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Friday, December 5, 2025

Little Park lit up for Santa Claus

NORTH BROOKFIELD – Last Saturday night, the streets of downtown were lined with people eager to catch a glimpse of everyone's favorite jolly old elf, Santa Claus.

Christmas songs played from Little Park, courtesy of DJ Brian, and soon the parade lights could be seen approaching the crowd.

The parade featured a number of floats entered by local businesses, a convoy of Jeeps, town department vehicles (including Police, Fire and Water), festively-dressed dogs, and of course – Santa Claus.

Santa Claus was standing aboard one of the fire trucks, and cheers and smiles greeted him as he made his way through Little Park, where children lined up for a chance to sit on his lap and tell him their Christmas wishes.

Parade-goers then headed to the First Congregational Church to sing Christmas carols, before returning to Little Park for the tree lighting.



Santa Claus made his way downtown to the Little Park in North Brookfield last Saturday evening, where he heard children's Christmas wishes and visited with residents. See more photos on page 5.



TURLEY PHOTO BY PAULA OUIMETTE
Wings of Song community chorus members rehearsed for their upcoming performances of "Night, Moon, Stars" at St. Joachim Chapel this past Monday night, led the Wings of Song community chorus.

Wings of Song prepares for winter concerts

STURBRIDGE – busy preparing for its annual winter performance.

Wings of Song, a community chorus centered in Sturbridge and drawing its 50 active members from towns in south-central Massachusetts and north-eastern Connecticut, is

In late December in Earth's Northern Hemisphere, nights are long and

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TURLEY PHOTO BY PAULA OUIMETTE
The Gilbert Plays will present "Nuncrackers: The Nunsense Christmas Musical" at The Center at Eagle Hill, 242 Old Peter-sham Road, Hardwick, Dec. 5-7 with evening and matinee shows. Shown from left are Olivia Pascale as Sister Mary Paul (Amnesia), Susan Clark as Sister Mary Regina (Reverend Mother), Heather Pascale as Sister Mary Hubert, Laura Grunberg as Sister Mary Leo and Gina Rourke as Sister Robert Anne.

Christmas musical brings humor to holiday season

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
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HARDWICK – This weekend, the nuns of Mount Saint Helen's Convent are embracing more than just sisterhood with the production of "Nuncrackers: The Nunsense Christmas Musical" – in fact, it's truly a family affair.

Directed by husband and wife team John and Linda Tomasi of The Gilbert Players, "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.

Linda Tomasi said The Gilbert Players first performed "Nuncrackers" in the St. Aloysius Catholic School building, where the theater group got its start in town before shifting its sell-out shows to the professional-level stage at The Center at Eagle Hill.

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.

"That was 30 years ago," Tomasi said of that first performance of "Nuncrackers".

For this year's performance, Tomasi decided to tag the members of a musically gifted Barre family in a Facebook post, suggesting that they audition for the lead roles in "Nuncrackers".

"I've always wanted to do a show with the Pascales,"

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Quaboag teacher receives Most Valuable Teacher Award

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
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WARREN – The Quaboag Regional Middle High School community gathered to celebrate a teacher during a special assembly recently.

Band and Chorus Teacher James Joinville was recognized for his dedication, creativity and the joy

he brings to every class and performance.

Joinville was nominated by a student to be this year's recipient of the Most Valuable Teacher Award. This award is presented by Country Bank in partnership with the WooSox Foundation to present this annual award to a teacher, who goes above and beyond to help their students.

Nominating Joinville

was freshman Teagan Bes-sette, who has Joinville as a teacher for her wind ensemble class. Since attending Quaboag, Bessette has had Joinville every year since seventh grade.

Besette said Joinville is her favorite teacher and is one of the best teachers in the school.

This celebration was originally designed to be a surprise, but somehow, Joinville found out early about the nomination and put on his "theater face" on his way to the assembly. Students of Joinville were called down to this special assembly and the auditorium had Smiley Ball, the mascot of the Worcester Red Sox.

Vice President of Community Relations at Country Bank, Jodie Gerulaitis read a speech that was written by Besette.

When Joinville was about to accept the award, Besette said he appeared very grateful, and almost cried. He also expressed how grateful he was for his students and the staff at Quaboag who recognized

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COURTESY PHOTO BY DERICK VELIZ
Quaboag Band and Chorus Teacher, James Joinville, is the recipient of the Most Valuable Teacher Award, presented by the WooSox Foundation and Country Bank. Joinville is shown on stage alongside Worcester Red Sox mascot, Smiley Ball.

Michael Lavelle named MSAA Assistant Principal of the Year

WARREN – Michael Lavelle, Assistant Principal of Quaboag Regional Middle High School has been named the 2026 MSAA Assistant Principal of the Year.

Lavelle has been the Assistant Principal at Quaboag for the past four years. He earned a bachelor's and master's degree from Westfield State University.

Prior to Quaboag, he taught history at the Baird Middle School in Ludlow and served as Assistant Principal in Belchertown, Auburn and Oxford.

As an administrator at Quaboag, Lavelle has been a steady positive influence who has earned the admiration and trust of fellow administration, teachers and students. On the Assistant Teacher of the Year application form a teacher and an administrator made the following statements:

"Mr. Lavelle knows the students by name and has built positive relationships with them. He is always available for students and works with the staff to ensure their needs are met."

"Mr. Lavelle has brought calmness and professionalism to the role of the Assistant Principal at Quaboag Regional. When dealing with discipline issues, he actively listens to all students involved in the situation and provides them with tiered disciplinary measures to help curb the behavior so that it does not happen again. He helps to continually improve the safety of the school by being present and visible throughout the school. He treats all students equally, not giving favor to any one

student based on who they are in the school or who their parents are. Putting all students on the same playing field is essential to building trust amongst students with him and each other."

Eighth grader Colby Chaplis described what he likes best about Lavelle, "I like how he can relate to every student on a personal level. He is very understanding and forgiving too."



Michael Lavelle

Another eighth grader, Callie Hawk, spoke about Lavelle's positive attitude. "He is always saying good morning to students or asking them about their day. He is always attentive and gives great advice. He is very deserving of this award."

Lavelle grew up in the City of Chicopee and resides in the town of Ludlow with his wife Erica (a second grade teacher) and his

dog Jameson. He is also the proud uncle of 13 nieces and nephews.

Outside of work, Lavelle enjoys visiting the ocean, watching his family grow and competing in all types of sporting events. Playing and listening to all sorts of music and attending live concerts. He is a big fan of the Celtics and Boston sports teams. Lavelle celebrates his Irish heritage, and serves his community as a Town Meeting member and at his local church as an eu-charistic minister.

