

QUABOAG CURRENT

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Quaboag Current
Newspaper

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Friday, November 24, 2023

WBES thanks veterans for their service

WEST BROOKFIELD – Students at West Brookfield Elementary School honored veterans at a ceremony that featured patriotic songs, readings and artwork.

The Nov. 9 ceremony began with the Pledge of Allegiance led by third grade students, followed by the singing of the National Anthem by all in attendance.

“We begin today by recognizing veterans, active duty, guardsmen, reservists... who have kept the country safe and free,” Principal Melissa Provost said.

Provost thanked West Brookfield American Legion Post 244 for providing a color guard.



Students at West Brookfield Elementary School get ready to hand out flowers to veterans during a Veterans Day ceremony held on Nov. 9.

See MORE PHOTOS | PAGE 8

Quaboag wins Springfield Stock Market Competition

By Haileigh Swistak
Student Intern

WARREN – On Thursday, Nov. 9, Quaboag Business Teacher Jean DiRico took 62 students from her three Personal Finance classes on a field trip to participate in the Junior

Achievement of Springfield’s annual Stock Market Competition.

This marked the 18th annual Stock Market Competition hosted by the Junior Achievement of Western Massachusetts which took place at the Cedars Banquet Facility in

Springfield.

The event began with each team having a fictitious one million dollars to invest into an artificial market which simulated the New York Stock Exchange. There was a total of 60 rounds which were labeled as

See COMPETITION | PAGE 13

Chamber of Commerce hosts annual dinner meeting

Ruggeiro takes place as new Board of Directors chairperson

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

WEST BROOKFIELD – The Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce welcomed incoming Board of Directors Chairperson Josh Ruggiero of Smith Brothers Insurance during its annual meeting and



dinner held at Salem Cross Inn. On Nov. 9, outgoing Chair-

person Lena Buteau of Monson Savings Bank spoke about the changes the Chamber has seen in the past few years, and where it stands now.

“We’ve come such a long way this year,” Buteau said. “From 2020 to 2022 we were driven to survive. In 2023 we were driven to thrive.”

Buteau credited the Chamber’s newest Chief Executive Officer, Robert Lavoie, with strengthening ties with businesses in the region, as shown

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Small Works Show

Local artists featured in final show of the year

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

WEST BROOKFIELD – The best things really do come in small packages, as shown at the Small Works Show at West Brookfield Art & Frame, 10 East Main St.

Featuring 13 of the gallery’s 21 artists, this year’s Small Works Show opened on Nov. 17 and will remain in place through Christmas. Although small, each piece of art is just as detailed and beautiful as the larger pieces displayed in the gallery.

West Brookfield bookbinder Karen Bullock displayed her handbound journals, including ones that come paired with mini journals.

“They’re all one-of-a-kind things,” Bullock said of her work.

Before she became a bookbinder, Bullock worked for Dover Saddlery making custom riding chaps and doing repairs.

Together with her husband, Bullock restores books through their business Old Working Books & Bindery.

“I’m one of those kids that can’t sit still,” Bullock joked.

See ARTISTS | PAGE 7



Karen Bullock displayed her handmade journals and cards at West Brookfield Art & Frame’s Small Works Show during an artist’s reception held on Nov. 17. TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA OUIMETTE

Residents shared thoughts on pollution with CMRPC

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

WEST BROOKFIELD – The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission presented a new Climate Pollution Reduction Grant workshop.

Part of their first phase of a Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, the agency insists on

raising community engagement and seeking out sectors of climate pollution most commonly affecting some sub-regions.

Executive Director of CMRPC Janet Pierce stated that the Commission represents 40 communities in the state of Massachusetts. CMRPC is one of 13 regional planning agencies in the state alongside northern Worcester County in

See POLLUTION | PAGE 6



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- community -

White Christmas returns on Sunday, Dec. 3

WEST BROOKFIELD – All are welcome to join the town on Sunday, Dec. 3 from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. for the 31st Annual White Christmas celebration.

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

Stick around to close the day with West Brookfield's annual tradition of gathering around the largest evergreen in town (located on the town common) while it illuminates for

the first time this holiday season.

West Brookfield's White Christmas Committee 2023 is 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.

Maps of town open houses and vendors can be picked up in various local business, by accessing the 31st Annual White Christmas in West Brookfield Facebook page or by emailing whitechristmaswb@gmail.com.

Parking is available free throughout town.



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Crazy Christmas Hat/Santa Parade and tree lighting Dec. 3

BROOKFIELD – The Brookfield Cultural Council is happy to present its first Crazy Christmas Hat/Santa Parade and Tree Lighting on Sunday, Dec. 3, beginning at 4:30 p.m. in front of the Town Hall.

Get started now making your Crazy Christmas Hat. You can also buy a crazy hat (but bought hats can't be entered for a prize).

There will be first, second, and third place

winners. Use your imagination and come up with something unique - this is for all ages.

Participants will meet in front of the Town Hall where there will be a Christmas backdrop for your family photos (this will be set up at 4 p.m. to be sure everyone has a chance to get that photo).

Practice your singing because there'll be singing as people walk to the gazebo to light

the tree with Santa. In fact, this year they'll be leading Santa to the gazebo.

Some songs to be sung include "Winter Wonderland", "Jingle Bells", "Santa Claus is Coming to Town", "We Wish You A Merry Christmas", and more. Hot chocolate and cookies will be served.

For more information, email Jeanne Lytle at lytlej1234@gmail.com.

Road safety grant awarded to Sturbridge Police Department

BOSTON – State Rep. Todd Smola (R-Warren, Ranking Member, Ways & Means Committee) announced in a press release that the Sturbridge Police Department has been awarded \$19,406.65 through the FFY 2024 Municipal Road Safety grant program.

This funding will be used to enhance road safety measures in Sturbridge.

Smola expressed his appreciation for the Sturbridge Police Department by stating, "This grant is an investment in our town's well-being, and I know the Sturbridge Police Department will use this funding to create a positive impact in our community. I commend the vital work that our police officers do, and I am grateful for the grant funding that will allow them to provide continuing crucial aid."

Through the MRS grant program, 186 municipal police departments in Massachusetts will be receiving a combined total of \$5,449,584.03.

The MRS grant program is presented by the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security's Office of Grants and Research. OGR is the State Administering Agency for funds received by the Commonwealth

from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The MRS grant program makes federal funds available to provide police departments flexibility in addressing local traffic safety issues. Funding uses may include equipment options and developing traffic safety programs.

The goal of MRS is to support traditional enforcement activities and develop new strategies to reduce roadway crashes, injuries, fatalities, and economic losses in Massachusetts.

OGR submits an annual highway safety plan and grant applications that detail how the Commonwealth intends to utilize its NHTSA funding. MRS grant awards are for projects that will help achieve OGR's highway safety plan goals, including a reduction in injuries and deaths resulting from crashes involving impaired, distracted, and speeding drivers and pedestrians, bicyclists, and unrestrained vehicle occupants.

For additional information please contact Smola by email at Todd.Smola@mahouse.gov or call 617-722-2100.

Project 351 food drive is Dec. 2

BROOKFIELD – Brookfield's 2023 Project 351 ambassador Edie Simpson is working with the Brookfield Food Pantry to organize a food drive to help those facing food insecurity in the community.

The food drive will take place at the Brookfield Transfer Station from 7 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 2. If you cannot make that date or are not a member of the transfer station, donations are accepted at the Merrick Public Library during their regular hours all year round.

