

# QUABOAG CURRENT

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Quaboag Current  
Newspaper

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Volume 18, Number 3

Friday, December 13, 2024

## White Christmas and beautiful weather

By Richard Murphy  
Correspondent

WEST BROOKFIELD – The dusting of snow the night before and that of the previous week gave the annual White Christmas event the right seasonal look this past Sunday – and the beautiful sunshine did not hurt.

Townpeople, visitors and town institutions were ready for the day. Businesses and homes could put out flags signifying an open house and many did.

A good place to start, especially for youngsters, would be the Town Hall. Inside, kids would be entertained by the Toe Jam Band up from New Bedford. They could get their pictures taken with Santa and build gingerbread houses.

There would be more at the Great Hall later on.

Next, over to Hitchcock Tavern. Outside, at the corner, A trio consisting of trumpet, sax and clarinet were entertaining the passersby for the



Shown from left are Heidi and Pastor Sandy at The George Whitefield United Methodist Church during the West Brookfield's White Christmas event. TURLEY PHOTO BY RICHARD MURPHY

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## School Committee votes on regional agreement

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
pouimette@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – School Committee Vice-Chair and Regional Agreement Amendment Committee member Tim Canada said the School Committee needs to vote whether or not to accept the amended regional agreement to join the Quaboag Regional School Committee,

along with the towns of Warren and West Brookfield.

If the agreement is accepted by both school committees, it would then move to a town meeting vote. Canada said financials have changed since the original feasibility study was conducted in 2020, and those figures will need to be updated if the vote passes.

“It’s really just a modified version of what Quaboag is already operating under,” he

said at the School Committee’s Nov. 18 meeting.

Canada moved to approve the amended agreement, which he described as the framework for how the school district governs itself. School Committee members voted unanimously to approve the agreement and bring the vote before residents at a town meeting.

During the Quaboag Regional School Committee

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## Nativities From Around the World

### Church hosted 15th annual community event

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
pouimette@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – For the past 15 years, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been hosting a free, four-day event that ushers in the Christmas season with a sense of peace and belonging.

“Nativities From Around the World” featured over 500 different nativity scenes depicting the birth of Jesus Christ, with each one holding significant meaning to its owner. These nativities are displayed by members of the church as well as by people from the community at large.

With 90 nativity scenes in

See CHURCH | PAGE 6



Gail Ann Anderson of Hardwick displayed a photo of her grandchildren depicting the birth of Jesus Christ. Anderson displayed approximately 100 nativity scenes from her collection in “Nativities From Around the World,” an annual community event held at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in North Brookfield for the past 15 years. TURLEY PHOTO BY PAULA OUIMETTE

## Theatre Guild performs music revue through the decades

By Ryan Drago  
Staff Writer  
rdrago@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – There will always be show business as the Theatre Guild of North Brookfield gives a show highlighting musicals through the decades.

This theatre production that wrapped up 2024 for the Theatre Guild was a music revue highlighting the memorable musicals, movies and dances throughout musical theatre. The cast and ensemble of the Theatre Guild of North Brook-

See THEATRE | PAGE 12



Sarah Priestley and Adam Baker performed “I Get a Kick Out of You” from “Anything Goes”. TURLEY PHOTO BY RYAN DRAGO



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# - community -



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## Federated Church announces holiday concert

STURBRIDGE – The Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale will present a holiday concert and sing-along on Sunday, Dec. 15, at 2:30 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 or contact the church office by calling 774-304-1021 or emailing churchoffice@sturfed.org.



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## Wings of Song presents 'Peace and Joy' Dec. 14-15

STURBRIDGE – Wings of Song, a 45-voice community chorus, will perform "Peace and Joy" on Saturday, Dec. 14, at 7:30 p.m. at St. Anne's Church, 16 Church St., Fiskdale and Sunday, Dec. 15 at 3 p.m. at Evangelical Covenant Church, 24 Child Hill Road, Woodstock, Connecticut.

"Peace and Joy" features pieces from the familiar Handel's Hallelujah Chorus to the original 1818 version of Silent Night that few will know. Composers as modern as Arvo Pärt, 1990 and Marc-Antoine Charpentier, about 1690.

As Director Nym Cooke said, "This music plunges deep and soars high! This will be a very special concert. I think – on the one hand, meditative, centering, and relaxing; on the other hand, uplifting, inspiring, and energizing. Just the right medicine for these times."

There is no admission charged for the concerts. A freewill offering will be collected at intermission. Both venues are handicapped accessible and complimentary refreshments will be provided by the chorus members after the concerts. Concertgoers are encouraged to arrive early to be sure of seating.

## Yoga and meditation program offered this evening

WARREN – Yoga & Meditation for Vibrant Health & Peace of Mind will be held on Thursday, Dec. 12 from 6:30-8 p.m. at the Centered Place, 286 Bridge St. and live on Zoom.

Holiday lights are everywhere. Yoga and meditation help you find the light that shines from within you. Experience an inner depth filled with peace and joy.

Yoga and meditation are clinically tested for reducing stress and improving health. Enjoy a slower-paced yoga practice with simple poses that are easy and work like magic. Relieve back, neck and shoulder tension. Improve mobility, vitality and stamina.

Learn how to relax-stay calm and breathe easy even amidst the challenges that come with the holidays and the times we live in.

The event is free and for all ages, 14 and up. No previous yoga experience necessary. Attend in person or online.

Registration is required. Please call 413-436-7690 or email warrenpubliclibrary@hotmail.com to register. Zoom link will be provided upon request when registering. If attending via Zoom, have a chair handy (folding chair is best).

This workshop will be presented by Phil Milgrom of the Centered Place in Warren and is sponsored by the Warren Public Library with a grant from the Warren Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the MA Cultural council, a state agency.

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# - community -

## Shoe collection bin available at transfer station



The Rotary Club of the Brookfields has partnered with the Warren Transfer Station and Planet Aid for a new Footwear Collection Box. Donating unwanted sneakers and other footwear to this collection bin for recycling will help support the Rotary Club of the Brookfields' Literacy and Community Service Projects they do for the seven towns they serve. *SUBMITTED PHOTO*

## Library story time happens Dec. 16

**NEW BRAINTREE** – The New Braintree Public Library, 45 Memorial Drive, is offering a Story Time program for preschoolers on Monday, Dec. 16 beginning at 9 a.m.

The program's focus is on Christmas and will include a sing-along program with Rich Hennessy and his ukulele.

The readings will include "Bear Stays up for Christmas" by Karma Wilson and "Mouse's First Christmas" by Lauren Thompson.

Parental supervision is required for this reading and craft program.

People may call the library at 508-867-7650 during regular business hours for more information.

## 'A Big Band Christmas' concert Dec. 22

**WARE** – Weir River Jazz will present "A Big Band Christmas," a big band concert in the Grand Hall of Workshop13, 13 Church St. on Sunday, Dec. 22, at 2 p.m.

All are welcome to hear the great

sounds of a traditional Big Band playing your favorite seasonal melodies. This concert is open to the public and there is no charge for admission. Donations to Workshop13 are appreciated to help continue the support of the arts.



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- opinion -



## Kissing balls for a new porch

It's really funny that sometimes I have to consult my own columns to remember how to do something.

You see, now that the front porch is done, there is a new area to decorate, an area well-suited for kissing balls! My daughter and I were at the local garden center and there were so many beauties for sale.

Of course it would break my budget to buy one to go in the middle of each pair of columns, so it looks like I'll be making them myself.

The first thing you will need is a styrofoam ball. One that is six inches in diameter would make a good size kissing ball.

Then gather a coat hanger and some wire cutters. Snip away the hook and straighten out the rest. Insert it through the middle of the ball and bend one end as a hanger.

About 18 inches will be showing; it will look better if you choose a gold colored hanger. If not, you can always cover it later.

Getting the piece of wire into the dead center can be difficult, so use a long wooden pick to pre-make the hole. After that insertion will be easy.

