

# QUABOAG CURRENT

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TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA OUIMETTE

Volunteers from the North Brookfield Community Food Collaborative distributed 210 turkeys and bags of food to make Thanksgiving meals last Thursday afternoon.

## Voters took action at town meeting

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
pouimette@turley.com

STURBRIDGE – At the start of the Special Town Meeting, Moderator Leigh Darrin remembered several residents who passed away this year, and asked voters to observe a moment of silence to honor them.

“First, Mary Blanchard, a woman that we can all agree was a dedicated public servant and cared deeply about the town of Sturbridge,” she said at the Nov. 17 meeting.

Blanchard, who was a teacher at Burgess Elementary School before retirement, also served on the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Open Space Committee and the Select Board. She was in her sixth term on the Select Board when she died in September.

Darrin also remembered Margaret Darling, who

## Volunteers made Thanksgiving possible for all

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
pouimette@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – For the second year in a row, volunteers from the North Brookfield Community Food Collaborative

gathered to distribute everything needed to celebrate Thanksgiving for people facing food insecurity.

This year, the collaborative was able to give away 210 turkeys and bags filled with food, thanks to generous donations and strong

partnerships both locally and across the region. The turkeys were donated to the cause and delivered to town by employees of C&S Wholesale Grocers, who also helped to bring them to residents in need.

“They’ve been support-

ing us the past one and a half years,” North Brookfield Community Food Collaborative founder Karen Farrington said.

Farrington said the collaborative has been able to help more people this year, serving 160 families in ad-

dition to providing support to food pantries in Ware, Brookfield, Spencer and Southbridge.

She credited the collaborative’s success to its volunteers who work tirelessly to

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**STURBRIDGE PAGE 6**

## Board of Health heard proposal from food collaborative

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis  
Correspondent

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The North Brookfield Community Food Collaborative, a food assistance program operated by a group of volunteers headed by Karen Farrington met with the Board of Health last Wednesday to discuss permits needed in order for

the program to continue to operate.

According to the collaborative’s Facebook page, on Oct. 16, they were unable to distribute food as they had to immediately start the process of obtaining a permit for operation, per rule of the Board of Health. In that post, the collaborative alleged that “the board was not able to provide clarity in

what the process looks like.”

In a speech to the board, Farrington explained that the collaborative is a “vital resource” and feeds 160 families in North Brookfield every week, many of whom are physically unable to provide for themselves. She said many of the people who depend on her service are el-

**N BROOKFIELD PAGE 9**

## Gallery to hold 9th annual Holiday Group Show on Dec. 5



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Artists at the West Brookfield Art & Frame Gallery will be featured in the 9th annual Holiday Group Show. An opening reception will be held on Friday, Dec. 5 from 5-7 p.m. Gallery owner and artist Rebecca Fay created this painting of a house decorated with holiday lights.

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
pouimette@turley.com

WEST BROOKFIELD – Get ready for your holiday shopping while also supporting local artists and business at West Brookfield Art & Frame Gallery for the 9th annual Holiday Group Show during the month of December.

The Holiday Group Show will showcase the gal-

lery’s artists and will open with a reception on Friday, Dec. 5 from 5-7 p.m. There will be merriment found in the form of wine, cheese and friendly conversation – all while surrounded by one-of-a-kind works of art that are sure to become your loved one’s most cherished holiday gift.

“It’s a time to celebrate our local artists at the gallery,” West Brookfield Art & Frame Gallery owner

Rebecca Fay said of the Holiday Group Show.

Some of the gallery’s artists who will be submitting work for the show include Ruth Sanderson of Easthampton, a well-known illustrator who has worked on over 90 children’s books. Sanderson will have her plein air paintings and scratchboards at the show.

**GALLERY SHOW PAGE 10**

## Superintendent presented MCAS scores

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
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NORTH BROOKFIELD – Superintendent Timothy McCormick provided a “big picture” view of the school district’s 2025 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System testing results to the School Committee, including tracking student growth.

At the Nov. 17 meeting, he said the data was broken down into different categories, including meeting and

exceeding expectations, and not meeting and partially meeting expectations.

McCormick said the school district is not requiring assistance or intervention from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education or the state at this time.

“That is because we are making a lot of progress,” he said.

McCormick said district wide, North Brookfield Public Schools showed “moderate progress” toward growth,

with 38%. The high school saw 78% growth from 2024 MCAS scores to 2025, which fell into the “meeting or exceeding targets” range and the elementary school at 37%.

McCormick said despite the growth, the high school is still in need of assistance from the state due to only 94% of math students taking the test last year, just shy of the 95% required. He said he has reviewed the testing data and discovered potential er-

**MCAS SCORES PAGE 9**



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# - community -

## Board welcomed new Police Chief and TA

**By Paula Ouimette**  
*Editor*  
 pouimette@turley.com  
**NORTH BROOKFIELD** – Board of Selectmen Chair Jason Petraitis said two weeks prior, the board interviewed Lieutenant Ryan Daley for the position of Police Chief, which he has accepted.

Town Clerk Tara Hayes swore Daley in during the Nov. 18 meeting, and the board members welcomed him to his new role as the head of the Police Department. Petraitis also thanked former Police Chief Mark Smith, who took a position in another town.

“Welcome aboard Ryan as the Chief,” he said. “I’d also like to thank Mark Smith for his service to North Brookfield as the Chief of Police over the last few years. Mark, we wish you well in your endeavors going forward.”

**New Town Administrator**

Petraitis introduced new Town Administrator Ron Aponte during the meeting. Aponte started in the position on Nov. 17, and previously served as Town Administrator in Brookfield.

“I am looking forward to the challenge,” Aponte said.

**Easement for National Grid**

Petraitis said National Grid had approached the board previously about

transferring an easement the town owns for sewer to the utility company in order to expand a substation.

“We were able to negotiate \$15,000. They’re going to purchase the easement from us for that,” he said.

National Grid will also tie-in to the town’s sewer system.

Petraitis said the sale would need to be approved by voters at town meeting, and will appear as an article on the warrant at the special town meeting to be held on Wednesday, Dec. 10 at 6 p.m. in the high school kiva. He said if the article is approved, the \$15,000 will appear in free cash next year.

Petraitis said the town had paid \$300 for the easement in 1887, which is equivalent to over \$11,000 now.

**Trench fee increase**

Highway Department Superintendent Randy Morgan presented a proposal to the board to increase the trench fee from \$30 to \$250. He said the fee has not been adjusted for years and other towns charge closer to \$300.

This fee is applied whenever a trench is dug in the road, and would be used to cover the cost of any repairs.

The board approved the increase in the trench fee.

**Grant award and donation**

The board accepted a grant in the amount of

\$1,750 from St. Vincent’s Community Healthcare Fund to fund wellness programs and outreach as well as heart disease education for seniors citizens at the Senior Center.

The board also accepted a donation to the Council on Aging in the amount of \$2,000 from Country Bank.

**Public comment**

John Tripp asked if the board had read a letter he submitted regarding the removal of a small children’s picnic table he built that was removed from the Little Park downtown. He said he did not receive a response from any of the board members.

Tripp said he was told the table was removed by the Parks & Recreation Committee due to concerns about the chain connecting it to another table being a tripping hazard.

“These table and benches were all built in my garage in November 2020 by my son and I,” Tripp said. “They were donated by many townspeople and others...They were donated in remembrance of family members and loved ones. These tables and benches should remain at the Little Park.”

Tripp asked for the table to be returned to the park, and offered to secure it to

the pavers. He said if the table is not put back in the park, he would like it returned to him.

Petraitis said the board has discussed his letter and will be responding to him.

Tripp also offered to maintain Little Park, and to gather other volunteers to help him.

**Change order for Fire/Highway building**

The board reviewed and approved a change order for the Fire/Highway building project.

**CDBG extension**

The board signed an extension for the Community Development Block Grant to complete the final phase of the Mount Pleasant Street Improvement Project. The grant will now be extended to June 30, 2026.

**Spending request**

The board approved a spending request from the Highway Department in the amount of \$1,300 to repair the brake system on the 2011 F350 truck.

**Budget development policy**

The board read and approved a budget development policy letter that will be sent to all departments. The letter explained the due dates for various budgets and capital requests, allocating for line items and more.

## Wings of Song sings of Night, Moon, and Stars

**STURBRIDGE** – al Church, 61 Elm St. in Southbridge, on Sunday, Dec. 14 at 3 p.m. As always, both concerts are free to the public, with a freewill offering collected.

As always, both venues are handicap accessible. As always, yummy refreshments will be served after each concert. And as always, folks are advised to come early to be sure of a seat.