They are looking for soups, baking mixes, baked beans, condiments, Chef Boyardee products, paper goods (excluding toilet paper), cereal, non-perishable snacks, coffee, hot chocolate mixes, canned vegetables, salad dressings, puddings and jellos, and jams and jellies. All donations will go directly to the Brookfield Food Pantry.

Project 351 is an organization that works to build a better community through youth-led service.

Are you having difficulty communicating with your partner, struggling with boundaries, and healthy relationships?

We invite you to join us Friday afternoons from 1-2:30 pm to explore these topics and more.

This group will be held in zoom, is educational, confidential, and free.

Please contact **Pat James 413-726-8661.**

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- community -

The ties that bind

Author journeys through 175-year history of family sash

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

BARRE – Paula Grandpre Wood has been studying genealogy since she was a teenager, following the connecting thread that weaves her family together, generation after generation; the Ceinture Fléchée.

Also known as the Arrow Sash, this 175-year old sash has been passed through her father's family for six generations. It was wrapped around the men over their fur coats in Canada.

"This all began in 2012 when I had this obsession," Grandpre Wood said of determining the sash's origins. This obsession led her to travel with friends to Quebec, Canada, her family's start in North America, and to write her first book.

"The Long Walk Home with the Ceinture Fléchée: The Arrow Sash," chronicles the journey of the sash, Grandpre Wood's family, and her own spiritual journey.

"The story starts with my ancestors, which I was blessed to have all the way back to the 1500s," she said.

Taking the sash with her, Grandpre Wood traveled to where her seven times great-grandfather was indentured to the governor as a servant for a three-year contract.

After finishing the term of his contract, Grandpre Wood's ancestor was given land, and put down permanent roots. That land is now the Canadian shrine to Our Lady of the Cape.

Grandpre Wood said her ancestors had arrived in New France (Canada) after having to flee La Rochelle, France. Her ancestors also converted to Catholicism when they arrived in the new world.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I think I'd be looking for my ancestors in Quebec cemeteries," she said.

Grandpre Wood wondered what it must have been like for her ancestors, as they left everything they knew and loved to travel to an unknown place.

"What would you do to save your family? We're seeing that today, what happened in Ukraine, Israel, Gaza... where do you go with your families? Where do you take your families for a better life, even if you have to give up everything you love?" she asked.

The sash now belongs to her brother, but Grandpre Wood considers herself the "Keeper of the Sash," carrying it with her while she continues to find both ancestors and descendants.

Grandpre Wood said her great-grandparents had to uproot and move once again after they lost their farm, bringing



Author and Barre resident Paula Grandpre Wood stands with her book display during the Autumn Fair. SUBMITTED PHOTOS

all 11 children to Central Falls, Rhode Island where their cousins lived.

The family lived in a tenement house, just as Grandpre Wood did growing up in Central Falls.

The journey of the sash runs parallel to Grandpre Wood's spiritual journey, leading her to reclaim her faith.

"After being away from the Catholic church for 35 years, I had a call to return to the church," she said. "Never did I think I'd be including myself in the book...my story and my return to the Catholic church and my ancestors' story. What I found out in the end, as I kept bringing the sash to different places, they kept praying for me. It's about spirituality; mine and theirs."

When she's not exploring her family's history, Grandpre Wood enjoys spending time with her husband of 41 years, Mike, and their three dogs. She is also actively involved in the church, as a member of Saint Francis of Assisi Parish.

Prior to her retirement two weeks ago, Grandpre Wood worked as a physical therapist for 37 years at Quality Physical Therapy in Sturbridge and its satellite office at the Listening Wellness Center in Barre.

"For 22 of those years I lived in Barre," she said. "I think of the thousands of people that I've met over the years. I love the work that I was able to do for all those years and the people I got to meet, it's incredible."

One of the people Grandpre Wood met during her time as a physical therapist, is Laura Dusha Nelson, the outgoing executive director of



The author's great-grandparents Domina and Albina are shown with their 11 children.



Paula Grandpre Wood wears the sash at a cemetery.

the Listening Wellness Center.

"I read the book, because I know Paula, she's been my physical therapist," Dusha Nelson said. "I honestly couldn't put it down. I wanted to hear what the next thing was...people who love history are going to love it, and people who know Paula are going to love her journey."

When asked if she had plans to continue writing, Grandpre Wood said "it's not over yet."

"The sash always takes me to new places and challenges me to go a bit further," she said.

About 'The Arrow Sash'

"The Long Walk Home with the Ceinture Fléchée: The Arrow Sash" is available through Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

Grandpre Wood will also be at Saint Francis of Assisi Parish Christmas Open House at St. Joseph's Church, South Street, (adjacent to the Listening Wellness Center) on Saturday, Dec. 2 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

For more information about the book or author, visit paulagrandpre-woodsash.com.



Pine Acres Resort in Oakham is looking for an Activities Coordinator to join their team! This position is considered part time, but offers more hours during the camping season!

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- opinion -



Garland and wreaths a fun DIY project

I spent the morning wrapping garland around lampposts in preparation for Old Sturbridge Village's "Christmas by Candlelight" program.

Although I used to balk at decorating prior to Thanksgiving, it's a must at work, where so much needs to be ready for the first day of the program, next Friday, Nov. 24. The garland is beautiful- a mix of cedar and fir.

The smell of the cedar isn't at all familiar from my childhood Christmases, but I love it as an adult. What makes the garland so pretty is the variation in textures.

After the decorations are up at the Village, I turn to decorating at home. I love to sit on the floor of my living room with all types of greens strewn before me on an old bed sheet.

I make a wreath or two for our house and I always make one to give to a dear friend as an annual birthday present.

I encourage you to try your hand at wreath and garland making. It's really the same principle, with one made on a circular frame and the other made on a cord of ribbon or rope the length you need for decorating.

As mentioned, the key to success in wreath and garland-making is having a variety of greens to choose from. From airy white pine to rigid spruce, wispy arborvitae to dense juniper, pointy-leaved holly to minute boxwood, all look great together.

Balsam and fir tips pruned from the Christmas tree are a logical addition. Then add some budded Pieris, gilded birch branches and voila! - you have a unique combination.

Top it off with pinecones, winterberries and even sumac for a stunning grouping.

It's not hard to find different types of greens. First, scour your neighborhood.

Many of the plants I mentioned make their homes in our landscapes. I regularly prune this time of year purposely to use the clippings in my decorating.

The key to a good cut is not to leave stubs-always snip next to a side branch.

Cemeteries and vacant lots are also great spots to get a variety of greens. But be sure to ask permission beforehand.

Regardless, kindly take only what you need and space your cuts out evenly around the plant.

Making a wreath is easy. Start with a wire coat hanger opened up into a circle.

Attach some pliable wire to it - 22 gauge is a good choice. Then, wrap little bunches of greens to the base one after another.

Be careful to lay them alongside, not on top of each other. You can make a wreath of just one type of green at a time, or make mixed "bouquets" for your bunches.

When you reach the end of the wreath, hide the last bunch under the first and secure the wire. You can easily make a loop for hanging, or use the hook that came with the coat hanger.

You can attach a bow to the front and insert some berries or pinecones on wire picks to jazz it up a bit.

Garland making follows the same principle. Working on a taut cording or rope is important for success.

If you are going to be making a lot of garland I recommend "tying off" the ends of the cording or securing them somehow to your work surface. I've done it with duct tape or with the cord knotted to nails in my work bench.

See GARDEN | PAGE 5



By Ellenor Downer

I received an email from a reader, who had a Cooper's hawk in his yard for two days.

He said, "The barred tail was distinctive flying through the yard...and looked like a dart with the tail straight out. Many people don't realize they, like the Peregrine Falcon, were decimated by DDT and pesticides."