- community -

Crafters made Thanksgiving pie garland

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
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NORTH BROOKFIELD – The Haston Free Public Library hosted a craft night recently to create a Thanksgiving pie garland.

With the holiday season fast approaching, local crafters arrived for Craft Night to make their own decorations for their homes. Pie is a popular dessert during Thanksgiving, so it'd be suitable for crafters to decorate their homes with pie garland.

Craft Night was held in one of the meeting rooms at the Haston Free Public Library and had a great turnout. About a dozen people showed up to craft their own Thanksgiving pie garland.

Samples of the garland were made by Library Director, Lia Tulip. This craft consisted of various styles and got crafters to express their creativity. Tools for the craft consisted of felt,



Shown is a sample of the Thanksgiving pie garland made by Library Director Lia Tulip. This sample hangs on the mantle of the old fireplace in one of the meeting rooms of the Haston Free Public Library.

wooden beads, and creative minds.

Brown felt was used to make the crust part of the pie. Tulip's example was perfect and she folded the brown felt to help shape it into a crust look. A sample of the Thanksgiving pie garland was hung up on the mantle in the meeting room/craft room.

This would be a nice place to hang your own pie

garland for Thanksgiving if you have a fireplace.

White colored felt was used to portray the whip cream for the pie. Tulip's sample of the whip cream was shaped nicely, giving them a rose-shaped look. The wooden beads were placed in between the pie slices.

This craft didn't require any crafting experience, and all skill levels were wel-

comed. Many who attended the craft expressed their creativity and got into the holiday spirit. There will be plenty of slices of pie hanging around people's homes during the festive holiday season.

For more activities, visit the Haston Free Public Library at 161 North Main St. Visit www.northbrookfieldlibrary.org for future events and activities.

White Christmas is 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 through-

out 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.

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.

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

'Nativities From Around the World' this weekend

NORTH BROOKFIELD – For the 16th year, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 108 New Braintree Road, welcomes all people to experience "Nativities From Around the World," a free, four-day event that celebrates the Christmas season with a display of nativities that capture the joy and peace of Jesus' birth.

"Nativities From Around the World" will be held at the church Friday,

Dec. 5 from 4-6 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 6 from 10 a.m.-8 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 7 from noon-4 p.m.

On Friday, Dec. 5 there will be concert by the Weir River Concert Band (formerly the Ware Community Band) under the direction of Joanne Pajak Meegan starting at 6 p.m., with desserts served afterward.

Donations will be collected to benefit local food banks in the community.

St. Aloysius students participated in food drive



Students at St. Aloysius Catholic School participated in a food drive last month to benefit the Hardwick Food Pantry.

HARDWICK – From Nov. 10-18, St. Aloysius Catholic School students participated in a food drive to benefit the Hardwick Food Pantry.

Over the course of the eight days nearly 800 units of food were gathered.

There was a friendly competition among the classrooms, whereby the class that raised the most food would be entitled to a N.U.T (No Uniform Today) Day.

The smallest (but mightiest) class, kindergarten, won the challenge with around 200 units raised. They will be treated to a pajama day, and a movie to go with it. Congratulations to all the students for their hard work and commitment to this particular Corporal Work of Mercy, feeding the hungry.

Christmas in New Braintree takes place Saturday

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.

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Federated Church holiday service schedule

STURBRIDGE – The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale, 8 Maple St., has announced its 2025 Christmas service schedule, according to Rev. David Cote, pastor.

The Church will conduct Sunday-morning Advent services at 9:30 a.m. on Dec. 7 (Light of Peace), Dec. 14 (Light of Joy) and Dec. 21 (Light of Love).

On Dec. 24, Christmas Eve, the Church will hold its annual Christmas Eve candlelight service at 9 p.m.

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

For additional information, please visit the Church website at sturfed.org or contact the Church office at 774-304-1021 or churchoffice@sturfed.org.

- community -

Post Road Realty celebrated over 10 years in business

Staff Report

WEST BROOKFIELD – Cassie Paolucci has been a fixture in the local business community for more than two decades.

In 2002, Paolucci and her husband, John, opened Main Street Liquors in West Brookfield.

“This store was our first venture. We were excited to open a business in our hometown,” said Paolucci.

In 2005, Paolucci received her realtor license and began selling real estate for Quaboag Valley Real Estate. Paolucci earned her broker license and opened Post Road Realty in 2013 with husband John.

“I love meeting people and helping people with one of their biggest purchases in life,” said Paolucci. “I maintain relationships, not just clients but friends. I value all my past and future clients and have worked hard to have solid friendships.”

Paolucci also operates Post Road Storage, which has just expanded to Post Road Storage & Billboards. “It’s a resource that Post Road can offer their clients, storage space, either before the move in or move out stages. And now, we offer billboards which opens doors to local businesses to market themselves.”



Deb Provencher is the administrative assistant at Post Road Realty.

Paolucci also has rental properties, which are often used as a benefit to the buyers or sellers of the properties.

“This option opens up time frames for selling or buying a home, and help



Cassie Paolucci is shown outside Post Road Realty in West Brookfield.

cover that possible crossover time between transactions,” said Paolucci.

With a strong knowledge of the construction industry, Paolucci has built new homes and renovated homes for resale.

“Knowing the contractors and the costs of building, helps me provide a stronger input to a seller or buyer that they can count on,” said Paolucci.

Paolucci gives a lot of credit for the success and efficiency of the Post Road office operations to her administrative assistant, Deb Provencher. Provencher came to work for Post Road Realty four years ago.

“I had retired after teaching kindergarten for twenty years, before that, I had worked in the insurance and banking industries,” said Provencher.

“Retirement wasn’t sitting well with me so I went looking for a part time position. I had seen the position for Post Road Realty available. It turns out that Cassie and I had known each other well, as I had been her children’s teacher,” said Provencher.

Provencher said she enjoys her job so much that she earned her real estate license. “I enjoy the administrative responsibilities of the office,

though it’s a challenge to navigate the ups and downs of the real estate markets. It’s very rewarding to me personally when I can assist a client check off any requirement in any process.”

On Provencher’s off duty time, she enjoys ship cruising, friends and family, the New England Patriots, though the beach is her “happy place.”

Paolucci serves on the West Brookfield Town Common commission.

“It is special to me that I can help where I grew up. The common means a lot to so many family and friends. Getting the fountain working is a task but we make it happen,” she said.

Paolucci has a daughter, Isabella, and a son, Vinny, and three dogs, Gino, Enzo and Rocko. On her off time, she enjoys gardening and camping. She also has chickens and three beehives.

“Professionally, what I do isn’t just a job, it’s a passion. This job is not all roses but the satisfaction of helping a family makes it right for me,” said Paolucci. “Post Road Realty is generational. We commit to helping clients, not just as clients but as friends and we assist those friends throughout the years present and to come.”