Having a selection of greens on hand will make a pretty kissing ball. Scavenge the landscape for holly, yew, white pine, juniper and the like. Now it is time to insert clumps of greenery into the ball.

Styrofoam is very durable – great for holding all of these stems, but much more difficult to work with than floral foam. For that reason, all but the most rigid stems need to be put on wooden picks before they can be stuck into the ball.

Make small bunches of greenery about four inches long, holding their stems next to the pick and wrapping the attached wire to it. One by one insert these bunches into the styrofoam.

It is best to work randomly around the ball – setting the dimensions if you will, rather than starting in one place and working out. Being that it is round, it will be hard to put it down while working on it.

After a while you'll get into the swing of things by wiring a few bunches of greens, putting them in, wiring a few more and so forth. Finally, give it a good look. Is it a nice, round shape? Is there any foam showing? Where could it use a few berries?

Rose hips or winterberry, or even artificial berries will surely brighten it up, as will strands of ribbon wired to a wooden pick and inserted into the bottom. Wired ribbon is a good choice since it has a little shape; less droopy so to speak.

It will be surprising just how much greenery it takes to make a kissing ball. When I am making wreaths or decorations of any sort I always continue harvesting even after I think I have enough, just as a bit of insurance. It's always better to have extra than have to stop everything and go picking again.

One little factoid for cruise ship trivia: "Kissing bunches" in Old England were comprised of two intersecting circles of greens that were often decorated with fruit as well as figures of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. The "kissing" aspect came from the sprig of mistletoe that hung on the very bottom of the sphere – evoking the same response it does when hung by itself today.

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



## SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor

### Signing up for Social Security and Medicare Part B at 70

Dear Rusty

I just turned 69 years old in August 2024 and am still working full time. I signed up for Medicare Part A but, it is my secondary insurance because I have great health insurance through where I work.

My wife is retired and has Medicare Part A but, is on my insurance also and she is taking Social Security.

Our plan is for me to work until August 2026 when I'll be 71. I'll file for Social Security when I turn 70 and bank all of it for a year until I retire. That is money we plan to use for travel and fun things. I have three questions: when should I file for my Social Security so it starts in September; when do my wife and I file for Medicare Part B with a supplement so it starts in September; and are there negative tax implications to this plan that I haven't thought of?

Signed: Needing Info

Dear Needing Info

Sounds like you have a great strategy planned for your personal Social Security benefits and your Medicare Part B enrollment for both of you. To your questions:

If you will be 70 in August 2025, you can apply for Social Security about three months prior e.g., in May 2025. Just be sure to specify that you wish your SS benefits to start effective with the month of your 70th birthday.

Signing up a few months early is perfectly okay; you will indicate your desired benefit start date on your application and that is when SS will start your benefits. Remember, SS pays benefits in the month following the month earned, so your first payment will be received in September 2025 on the second Wednesday if you were born before the 11th of the month.

As for Medicare Part B coverage for you and your wife, both of you can enroll in Medicare Part B a couple of months prior to you leaving work, but request that Medicare Part B coverage starts in the month your work coverage ends. In other words, you can enroll in Medicare

before you retire from work, but request that your Part B coverage starts in the first month your employer coverage ends to avoid any gap in healthcare coverage.

Obviously, you should begin your private supplemental healthcare coverage to coincide with the start of your Medicare Part B coverage.

Regarding the tax implications, just be aware that a portion of your received Social Security benefits become taxable income if your Modified Adjusted Gross Income as a married couple exceeds certain thresholds. FYI, "MAGI" is your Adjusted Gross Income on your tax return plus 50% of your received SS benefits, plus any non-taxable interest you may have had.

If you file your taxes as "married/jointly" and your MAGI is more than \$32,000, then 50% of the SS benefits you receive during the tax year becomes taxable income or if your MAGI as a married couple is over \$44,000 then up to 85% of the SS benefits received during the tax year becomes taxable income at your normal IRS tax rate. Income tax on SS benefits occurs when your MAGI is over the thresholds for your tax filing status, so you should plan accordingly.

If your MAGI will be consistently over these thresholds after you retire from working, you may choose to have income tax withheld from your SS benefits, which is easy to do by submitting IRS FORM W-4V to your local Social Security office.

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### OPINION PAGE/ LETTERS POLICY

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Send opinions to:

Letters to the Editor, 80 Main Street, Ware, MA 01082 OR e-mail to [pouimette@turley.com](mailto:pouimette@turley.com). Deadline for submission is Monday at noon for the following week's edition.

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Quaboag Current Newspaper

# - opinion -

## Performance hearing held for Mt. Pleasant Street project

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
pouimette@turley.com

NORTH BROOKFIELD – Joe Ferguson, a planner in the Community Development unit of the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, led a performance hearing for the fiscal year 2021 Community Development Block Grant.

At the Board of Selectmen's Dec. 3 meeting, Ferguson said this program was founded in 1974 using federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. He said rural towns like North Brookfield are known as non-entitlement communities and must compete for funding through the grant application process.

"It's not a promise that every community gets those grants," Ferguson said, and projects must meet one of three national objectives including "benefit to low- to moderate-income."

Ferguson said there is a various number of eligible programs, including improving infrastructure, Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility, improvements to public facilities, housing rehabilitation, planning for parks and recreation, environmental remediation and architectural and engineering studies.

"There's no municipal financial outlay required to apply or to receive funding to manage these projects and there's no match required," he said. "Everything is grant funded from the actual project or improvement, to the adminis-

tration and project management."

Ferguson said each town is given a "community needs score" by the commonwealth, which helps direct funds to the communities most in need of assistance.

"The higher your needs score, the more competitive you are," he said.

Ferguson said the town's needs score was seven out of 10 for the FY 21 grant cycle, but has since been adjusted. He said the town's score remains competitive for funding.

The FY 21 CDBG cycle funded infrastructure and water system improvements for Mount Pleasant Street. This project was identified through the town's West Side Neighborhood Improvement plan which was funded by the FY 19 CDBG cycle.

"This was awarded about towards the near end of COVID," he said. "Design took a little bit longer than we anticipated and there was some staff turnover at CMRPC before I joined about a year ago, that probably also led to some delays on getting this project designed and out to bid."

Ferguson said the project is mainly focused on the water main and associated service lines, stormwater drainage, sidewalks and roadway. He said the final design was presented to the Board of Selectmen in September 2023 and a contractor was procured in June 2024 for the first phase of construction.

Ferguson said progress meetings about the project have been held throughout the process and another is

planned for Dec. 17. He said phase one work, while delayed, is expected to be "substantially completed" by the end of the month.

He recommended the board extend the FY 21 grant performance period to June 30, 2025, to ensure phase one is completed. He said the town will not incur any additional costs for this extension and the project remains "considerably under budget."

Ferguson said phase two of the project will be funded under the FY 24 CDBG cycle and involves the installation of the stormwater drainage system, full depth roadway reconstruction, sidewalk improvements and curbing replacements.

"We anticipate that we can go out to phase two construction bid in early spring 2025," he said.

Ferguson thanked the Mount Pleasant Street neighborhood residents for their patience during the construction progress, as well as the town's officials and departments.

### New hires

The board appointed Brent Lavoie to a full-time position on the Police Department. Lavoie said he sponsored himself through the Quinsigamond Community College's full-time academy last fall and graduated this past May. "I'm very excited to start my career in North Brookfield," he said.

John Mitchell Sr. was appointed as a full-time employee on the Highway Department. Mitchell said he grew up in North Brookfield and his family has

many ties to the town.

"I've got some strong roots in North Brookfield," he said. "I'm looking forward to contributing all my knowledge...I've got a lot of experience."

Mitchell has also operated his own tree service, which is now run by his son.

### ARPA request

The board received American Rescue Plan Act spending recommendations from the ARPA Committee in the amount of \$2,400 to cover the cost of labor for the Haston Free Public Library's replacement of the lower level emergency exit.

This expense does not include the cost of materials for the project. Board of Selectmen Chair Jason Petraitis said the cost of the door and hardware only is \$3,490.