The Cooper's hawk is 16 inches long and as the reader said in his email they have a long tail with barring. They also have fine streaking on the breast.

They are gray above with reddish brown barring. Their crown is darker than the back.

The immature Cooper's hawk is dark brown above and light below with thin streaking. Immature plumage is kept for one year.

During the breeding season, these hawks have a regular feeding route where it hunts for common medium sized birds such as mourning doves, blue jays and starlings.

The female lays three to six pale blue green eggs with dark marks in a platform nest of sticks place in a tree ten to 70 feet high.

Cooper's hawks may show up at bird feeders especially during the winter months, when it roams a wider area for food. Cooper's hawks inhabit mixed forests and open woodlands.

They make a loud repeated "kek kek kek kek" call given during alarm or during pair interaction. As mentioned in the email above, the Cooper's hawks were decimated in the 1950s and 1960s due to the use of DDT.

Other birds by the lake

He lives on a lake and said, "There is an old pine the Bald Eagles love to fish from. There are two Red Shouldered Hawks' nests

within three or four hundred feet of each other and when the young start yelling for food the other nest invariably starts and I have them in stereo. Last year a pair of Blue Heron nested, but this year there is only one who patrols the cove shoreline alone. The eagles seem to ignore the adult." He also sees Golden eagles as well.

Bird tally

I received an email from a reader, who visits ponds in Warren. He sent a tally of bird observed on Nov. 2, 3 and 4. They included on Nov. 2 46 Canada geese and again the same number on Nov. 3 and six on Nov. 4; one pied-billed grebe on Nov. 3, four great blue herons on Nov. 2, two on Nov. 3 and 3 on Nov. 4; a red-tailed hawk on Nov. 2 and one bald eagle on Nov. 3.

He also reported seeing two American crows on Nov. 2, a yellow-bellied sapsucker on Nov. 2, two blue jays on Nov. 2, a titmouse on Nov. 2, one bluebird on Nov. 2 and two on Nov. 3, six robins on Nov. 2, two yellow-dumped warblers on Nov. 2 and again on

Nov. 3 and three song sparrows on Nov. 2. Yellow-bellied sapsuckers, yellow-rumped warblers and bluebirds were eating poison ivy berries.

Canada geese

This weekend my granddaughter and I saw about two dozen Canada geese fly over her house. They were honking as they flew overhead; headed for a beaver pond across the street.

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.



Cooper's hawk

OPINION PAGE/ LETTERS POLICY

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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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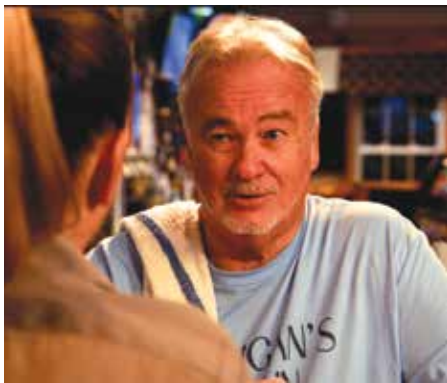
Local actor steps out of the background in 'Madigan's Again'

BROOKFIELD – Brookfield actor, Joe Klimavich, is no stranger to the spotlight.

After first stepping on the stage as Colonel Pickering in a high school production of "My Fair Lady", Klimavich has played a number of lead roles in local community theatre musicals, including Harold Hill in "Music Man", Frank Butler in "Annie Get Your Gun", and the Modern Major General in a Worcester State University production of "Pirates of Penzance".

But that all changed in the summer of 2019 when the local public relations consultant and adjunct college professor answered a call for background actors in *Defending Jacob*, the American crime drama miniseries starring Chris Evans, produced by Apple TV+, and filmed at New England Studios, in Devens.

"My character was a court reporter in two of the crucial episodes in the series,"



Joe Klimavich behind the bar in *Madigan's Again*, which premieres on Nov. 30 at Worcester's Hanover Theatre.

said Klimavich. "It was a non-speaking role, but, on the plus side, I didn't have to learn any dialogue, I made a lot of friends on set, and I got a firsthand look at the state of filmmaking in Massachusetts."

When the phone rang again in 2022, it was Worcester comedian and filmmaker, Tom Dwyer, who had been Klimavich's student at Worcester State University, asking if he would take on a small, non-speaking role as a producer in the pilot for his new comedy series, *Hollywood*, the story of Tommy McCann (Dwyer), an actor who was caught in a scandal and forced to return back home to Worcester. ("Can he make it back to the top? Or will he be forever stuck in Hollywood?"). Filmed in Worcester, that pilot is premiering at Worcester's Mechanics Hall on Friday, Nov. 17.

"I didn't get any lines, but I did get my very first IMDB listing," Klimavich joked.

In June 2023, Klimavich and his wife, Barbara, joined other background actors from the Brookfield community as "wedding guests" in "Birthrite", a film shot at Elm Hill Farm by Hollywood director Ross Partridge, and his wife, actor Jennifer Lafleur.

Finally, in July of this year, Klimavich got the call he'd been waiting for, a speaking role in Kristin Koliss' short film, "Madigan's Again", which Koliss describes as "a story about compassion, connection and loving ourselves no matter what we've done."

In the film, Klimavich plays the featured role of "Bud," the amiable bar-



Joe Klimavich plays "Bud" in Kristin Koliss' short film, "Madigan's Again", which premieres on Nov. 30 at Worcester's Hanover Theatre. SUBMITTED PHOTOS

tender to Koliss in the main role of "Marie."

Much of "Madigan's Again" was filmed at the St. Charles Hotel, in Millbury. The film is co-directed by Tom Dwyer and Koliss, who wrote the script 20 years ago when she lived in Los Angeles.

Milford native, Joseph Anthony Marcello is the director of photography. All three produced the film together through their production companies – Greatest Gram Productions, LYM Productions, and Angel Entertainment.

Klimavich admits, "it felt good to

step out of the background and into a speaking role again. Kristin has had a dream of making movies for over 30 years, so I feel honored to have played a small role in helping to make that dream come true. Best of all, it's made in Massachusetts!"

'Madigan's Again' makes its world premiere at The Hanover Theatre, in Worcester, on Nov. 30 at 6 p.m., followed by a Q&A with the filmmakers. General admission tickets are \$25.

Contact the Hanover Theatre box office by calling 877-571-7469 for more information.

GARDEN | FROM PAGE 4

For me, working in a left to right manner seems natural. I use the pliable wire to secure the bunches of greens one after the other to the cording.

Sometimes I wait to embellish the garland with cones or berries until after it is set up around my doorway or wrapped around the lamppost. That way you'll be sure they aren't hidden or bending funny.

I hope that you will be encouraged to try your hand at wreath or garland making this year! It's quickly become one of my favorite Christmas traditions and it can be the same for you, too!

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

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- community -

POLLUTION | FROM PAGE 1

Massachusetts and Windham County in Connecticut.

The project is funded through the Inflation Reduction Act and includes regional short and long term plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful air pollution.

Greenhouse gases are gases that trap heat in the atmosphere and make the planet warmer. Major greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases.

These gases may cause threats to property, communities, safety, health and ecosystems.

One of the first speakers at the workshop presentation was assistant resiliency planner, Will Talbot. Explaining the difference between air pollution and climate pollution, Talbot pointed out some of the ways to reduce greenhouse gases.

For transportation, reduce overall travel demand and improve fuel efficiency. For electricity, fuel switching efforts, increase efficiency, and scale up energy transmission.

For industry, change regulations, raise awareness, and upgrade industrial facilities.