Members of Circle of Song are shown rehearsing for the upcoming concert to be held on Saturday, Dec. 20 in the Town Hall in Barre.

Circle of Song to perform annual concert

BARRE – Circle of Song will celebrate 25 years of community singing, with a free community concert on Saturday, Dec. 20 in the Town Hall, 2 Exchange St., at 7 p.m.

Twenty-five years ago, in September of 2001, Circle of Song came into existence under the co-direction of Julie Rawson and Beth Bryant, long-term community music colleagues. Fast forward 25 years. Bryant moved to Georgia in 2006, but kept close ties to family and music in Barre.

To celebrate Circle of Song’s rich community-based four-part harmony, singing any genre that its members have wanted to sing, the founders decided to get together again for this anniversary concert.

Quintessential musician that she is, Bryant travelled

up to Barre on Nov. 6 to participate in the Circle of Song rehearsal and reunite with the chorus.

Under Bryant’s direction, “Regina Coeli” will be sung. This upbeat minor work by Mozart of approximately eight minutes in duration, is a masterful and energizing celebration of Mary, Queen of Heaven, dating back to the 13th century in the Catholic Mass.

On the other end of the spectrum, Bryant will also direct “Java Jive”, made popular by the Manhattan Transfer. This is a silly song about the wonders of coffee. And as a special treat, Grace Jenkins and her dancers will put it to dance.

Finally, Bryant, locally renowned for her expertise on clarinet, will accompany “Black is the Color of My True Love’s Hair”.

According to Wikipedia, “Black Is the Color (of My True Love’s Hair)” is a traditional ballad folk song known in the U.S. as associated with colonial and later music in the Appalachian Mountains.

It is believed to have originated in Scotland, as it refers to the River Clyde in the lyrics. American musicologist Alan Lomax supported the thesis of Scottish origin, saying that the song was an American “re-make” of British materials. It is a hauntingly beautiful piece that concert-goers will enjoy.

The concert is free and the refreshments are always tasty. To learn more about Circle of Song or to join in January, contact director, Julie Rawson at julie@mhof.net; 978-257-1192 for more information.

Advent Interlude rescheduled to Dec. 15

WEST BROOKFIELD – First Congregational Church of West Brookfield, UCC, 36 North Main St., will be hosting a new event, Advent Interlude, on Monday, Dec. 15 at 7 p.m.

This event was rescheduled due to inclement weather on the original

date.

Open to the community, 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.

Library holds holiday raffle and mitten tree

EAST BROOKFIELD – The East Brookfield Public Library, 122 Connie Mack Drive, is raffling off a hand stitched holiday tree skirt or a hand crocheted blanket.

Tickets are two for \$5. Proceeds from the raffle go toward the library’s adult programs.

Mitten Tree

The library’s Mitten Tree is now up. The library collects hats, mittens, scarves, gloves,

socks for adults and children, ChapStick and new sweaters for all ages and sizes.

If you or anyone you know needs any of these items, please come to the library and visit our Mitten Tree.

Library Wish List

The library is in need of cheap paper plates – the kind that you must use more than one or your food will spill off, Playdough, bubbles,

large crayons, ribbon, card stock (all colors), purple glue sticks, crepe paper, small bags of chips, sandwich bags, large zip lock bags, cookies, juice, coloring books, construction paper, googly eyes and feathers.

Holiday closures

The library will be closed on Dec. 25, Jan. 1 and 19 and Feb. 16. The library is also closed if the school is closed.

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- opinion -

Wreaths and swags for one and all

For the last two weeks we've been busy decorating Old Sturbridge Village for their Christmas by Candlelight program.

The garland, wreaths, bows and swags are all up, and the planters have been filled with greens. It was fast-paced fun, and oh so rewarding. The museum looks absolutely magical.

I filled planters side by side with a coworker who, in her 30 plus years, has never done this part of the job with me. As we stuck greens and stood back to assess our work, it occurred to me that I've grown up making all of these decorations, like my parents before me!

I had assumed everyone else had too, but here we had Nina, who in her 60s, was at it for the first time. If you find yourself ready to make your own decorations, here are a few pointers from the archives.

My Dad was the wreath-maker in the family, and usually a post Thanksgiving walk in the woods

would yield his raw materials. The wreaths he made would be taken back to decorate a college dorm or whatever apartment my older siblings would return to after Thanksgiving break some 40 plus years ago.

One wreath would also make its way to the front door of our little red house, too. Decorated with a red ribbon and a few pine cones, it really was something so simple and so beautiful in the same right.

His approach is the same one I'll recommend today.

Start with a wire coat hanger bent into a circle and attach some pliable wire to it. Then, wrap little bunches of greens to the base one after another.

Be careful to lay them alongside, not on top of each other. It's important, however, to have the wire catch a little bit of the stem of the prior

bunch – that way the wreath will be good and tight. You can make a wreath of just extra boughs from your Christmas tree, but mixing in other types of greens will make it more interesting. I like to use prunings from my home landscape: mountain laurel, boxwood, juniper, and white pine among others will look great together because they vary in color and texture.

You can dress up a green wreath with pinecones, winterberries and artificial fruit, not to mention a big bow. Most types of Christmas tree boughs are conducive to wreath making, but wear

thick gloves if you are using Colorado blue spruce as your base – it sure is picky!

When my Dad gave up making his famous wreaths, Mom took a simpler yet more elaborate approach to decorating our house. She would make a swag for each window!

First determine how many you want to make, then set up an assembly-line of sorts. Choose a sturdy green for the base of the swag- extra Christmas tree boughs would be perfect for this as well.

I cut however many I need to the same size, and I lay them out pretty side up. Next, I choose another type of green a bit smaller and put it on top. I repeat the process six or seven times until I have a nice upside-down "fan."

Here too, varying texture is nice, although Mom's feathery white pine and pine cone swags are pretty by

themselves.

To complete your swag, wrap wire around the stems four or five inches down from the top, leaving a loop on the back for a hanger. You can cover the wire with a bow. I have often wired two swags together horizontally.

Place a bow in the middle, where the two intersect and hang your creation over a window or door, or even underneath a window for a different take on decorating.

Whether this is your first attempt at wreath and swag making or you've been at it for years, enjoy this holiday ritual, just as my mom and dad did.

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.



Golden-crowned kinglet
A Brimfield resident sent an email to report seeing a golden-crowned kinglet on Nov. 17 in a dwarf Alberta spruce tree in front of his house.

He said, "[It was] very active, but I got to see the bright yellow crown patch."

Golden-crowned kinglets are a small bird, not much larger than a hummingbird. The male is boldly marked with a black eyebrow stripe and flashy lemon-yellow crest.