Music Director Nym Cooke provides this glimpse into what you’ll hear: “Everything from an operatic quartet by Baroque composer Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) to the bluegrass gospel song ‘Beautiful Star of Bethlehem’; from ‘Moon is Walking’ by Joseph Shabalala of Ladysmith Black Mambazo to the world premiere of ‘Notte’ by Wings of Song tenor Gianni Davilli; from the tender Danish Christmas song ‘Among the Stars of Midnight’ to John Rutter’s magnificent choral setting of ‘O Holy Night’; from the shape-note song ‘Star in the East’ to Henry VIII’s ‘Green Grow’th the Holly’... Audiences will join us in singing three Christmas classics that feature stars: ‘The First Nowell,’ ‘O Little Town of Bethlehem,’ and ‘We Three Kings of Orient Are.’”

People are strongly encouraged to bring stars or moons, to be held or hoisted aloft at key points in the proceedings. More than one moon is fine, in the spirit of celebration.

The celebration takes the form of two concerts: one at St. Joachim Chapel, 16 Church St. in Fiskdale (part of Sturbridge), on Saturday, Dec. 13 at 7:30 p.m., and the other at the Elm Street Congregation-

## Gilbert Players bring ‘Nuncrackers’ to The Center

**HARDWICK** – The Gilbert Players of Hardwick are pleased to announce their Holiday performance of “Nuncrackers”.

This spirited and comical musical production centers around a small group of nuns discovering that their cook ( Sister Julia), Child of God, has accidentally poisoned

52 of the sisters and they are in dire need of funding to properly pay for the funerals.

The sisters decide that the

best way to raise money is to put on a variety show in the Center at Eagle Hill so they take over the auditorium.

Here we meet Reverend Mother Regina ( a former circus performer) and other delightfully funny nuns who have ventured from being a street wise punk, a wannabe ballerina and Sister Amnesia a delightfully wacky nun who lost her memory when a crucifix fell on her head. There is no

doubt about it, this performance is “habit” forming as they tackle temptations and bring the audience into the convent with them.

The Gilbert Players have a reputation of putting on top notch shows, sold out performance and family fun for all.

You may remember their last production of “ Chicago”. Well, some of the women behind bars have become nuns. So put on your happy face and join the nuns for a

few hours of laughs.

“Nuncrackers” will be performed at The Center at Eagle Hill, 242 Old Petersham Road, on Friday, Dec. 5 at 7 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 6 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 7 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$10, \$17 and \$19.

Tickets can be purchased online at thecenterateaglehill.org, calling the box office at 413-477-6746, or at the door. Advanced purchase is recommended as this show is likely to sell out.

## Santa Parade and Tree lighting

**NORTH BROOKFIELD** – The annual Santa Parade and Tree Lighting will be held on Saturday, Nov. 29.

The parade starts at 5 p.m., leaving the high school and traveling down North Main Street to deliver Santa to the Little Tree Park. The tree lighting will be held at 6 p.m. at the park, followed by caroling at the church. Stop by the library to write letters to Santa from 3-5 p.m.

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 The Holyoke Sun  Ware River News  
 Journal Register  The Wilbraham-Hampden Times

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

## - community -

### Church hosts Holiday Concert and Sing-Along

STURBRIDGE – The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale will present a holiday concert and sing-along on Sunday, Nov. 30, at 3 p.m. in the church sanctuary at 8 Maple St., according to Rev. David W. Cote, pastor.

The concert will feature music of the season from the Fanfare Brass Ensemble and the Sturbridge Federated Church choir, under the direction of choral director, Andrew Kosiba.

The Fanfare Brass Ensemble, established by David Neill in 2008, draws its inspiration from the acclaimed Philip Jones Brass Ensemble.

The Fanfare Brass Ensemble is composed of experienced brass musicians including David Neill (Bass Trombone), Trumpet players Robert Venables, Sheldon Ross,

Ken McCance, and Melissa Willis, Jean Jeffries (French Horn), Trombonists David Sporny and Charles Emery, Ernie Adams (Bass Trombone), and David Winer (Tuba).

The event is free to the public, with a voluntary goodwill offering to be collected during the performance.

For more information about the event, please visit the church website at [sturfed.org](http://sturfed.org) or contact the church office at 774-304-1021 or via email at [churchoffice@sturfed.org](mailto:churchoffice@sturfed.org).

The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale joyfully celebrates Christ's presence and God's grace in our lives.

Members of the community are welcome and invited to join in worship on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. Services are also live-streamed on the church's Facebook page.

### Veteran's Breakfast celebrated those who served



West Brookfield Senior Center's Director Kelly Hitt and her amazing team of staff, volunteers and members of the Rotary Club of the Brookfields worked hard to provide their annual delicious Veteran's Breakfast for the local veterans and their families. The presentation of the flag's by the West Brookfield Color Guard, representing the service of our armed forces added to the event. Everyone had a wonderful time and no one left hungry. Thank you, to all our veterans.

### Church announces Holly Berry Fair vendors

STURBRIDGE – The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale will hold its annual Holly Berry Fair on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. in the church's Fellowship Hall at 8 Maple St.

Co-chairs Nancy Castendyk and Janet-Rae Sinanian say the annual event will feature an impressive lineup of local artists and makers offering one-of-a-kind gifts—from leather goods and alpaca items to cozy knits and seasonal décor. Shoppers can also stop by Koinonia's booth, where members of the Federated Church women's group will be selling their much-loved baked goods and homemade treats.

"It's a wonderful way to kick off the holiday season," said Castendyk. "There's always something special to discover, and it's all in support of our local artisans and



Handcrafted items like these cute reindeer will be offered at this year's Holly Berry Fair on Saturday, Dec. 6

community."

Featured local artisans include Penny Adams (aromatherapy), Corinn Algier (herbalism/salves), Charles Batterby (leather goods), Mary Bernstein (tie dye), Sandi Bostrom (handbags), Benjamin Brigham (coun-

try decor), Susan Bundeff (stained glass), Tamara Cook (snowflake tree), Bonnie Fancy (knitted items), and Collette Gage (alpaca items).

The fair will also feature Madison Gallipeau (crocheted items), Emma Lane (stone jewelry), Linda Mc-

Manus (table runners), Misy Peters (wooden items), Julia Plasse (handbags), Mary Shaw (crocheted scarves), and Janet Sinanian (iris folded cards).

For additional information about the Holly Berry Fair or other upcoming events, please visit the Church website at [sturfed.org](http://sturfed.org), visit the Church's Facebook page @FederatedChurchSturbridgeFiskdale, or contact the Church office at 774-304-1021 or [churchoffice@sturfed.org](mailto:churchoffice@sturfed.org).

The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale joyfully celebrates Christ's presence and God's grace in our lives.

Members of the community are welcome and invited to join in worship on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. Services are also live-streamed on the church's Facebook page.

### Wreaths Across America ceremony is Dec. 13

WEST BROOKFIELD – On Saturday, Dec. 13 at noon on the Common, a ceremony to recognize Wreaths Across America Day will be held.

Sponsor a wreath to remember and honor a West Brookfield veteran. Wreaths will be placed on all of West Brookfield veterans' graves at Pine Grove and Sacred Heart Cemeteries following the ceremony.

Last year, 400 wreaths were placed on veterans graves in West Brookfield.



For more info, contact Nadine Morin at 774-200-3396 or Joanne Dorman at 508-867-2524.

### Library hosts 'Polar Express' event Nov. 29

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The Haston Free Public Library, 161 North Main St., is hosting a Polar Express themed event on Saturday, Nov. 29 from 3-5 p.m.

Youth Services Librarian Brianna Lamb will be reading the classic Christmas tale, "The Polar Express".

Kids will get a chance to write their letters to Santa Claus during this fun event. There will be holiday music playing and it will be provided by On Q Piano Students.

The event will also feature a bake sale and cookie walk with the proceeds going towards benefitting library programs.

### Senior Center lists events in December

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

Activities include: a free drawing class – Casting Shadows on Thursday, Dec. 4, at 11 a.m.; free art class – Christmas Lanterns on Thursday, Dec. 11, at 11 a.m.; music bingo on Monday, Dec. 15 at 10 a.m.; and drawing class – Portfolio Work on Thursday, Dec. 18 at 11 a.m.

A blood pressure/glucose clinic will be held on Monday, Dec. 15 at 10:30 a.m.

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

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### The West Brookfield Rescue Squad's 2026 Subscription Drive is now available!