The board approved this recommendation.

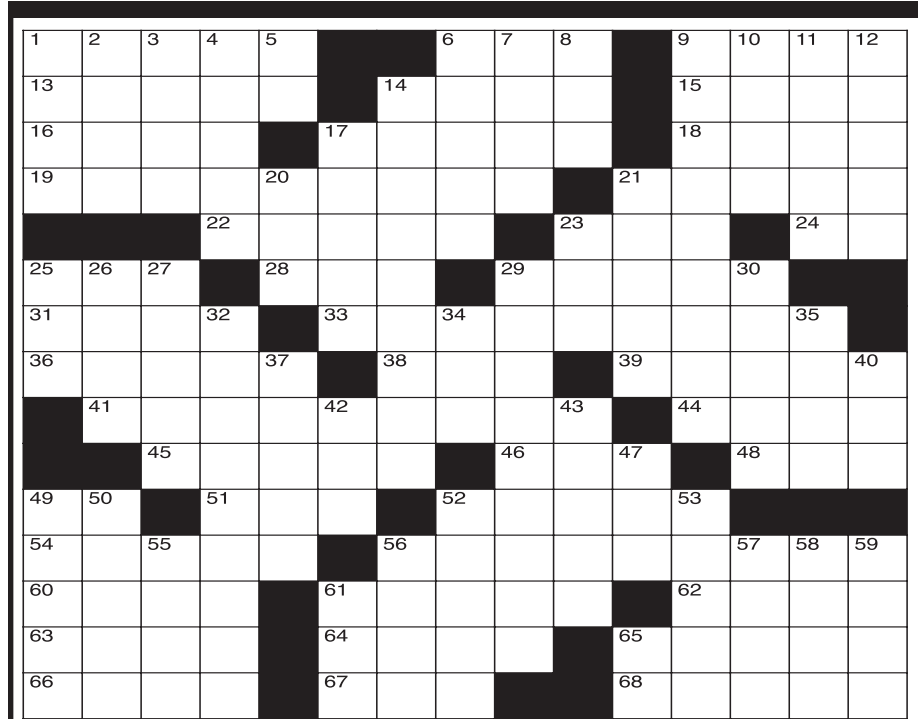
After this expense, the remaining ARPA balance is \$6,873, Administrative Assistant Ashley Barre said. Town Administrator Michael Szlosek said about \$3,000 of that balance will be appropriated to cover the cost of tree work.

### Appointment

The board appointed Andrew Wiewel to serve on the Conservation Commission.

### Spending request

The board approved a spending request from the Highway Department in the amount of \$424 to purchase tires for the town's sidewalk snow removal machine.



### CLUES ACROSS

1. Thou \_\_\_ do it
6. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
9. Brainstem part
13. Town in New York state
14. Little (Spanish)
15. Continent
16. Retch
17. Short-billed rails
18. Small period of time (abbr.)
19. Confused
21. A team needs one
22. Woman in ancient times
23. Republican Party
24. Spanish be
25. "The Godfather" character Johnny
28. Not around
29. City in Zambia
31. A type of beginning
33. Numb
36. Gurus
38. Small, gray-headed

### CLUES DOWN

1. One-time Aaron
39. Vehicle type
41. Disorders
44. One point east of southeast
45. Indian soldier
46. Tree type
48. Midway between south and southeast
49. It cools your home
51. Corn comes on it
52. Ship's deck
54. A way to bake
56. Improvised
60. Butterfly genus
61. Baseball fields have them
62. Designated space
63. Discharge
64. Two of something
65. Once more
66. Part of your face
67. Tax collector
68. Cassia tree

### CLUES ACROSS

2. Wings
3. Overly studious person
4. They protect your valuables
5. The Volunteer State
6. Non-hydraulic cement
7. Horse mackerel
8. Jackson and Diddley are two
9. Splendid displays
10. Mountain in NE Greece
11. A daughter or your brother or sister
12. German surname
14. Having more than one husband at a time
17. Romanian city
20. Energy
21. Makes less hot
23. Gas diffusion electrode
25. Former CIA
26. Set an example for others
27. Support of a particular person
29. One from the Big

### CLUES DOWN

6. Mountain range
32. Violate the sanctity of something
34. Supervises flying
35. Talks
37. Persian male given name
40. Born of
42. Forcibly take one's possessions
43. Discounts
47. Knockouts
49. Posh Colorado destination
50. Form of therapy
52. British rock band
53. Type of virus (abbr.)
55. The U. of Miami mascot is one
56. Volcanic crater
57. Middle Eastern nation
58. Sinn \_\_\_\_, Irish organization
59. Ethiopian lake
61. Bits per inch (abbr.)
65. Equally

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January 25, 2024  
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Grandparents: Donald & MaryAnn Dunbar, Ware  
Thomas & Sharon Legasey, Spencer

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 Parents' Names: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parents' Town of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Grandparents' Names & Town of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
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<input type="checkbox"/> Journal Register	<input type="checkbox"/> The Wilbraham-Hampden Times

**Deadline for photos and forms is Monday, December 16, 2024**

**CHURCH | FROM PAGE 1**

one room alone and more in the next, Hardwick resident Gail Ann Anderson, has been collecting since her youngest child was 5 years old; and has been a part of “Nativities From Around the World” since it first started at her church.

Anderson’s love for the nativity dates back to her childhood, when her mother would place the scene under their Christmas tree, and Anderson would lay there to look at it.

“I loved the baby Jesus and the cow,” she remembered fondly.

Anderson has passed this love onto her children, with each of them having at least one nativity scene. Her daughter had three nativities displayed alongside Anderson’s including one that was embossed on a crown, paying homage to Jesus’ title as the king the kings.

Anderson shared that two of the nativities were nearest to her heart, including ceramic figures of Joseph leading a pregnant Mary on a donkey, and another that featured her beloved grandchildren dressed as members of the holy family.

“I love them all,” Anderson said of her nativities. “But these two are the ones.”

The photo of her grandchildren was part of their Christmas card that year, and Anderson proudly displayed it on a table amidst the glow of white lights during the event. Her grandchildren are now adults, with the youngest one a stu-

dent in college.

Anderson said she has added to her nativity collection by shopping at various stores, utilizing her Recycling Center’s swap shed and ordering from mail catalogs. She has even received them from people that know of her special interest.

As you walked through the various display rooms of the church, you could see nativities that hailed from the U.S. as well as other countries.

One nativity scene that has returned to “Nativities From Around the World” year after year, is owned by Jim and Helen Foyle of North Brookfield.

Originating from Germany, this nativity is over 100 years old and has been restored through the efforts of Linda Novac, Annette Perkins and Laura Dusty. This 20-piece set was made in 1913 for the Bernardini Statuary Co. in New York and once was displayed at the Haston Free Public Library before the Foyle family purchased it through a town-wide asset auction.

One nativity was crafted close to home by a young child who painted Mary holding baby Jesus on a rock. That child (now grown) has gone on to become an art teacher.

As people viewed the nativities, they expressed their appreciation for the display and noted it’s significance to the holiday season.

“This is what Christmas is all about,” one visitor said.



An angel embraced Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus.



The nativity is seen lit inside an ornament shape.



Felt and wooden beads were used to create this colorful nativity scene.



Figures wore traditional clothing in this Hungarian nativity. *TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA QUIMETTE*



Mary, baby Jesus and Joseph are featured in the word “joy.”



Gail Ann Anderson displayed a scene featuring a pregnant Mary being led on a donkey by Joseph.



This wooden nativity was made in Israel.



An art teacher painted Mary and baby Jesus on this rock when she was a child.



This ceramic nativity had delicate gold details.



A rubber ducky nativity scene brought smiles to many faces.



The Wise Men arrived with their gifts.



This crown is embossed with the nativity scene.



Many of the nativities made use of natural materials, including tree bark.



The Foyle family's nativity has been restored by the talents of Linda Novac, Annette Perkins and Laura Dusty.



