

# QUABOAG CURRENT

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Friday, November 14, 2025

## At Joy of Beans, the good time rolled

Coffee and Art Jubilee featured local artists

By Richard Murphy  
Correspondent

WEST BROOKFIELD – Scheduled to begin at 3p.m. exhibitors were all setup before time for The West Brookfield Coffee and Art Jubilee.

On Saturday Nov. 8 in front of and inside Joy Hinton's Joy of Beans Coffee at 12 East Main St., a bit of New Orleans would come to West Brookfield.

Even before one got close you could hear Alex, a police officer on the job. No, he wasn't arresting folks. Rather, he was wailing away on his saxophone.

Hinton, impresario of Joy of Beans Coffee, with her husband had met Alex as he was playing in Northampton. Later they would search him out for a family event. Obviously, they kept in touch, and it was a good thing as the man did a lot for



Mary Remington holds up a cabin and cups she made out of clay.

the mood.

Hinton must live a good life. Last summer, she and Rebecca Fay, of West Brookfield Art & Frame next door, held a solstice event on a day of perfect weather. Nov. 8 would also have great climate. Mid-autumn, so a

sweater or jacket might be in order, but still lovely. Hinton herself, is hardy and sailed through the day in a Joy of Beans tee.

Out front were many exhibitors, some that have been regulars at West Brookfield events and others new.

The first table, near the shop itself, belonged to Susan Linnéa Kallander whom we have met at other local markets. She does pet portraits and makes earrings out of gemstones and clay.

Next to her was Ware native and West Brookfield Winter Market regular Bernie Wilson.

Wilson is a world-class recycler, making pens out of old pallets because he is "too cheap to buy wood." Many of his pens at this market were made from the American Chestnut taken from the reconstruction of the Ware-Hardwick covered bridge. The near extinction of the American Chestnut is a story in itself.

On his table, as well as pens, were a plethora of kitchen utensils, also with parts made from recycled wood.

Wilson, with his wife Debby, operates as B&D Enterprises.

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Town Administrator Robin Grimm is shown with Robert Briere during a Veterans Day remembrance held at the Old Burial Ground on Nov. 6.

## Veterans remembered at Old Burial Ground

By Richard Murphy  
Correspondent

STURBRIDGE – The calendar has Veterans Day as Nov. 11, but in Sturbridge, at the Old Burial Ground, it would be observed on the sixth day of the 11th month and with it we would say an early hap-

py birthday to the 250th year of our country's birth.

The program at the Old Burial Ground was the project of Robert Briere. Briere is an Air Force veteran.

Several years ago, he

See VETERANS PAGE 9

## Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce held Annual Dinner

By Richard Murphy  
Correspondent

WEST BROOKFIELD – It gets dark early in November, and the evenings are chilly, but at the West Brookfield landmark, The Salem Cross Inn, it is warm inside, especially when there is a convivial gathering enjoying each other's company.

Thursday, Nov. 6 was the day of the Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce's Annual Meeting for 2025. Members and guests began coming around 5 p.m. and there was much catching up and getting acquainted as the people filtered in.

We were greeted warmly by the CEO James Przypek as well as Renee Niedziela of J.Stolar Insurance Agen-

cy, who also serves as president of the Chamber.

A couple of mischievous lads, Michael Rouette, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, and Dan Moriarty, President and Chief Executive Officer of Monson Savings engaged us in conversation.

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## 'Shrek' steps out of the swamp and onto the stage



Students Auguste Bellerose and Eliza Brown star as Shrek and Fiona in "Shrek the Musical" at Quabbin Regional Middle/High School. The musical was performed this past weekend.

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
pouimette@turley.com

BARRE – Quabbin Performing Arts is getting ready to peel back the layers of a reclusive ogre's life and reveal a beautiful love story more magical than any that has come before it.

Opening last weekend, "Shrek the Musical" took to the stage at Quabbin Regional Middle/High School, 800 South St., with a cast full of fairy tale characters, led by a reluctant hero, his quirky sidekick and a prin-

See SHREK PAGE 10

## Tantasqua hosted annual Christmas Craft Fair

By Ryan Drago  
Staff Writer  
rdrago@turley.com

STURBRIDGE – It's never wrong to start holiday shopping early as the annual Christmas Craft Fair took place this past weekend.

Shoppers had the chance to explore over 140 vendors, enjoy delicious food, and see new features in this year's craft fair at Tantasqua Regional High School. For over a decade, the school has offered this Christmas Craft Fair, and many community members



Santa Claus made his way to Tantasqua Regional High School during the annual Christmas Craft Fair.

See CRAFT FAIR PAGE 8

## Select Board promoted Bonneau to fire lieutenant

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
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STURBRIDGE – Firefighter/Paramedic Matthew Bonneau was promoted to the rank of lieutenant by the Select Board at the Nov. 3 meeting.

Bonneau has been with the Fire Department since 2018 and has also served as Assistant Training Coordi-

nator and Fire Investigator.

Fire Chief John A. Grasso Jr. said Bonneau also assists the department with maintaining the radios and vehicle emergency equipment, along with training and orienting new employees.

"He places a big emphasis on education," Grasso said of Bonneau.

Grasso said Bonneau is a "uniquely qualified" candidate for the position

of lieutenant and that he "performed outstanding" throughout the written exam and assessment center.

### Abatement request

Town Administrator Robin Grimm said a resident from Audubon Way presented a request for a water/sewer abatement due to unusually high water usage during the months of July and Septem-

See STURBRIDGE PAGE 8



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## - community -

### Local restaurants give back with free meals

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
pouimette@turley.com

As many people who need help to purchase food through the government's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program face uncertainty with receiving funding this month, many local restaurants are offering help and a warm meal.

#### North Brookfield

JARS Café & Bakery, 23 Summer St., is offering a free grilled cheese sandwich, cup of soup (either chicken noodle or tomato), cookie and a choice of either water, tea or coffee to anyone with a SNAP/Electronic Benefits Transfer card.

Owner Sujoy Spencer said the staff at the café want to help those in need in the community, even though the café does not receive reimbursement for the meals from the government.

"I want to be here for my community," Spencer said.

To receive a free meal,

people must show their SNAP/EBT card and ID. One meal will be provided per cardholder.

This offer will be available each day the café is open, while supplies last. Meals are available for dine-in, or for take-out.

Paige, who is the winter manager and baker at JARS Café & Bakery, said she hopes that more people will come into the café and enjoy the free meal.

A donation jar is located inside the café for people to give money in order to assist with the costs of providing the free meal.

"We will continue to offer this meal until SNAP/EBT benefits improve," Paige said.

#### Brookfield

The Clam Box, 245 West Main St., Route 9, is offering the Community Cares Project, which will provide free pasta dinners to anyone needing help with food security. These dinners will be available to go and will feed the appropriate number of

people in your family.

According to The Clam Box's Facebook page, there will be no questions asked of people requesting meals.

People can help support this program by donating money, prepaying for a family's meal, or dropping off nonperishable food items in the restaurant's Take It or Leave It box.

"Your family should not go hungry," owners Tim and Cindy Dugas said in a social media post.

In its first week, the Community Cares Project fed over 150 people with more than 250 meals donated by members of the community.

#### Sturbridge

B.T.'s Smokehouse, 392 Main St., is offering free "one pot" meals to anyone in need on Tuesdays until SNAP funding is restored.

Anyone in need of a meal is encouraged to come to the back door of the restaurant (through the fence) anytime after 3 p.m. on Tuesdays and staff will hand them a pan of

food, no questions asked.

"We are going to do what we can to help those in need," said Brian Treitman, the restaurant's owner and chef when he announced the one pot meals on social media.

In its first week, the restaurant "sold out" its one pot meals with almost 50 meals served to people in the community.

Gido's Brick Oven Pizza & Ice Cream, 367 Main St., will offer free trays of food to families in need on Thursdays after 3 p.m.

Please call the restaurant at 508-213-3229 and ask for Ted. This is so restaurant staff can have the food prepared and ready for a scheduled pick-up time at the back door.

"Serving our community is at the forefront of our hearts, and we want to serve beyond our doors to lessen the worry so many people may be experiencing," owners Jenna and Ted Gidopoulos said in a Facebook post.