- The 2026 subscriptions are valid January 1, 2026-December 31, 2026.
- Subscriptions are open to all residents within our service area (West Brookfield, Hardwick, and New Braintree, MA).
- Subscriptions are available on our website!
- Individuals who would rather fill out the form in person are welcome to call and schedule an appointment with a member of our team

Scan the QR code or visit our website at [wbrescuesquad.org](http://wbrescuesquad.org) to subscribe!



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Phone: (508) 637-1778

- opinion -

# Thanksgiving nostalgia and planning ahead for next year's gratefulness

The arrival of Thanksgiving always gets me a little nostalgic.

Gone are the days of sneaking into the kitchen with my sister for a little bit of the crispy dressing from the stuffed turkey still in our parent's oven. Or how about awakening to the wonderful scents the morning of, knowing mom had been up at 4 a.m. getting the bird prepared.

It was always so much fun to butter the brown and serve rolls and then transfer them from the oven to the pre-heated trivet in their little wooden basket. I can smell the smells if I think about it long enough, and surely I can see my dad at the counter with the carving knife in hand.

Another big tradition was the nut bowl and the nut cracker and tools. We only ate nuts at Thanksgiving, and at Christmas to a lesser extent. I remember the Brazil nuts and walnuts being especially hard to crack with my little hands, but the challenge was half the fun.

These memories from my childhood are replaced with new traditions that my kids will call their own memories when they are my age. I guess the important thing is that we are thankful on this day whether it is for the memories, the people or the food or all of it. Gratitude goes a long way.

This Thanksgiving I am especially thankful for the bountiful harvest from this year's vegetable garden. The old motto goes something like: "you get out what you put in."

This year I sure put in a lot of effort in hopes of that harvest. When rain stopped I watered and watered and watered some more.

I made an investment in organic fertilizers and mulched the rows as best as I could. I lugged free compost home by the bucket. I harvested even when I was tired of it and preserved it all even after I grew weary.

Does all this make me a saint or a perfect gardener? By all means, no. I still



planted too close and didn't weed as much as I should. I got my flowers in too late and didn't stake a single one.

Oh well, no one and nothing is perfect, but I guess my attention was directed towards the harvest and I am happy to have succeeded at that to a pretty good degree.

I ordered my first seed catalog for the 2026 growing season this past week, and I can't wait until it arrives. I can picture how much fun I'll have going through last year's seeds and notes while I plan my garden.

When you undertake this process, keep in mind what you want your attention directed towards. Do you want to streamline, experiment or perfect?

I learned this year that I don't need eight varieties of tomatoes to make a really good sauce. What I do need is a really good paste tomato variety, and maybe a two or three cherry types for salads, and one slicing variety to top an occasional burger.

That is just an example, but you get the idea. Streamlining is practical.

If you want to try growing new things, maybe Brussels sprouts like I wrote about last week, or sweet potatoes, like I experimented with this past summer, take some time over the offseason to look up the particulars so that you will be successful.

I did a show and tell with some students recently and it was a lot of fun to show them some out of the ordinary things that can be grown at home, like popcorn and luffa sponges for example. Get creative.

Maybe what will inspire you is getting something right, doing a better job

growing a certain crop.

Did your zucchini look like baseball bats? Don't worry, next year you'll harvest sooner and more often. Same thing goes for those blimpy cukes. And what about those carrots? Next year you'll loosen up your soil and remove some rocks from the carrot patch so that they won't all fork. Straight, long roots here we come.

Wishing you all a Happy Thanksgiving! Have fun when the planning stage begins for next year's garden. It is, after all, just about six months away from our frost-free date.

Now that is something to be thankful for!

*Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.*

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## If we both collect Social Security, will our benefits be affected?

Dear Rusty:

I reached full retirement age back in June, but I have not yet filed to collect Social Security. My husband currently collects SS funds, and he waited until he had reached full retirement age a few years ago. I am considering signing up now to receive my funds, but I am a little confused about whether I will receive my full benefit or is there some kind of adjustment made based on both of us collecting?

We are a simple case. We have been married for 46 years, so there are no other exes involved in this equation. He did everything online when he was ready to start receiving his funds, but we didn't consult with any advisor when my husband claimed. Now I think that adding me as a spouse might trigger some other things I should consider. Thank you for your advice.

Signed: Concerned Wife

Dear Concerned:

Since you and your husband have both reached your respective SS Full Retirement Age, you are both entitled to receive your full benefits without any reduction. And since you haven't yet filed, you are now accumulating Delayed Retirement Credits at the rate of .667% additional benefit for each month you continue to delay. You will get your full SS retirement benefit plus any earned DRCs when you claim. The only question you need to consider is whether either you or your husband will be entitled to a "spousal boost," an increase when you claim.

If the SS retirement benefit you were entitled to at your FRA is less than 50% of the amount your husband was entitled to at his FRA, then you will get a "spousal boost" on top of your own SS retirement amount (the "boost" amount would be the difference between your FRA amount and half of his FRA amount). But if your SS amount at your FRA is more than 50% of your husband's FRA enti-

tlement, then you will only get your own SS retirement benefit based on your own lifetime earnings record. Spouse benefits are always determined from each partner's FRA entitlement and if one partner's FRA amount is less than 50% of the other partner's FRA amount, then a spousal boost will be given. And that also works if your FRA entitlement is higher than your husband's, if your FRA amount is more than twice your husband's FRA amount, then he will get a spousal boost from you. Otherwise, each of you will get only your personally earned SS retirement amount and both of you collecting SS will not negatively affect each other's individual SS benefit.

FYI, the spousal boost amount stops growing at full retirement age, so if you are eligible for a spousal boost from your husband then you should claim your SS benefits now and ask for benefits retroactive to June (your FRA month). However, if you will not get a spousal boost from your husband, you have the option of delaying even further and earning more DRCs (thus a higher monthly benefit). You can earn DRCs up to age 70, at which time you will get the maximum possible Social Security benefit about 127% of your personal FRA amount if you delay that long.

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

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## "Falling back" to a season of change

It's not just the leaves that change in autumn. We do, too.

Our bodies naturally change with the seasons, as the hours of sunlight, temperatures and humidity fluctuate. In our fast-paced modern world, we are tempted to ignore these seasonal signals, enabled as we are by artificial lighting, indoor climate control and the year-round availability of many foods. (Strawberries in January? Really?)

Let's look at some of the ways our bodies adjust to fall, and a few ways you can perhaps enhance well-being by paying attention to them.

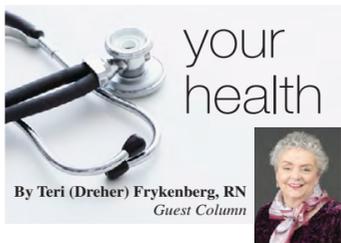
### Sleep disruptions

The hours of sunlight gradually become fewer after the summer equinox, and then there's the jarring change when we turn our clocks back in November. The politicians have haggled for years whether "falling back" is still necessary, as it requires students to get up while it's still dark, and sunset comes ever earlier.

The effects on our bodies are profound. With less exposure to natural light, we sleep more, which can affect mood, focus, memory and energy. Later sunrises might make it harder to get out of bed in the morning, and daytime drowsiness becomes more frequent.

### Less physical activity

Chilly mornings and earlier darkness may make us less likely to get that morning or evening walk in. We sit and watch foot-



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN  
Guest Column

your health

planning for the upcoming holidays.

And, of course, dry skin becomes more of a problem in the fall, when indoor humidity drops.

### A few tips:

Get more sunlight: More exposure to sunlight increases Vitamin D, serotonin and dopamine (the feel-good brain chemicals). In particular, morning sunlight helps our bodies sync our circadian rhythms with the season, which in turn helps us sleep better at night. It can also counteract the effects of the blue light emanating from our computers, tablets and phones.

Put your senses to work: Feel the colder air on your cheeks, listen to the leaves crunching under your feet and smell the changes in the air. Smell the crisp air, and perhaps experiment with some aromatherapy scents indoors – eucalyptus, cardamom, lavender – to elevate mood and tamp down anxiety.

Take care of your skin: Amp up your use of moisturizers, turn off the dehumidifier and avoid long, hot showers and baths. Treating your skin kindly now will help as we head into the even drier winter months.

Try some "fall foods": Eating vitamin-rich vegetables now will help you fight off winter illnesses. Good choices include squashes (pumpkin, butternut, acorn and the like); green leafy spinach and

TOUR HEALTH  
PAGE 10

## OPINION PAGE/ LETTERS POLICY

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

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## - community -

### First Congregational joins in White Christmas festivities

WEST BROOKFIELD – The First Congregational Church of West Brookfield, 36 North Main St., will host an open house on Sunday, Dec. 7 from 11:30 a.m.-5 p.m. during the town’s White Christmas celebration.