Other ways mentioned include renewable sourced electricity, enhancing energy efficiency, promoting passive heating and cooling sources, recycle materials, reduce food waste, reduce contamination, and manage disposal facilities.

The biggest step CMRPC is currently working on is increasing community engagement. Their presentation in

West Brookfield was an opportunity to get the public's input on questions and concerns regarding climate pollution in their region.

Specific information was displayed throughout the hall identifying the six main sectors of climate pollution.

"Think about how it affects your community," said Pierce.

Every table covered a sector of some of the climate pollution being focused on in the grant overview. These sectors are based off sub-regional emission statistics and analysis.

The sectors are transportation, electricity, industry, commercial and residential buildings, and waste and materials management. The last table placed was an activity table where residents prioritize their top two sectors for future investments.

The residents received two tickets each and placed one in each box. The ticket count will indicate where the residents most likely want to see the future funds be invested to reduce climate pollution in the region.

CMRPC were thankful to get the public's opinion and want to thank the town of West Brookfield for hosting their workshop. As part of their first phase of the grant, understanding the needs of the public is essential to moving forward in the process of executing the long-term goals of the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant.

Their next public workshop will be sometime in December in Barre. To learn more about climate pollution reduction, visit cmrpc.org.



Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission hosted a workshop at the Town Hall in West Brookfield. One of the sectors of air pollution was waste materials treatment. TURLEY PHOTOS BY RYAN DRAGO



Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission Project Manager, Ian McElwee began the air pollution workshop wanting to know the public's important questions regarding the effects of pollution in their sub-region.

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CLUES ACROSS

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|---|--|---|---|
| <p>1. Nocturnal S. American rodent</p> <p>5. Requesting</p> <p>11. Give temporarily</p> <p>12. Happiness</p> <p>16. Military branch</p> <p>17. __, denotes past</p> <p>18. Middle Eastern city</p> <p>19. Air hostesses</p> <p>24. Partner to Pa</p> <p>25. Percussion instrument</p> <p>26. Popular computers</p> <p>27. Decrease light</p> <p>28. Valley in the Osh Region</p> <p>29. "To __ his own"</p> <p>30. Absence of difficulty</p> <p>31. Notice announcing intended marriage read out in church</p> <p>33. Trims by cutting</p> <p>34. Impact</p> <p>38. Military member</p> <p>39. A French river</p> <p>40. Member of prehistoric people in Mexico</p> | <p>43. Messenger ribonucleic acid</p> <p>44. Musician Clapton</p> <p>45. Greek sophist</p> <p>49. Largest English dictionary (abbr.)</p> <p>50. Narrow valley</p> <p>51. A way to disentangle</p> <p>53. Indicates not an issue (abbr.)</p> <p>54. Recommending</p> <p>56. Genus of legumes</p> <p>58. Friend to Larry and Curly</p> <p>59. Off-Broadway theater award</p> <p>60. Fencers</p> <p>63. Small Eurasian deer</p> <p>64. Denoting passerine birds</p> <p>65. Separate by category</p> | <p>3. Photographic equipment</p> <p>4. Confirms a point</p> <p>5. Developed over time</p> <p>6. Not the leader</p> <p>7. __ Lang (country singer)</p> <p>8. Adults need one</p> <p>9. Nests of pheasants</p> <p>10. Antelopes</p> <p>13. One quintillion bytes (abbr.)</p> <p>14. Japanese three-stringed lute</p> <p>15. Type of cat</p> <p>20. Cools your home</p> <p>21. The ancient Egyptian sun god</p> <p>22. Pouches</p> <p>23. Trigraph</p> <p>27. Form of Persian spoken in Afghanistan</p> <p>29. __ route</p> <p>30. Body part</p> <p>31. Bridge building degree</p> <p>32. Indicates position</p> <p>33. Political action</p> | <p>committee</p> <p>34. Tasty snack</p> <p>35. Part of a quadruped</p> <p>36. Locate</p> <p>37. Pitching statistic</p> <p>38. Of I</p> <p>40. City in Utah</p> <p>41. Football players in the trenches</p> <p>42. Hammer is one</p> <p>44. A "nightmarish" street</p> <p>45. Performers</p> <p>46. Slang for cut or scrape</p> <p>47. More breathable</p> <p>48. Most slick</p> <p>50. Provokes</p> <p>51. Home to college's Flyers</p> <p>52. Sodium</p> <p>54. Large fish of mackerel family</p> <p>55. Zero</p> <p>57. __ and behold</p> <p>61. The Palmetto State</p> <p>62. Popular Tom Cruise movie franchise (abbr.)</p> |
|---|--|---|---|

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Deadline for photos and forms is Friday, December 6, 2023

- community -

ARTISTS | FROM PAGE 1

adding that she is also a weaver. "I've been through the gauntlet of crafts."

Bullock also makes greeting cards, using vintage paper.

Artist Cheryl O'Donnell has been painting since she was a child, turning to it professionally after college. It was during her college years at MassArt, that O'Donnell met West Brookfield Art & Frame owner Rebecca Fay.

Using acrylics, O'Donnell paints moving landscape scenes, including a moonlit river, blanketed in rich tones of blue.

Jennifer Geldard had several of her "Birds of Emotions" displayed in the Small Works Show including the Chartreuse Bird of Mischief.

Each bird, pens a letter to the Bluebird of Happiness, with Mischief simply stating "Tag, you're it!"

Geldard said for her as an artist, birds have always just been "a thing."

"I've been doing birds in all different mediums," she said. "Every time I paint one, they have a different expression."

Using watercolors for the Birds of Emotions adds a whimsical flair to each expressive feathered friend.

Wood turner and West Brookfield resident Frank White was joined by his wife Patty at the reception, where he had some of his smaller pieces including a cherry burl bowl, a vase and a wood-burned spider.

The spider is surrounded by a cherry burl frame, which is always appealing to both the wood turner and customers.

The vase features one of the styles of feathers White creates at home in his shop.

"I did several of these feather patterns based on southwestern pottery design and a number of more realistic feathers," White said.

Hosting a Small Works Show for the holidays helps promote many artists at once, Fay said,

and provides the community a chance to support culture in their area by purchasing smaller, less expensive pieces.

Artists at the gallery pay \$34 rent monthly, and are able to keep 100% of all profits from the sale of their work.

"When the artists here promote themselves and the gallery, we all win, and that's the idea," Fay said.

With over 50 small pieces, Fay said the Small Works Show is "undoubtedly the hardest show to curate and hang of the year." But adds that she "loves it the same way some woman love rearranging the furniture."

"When it all balances well, the sense of accomplishment is real," Fay said.

Fay said the gallery is also a full service custom frame shop.

"With the holidays upon us, please remember that framing a kid's artwork, grandma's favorite hand written recipe, a veteran's medals, a collection of shells... any keepsake, makes a truly special gift that will be treasured for generations," she said. "Custom framing something special is one of the most unique gifts to give to someone who already has everything! Trust me on that!"

The Small Works Show will be on display through Christmas, so make sure to visit West Brookfield Art & Frame and browse the many items local artists have to offer.

Also, don't forget to visit the gallery during the town's White Christmas celebration on Sunday, Dec. 3.