### A season of giving

Ways to support the region this holiday season

By Ryan Drago  
Staff Writer  
rdrago@turley.com

During the holidays there are various ways to help those in need of extra assistance.

Throughout central and western Massachusetts there are families in need of food and clothing assistance. There are various communities with volunteer run organizations who are working hard to collect food and clothing for families and individuals in need.

These organizations and local businesses are getting involved by leaving a donation box or drop-off space that folks can drop off food and clothing that will be collected and distributed.

These organizations operate effectively thanks to volunteers and donors who wish to make a difference in the lives of those who need of assistance during the holiday season. Each town listed has a resource of where donors can go to provide food and clothing.

#### Barre

The Barre Food Pantry is a registered 501c3 charity that collects food from local donors, area markets and the Worcester County Food Bank. The volunteers serve more than 100 area families with a twice-monthly distribution at the Barre Congregational Church and with emergency deliveries during the month.

Donations of nonperishable food are accepted at the Barre Family Health Center, the Barre Senior Center on South Barre Road, the Woods Memorial Library, at St. Joseph's Church and at The South Barre Rod & Gun Club.

For more information, visit [www.barrefoodbank.org](http://www.barrefoodbank.org). Ways to donate can be found on the donate page on the website, click "How to Donate".

#### Warren, West Warren & West Brookfield

The Sharing Cupboard Food Pantry opened its doors to serve the community of West Brookfield in the spring of 2002. This community food pantry now serves West Brookfield, Warren and West Warren.

Over the years, the need has grown to the point where the sharing cupboard has served around 75-90 families every year.

This cupboard accomplished its mission thanks to direct donations and food drives. This year, Boy Scout Troop 142 ran a food drive in the center of Warren to help benefit residents of both towns.

Donations can be brought to the First Congregational Church of West Brookfield, United Church of Christ, at 36 North Main St. in West Brookfield. For more information, call 508-867-7078.

#### Ware

There are several locations in Ware that are involved in collecting and distributing food for the community. The Ware Senior Center has the Brown Bag Food for Elders Program provides a free bag of groceries to eligible seniors once a month at

local senior centers and community organizations. There is the Jubilee Food Cupboard, located at the Trinity Episcopal Church that is open every Thursday from 9 a.m.-noon. There is a drop-off box at the Ware Big Y Supermarket. There is also the All Saints and St. Mary's Church Food Pantry. Information on how to donate can be found at [www.warecatholic.org/foodpantry](http://www.warecatholic.org/foodpantry).

The Knights of Columbus is also hosting its annual Coats for Kids drive. Donations of new (or gently worn and clean) coats, hats, gloves and mittens will be accepted.

Drop-off locations are at all three Ware Public Schools, Nat Falk, the Sharpest Edge Barber Shop, and the Country Bank branch on West Street.

Monetary donations can be made to Ware Knights of Columbus Council 183, P.O. Box 88, Ware, MA 01082. Please put "Coats for Kids" in the check memo.

On Saturday, Nov. 15, Bruce Marshall of 97.7 FM will be hosting a live broadcast for Coats for Kids from Nat Falk from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Make a donation during this time and you will receive a 10% discount off anything in the store.

This radiothon is sponsored by Country Bank.

Families in need of coats for their children can contact the School Superintendent's office at Ware Public Schools. Any extra coats received during Coats for Kids will be distributed to the town's food pantries.

#### The Brookfields

The Clam Box in East Brookfield hosted a coat drive this past weekend that went directly to the Friendly House of Worcester. Over 400 coats were donated by members of the community to help those during the coldest time of the year.

The Clam Box has a "Take It or Leave It" box to collect nonperishable food items for residents in need and is also offering free pasta dinners through its Community Cares Project.

The Brookfield Congregational Church collects non-perishable food items to support the Brookfield Ecumenical Food Pantry. The Brookfield Ecumenical Food Pantry is open on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 9:30-11 a.m. For more information, please call Louise Woodard at 508-867-3891.

The East Brookfield Police and Fire departments will hold their semi-annual food drive on Saturday, Nov. 15 from 9 a.m.-noon at the Fire Station. This food drive will benefit the food pantry at the East Brookfield Baptist Church.

#### Sturbridge

People can donate winter coats for children and adults at Gido's Brick Oven Pizza & Ice Cream, 367 Main St., now through Dec. 19. All sizes of coats welcomed.

Coats received will be professionally cleaned by Anton's Cleaners and distributed to families in need through a network of over 90 local social service agencies, schools and nonprofit organizations.

### Veterans Legacy Trail features interactive map of war memorials

The Healey-Driscoll Administration launched the Massachusetts Veterans Legacy Trail, a first-of-its-kind project cataloging more than 1,200 war memorials across Massachusetts.

Developed as a signature initiative of the Massachusetts 250th Anniversary commemoration, the Trail honors the service and sacrifice of veterans and military service from the Revolutionary War to the present day.

The new initiative features both an interactive website and a companion brochure, designed to help residents and visitors explore Massachusetts' military history in engaging and accessible ways.

The Veterans Legacy Trail includes the Brookfield War Veterans Memorial, the Sturbridge Revolutionary War Patriots Memorial Mark and the New Braintree Veterans Monument.

Located near the town center, the Brookfield War Veterans Memorial honors local residents who served from the Civil War to today. The site features several monuments, including tributes to those who fought in the Civil War, World War I, the Spanish-American War, and a 9/11 remembrance marker.

The Sturbridge Revolutionary War Patriots Memorial Marker commemorates the men and women of Sturbridge who fought for American independence, honoring their valiant service in the struggle for liberty from Great Britain. Erected by the Massachusetts State Society Daughters of the American Revolution, the marker was installed to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the United States.

New Braintree Veterans Monument is a granite memorial that honors the town's residents who served in the U.S. military. It is located at the intersection of Memorial Drive, Hardwick Road, and Old Common Road, beside the Town Hall in New Braintree.

"Massachusetts has always been at the heart of America's story," said Governor Maura Healey. "With the Veterans Legacy Trail, we're connecting Massachusetts residents and visitors alike with the sacrifices of generations who served, and ensuring their legacy is part of how we commemorate our nation's 250th anniversary."

"The Veterans Legacy Trail makes history tangible," said Lieutenant Governor

Kim Driscoll. "Whether it's a neighborhood monument like Bunker Hill in Charlestown or a landmark like Battleship Cove, these sites tell stories that belong to all of us — and they help us teach future generations the meaning of service and sacrifice."

"Our veterans' history is Massachusetts history," said Veterans Services Secretary Jon Santiago. "This project is about honoring those who came before us, while making it easier for families, schools, and communities to explore and engage with their legacy. We're proud to partner with MA250 and the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism to bring this vision to life."

"The Massachusetts Veterans Legacy Trail exemplifies the collaborative spirit of MA250," said Kate Fox, Executive Director at the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism. "It honors the courage of those who fought for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, while connecting communities through shared stories. Trails like this invite visitors and residents to explore our state in new ways, strengthening our role as leaders and revolutionaries and deepening tourism, education, and civic pride."

The project was formally launched at Battleship Cove in Fall River with Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll, Secretary of Veterans Services Jon Santiago, and partners from the Massachusetts legislature, Office of Travel and Tourism and the MA250 Commission.

#### About the project

The Veterans Legacy Trail website offers a searchable map of more than 1,200 memorials in towns and cities statewide. Each entry includes location information, photographs, and historical context.

Users can search by region, war era, or community to uncover local stories of service and sacrifice.

As a companion to the digital platform, the Veterans Legacy Trail brochure compliments the digital platform by featuring the top 10 memorials in each of the Commonwealth's six regions. Modeled after the Massachusetts Ice Cream Trail, the brochure provides an easy-to-use, family-friendly encouraging residents and visitors to explore landmarks that define Massachusetts' military history.

The Veterans Legacy Trail website is now live at [mass.gov/vetstrail](http://mass.gov/vetstrail) and you can view a digital copy of the brochure here.

For more information on the Massachusetts 250th Anniversary, visit [www.massachusetts250.org](http://www.massachusetts250.org).

