor and Brian Carrabes into the empty net.

The Railers got off to a muddy start. As a result, Adirondack had a 2-0 lead before the game was 10 minutes old.

Wendt put a wrist shot home from about 30 feet at 2:51, then Taylor had a gimme from just outside the crease at 11:21 with the Thunder on a power play. It stayed 2-0 heading into the second period and Worcester made it a tie game before that period was half over.

Lincoln Hatten gave the offense some energy when he worked a breakaway at 3:30, although he did not convert. The Railers then went on a power play at 3:41 and Stief took only six seconds to make it 2-1. He was set up when Drew Callin made a clean faceoff win.

Stief scored from the right point as Anthony Callin also got an assist on the play. Donhauser tied it at 8:04 off a faceoff win by Ryan Miotto. A dreadful giveaway allowed McManus to score unassisted and make it 3-2 at 14:41 but Worcester answered that goal just eight seconds later when Anthony Callin scored from in close after being set up by Matt DeMelis. It took Callin two games to score his first goal this season. It took him 16 to score his first goal last year. McManus scored unassisted on another turnover three minutes into the third period and the Railers could not answer that one. "We had a game plan going into the third and didn't touch it for nine minutes," Tuzzolino said. Stief was the eighth different player to score the season's first goal in the Railers' eight seasons, the second defenseman. Nick Albano is the other.

In order, first goals have been scored by Wade Murphy, Barry Almeida, Jordan Samuels-Thomas, Albano, Brent Beaudoin, Quin Ryan and Stief.

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Stief scored from the right point as Anthony Callin also got an assist on the play. Donhauser tied it at 8:04 off a faceoff win by Ryan Miotto. A dreadful giveaway allowed McManus to score unassisted and make it 3-2 at 14:41 but Worcester answered that goal just eight seconds later when Anthony Callin scored from in close after being set up by Matt DeMelis. It took Callin two games to score his first goal this season. It took him 16 to score his first goal last year. McManus scored unassisted on another turnover three minutes into the third period and the Railers could not answer that one.

"We had a game plan going into the third and didn't touch it for nine minutes," Tuzzolino said. Stief was the eighth different player to score the season's first goal in the Railers' eight seasons, the second defenseman. Nick Albano is the other.

In order, first goals have been scored by Wade Murphy, Barry Almeida, Jordan Samuels-Thomas, Albano, Brent Beaudoin, Quin Ryan and Stief.

## T-Birds come back to bash Bears

HERSHEY, PA – The Springfield Thunderbirds (1-2-0-0) rebounded in a big way from a defeat the night before as they dispatched the Hershey Bears (1-2-1-0) by a 5-1 score on Sunday inside Giant Center.

For the first time in the young season, Steve Konowalchuk's team finally vaulted to a lead at the 7:06 mark of the first period off a clean rush. Corey Schueneman carried the puck deep into the Hershey zone before slipping a perfect drop pass onto the blade of Jakub Stancl. The rookie connected off the inside of the post, beating Clay Stevenson on the stick side to give Springfield a 1-0 lead on Stancl's first professional tally.

Springfield dodged a dangerous chance from ex-Thunderbird Calle Rosen, who emerged from the penalty box and skated in on a breakaway against Vadim Zherenko, but Rosen missed the target on the blocker side.

Both teams failed to connect on power play chances, but Springfield was not done on the offensive end.

With just 24 seconds left on the clock, Hunter Skinner joined a rush, one-timing a Nikita Alexandrov pass through Stevenson to make it a 2-0 game into the intermission. Matthew Peca also picked up an assist on the play for his first point of the season. In the process, the T-Birds captain became the first player in the T-Birds' 10-year history to record 200 points as a member of the Thunderbirds.

Zherenko stood tall through the opening half of the second period, with Hershey linking lengthy shifts in the offensive zone, threatening to cut into the Springfield lead. After surviving the onslaught, Otto Stenberg alertly spotted Matt Luff coming off the T-Birds' bench, and the veteran winger roofed a breakaway snapper over Stevenson's glove to make it a 3-0 score at 11:45.

Dalibor Dvorsky joined the scoring party next at 14:11, as the 20-year-old got a fortunate bounce to cash in his first of the season. He was hoping to slip a pass to his left side, but the puck ric-

ocheted right back onto his stick in the low slot, giving Stevenson no chance to defend it. Alexandrov picked up his second assist on the tally.

Hershey finally broke the four-goal blitz at 15:24 as Henrik Rybinski crashed the blue paint to chip a loose puck over Zherenko for his second goal in as many nights, cutting the margin to 4-1.

Still, the T-Birds offense was not finished, and with a power play in the closing minute, Theo Lindstein rifled home his first goal in the AHL with just 23 seconds left in the frame to make it a 5-1 score. Luff picked up his second point and Alexandrov garnered his third assist on the rookie's first North American tally.

Zherenko had a sizable lead, but the fourth-year pro slammed the door shut in the third, as Hershey failed to pierce the netminder on 14 third-period offerings. Zherenko has now stopped 47 of the last 49 shots he has faced.

### QUABOAG GIRS FROM PAGE 7

a couple of players into an attacking formation at the start of the second half."

While Granby had already locked up a berth in the upcoming Division 5 state tournament, Quaboag (7-6-2) needed to win one of their remaining three regular season games to clinch a spot in the Division 4 state tournament.

The Lady Cougars, who were ranked 38<sup>th</sup>, were scheduled to play two road matches against Ware High School (Monday night) and Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School (Wednesday afternoon) before wrapping up the regular season with a home date against Uxbridge High School on October 27.

"With this draw, we now only need to win one of our last three games to automatically qualify for the Division 4 state tournament," Mooney said. "I do like playing the Western Mass. teams. Today's game was a very good test for my team."

Quaboag is hoping to qualify for the Division 4 state tournament for the first time.

A year ago, the Lady Cougars lost to the Lady Rams at home in a Division 5 round of 32 match.

Granby's season ended two days later with a loss at Georgetown in the round of 16.

The two teams also faced each other during the 2024

regular season, as the Lady Cougars posted a 1-0 road victory. It was Quaboag's third consecutive win in the series since a 1-1 tie in 2021.

Despite falling behind 2-0 in this year's meeting on the soccer pitch with Granby, Mooney knew the game wasn't over yet.

"A 2-0 lead is probably the worst lead that you can have in a soccer match," he said. "The team with the 2-0 lead is thinking that they can relax a little bit, and the other team is thinking they just need one goal to make it a close match. If that happens, anything can happen. We were able to comeback by scoring two goals in a span of five minutes. Having a 3-0 is always a lot better."

The Lady Cougars had a couple of scoring chances early in the opening half.

A shot taken from senior captain Maddy Bagg was saved by Granby junior keeper Meredith Bartosz (4 saves).

A couple of minutes later, freshman Julia Queiroga fired a shot on goal and Bartosz made a diving save attempt. She managed to knock the ball over the end line resulting in a corner kick.