The dining area opens

at 11:30 a.m. and the menu includes: a plentiful and delicious hot turkey sandwich with stuffing, gravy and cranberry sauce, hot dogs, chili dogs, chili by the bowl, two kinds of homemade soup, chicken, egg and ham salad sandwiches, home-

made pie - apple, blueberry and pumpkin and new this year – cheesecake.

They will also offer a huge raffle with many items and gift cards, a concert by the Hardwick Memorial Handbell Choir at 1:30 p.m., “Find-the-Elf” for

the kids, free door prize raffle and a bountiful baked-goods table.

A special treat this year is a raffle for a gorgeous handmade quilt. The pattern is Potato Chip and measures approx. 58 inches by 68 inches.

The Christmas tunes will be playing and the atmosphere will be festive and cheery. A wonderful place to be to welcome in our holiday season.

Call the church for more information at 508-867-7078.

### Fiskdale resident started at Lasell University

NEWTON – Sebastian Troyse, a student from Fiskdale began their first semester in the fall of 2025 at Lasell University.

### TURKEYS FROM PAGE 1

ensure everyone has access to food.

“It is exactly what it sounds like...everybody collaborates to make it hap-

pen,” she said.

Farrington said 15 volunteers worked to distribute bags that were filled by students from North Brookfield Jr./Sr. High School. Students in North

Brookfield Elementary School’s third grade class spread holiday cheer by creating handmade cards for each bag’s recipient.

Farrington said the collaborative surveyed residents in town about their food needs, and they expressed the importance of greater accessibility. Many are unable to attend scheduled food pantry distributions due to scheduling conflicts, lack of transportation and other barriers.

“People struggle to get to food pantries at designated times,” Farrington said. “Our food pantry’s open 24/7, 365 days a year.”

Farrington said the collaborative has gained sup-

port from its partnerships with local farmers, business and organizations. She added that the collaborative’s mission to fight food insecurity will continue to grow.

“We have an awful lot of community support, but we also know we need to get bigger,” she said. “More needs to be done.”

Farrington’s daughters Abby MacDonald and Audra Hogle were also on hand to assist volunteers with the “organized chaos” of the Thanksgiving bag distribution.

MacDonald said the collaborative has been a good thing for the town, and that it has brought



Volunteers gave out a variety of pies to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday.

people closer together. She said its success wouldn’t be possible without everyone’s help and support.

“At this point, I feel like we’re all family,” she said. “We care about each other.”



North Brookfield Community Food Collaborative founder Karen Farrington (right) directed Nancy Waldron where to bring a bag of food.



Third grade students at North Brookfield Elementary School designed cards for each meal recipient.



Bags were filled with everything needed to cook a Thanksgiving meal. Giving with gratitude



C&S Wholesale Grocers donated 210 turkeys to be given to people facing food insecurity.

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# - community -

## 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 encourages 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: whitechristmas-wb@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.

## Celebrate 'Christmas in New Braintree' Dec. 6

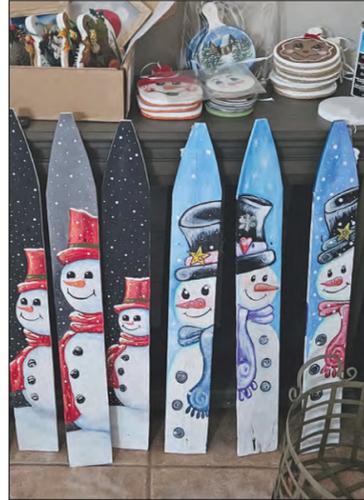
NEW BRAINTREE – The "Christmas in New Braintree Craft Fair" will be held on Saturday, Dec. 6 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. in the New Braintree Grade School and Town Hall.

The fair is sponsored by

the Tri-Parish Community Church. There are a few spaces still available. To reserve, call 443-835-7530.

Other activities taking place during "Christmas in New Braintree" include the traditional Christmas

Cookie Sale and Cafe, crafts and games for kids, visit with Santa, and a horse drawn hayride. Please join the Christmas in New Braintree festivities for a day of shopping and family fun.



Submitted Photos  
Pictured are a few items handcrafted by Jeanette Renaud and Linda St. Denis. These and many other crafts will be available at the "Christmas in New Braintree Craft Fair" to be held on Saturday, Dec. 6 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

## Former West Brookfield resident releases novel

WEST BROOKFIELD – Former West Brookfield resident Jonathan Cook has released a novel about New England's criminal underbelly, "The Vampires of York, Maine: A Modern Crime Story" and will host meet the author book signing events across Worcester County.

Meet the author book signings are scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 7 at West Brookfield Art & Frame during the town's White Christmas celebration beginning at 11 a.m. and Saturday, Dec. 13 at Moon Magick Café by Chey in Southbridge from 2-5 p.m.

Cook worked for 40 years in the restaurant industry including a stint at Salem Cross Inn. He was a journalist for 10 years at various

small papers throughout New England.

He now writes fiction full time from his home in Worcester where he's working on the prequel to "Vampires", called "The Grave robbers of Wormtown" set in Worcester in the 1990's.

"The Vampires of York, Maine: A Modern Crime Story" follows the misadventures of Jerry O'Shaughnessy, journalist turned bar owner, as he gets involved in a missing girl case. In the process, he uncovers human trafficking, a neo-Nazi gang and supernatural elements in coastal Maine.

Packed with history and local lore of the Seacoast, this story has deep ties to the Worcester mafia.

From the book: "What happened on this spot sent

shockwaves through the frontier and into the towns. Some say this traumatizing event caused the Salem Witch Hysteria. Those who think so reason that Salem was the town where refugees from the massacre had fled, and only a few weeks later began the witch trial of Sarah Good accused because she wasn't devout enough. People were quite scared. Life in this area was terrifying in the winter of 1692.

"Here today, we tend to feel those problems are confined to an ancient era, but in reality they were a seed that is still alive even in those with very easy means."

The novel is currently available online and at Tidepool Bookshop on Chandler Street.

### STURBRIDGE FROM PAGE 1

served on the Council on Aging; Robert Duncan, a school psychologist at Tantasqua and co-founder of the Tantasqua Regional Youth Soccer League and an on-call firefighter; Rebecca Gould Mimeault, who served on the Council on Aging and the Senior Center Building Committee; and Laury Applegate, who served as the treasurer for the Friends of the Joshua Hyde Public Library.

Darrin also recognized three National Honor Society students who are residents of the town, who volunteered to help during the town meeting.

### Bylaw changes

Voters took action on the nine-article warrant, including making changes to the town's bylaws.

Article 47 asked voters to add language pertaining to kennel licensing to the bylaws. The commonwealth has required that all cities and towns have a kennel licensing process in place.

### The bylaw change passed 97-7.

Article 48 proposed changes to General Bylaws Chapter 129, Buildings and

### Building Construction.

This change is to ensure reliable emergency communication inside all commercial buildings in order to improve public safety, ensure code compliance and protect both occupants and first responders. The article passed 99-6.

### Fire Department equipment

With article 49, the Fire Department requested \$15,000 to supplement a \$178,800 grant the town received to purchase turnout gear and three cardiac monitors. The price of the cardiac monitors increased, with each one costing \$54,665.33. This article passed 99-3.

### Land donation

Article 54 asked voters to accept the donation of approximately 222 acres of land on Douty Road. The owner of the parcel donated the land to the town to use for general municipal purposes, which includes recreation and open space.

### This article passed 96-10.

### Hometown Heroes fund

Voters passed article 52 with 88 in favor and 16 opposed to establish a Hometown Heroes Revolving Fund for banners to honor the town's veterans. Article 53, which also passed, estab-

lished the spending limits of the revolving fund.

### Library outdoor space

Finance Committee Chair Kevin Smith said article 50 was intended to ask voters for \$30,000 in addition to the \$110,000 allocated at a previous town meeting to cover the cost of an outdoor program space at the Joshua Hyde Public Library.

He said due to changes in the cost of the project, it was recommended that the article be passed over.

Bids for the project came in higher than the \$140,000 estimated, totaling around \$197,300, and the Finance Committee voted to take no action on the article at this time.

"Some options will need to be reconsidered," Smith said.

### Water tank repairs

While repairs were being made to the tanks at the water treatment plant, an inspection of the interior showed a need for additional repairs to the pressure vessel. These repairs are estimated to cost \$75,000.

The amount needed to pay for the additional repairs outlined in article 51 will come from the water reserve account. This article passed 99-6.