### Holiday Fair to be held Nov. 22

WEST BROOKFIELD — The George Whitefield United Methodist Church, 33 West Main St., will host its annual Holiday Fair on Saturday, Nov. 22 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m., featuring baked goods, hand knits and crafts, jams, fudge, holiday décor and Thrift Store.

Coffee and Donuts will be available in the morning and a lunch of homemade soups and hotdogs will be served from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

For more information you may call Heidi at 978-989-5736.

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## - community -

### Amateur radio club to hold meeting Nov. 25

*'No Towers, No Problem: Unlocking Big Scores with Backyard Ingenuity'*

WEST BROOKFIELD – The Quaboag Valley Amateur Radio Club welcomes all amateur radio operators and those interested in the hobby to its monthly meeting, where members explore a wide range of topics related to ham radio, public service, and emergency communications.

This month's meeting will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 25 at 6:30 p.m. The meeting takes place at the West Brookfield Senior Center, 73 Central St.

Think you need stacks of antennas and multiple towers to crack the contest leaderboards? Think again. Join John, N1PGA as he discusses his ever-evolving antenna farm—consistent-

ly landing Top-5 contest scores without a single tower in sight.

Whether you're working with a postage-stamp backyard, planning a stealthy vacation rig, or gearing up for Field Day, POTA, or SOTA, this session will challenge your assumptions about the need for a tower and spark fresh ideas. You'll leave inspired, informed, and ready to rethink what's possible with some home-brew antennas, rope, creativity, and a little RF magic.

QVARC meetings are open to all—whether you're a licensed ham, studying for your license, or simply curious about the world of amateur radio. The club also offers regular license testing for those looking to obtain their amateur radio license.

For more information about the club, upcoming events, or licensing opportunities, visit QVARC.com.

### Senior Center lists events

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

Free art classes will be held on Thursdays with wreath ornaments on Nov. 20 at 11 a.m. A free drawing class will teach how to create landscapes on Nov. 13.

Music bingo will be held

on Monday, Nov. 17 at 10 a.m.

A presentation by Home Health Agency will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 12 at 11:30 a.m. and a fraud presentation by North Brookfield Savings Bank will be Tuesday, Nov. 18 at 11 a.m.

A Thanksgiving luncheon will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 19 at noon. There is limited seating and the luncheon is first come, first served.

### Local artist featured at West Brookfield library

By Ryan Drago  
Staff Writer  
rdrago@turley.com

WEST BROOKFIELD – The Merriam-Gilbert Public Library recently welcomed the artwork of Terrence J. Kiernan.

Based out of West Warren, Kiernan has been involved in art his whole life. In addition to taking courses in art school, Kiernan always made time to draw and paint.

One of his preferred styles is using loose colors, where different colors bleed into each other.

Over a dozen paintings by Kiernan are featured in this exhibit and showcases his impressionistic style that reflects a nature inspired theme. One of his inspirations Kiernan mentioned is the work of French painter, Claude Monet, who was a leader of the Impressionist movement.

Kiernan had an art piece called "Bare Poles", an acrylic painting with a boat in the middle. The painting with the boat also had a great background that has a similar style to the impression artwork that Monet worked on a lot during his painting career.

Another big inspiration of Kiernan's art is Norman Rockwell, who had a more realistic style to his artwork. Kiernan described Rockwell's art as a photograph and Kiernan said he likes art that looks like a photograph.

Kiernan is a member of the Quabbin Art Association, an association that promotes community inter-



TURLEY PHOTOS BY RYAN DRAGO  
Terrence J. Kiernan of West Warren is shown alongside his acrylic painting "Homestead" at the Merriam-Gilbert Public Library.

est and appreciation in the visual arts by providing education, support, and opportunity for local artists. Kiernan has had his art featured during Quabbin Art Association's exhibits throughout Massachusetts.

Recently, his art was featured at the Palmer Library. His art is also featured at Lost Towns Brewing in Gilbertville alongside art from other local artists.

Next year, Kiernan will be going to the West Springfield Library to have his artwork featured. From December 2025 to February 2026, his artwork will be at the Black Birch Winery & Vineyard in Hatfield.

In the last few years Kiernan has committed a lot of time to his art and has received a lot of positive feedback. His chosen art medium is acrylic paint and many art pieces around the art exhibit at the Merriam-Gilbert Library are acrylic.

One art piece his very proud of is called "Homestead", an acrylic painting that Kiernan describes as "a

painting outdoors and has had some inspiration from nature. One of his pieces named "Tiger Lilies" were inspired by his neighbor's place across the street.

When it comes to artists and their own artwork, Kiernan believes in being honest with yourself. Art is something where you are always moving and improving.

"Art is like a pursued talent," Kiernan said. "You get better when you exercise that talent."

Kiernan will have his art exhibit displayed at the Merriam-Gilbert Public Library, 3 West Main St., now through December.

painting I can make a story out of." The painting shows a grassy field, sky, and a house on the righthand corner.

Kiernan worked on the texture of the grass and leaves viewers with them wondering what is beyond the hill at the top of the homestead. The painting also leaves the viewers wondering what the atmosphere of the house is.

"I get lost in this one," Kiernan said about his "Homestead painting". "Anyone can make their own story."

Kiernan does a lot of his



Terrence Kiernan's art is inspired by nature and has an impressionistic style.



Terrence Kiernan's art medium is acrylic paint and flowers and gardens were a popular theme in this art exhibit.

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- opinion -

# A healthy orchard begins in the planning phase

It was a lot of fun to take part in a “meeting of the minds” this past week, where we were discussing key maintenance tasks in the young orchard at Old Sturbridge Village.

I left the meeting inspired for my own young orchard, and with renewed interest in heirloom apples altogether.

I must make a trip to Cold Spring Orchard to get some Caville Blanc for the Thanksgiving pies before they are all gone! They are surely the best pie apples, to me at least!

Perhaps indulging in your favorite apple varieties have inspired you to consider a home orchard as part of your landscape. If so, this column, straight from the archives, is for you. Enjoy the re-visit, as you ask yourself some important questions. We all know that the key to successful home apple orchards appears to be forethought. Purchasing fruit trees should not be an “impulse buy.”

What variety do you want to grow? While I like heirlooms, you may prefer some of the newer, disease resistant types.

Or maybe you want apples that span the seasons, say Paula Red to start, Honey Crisp for mid-stream and Gold Rush to finish it off. Perhaps you'd like to make cider or bake lots of pies.

There are apples that are specifically suited to how you'd like to use them. My favorite place to buy trees by mail order is through Fedco in Maine. Call 207-426-0090 or log on to fedco-seeds.com/trees to request their “Trees” catalog.

You will glean lots of useful information within the pages of this catalog. I am thrilled to know that they are grafted on site and accustomed to our climate!

How tall to you want your trees to get? Apple trees are available in dwarf, semi-dwarf and standard size.

Their ultimate size is determined mostly by the rootstock onto which the named variety is grafted.

Each has their pros and cons. Dwarf trees can generally be maintained without a ladder. They come into bearing sooner but because of their size produce fewer

apples than larger trees. Staking and irrigation are often necessary, because of limited root systems. They can be

will fit in the space designated for your home orchard.

The best spot is one that receives six-eight hours of full sun per day.

Deep, well-drained soil is ideal; never plant where you know the water table is high. In my opinion, a few trees positioned close to the house will be maintained better because they are in eye-shot as compared to those placed strategically out in the back-forty. They tend to nag you as you walk by: “Time to prune!” “Why are those leaves curled?” What is that orange spot?” You get the idea.

Is my soil any good? Fall is a great time to take a soil test.

First, slice a six-inch core of soil from your intended orchard with a stainless steel trowel. Remove surface debris and air dry.

Repeat several times and mix the cores together. Then, measure out a cup of soil to send to the lab. If the locations you plan on planting your apple trees vary considerably, test them separately.

Official directions and



planted relatively close together (six-eight feet) and are generally short-lived.

Semi-dwarf trees are mid-sized, bear well and are most productive for two or three decades. They are usually spaced 12-14 feet apart from one another.

Standard, or full-size trees are those beauties of our grandparent's era. Extremely hardy, many are still around and might even be bearing fruit! Plan on 18 feet or more between trees, with a mature height of 15-20 feet tall!