They spend much of their time high up in dense spruce or fir foliage and that is the place to find them.

Their high, thin call notes and song is often heard before catching sight of them.

The Brimfield resident called them "very active." They can survive 40 degrees below Fahrenheit nights. Sometimes huddling together for warmth.

They breed in the far north and montane west and visit most of North America during winter. Although it used to nest almost exclusively in boreal spruce-fir forests, the golden-crowned kinglet has expanded its breeding range southward into conifer stands of the

Midwest and Appalachians.

They usually raises two large broods of young, despite the short nesting season of the northern boreal forest. The female feeds her first brood only up until the day after they leave the nest. She then starts laying the second set of eggs while the male takes care of the first brood. The male manages to feed eight or nine nestlings himself and he occasionally feeds the incubating female too.

An interesting fact about golden-crowned kinglet's is each nostril is covered by a single, tiny feather.

The oldest golden-crowned kinglet on record was a male and at least 6 years, 4 months old when it was recaptured and re-released by a Minnesota bird bander in 1976.

Other Brimfield birds

This month the Brimfield resident saw a Carolina wren flipping over leaves in his garden. He said, "We joined the 'leave the leaves' movement and don't do a major fall cleanup to benefit the critters that survive the winter under the leave and in the other material left in the garden."

He also noticed robins and cedar waxwings in the crab apple tree in his yard. He said, "We don't usually see these species eating the crab apples until later in the winter. Fortunately there is a bumper crop of fruit on

the trees this year. A couple of robins were also on the ground searching for food and I saw one robin at some pokeberry aka, pokeweed, eating the fruit. He has not seen any water fowl at the local ponds he visits regularly.

Lots of bluebirds
I received an email from a reader, who said his wife saw approximately 40 bluebirds on the causeway stonewall at Quabbin Reservoir.

Bald eagles
My daughter, Paula, took photos of a bald eagle in a field along the Ware River, on Church Street in Ware recently.

I saw a bald eagle perched in a tree on the shore of the Ware River not far from the Gilbertville line. It may have been the same eagle.

Migrating geese
I saw a large flock of Canada geese in a small, pond along Route 32 in Ware on Nov. 15. They covered over half the pond.

Helping birds
When it is time to take the Christmas tree down, place it outside to offer shelter to birds and other critters. Some people hang peanut butter filled pine cones rolled in birdseed or pieces of suet to provide some high energy food. Planting evergreen trees especially spruce and firs are away to attract the golden-crowned kinglets and offer a living shelter year round.

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.



Should I ask for retroactive benefits?

Dear Rusty:
I turn 70 next month, Oct. 3 and am making an application for Social Security benefits to begin in January 2026.

I want the maximum Delayed Retirement Credits and the highest permanent monthly benefit. I do not want to leave money on the table, so should I request six months of retroactive benefits or at least retroactive to October when I turn 70? If I do this, will I lose DRCs and adversely impact my ongoing monthly benefit after February 2026?
Signed: Turning 70

Dear Turning 70:
I must ask why claim your Social Security to start in January? You are entitled to your maximum SS monthly benefit in the month you reach 70 years of age, so waiting until January doesn't gain you anything. You could apply in August, specifying you wish your benefits to start in October, and you would get the maximum age 70 benefit you are entitled to (e.g., the maximum Delayed Retirement Credits available to you, and the highest possible monthly benefit).

Since you are looking for your maximum DRC's, to prevent SSA from giving you any retroactive benefits, which would permanently lower your monthly amount) you should enter in the "Remarks" section

of your application that "I do not wish to receive retroactive benefits. I want my maximum monthly benefit effective with the month I turn 70 years of age."

If, however, for some reason you still wish to claim effective with January 2026, you should indicate in the "Remarks" section of your SS application that you only wish three months of retroactive benefits, for the months of October, November and December 2025. This is to prevent you from losing the money you would miss by waiting beyond October to claim. If you ask for benefits retroactive to any month earlier than the month you turn 70, your monthly benefit will be permanently reduced.

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.

PEOPLE/MILESTONE NEWS

As a free service for our readers, we will print all births, weddings, engagements, milestone anniversaries, major birthdays, military achievements, honors and awards. We have a "people news" form available for you to submit these listings. This material is provided to us by our readers and local institutions and we do not charge to print this content.

For more information, or to submit people or milestone news for the Quaboag Current, please email pouimette@turley.com.



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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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Quaboag Current

Little Park lit up for Santa Claus



This float by Mile Marker 63 Disc Golf had a "Discmas" tree made out of disc golf discs.



People aboard Mile Marker 63 Disc Golf's float tossed candy to the crowd gathered to watch the parade.



Brookfield Orchards had a float featuring dancing Christmas trees, snowmen and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.



Girls Scouts were joined by gingerbread men on this float.



The North Brookfield PTO's float won the "Brightest Float" category. The float contest was sponsored by North Brookfield Girl Scout Troop 64831.



C.R. Levesque Trucking of Monson had several entries in the parade, each one decked out with wreaths and lights.



The Fire Department's Tower 1 was decorated with holiday lights for the parade.



Jesus, Mary and Joseph were in the back of this Jeep.

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- community -

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 Blacato 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

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 person or to a cou-

ple 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 or stop by the Second Chance Adoption Center at 111 Young Road, to meet her.



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



The Sturbridge-based community chorus, Wings of Song, draws its 50 members from across south-central Massachusetts and northeastern Connecticut.

WINGS OF SONG FROM PAGE 1

cold. For millennia, humans have gathered to mark this time with fires and dances and singing and musical instruments and stories and revelry: to tell the dark and the cold that our spirits are undaunted, and to celebrate the lengthening of days that begins at this time.

“Night, Moon, Stars” will be performed at St. Joachim Chapel, 16 Church St. in Fiskdale (part of Sturbridge), on Saturday, Dec. 13 at 7:30 p.m., and at the



Members of Wings of Song sang during a recent rehearsal.

Elm Street Congregation- al Church, 61 Elm St. in



TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA OUIMETTE

Music Director Nym Cooke (shown with a moon adorned to his shirt), led the Wings of Song community chorus.

Southbridge, on Sunday, Dec. 14 at 3 p.m. Folks are advised to come early to be sure of a seat.

Both concerts are free to the public, with a freewill offering collected.

Refreshments will be served after each concert and both venues are handicapped accessible.

These concerts celebrate both Christmas and the Winter Solstice in song this year with a focus on night, moon, and stars: the darkness from which light is born, and reborn.