The Foyle family displayed their 100 year old plus nativity scene which was made in Germany in 1913.



This ceramic nativity scene came from Thailand.



A Precious Moments nativity was displayed.

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**CHRISTMAS | FROM PAGE 1**

worthy cause of the Sharing Cupboard of the First Congregational Church of West Brookfield.

In the Hitchcock Tavern itself, the main hall and a smaller room were filled with numerous colorful crafts. As ever, the flow of visitors was steady.

Out in front, there were hardy souls in tents. Tom and Martha of Bucket List Maple Syrup, down from Long Hill, were offering their sweet product.

The Lake Wickaboag Council Grove Homeowners Association represents a neighborhood with roads not maintained by the town and were raising funds for their streets. Two residents were selling raffle tickets for road rehabilitation.

North Brookfield Junior High School students had a table covered with sweet stuff from Brookfield Orchards to sell as they were raising money for their class trip.

The Cub Scouts from Pack 159 in Brookfield had a rack of wreaths for sale next to the students.

The Merriam-Gilbert Public Library was, as usual, holding its welcoming open house. There were refreshments and also the raffle. Many prizes had been donated by generous local businesses and organizations.

The town's churches were also welcoming. The George Whitefield Methodist Church had a Bluegrass Carol Service. There was also a church fair. Pastor Sandy said of the church that "God is with all of us." Lovely thought.

We crossed over to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart where the Knights of Columbus were serving lunch and the Sodality was staffing the raffle.

On to the First Congregational Church where one of the ladies greeting folks told me that the open-faced turkey sandwich was wonderful. The quilt being raffled was something to see.

Then up to the elementary school that was packed with vendors. There were large rooms of various crafts on sale as well as in the halls. Smaller rooms had the Parent Teacher Group raffle and the Elves R Us shop with stocking stuffer gifts.

So much going on that it took us a while, but way in

the corner of the last room was the last vendor, Marge Pond and her Ishkabbile Crafts. This retired lady (well, maybe not so retired) makes and machines puzzles, birdhouses, bandsaw boxes, seasonal decorations, bat houses, and many other wooden wares.

Are you left-handed? She's made you a wooden spoon.

Again, this year, on the Common the local Boy Scouts were serving hot chocolate and the horse and carriage rides were taking place.

Much else was going on. There was a Chinese Raffle at the Senior Center, and toy drive donations were being made to the Rescue squad. There was sausage and grinders at the Fire Station.

As the afternoon progressed, the light began to decline and at 5:45 p.m. the tree on the Common would be lit up.

The day started at the Town Hall, and so would it end. At 6:15 p.m. it would be time for the concert in the Great Hall.

Before the music, however, a presentation would be made to a gentleman who truly deserved it. William Jankins has held many positions in service to the town. Considering his love and attention to the subject, to call him the town historian would be understatement.

State Rep. Donnie Berthiaume presented Jankins with a tribute from the Great and General Court.

Then it was on to the music by the Weir River Concert Band conducted by Joanne Meegan. It was a wonderful show with many surprises including a Christmas twist on "Ode To Joy" and Pachelbel's Canon.

The solos were all well done, including the reading of The Night Before Christmas.

The people of the town, and those who came from elsewhere for the day, owe a debt of gratitude to the committee members who organized the event: Amanda Wodyga, Chairperson; Melanie Waugh, Treasurer; Heather Gough, Secretary; Chelsey Mathieson; Christin Girouard; Mary Anne Matys-Rohde and Mariel Galarza.

Only 12 months until White Christmas 2025.



North Brookfield Junior High held a class trip fundraiser.



Karen Murphy and Mary Deotte are shown with the quilt raffled by the First Congregational Church.



Weir River Concert Band performed holiday songs under the direction of Joanne Meegan.



Tom and Martha selling the sweet stuff.

C	A	N	S	T		S	S	B		P	O	N	S		
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B	E	D	E	V	I	L	E	D		C	O	A	C	H	
				S	I	B	Y	L		G	O	P		E	S
O	L	A		M	I	A		N	D	O	L	A			
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N	O	S	E		I	R	S			S	E	N	N	A	



Council Grovers supporting roads. TURLEY PHOTOS BY RICHARD MURPHY



Marge Pond's Ishkabbile Crafts.



Margo is shown at the Our Lady of the Sacred Heart craft table.



Gingerbread houses were ready to be decorated in the Great Hall.

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# SPORTS

## Panthers preparing for season opener



The Quabbin Regional High School girls basketball team scrimmaged last Friday against Ware



The Panthers are preparing for their regular season opener against Narragansett.

BARRE – Last Friday evening, the Quabbin Regional High School girls basketball team continued its preparation for the 2024-2025 season. The Panthers hosted Ware High School for a scrimmage. The Panthers also faced off with Palmer, another Western Mass. team earlier this week. Quabbin, which won the Central Mass. title game last year against Notre Dame Academy, open up the season at Narragansett on Friday, Dec. 13. Quabbin's home opener is Friday, Dec. 20 against Maynard.



Quabbin made it into the opening round of last year's state tournament.  
TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Quabbin won the Central Mass. title last year.



The Panthers also had a scrimmage scheduled against Palmer this week.



The Panthers are looking for a return trip to the title this year.

## Pioneers set for new season

PALMER – Last week, Pathfinder girls basketball started its preparation for the winter season. This week, the Pioneers face off with North Brookfield in scrimmage ac-

tion. Pathfinder then opens up the regular season on Tuesday evening, Dec. 17 at 6 p.m. at home against the Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School.



Desiree Croteau fakes before passing inside.



Morgan Clark follows a shot toward the hoop.



Pathfinder girls basketball practices last Friday afternoon.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Greenly Lagimoniere maneuvers the perimeter.

## Lawsuits lead to more compliance of scheduling rule

By Gregory A. Scibelli  
gscibelli@turley.com

PALMER – If you go on the Arbiter Live website to look at your favorite team's schedule, you will notice the end of every season has anywhere from one to three "filler dates."

These filler dates were the subject of lawsuits filed by Minnechaug and Monson High Schools after their failure to comply with the rule resulted in forfeits being assigned to Monson, Minnechaug, and Pathfinder for either Western Mass. or nonplayoff games played following the end of the regular seasons.

The forfeits were meaningful in terms of determining the

- sports -

# Ortyl to take helm of Pathfinder boys basketball

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

PALMER—Ethan Ortyl was hired as a history teacher at Pathfinder Tech prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year. He's also the first-year head coach of the Pioneers boys' varsity basketball team.

"I really wanted a teaching position where I could contribute to the culture of the school outside of the classroom," said Ortyl during a recent interview. "I really enjoy history, and basketball has always been one of my passions."

Ortyl graduated from South Hadley High School in 2019 and from UMass-Amherst in 2022. He replaced Zac Button as a history teacher and the boys' varsity basketball coach at Pathfinder Tech.

Ortyl did his student teaching last year at Putnam Vocational Technical Academy in Springfield.

"It was part of the Teach 180 days in Springfield program, which was an awesome experience for me," he said. "There was another teacher in the classroom with me for the first few months of the school year. I taught my own class during the second half of the school year. I was nervous at first, but the kids at Putnam were great. I also had a very good mentor. After teaching at Putnam, I knew that I wanted to work at a vocational school. I'm very thankful that the teaching and coaching position was open here at Pathfinder Tech. Everyone has been very helpful to me during the first few months of the school year."

Laura Asson is the head of the History Department at Pathfinder Tech.

"Laura has really helped me a lot so far this year," Ortyl added. "I teach a World History class to the freshmen and U.S. History to the sophomores. I also teach a History of War class to the juniors and seniors. I've really enjoyed teaching the three different history classes."

Another person who Ortyl is hoping to get some coaching advice from is Kevin Aldrich, who's the Path-

finder girls' varsity hoop coach.

"Kevin has been coaching here for a very longtime and I'm looking forward to speaking with him during the course of the season," Ortyl said. "I want my players to support the girl's team at their games. I hope they come to our games."