At the other end of the field, junior Kalli White had a couple of chances before firing a low shot into the left corner of the net past Quaboag junior keeper Persepho Piermarini (5 saves) giving the Lady Rams a 1-0 advantage during the 34<sup>th</sup> minute.

Both teams had a couple of shot attempts during the first half, but senior goalie Gianna Manca made eight saves during the first 30 minutes.

The turning point of the game took place with 1:30 left in the third quarter. The Lady Panthers were given a penalty stroke after the Lady Warriors covered the ball. Casey took the stroke and banged a shot into the back of the cage.

"This was the third time that I've made a penalty stroke this season," Casey said. "I was a little bit nervous because I needed to make it to give my team the lead. This is probably the best season we've had since I've been playing for the varsity team. All of us are like sisters."

Casey had a couple of

White, who has been a member of the varsity soccer team since the eighth grade, entered the road match three points away from reaching 100 career points.

Bagg and senior captain Maddy Potvin had shots on goal during the final two minutes of the first half.

The Lady Rams' second goal was scored by freshman Marcela Tapia in the 54<sup>th</sup> minute.

White was credited with the assist leaving her one point away from the elite milestone.

"It would've been nice if Kalli would've reached her 100<sup>th</sup> career point in today's game," Weaver said. "She wouldn't have been able to accomplish the milestone without the help of her teammates."

The Lady Cougars sliced the deficit in half when Potvin fired a shot into the left corner, which was assisted by Queiroga, in the 62<sup>nd</sup> minute.

Four minutes later, Bagg scored the tying goal by lofting a shot into the upper left corner, which was assisted by Potvin.

The Quaboag coach praised the performance of his defensive unit in the second half. Those players are junior Brielle Gerulaitis, junior captain Asher Sargent, and senior Olive Moulton.

Both teams had a couple of shot attempts during the final 15 minutes of regulation, but the score didn't change on the scoreboard.

a 1-0 lead entering the fourth quarter.

Less than two minutes into the final quarter, Curran fired a shot that deflected into the cage off the goalie's pads for an unassisted goal.

Quabbin's final goal was scored by Hamm, which was also unassisted, with 6:30 remaining in regulation.

"Two of our younger players scored goals during the fourth quarter," Casey said. "Everyone has been contributing to our success so far this year."

About 15 seconds later, the Lady Warriors ended Thorpe's shutout bid following a goal from sophomore Lacey Beauregard.

The Lady Panthers managed to hold onto the two goal lead the rest of the way.

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# - community -

## CRAFT FAIR FROM PAGE 1

senting her craft business, Carolann's Country Corner. MacMaster had bibs, adult clothing protectors, aprons and her famous handmade dolls.

MacMaster said her dolls were popular this year as she sold all the dolls she had during the craft fair.

"Dolls sold out," MacMaster said.

MacMaster has ran Carolann's Country Corner for 40 years and plans on continuing offering the annual craft fair at the library. The East Brookfield Public Library is currently working on other fair ideas and hopes the craft fair will grow in the future.

Another unique item MacMaster had was stuffed owls. The idea of owls came from when MacMaster was a librarian at Westfield State University. The owls are inspired by the logo and mascot of the college.

Donations during the craft fair will go towards programming at the library. Local crafters are eligible to sign up and be a part of the craft fair. Carolann's Country Corner will be attending White Christmas in West Brookfield in December.

Also attending this year's craft fair is Luann Mckee and Betty Ann Casey of Twin Knitters & Crochets. These twins crochet hot pads, pot-holders, newborn hats, dish cloths, and knit youth hats.

Together, the twins have been knitting and crocheting together for 40 years.

Both Luann and Betty say their hot pads are a popular item their customers love. Twin Knitters & Crochets will be attending White Christmas



Crafting friends Luisa Lamas and Michael Burdett shared a table with their handmade crafts.

in West Brookfield in December.

For those appreciate woodcrafts, Chairman of the Board had unique items available. Wayne Boulette of North Brookfield is the owner of Chairman of the Board offering wood crafted items such as cutting boards, charcuterie boards, wooden piggy banks, and phone holders. The phone holders were a hit as the other vendors at the craft fair got one as well and put their phones in them.

Some of Boulette's cutting boards are shaped like farm animals, mostly cows and pigs. Boulette said his cutting boards are popular when it comes to his customers.

Another vendor was

The Cozy Prescription & Friends, two crafters sharing the same table with each other and their hobby inspired crafts. Michael Burdett is

the creator of The Cozy Prescription and this was his first time attending a craft



An owl was made by Carolann MacMaster of Carolann's Country Corner.

fair.

Burdett crochets dolls, Christmas themed crochets, and animals. For Burdett, crocheting is a hobby.

His fellow crafting friend Luisa Lamas is a volunteer at the East Brookfield Public Library and brought

handmade tote bags to the craft fair. Lamas also enjoys making bracelets, earrings, and watercolor bookmarks.

Lamas in her spare time enjoys crafting and was able to share her work at this year's craft fair.



Wooden charcuterie boards were made by Chairman of the Board.



Crochet dolls were made by Michael Burdett of The Cozy Prescription.



Halloween themed tote bags were made by Luisa Lamas.

The East Brookfield Public Library will be hosting trick or treating on Thursday, Oct. 30 at 10:30 a.m. Guests will go through the town offices connected

to the library and will be collecting Halloween candy. Visit the East Brookfield Public Library at 122 Connie Mack Drive.

## State Auditor highlights inequities in Mass Save Program

BOSTON – State Auditor Diana DiZoglio's Office released a report of the Commonwealth's Mass Save energy efficiency program.

Mass Save was established in 2008 through a partnership between the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its natural gas and electric utilities, aiming to improve energy efficiency. The program encourages residents and businesses to upgrade their buildings through a wide array of services, rebates, incentives, and training.

Mass Save is consumer-funded – Massachusetts' consumers, whether residential or commercial, pay a surcharge on their electric and gas bills to fund the program.

The report, produced by the State Auditor's Division of Local Mandates, examines the municipal distribution of incentives from

Mass Save. DLM reviewed the correlation of Mass Save net benefits with socioeconomic factors including income, population density, and owner-occupied housing rate. Furthermore, DLM assessed the distribution of Mass Save incentives in Environmental Justice municipalities and Gateway Cities.

The report identifies significant disparities in Mass Save's distribution of incentives, with some higher-income communities gaining more benefits than contributions made, and many lower-income municipalities contributing much more than their residents receive.

The report found residents of 48 out of 175 Massachusetts municipalities with incomes below the state median contribute more to Mass Save than the state average. Many residents of EJ municipalities and Gateway Cities disproportionately

contributed more to Mass Save than residents of other municipalities, with residents in communities with over 90% EJ populations contributing on average 151% more per capita compared to municipalities without EJ populations.