The chorus is led by Music Director Nym Cooke, who shared some of the diverse songs to be performed during “Night, Moon, Stars” including “Beautiful Star of Bethlehem”, from “Moon is Walking” by Joseph Shabalala of Lady-smith Black Mambazo as well as the world premiere of “Notte” by Wings of Song tenor Gianni Davilli.

The chorus will shift from the 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” and much more. Audiences will join the chorus 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.



Singers looked to Music Director Nym Cooke during rehearsal.



Wings of Song is shown preparing for its annual Christmas/winter concerts to be held Dec. 13 and 14.

EARLY DEADLINES FOR ADS & LEGAL NOTICES

Christmas will bring early deadlines for all ads & legal notices to run in TURLEY PUBLICATIONS the week of December 22-26, 2025:

Wednesday, December 17 at 2 PM for December 25 issue

- Country Journal • The Register • Wilbraham-Hampden Times

Thursday, December 18 at 2 PM for December 25 Issue

- Agawam Advertiser News
- Sentinel • Quaboag Current • The Journal Register

Friday, December 19 at 2 PM for December 25 Issue

- Ware River News • Barre Gazette

Monday, December 22 at 2 PM for December 26 Issue

- Town Reminder • The Holyoke Sun • Decopee Register

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Cougars fall to Indians on Thanksgiving Eve

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WARREN—The first 13 minutes of the rivalry game between the Ware and Quaboag football teams was controlled by the home team, who was hoping to celebrate an upset victory.

After giving up a touchdown early in the second quarter, the visiting team from Billy Jo Robidoux's hometown took over the spotlight for the rest of the game.

The Ware offense, who needed only nine plays to score three second quarter touchdowns, added two more touchdowns in the second half leading to a 34-7 victory over the Cougars in the 16th meeting between the two neighboring high schools on Thanksgiving Eve.

"When Quaboag scored at the start of the second quarter, it gave us a lot more energy and motivation. We weren't going to lose tonight's game," said senior Alex Orszulak, who was named as Ware's MVP following the contest. "I'm very glad that I'm a member of this football team. Everyone cares about each other and it's not just about one individual player on our



Jason Pensinger makes a tackle for the Cougars

team. If that was the case, we would be playing golf."

The team approach is something that Ware head coach Mike Fazio always preaches to his players.

"The players know that it's never I or me, it's always us and we," Fazio said. "There isn't anybody bigger than the program. If a player does score five touchdowns in a game, he doesn't do it without the help of his teammates. We're trying to build a family culture here."

Orszulak is one of the In-

dians senior captains, along with Marek Luongo, Troy Dufresne, Sean Bernier, and Jadrien Berthiaume.

It was also the final high school football game for Ware seniors Brayden Compton, Robert Wood, Ethan Corder, and Jacoby Heredia.

"All of the seniors played a huge role this year," Fazio said. "A couple of them have been members of our football team during the past five years. I'm going to miss them and I love them.



Thomas Bellizzi launches a pass attempt.

They're better people than they are football players, which is something that you always want to see."

The Indians, who finished their season with a 7-4 overall record, suffered back-to-back one point non-league losses to Belchertown High School and the Springfield International Charter School at the beginning of the regular season. They also lost to archrival Palmer for the first

See QUABOAG
PAGE 8



Jayden Mioduszewski tries to overcome a Ware lineman.



Bayer Sargent starts a carry for Quaboag.



Chase Talbot returns the opening kickoff for a touchdown



Eric Serrano tries to get through a blocker

Quabbin football finishes strong

BARRE – On Thanksgiving Eve, Quabbin Regional High School did get a quick start with two touchdowns, but it was the way the Panthers finished that really counted. Quabbin had three straight touchdowns to finish the game and the Panthers defeated Gardner 35-14. Quabbin's season finishes at 4-7. In the win, five

different Panthers scored touchdowns. Chase Talbot would start the game by returning the ball 80 yards for a touchdown. On the next possession, Owura Ankoma-Mensah returned a punt about 60 yards to the one-yard line. Adam Adams would make a one-yard run for the score. Gardner would score touchdowns in the second

and early in the fourth quarter. The two-point conversion in the fourth quarter would give Gardner a 14-12 lead. But Zakk Mielnick responded with a 37-yard for a touchdown. Brady Dennis and Quinn Reynolds would score after that as the Panthers finished off their regular season with a win.



Quarterback Adam Adams takes the keeper into the end zone.



Brady Dennis makes a play on the defensive line.

Field goal hurts Pioneers on Thanksgiving

BELCHERTOWN – On a windy and cold Thanksgiving morning, a field goal from Belchertown's Leandro Martins made the difference for the Orioles in a 17-14 win over Pathfinder. With Belchertown up 7-6 in the second quarter, Martins sent home a field goal to make the score 10-6. Both teams would score an additional touchdown later in the game, but the field goal remained the difference that helped the Orioles earn the holiday win.



The Pathfinder defense comes up with a big stop.



Jarett Skowyra takes the return toward the right sideline



Trevor Alexander makes a carry for the Pioneers.

MIAA sets deadlines for finalized schedules

FRANKLIN – The 2025 Schedule Commitment Deadline and Process Reminder that the MIAA winter schedule commitment deadline is Friday, Dec. 19 for basketball and ice hockey. After that point, no changes can be made to your opponents or the number of games/matches that can be played.

After the Dec. 19 commitment deadline, all

schedules will be considered final.

Three days before the Schedule Commitment deadline, MIAA staff will produce and publish schedules for each sport based on the available data for review and verification by member schools. Below is the breakdown for 2025-26 school year:

- WINTER 2025-2026
 - o First contest date: Thursday, Dec. 11

- o Schedule data published for review: Tuesday, Dec. 16

- o Schedule Commitment deadline: Friday, Dec. 19

- SPRING 2026
 - o First contest date: Thursday, Mar. 26 (Monday, March 23 for Spring Golf)

- o Schedule data published for review: Tuesday, Mar. 31

- o Schedule Commitment deadline: Friday, Apr. 3

- sports -

Students chosen for sports ambassador program

WOBURN, MA - The Massachusetts Amateur Sports Foundation / Bay State Games is proud to announce the 80 selected high school student-athletes who have been chosen to serve as Ambassadors for the 2025-2026 academic year. These student leaders were selected from schools and communities across Massachusetts based on their involvement in athletics, commitment to leadership, and

desire to inspire future participation in the Bay State Games and statewide community sport initiatives. The Ambassador Program provides leadership development, event experience, and networking opportunities while ambassadors serve as representatives of Bay State Games in their schools, on their teams, and in their communities. Ambassadors play a key role in growing awareness,

supporting recruitment efforts, and connecting their peers to the opportunities and events offered through Bay State Games including the Summer & Winter Games, scholarships, internships, and other year-round programs. "The Ambassador Program helps expand statewide awareness and impact of Bay State Games programs while mentoring high school students on the

career and education opportunities available in the world of sports" said Kevin Cummings, Bay State Games Executive Director. "This class of ambassadors represents the next generation of leaders in sport from across Massachusetts. We are excited to support them as they help inspire participation in the Bay State Games and lay the foundation for their future careers"

The 2025-2026 Ambassador program kicked off on November 2 with a statewide Ambassador Summit at the Natick Armory, hosted by the Massachusetts Army National Guard. Ambassadors from across the state participated in the program that included a fitness warm up and team building exercises, a panel discussion on the college athletic recruiting process and an address from mo-

tivational speaker, philanthropist, athlete and race director Dave McGillivray. The Ambassador term began in October 2025 and runs through July 2026. Among local student-athletes selected, Makenzie Casey of Quabbin Regional, Kendall Placzek and Richard Hale of Minnechaug Regional, Logan Millet of Ware, and Madelyn Moreau of Monson.