Ortyl was a member of the indoor and outdoor track team at South Hadley High School. He attended all the other Tigers sporting events as a fan.

"I always used to sit in the front row of the bleachers and root for the South Hadley teams," he said. "My twin brother, Will, was a member of the hockey, baseball, and golf teams."

Even though Ethan Ortyl never played baseball in high school, one of his favorite coaches is Matt Foley, who's been coaching the Tigers varsity baseball team for many years.

"I never played baseball for coach Foley, but I do have a ton of respect for him," Ortyl said. "I like how he runs his baseball program, and he really cares about his players. He also became a varsity coach at a very young age."

Two of Ortyl's favorite teachers at South Hadley High School are Tim Bault and Madeline Wendt.

While he was a student at UMass, Ortyl was a manager for the Minutemen men's basketball team.

"I was a student manager for three years. Then I was the head manager for about eight months," Ortyl said. "My goal at that time was to work for a professional or college basketball team. Even though it was a lot of hours, it was a great experience for me. I had an opportunity to visit some places that I've never been to before. One of the best places that I visited was Dayton. They always sell out their home games before the start of the season."

During Ortyl's first couple of years as the manager, the Minutemen men's basketball coach was Matt McCall. He also worked under current head coach Frank Martin.

While most high school basketball coaches begin at

the junior varsity level, Ortyl is starting his coaching career at the varsity level.

"It's definitely going to be challenging coaching at the varsity level, but it's something that I'm really excited about," Ortyl said. "I think I can be a very good leader and mentor for these kids. I wouldn't have applied for the coaching position if I didn't think I could handle it."

The first practice of the high school basketball season was held on December 2.

The Pioneers, who graduated seven players from last year's squad, don't have any seniors listed on this year's varsity roster.

"We're going to be a young team and we're going to mold together," Ortyl said. "I'm very excited about working with this group of players."

The only two returning varsity players are junior Matthew Vanasse and sophomore Cayden Bousquet.

The other juniors are Dustyn Cook, Aiden Girard, Jack Marceau, and Dayne Shanley. The foursome were members of the j.v. basketball team a year ago.

Sophomore's Ian Sauri Nieves and Cassian Kowalik are also making the step up to the varsity team from the junior varsity basketball team.

Rounding out the varsity squad are freshmen Jordan Mbi, Grayson Griswold, Maddox Baer, and Mason Baer.

Pathfinder Tech is scheduled to begin the 2024-25 regular season by hosting Duggan Academy in a non-league contest on December 12.

The Pioneers, who are members of the Tri-County South Division, finished the 2023-24 campaign with an 11-10 overall record. They lost to cross-town rival Palmer in the preliminary round of the Division 5 state tournament.

The Pioneers will be making the short trip down Main Street in Palmer to battle the Panthers in a non-league contest on February 5. A couple of other non-league games on the Pioneers schedule are at Ludlow (Jan 17) and at home against Monson (Jan.24).

## Quaboag 2024-2025 winter varsity schedule

### Boys Basketball

Thursday, Dec. 12	Away	Bartlett	6:30 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 16	Away	David Prouty	6:30 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 20	Away	Southbridge	6:30 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 27	Home	Ayer Shirley	5 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 30	Away	Bay Path	6:30 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 3	Away	Grafton	6:30 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 6	Home	Millbury	7 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 8	Away	Adv. Math & Science	4:45 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 10	Home	Blackstone Valley Reg.	6:30 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 13	Home	Leicester	7 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 15	Home	University Park	7 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 17	Away	Uxbridge	6:30 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 20	Home	Mahar	1:30 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 23	Home	Northbridge	6:30 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 30	Away	Auburn	6:30 p.m.
Sunday, Feb. 2	Away	Ware	5:30 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 6	Home	Oxford	6:30 p.m.
Monday, Feb. 10	Home	Tantasqua	6:30 p.m.

### Girls Basketball

Thursday, Dec. 12	Away	Marlborough	6:30 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 14	Away	TBD	TBD
Monday, Dec. 16	Away	David Prouty	5 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 18	Home	Southbridge	6 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 30	Home	Bay Path	6:30 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 3	Home	Grafton	7 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 6	Away	Millbury	6:30 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 13	Away	Mahar	7 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 15	Away	Southbridge	6 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 17	Home	Uxbridge	7 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 24	Away	Northbridge	6:30 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 27	Away	Leicester	6:30 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 30	Home	Auburn	6:30 p.m.
Sunday, Feb. 2	Away	Ware	7 p.m.
Monday, Feb. 3	Home	Leicester	6:30 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 7	Away	Oxford	6:30 p.m.
Monday, Feb. 10	Away	Tantasqua	6:30 p.m.
Tuesday, Feb. 11	Away	South Hadley	7 p.m.

### Indoor Track (meets at Tantasqua)

Wednesday, Dec. 18	Away	Meet 1	5:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 8	Away	Meet 2	5:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 15	Away	Meet 3	5:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 22	Away	Meet 4	5:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 26	Away	Meet 5	5:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Feb. 5	Away	Meet 6	5 p.m.

## North Brookfield 2024-2025 winter varsity schedule

### Boys Basketball

Monday, Dec. 16	Away	South Lancaster	6:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 18	Away	Immaculate Heart of Mary	4:30 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 3	Home	Bethany Christian	6 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 8	Home	Hampden Charter	6:30 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 13	Away	Murdock	5 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 16	Home	South Lancaster	6:30 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 21	Away	Trivium	6 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 23	Away	Abby Kelley	6:30 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 24	Home	Sizer	6:30 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 27	Home	Immaculate Heart of Mary	4:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 29	Home	Abby Kelley	6:30 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 31	Away	Bethany Christian	7 p.m.
Monday, Feb. 3	Home	Monson	5:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Feb. 5	Away	Sizer	6 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 7	Away	Trivium	5:30 p.m.

### Girls Basketball

Monday, Dec. 16	Away	Parker Charter	5 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 18	Away	Bethany Christian	6 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 3	Home	Blackstone-Millville	4:30 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 6	Home	South Lancaster	5 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 8	Home	Immaculate Heart of Mary	4:30 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 13	Away	Murdock	6:30 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 16	Home	Immaculate Heart of Mary	5 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 21	Away	Sizer	4:30 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 24	Home	Abby Kelley	5 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 27	Home	Trivium	6 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 31	Away	Bethany Christian	5:30 p.m.
Tuesday, Feb. 4	Away	South Lancaster	5 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 7	Away	Trivium	4 p.m.

### LAWSUITS | FROM PAGE 9

schools' power ranking for the state tournament. Minnechaug and Monson were successful in securing a court injunction and did not take the forfeits. Pathfinder did not attempt to use legal means to reverse the forfeits, and the boys soccer team made the Western Mass. finals, which means they won two games after the regular season that were changed to losses for their MIAA ranking.

More than a dozen other schools including Northampton also were affected by the issue. Many other schools that did not have playoff teams, found themselves unaffected by the issue. But now, nearly every school as of this week had placed filler games at the end of their regular season.

Agawam High School Athletic Director Karen Gomez said filler dates were also placed on many wrestling schedules to comply with the MIAA's rules on determining how many playable dates a team is having.

Though it is not strictly enforced as of yet, more enforcement of posting varsity rosters on the Arbiter site could be down the line.

"Rosters are supposed to be posted and updated," Gomez said. "They are used to determine rosters when it comes to the playoffs as well."

Gomez says she has to back on the site and make sure rosters are updated for the playoffs to ensure JV players added to rosters for tournament are included.

When looking at an individual team's schedules, most teams play 16 to 18 regular season contests. The filler dates are then replaced by Western Mass. playoff games or "nonplayoff" games. Some of those nonplayoff games are needed, however. A team that finishes the regular season with a 7-9 record can get into the state tournament with a .500 record. The nonplayoff games played by that team then mean something as they can use them to finish season 9-9 and qualify.