Where will you plant them? With the size of the trees determined, you can now figure out how many

an order form are found on <http://soiltest.umass.edu>. The standard soil test is \$20. Mention on the test that you are growing apples and pH and fertilizer recommendations will be specific to that crop.

You can do something this fall to make planting easier next spring. Mark out where your trees are to go and dump a generous amount of compost on top of the grass in a circle three feet in diameter. This will start to break down the sod and get the microbes in the soil working.

With the planning part behind you, it will be a lot of fun to await the arrival of your trees come springtime.

*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](mailto:pouimette@turley.com) with “Gardening Question” in the subject line.*

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By Ellenor Downer



**Horned lark**

Recently, the Massachusetts Audubon Society reported the sighting of a horned lark on the summit of Mount Wachusett in Princeton.

Only the male horned larks have “horns.” They are tiny and hard to see. Males are sandy to rusty brown above with a black chest band and a curving black mask. The face and throat are either yellow or white. The female lacks the horns and face mask. She is brown with darker streaks and has a white eyebrow and white below.

They are about the size of a robin and the only lark species in North America. The female lays three to four pale gray to greenish white, blotched and spotted with brown eggs in a slight depression in the ground. Incubation is by the female and young are fed by both parents. Young may leave the nest after nine

to 12 days. They are not able to fly for about another week.

Larks forage entirely by walking and running on the ground. Except when nesting, they usually forage in flocks. They eat seeds and insects. They also eat berries. They are present all year in most areas from southern Canada south. They are strictly migratory in the far north.

**Mass Audubon bird sightings**

On Oct. 25 Wachusett Mountain in Princeton, hawk watchers reported sighting from the summit two northern harriers, ten sharp-shinned hawks, nine Cooper's hawks, 18 red-shoulder hawks, four red-tailed hawks, two American kestrels and one merlin. In addition, people saw two bald eagles, 37 turkey vultures and one horned lark.

**Helping birds**

With more than 40 million acres of lawn in the U.S. alone, there's huge potential to support wildlife by replacing lawns with native plantings. People will have less grass to mow by adding native plants. They then will be able to watch the birds come into their yard. They also

provide shelter and nesting areas for birds. The nectar, seeds and berries help feed the birds.

**Brimfield birds**

A Brimfield resident emailed on Oct. 17 that he went to the Brimfield State Forest a few days ago and checked three ponds. He said, “Not much about, one pond had eight Canada Geese and another had a group of wood ducks. Maybe a couple dozen in a beaver pond, it was difficult to get a count with all the stumps and branches in the water.”

He said, “In the yard the Eastern Towhee and Northern Catbird were last seen the second week of October. Besides the usual suspect there have been white-throated

Sparrows (most were the tan-striped color form), common yellowthroat (female). An unusual sighting was a male northern flicker taking a drink at the bird bath. That is the first time that I have seen a woodpecker take a drink” He also saw two dark-eyed juncos, the first of the year in his yard. One took a bath.

**Sunflower seed heads**

The Brimfield resident reported the tufted titmouse and northern cardinal really like the sunflower seed heads that he has been hanging on one of my feeder stations. Because of the black bears, he has no bird feeders out yet.

**Warren ponds**

The Brimfield resident drove past the ponds in War-

ren. At the one on New Reed Street, there was an adult bald eagle, three mallards and two double-crested cormorants.

**Canada geese**

I saw a flock of about two dozen Canada geese land in a harvested cornfield in Barre this past Saturday. I do not know if they were local geese or some migrating south from the north.

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](mailto:mybackyard88@aol.com) or [edowner@turley.com](mailto:edowner@turley.com) or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.



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# When will my disability become my regular Social Security?

Dear Rusty:

I hope you can answer this question.

I'm currently receiving Social Security Disability benefits, and I will be turning 65 in February 2026. I'm confused as to how Social Security Disability transitions to regular Social Security, and when. I assume it's age 65, but maybe it's my retirement date?

Also, does the amount remain the same or will it change? I'm not working. I've been on SSDI for about 15 years. Thank you.

Signed: Disabled Senior

Dear Disabled Senior:  
If you are collecting So-



cial Security Disability Insurance benefits, those SSDI benefits will automatically convert to become your regular Social Security retirement benefit when you reach your SS Full Retirement Age, which, in your case, is age 67. For information, FRA today is somewhere between age 66 and 67, depending on your year of birth, and the full retirement age for everyone born in

1960 or later is age 67.

The change from SSDI to your regular Social Security benefit will be transparent to you because your monthly benefit amount will remain the same. SSDI benefits were originally awarded to you based upon your full retirement age entitlement when you applied for SSDI, even though you hadn't yet reached your FRA when you went on SSDI. Thus,

the monthly benefit amount will not change because it is based on your lifetime earnings record, from before you became disabled.

FYI, although age 65 was once Social Security's “retirement age,” full retirement age for Social Security today is based on the year you were born. So, your SSDI benefit will automatically switch to become your regular Social Security retirement benefit as soon as you reach age 67. Essentially, the only thing that will change is the Social Security Trust Fund from which your benefits will be paid.

The Association Mature Citizens Foundation and its

staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. This article is intended for information purposes and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit [amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at [ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org). Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

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# - community -

## 33rd Annual White Christmas returns on Dec. 7

WEST BROOKFIELD – Please join the town of West Brookfield, as it kicks off the 33rd Annual White Christmas celebration on Sunday, Dec. 7 from 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

There will be fun for folks of all ages going on throughout the day.

The West Brookfield White Christmas Committee encourages everyone to come out and enjoy the town's annual kick-off of

the holiday season by touring the historic town, strolling the downtown district, exploring local businesses and open houses, decorating gingerbread houses in the Great Hall, meeting Santa for a quick picture, as well as dropping off those letters headed directly to the North Pole.

There will be horse drawn carriage rides throughout the day as well as shopping

with dozens of vendors set up throughout town. A puppet show, an elf hunt and ice carvings are sure to keep everyone's spirits high.

There will be plenty for the entire family to come and enjoy. If you are lucky, you may just see Father Christmas strolling the streets and greeting our visitors in town. Stick around to close the day with our holiday concert located in the Great Hall of

the Town hall to hear some lovely voices, courtesy of the Saint Thomas Aquinas School Choir.

Members of the West Brookfield White Christmas Committee 2025 are excited to be able to share this fun-filled day with both residents and non-residents alike. This is a free event brought to you courtesy of local businesses and town supporters.

The committee encour-

ages everyone from all walks of life to come and enjoy the town, and kick off the holiday season with lots of festive events throughout town to interest everyone.

Maps of town open houses and vendors can be picked up in various local business, by accessing the Facebook page ("33rd Annual White Christmas in West Brookfield") or by emailing: whitchristmaswb@gmail.com.

Committee members look forward to seeing everyone explore West Brookfield and all the excitement the holiday season brings. They remind folks to be mindful as the health and safety of all guests is priority in West Brookfield.

Parking is available free throughout town and shuttle services are available outside Gavitt Wire.

### COFFEE AND ART FROM PAGE 1

Oh, if you ever feel you need to call a deer, Wilson makes deer calls.

With a table laden with various colorful crockery, it could only be Mary Remington of Ware. Remington's various shapes and sizes of cups were outdone by the clay cabins in which she lit incense that would come out of the little houses.

Rarely is she at a loss for words, and provided us a quote for the day, "Clay is a non-renewable resource, Creativity is a bottomless source."

Thus, it is not surprising that Remington is a songwriter, and had with her a disc with new songs. The album's name is "In Embudo". This is not a mystic incantation, but the town in Mexico where the recording was done.

One artist, working in paint and canvas, Tara Erin, had several on display, but two stood out, not just because they were larger than many of the others, but the subject matter. Her rendition of Our Lady of Guadalupe more than catches the eye and the painting next to it has brilliant colors that surround the brilliant actress and vocalist of another century, Jeanette MacDonald, often paired with singer Nelson Eddy and many a duet. "Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life."

Erin's work is mystical as



TURLEY PHOTO BY RICHARD MURPHY  
Artist Tara Erin is shown with a painting of Jeannette MacDonald.

she notes: "Beauty heals us, that the story roots, and that the muse is always waiting—just beneath the noise."