### Prior year's bills

Article 46 approved the payment of prior year's bills in the amount of \$5,979.15 with a vote of 101-3.



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# SPORTS

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## Pioneers beat Smith in vocational tournament

PALMER – On Friday, Nov. 14, Pathfinder football picked up a Week 10 win over Smith Vocational 42-12. Pathfinder had multiple turnovers in the first half to get up fast in the game. The matchup was the first round of the vocational school football tournament, with Pathfinder advancing to face Cape Cod Regional Tech on Friday, Nov. 21. Highlights from that matchup will be in next week's edition.



Dustyn Cook kicks off for the Pioneers

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



The Pathfinder defensive line goes for the ball carrier.



The Pioneers get a tackle of a kick returner on special teams.



Stephen Curtis makes a tackle attempt.



Grayson Griswold gets ready to make a handoff.



Jarett Skowyra takes the snap for a point-after kick.

## Warriors pick up win before holiday matchup

FISKDALE – On Friday, Nov. 14, the Tantasqua Regional High School football team picked up a Week 10 win over Shrewsbury in a non-playoff game.

The Warriors qualified for tournament this year and drew a first-round game on Nov. 7 against Scituate High School. The Warriors were defeated 33-10 on the road to end their playoff hopes.

The Warriors drew Shrewsbury on the road in the nonplayoff phase, and their offense put up some big scoring with a 42-35 win. The victory brought Tantasqua's season to an even 5-5 with their annual Thanksgiving Day matchup to take place.

This year, the Warriors drew the home game against their holiday rival Shepherd Hill Regional High School.

## Railers grab 3-2 home win over Gargoyles

WORCESTER – At the next ECHL Board of Governors meeting, Railers COO Mike Myers should suggest that, to save time and aggravation and wear and tear, the league should forego the first three periods of each hockey game and go directly to overtime.

If enough of those around the table said "aye" Worcester might be the first ECHL team to go undefeated.

The Railers did it again last Sunday after noon. Anthony Repaci scored 90 seconds into OT to give his team a 3-2 victory over the Greens-

boro Gargoyles. Worcester has won six games this season, three in overtime.

It is 36-32 in overtime through the years but a remarkable 12-3 in its last 15 OT games. Sunday's fourth-period goal was the seventh of Repaci's career.

At the time, the shot seemed like a waste of time.

Repaci was at the very bottom of the offensive zone, almost to the goal line, and at least 10 feet from Gargoyles goalie (say that fast three times, why don't you?) Ruslan

See RAILERS PAGE 8

## Thunderbirds score win over Utica

SPRINGFIELD - The Springfield Thunderbirds (3-10-2-1) rode a magnificent night from their goaltender to a 2-0 shutout victory over the Utica Comets (2-9-2-1) on Friday night inside a sold-out Mass-Mutual Center.

An unlikely source got the T-Birds onto the score-sheet just 4:04 into the period, as defenseman Leo Loof made a wise read from the defensive zone, jumping into a rush to create a 2-on-1 attack. With Jakub Stancl crashing the net from the left-wing side, Loof used the shooting lane available to him, snapping a wrist over Nico Daws' blocker, giving Springfield the one-goal edge off setups from Hugh McGing and Nikita Alexandrov.

Georgi Romanov got the nod in the T-Birds' goal crease and answered the bell in the opening 20 minutes, making eight stops while his defense in front of him limited Utica's high-danger chances.

The middle period did not produce much in the way of chances, but the Comets made a strong push in the final minutes of

the frame, and Romanov was forced to be at his best with a handful of saves off redirections. The netminder also got some fortunate luck on one occasion as a Mike Hardman deflection attempt glanced off the underside of the crossbar, but stayed out.

Springfield also killed off one Utica power play attempt in the later stages of the second, while Utica went 2-for-2 to begin its night on the penalty kill, including 1:16 of power play time for the T-Birds at the start of the third. The Comets relentlessly pressured the Springfield net throughout the third, but Romanov had answers time and time again. Utica finished the game with 33 shots, but Romanov had stops on every one.

Calle Rosen finally put the game away with 1:11 to play, taking a pass from Romanov behind the net and lobbing a shot 200 feet down the ice and into a yawning cage to round out the scoring. The netminder's first shutout and win as a T-Bird also gave Springfield its second straight win on home ice.

## Quabbin grabs third win in Week 10 game

FITCHBURG – On Friday, Nov. 14, the Quabbin Regional High School football team picked up a win in Week 10 over host Montachusett Tech 20-6. After allowing the first touchdown of the game, Quabbin had 20 unanswered points. Chase Talbot had a 60-yard kick return for a touchdown give Quabbin a 7-6 lead in the second

quarter. Austin Holmes made a fumble recovery in the third quarter and went 55 yard for a touchdown.

Then Zakk Mielnicki had a quarterback keeper in the fourth quarter a four-yard touchdown run. Quabbin was 3-7 heading into their Thanksgiving Eve matchup with rival Gardner High School.



Wes Sanderson enters the pack.



Logan Sherbloom attempts to block two players.



Chase Talbot looks to return the kickoff.



Zakk Mielnicki sends a pass attempt away.



Brady Dennis makes a block on the line.

### Follow Turley Sports on Instagram

Turley Publications sports department has recently joined Instagram. You can find our account by searching "turleysports." We will regularly feature samples of photos that you will see in our publications on a weekly basis. Please follow and share

with your friends and loved ones. We will be featuring photos from all 11 of our sports sections, but as always, you can see all the photos that appear by subscribing to your local paper or picking up a copy in your community.

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# Turleysports

## Athlete of the Month

**NAME: Madelyn Bagg**  
**SCHOOL: Quaboag**

Bagg helped the Cougars to a late season win over Ware a few weeks back, scoring a goal for the Cougars.

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](mailto:gscibelli@turley.com).



## Dante is waiting for a fourth chance

EAST BROOKFIELD – Dante, the beagle who captured hearts in 2020 after spending a full month on the run during her recovery from a broken leg, has returned to Second Chance Animal Services.

Now 12-years-old, Dante is hoping for a “fourth chance” after her owner faced a significant life change and could no longer care for her.

Dante’s history with Second Chance is long and unforgettable. She first arrived on transport from an overcrowded Tennessee shelter. She returned after being hit by a car and underwent surgery for her injuries.

While recuperating in foster care, she escaped and traveled more than 15 miles from Hardwick back to East Brookfield, an incredible journey that made headlines.

At the time, Second Chance CEO Sheryl Blancato said, “It was like a story out of a children’s book where the heroine overcomes her fear through strength and determination to return to the people and place where she first knew love.”

A local resident helped identify the frightened stray, and Second Chance quickly set a trap, later adding a second trap with assistance from Missing Dogs Massachusetts. Staff monitored



Dante is a 12-year-old beagle at Second Chance Animal Services and she is looking for a new home.

live cameras and watched as Dante finally entered the trap set for her safe return.

Despite her ordeal, she was in relatively good shape and had even gained two pounds during her travels.

Today, Dante is a gentle senior girl with a shy disposition. Her adoption bio explains her needs clearly: “I have quite the story. I am an escape artist and I can’t help it; I love to explore! One of my adventures in my earlier years landed me with a broken leg. I absolutely must have a home with a fenced yard. I also need someone who will diligently keep my leash on. It is best if I go home to either a single per-

son or to a couple and no young children because I’m afraid that’s an easy way for me to slip out the door and take to wandering again.”

Because she takes time to warm up, interested adopters will need to make multiple visits to ensure she feels comfortable before heading to her new home. Second Chance is committed to helping her find the safe, loving environment she deserves for her golden years.

For more information or to meet Dante, visit [secondchanceanimals.org/adoptable-dogs](http://secondchanceanimals.org/adoptable-dogs) or stop by the Second Chance Adoption Center at 111 Young Road, to meet her.

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## Monadnock set to hold awards banquet

MILFORD, N.H. – Monadnock Speedway is set to close out another thrilling racing season with a night of celebration, recognition, and community. On Saturday, Dec. 13 beginning at 5:30 p.m., the speedway will host its highly anticipated Annual Awards Banquet at the Best Western in Keene, New Hampshire.

The event will spotlight the achievements of the champions and top ten drivers in the regular weekly divisions, while also recognizing the top three in the Six Shooter Division,

Teddy Bear Pools & Spas Triple Crown Champions, and competitors in the Young Gun Division for their dedication and commitment to the sport. In addition, several specialty awards will be presented throughout the evening, honoring standout performances and contributions both on and off the track.

Fans, drivers, teams, and families are invited to join the festivities as Monadnock Speedway celebrates the close of a competitive season and the communi-

ty that makes it all possible. This annual tradition brings together the best of the racing family for an evening of camaraderie, reflection, and excitement for the upcoming season.