The Arbiter website is exclusively used now for schedules, rosters, and score postings. The results are used by the MIAA to quantify Power Rankings for tournament seeds.

# - sports -

## Tantasqua 2024-2025 winter varsity schedule

### Boys Basketball

Friday, Dec. 13	Away	Doherty	6:30 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 16	Home	Southbridge	6:30 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 20	Away	Leicester	6:30 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 23	Home	David Prouty	12:30 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 27	Away	Shepherd Hill	7 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 30	Away	Minnechaug	12:30 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 3	Away	Millbury	6:30 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 6	Home	Grafton	6:30 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 13	Home	Bartlett	6:30 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 16	Away	Northbridge	6:30 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 20	Home	Shrewsbury	6:30 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 24	Home	Uxbridge	6:45 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 27	Home	Nashoba	6:30 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 30	Away	Oxford	7 p.m.
Monday, Feb. 3	Home	South	6:30 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 6	Home	Auburn	6:30 p.m.
Monday, Feb. 10	Away	Quaboag	6:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Feb. 12	Away	Holyoke	6:30 p.m.

### Girls Basketball

Monday, Dec. 16	Away	Holyoke	6:30 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 19	Home	Auburn	6:30 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 23	Away	South	6:30 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 27	Away	Millbury	6:30 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 30	Home	Chicopee Comp.	5:30 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 3	Away	Minnechaug	12:30 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 6	Home	Grafton	6:30 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 9	Home	Northbridge	6:30 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 17	Away	Leicester	6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 21	Home	Leominster	7 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 24	Away	Auburn	6:30 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 28	Home	Millbury	6:30 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 31	Away	Grafton	6:30 p.m.
Monday, Feb. 3	Away	Notre Dame Academy	6 p.m.
Wednesday, Feb. 5	Home	Longmeadow	6:30 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 7	Away	Northbridge	6:30 p.m.
Monday, Feb. 10	Home	Leicester	6:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Feb. 15	Home	Shepherd Hill	5:30 p.m.

### Indoor Track (all meets at Tantasqua)

Wednesday, Dec. 18	Home	Meet 1	5:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 8	Home	Meet 2	5:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 15	Home	Meet 3	5:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 22	Home	Meet 4	5:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 29	Home	Meet 5	5:30 p.m.

### Swimming

Thursday, Dec. 12	Away	Westborough	4 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 14	Away	Nashoba	1 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 18	Home	Bromfield	4 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 20	Away	Wachusett	3:30 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 3	Away	Advanced Math & Science	4 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 8	Home	Algonquin	4 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 10	Away	Doherty	3:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 15	Home	Grafton	4 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 17	Away	Tyngsborough	6 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 22	Home	Shrewsbury	4 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 24	Away	Gardner	7 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 30	Home	Grafton	3:30 p.m.

## Quabbin 2024-2025 winter varsity schedule

### Boys Basketball

Friday, Dec. 13	Away	Leicester	6:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 18	Home	Clinton	7 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 20	Away	Maynard	7 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 28	Away	Gardner Tournament	TBD
Monday, Dec. 30	Away	Gardner Tournament	TBD
Friday, Jan. 3	Home	Lunenburg	7 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 7	Home	Tyngsborough	7 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 10	Home	Gardner	6:30 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 14	Away	Littleton	7 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 16	Home	Hudson	7 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 21	Away	Clinton	7 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 24	Home	Maynard	7 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 28	Away	Tyngsborough	7 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 31	Away	Lunenburg	7 p.m.
Monday, Feb. 3	Home	Leicester	7 p.m.
Wednesday, Feb. 5	Away	Belchertown	5:15 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 7	Away	Hudson	7 p.m.
Tuesday, Feb. 11	Home	Littleton	7 p.m.

### Girls Basketball

Friday, Dec. 13	Away	Narragansett	6:30 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 16	Away	Worcester Tech	5 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 18	Away	Clinton	6 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 20	Home	Maynard	6 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 28	Away	Gardner Tournament	TBD
Monday, Dec. 30	Away	Gardner Tournament	TBD
Friday, Jan. 3	Away	Lunenburg	6 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 7	Away	Tyngsborough	6 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 10	Home	Gardner	5 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 14	Home	Littleton	6 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 17	Away	Hudson	7 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 21	Home	Clinton	6 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 24	Away	Maynard	6 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 28	Home	Tyngsborough	6 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 31	Home	Lunenburg	6 p.m.
Wednesday, Feb. 5	Away	Belchertown	7 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 7	Home	Hudson	6 p.m.
Tuesday, Feb. 11	Away	Littleton	6 p.m.

### Indoor Track

Wednesday, Dec. 18	Away	Meet 1	5 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 8	Away	Meet 2	5 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 15	Away	Meet 3	5 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 22	Away	Meet 4	5 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 29	Away	Meet 5	5 p.m.

### Wrestling

Saturday, Dec. 14	Away	Saint John's	10 a.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 18	Away	North Middlesex	7 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 21	Away	Marshfield	10:30 a.m.
Friday, Dec. 27	Away	Phil Tomkiel Tournament	9 a.m.
Saturday, Jan. 4	Away	Tri-County	10 a.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 8	Away	Nashoba	6:30 p.m.
Saturday, Jan. 11	Home	Quabbin Duals	10 a.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 15	Away	Marlborough	6:30 p.m.
Saturday, Jan. 18	Away	Duggan	10 a.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 22	Home	Shepherd Hill	6 p.m.
Saturday, Jan. 25	Away	Concord-Carlisle	10 a.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 29	Away	Leominster	6:30 p.m.
Saturday, Feb. 1	Home	Quad-Meet	10 a.m.
Wednesday, Feb. 5	Home	Algonquin	6 p.m.
Saturday, Feb. 8	Away	Triton	9 a.m.

## Pathfinder 2024-2025 winter varsity schedule

### Boys Basketball

Thursday, Dec. 12	Home	Pioneer Valley Christian	7 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 16	Home	Mt. Everett	7 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 23	Home	Ludlow	7 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 30	Away	Gateway	6:30 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 2	Home	Palmer	7 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 6	Away	Smith Vocational	6 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 9	Home	Hampden Charter	7 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 14	Away	PVCIC	6:30 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 17	Away	St. Mary's	7 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 21	Away	Pioneer Valley Christian	6 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 24	Home	Duggan	7 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 28	Away	Monson	6:30 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 31	Home	Gateway	7 p.m.
Tuesday, Feb. 4	Away	Smith Vocational	6:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Feb. 5	Away	Hampden Charter	7 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 7	Home	PVCIC	7 p.m.
Tuesday, Feb. 11	Away	St. Mary's	6:30 p.m.

### Girls Basketball

Tuesday, Dec. 17	Home	PVCIC	6 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 20	Away	Duggan	6 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 27	Home	Smith Academy	6 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 30	Home	Gateway	6 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 3	Home	Baystate Academy	6 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 7	Home	St. Mary's	6 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 10	Away	Hampden Charter	6 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 13	Home	Sci-Tech	6 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 16	Away	Westfield Tech	6 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 20	Home	Duggan	6 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 21	Away	McCann Tech	6 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 23	Away	Smith Academy	6 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 27	Away	Gateway	6:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 29	Away	Mohawk	7 p.m.

Monday, Feb. 3	Away	St. Mary's	6 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 6	Home	Hampden Charter	6:30 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 7	Home	McCann Tech	5 p.m.
Monday, Feb. 10	Away	Sci-Tech	6 p.m.

### Ice Hockey (co-op with Amherst)

Tuesday, Dec. 17	Home	Greenfield	8:15 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 19	Home	Chicopee	8 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 23	Away	Longmeadow	10 a.m.
Friday, Dec. 27	Away	Minnechaug	2 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 2	Home	Agawam	6 p.m.
Saturday, Jan. 4	Away	McCann Tech	6 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 7	Home	Ludlow	5:15 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 9	Home	Easthampton	6 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 15	Away	Taonic	7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 22	Home	McCann Tech	5:15 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 23	Away	Westfield Tech	7 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 29	Away	Easthampton	7 p.m.
Saturday, Feb. 1	Away	Southwick	6 p.m.
Wednesday, Feb. 5	Away	Chicopee	4 p.m.
Monday, Feb. 10	Home	Southwick	8:20 p.m.
Tuesday, Feb. 11	Away	Agawam	8:40 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 13	Home	Taonic	8:20 p.m.