The west most table belonged to Tori Cummings who has had an odyssey of a health journey, from near death on an operating table, saved only by the doctor's refusal to do the procedure, to treating herself back to health.

Cummings, with her fiancé Julian, had a selection of products for skin care and face care as well as aromatherapy and herbal teas that helped her regain health.

A mother and daughter came selling Sunflower Herbal Soap, and Tender Heart Arts crochet earrings, and seemed to be having a good time.

Then there was the local boy, Lucas whose grandmother taught him how to draw. He came to the market



Susan Linnéa Kallander displayed her earrings and pet portraits.

and sold Christmas cards.

Colleen of Amethyst Design had seed bead earrings and she also propagates plants and holds plant par-



Lucas displayed his handmade Christmas cards.



A chess match was underway in the midst of the excitement at the Coffee and Art Jubilee.



Alex set the mood with his saxophone during the Coffee and Art Jubilee.



Alexandria Leigh displayed her artwork.

well as assorted pastries.

Arrayed on the tents that had been put up earlier were lights that as the day progressed into evening enhanced the intimate atmosphere of the

venue. All too soon, 7 p.m. would arrive and though no one was shooed away, the evening would have to end.

What can Hinton do to top this?



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 Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parents' Names: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parents' Town of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_  
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The Wilbraham-Hampden Times

**Deadline for photos and forms is Friday, December 12, 2025**

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 Include a self addressed/ stamped envelope if you would like the picture returned or email photo to: jamie@turley.com with subject line: BABY'S FIRST.  
 This offer is available to all babies born in 2025.  
 Pictures will be published the week of December 23-26, 2025.

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		63								
			64					65		

**CLUES ACROSS**

1. Expression of surprise

4. Keyboard key

7. One who works on lights

12. Notable children's story

15. Fall back into a bad pattern

16. Eye parts

18. Atomic #18

19. Of she

20. Farm state

21. One point south of southeast

24. British media entity

27. Asian garment

30. Drench

31. Expressions of pleasure

33. Turf

34. UK trade union (abbr.)

35. Bleated

37. Fifth note of a major scale

39. Paddle

41. Monetary unit of Italy

42. American classical pianist

44. Shuts down for the day

47. Seize

48. Soluble ribonucleic acid

49. Greeting

50. Some cars still need it

52. Atomic #22

53. Let go

56. Marched in public

61. U.S. residents, Mexicans and Canadians

63. Hostilities

64. Speak aloud

65. River in NE Scotland

**CLUES DOWN**

1. Razorbill genus

2. Longtime Baltimore tight end

3. Performs on stage

4. Supports a sentiment

5. Rugged mountain ranges

6. Broadway songwriter

7. Snake-like fish

8. Men's fashion accessory

9. Hospital worker

10. Something to scratch

11. No (Scottish)

12. Volcanic ash

13. Of this

14. American jazz drummer

17. Drop down

22. English dialect

23. Predatory seabirds

24. Imams' deputies

25. Fertility god

26. Fence material

28. Parks and DeLauro are two

29. Distinctive smell (Brit.)

32. Protein-rich liquids

36. Touch lightly

38. Season for Catholics

40. Boat race

43. Police actions

44. Chinese river

45. Waterfall (Scottish)

46. Walk ostentatiously

51. Type of carpet

54. Mauna \_\_\_\_, Hawaiian volcano

55. Sea eagles

56. An enclosure for confining livestock

57. Dry

58. An increase in price or value

59. The highest point of something

60. Government lawyers

62. Larry and Curly's pal

# SPORTS

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## Cougars open up state tournament with victory

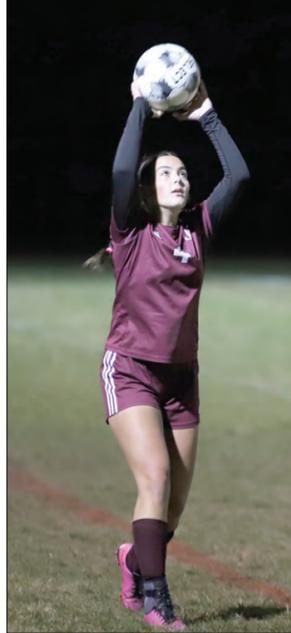


WARREN – Under the lights last Monday evening, Quaboag Regional High School girls soccer faced off with Blackstone-Millville and scored a 4-0 shutout at home in the preliminary round of the Division 4 State Tournament. The Cougars were scheduled to face Douglas in the Round of 32 following that matchup. Quaboag improved to 11-6-2 with the win.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Olive Moulton makes an interception on the ball.

Isabelle Manzano makes a throw-in.



Lillian Grover is closely pursued by an opponent.



Madelyn Bagg turns play around after making a play.



Julia Queiroga makes her way up the field.



Asher Sargeant socks a free kick away.

## Football falls in triple OT

BARRE – On a windy, rainy night at Quabbin Regional High School, the Panthers had their final regular season game against Groton-Dunstable. The matchup featured some unusual scoring as both teams dealt with less than ideal conditions. Groton-Dunstable would score a touchdown during the third overtime to escape 16-10. The visitors opened the scoring with a safety in the first quarter, countered by a rare high school field goal from Quabbin's Chase Talbot, who made a 36-yarder for a 3-2 Quabbin lead. Chase Talbot made it 10-2 with a touchdown run in the third quarter before a touchdown and two-point conversion tied the score for Groton-Dunstable, leading to overtime. Quabbin did not qualify for the state tournament and was scheduled for nonplayoff action against old rival Lunenburg.



Zakk Mielnicki goes for the tackle.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Wes Sanderson takes a run into traffic



The Quabbin offensive line gets ready for a play.

## Pioneers fall in matchup with Ware

WARE – Last Friday night, Ware defeated Pathfinder 16-12 in a nonplayoff matchup for both teams. Ware found itself in nonplayoff action following an upset loss against Palmer two weeks ago. Ware faces Putnam in Week 10 while Pathfinder will have a vocational tournament matchup with Smith Vocational of Northampton.



Trevor Alexander hugs the ball on a carry.



Anthony Arventos drops back to pass.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Jarret Skowrya starts a return for the Pioneers



Animas Kowalik makes a block.

# - community -

## CRAFT FAIR FROM PAGE 1

represent the vendors. Vicky Whitten is an instructor of Business Technology at Tantasqua and is the coordinator of the Craft Fair. Whitten alongside some helpful volunteers were greeting guests at the front entrance and were selling raffle tickets. The prizes for the raffle were provided by the vendors of this year's Christmas Craft Fair.

This fair will help benefit tech programs through the student organization, SkillsUSA. This national nonprofit organization helps thousands of students with registration fees and helps students who enroll in training programs in trade, technical and skilled service occupations.

Whitten recalled one of the earlier years of the Christmas Craft Fair housing around 40 vendors. This year, the craft fair has exceeded 140 vendors. The vendors consist of newcomers to the annual Christmas Craft Fair and many longtime vendors, who have been coming for nearly 15 years.

The efforts to put this Christmas Craft Fair together are made possible thanks to over 65 volunteers. Whitten said most of the volunteers are students of Tantasqua.

One first-time vendor at the Christmas Craft Fair comes from Charlton, Ju-



Sitting left to right are Cian Babcock, Owen Ashe, Spencer Wilkesman (Vice President), Fenton Michalak, Ethan Zhu (President), Abbie Wotton (Historian), and Elle Kearns (Treasurer) representing the National Honor Society at Tantasqua Regional High School during the Christmas Craft Fair. Members of NHS were hosting a bake sale.

lian Nowak. This crafter has been quilting since she started during her time in the Girl Scouts at the age of 10. Nowak has been sewing ever since and has various goods including pillowcases, baby blankets, and various holiday-themed blankets.

In the hallway was a booth representing the National Honor Society. Members of NHS were selling pies of all flavors during the Christmas Craft Fair. NHS members baked over 50 pies for their bake sale. Proceeds go towards NHS scholarships and the food drive.

To kick off the craft fair, guests could go have breakfast with Santa Claus at the Tantasqua High School's Cornerstone Café. Kids were able to share their holiday wishes and enjoy a nice

breakfast with jolly old St. Nick.