Furthermore, residents in Gateway Cities contributed approximately 24% more per capita than those in non-Gateway Cities, despite having considerably lower household incomes and getting fewer Mass Save benefits than higher-income communities.

The report also shows that as population density and the proportion of renters increase, Mass Save benefits typically decrease. High-density urban areas and municipalities with higher renter populations-groups less likely to directly benefit from property-based energy efficiency upgrades-were

consistently found to contribute more to the program even when they ultimately do not get much back, if anything, from the program.

Moreover, the report highlights how utility bills lack transparency regarding required Mass Save contributions. It is noted how utility bills remain unnecessarily opaque due to unfamiliar terminology and a lack of clear itemization, leaving many ratepayers unsure of what they are actually paying for.

While the bills break down charges into supply and delivery components, key fees are labeled with technical or vague terms that provide little meaningful information to the average consumer.

Among the report's recommendations, aimed at ensuring greater equity and efficiency, are to consider transferring Mass Save's

administration to an independent entity, expanding legislative oversight, creating more incentives to boost renter participation, and improving transparency and data accessibility.

"While Mass Save has a noble mission of promoting energy efficiency in the Commonwealth, its current programmatic structure undermines its mission by widening inequality, eroding economic justice, equity, fairness, and opportunity - and deepening the very disparities that contribute to the environmental justice challenges we must continually seek to address," said DiZoglio. "We urge the adoption of our recommendations, which seek to help ensure greater integrity in a program meant to serve all residents of this Commonwealth."

## Home of the Brave 5K returns for 7th year

STURBRIDGE – The Sturbridge Special Events Committee will host the 7th annual Home of the Brave 5K fun walk/run to benefit local veterans on Saturday, Nov. 8 from 8-11 a.m. on the Town Common.

Race entry is \$25, with a special military price of \$10 for servicemembers. T-shirts are included for those who register by Oct. 27.

The event will be attended by DJ Ellis Cropper and Flutie Star Reagan Bush.

The committee is currently seeking veteran resource vendors, donations for raffles, swag, and event volunteers.

For more information or to register, visit [www.5KGP.com](http://www.5KGP.com).

## SOCIAL SECURITY FROM PAGE 4

waiting until 70 to claim. Of course, no one really knows how long they will live, so it is a judgment you need to make. "Average" life expectancy for a man your current age is about age 84, but if you'd like to get a more personalized longevity estimate you can use this tool we use here at the AMAC Foundation: <https://socialsecurityreport.org/tools/life-expectancy-calculator/>

Another thing to keep in mind is whether your wife will get a widow's benefit if you die first. A widow will get the higher of either her own SS retirement benefit or the husband's benefit amount when he died. So, if you claim at age 70, your surviving spouse will benefit if her own SS is smaller

because you waited until 70 for your higher SS amount. Just something else to keep in mind.

Yet another is whether your wife will be entitled to a higher benefit as your spouse while you are both living. FYI, a spouse will get a "spousal boost" if her own SS retirement benefit at FRA is less than 50% of her spouse's FRA entitlement. If so, your wife cannot claim her spousal benefit until you take your own SS retirement benefit. If your wife will be entitled to more as your spouse while you are both living, then delaying until age 70 means your wife cannot collect her higher spousal amount until you claim. Depending on your financial needs as a couple, that may affect your decision as well.

When to claim is always a

judgment call which should consider your life expectancy, your financial needs and your marital status. If you don't need the SS money now while you are working and believe you will, indeed, live "at least till 87," then waiting would likely be your best long-term decision. If you have doubts about your life expectancy, and/or if your wife will substantially benefit from a "spousal boost" if you claim earlier, then claiming now would also be a wise choice.

Finally, it's also important to understand that your SS benefits may be taxable by the IRS and, if you are still working, your IRS tax rate will likely be higher now than it would be after you retire from working. Note: The so-called "one big, beautiful bill" provides only temporary tax relief

(thru 2028) on SS benefits - the IRS will still tax SS benefits but also allow a separate tax deduction to offset those SS taxes you pay.

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## - community -

# Connected and online program deadline is Nov. 7

BOSTON – The Healey-Driscoll administration and Massachusetts Technology Collaborative's Massachusetts Broadband Institute launched the Connected & Online Program, a \$23 million initiative to close the digital device gap across Massachusetts.

The program will distribute approximately 27,000 internet-connected devices such as laptops, desktops, tablets, assistive technology and supportive equipment to eligible organizations across the state.

Funded by the U.S. Treasury Capital Projects Fund, the Connected and Online Program is part of the state's

broader digital empowerment strategy and aims to increase access to education, expand workforce training and support access to health care services, especially in Gateway Cities and rural communities. Devices will be preloaded with security and accessibility software and distributed at no cost to approved applicants.

"Access to the internet is no longer a luxury it's a necessity for work, learning and health," said Governor Maura Healey. "Through this program, we are making sure that communities across Massachusetts have the tools they need to succeed in the digital economy. Closing the

digital divide is essential to building an economy that works for everyone, no matter their zip code."

"From rural towns to our largest cities, residents deserve the chance to log on and connect with opportunity," said Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll. "These devices will help families access telehealth, students complete their homework, and job seekers apply for new opportunities. This investment is about removing barriers so that everyone in Massachusetts can fully participate in our economy."

"MBI is proud to partner with organizations across the state to support telehealth,

remote patient monitoring, online learning opportunities and workforce development," said MBI Program Executive Jody Jones. "The first step to accessing critical services in today's world depends on a reliable device that is connected to the internet. The goal of this program is to increase access to these devices and ensure that all residents, regardless of where they live, are able to fully participate in the digital economy."

Eligible applicants to the Connected and Online Program include municipalities, libraries, health care providers, workforce centers, educational institutions and nonprofits. Each organiza-

tion may request a minimum of 30 and a maximum of 500 devices.

Applicants will demonstrate how the supplied devices will be accessible to the public, either through lending programs or on-site use and how expanded access to devices aligns with the needs of the communities they serve. Applicants must also include a strategy for measuring usage and outcomes and outline a plan for ongoing end-user support and device management.

The deadline to apply for the Connected and Online Program is Friday, Nov. 7.

A division of the Massachusetts Technology Col-

laborative, Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) is working to extend high-speed internet access and availability across the state. To achieve this, MBI uses state and federal funding to launch infrastructure expansion programs that target areas of the state that lack high-speed internet access as well as programs that tackle barriers to internet adoption and increase availability, addressing critical issues around affordability, enhanced public Wi-Fi, the need for internet-enabled devices and digital literacy training. People will learn more by visiting <https://broadband.masstech.org>.

## Dimming lights boosts bird migration success

People offer migrating birds a big boost simply by dimming outside lights according to the Allen Bird Club.