QUABOAG
FROM PAGE 7

time in a decade. It was the third consecutive year that Ware captured the Thanksgiving trophy against the Cougars. They now hold a 10-6 lead in the series, which began in 2009. It was a rebuilding season for the Cougars (0-10), who were outscored, 351-51 this fall. The only time that they scored more than eight points in a game was a 20-14 non-league home loss against Mahar Regional on September 26.



Jacob Cacace returns the ball to start the second half.

Senior quarterback Jacob Cacace was selected as the Cougars MVP Award winner. He was also a senior tri-captain, along with Jeffrey Bouchard, and Steven Smith. The other seniors listed on the Quaboag football roster are Kadin Dufault, CJ Kady, and Elijah Wilhelm. Following the game, Quaboag head coach David Shepherd announced that longtime assistant coach Henry Brogna will be retiring. The last time that the Cougars defeated the Indians on the gridiron was a 26-21 victory in the 2022 contest, which took place on Thanksgiving morning at Veterans' Field in Ware. Before the opening kick-

off in this year's contest, the Cougars won the coin toss and elected to receive the ball first. Starting at midfield, Cacace marched his team 30 yards down the field. The Cougars picked up a couple of first downs following a four yard run and an eleven yard run from eighth grader Bayer Sargent. That drive stalled when the Ware defense forced the Cougars to turn the ball over on downs at the Indians 19 with a little more than six minutes remaining in the opening quarter. The Cougars offense got the ball right back following a punt. They then put together a nine play scor-

ing drive, which covered 40 yards. Cacace kept the series alive with three first down runs before Sargent dashed into the endzone on a two yard run with 11:10 remaining in the second quarter. Eighth grader Jayden Mioduszewski made the extra point attempt giving the Cougars a 7-0 lead. Mioduszewski and Sargent are two of the eleven eighth graders listed on the Quaboag football roster. The Cougars didn't keep the lead for very long. On the first play of the ensuing series, Berthiaume carried the ball 40 yards down the right sideline before being pushed out of bounds at the Cougars 31



Quaboag's Keegan Grieco and CJ Kady try to come up with the takedown.

yard line. Berthiaume picked up six more yards on the next play before Orszulak scored on a 25-yard run with ten minutes remaining in the first half. He plowed over a couple of Quaboag defenders on his way into the endzone. Jurczyk completed a TD pass to Orszulak on the two point conversion. "For some unknown reason, we began the game very slowly," Fazio said. "Once we took the lead in the second quarter, we began playing our style of football, which is physical and downhill. I'm very proud of the kids." It was the first time that Jurczyk was the starting

quarterback against the Cougars. "This is the first time I started in the Thanksgiving game, and it was an amazing feeling," Jurczyk said. "Throwing touchdown passes is my favorite thing to do. I wouldn't be very successful without the help of my linemen. I'm glad that I have one more season to play with this team." During the final three minutes of the second quarter, Jurczyk completed a pair of touchdown passes. He connected with classmate Dalton Marquis for a five yard TD reception with 2:18 showing on the scoreboard clock. Orszulak caught another

touchdown pass on the conversion play. Then a 25-yard punt return by Marquis and a 15-yard late hit penalty put the ball at the Cougars 24 yard line. The Indians only needed two plays to score their third touchdown. This time, Jurczyk tossed a 24-yard touchdown pass to Bernier, which gave the Indians a 22-7 lead with 11 seconds remaining in the first half. The Indians tried an extra point attempt, which sailed wide left. They also missed both of their PAT's in the second half. Marquis closed out the first half with an interception. The Ware defense forced Quaboag to turn the ball over on downs at the start of the second half. Then Berthiaume carried the ball six times before scoring on a 12-yard scamper with 6:36 left in the third quarter. Less than three minutes into the final quarter, Jurczyk capped off the game's scoring by throwing his third TD pass, which was a 24-yarder to Wood. Orszulak intercepted late in the fourth quarter before the Indians players celebrated their final victory of the 2025 campaign.

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

- 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 de-

licious 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, homemade 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.

N Brookfield Senior Center lists December activities

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 art class – Christmas Lan-

terns 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.

JOINVILLE FROM PAGE 1

him during this award ceremony.

Bessette believes Joinville does a lot for the students and continues to commit to them and the school.

"He wouldn't be here without us," Bessette said. "An easy going and helpful person, even if he wasn't your teacher."

Bessette described Joinville's teaching style as a kind and understanding person when he teaches, who takes time to help you. Bessette plans on having Joinville as a teacher throughout her time at Quaboag.

Joinville has been teaching at Quaboag for 18 years, starting in the 2008-2009 school year. Over the years, Joinville has saved every single teacher ID card/photo he has gotten during his tenure at Quaboag.

His first full-time year began in 2009 after the music director left Quaboag and Joinville would take up a new role. Prior to teaching, Joinville worked as a mailing department head for the Fast Lanes Violations officer.

In his spare time, Joinville for many years has performed as an organist for St. Christophers in Worcester. Joinville has been an organist for 25 years.

Joinville knew what he wanted to do since the sixth grade. He and his friend Brian Kellam had figured out what they wanted to do while they were both still in middle school.

Kellam would become a fighter pilot, flying a F-16 and Joinville wanted to teach music.

"We both followed these dreams," Joinville said.

Joinville said he got a lot of messages from former students who reached out and congratulated him on this award. One of the gifts Joinville got in addition to the Most Valuable Teacher Award was a customized baseball jersey with his last name and the #1 placed on it. Joinville said this was the only time in his life his name was placed on a sports jersey.

At first, Joinville was shocked by the news that he was nominated and was given this award. As time went on leading to the ceremony, the moment became humbling for Joinville. He said he does what he does for the kids, the community, and for the school.