About West Brookfield Art & Frame

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

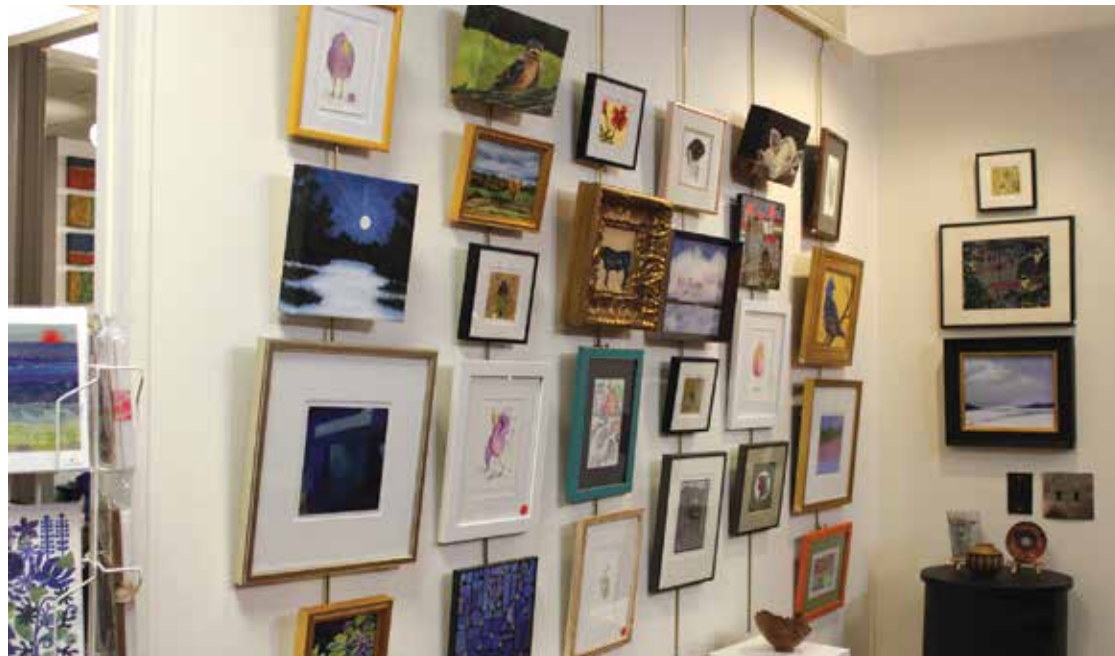
For more information about West Brookfield Art & Frame, or upcoming shows, follow them on Facebook, visit www.westbrookfieldartandframe.com, email yafacceber@hotmail.com, call 508-753-8604 or stop by during open hours.



Cheryl O'Donnell displayed some of her acrylic landscape paintings, including this moonlit scene. TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA OUIMETTE



Patty and Frank White attended the artists reception at the Small Works Show. Frank displayed his wood turned items.



Thirteen artists entered their work in the Small Works Show.



Jennifer Geldard displayed her "Birds of Emotions," a series of 12 birds that each capture a different emotion.

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WBES thanks veterans for their service



A student prepares to bring her grandfather a flower. *TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA OUIMETTE*



U.S. Navy veteran Stanley Wrzesien of Ware received a flower from his granddaughter. He is shown with his daughter, Jodie Gerulaitis.



Students at West Brookfield Elementary School lined up to honor local veterans.



Fourth grade students set The White Table, honoring prisoners of war and missing in action.



Fourth grade students lay a white table cloth on the table.



Students gave presentations about each branch of the military.



Fire Chief Rich Lapierre, a U.S. Army veteran, accepts his flower.



U.S. Army veteran Ken Collette stands to accept his flower.



A veteran shakes hands with the student who presented him with his flower.

SPORTS

Cougars fall to Northbridge

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WARREN—Prior to last Friday night's non-playoff game, Northbridge High School and Quaboag Regional had never faced each other on the gridiron.

Ken LaChapelle, who's wrapping up his 46th season as the Northbridge varsity football coach, entered the contest with 392 career victories. He moved a step closer to reaching the 400-win milestone after guiding the Rams to a 34-13 road win over the Cougars.

"It was nice to come here for the first time and get a win," said LaChapelle, who's the all-time winningest high school football coach in Massachusetts. "We've had an up and down year, so this is a very important win for us. I'm just hoping that we can find our way back home now."

While Quaboag head coach Dave Shepherd doesn't know LaChapelle very well, he did enjoy coaching against him for the first time.

"He's a great football coach," Shepherd said. "It was a lot of fun coaching against him for the first time. We just didn't play our best game of



Tyler Withers leaps high to grab this pass. TURLEY PHOTOS BY JACK CASCIO NEAP.SMUGMUG.COM



Hayden O'Malley smothers the ball and then changes directions. TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Warriors make it to state quarterfinals

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

FISKDALE—The Tantasqua girls' varsity soccer team has only lost four matches on either the turf field located inside the cage or the stadium field, which is also turf, since the start of the 2021 regular season.

Led by junior Lilina Shiers and a stout defensive effort, the eighth-seeded Lady Warriors posted a 2-0 shutout victory over the 25th-seeded East Bridgewater Vikings in a Division 3 state tournament round of 32 contest under the stadium lights on Nov. 6.

"We always play very well season."
See WARRIORS | PAGE 11

Smith Voke gets revenge on Pioneers



Hunter Griswold drops back for a pass attempt. TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEET-DOGPHOTOS.COM



Matthew Vanasse and Branden Hnitecki combine for a tackle.

NORTHAMPTON — On Nov. 10, the Pioneers football team traveled to Northampton for a nonplayoff game against Tri-County opponent Smith Vocational. Pathfinder had a 19-7 win over Smith Voke in Week 8. This time, the Pioneers were not so lucky, falling 32-26. With the defeat, Pathfinder is 4-6 heading into this Thanksgiving's game against Belchertown.



Nicholas Pfister runs down the field.



Dustyn Cook kicks off.



Hunter Griswold runs through traffic.

- sports -

COUGARS | FROM PAGE 9

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Turleysports

Athlete of the Month

NAME: Tess Chevalier
SCHOOL: Tantasqua

Chevalier led the defensive effort for Tantasqua in their Round of 32 win over East Bridgewater.

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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the season tonight.”

Shepherd is also a veteran football coach. He spent the first four years of his high school football coaching career at Amherst Regional. He then coached football at Ware High School for nine years and this is his 15th season at Quaboag.

“Overall, this is my 28th year coaching high school football,” he said. “I certainly won’t be coaching as long as coach LaChapelle.”

The Rams headed back to the Blackstone Valley with a 5-5 overall record, the Cougars, who had won their previous two games, fell to 6-4.

After winning the coin toss and electing to receive the opening kickoff, the Cougars offense started the first series of the game at their own 37.

On the first down play, senior running back Tyler Withers dropped the direct snap from center. After picking up the ball, Withers sprinted down the right sideline before being tackled from behind at the ten yard line by Northbridge senior Zach Tevepaugh.

Two plays later, sophomore quarterback Jacob Cacace completed a four yard pass to junior Brasen Sauriol, who made a diving catch at the five. The Cougars wound up turning the ball over on downs following two incomplete passes in the endzone.

“We really need to punch it in on our opening drive,” Shepherd said. “We thought about trying a field goal on fourth down, but Northbridge has an explosive offense, and we really needed a touchdown there.”

It took the Rams 12 plays to march 95 yards down the field.

The visitors took a 7-0 lead with 2:20 remaining in the first quarter, sophomore Nate Falconer plowed into the endzone on a one yard run. Sophomore Jayden Wilson added the extra point.

With 8:20 remaining in the first half, Cacace completed a pass to Withers down the left sideline, which would’ve given the Cougars a first down at the Rams 40. However, the play was wiped out following an offensive pass interference penalty.

“The offensive pass interference was the turning point of the game,” Shepherd said. “We were moving the ball well on that drive.”