Millions of birds migrate through Massachusetts each fall and spring, and the majority fly at night. Unfortunately, outdoor lighting can distort birds' vision, causing needless fatalities as they blindly fly into lit buildings. Light overflow also disorients birds' navigational senses, making their arduous journey harder. According to the National Audubon Society, "While lights can throw birds off their migration paths, bird fatalities are more directly caused by the amount of energy the birds waste flying around and calling out in confusion. The exhaustion can then leave them vulnerable to other urban threats."

Fortunately, there are four simple steps people can take to make a positive difference. As a bonus, many of these tips save money, improve sleep quality and restore the ecosystem's essential circadian

cycles. Turn off unnecessary lights. "When not in use, turn off the juice" is a 1970s jingle that rings true today. It's a great way to remember to save energy, money and birds.

Use motion-activated outdoor lighting or timers. Motion-sensitive lights are often a better choice for home security because they offer an element of surprise, while lighting a building all night can unintentionally highlight every point of access. Timers work well for family members who arrive home after dark but don't need a light all night.

Cap outdoor lighting so illumination points down. Theaters, where the entire stage is lit while the audience sits in darkness, are a great example of how lighting can be directed only to where it's needed. Use lights that have solid lids pointing light down.

If people work in a large office or industrial building, they could ask if night lighting can be reduced. Upper story lighting on

tall buildings can be particularly tragic for flocks of migrating birds. Boston, Connecticut, and New York all have "Lights Out" programs during peak bird migration, Aug. 15 to Nov. 15 and April 1 to May 31. Make a company a migration champion by joining the trend.

Those who want to track Massachusetts's nightly migration can do so for free by visiting the website BirdCast.info. Created by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, UMass Amherst and Colorado State University, this online migration tool offers area-specific migration forecasts and shares live or day-after migration data. Glimpsing data from the remarkable, nighttime migration of birds will shine a light on the importance of flicking the switch on blazing skies.

The Allen Bird Club is a nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing Greater Springfield area birders together since 1912. For more information, people may visit [www.AllenBirdClub.org](http://www.AllenBirdClub.org).

## Re-procurement for service plazas contract

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announces they are preparing to re-procure the contract to rehabilitate, operate and maintain the 18 service plazas across the state.

"These service plazas play a critical role for our residents, visitors, workers and economy. MassDOT's focus has always been on delivering the highest-quality service plazas that offer the best value for taxpayers," said Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver, who will oversee the process. "After careful consideration, we have determined that the best path forward to ensure the success of this project is to reprocure the contract."

MassDOT will also work

with the current lease holders to ensure that travelers and workers do not experience disruptions to essential services.

Earlier this year, after a lengthy, multi-stage procurement process, the MassDOT Board authorized Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt to award the Transition and Lease Agreements for the service plazas to Applegreen. After signing a Transition Agreement and during the lease negotiation process, Applegreen made the decision to withdraw.

After careful evaluation of all options, MassDOT is preparing to re-procure the service plaza contract in order to deliver the highest quality facilities and services for travelers while ensuring

the best value for taxpayers and toll payers. MassDOT will begin negotiations with the current leaseholders for extensions immediately to ensure continuity of service and labor at the plazas.

MassDOT has been reviewing the original procurement and will seek feedback from the industry to develop recommendations for a revised Request for Proposals that will best ensure robust interest from high-quality bidders and set the project up for success.

Day-to-day management of the service plazas is being transferred to the MassDOT Highway Division to ensure structured performance oversight, regular inspections and centralized corrective action.

## Driver's education returns to in person format

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles announced that, starting Monday, Sept. 22, all classroom instruction provided by professional driving schools will transition back to an in-person format.

The RMV has been in communication with driving schools, customers and other stakeholders, explaining how this change will result in en-

hanced student engagement, stronger learning outcomes, equal opportunities for all schools and improved road safety.

The option of remote (virtual) classes was introduced as an accommodation during the pandemic. Effective Sept. 22, a live instructor will be required to teach all classes including the parent class. There will be a maximum of 30 students per class

for a student/teacher ratio of 30:1. Research supports that in-person learning fosters better focus, higher engagement and more effective preparation for safe driving.

For information, people may visit <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/drivers-education-programs>. For the latest RMV updates and information, people may follow the RMV at MassRMV on X, formerly Twitter.

## Country Bank grants \$20k to revitalize CDC

Country Bank, a full-service financial institution serving Central and Western Massachusetts, supports Revitalize CDC in Springfield.

The CDC performs free critical repairs, modifications and rehabilitation on the homes of low-income families with children, the elderly, veterans and individuals with disabilities; helps bridge food insecurity gaps through delivery of fresh foods; and positions community members toward healthier lives through education and support for chronic conditions like asthma and diabetes.

"Over the last decade of working with Revitalize CDC, I have seen the organization grow into a vital pillar of support for the housing, health, and nutrition needs of our community. Since their founding in 1992, Revitalize CDC has served 30,000 individuals, investing over \$52 Million into Western Massachusetts. Especially during this time of uncertainty in the funding coming from Federal and State sources, Country Bank is proud to continue our support of Revitalize CDC with an additional

donation of \$20,000. It is our sincere hope that this contribution inspires others to be generous in their support of Revitalize CDC and the critical services they provide," stated Ben Leonard, Senior Vice President, Commercial Banking Team Leader at Country Bank and Vice Chair of the Revitalize CDC Board.

"We are incredibly grateful to Country Bank for their generous support and hands-on involvement in our #GreenNFit Neighborhood Rebuild program. Together, we're not just repairing homes, we're rebuilding hope and creating healthier, safer communities," stated Coleen Shanley-Loveless, President & CEO of Revitalize Community Development Corporation.

Established in 1850, Country Bank is a full-service \$2 billion mutual community bank serving Central and Western Massachusetts with 15 banking centers and two business offices in Ware, Palmer, West Brookfield, Brimfield, Belchertown, Wilbraham, Ludlow, Longmeadow, Leicester, Paxton, Charlton, Springfield, Uxbridge and Worcester.

## DOER awards \$911,000 for local clean energy projects

BOSTON – The Healey-Driscoll Administration announces \$911,000 in grants to support clean energy initiatives across Massachusetts.

This funding, administered by the Department of Energy Resources through the Regional Energy Planning Assistance program, will allow eleven regional planning agencies to provide essential technical assistance to 143 cities and towns to plan and implement clean energy projects. Grants awards include: the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, \$79,000; Franklin Regional Council

of Governments, \$81,000 and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, \$140,700.

"When we invest in local clean energy projects, we help our communities lower energy bills and reduce pollution," said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper. "This program gives cities and towns the tools they need to plan and act. That means cleaner air, lower costs, and stronger neighborhoods across Massachusetts."

"This funding provides valuable support to under-resourced municipalities, and

catalyzes regional projects," said DOER Commissioner Elizabeth Mahony. "We're proud to help our cities and towns build the knowledge and expertise they need to plan and complete clean energy projects. These projects boost local economies, lower energy costs and create healthier, more resilient communities."