The visits from Santa didn't stop there. The jolly man greeted guests at a bookstand featuring copies of the book, "If Mice Pulled the Sleigh" by Bill Barnsley. This adorable holiday story was inspired by two things according to Barnsley, Santa Claus and children.

"I blame small children," Barnsley said joyfully.

This Christmas tale has the author explore the challenges and antics of mice, cats, dogs, ducks, snakes, or elephants attempting to pull Santa's sleigh on Christmas Eve. The illustrator of the book is Mariano Epelbaum.

Jolly old St. Nick was close by greeting children and families and taking pictures with the kids during the Christmas

Craft Fair.

Beth Sthay of the Knotty Knitter has been knitting for 30 years and is a returning vendor at the Christmas Craft Fair. Sthay has been coming to the craft fair at Tantasqua for about 10 years and brought some popular products that her customers enjoy. One popular item is the drink mitt, a knitted mitt designed to hold a bottle.

Sthay began knitting scarves and then soon branched out to knitting more products. Sthay was wearing Tantasqua colors, green and yellow, during her time at the Christmas Craft Fair.

Representatives of the Rotary Club of Sturbridge were in attendance at the Christmas Craft Fair. This club believes in empowering commu-



Glenys Hachfeld, left, David Zonia and Lorraine Herbert represented The Rotary Club of Sturbridge, which was hosting a lottery raffle to benefit local scholarships and community projects.

nities and transforming lives. Last year the Rotary Club in Sturbridge raised over \$8,000 for the food bank and \$7,000 worth of scholarship funding. The club participates in various community service projects.

The Rotary Club of Stur-

bridge was hosting a lottery raffle at the craft fair. Proceeds benefit local scholarships and community projects. More information can be found at [www.sturbridgerotary.com](http://www.sturbridgerotary.com) and [www.facebook.com/sturbridgerotary](http://www.facebook.com/sturbridgerotary).



Beth Sthay of The Knotty Knitter wore Tantasqua's school colors at her booth during the Christmas Craft Fair. Sthay is wearing her popular drink mitt.

## STURBRIDGE FROM PAGE 1

ber.

The resident said their July water/sewer bill was almost six times the amount it normally is. The resident said they hired a contractor to check for leaks at this time, and none were detected.

He said his September bill was about \$2,300, and he was

directed by town officials to fill out a request for abatement. He said the two bills for July and September total about \$5,000.

Recently, a small leak was found in the resident's sprinkler system line and it was repaired on the same day.

Department of Public Works Director Heather Blakeley said her department checked the resident's usage, which showed "extreme us-

age" during the last quarter. She said the data log indicated that the leak was intermittent, going for a couple hours during the day at a high rate, before going back to normal.

"It repeated itself in this manner basically from the middle of May to the middle of July," she said.

Blakeley said she believes it could be caused by the sprinkler system leak, or possible a toilet that is con-

tinuously running when the homeowners were not home.

She said recent data shows that this issue is no longer happening.

"They are back down to normal," Blakeley said of the resident's usage.

Select Board Chair Jamie Goodwin requested that the resident's usage meter be checked to ensure that it is working correctly prior to determining whether an

abatement can be issued to the resident.

### 250th parade and events

Select Board member MaryLou Volpe announced that planning is underway for the nation's 250th celebration, which includes a parade on June 27. She said volunteers are especially needed for the parade and more information is located on the town's website, [www.sturbridge.gov](http://www.sturbridge.gov).

Volpe encouraged people and businesses to decorate floats for the parade as well.

She said plans for the parade need to be finalized by January.

The yearlong celebration also includes an essay contest for Burgess Elementary School students, business events in February through March, a Taste of Sturbridge in March and April, a scavenger hunt in April during school vacation and a Family Fun Day on May 16.

### Police Department report

Police Chief Earl Dessert said the department responded to 2,389 calls for service in August, which included 51 arrests, 35 incident reports, 33 motor vehicle accidents, 117 citations, 59 motorist assists, 60 alarms, 511 business/house checks, 13 restraining orders, eight domestic disturbances, nine breaking and entering/thefts.

He said the department requested mutual aid 12 times in August and responded out of town twice.

Dessert said National Night Out was held in August and was very successful with a good turnout of attendees.

In September, the department responded to 2,470 calls for service, which included 53 arrests, 37 incident reports, 25 motor vehicle accident reports, 163 citations, 61 motorist assists, 63 alarms, 571 business/house checks, four restraining orders, eight domestic disturbance calls and nine breaking and entering/thefts.

He said the department requested mutual aid four times in September and responded out of town three times.

By the end of the September, the department had responded to 25,948 calls for the year.

Dessert said the department has tasers that are now expired and are surplus equipment. He said the tasers have been replaced by the manufacturer and the department received a credit for new ones.

He said he was contacted by the Brimfield Police Department and they expressed interest in receiving the accessories for the expired tasers. The expired tasers themselves will be disposed of.

The Select Board voted in approval of transferring the accessories to the Brimfield Police Department.

### Fire Department report

Grasso said the department's call volume is about 7% higher than last year's numbers. He said calls are requiring fire department staff to stay longer at hospitals.

"We are utilizing our mutual aid partners more and more," he said. "I appreciate those communities that come into town and help us out."

Grasso said the town received a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Assistance for Firefighters grant program in the amount of \$178,800. This grant will fund the partial purchase of three cardiac monitors that cost about \$65,000 each.

"Because of the grant, it's only going to cost the town about \$15,000 if town meeting approves that warrant item," Grasso said.

The Special Town Meeting to vote on this article and others will be held on Monday, Nov. 17 at 7 p.m. at Tantasqua Regional High School.

The grant will also allow the department to purchase six sets of turnout gear.

With the start of heating season, Grasso reminded residents about the proper disposal of wood/pellet ashes. He said the improper disposal of ashes has caused many fire incidents.

Grasso said the department's Fire Prevention Officer can provide more information about how to safely dispose of ashes and how to properly operate a wood or pellet stove in the winter.



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# - community -

## VETERANS FROM PAGE 1

approached Kathy Pelley, Burgess Elementary School principal, about reviving a ceremony he remembered from his childhood. The students at the old Sturbridge Center School would be led by their teachers to the Old Burial Ground on the last day of school before Memorial Day and would place flags on the graves of the Revolutionary War veterans.

The ceremony is now also observed near Veterans Day as the students would come by bus from the Burgess Elementary School with their teacher Mrs. Quinn and Principal Pelley.

It began with Brier welcoming those present on this chilly day. The Pledge of Allegiance would be recited and the National Anthem sung by all.

Briana Embree, music teacher at Burgess, would lead the students in enthusiastic rendition of the George M. Cohan tune, "You're a Grand Old Flag".

Robin Grimm, Sturbridge Town Administrator, would speak to the day. Next, Amanda Galonek Hellyar, District Director for State Senator Ryan C. Fattman, and would also talk about the significance of the ceremony.

Also, in attendance, state Rep. Todd M. Smola would pay tribute to the veterans of past wars as well as those currently deployed.

Something new this year was the cleaning of the gravestones. Since the revolution, the stones had not been cleaned. This is volun-



The Minutemen and the Color Guard listen to Commander Christopher Tourtellot's orders.

teer work and the volunteer leader, Walter Hersee was in attendance to discuss it. Must have been a lot of elbow grease involved.

Members of the Massachusetts Daughters of the American Revolution came to the ceremony as they usually do, and Regent Noveline Beltram of the Captain Job Knapp Chapter spoke to the assembled.

How did we get the colors red, white and blue on the flag. Well, that would be addressed by Christopher Tourtellot. Tourtellot is the commander of the Massachusetts Sons of the American Revolution General Henry Knox Regimental Color Guard.

Commander Tourtellot would recite the rousing toast to the flag (sans libation) he recites every year. It celebrates what the banner is all about and speaks to the meaning of the colors.

The Burgess students would each take a flag and



Burgess Elementary School students stood with their music teacher.

go to the graves, replacing the worn flags with the new.

The flags had been generously provided by Michael Glick and Michael Harrington of the Publick House. They, along with the Sturbridge Lions Club provided community support.