Northbridge junior Anthony Lippolis intercepted a pass on the next play.

The Rams then took a 14-0 lead when sophomore QB Joel LaChapelle completed a 45 yard touchdown pass to senior Michael DiMuzio with 7:31 left in the second quarter.

The Cougars responded with a 67 yard touchdown run by Withers, who found a huge hole in the line, with 3:55 left in the half.

Withers, who’s a co-captain, also made the extra point cutting the Cougars deficit to 14-7.

The members of the Quaboag offensive line are junior Trenton Benson, junior Samuel Carrasco, senior Jaden Ostiguy, senior Chucky Smith, and senior co-captain Bryce Douglas, who was a force on defense.

The home team wouldn’t get any closer than seven points the rest of the game.

With two minutes remaining in the opening half, Falconer scored his second touchdown on an 11 yard dash up the middle.

After the Rams recovered a fumble, the Quaboag coaching staff wasn’t very pleased with the clock operator, who gave the Rams offense a couple of extra seconds at the end of the first half.

It allowed LaChapelle, who’s the grandson of the Rams head coach, an opportunity to throw a 13-yard TD pass to junior Ben Dizenzo, which gave the visiting team a 28-7 halftime advantage.

“I really don’t know what happened at the end of the first half,” Shepherd said. “There wasn’t any time on the scoreboard clock, but they gave them a couple of extra seconds and they scored a touchdown.”

The Rams scored another rushing touchdown in the third quarter to take a commanding 34-7 lead.

At the beginning of the fourth quarter, Cacace threw a 13-yard pass to junior Jack Morgan, who dove into the end zone. The extra point attempt sailed wide left.

The Cougars five seniors were set to be honored in a pregame ceremony before they play in their final high school football game against rival Ware on the night before Thanksgiving.

Bryce Douglas eats up yardage on this run. Turley photos by Jack Cascio NEAP:smugmug.com

Brasen Sauriol takes down a Northbridge runner.

Jacob Cacace eyes his blockers as he eats up yardage.

- sports -

WARRIORS | FROM PAGE 9

at home, especially on this field,” said Shiers, who scored both of her team’s goals. “We practice on this field, so we’re very used to playing here. We also always have a lot of fans at our home games. It just feels awesome.”

It was the second time that Tantasqua (16-5) won a home match in the state tournament.

Two years ago, the Lady Warriors defeated Boston Latin Academy, 5-0 in a preliminary round game inside the cage. They lost a home match to Saugus, 2-1, in the round of 32 a year ago.

Tantasqua’s only home loss during the 2023 regular season was to SWCL rival Grafton, who’s a Division 2 team. The Gators also defeated Tantasqua on their home turf two years ago.

The Lady Warriors’ only other home loss during the past three seasons was to Uxbridge during the 2021 campaign.

“The players are a lot more focused whenever we play at home game because they don’t have to sit on the bus before playing,” said Tantasqua head coach Matt Rickson. “They know this field and they always play very well here.”

One of the Lady Warriors senior tri-captains is Tess Chevalier, who’s a starting defender.

“It’s very exciting to win a home game in the state tournament,” Chevalier said. “I was a member of the varsity soccer team two years ago, but winning today’s game really means a lot to me. I didn’t want to end my high school soccer career with a home loss.”

The other members of the Lady Warriors defensive unit are junior Kay-

die O’Neil, senior Gabby Scanlon, and senior Nicki Vejack.

“We have a solid back four,” Rickson said. “Our goalie also has a lot of shut-outs this season.”

Senior goalie Elizabeth Thompson only had to make a couple of saves in posting her twelfth shutout of the season against East Bridgewater (9-10-3).

Ava Chevalier, who is Tess’s twin sister, is also a senior captain, along with senior Grace St. Laurent, who’s the Lady Warriors back-up goalie.

“It has been a lot of fun being teammates on the soccer team with my sister, but it also has its challenges,” Tess Chevalier said. “We are planning on going to different colleges next year.”

The Lady Warriors controlled possession for most of the first half, but the round of 32 contest remained scoreless until the 35th minute.

That’s when Shiers weaved around a couple of defenders before firing a low shot into the right corner of the net just out of the reach East Bridgewater freshman goalie Kayleigh Shea.

“We had a couple of scoring chances in the first half, but we couldn’t put any of them away,” Shiers said. “I finally scored a goal with five minutes left in the first half. I’m just glad that the ball went into the net.”

A little more than ten minutes into the second half, the home team scored a corner kick goal.

Senior Eleanor Colati sent the ball into the box from the right corner and Shiers headed it into the net. The Vikings goalie did get her hand on the ball,



Tess Chevalier tries to block her opponent as she goes after the loose ball. TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

but she wasn’t able to make the save.

“I just love scoring head goals,” said Shiers, who scored her team-leading 17th goal of the season. “It was a great ball from Eleanor and I was able to put it into the net. Everything was perfect on that play.”

Rickson is very happy that he’ll be coaching Shiers for one more year.

“Lili is an outstanding athlete,” he said. “She’s a very hard worker and she was our player of the match tonight. I’ve coached a couple of outstanding soccer players who have played college

soccer. Lili will have that opportunity in a couple of years.”

Tantasqua managed to hang onto their two goal lead for the final 25 minutes of the match.

Two days later, the Lady Warriors closed out the home slate with an exciting 2-1 overtime victory against ninth-seeded Danvers in the round of 16. They lost, 1-0, at top-seeded Medfield in the Division 3 state quarterfinals, last Saturday night.



Abby Rio tries to play the ball ahead of an opponent.



Nicki Vejack headed the ball.

Hall creates new award with rapper

SPRINGFIELD — The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame and ground-breaking rap star, renowned blockbuster film producer and actor, entrepreneur, and co-founder of the BIG3 basketball league, Ice Cube, are thrilled to announce a pioneering partnership culminating in the creation of the inaugural Ice Cube Impact Award.

This unique collaboration is set to honor Ice Cube’s extraordinary contributions to the world of basketball, his unparalleled passion for the game, and his unwavering commitment to encouraging crucial dialogues surrounding inclusivity, equal opportunity, and racial and social justice while contributing to initiatives focused on education and community development.

“The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame Award named in my honor is truly

remarkable, and words alone can’t express my gratitude for this recognition from such a prestigious organization,” said Ice Cube, a lifelong Lakers fan who grew up playing basketball at the Inglewood YMCA. “Having an award bearing my name only intensifies my commitment to advancing inclusivity and equal opportunity in sports, alongside my unwavering dedication to community activism.”

The Naismith Hall of Fame will permanently house and amplify the Ice Cube Impact Award in its museum and honor subsequent award winners each year through a dedicated exhibit and in-depth storytelling about honorees who use basketball as a platform for good works in their own communities.

“Ice Cube’s unquestionable passion for the game and his desire to see it uti-

lized as a catalyst for positive impact on communities are unwavering,” said John L. Doleva, President and CEO of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame. “His sphere of influence in both the entertainment industry and in the professional sports arena brings remarkable authenticity and value to this award. We are delighted to join hands with Ice Cube as he leverages his love of the game to inspire others. The Ice Cube Impact Award will stand as a testament to the power of basketball and the profound impact it can have on communities worldwide.”

Ice Cube’s remarkable journey through the world of basketball has had a profoundly transforming effect. As the visionary founder of the BIG3, he created a professional league built on the game’s proven bests--Hall of Fam-

ers, World Champions, and All-Stars. The BIG3 has launched and revitalized careers and opened doors for all players and coaches who wish to continue to positively contribute to the game in a format that captures the hearts and imagination of fans nationwide. His unique and innovative approach to the game, which incorporates elements of streetball and professional basketball, also showcases the immense power of sports in uniting communities, as exemplified by the Young3 program focusing on youth in underserved areas.