### Wrestling

Saturday, Dec. 14	Away	Knight-Hawk Tournament	10 a.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 18	Home	Smith Voke	7 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 27	Away	Monument Mountain	8 a.m.
Thursday, Jan. 2	Away	Frontier	7 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 8	Home	Belchertown	7 p.m.
Saturday, Jan. 11	Away	Taonic Duals	9 a.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 15	Away	Mohawk	7 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 29	Home	Gateway	7 p.m.
Saturday, Feb. 1	Away	Wayland Duals	10 a.m.

## Springfield Thunderbirds stay on track with big overtime win

SPRINGFIELD — The Springfield Thunderbirds (12-9-1-0) clawed back from 1-0 down after 40 minutes and emerged with a 2-1 overtime victory over the Rockford IceHogs (8-10-3-0) before a sold-out crowd of 6,793 on Saturday night at the MassMutual Center.

After the two clubs exchanged chances in the opening five minutes, the opening period brought very little in the way of offense against Springfield netminder Vadim Zherenko or Rockford goalie Mitchell Weeks.

The T-Birds were uncharacteristically sloppy in the defensive zone, and a pivotal turnover at 2:59 of the second period resulted in Rockford's opening goal as Cole Guttman picked off a loose puck in the middle of the zone and slipped a five-hole shot through Zherenko to make it 1-0 IceHogs. It marked the first time in eight games that the T-Birds allowed the first goal of a game.

Offense did not come easily for Springfield, as the home team was outshot 16-6 in the middle peri-

od. Zherenko was at his best, making a pair of other breakaway saves on Guttman among his 24 denials through 40 minutes of play.

Zherenko rose up to make a game-changing stop in the opening seconds of the third, as he stretched out with the left leg to stonewall Samuel Savoie on a breakaway bid to keep the score at 1-0.

Less than three minutes later, Tyler Tucker continued his torrid goal-scoring weekend, flipping a point shot over Weeks on the glove side, bringing about a Teddy Bear storm and equalizing the game, 1-1.

It appeared as if the Thunderbirds had taken the lead just a few moments later when a Michael Buchinger shot bounded high in the air and into the blue paint. Matthew Peca jabbed the loose puck across the goal line, seemingly making it a 2-1 Springfield lead. Despite being called a goal on the ice, the officials gathered and ultimately waved off the tally, and the 1-1 tie carried to the end of regulation.

The T-Birds rewarded their netminder in the extra session at 3:42 with their 19-year-old phenom stepping into the spotlight. After Aleksanteri Kaskimaki fed the puck through neutral ice to Dalibor Dvorsky, a 2-on-1 developed with Tucker joining the rush. Dvorsky patiently curled the puck to the middle of the ice around a sprawled defender before launching a perfect shot glove-side on Weeks to give Springfield its second overtime win in as many nights.

The rookie's team-leading 10th goal of the season also went down as his first overtime game-winner as a pro. Springfield has now won four straight games and is 8-1-1 in its last ten games, springboarding the team into third place in the Atlantic Division standings.

The T-Birds next embark on one of their longest road trips of the season, beginning with a Saturday contest in Wilkes-Barre against the Penguins on Dec. 14 at 6:05 p.m. at Mohegan Sun Arena at Casey Plaza.

**THEATRE | FROM PAGE 1**

field would perform various and memorable musical numbers dating back to the 1920s.

This was the first music revue done by the Theatre Guild of North Brookfield in over 25 years. The creative team behind the production of this music revue consisted of Erin Smith, Jay Valencourt, Joey Valencourt and Branden Ford.

Serving as producer of the show is Joe Chenevert, longtime president of the Theatre Guild. Choreography for the show was coordinated by Erin Smith, who also appeared in several musical numbers.

The musical accompaniment was by Eva and Dave Brown. Stage Tech was Mara Ingalls and Sound Technician was Jim Bain - Sounds by Rich.

Over 30 local performers from the Theatre Guild of North Brookfield provided entertainment that defined the decades in movie musical magic. Toe-tapping numbers, rocking renditions, and some seasonal holiday staples that will transport you to Hollywood and Broadway.

Over 100 years of musicals all under one stage.

The opening act came from the ensemble and it was a perfect presentation to welcome guests to the stage at North Brookfield Elementary School. The musical number was "Be Our Guest" from "Beauty and the Beast". Portraying the infamous Lumiere in the number was Joey Valencourt.

The song from the 1920s was "Blue Skies" from the "Jazz Singer" and it was performed by Rachel Estivill. Whenever a new decade started, members of the Theatre Guild would discuss some of the memorable moments in history along with musicals that first appeared in the decade.

From the 1930s, the songs performed were "I Get a Kick Out of You" from "Anything Goes" and was performed by Sarah Priestley and Adam Baker. The

other was "Over the Rainbow" from the "Wizard of Oz" and was performed by Amber King, who dressed as Dorothy.

From the 1940s, two performances were given by members of the Theatre Guild. The first was highlighting the holiday spirit with "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" from "Meet Me in St. Louis".

The next 1940s performance was by the trio of Derek Ingalls, Joey and Jay Valencourt for a presentation of the 1949 song "New York, New York" from "On the Town".

The show would then reach a time in history where films and musicals really took the world by storm. The 1950s had many great musicals and songs that are still idolized to this day. Performances in the Guild's music revue include "Singing in the Rain", "Diamonds are a Girls Best Friend", "Anything You Can Do, I Can Do Better", and "Jailhouse Rock".

When the music revue reached the 1960s the audience would experience music from notable stories from that decade including "West Side Story", "Mary Poppins" and "A Hard Day's Night". Joey Valencourt returned to the stage and sang "Maria" from "West



"High School Musical" made its way into the Music Revue performed by the Theatre Guild of North Brookfield.



"The Cell Block Tango" from "Chicago" made its way to the stage and the audience "had it coming."

**See THEATRE | PAGE 13**



The opening musical number was "Be Our Guest" from "Beauty and the Beast". Joey Valencourt performed as Lumiere. TURLEY PHOTOS BY RYAN DRAGO



The cast ended the show with the ensemble performing "There's No Business Like Show Business".



Amber King performed "Over the Rainbow" from "The Wizard of Oz".



Stephanie Murin is shown during "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend" performance.



Missy McDonald and Adam Baker performed "Annie Get Your Gun's" popular hit "Anything You Can Do, I Can Do Better".



Throughout the show presenters talked about the decades and the musicals that came from them. Joe Chenevert is shown during his presentation introducing the next decade of musicals.

**THEATRE | FROM PAGE 12**

was “Spoonful of Sugar” and featured Joe Chenevert and Richard “Tabby” LeBlanc dressed in baby outfits.

The 1970s were a blast to relive as the Guild performed several musical hits that stand out as timeless classics. “Summer Nights” from “Grease”, “Time Warp” from “The Rocky Horror Picture Show”, “Day by Day” from “Godspell”, “Pinball Wizard” and “Cabaret” were all performed during the Guild’s Decades of Song and Dance: The Movie Musicals.

When the show reached the 1980s, the first performance was given by the duo of Missy McDonald and Hannah Ingalls. The pair would sing “Little Girls” and “Tomorrow” from the memorable musical, “Annie”. What caught the audience by surprise was the stage was covered in toy dolls, and many made their way off the stage thanks to McDonald’s performance of “Little Girls”.

For the 1990s the music revue highlighted Disney. The 1990s were the golden age of music and Disney movies. Memorable movies of the Disney Renaissance from “The Little Mermaid”, “Aladdin”, “The Lion King”, “Mulan” and many more were remembered during the music revue.