Then, Commander Tourtellot would bring the members of the Color Guard to

order in line. Next to them would be three stalwart members of the Sturbridge Militia. These men would be led by Captain Timothy Parker (a.k.a. Douglas Quigley)

The attire of militia and color guard provided a stark contrast. The guard were attired in the uniforms of the Continental Army while



Taps was played by a student from Burgess Elementary School.



Signs detail the history of the gates at Old Burial Ground.

would sound taps. Then, at a distance another bugler would sound the same notes.

Then, it was over and all would drift away, in all probability to a spot with a bit more warmth. No matter, Brier will bring folks together for Memorial Day in 2026, the 250th year of the United States.

## VETERANS FROM PAGE 1

Who says a banker can't have a sense of humor?

Soon enough, it was time to take our seats. Guests were introduced and we would hear from state Sen. Ryan Fattman as presented by his District Director, Amanda Hellyar.

Niedziela then spoke about the Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce, and there was much to say. The list of actions and events is exhaustive, and we were provided with documentation.

This Annual Meeting, presented by Superior Plus Propane, was the largest turnout in over a decade.

Over the last 12 month the Chamber re-launched the Membership Committee, creating a Local Market Vendors level. Networking and seminar events were hosted, and a successful raffle fundraiser was conducted, courtesy of Pathfinder Tech.

The annual Business & Recreation Guide was published, and membership in the Quaboag Referral Group grew. The Chamber's Mass Pike Exit 63 Billboard was rehabbed.

The meaningful Choice Awards were re-launched, with fun along the way, Bingo Night in March and a golf outing last month.

There were 22 new and returning members to the Chamber, and ribbon-cutting events were held. The QHMA.com website saw healthy growth.

Over the past 12 months, there were promoted 694 member events, workshops, and seminars on the website that generated 90,478 views. The previous year's views were a fraction of the current pace. Even better, member page views were 125,000, a 28% increase.

There was recognition of the Year's Silver Underwriters: Country Bank, J. Stolar



Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce CEO James Przypek welcomed guests to the Annual Meeting.

Insurance Agency, Monson Savings, and ServPro of Hampshire County.

Also, the Bronze Underwriters: Behavioral Health Network, Christopher Heights of Belchertown, Superior Plus Propane, and Westfield Bank

Among the Annual Meeting sponsors, the Presenting Sponsor was Superior Plus Propane.

The Speaker sponsors were Bay State Health and Burkhart Pizzanelli, CPAs. The Table sponsors were Bell & Hudson Insurance Agency, North Brookfield Savings Bank, Pioneer Valley Environmental, and SERVPRO of Hampshire County.

At the previous year's meeting, a number of By-Law edits were voted on. This year members are being asked to vote on Board Nominations below.

Nominated to serve as Officers for the Chamber for the next year are: President, Renee Niedziela; 1st Vice President, Edward Fisher Jr.; 2nd Vice President, Eric Duda; Clerk, Amy Scribner; Treasurer, Julie Quink; Assistant Treasurer, Lena Buteau

Nominated for new and continuing appointments



Renee Niedziela of J.Stolar Insurance Agency, also serves as president of the Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce

to the Board of Directors for the Chamber: Through 2026: Michael Harris, Michael Moore, Teresa Grove. Through 2027: Anthony Marini, Kate Davignon, Rebecca Maurer. Through 2028: Jamie Fitzgibbon, Lorna Stone, Kaitlin Young.

The formal part of the meeting over, dinner was served, and it was quite a repast. The beef, and chicken that the Salem Cross is known for did not disappoint the diners as they engaged in spirited conversation.

Soon enough, the main course was done, and it was



The raffle winners were drawn.

time for the evening's speaker, Megan McDonough.

McDonough is a thought leader, author, and founder of the Wholebeing Institute, a global organization teaching the science of well being to thousands of students across 48 countries, with programs translated into Spanish and Portuguese.

She has led growth strategies for international organizations such as the Women Presidents Organization and the Krip-alu Center for Yoga & Health, designing programs that boost engagement, resilience, and leadership capacity.

With more than two decades of experience at the intersection of business and positive psychology, Megan helps leaders apply evidence-based practices – positive emotions, strengths, and meaning – to create workplaces where both people and organizations thrive.

The theme of the presen-

tation: Grow Strong.

McDonough, through a skillful use of narrative and vignettes discussed tuning into one's strengths, and finding meaning in a world where quiet quitting in the workplace is not uncommon.

When she finished, a local institution of 85 years, Rondeau's Dairy was honored, with a presentation to

Mike Rondeau.

After that, the raffle was drawn with prizes donated by Megan's Wholebeing Institute, Baystate Health, The Chamber itself, and J. Stolar Insurance Agency.

Then, we were done, and the assembled left in a leisurely manner and departed into the chilly night air.



A couple of bankers from Monson. Shown from left are Michael Rouette, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, and Dan Moriarty, President and Chief Executive Officer of Monson Savings Bank.

# - community -

## Historical Society presents 'Lost Towns' author Elena Palladino

STURBRIDGE – Join the Sturbridge Historical Society at the Publick House on Thursday, Nov. 20 at 7 p.m. for a presentation by former Sturbridge resident Elena Larson Palladino.

Palladino will speak on her 2022 book, "Lost Towns of the Swift River Valley: Drowned by the Quabbin".

In 1938, four Massachusetts towns were discontinued, evacuated, and flooded to accommodate the construction of the Quabbin Reservoir. The reservoir was the solution to providing Boston and the State's metropolitan areas with fresh drinking water.

Palladino tells the story

of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich, and Prescott, the towns which were sacrificed to make room for the Quabbin. Through archival research, Palladino recounts the history of these communities through three townpeople of the Swift River Valley: Marion Smith, a woman from a wealthy man-

ufacturing family, William Segur, the country doctor, and Edwin Howe, postmaster and general store owner.

Palladino brings life and feeling to these communities that once were thriving and home to many.

Palladino grew up in Sturbridge and now resides in Ware. She and her family

live in Marion Smith's former home, which sparked her interest in the history of the Quabbin.

Palladino holds a bachelor's degree in English from Simmons College, a master's in literary and cultural studies from Carnegie Mellon University and an Ed.M. in higher education from Har-

vard University. She currently works in higher education in Western Massachusetts and also sits on the board of directors for the Swift River Valley Historical Society and Friends of Quabbin.

The presentation will take place at 7 p.m., and is graciously hosted by the Publick House.

### SHREK FROM PAGE 1

cess with a big secret.

Filling the role of Shrek the Ogre is junior Auguste Bellerose, who is known for his astounding stage debut as Beast in last year's production of "Beauty and the Beast". Bellerose also portrayed Jay in the school's one-act production, "Abigail For Now".

Bellerose said he relates to the character of Shrek, but jokingly described himself as more of a parfait than an onion.

"I feel like I have a lot of layers," he said.

Bellerose, who is currently taking four college-level classes and is an active member of the school's NJROTC program, said theater wasn't something he really thought about pursuing, but he has discovered a love for it.

He said playing Beast last year helped him shape his performance as Shrek for this year's production.

"Playing the Beast and being grumpy all the time helped," he said. "Now I can be comedically grumpy."

Playing the role of Shrek's eager but often rebuffed sidekick Donkey, is eighth grader Sebastian Palomera-Espinoza.

Palomera-Espinoza took on a similar part in last year's "Beauty and the Beast" starring alongside Luke Salvatore's Gaston as the loyal but bumbling LaFou.

Donkey's positivity and ability to look on the sunny side of life provides a sharp contrast to the distrustful and sarcastic nature of Shrek. Together, the two make unlikely friends and they work together to save the swamp and all of the fairy tale characters from a ruthless (but diminutive) ruler.

Palomera-Espinoza said



Donkey, played by Sebastian Palomera-Espinoza, tried to claim his half of Shrek's swamp.



Sophia Pascale as Gingy sang during "Freak Flag".

he relates to Donkey in a lot of ways, including having a positive outlook on life. "It's very easy to go through life when you're thinking about the bright side," he said. "We share a lot of the same energy."

One of the biggest challenges in his role has been building his confidence as this larger-than-life character.

"It's a very playful, funny character," he said.

Taking on the role of Fiona, a not-so-typical fairy tale princess, is eighth grader Eliza Brown, who is a theater veteran now in her fourth production with Quabbin Performing arts. She has also been in dozens of community theater productions as well.