How Joinville found out about who nominated him is a comedic story. He believes a fellow classmate of Bessette alluded to the answer.

As for the ceremony, Joinville described it as a party featuring students of music and theater, as well as Superintendent Stephen Duff and Quaboag administration members joining in on the celebration. Representatives of the WooSox Foundation joined in on the celebration as Joinville was praised by the Smiley Ball the mascot.

The feeling described by Joinville was awesome and he admitted that he almost cried. Any teacher who hears appreciation from the students and staff is always



A Most Valuable Teacher banner was held by Superintendent Stephen Duff, James Joinville, Quaboag Regional Middle High School Principal John Diorio, freshman Teagan Bessette (who nominated Joinville) and Country Bank Vice President of Community Relations Jodie Gerulaitis.

good to hear, according to Joinville.

In 2020, Joinville received an award through MSA and the National Honor Society Massachusetts Chapters. It was the Everett Masters Adviser of the Year Award and Joinville found out through a scavenger hunt.

While on school grounds, Joinville found himself do-

ing a scavenger hunt around the school. There were six clues in total, and it ended with him finding out in the school auditorium. Joinville still has the clues saved in his office.

Joinville wanted to acknowledge his inspirations that helped him lay out the path to pursue college and wanting to become a music teacher. His inspirations

were Charlie Pietrello, Dave Daquil, Bob Chadwick and Beth Johnson; teachers he had in middle school and high school.

Joinville went to the University of Maine in Orono and had the pleasure of reconnecting with former instructors of his. A couple students of Joinville have enrolled in UMaine and are studying music.

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DEADLINE
January 28, 2026

PUBLICATION DATE
February 18, 2026



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- public notices -

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 Backlot, 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, under the Events Calendar.

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

Timothy Morrell
Planning

TOWN OF NORTH BROOKFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the North Brookfield Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing to consider a petition to locate poles, wires, cables, and fixtures, including the necessary anchors, guys, and other such

sustaining and protecting fixtures, brought before it by Massachusetts Electric Company d/b/a National Grid and Verizon New England, Inc **Tuesday, December 16, 2025 at 6:15 PM** at the North Brookfield Police Department, 55 School Street, North Brookfield, MA 01535.

The pole location that will be considered is as follows:

Madbrook Rd- National Grid to install 1 JO Pole on Madbrook Rd beginning at a point approximately 915 feet south of the centerline of the intersection of Oakham Rd. Install a new Pole 25-25 to power new residential home.

Said hearing will begin at 6:15 PM and continue until completion, and will be conducted pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 166.

Jason M Petraitis, Chairman
Jamie Gilman
Ralph Kay
12/05, 12/12/2025

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

The Town of West Brookfield Water Department ("Owner") shall receive sealed General Bids at the Town of West Brookfield Water Department Office, Town Hall Lower Level, 2 East Main Street, West Brookfield, MA, to the attention of Kathy Landry, Water Department Administrative Assistant, for the construction of the Leland Road Water Treatment Facility Upgrades, Contract No. WDLR2026-01, DWSRF-19048, until 2:00 PM

prevailing time, Wednesday, January 21, 2026, at which time bids will be opened and publicly read aloud. Bids submitted after this time will not be accepted.

The Town of West Brookfield Water Department shall receive sealed filed sub-bids at the Town of West Brookfield Water Department Office, Town Hall Lower Level, 2 East Main Street, West Brookfield, MA, to the attention of Kathy Landry, Water Department Administrative Assistant, for the construction of the Leland Road Water Treatment Facility Upgrades, Contract No. WDLR2026-01, DWSRF-19048, until 2:00 PM prevailing time, Wednesday January 7, 2026, at which time sub-bids will be opened and publicly read aloud. Sub-bids submitted after this time will not be accepted.

Sub-bids will be required on the work described in the following disciplines of work: Masonry; Miscellaneous and Ornamental Iron; Waterproofing, Dampproofing, and Caulking; Painting; Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning; and Electrical.

A non-mandatory pre-bid conference will be held at the Town of West Brookfield Leland Road Wellfield, 16 Leland Road, West Brookfield, MA 01585, at 10:00 AM prevailing time, Wednesday December 17, 2025.

The Work of this Contract generally consists of the construction of a 41'-4" by 29'-4" double wythe masonry building with three GreensandPlus filtra-

tion vessels for iron and manganese removal, a below grade spent backwash tank, backwash supply tank, and pipe gallery. A sodium hypochlorite disinfection system will be installed in the existing WTF building on site as well as new submersible well pumps and motors. Building components include HVAC, plumbing, SCADA, and electrical. Site work includes installation of 8-inch ductile iron water main and associated valves, hydrants, fittings, and appurtenances, approximately 187 feet of 24-inch diameter ductile iron water main for 4-log virus inactivation, relocation of propane tanks and associated piping, electrical, grading, chain link fence, gravel driveway, stormwater controls, erosion controls, and miscellaneous site work. All work shall be completed within 510 consecutive calendar days of the date fixed in the Notice to Proceed.

The Contract Documents may be obtained electronically through Tata & Howard, Inc. by contacting Juliette Burcham at LelandWTFbid@tataandhoward.com.

The bidding and award of the Contract will be under the provisions of "Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 149, Sections 44A-44J (MGL c.149, ss.44A-44J)." Each bid and sub-bid shall be accompanied by a bid security in the amount of 5% of the total bid amount and in the form described in the Instructions to Bidders. A Performance Bond and Labor and Materials Payment Bond each in the amount

of 100 percent of the Contract Price will be required in the form described in the Instructions to Bidders. Each general bid must be accompanied by a DCAMM Certificate of Eligibility for Water and Sewerage Treatment Facilities and an Update Statement in accordance with MGL c. 149, s44D. Each filed sub-bid must be accompanied by a DCAMM Certificate of Eligibility and Update Statement for the respective trade in accordance with MGL c. 149, s44D and s44F. No Bidder may withdraw their bid within 30 days (Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays excluded) after the actual date of the opening of the General Bids.

This project is funded in part by the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust (the "Trust"). This project requires compliance with the Department of Environmental Protection's Diesel Retrofit Program. Procurement Considerations - Six Good Faith Efforts. 40 CFR, Part 33, Subpart C: Pursuant to 40 CFR Section 33.301, the sub-recipient agrees to make good faith efforts whenever procuring construction, equipment, services, and supplies under an EPA financial assistance agreement, and to require that sub-recipients, loan recipients, and prime contractors also comply. Records documenting compliance with the six good faith efforts shall be retained. The specific six good faith efforts can be found at: 40 CFR Section 33.301 (a)-(f).