The Ice Cube Impact Award will be presented to Ice Cube at the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame on Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Monday, January 15, 2024) in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Quilts of Valor

Local veterans honored for answering call to service

By Paula Ouimette
 Editor
 pouimette@turley.com

WARE – Over 359,000 quilts have been gifted to veterans thanks to the efforts of the Quilts of Valor Foundation, which was started 20 years ago by founder Catherine Roberts.

This past Veterans Day, five area veterans received quilts during HomeFront Strong's Military Appreciation Breakfast, held at the Senior Center. The quilts were lovingly made by quilters of the Pro Style Graphics Chapter of Quilts of Valor in Springfield.

After the National Anthem was performed on violin by 13-year-old Graciella Baublitz, those in attendance joined in the Pledge of Allegiance led by brothers Ron and Bobby Rucki.

Presenting the quilts were Kate Blanchard and Connie Barnes.

Blanchard said the quilters in the Springfield chapter started making Quilts of Valor 10 years ago, traveling to the Charlton Sewing Center before starting their own chapter closer to home. Together, they've made over 150 quilts.

Veterans can receive a lot of awards and recognition for their acts of service and bravery when protecting their country and freedom, she said, but these quilts are really to honor their willingness to serve.

"Quilts of Valor are honoring those who served and went where they were told to go," Blanchard said. "You did it, you served."

Blanchard shared a story she heard from a Korean War veteran, who had enlisted when he was just 16 years old. By the time he was 19, he was the "old man" of his unit, with the rank of sergeant.

One day, as this veteran was being driven past another servicemember handling artillery, he noticed something wasn't right with the gun that was about to be fired. He jumped out of the Jeep, and threw a hammer at the gun.

His quick actions saved five lives that day. There wasn't even a notation about this heroic action in his military files, Blanchard said.

This is the life of a veteran, she said. "In many times, this isn't even acknowledged," Blanchard said. "We are grateful for that service."

The quilts were presented to William Griswold, a U.S. Army veteran from Palmer, Belinda Morrone, a U.S. Air Force veteran from Worcester, William "Billy" Byrnes, a U.S. Army veteran from Palmer and Willie Lemieux, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran from Belchertown. Gerald Flynn, a U.S. Army veteran, also received a quilt but was unable to attend the ceremony.



U.S. Air Force veteran and retired HomeFront Strong board member Belinda Morrone receives a Quilt of Valor from Kate Blanchard and Connie Barnes during HomeFront Strong's Military Appreciation Breakfast held at the Ware Senior Center this past Saturday. TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA OUI-METTE

Morrone, a retired HomeFront Strong board member, is part of a smaller group of veterans recognized for their service, Blanchard said.

"We're in a minority being female, but we are veterans," said Blanchard, who is also a veteran.

Blanchard and Barnes wrapped each quilt around its recipient, thanking them individually for their service.

"We truly hope they provide warmth and comfort to you," Blanchard said of the quilts.

This is the third year HomeFront Strong, formerly the Brookfield Institute, has hosted its Military Appreciation Breakfast on Veterans Day. The breakfast is always free, and open to all veterans, servicemembers, and their families.

"We had a veterans breakfast prior to the pandemic," Jennifer Baublitz, executive director for HomeFront Strong said, seeing it return as an annual event last year.

This breakfast is just one of the ways HomeFront Strong continues its mission to build resiliency in veterans and military families through targeted programs and resources. The organization also hosts a drop-in Morning Coffee program on the fourth Thursday of each month from 10-11:30 a.m. at the Palmer Public Library, offering snacks, coffee and camaraderie.

"We remember those who serve the people," Baublitz said. "We remember our comrades."

While almost every seat in the dining room of the Senior Center was filled on Saturday, one chair at a small table remained empty the entire time.

The table, which was draped in a white table cloth, was set to honor prisoners of war and those missing in action.

"We remember them," Baublitz said, as she read the significance of each item placed on the table. "Remember until the day they come home."

The table is smaller than the other tables in the dining room, symbolizing the frailty of one prisoner alone against their captors. The black napkin represents the emptiness left in the families' hearts.

The table has a red rose, a candle, a bread plate and an inverted wine glass. On the bread plate is a lemon, a bitter reminder of these POW/MIA's fate, and salt to represent the tears of their loved ones.

The glass is overturned, to remind people that these servicemembers are not here to raise their glasses.

Baublitz credited a crew of dedicated volunteers for making the breakfast a success, including Senior Center Executive Director John Zienowicz, Chef Alton Davis, Council on Aging members and Senior Center volunteers, along with Country Bank staff, who served and cleared plates.

Morrone presented a medallion coin to each volunteer, as well as to HomeFront Strong staff and volunteers.

She also recognized Town Manager Stuart Beckley, Veterans Service Officer Mark Avis, along with Select-board members Nancy Talbot and Jack Cascio and Superintendent of Ware Public Schools Michael Lovato, who all attended the breakfast.

For more information about HomeFront Strong and the programs and services it offers, find them on Facebook and Instagram, visit brookfieldinstitute.org, call 508-499-9589 or email jennifer@brookfieldinstitute.org.



A veteran stands as the U.S. Marine Corps song is played.



Kate Blanchard thanks Palmer veteran William "Billy" Byrnes for his service.



Veterans stand as their military branch's song is played.



William Griswold of Palmer proudly wears his Quilt of Valor, joined by his wife, Charlann.



A U.S. Air Force veteran stands for his branch's song.



U.S. Army veterans stand during their branch's song.



William "Billy" Byrnes, a U.S. Army veteran, wears his red, white and blue quilt.



Connie Barnes wraps William Griswold in his Quilt of Valor.



Graciella Baublitz, age 13, performs the National Anthem on violin. She has been playing since she was 5 years old.



Belchertown veteran Willie Lemieux, U.S. Marine Corps, wears his Quilt of Valor as Kate Blanchard explains its significance.



A U.S. Coast Guard veteran stands for his branch's song.

COMPETITION

FROM PAGE 1

days that lasted exactly one minute each.

Out of the 12 schools and 72 teams that participated in the event, a total of 300 middle and high school students were in attendance.

One of Quaboag's teams, "Buy Low, Sell High" from Quaboag won first place. The students in this team were Kassidy Pelland, Emily Cieslak, Richard Tracy, Daniel Hobart, and Izaiah Flores.

The team ended the game with the highest net worth of \$1,369,533.62 and an ROI of 36.95% and won a pizza party for all students in DiRico's Personal Finance classes.