This funding is designed to help communities achieve Green Communities Program designation and assist current Green Communities with the management and expansion of their clean en-

ergy efforts. Local clean energy projects cut energy use and save taxpayer dollars by reducing the cost of local government. The grants will also enable municipalities to collaborate on regional clean energy projects and improve emissions reduction planning.

An important part of the program is training for local energy managers and volunteer committees. By enhancing local expertise, communities will be better equipped to propose and review energy projects tailored to their needs.

## Sturbridge planning parade and festivities to celebrate America250

STURBRIDGE – A committee of Sturbridge citizens is working to plan events to celebrate America250 in 2026.

The celebration of this anniversary of the country's independence will culmi-

nate in a parade, and a festive gathering on the Town Common on June 27, 2026.

The committee is calling on townsfolk, businesses, and nonprofits to help with the celebration. Needed are behind-the-scenes volun-

teers to help plan the events and/or on the day of the event, marchers, sponsors, floats, etc.

Anyone who is interested in getting involved should contact the committee at: [Sturbridge250@gmail.com](mailto:Sturbridge250@gmail.com).

## East Brookfield library lists upcoming events

EAST BROOKFIELD – The East Brookfield Public Library, 122 Connie Mack Drive, will host Movie Time on Tuesdays at 12:30 p.m.

Movie Time will be held on Oct. 28, and Nov. 25. Stop by the library with your lunch and enjoy a blockbuster mov-

ie and meet new friends.

### Adult board games

Join library staff for an afternoon of games and snacks on the first Tuesday of every month at 1 p.m. If you like to play games and want to meet new people from the commu-

nity, this program is for you.

This program is for adults 18 years or older. Walk-ins are welcome but registration is preferred so staff can plan accordingly for the snacks and number of games.

## Haunted House returns in Warren

WARREN – The Haunted House at the Shepard Municipal Building returns for three nights of fright.

The Haunted House is located at 48 High St. and will be Saturday, Oct. 25, Monday, Oct. 27, and Tuesday Oct. 28 from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

This haunting event is put together by Warren Parks & Recreation. This is a free event.

This event may not be suitable for young children. For more about Warren Parks & Recreation, visit [www.warren-ma.gov/parks-recreation-commission](http://www.warren-ma.gov/parks-recreation-commission).

# - community -

## PATHFINDER FROM PAGE 1

our regional workforce,” Phelps said. “But this expansion could be the most significant opportunity in our school’s history.”

The Belchertown School Committee recently voted to close Cold Spring School by June 2026 due to shifting enrollment needs. Rather than see the building sit vacant, Pathfinder has proposed taking ownership on July 1, 2026, and opening its doors to students just two

months later.

At roughly 30,000 square feet, the facility would initially house five existing technical programs moved from the Palmer campus, freeing space there for additional classrooms and expanded offerings. Pathfinder currently operates 15 programs; with the new facility, that number could grow to 20.

New programs under consideration include medical assisting, veterinary and animal science, engineering, public safety, and expanded early childhood

education; fields that reflect urgent workforce needs in the region.

“This expansion will allow us to eliminate waiting lists and ensure that every student in our nine member towns has a seat,” Duda said. “It also opens the door to non-resident students who want to train for high-demand jobs.”

The plan has garnered strong support from state legislators, municipal leaders, and workforce development agencies. Pathfinder is seeking \$5 million, the maximum available,

through the state’s Career Technical Education Capacity Expansion grant, part of a \$100 million funding package through the Healy-Driscoll administration. Applications are due Oct. 30, with awards expected in early 2026.

State Sen. Jake Oliveira, who represents both Palmer and Belchertown, called the project “a win-win.”

“Anytime you take a school offline, there are tough questions about what happens next,” Oliveira said. “Repurposing Cold Spring for career and

technical education is a tremendous opportunity. It not only preserves a taxpayer investment but also creates pathways in fields like early childhood education, where our communities face real shortages.”

State Rep. Todd Smola echoed the importance of the expansion by saying, “Pathfinder has been a staple in the region for so many years. Expanding capacity, especially in rural areas, is huge. We need to get behind this grant application and make sure it gets across the finish line.”

If funding is secured, Pathfinder expects to open the Cold Spring campus on Aug. 26, 2026 with an initial 150 new seats. Over time, that number could rise to nearly 200, according to Duda.

“This is truly a win-win,” Duda said. “We’re not asking for more from local taxpayers. We’re using grant funding and non-resident tuition to build something that will benefit our students, our towns, and our regional workforce for decades to come.”

## SUMMIT FROM PAGE 1

and social media.

McElhone believes there are “smart mentors for on-line safety” and the goal is to help educate students about the dangers of the digital world.

“We’re building on that progress,” McElhone said as that is what this year’s school summit is about.

Executive Director of the Children’s Advocacy Center of Franklin County and North Quabbin, Carol Conragan came up to speak next and talked about the increase in photos being shared on social media. There is also an effective source known as “Handle with Care (HWC)”, a school-community response to help ensure that children exposed to trauma in their home, school, or community receive appropriate support.

Sullivan came up to speak prior to the keynote speaker’s presentation and said, “I encourage schools to find that healthy alternative.” This is in response to helping kids and keeping them away from dangers of the digital age.

The keynote speaker for this year’s School Summit was Dr. Michael Rich, who is a pediatrician and the Founder & Director of the Digital Wellness Lab and the founder/co-director of the Clinic for Interactive Media and Internet Disorders. Both are based out of the Boston Children’s Hospital.

The Digital Wellness Lab works to promote positive and healthy digital media experiences for people from birth to young adulthood. The Clinic for Interactive Media and Internet Disorders is the first evidence-based clinical program addressing the problematic interactive media use in children, adolescents, and young adults.

Rich shared that he has been working well with various tech companies to help release findings in these studies on how kids are “lost in a sea of screens they are living in.” This work was supported by various companies including YouTube, TikTok, Roblox, Google, and Microsoft. Rich says there are various headlines of kids being addicted to screens and based of examples has identified the effects of excessive screen use.

Some kids have lost interest in school and sports due to having a lot of screen time. Nowadays, the age of kids beginning to use digital gadgets has gotten younger, as young as the age of 9. In Rich’s studies, 73% of parents are using devices while eating during family meals.

Rich sees constant screen using as “the next normal” and the change is a moving target. Rich wants parents, educators and students to recognize those moving targets.

“We are all in a screen

saturated world,” Rich said.

According to reports, teenagers are averaging about 8.5 hours per day being on screen. There is a 17% increase in screen use during the COVID-19 pandemic. A lot of younger people are engaged in digital and physical worlds, according to Rich.

For screen use or social media, 84% of kids check their phones hourly and 16% more frequently every five minutes.

In these findings, Rich talked about a feeling called “FOBLO”, which stands for Fear of being left out. Wondering why kids are so attracted to these sources, Rich explained that interactive media provides a fertile environment for key tasks for adolescent development.