Alexis Caouette, Nick King and Hannah Ingalls did a great job performing “Hakuna Matata”. Following that performance Joey Valencourt performed a fantastic Disney medley with many musical hits from various shows and movies from Disney.

The 2000s portions of the show featured performances from “Chicago”, “Rent” and “High School Musical”. The 2010s reminded the audience of the global phenomenon, Disney, once again winning the hearts of youth and adults with another musical success in “Frozen”. Rachel Estivill and Dede Valencourt performed “Do You Want to Build a Snowman”.

Derek Ingalls, Aidan Joyce, Jack Gaudette and Jay Valencourt performed a combination of “Jukebox Hero” and “I Love Rock n Roll” from “Rock of Ages”.

The show would wrap up by making it to the current decade, the 2020s. Speaking prior to the finale was Joey Valencourt reflecting on how much the world of show business has changed and how many of the shows they performed have impacted the world.

“We’ve experienced so many,” Valencourt stated and how these musicals have kept “millions entertained.”

The show would wrap up with the ensemble performing “There’s No Business Like Show Business”. The Theatre Guild of North Brookfield will continue providing great community theatre programs for all ages as they end 2024 with a successful showing of their amazing music revue, Decades of Song and Dance: The Movie Musicals.

The Theatre Guild of North Brookfield is excited for their 2025 season with musicals including Cabaret and Footloose. For more information, visit [www.theatreguildofnorthbrookfield.com](http://www.theatreguildofnorthbrookfield.com).



The Pink Ladies sang “Summer Nights” from “Grease”, one of the popular musical films from the 1970s.



“Time Warp” from “The Rocky Horror Picture Show” had the cast styling.



“Spoonful of Sugar” from “Mary Poppins” featured Joe Chenevert and Richard LeBlanc wearing baby hats and bibs.



The cast prepared for bows during the finale of the music revue.



This colorful performance came from “Godspell” and the group sang “Day by Day”.



The cast joined Santa Claus for a special holiday presentation that got the audience in the Christmas spirit.



Missy McDonald and Hannah Ingalls performed “Little Girls” and “Tomorrow” from “Annie”. The stage was covered with dolls.



Santa Claus making an appearance during the performance of “White Christmas”.



The Music Revue by the Theatre Guild highlighted “Jailhouse Rock” from the 1950s.

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**SCHOOL | FROM PAGE 1**

meeting, which occurred at the same time as the North Brookfield School Committee's meeting, its members voted against approval of the draft, which would prevent the agreement from reaching any town meeting votes and progressing toward Quaboag becoming a three-town regional school district.

**Recognition**

Superintendent Timothy McCormick recognized senior Anthony Polanco for his achievements as a student and role model.

McCormick said he recognizes one student from the senior class each year who has exemplified academic excellent but also leadership in the school community. The Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents honors such students across central Massachusetts at a luncheon held at Holy Cross.

"This year we have a senior who... has gone above and beyond what we expect of any senior to do both in terms of the classroom but also in respects to leadership," he said. "We always want to instill in our students, especially our outgoing seniors, to leave the school better than the way you found it. I think this student really exemplifies that."

McCormick said Polanco is president of the National Honor Society, class president, treasurer of the Student Council and part of the Boston Celtics' Playbook Initiative as a student leader.

Polanco was also part of the Mass IDEAS (Initiatives for Developing Equity & Achievement for Students) training, working with students and being a student leader.

He is a member of the varsity basketball team, team manager of the softball team and a Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association ambassador.

"He did all that and he's also the top five in his class academically," McCormick said.

McCormick also recognized the North Brookfield Elementary School PTO, Jess Wisniewski and the Student Council for organizing a pancake breakfast for veterans to recognize

Veterans Day.

"We had over 35 veterans this year who were in attendance," he said.

The names and branches of the veterans were read, and students performed songs and gave them cards. McCormick said this has been a well-loved event for the both school and community.

**Superintendent's report**

McCormick said the school district's Handle with Care initiative should be in place by next month. This initiative is in partnership with the North Brookfield Police Department to notify the school of a student that may need additional support due to an incident at home.

"The police officer who is on scene will send a message with the student's name and just a simple text message of 'handle with care.' They do not get into confidential information, they don't share details. It's just to alert the school that we have a student or students that may be arriving the next day who may need extra attention or care," he said.

McCormick said the Handle with Care initiative has been adopted by 40 different states and is currently implemented at the Quabbin Regional School District and Gardner Public Schools as well as others.

McCormick said the new swings have been installed at the elementary school's playground thanks to a donation from Jamie Gilman.

He said the school district's new instructional coach, Dr. Emily O'Rourke has "hit the ground running" and has been meeting with staff.

**MCAS results**

McCormick shared Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System testing results from last spring. He said all students took the Next Gen version of the test, which he said has more rigorous and challenging questions than the earlier generation of the test.

"Test scores have gone down...it's a different kind of test than it was 10 years ago," he said.

Overall, the school district did not require assistance or intervention due to its MCAS scores, he said.

McCormick said English Language

Arts scores did not meet the target across the school district, which looked at results from grades three through eight and high school.

Math scores exceeded the target score for the lower grade levels, but lost points at the high school level. For math, the grade four scores actually exceeded the state average.

"This is quite an accomplishment," he said.

Low growth was reported for both math and ELA, but McCormick said the school district reduced the dropout rate and improved chronic absenteeism.

"There's some things that obviously we're going to talk about that we need to continue to address and work on, but there's some things that we made some progress with that we should be proud of, the work that we're doing in each building," he said.

McCormick highlighted some of the "glows" the school district achieved with its MCAS scores, including math showing improvement over the last four years, grade four growth and achievement in math, as well as grade six growth and achievement in ELA. He said when compared to other comparable school districts, North Brookfield's math scores fall into the middle.

Areas where improvement is needed include grade eight students for both math and ELA, as these students did not earn a meeting or exceeding expectations ratings. McCormick said they will target these areas through math interventions, implementing district-wide research based writing methods and strategies, evaluating the science curriculum, and more.

"District wide, very few students scored an 'exceeding expectations' rating," he said.

McCormick said they will continue to support teachers for long term success as well as build up students' reading stamina.

**Administrators' reports**

High School Principal John Diorio said a group of students participated in the Mass Makers STEM Conference with STEM teacher John McNeil, where they made an emergency shelter bed using cardboard and tape.

"I'm proud to say that North Brookfield High School, Mr. McNeil's team, won the competition," he said.

The Worcester County District Attorney's Office met with middle school students about bullying and cyber safety. The DA's office will continue the talk with high school students in January, and address healthy dating relationships as well.

Students in science teacher Karlee Kemp's forensics class and ELA teacher Heather Macpherson's true crime class will take a field trip to Lizzie Borden's house in Fall River.

McNeil is spearheading a toy drive called Operation Holiday Cheer, which first started in Sturbridge four years ago. The toy drive will be held on the same day as the Christmas in North Brookfield event and will feature a ruck from the high school to the police station, where the toys will be distributed from.

He said the main mission of Operation Holiday Cheer is to "raise awareness and spread some holiday cheer."

Elementary School Principal Arthur Murphy said the school just concluded its fall food drive to fill its food pantry for the holiday season.

Murphy said staff continue to focus on behavior expectations and there has been a decrease in behavior over last year's numbers. He said they continue to celebrate student success with items in the school store, including experiences such as "principal for a day," police cruiser rides to school and more.

"It's been a huge hit with families and with the students," he said.

**Student Council update**

Student Council Representative Dante Giangrande said the Student Council helped out at the family conference night.

"Our goal for this night was to make it a community event where parents and families can come to meet teachers and see fun things we offer," he said.

Giangrande said the annual Giving Turkey will be held throughout November and the annual Giving Tree will be held in December. The Christmas in North Brookfield event will feature games, raffles and concessions and more and continues to be the Student Council's most popular event.

**- legal notices -**

**TOWN OF NORTH BROOKFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
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Friday, December 13, 2024

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