To purchase a ticket online go to: <https://square.link/u/jHFglOQf>

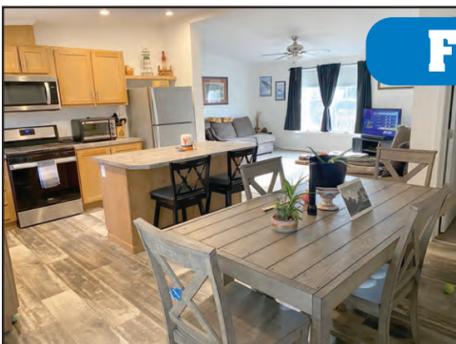
Tickets are limited! Event capacity is 200. Seating is 8 to 10 people per table. Requests to be seated with another team may be made by emailing the speedway @ [monadnock-speedway@ymail.com](mailto:monadnock-speedway@ymail.com).

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## Workshop13 highlights local talent Nov. 29

WARE – Workshop13 is excited to highlight seven local and regional musicians - Charlie Diamond, Eric Troy, Tobey sol Laroche, O’Leyra, Catie Verostick, Makayla Nelson, and featured artist Taija New – in its new Singer Songwriter Series.

This event takes place in Workshop13’s Grand Hall at 13 Church St. on Saturday, Nov. 29. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the performance begins at 7 p.m. Tickets are priced on a sliding scale and are available at [www.workshop13.org](http://www.workshop13.org).

Special guests from the Musical Chairs of Massachusetts podcast/YouTube channel, Chris Guerra and Nikki Cross, will be present. Enjoy photo ops, meet and greets, food for purchase (free popcorn), and a cash bar.

The performance will feature sound design by Brian Jyringi and be hosted by



The Singer Songwriter Series at Workshop13 will feature seven local and regional musicians on Saturday, Nov. 29 at 7 p.m.

Amanda Meli and MC’d by Kevin Wherry.

Singer-songwriters will share their original songs and the stories behind them, “in the round” style, a performance format that brings a group of singer-songwriters

together sharing the stage, with each artist delivering songs one after another. After intermission, enjoy a special featured performance by nationally touring artist Taija New, followed by powerful second round, a group curtain call, and a community meet-and-greet with all performers.

### About Workshop13

Workshop13 is a dynamic center where arts, culture, and community converge—expanding access to the arts and nurturing creativity and self-expression in our rural region. For more information visit [workshop13.org](http://workshop13.org) or call 413-277-6072.

### RAILERS FROM PAGE 7

Khazheyev (say that fast three times, too) but fired away, anyway.

It went through the five-hole to earn two points for the home team.

“I didn’t have an angle,” Repaci said. “I knew I was late in the shift and I could see (Matt Stief) coming downhill. I didn’t want to make a pass that gets picked off and there’s a 2 on 1 going the other way.”

“So what I was trying to do is just throw it into the goalie’s pads and hopefully have it pop out somewhere.”

Repaci has scored 97 goals now for the Railers so, just doing the math, some of them had to be overtime goals. Seven is a high percentage, though.

“I’ll take ‘em,” he said. “I’m thankful that coaches trust me to go out there for 3 on 3 and put me in good

situations where there’s open ice.”

The victory was Worcester’s fifth in the last six games, all at home. The Railers finished this eight-game home-stand, their longest of the season, earning 10 of a possible 16 points. That is a .625 winning percentage, a good mark in a league where home ice is not a huge advantage.

Henrik Tikkanen got the win in the Railers net. He has won four in a row with an 0.73 goals-against average. Worcester is 5-2-1 for 11 points in Tikkanen’s eight starts this season.

Riley Piercey and Matt DeMelis had the other Railers goals. Colton Leiter and Wade Murphy scored for the Gargoyles.

The Railers played one of their best first periods of the season, especially at home, and had the lead after 20 minutes for merely the second time this year.

They dominated the early going and had a lot of pressure, but not a lot of goals. Worcester was finally rewarded when Piercey got his first goal of the season at 13:36 as the Railers took advantage of a turnover created by Max Dorrington.

He controlled the puck about 10 feet inside the blue line and passed it to Piercey. He put a low shot under Khazheyev’s pads to make it 1-0.

Leiter tied it with a power play goal at 4:32 of the second period. DeMelis got the lead back at 11:04, set up by Stief. Murphy re-tied it with a shorthanded goal at 3:53 of the third period, finishing off a 2 on 1 break.

It remained 2-2 until Repaci figured he would just put the puck on net and see what happened.

What happened turned out to be a happy ending for the Railers.

### YOUR HEALTH FROM PAGE 4

arugula; and cruciferous veggies like kale, broccoli and cauliflower.

Entertain yourself: Even in the Middle Ages, people enjoyed indoor games like chess, as well as outdoor activities and fall fetes.

As the saying goes, to everything there is a season. Making a few changes in your routines and habits can help you feel better this fall.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, is a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate and founder of [www.NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com](http://www.NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com), which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. Teri offers a free phone consultation to Turley Newspaper readers as well as to nurses interested in becoming advocates. Reach her at [Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com](mailto:Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com)

# - community -

## Christmas in New Braintree is Dec. 6

NEW BRAINTREE – New Braintree is kicking off the holiday season with its “Christmas in New Braintree” on Saturday, Dec. 6.

The event will include a craft fair hosted by the Tri Parish Community Church from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the New Braintree Grade School and Town Hall, both located on Memorial Drive,

photos with Santa from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and crafts for children.

The New Braintree Congregational Church will be holding its traditional cookie sale and cafe during the craft fair.

The New Braintree Historical Society will be hosting a Holiday Open House at the museum at 10 Utley

Road from 4:30-6:30 p.m., and there will be a town tree lighting ceremony at the town hall to bring an end to the festivities.

All are welcome. Anyone who would like to participate as a vendor or volunteer please contact Bonnie St. Cyr at 443-835-7530 or bonniesteyr@yahoo.com.

## Advent Interlude at First Congregational Church of West Brookfield on Dec. 2

WEST BROOKFIELD – First Congregational Church of West Brookfield, UCC, 36 North Main St., will be hosting a new event, Advent Interlude, on Tuesday evening, Dec. 2, at 7 p.m.

Open to the commu-

nity, Advent Interlude is an hour of inspiring readings, short video presentations, and lively music offerings designed to help folks reflect upon, and be inspired by, the true meaning of the Advent season, in preparation for the Christmas celebration

of the birth of Jesus.

All are welcome and invited to come for a time of joy and then go out inspired by the true meaning of the season in which we prepare for the birth of the Christ child. For more information call the church at 508-867-7078.

### N BROOKFIELD FROM PAGE 1

derly, disabled, or children.

She also said that the food collaborative is more accessible than other food pantries in the town, as they deliver and operate on a 24/7 basis, while the current food assistance programs in the town only operate 11 hours a month combined. The collaborative is also partnered with many reputable organizations, including Whole Foods, C&S distributors, and Hannaford, and they get deliveries weekly from these organizations.

In response to the board saying that they need a food handling permit to operate, Farrington said that is not the case.

Since the collaborative is only receiving deliveries and distributing them the same day, they do not need a food handling permit, be-

cause there is no cooking or preparation being done, Farrington said. She said to “think of the collaborative as a postal distribution center.”

However, even though there is no cooking or preparation, since there is food being held and distributed, permits must still be acquired, and inspections are still mandatory, according to the proposal.

Farrington said she found a permit which describes exactly what they are doing, which is in Massachusetts General Law Section 94 Section 66 Cold Storage Warehouses. This law describes operations similar to Farrington’s, which are separate from commercial kitchens, the proposal said.

Ethan Melad, chairman of the Board of Health, said that this license is given out on a state level, and that local boards may not have

the authority to grant this license.

Farrington suggested a viable solution to this permit concern would be to draft a bylaw for the town, specifically allowing residential homes to distribute food so long as it is not prepared, and stays in its original packaging. She cited many organizations that are already doing this successfully, and without issue, including the Greater Boston Food Bank, multiple churches, and Food Hero, another non-profit in the state.

Farrington also addressed inaction on behalf of the Board of Health, alleging that when the board instituted this necessity for a proposal, they gave no guidance, no transition period to let them continue distributing food, and no collaborative problem solving.

“Food insecurity is a public health issue. This board

has both the authority and responsibility to address it,” she said.

The board’s response At the onset of the meeting, Melad said that the board has been cooperative, and in communication with both Farrington and the food collaborative to try and find a solution to keep the program in operation. He said the allegations that the board has not been helping are inaccurate, and that their goal was never to shut down the collaborative.