Minimum Wage Rates as determined by the Executive Office

of Labor and Workforce Development under the provision of the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 149, Section 26 to 27D, as amended, apply to this project. It is the responsibility of the contractor, before bid opening, to request if necessary, any additional information on Minimum Wage Rates for those trades people who may be employed for the proposed work under this contract. Federal Minimum Wage Rates as determined by the United States Department of Labor under the Davis-Bacon Act also apply to this project.

If the bidder views/obtains the plans and specifications from a source other than those noted in this Advertisement for Bids, the accuracy and/or completeness of the bid documents cannot be guaranteed and the bidder assumes the responsibility for obtaining any additional information regarding the project, including addenda, that may be required for bidding. Failure to acknowledge addenda issued during bidding shall designate a bid or sub-bid as non-responsive. The Owner reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to accept any bid, or to waive any informality on bids received.

TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD
WATER DEPARTMENT,
MASSACHUSETTS
12/05/2025



Heather Pascale as Sister Mary Hubert (left) gets an earful from Susan Clark as Sister Mary Regina, or the Mother Rever



Sister Mary Paul (Amnesia) played by Olivia Pascale and Sister Mary Regina played by Susan Clark, sang during the song "Three Hundred Sixty-Four Days".



Sister Mary Hubert (played by Heather Pascale) felt the pressures of holiday shopping.

MUSICAL FROM PAGE 1

Tomasi said, "They are so talented and we share the same sense of humor."

This chance reach-out manifested into the star-studded cast that will have you "holy rolling" in the aisles with laughter.

Heather Pascale of Barre, a mother of seven, is returning to the stage as Sister Mary Hubert with two of her daughters Olivia Pascale (also of Barre) and Gina Rourke of Wheelwright, as well as her mother, Susan Clark.

The family has music running through their veins, and have formed several successful family bands, including a Christian rock band called Six Stories Up. The daughters credited their mom, and their grandmother, for teaching them to sing and make music.

Tomasi described Heath-

er's voice as "amazing."

"She can be three different characters in one black dress, depending on what sister she's talking to," Tomasi said.

Heather can be remembered for several roles with The Gilbert Players alongside her children. She even starred in a production with her youngest daughter, Sophia, when Sophia was just 9 months old.

"She even cried on cue," Rourke said of her sister's acting debut.

Heather said she had taken a hiatus from the theater, but was excited to play the convent's second-in-command in "Nuncrackers".

"I had take a little bit more than a decade-long break and Linda pulled me out of the woodwork," she said.

Heather said she put her experience as a mother into the character of Sister Mary Hubert.

"I've had to be a lead-



Gina Rourke sang as street-smart, tough-talking Brooklyn nun, Sister Robert Anne.

er to these girls their whole life," she said pointing to her daughters. "Sister Mary Hubert is a bit of a leader."

Clark of Barre, plays the role of Mother Reverend, Sister Mary Regina, and she admitted that her grandchildren somewhat misled her

when she accepted the role by saying it, "didn't have a lot of lines."

"I told her the part would be really easy," Rourke said with a laugh.

Nonetheless, Clark eagerly took on the challenge, easy or not, and said the experience has been wonderful and has given her more cherished memories with her daughter and granddaughters.

"I'm loving being with my family," she said.

At 76 years old, she is no stranger to performing, having first joined The Gilbert Players in their production of "Annie" along with her grandchildren.

Clark said she brings her sense of humor to her role as Mother Reverend, and jokingly said she uses her husband as inspiration in the scenes where she's lecturing the other nuns. She has also put her baton-twirling talents to use for the first time in over 40 years.

Rourke, who has been performing as long as she can remember, became the lead singer of the family band when she was just 8 years old,

and even won The Center's Got Talent singing "Jesus, Take the Wheel" her senior year of high school.

Rourke said her Italian family members inspired her role as the street-smart, tough-talking Brooklyn nun, Sister Robert Anne.

Rourke has appeared in a lot of shows at The Gilbert Players, including "Annie Get Your Gun", "Annie", "The Wizard of Oz" and "Honk!" In high school, she was able to play her favorite stage role of all time, that of Asaka in "Once on This Island". She has also performed with Sterling Community Theatre.

Rourke has been a dance teacher for 12 years, and also did the choreography for "Nuncrackers".

Rourke described Sister Robert Anne as someone who "likes to be kind of a star."

"I really love to perform...I'm very confident performing and so it vibes with me," she said of the role.

Her sister Olivia has been in five shows with The Gilbert Players, most recently in "Chicago". She has also performed with the Sterling Community Theatre and Central Mass Onstage.

Olivia said Sister Mary Paul, also known as Amnesia, got that nickname after suffering memory loss when a crucifix fell on her head. Her sweet southern drawl delicately covers her sarcastic side.

"She's super funny," Olivia said of her character. "She's sassy and quirky, and super sarcastic."

Joining the family to round out the cast of nuns is Hardwick resident Laura Grunberg as Sister Mary Leo, a nun who dreams of being a dancer.

"My ambition is to become the first nun ballerina," she said.

Grunberg moved to town two years ago, and this is her first time performing with The Gilbert Players.

When she lived in New York and worked as a library director, she wrote and directed several old-time radio shows, and also participated in community theater.

Grunberg got her acting debut in Hardwick during this past October's Ghost Walk in the cemetery adjacent to the Town House, playing the role of Bathsheba Newcomb Ruggles, the mother of the infamous Bathsheba Ruggles Spooner.

All of the cast members said they have enjoyed working with Linda and John and being a part of "Nuncrackers".

"I love working with John," Rourke said. "I take his criticism very seriously. He makes us better for sure."

Rourke said Linda "loves to make her cast happy," right down to bringing cookies to rehearsals.

About 'Nuncrackers'
Enjoy some quality time with your own family and share laughs with the sisterhood this weekend at "Nuncrackers: The Nonsense Christmas Musical".

Tickets are \$10, \$17 and \$19. Ticket prices will never go above \$20, Tomasi said, keeping theater affordable and enjoyable for all.

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.

The Center at Eagle Hill is handicapped accessible.

EARLY DEADLINE

In observance of **CHRISTMAS** for Dec. 22-26 newspapers there will be an **EARLY CLASSIFIEDS DEADLINE!** Place your advertisement no later than **Thurs., Dec. 17 at 3 p.m.**

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This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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NO ENTRANCE FEE
 Mobile Home located in Waterwheel Village at 31 Edward Lane, Barre, MA 01005. This is a 55 and better community. This home includes a wonderful floor plan with very spacious rooms. Master bedroom includes a walk-in closet. Two full bathrooms. A four-season sunroom is off the kitchen. Includes two large woodsheds and a metal garage you can park under to fend off winter weather. Asking \$289,000. See listing on MLS # 73433198

NO ENTRANCE FEE
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