There is also Problematic Interactive Media Use, the inability to regulate use of interactive media which displaces key elements of health and development. These include sleep, nutrition, academic performance, social life, relationships and mental health.

Another study Rich shared is Growing Up Digital, seeing if users are distracted or addicted. 30% of parents feel “addicted” to their own technologies with social media. 22% of parents feel their children are “addicted” to technology with the areas of greatest dependence being watching videos and video games. Even grandparents were studied for GUD. 36% of grandparents believe their grandchildren are “addicted” to technology. Rich mentioned psychological conditions predisposed to PIMU: ADHD, social anxiety, ASD and depression.

Rich would then move on to the “hot topic”, smartphones in schools. There was a middle school class experiment a teacher did in a 45-minute period.

The sheet listed various social media platforms, phone calls, texts, email, and other screen related platforms. The teacher had over 1,100 tallies from students who admitted to how much they use their smartphone.

Rich described a cell phone as a “24/7 mom and dad in your pocket.”

In Alberta, there was research conducted based on feedback from over 2,800 Alberta K-12 teachers and school leaders. This research was on a cellphone ban that was put in place recently. 74% of teachers say everyday classroom interruptions are down with the cellphone ban. 66% of teachers reported that there is better student mental health since the ban. 57% of teachers already notice improvement of student academic performance.

To wrap up, Rich mentioned the five M’s of digital wellness, Model, Mentor, Monitor, Memories, and Mastery. Rich says we should “be the change we

want to see in our kids”. The Digital Wellness Lab seeks to understand social media effects and use them to empower wellness. Though there are benefits to the use of social media and digital gadgets, but educators and parents want to keep kids informed on the negatives and non-benefits.

For more information visit digitalwellnesslab.org. Rich has conducted research on digital distractions since 1994. Rich has interviewed tens of thousands of kids during his research across various subjects. Copies of Rich’s book, “The Mediatrician’s Guide: A Joyful Approach to Raising Healthy, Smart, Kind Kids in a Screen-Saturated World” were given out to guests at the School Summit and Rich signed copies during the lunch period.

Rich encouraged parents to follow each stage in their children’s lives and wants more engagement from parents and educators to better understand the topic of social media and promote parental engagement tools.

Social media and digital distractions are a broad subject that continues to grow, and Rich thinks its best for educators, school leaders, parents and children to learn together.

“Let’s learn this together,” Rich said.

Next was a panel discussion highlighting the perspectives from young people. The interviews for this panel were Lexi Polokoff of SPIFFY Coalition, Naomi Bledsoe of Communities that Care Coalition, and Susan Reynolds of the Look Up Foundation.

The panel features high school students from various western Massachusetts schools to share their insight on social media use. The students were Silas Giguere of Franklin County Technical School, Nathan Woodard of Greenfield High School, and Anna Tunstall and Kerin Guimond of Smith Academy.

Woodard explained that him and his fellow students are involved in student council and the council does have an Instagram page for contact and connecting. These students took questions from the audience about handling distraction and how they manage their cellphone use and time outside of school.

All the students on the panel shared their own codes of conduct and how they avoid being on their cell phones constantly. Woodard mentioned he has standards in place on how much phone and television time he has at home and instead of using his cell phone, he bought an old school alarm clock to use instead to limit cell phone use.

When asked how parents can be supportive on

when addressing social media use, Tunstall said parents could limit their own phone use. Students sometimes sense teachers using their phones during school and think that could send a poor message.

When addressing the new cellphone bans, Guimond thinks that it can be addressed better for students and parents.

“Address the cell phone ban better and why it is important,” Guimond said.

The students shared various hobbies they have that help them avoid constant screen time. When asked about ways to combat negative social media posts, several students say they have them blocked and keep trusted adults informed. These students also encourage others to do more outdoor gatherings and have adults recognize the responsibility level in kids as the research on social media use continues.

The next presentation was about data around social media, cellphones, youth in schools and implications for policy. This discussion talked more about the cellphone ban policies, including the Bell-to-Bell policy. 2,300 students in Hampshire County did

this survey and 24% of schools that participated in the PNAS had bell-to-bell policies in place during the 2024-2025 school year.

Bell-to-Bell includes any policy where students store their phones in pouches or lockers that locked at the beginning of the day and then unlocked at the end of the day, so that students aren’t seeing their phones from the first bell of the day until dismissal. The survey proves that a school cell phone policy is effective and works more positively than when a student gets their phone taken away.

Kids are less distracted and with a policy in place school leaders hope to see an increase in school engagement. The survey also proved that fewer phone distractions are associated with better mental health.

When studying phones in schools, students get an average of 237 notifications a day, 25% of which happen during the school day. Two out of three students report being distracted by their own devices. Over 50% of students report being distracted by other students’ devices. 35% of students report cheating with their phones.

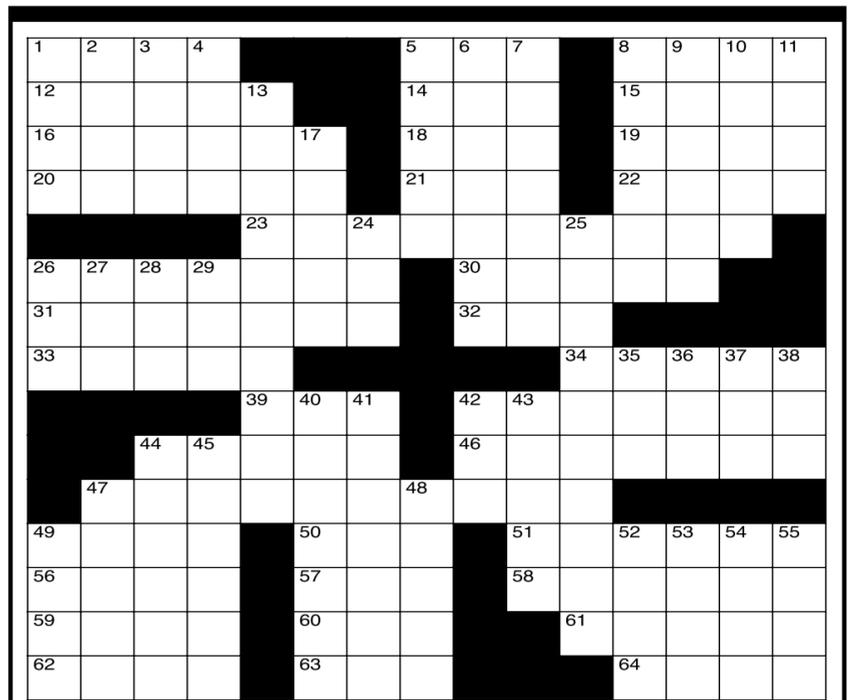
With much confidence, these researchers believe that the state will likely pass phone free school policies. Although it will still be difficult to fully eliminate technology use in schools and outside of school.

“It’s hard to take these technologies away,” said Kat Allen of Communities that Care Coalition.