He said that the goal of the board is to uphold regulations, and that they are not intentionally preventing the collaborative from operating, and that they never issued a cease and desist to the organization.

Questions were also raised by Farrington and the organization, as well as community members in attendance, as to why the

board has waited until now to start enforcing the collaborative.

The board said they knew of the collaborative, but not that they were distributing “time and temperature sensitive foods,” which are foods that require freezing or refrigeration to be safe for consumption.

There was not a clear resolution to the issue, but the board provided the option of proposing a variance to the state, which if accepted would let her continue to operate as is, without deviation. The process would include Farrington and the collaborative writing a proposal to the state. Farrington asked if the board would help her write this proposal, to which they agreed.

The attendance of the meeting, which was moved to the North Brookfield Police Station because of

expected turnout, was large, over-crowding the meeting room in the station. The public was staunchly on the side of the collaborative, and expressed their frustration that the board was allegedly creating excessive difficulty for a charity organization.

One community member, a volunteer with the collaborative named Nancy, said to the board “there is so much hurt,” and pleaded with the board to follow through. Another community member expressed her frustration saying that food stamps are not enough to cover food needs, and that organizations like Farrington’s make a huge difference.

“You can’t live off of 30 dollars,” she said.

The Board of Health meets on the third Wednesday of every month, and are currently scheduled to meet next on Dec. 17.

### MCAS SCORES FROM PAGE 1

rors in reporting, so he has appealed this decision.

“It appears that some of the students who DESE believes should have taken the test should not have been taking the test, so we want to make sure those numbers are clear,” he said.

McCormick said the school district is really focusing on maintaining consistent, high-quality instruction for its students. He said staff turnover has shown to have a negative impact on test scores.

He said many grade levels are showing consistent student growth, with some areas that need improvement, including grade five math scores.

McCormick said the school district has also seen an improvement in student attendance.

McCormick said even though it is no longer a graduation requirement, the MCAS test is still a good “measuring stick” to see how students are learning.

### Remembering Damian Sarrette

McCormick recognized 27-year veteran English Language Arts teacher Damian Sarrette who passed away on Oct. 30.

“During this long and decorated tenure, he taught, he guided and supported thou-

sands of students,” he said. “Leaving a lasting impression on generations of learners.”

McCormick said Sarrette’s dedication to the students went beyond the school day, serving as National Honor Society advisor, Senior Class advisor and the Card Playing Club advisor.

“Damian consistently gave his time, his energy and the heart to the students of NBHS,” he said.

Sarrette also served as the Teachers Association president for over 10 years, “advocating fiercely for his membership while always maintaining a fair, steady and reasonable presence during contract negotiations.”

McCormick said Sarrette was the loving father of Luke, Mason and Avry, whom he spoke of often and with tremendous pride.

“His loss is felt profoundly by his students, his colleagues and our entire school community. There will always be a significant void in his absence,” he said.

McCormick asked everyone to join him in a moment of silence to remember Sarrette.

### Superintendent’s report

McCormick said Dave Kartunen of cartoonEDU, a former broadcast news journalist, recorded interviews with himself, STEM teacher John McNeil and several STEM students.

“What he does is turn these interviews kind of into a message for families, for teachers, for students, but he does it in a way that is very easy to understand,” he said.

McCormick said this was paid for from grant funding received for Innovation Pathways.

McCormick said he and High School Principal Brian Beck attended an information session hosted by the One8 Foundation for Investigating History.

He said Investigating History is more of an elementary through early middle school history curriculum. He said the Democratic Knowledge Project, a curriculum for eighth grade civics students, was introduced as a curriculum this year.

“This grant, if awarded, will allow some training for our teachers, for our administrators...the hope is to phase this curriculum in upon School Committee approval next fall,” he said. “We’re excited about this opportunity.”

McCormick said the Superintendent’s Advisory Council is now entering year two, and will hold its first meeting soon.

### Special education procedural guide

McCormick credited Director of Student Services Dr. Michael Baldassarre for organizing the school district’s procedures for special

education into a formalized manual in preparation for the upcoming audit in January 2026.

“This is going to help us not only with our audit, but also going forward and having a clear plan for our special education department,” he said.

Baldassarre said he worked with staff to review preexisting documents to build a comprehensive procedural guide.

“The purpose of it is simple,” he said. “We really want to make sure that everyone in North Brookfield has a clear and consistent direction that reflects not just the Department of Education’s requirements, but the way we actually serve our kids.”

Baldassarre said he hopes this guide becomes a reliable resource for teachers. He said the guide will also be posted on the school district’s website for parents to review.

Administrators’ reports Beck thanked everyone who showed their support to the students and staff dealing with the unexpected loss of Sarrette. He said counselors from other school districts were on hand to provide support as well.

A Winter Fest Concert will feature elementary and high school ensembles on Thursday, Dec. 11 at 6 p.m. in the elementary school.

Beck said the annual Well-

ness Day event was held, and it included games of pickleball, crafts, rock painting, making magnets, karaoke, banking and financial wellness, stress reduction, board games and weightlifting. He thanked the staff involved with organizing this event.

Baldassarre said the Special Education Parent Advisory Council is hosting its first spaghetti supper on Nov. 19, which will include a presentation about managing anxiety and stress at school and home. He said this event is open to all parents in the school district.

“For our parents to learn about ways to work with their children,” he said.

Baldassarre said the school district now has an official SEPAC and has appointed officers. He said this was a “badge of honor” for the special educational department to have pulled this off in such a short time.

### Student Council update

Student Council Representative Noah Gillette said the annual Giving Turkey food drive has begun and donations will be accepted throughout the month. Non-perishable food items collected will be given to the North Brookfield Community Food Collaborative.

Gillette said the teacher whose class collected the most donations would have

to wear a turkey costume on Nov. 26.

The Giving Tree will be put up in December. He said more information would be posted on the North Brookfield Student Council’s social media pages and around the school.

The annual Christmas in North Brookfield event hosted by the Student Council will return on Saturday, Dec. 6 from noon-2 p.m. in the high school. There will be crafts, free raffles, food, music, pictures with Santa and Mrs. Claus, games and gifts from Operation Christmas Cheer.

Teacher and U.S. Army veteran McNeil will lead a ruck with his platoon to benefit Operation Christmas Cheer from the Police Station to the school to distribute toys. Toys will be collected at the Police Station prior to the ruck.

Gillette invited community members to follow the Student Council on Facebook and Instagram, and to attend their meetings, which are held every other Monday in the high school kiva.

### Donations

The School Committee accepted a donation in the amount of approximately \$350 in supplies to repair the elementary school’s loading dock, and \$850 from a golf tournament to benefit the athletics department.

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USDA INSP. SWISS CHEESE.....	<b>\$4.44</b> lb	USDA INSP. STORE MADE BONELESS KOREAN BBQ MARINATED PORK BUTT STRIPS.....	<b>\$3.35</b> lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN HADDOCK FILLET SKINLESS.....	<b>\$5.99</b> lb

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## - legals -

### TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that in accordance with the provisions of M.G.L Chapter 40A, Section 9, and Section 11 Back Lot Permit, of the West Brookfield Zoning Bylaws, the Planning Board will open a public hearing on **Monday, December 15th, 2025 at 6:00 pm** in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 2 East Main Street, for the following application:

Darcie Confar seeks Special Permit approval to create a Back-

lot, approximately 20.805 acres, at 62 Birch Hill Road, West Brookfield.

Interested parties may review the plan at the office of the Town Clerk in the Town Hall, 2 East Main Street, West Brookfield. A copy is posted on the display board outside of the Town Hall and on the Town website at [www.wbrookfield.com](http://www.wbrookfield.com), under the Events Calendar.

The Board invites all interested parties to attend the public hearing.

Timothy Morrell  
Planning Board Chair  
11/28, 12/05/2025

## Weir River Jazz presents free holiday concerts

HARDWICK – Weir River Jazz will present “Tunes for the Tinsel,” a big band concert in the sanctuary of the Stone Church Cultural Center on Route 32 in Gilbertville on Sunday, Dec. 7 at 2 p.m.

All are welcome to join them to hear the great sounds of a traditional Big Band with their version of popular

seasonal melodies. Or if you prefer a different setting, join the band on Saturday Dec. 13 at 2 p.m. for “Trimnings for the Tree,” presented at Workshop13 in Ware.

Both programs are open to the public and there is no charge for admission. Reservations are suggested for Workshop13 as seats go quickly there.