Starting as an ensemble member in her sixth grade year's performance of "Matilda", Brown has harnessed all of the aspects of her vibrant personality to give Fiona a special quality that sets her apart from other princesses.

"Fiona is a really hard character. She has so many dynamics," Brown said. "She's different...I feel like I

relate to her because she has so many different personalities...silly, proper."

Brown said theater has given her a chance to build new friendships and to connect with students in other grade levels.

"It's easier to talk to people," she said. "It also brings a lot of people from different backgrounds together...it's not just theater kids."

Bellerose agreed that joining the Quabbin Performing Arts has opened him up a lot and helped create new connections with his peers.

Bellerose, Brown and Palomera-Espinoza all agreed that Salvatore's performance in "Beauty in the Beast" last year inspired a lot of students to come forward and take part in "Shrek the Musical".

Salvatore, a senior during "Beauty and the Beast", had never set foot on stage before; especially not in a musical as a lead role.

"Luke's participation last year made so many people want to participate," Bellerose said.

All three of the student-actors spoke about some of the challenges they faced in preparing for the opening of "Shrek the Musical", including learning the songs.

"Shrek" is a really great musical," Palomera-Espinoza said. "But don't underestimate it."

Its songs are much more technical than many high school performances, with soaring high notes and powerful dynamics.

Bellerose, who said he is more of a baritone singer, said Shrek's songs are written for a tenor and this has pushed him to gain more confidence in the upper regis-

ter of his vocal range.

Brown said it's the songs that make "Shrek the Musical" so exciting to perform (and to watch) and how "you can't pick one best song."

Rounding out the cast of "Shrek the Musical" are Aspen Packard as Lord Farquaad and Papa Ogre; Owen Breuer as Pinocchio; Sophia Pascale as Gingy; Kayleigh Fuller as Dragon and Fairy Godmother; Bella Spring as Big Bad Wolf; Elizabeth Matheson as White Rabbit; Kailynn Schuster as Peter Pan; Charlotte LaPointe as Wicked Witch and Young Fiona; Anna Metcalf as Sugar Plum Fairy; Ximena Palomera-Espinoza as Ugly Duckling; Grace Lantigne as Mama Bear; Adrien Cyr as Papa Bear, King Harold and Pied Piper; Ava Kinney as Baby Bear; Adelaide Harmon as Mad Hatter; Emily DeMalia as Humpty Dumpty; Nathan Kearchner as Elf and Little Shrek; Spencer Nally as Grumpy; Elizabeth Lambert as Mama Ogre and Bluebird Singer; Janelle Hutchinson as Queen Lillian; Winter Boyea as Teen Fiona; Kalypso DeCologero as Thelonus; Milo Zantouliadis as Captain of the Guards; and Ash St. Clair as Duloc Greeter and Bishop.

The cast includes Lola Dumont, Julianna Lindsten, Catherine Tucker, Audrey Larson, Amy Landrin, Virginia Morin, Emma Lindsey, Lola Dumont, Bailey Burke, Taylah Cass, Andie St. Clair and Sadie Ouimette.

"Shrek the Musical" also has a dedicated crew including Musical Director Julia Tuttle, who is now in her fifth year with the Quabbin Performing Arts. Tuttle is also a teacher at the middle-

high school.

Tuttle first became involved in theater when she was cast in the Barre Players' production of "Jesus Christ Superstar". When she was a senior in high school, she took on the lead role in "Cinderella".

"It was my first real lead role and was an awesome learning experience," she said.

Tuttle said the school's theater department works hard to get as many students and people involved in its production as possible.

"We are open to having anyone who is even slightly interested in theater to get involved!" she said.

Amanda Schuster, blocking director and stage manager, is back for her second production with Quabbin Performing Arts.

Schuster first became involved with theater in elementary school, but her passion grew when she entered high school. A dancer since the age of 6, Schuster has her bachelor's degree in theatre with a dance concentration.

Schuster said she has enjoyed working with the students and watching them "create something memorable."

"It is a great place to feel accepted, to be able to be yourself, and learn how to work with a lot of people and learn to trust each other," she said.

Art teacher Lisa Payne is in charge of set design and construction, assisted by the talents of her students. She has helped to bring a total of 18 productions to life on stage.

"My interest in theater was first piqued when I was

in a summer camp as a third grader," Payne said. "I remember playing a seed that grew into a tree."

Payne now has a master's degree in theatrical design and she said the highlight of her role with Quabbin Performing Arts has been working with both the students and her colleagues to build the set and props.

Creating Dragon's head for "Shrek the Musical" was also a memorable experience.

"Theater is a wonderful venue for students to express themselves – either on stage, through design, working backstage, and/or running the tech end of things," Payne said. "Theater teaches our students to work in an ensemble, how to push through difficult things and how to be inclusive."

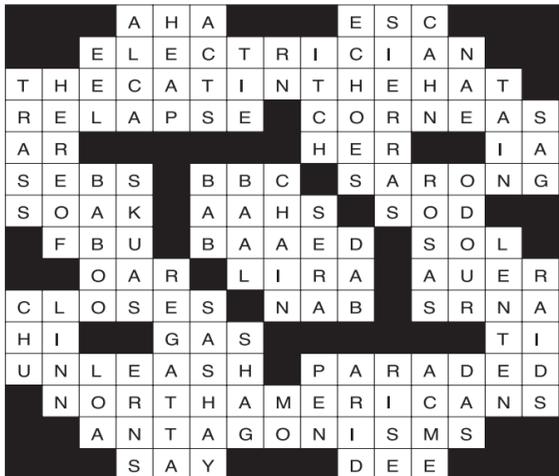
About "Shrek the Musical"

"Shrek the Musical" will be performed in the auditorium at Quabbin Regional Middle/High School, 800 South St., Friday, Nov. 14 at 7 p.m. and Saturday, Nov. 15 at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$10 if purchased in advance or \$12 at the door. Early ticket purchase is recommended as this show is likely to sell out for each performance.

A link to purchase tickets is available on the school district's website, www.qrsd.org or directly at our.show/quabbin-shrek.

Refreshments and Break-A-Leg Bags will be available for purchase through Quabbin Pro Musica during the intermission of each show. Proceeds will benefit students in the school district's music department.



## EARLY DEADLINES FOR ADS & LEGAL NOTICES

Thanksgiving will bring early deadlines for all legal notices to run in TURLEY PUBLICATIONS the week of November 24-28, 2025.

**Thursday, Nov. 20 at 2 PM for November 27 issue**

- Agawam Advertiser News • Country Journal
- The Register • Wilbraham-Hampden Times

**Friday, November 21 at 2 PM for November 27 Issue**

- Sentinel • Quaboag Current

**Monday, November 24 at 2 PM for November 27 Issue**

- The Journal Register • Ware River News • Barre Gazette

**Tuesday, November 25 at 2 PM for November 28 Issue**

- Town Reminder • The Holyoke Sun • Chicopee Register

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Mobile Home located in Waterwheel Village at 31 Edward Lane, Barre, MA 01005. This is a 55 and better community. This home includes a wonderful floor plan with very spacious rooms. Master bedroom includes a walk-in closet. Two full bathrooms. A four-season sunroom is off the kitchen. Includes two large woodsheds and a metal garage you can park under to fend off winter weather. Asking \$289,000. See listing on MLS # 73433198

**NO ENTRANCE FEE**

Brand New Mobile Home located in Waterwheel Village at 37 Gauthier Rd., Barre. This is a 55 and better community. This home features an open kitchen/living room concept, perfect for family gatherings. Two large bedrooms on opposite ends of the home. Master bedroom has a walk-in closet and large attached bathroom. Just off the kitchen is a laundry area with door leading to back deck and yard. There is a monthly HOA fee which includes water, sewage, rubbish removal, and taxes. All exterior and interior doorways are 36" wide. Asking \$219,000. See listing on MLS # 73397436

**NO ENTRANCE FEE**

Mobile Home located in Waterwheel Village at 32 Edward Lane, Barre, MA 01005. This is a 55 and better community. Includes large carport and two large garden sheds. Approx. living area 1,000 SqFt. Asking \$139,900. See listing on MLS # 73398863.

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