It will take a commitment from school administrators, teachers, and staff to implicate these policies, which are viewed as a positive source for not only the school environment, but also for the students.

The School Summit also featured a panel discussion with perspectives from educators. School administrators from all over Pioneer Valley and western Massachusetts shared experiences and advice on how they handle schools during the age of digital distraction.

Reynolds of the Look Up Foundation gave a talk on mindfulness and youth generated approaches to digital pitfalls. It was an insightful topic as the Safe and Healthy School Summit featured dedicated professionals wanting to handle the use of social media and digital distractions.



### CLUES ACROSS

1. Remark
5. Upper body part
8. Expression of dismissiveness
12. Alternate name
14. Popular beverage
15. Swiss river
16. Step-shaped recess
18. Rocker Stewart
19. Bright shade of color
20. Popular “street”
21. Wrath
22. Heat units
23. Nocturnal omnivorous mammals
26. Fall back into record
30. Remove from the record
31. Sound a splash made
32. Popular Dodge pickup model
33. Jamaican river
34. Notable event in Texas history
39. Cool!
42. Subset of Judaism
44. Newly entered cadet
46. Duct in urinary system
47. Exterminator
49. Snatch quickly
50. Have already done
51. Less healthy
56. Therefore
57. What couples say on the altar
58. Mysteriously sullen
59. Look angry or sullen
60. Bird’s beak
61. Taco ingredient
62. Square measures

### CLUES DOWN

1. Pubs
2. Wings
3. Popular BBQ dish
4. Small sponge cake
5. Open-roofed entrance halls
6. Organize anew
7. Type of wine
8. Forums
9. North Atlantic islands (alt. sp.)
10. Pond dwellers
11. Large integers
13. Signaled
17. Brief
24. Type of student
25. Tibetan monasteries
26. Revolutions per minute
27. NY Giants great Manning
28. Local area network
29. Residue from burning
35. Illuminated
36. Vasopressin
37. Notable space station
38. Wood sorrel
40. Adhering to laws
41. Chose
42. Hovel
43. Stood up
44. European city
45. Works ceaselessly
47. Mistake
48. Sun-dried brick
49. Sicilian city
52. A steep rugged rock or cliff
53. Murder
54. Other
55. “Deadpool” actor Reynolds

# - public safety -

## East Brookfield Police Log

During the week of Oct. 5-12, the East Brookfield Police Department responded to 229 building/property checks, 81 directed area patrols, 25 radar assignments, 14 traffic controls, nine emergency 911 calls, eight citizen assists, four assist other agencies, one motor vehicle investigation, two threats, one scam, three motor vehicle accidents, one animal call and 42 motor vehicle stops in the town of East Brookfield.

### Sunday, Oct. 5

8:54 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued  
 10:36 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued  
 11:42 a.m. 911 Misdeal, Red Gable Road, Services Rendered  
 12:43 p.m. Motor Vehicle Crash, West Main Street, Report Taken  
 5:21 p.m. Directed/Area Patrol, Podunk Road, Citation Issued  
 5:25 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Podunk Road, Citation Issued  
 7:06 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Podunk Road, Patient Refusal

### Monday, Oct. 6

6:04 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued  
 9:19 a.m. Assist Citizen, South Pond Road, Dis-

patch Handled  
 10:50 a.m. Motor Vehicle Investigation, East Main Street, Services Rendered  
 12:08 p.m. 911 Hang-up/Abandoned, East Main Street, Officer Handled  
 3:16 p.m. 911 Threat, Harrington Lane, Report Taken  
 5:31 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Knox Trail Road, Citation Issued  
 5:35 p.m. 911 Threat, Harrington Lane, Officer Handled

### Tuesday, Oct. 7

11:55 a.m. 911 Alarm, East Main Street, Services Rendered  
 12:59 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Podunk Road, Dispatch Handled  
 4:39 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued  
 4:55 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Podunk Road, Citation Issued  
 5:28 p.m. Radar, Podunk Road, Citation Issued  
 5:28 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Podunk Road, Citation Issued  
 7:46 p.m. Radar, East Main Street, Citation Issued  
 7:49 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued  
 11:43 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Report Taken

### Wednesday, Oct. 8

4:13 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Connie Mack Drive, Dispatch Handled  
 8:19 a.m. Motor Vehicle Crash, East Main Street, Services Rendered  
 10:09 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Connie Mack Drive, Services Rendered  
 4:16 p.m. Assist Citizen, Connie Mack Drive, Services Rendered  
 5:42 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued  
 11:04 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued  
 11:14 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued

### Thursday, Oct. 9

6:27 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, West Main Street, Citation Issued  
 8:58 a.m. 911 Disabled Motor Vehicle, East Main Street, Services Rendered  
 10:46 a.m. Assist Other Agency, Connie Mack Drive, Services Rendered  
 5:51 p.m. Assist Citizen, Connie Mack Drive, Services Rendered

### Friday, Oct. 10

4:47 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Podunk Road, Citation Issued  
 5:33 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Podunk Road, Citation Issued  
 5:30 p.m. Assist Citizen, Connie Mack Drive, Officer Handled

8:23 p.m. Motor Vehicle Crash, Route 9, Services Rendered  
 9:19 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Route 49, Citation Issued

### Saturday, Oct. 11

8:27 a.m. Assist Citizen, Maple Street, Officer Handled  
 8:59 a.m. Scam, Connie Mack Drive, Services Rendered  
 12:08 p.m. Assist Citizen, Connie Mack Drive, Merge  
 1:11 p.m. Assist Citizen, West Main Street, Services Rendered  
 4:08 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, North Brookfield Road, Citation Issued  
 6:04 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Cottage Street, Citation Issued  
 7:12 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued  
 10:43 p.m. Radar, North Brookfield Road, Citation Issued  
 10:51 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, North Brookfield Road, Citation Issued

### Sunday, Oct. 12

8:41 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Route 49, Citation Issued  
 4:10 p.m. Assist Citizen, East Main Street, Officer Handled  
 4:51 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Adams Road, Citation Issued

## New Braintree Police Log

During the week of Oct. 13-20, the Hardwick/New Braintree Police Department responded to 19 building/property checks, 26 directed/area patrols, nine radar assignments, two emergency 911 calls, two safety hazards, three citizen assists, one threat, 10 animal calls and seven motor vehicle stops in the town of New Braintree.

### Tuesday, Oct. 14

9:15 a.m. Safety Hazard, Dennis Whitney Road, Dispatch Handled  
 12:29 p.m. Assist Citizen, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

### Wednesday, Oct. 15

9:40 a.m. Assist Citizen, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled  
 5:01 p.m. Safety Haz-

ard, Barre Road, Officer Handled

### Thursday, Oct. 16

7:59 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Hardwick Road, Citation Issued

### Friday, Oct. 17

11:27 a.m. 911 Animal Call, Gilbertville Road, Referred to Other Agency

### Saturday, Oct. 18

4 a.m. Threat, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled  
 2:35 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Hardwick Road, Written Warning  
 4:51 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Gilbertville Road, Citation Issued

### Sunday, Oct. 19

2:29 p.m. Assist Citizen, Memorial Drive, Officer Handled

## BBB warns of new phone call scams

The Better Business Bureau is warning people about a new phishing phone scam where callers claim you have an unclaimed "relief check" waiting.