RIGHT: Quaboag Regional High School's "Buy Low, Sell High" won first place at the Junior Achievement of Springfield's annual Stock Market Competition. The students in this team were Kassidy Pelland, Emily Cieslak, Richard Tracy, Daniel Hobart and Izaiah Flores. SUBMITTED PHOTO



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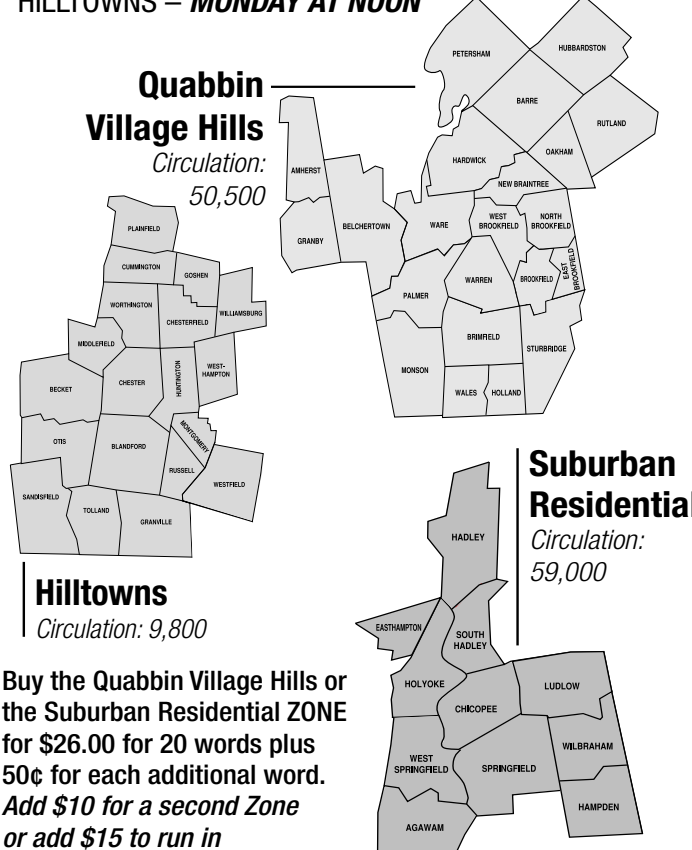
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MEETING | FROM PAGE 1

by the dinner's sold out attendance. "He's doing such a great job being the welcoming face of the Chamber in four short months," she said. "He's invested in being involved and building lasting relationships."

In the coming year, the Chamber is gearing up to do more, Buteau said, including the return of its annual community awards, as well as increased marketing for Chamber members.

Buteau also credited the Chamber's Board of Directors for their team effort to work together; Ruggiero, Treasurer Julie Quink of Burkhart Pizzanelli P.C., Assistant Treasurer Renee Niedziela of J. Stolar Insurance Agency, Clerk Amy Scribner of River East School-to-Career and past Chairperson Tanya Bullock of Life's Memories & More.

Buteau said the Chamber welcomed a number of new businesses to its membership this year, including the Chamber's youngest member, Bill Partelo of Wicked Woodworking, who just celebrated his 18th birthday.

As Rugeiro took over the meeting from Buteau, he thanked the underwriters and Salem Cross Inn for hosting the night's event.

He said the small businesses that make up the Chamber are the "lifeblood of the area," and they're helping the Chamber to overcome changes and challenges.

"This really is an amazing organization...now we are perfectly poised to help you, our members," Rugeiro said. "This Chamber is one of the best resources we have."

Chamber members thanked Buteau for her dedication to its members, and Monson Savings Bank's Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Michael Rouette noted her long career in community banking.

"Lena is passionate about her job, her employees...she is a strong advocate for customer service," Rouette said. "We're here tonight to celebrate her role in the Chamber. It wasn't an easy role she walked into. She devoted countless hours to the Chamber."

Lavoie and Scribner presented Buteau with an elegant black wooden chair, made by Standard Chair of Gardner. Buteau's name is engraved on the chair, along with the Chamber's newly designed logo.

Featured speaker for the evening was state Rep. Todd Smola, who was joined by newly elected state Sen. Peter Durant.

Smola touched on several issues before the State House and in his role as a ranking member of the Ways & Means Committee.

"We have our finger on the pulse strings of Massachusetts," he said.

Smola said a lot has changed since the COVID pandemic, including the issue of portability. Remote accessibil-

ity has given people the ability to do a number of jobs from anywhere in the world.

Now, there is out-migration from the commonwealth, which has dropped 12 spots to being ranked 45th among states for tax incentives. Smola said a tax incentive package was passed to help balance it out.

"We manage our money really well," Smola said of the commonwealth.

Even with the best money management, housing continues to be a top concern for residents of Massachusetts. The housing crisis is impacting people from all income levels.

"Housing, housing, housing...it is our big problem," Smola said, and its another reason people are relocating to other states.

Smola said 400,000 additional housing units will help the problem, but it won't fix it.

Transportation is another issue residents face, Smola said, especially in rural areas where infrastructure is lacking. Retention of workers is also a concern for business owners, especially in western Massachusetts.

"We are losing our young workforce," he said.

Smola said while the commonwealth is facing these issues, its strength lies in the small businesses that continue to grow and serve people across the region.

"The backbone of this region is really the small businesses," Smola said.

About the Chamber

The Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce was established in 1978 to assist businesses in the Quaboag Hills Region, serving the towns of Belchertown, Brimfield, Brookfield, East Brookfield, Hardwick, Holland, Monson, New Braintree, North Brookfield, Palmer, Spencer, Wales, Ware, Warren and West Brookfield.

Its mission is to advance economic growth and tourism in the region, to be an advocate for policies that achieve the development goals of the communities, and to advance the interests of its members.

The Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce offers more than just networking opportunities. It helps the business community from the smallest entrepreneurs to the largest corporations; through trainings, seminars and more.

Membership fees start at \$245 a year, with the average business paying about \$1 a day for the Chamber's services. Membership fees are only \$100 for nonprofit organizations.

The Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce is located at 4 Springfield St., Suite 525, Three Rivers. For more information, visit qhma.com, call 413-283-2418 or email info@qhma.com.

- obituary -

Claire A. Nickerson, 88

WARREN – Claire A. (Wirf) Nickerson, of Warren, died on Friday, Nov. 10, 2023, at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield after a brief illness, at the age of 88.

She leaves her daughter, Deborah Tonelli and her husband Norman of Westerly, Rhode Island; two sons, Timothy Nickerson of Warren, and Jeff Nickerson and his wife Sharon of North Brookfield; four grandchildren, Melissa Vadnais, Allyson Manganello, Tyler Nickerson and Conor Nickerson, as well as three great-grandchildren, Timothy, Rachel, and Julian Letourneau.

She was predeceased by her parents, Walter Wirf and Hattie (Chapin) Wirf, her sister Hilda (Wirf) Zrate, and the love of her life, her husband, Donald Nickerson, who passed away in September.

After graduating from Warren High School, Claire married her high school sweetheart "Nick" and began to raise her family. Along with her husband she helped manage Nickerson's Par 3 golf course cooking hundreds of meals over many years.

She volunteered her time on the Warren Fire Department Auxiliary where she helped serve coffee and food to firemen fighting fires at all hours of the day and night. For many years she volunteered counting votes at annual elections for the town of Warren.

Past jobs included being a secretary at WARE radio station, hostess at Salem Cross Inn, and for many years working in the office at Warren Pumps.

Claire was a loving and devoted wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

At an early age Claire excelled at tap dancing and would perform in local recitals. She was an excellent seamstress, sewing beautiful clothes

and costumes for her children and grandchildren.

She loved gardening and crafts. She enjoyed travelling on cruises with Nick and also taking many fun trips with her grandchildren and enjoyed spending time with "the girls" having coffee at the Warren Spa.

Claire was a very generous person who would help anyone in need.

Nick and Claire were a wonderful and loving couple and will be missed by all who had the privilege to know them. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Honor Flight Connecticut at www.honorflightct.org or Second Chance Animal Shelter at <https://www.secondchanceanimals.org/donate/>.

A joint graveside burial for Nick and Claire will be held in the spring at Pine Grove cemetery in Warren and updates will be posted on this obituary. Varnum Funeral Home, Inc., 43 East Main St., in West Brookfield is assisting the family with arrangements.

An online guest book is available at varnumfuneralhome.com.



Death Notice

Nickerson, Claire A. (Wirf)
Died Nov. 10, 2023

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QUABOAG CURRENT

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