## - public safety -

### East Brookfield Police Log

During the week of Nov. 10-16, the East Brookfield Police Department responded to 155 building/property checks, 79 directed area patrols, seven radar assignments, 11 traffic controls, eight emergency 911 calls, one citizen assist, one assist other agency, three investigations, one property damage, two motor vehicle accidents, two safety hazards, one animal call and 29 motor vehicle stops in the town of East Brookfield.

**Monday, Nov. 10**  
3:36 p.m. Property Damage, East Main Street, Arrest(s) Made  
5:59 p.m. 911 Motor Vehicle Crash, Rice Road, Arrest(s) Made  
11:46 p.m. Medical Emergency, Drake Street, Transported to Hospital  
**Tuesday, Nov. 11**  
11:18 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Howe Street, Patient Refusal  
12:44 p.m. Motor Vehicle

Stop, South Pond Road, Citation Issued  
3:48 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, North Brookfield Road, Written Warning  
5:10 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, North Brookfield Road, Citation Issued  
5:40 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, North Brookfield Road, Citation Issued  
11:22 p.m. Medical Emergency, Lashaway Drive, Transported to Hospital  
**Wednesday, Nov. 12**  
12:59 p.m. Investigation, Rice Road, Services Rendered  
2:58 p.m. Suspicious Activity, Dunn Brook Road, Spoken To  
9:02 p.m. Directed/Area Patrol, East Main Street, Citation Issued  
9:06 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued  
**Thursday, Nov. 13**  
9:46 a.m. Safety Hazard, Terry Lane, Services Rendered

**Friday, Nov. 14**  
12:06 p.m. Motor Vehicle Crash, East Main Street, Report Taken  
5:09 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Route 49, Written Warning  
9:37 p.m. Assist Citizen, West Sturbridge Road, Spoken To  
10:17 p.m. Medical Emergency, Maple Street, Transported to Hospital  
10:27 p.m. 911 Suspicious Activity, West Main Street, Negative Contact  
**Saturday, Nov. 15**  
10:16 a.m. 911 Misdial, Maple Street, Spoken To  
3:25 p.m. Assist Other Agency, Out of Town, Services Rendered  
6:19 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, North Brookfield Road, Written Warning  
**Sunday, Nov. 16**  
8:43 a.m. Investigation, East Main Street, Officer Handled  
9:43 a.m. Investigation, Connie Mack Drive, Services

Rendered  
10:20 a.m. Safety Hazard, East Main Street, Officer Handled  
1:54 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued  
4:46 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Written Warning  
4:59 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Written Warning  
5:14 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued  
5:55 p.m. Directed/Area Patrol, East Main Street, Citation Issued  
6:01 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued  
7:53 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Citation Issued  
8:14 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Main Street, Written Warning  
8:36 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Route 49, Written Warning

### GALLERY SHOW FROM PAGE 1

Abigail Rorer of Petersham, who recently held a very successful solo show at the gallery back in October, will have her wood engravings, silverpoints and more. She is also the publisher of limited edition fine print books.

West Brookfield's own talented wood turner, Frank White, will have his bowls and more to display at the show – any one of his pieces will bring beauty to your holiday table setting.

Brookfield artist Vanessa Varjian is the youngest art-

ist in the show, but her years of experience as a painter are evident in her outdoor scenes, which have an impressionistic feel and perfectly capture the way the natural light hits her subject.

Susan Pecora of Thorn-dike, who used to have her own painting show on PBS, will have numerous paintings featuring easily identifiable local landscapes. Pecora is a renowned artist and her work is featured in galleries all over.

In addition to being the gallery owner, Fay is also one of its artists. For this

year's Holiday Group Show she will showcase her beetle and bee pieces while incorporating 22-karat gold leaf.

Joanne Talbot Quinn of Princeton is a retired art teacher, has been focusing her paintbrush on capturing the vibrant beauty of the nasturtium flower, in addition to the soft beauty of her landscape scenes.

West Brookfield native Cathie Palo and Lowell resident Cassandra Goldwater will return after holding their third annual Jewelry Show at the gallery in November. Their stunning jew-

elry ranges from metal bangles, to pendants adorned with natural stones collected from the beach. Each piece is handcrafted and unique.

West Brookfield artist Jennifer Geldard will also return to the gallery to showcase her jewelry made with glass beads and her whimsical paintings. Geldard used to own a bead shop in Concord many years ago, before opening Glass Girls Studio and Gallery in the space that is now West Brookfield Art & Frame.

Cheryl O'Donnell of New Hampshire will also

be featured in the Holiday Group Show. Known for decorative painting, O'Donnell is also noted for her fine art portraits and landscapes.

Carole Bentley of North Brookfield will also be featured in the show, with her paintings of landscapes, seascapes, flowers and birds.

Holden plein air painter Gerard Blouin is said to paint outdoors in almost any weather. An environmentalist and outdoorsman, his passions are reflected in the scenes he captures on canvas.

Multimedia artist and

bookbinder Karen Thompson Bullock from West Brookfield will have gorgeous ornaments and wonderful boxes on display.

Lisa Cohen of Gilbertville, who is also an active participant at Workshop13, has restocked her ceramic offerings at the gallery. When she is not at the kiln, Cohen is writing science fiction and fantasy novels and being active in her community.

Artist John Collins of Ware, will feature his paintings in the show. Collins is also a talented sculptor, having recently focused on his artistic talents after retiring from his career as an architect.

Elisabeth Hyder of North Brookfield makes her own paste paper and creates all kinds of works of art with it.

Cruger Johnson Phillips is the only abstract artist featured in the show, and she will have her small, original paintings, which have inspirational and positive messages written on the back.

### White Christmas and book signing

Local author Jonathan Cook will have a “meet the author” event and book signing at the gallery during White Christmas in West Brookfield on Sunday, Dec. 7 starting at 11 a.m.

Cook worked for 40 years in the restaurant industry including a stint at Salem Cross Inn. He was a journalist for 10 years at various small papers throughout New England.

“The Vampires of York, Maine: A Modern Crime Story” follows the misadventures of Jerry O'Shaughnessy, journalist turned bar owner, as he gets involved in a missing girl case. In the process, he uncovers human trafficking, a neo-Nazi gang and supernatural elements in coastal Maine.

Packed with history and local lore of the Seacoast, this story has deep ties to the Worcester mafia.

### About the gallery

The Holiday Group Show will be on display at West Brookfield Art & Frame Gallery, 10 East Main St., for the month of December. For more information, call the gallery at 508-753-8604, email [yafacceber@hotmail.com](mailto:yafacceber@hotmail.com), visit [westbrookfieldartandframe.com](http://westbrookfieldartandframe.com) or stop by the gallery during open hours, Thursday and Friday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.



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Valid MA CDL operator, Hydraulic Hoister's licenses and OSHA-10 certification is preferred.  
• salary rate range: \$26.49 - \$38.59 per hour  
Further information can be found on the Town's website:  
**www.worthington-ma.us**  
Questions will be answered by the Highway Superintendent at 64 Huntington Road, Monday – Friday, 7 AM to 3 PM; the telephone number is 413-238-5830 or send letter of interest, resume and three (3) references with relevant contact information to: **highway@worthington-ma.us** or to **Worthington Highway Department, PO Box 643, Worthington, MA, 01098.** This posting will remain pertinent until the position is filled.  
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**TOWN OF WORTHINGTON INVITATION TO BID SNOW PLOWING SERVICES**

The Town of Worthington Highway Department is soliciting bids for seasonal plowing services for the 2025–2026 winter season. Work will include plowing backroads and selected blacktop sections throughout the Town of Worthington.  
Minimum equipment requirements:  
• ¾-ton truck or larger  
• 8-foot plow (minimum)  
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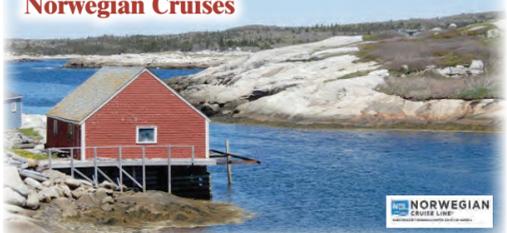
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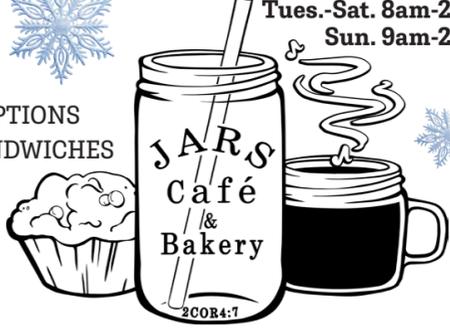
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