In order to claim your check, you have to visit a website to collect it. The message sounds official, but it is a trick to steal your personal and financial information.

BBB Scam Tracker has received over 800 reports in less than two months about this scheme.

On BBB Scam Tracker, one person shared the message they received, "Hey, it's Dan from www.myreliefcheck.com. Our records show you may have \$5,286 waiting in a relief check that's already been issued in your name, but has not yet been collected. This could be from past relief programs or federal assistance payments. visit www.myreliefcheck.com. Search your name and collect it before it's returned."

How the scam works  
 You receive a call, voice-mail, or text, saying you qualify for an unclaimed relief payment. You're directed to a website that warns you to act quickly before the money is returned.

But the site doesn't lead to real government assistance. Instead, it redirects you to a page called, "My Cash Search."

On that page, you're asked to enter personal details such as your ZIP code, phone number, email, and home address. After that, you're pushed to redeem offers that lead to outside sites.

This setup allows scammers to collect your information, flood you with spam, and trick you into signing up for unwanted services or charges. Some

sites may also install harmful software on your device.

By handing over this data, victims risk identity theft, drained bank accounts, and nonstop contact from scammers. Many reports also mention follow-up calls, texts, or emails trying to get even more money or information.

### Tips to avoid this phishing scam

Hang up and don't engage. Government agencies will not call and tell you to visit a random website to claim money.

Verify with official sources and avoid unfamiliar websites. If you receive a call about unclaimed money, contact the government agency directly using contact information from its official website.

### Do not click on links or visit sites given by the caller.

Never share personal or financial information with strangers. Do not give out Social Security numbers, banking information, ID numbers, or addresses.

Check the web address closely. Scammers often create sites that look real but are slightly different from the official one. Learn how to spot a fake website.

Watch for urgent language. Phrases like "act now" or "before it's returned" are red flags.

Call your bank if you shared payment details. They can help you freeze accounts and look for suspicious activity.

Report scams. File a report with BBB Scam Tracker, the FTC, and local law enforcement.

Keep a record. Save any texts, emails, or call details to share with investigators and your bank.

Find more consumer tips at BBB.org.

## USDA urges checking trees for Asian longhorned beetle

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is asking the public to look for and report signs of the Asian longhorned beetle.

APHIS declares August is "Tree Check Month" and asks everyone to look for signs of this destructive, invasive beetle by checking trees on their property and in their community for damage. Left unchecked, ALB can cause infested trees to die.

"August is an ideal time of year to look for the beetle and the damage it causes," said Josie Ryan, APHIS' National Operations Manager for the ALB Eradication Program. "Adult beetles are emerging now. You can see them on trees and other nearby items. Finding and reporting infested trees early means we can save more trees."

The ALB is a wood-boring beetle that attacks 12

types of hardwood trees. The insect prefers maple trees, but it also likes to attack birches, buckeyes, elms and willows. Sometimes it attacks ash, golden rain tree, katsura, London plane tree, mimosa, mountain ash and poplar. Infested trees become safety hazards. Branches can drop and trees can fall over, especially during storms.

In its larval stage, the insect feeds deep inside tree trunks and branches. It creates tunnels as it feeds. Then as an adult, the beetle chews its way out, creating 3/4-inch round exit holes. Once the beetles exit a tree, they feed on its leaves and bark before mating, laying eggs and starting another generation of tree-killing beetles.

The adult beetle has markings that are easy to recognize: A shiny, black body with white spots. Its body is about one inch to one 1/2 inches long. Black and white antennae that are longer than its body. Six legs

and feet that can appear bluish.

Signs that a tree might be infested include: Round exit holes in tree trunks and branches about the size of a dime or smaller. Egg sites or chewed spots, on the bark about the size of a quarter. Sap may weep out from these. Sawdust-like material called frass found on the tree, ground or tree branches.

Branches or limbs dying or falling from an otherwise healthy-looking tree.

Look for and report any sightings of the beetle, or the tree damage it causes. And don't move materials that the beetle may be in, such as firewood. Doing this can keep infestations from spreading to new locations.

Report signs of ALB: If people think they found a beetle or tree damage, report it by calling the ALB hotline at 1-866-702-9938. Or submit an online report through the Asian longhorned beetle website. Try to photograph

the beetle or tree damage. If they can, capture the beetle in a durable container and freeze it. This helps preserve the insect for identification.

For those who live in an ALB quarantine area, keep ALB from spreading by following state and federal laws. These laws restrict the movement of woody material and untreated firewood, as they could contain ALB.

For more information about ALB and program activities, people may call 1-866-702-993 or visit www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-pests-diseases/alb.

ALB arrived in the United States in the 1990's in untreated wood shipping crates. Despite eliminating this pest from Illinois and New Jersey, the 30 plus year battle continues in Massachusetts, New York, Ohio and South Carolina. ALB is just one example of the costly and destructive biological threats our country faces.

In July, Secretary Rollins announced USDA's National Farm Security Action Plan, which elevates agriculture as a key element of our nation's national security and calls for aggressive action to safeguard plant and animal health. This includes protecting our country's vast and pristine forests from unintentional and deliberate foreign biological threats.

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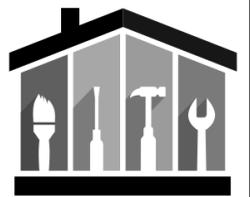


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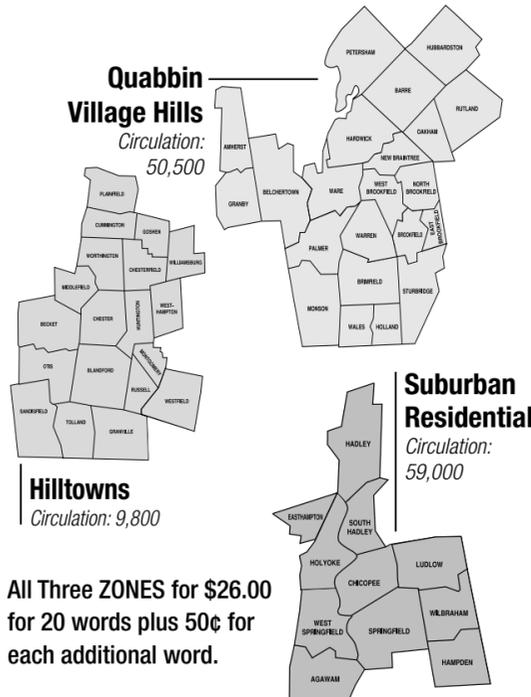
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