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Select Board signs COA agreement

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Staff Writer
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HARDWICK – The Select Board met last Monday where they signed a three year agreement with the Barre Senior Center, so Hardwick residents can continue to utilize their services.

This comes after the signing was delayed at a May 26 meeting following concerns about the center from residents,

At the June 8 meeting, Select Board Chair Jeff Schaaf said residents came to him and expressed their approval of the senior center, and said they felt included and approved of the operations. Schaaf said the senior center seems to be enjoyed by Hardwick residents.

Barre Senior Center Director Betty-Jo O'Brien was also present, along with members of both the Barre and Hardwick Councils on Aging. O'Brien said she watched the last meeting, and saw the comments made about the senior center.

She said the senior center is seeing a growing number of Hardwick residents, and the center offers transportation, nutrition programs, wellness programs and educational programs. She said in 2024, there were seven new Hardwick residents

attending, when she started a "stronger together" initiative, which brought in 34 new residents.

She said as of May 31 of this year, there are 11 new participants.

O'Brien said there are 56 Hardwick participants, which accounts for about 7% of the town's senior population.

O'Brien also addressed concerns about the kitchen not being operational. She said the kitchen manager did not have certifications, so the center had to suspend meals until then, but they served over 17,000 meals, including over 3,800 for Hardwick. O'Brien said they also served about 1,900 congregate meals and 301 free meals during a government shutdown.

O'Brien also said eight people utilize the transportation services, and there was a quilting square project made by residents of both Hardwick and Barre, which were featured in the Barre Gazette.

O'Brien also said the comments made last meeting were derogatory toward the Hardwick Council on Aging, who she said "pour their hearts" into the senior center. She said the newsletter for the center would "blow you away."

Please see **HARDWICK**, page 3

Pathfinder packs gym for graduation ceremony

By Marcelo Gusmão
Staff Writer
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PALMER – On June 7, Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School held its graduation ceremony to an audience of close to 1,500.

The families and loved ones of this year's graduates from Pathfinder Tech gathered in the gymnasium at Belchertown High School. This marked the first time in 51 years that Pathfinder's graduation was moved off-campus.

"We were forced to pick a specific date this year, because Skills USA Nationals were moved and conflicted with everyone's graduations," said Superintendent Eric Duda, who explained that there were students flying back from Atlanta, Georgia late the night before the graduation ceremony.

Please see **PATHFINDER**, page 15



Salutatorian Destiny Rodriguez celebrated her achievements with Kennndyl Roberts and Dylan Holbrook.

Turley Photos by Marcelo Gusmão

To support Jason Benmahidi (left) on his graduation day, he was joined by Shawn Souza and Stephanie Benmahidi.

Voters approve budget, new fire/EMT positions

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
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WARREN – Over 110 voters took action on 25 articles at the annual town meeting held last Thursday evening.

FY 26 recap

At the June 11 meeting, Town Administrator James Ferrera said fiscal year 2026

was a "busy, but productive year" for the town.

He said the town recently put \$350,000 in stabilization funds, bringing the general Stabilization Fund balance up to about \$2.8 million and Capital Stabilization up to \$800,000.

"The town's fiscal position remains strong," he said.

Ferrera said the town also held a successful tax-title property auction in FY 26,

"This is a level services budget. The town is not reducing services, laying off staff, or asking for an override."

- James Ferrera, Town Administrator

which recovered \$320,000 in lost taxes from the sale of 12 out of 14 tax-title properties. Those properties are now

back on the town's tax rolls.

Ferrera said the town also launched its updated website, which is more user friend-

ly to staff and the public, as well as Americans with Disabilities Act accessible.

He said the town has also received over a million dollars in state and federal grants in FY 26, with much of that money going to improving existing infrastructure.

"We are continuing to improve and maintain all of our buildings," Ferrera said.

Ferrera said the town

formed a task force to research other health insurance options for employees, and it was determined the current provider was the most cost effective.

FY 27 budget

Ferrera said the town's financial team spent six months working to create the FY 27 budget, which is a

Please see **ATM**, page 13

THE POLLINATION STATION

Kids' Corner Workshop teaches flowers and pollinators

By Ryan Drago
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WARE – This month's Kids' Corner Workshop at the Ware Grange focused on pollinators and flowers.

Jennifer McNally welcomed all of her young friends and families to the "Pollination Station", and

Please see **WORKSHOP**, page 3



Turley Photo by Ryan Drago

Rowan, left, and Brie tested out the hummingbird pollinating station with pipettes.

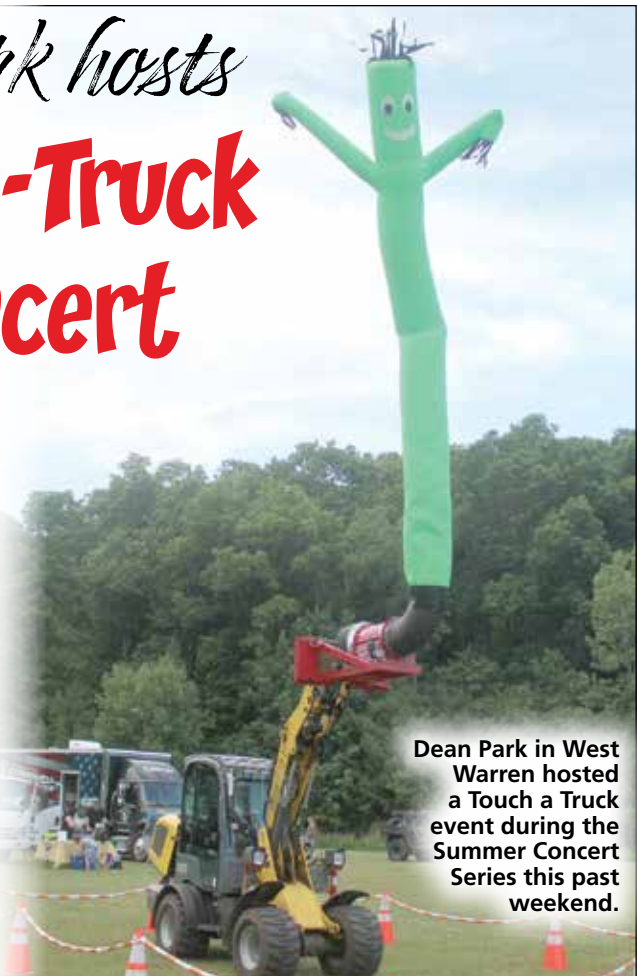
Dean Park hosts Touch-a-Truck and concert

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
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WARREN – Dean Park in West Warren was rocking the night with live music and trucks this past week.

As part of the Parks & Recreation Department's Concerts in the Park series, Dean Park features fun activities for families and children. This past week featured a Touch a Truck event with over a dozen vehicles of all styles provided by various departments and businesses.

Please see **TOUCH-A-TRUCK**, page 8



Dean Park in West Warren hosted a Touch a Truck event during the Summer Concert Series this past weekend.



Museum Educator from the EcoTarium in Worcester, Elizabeth Baldwin (right), observed 6-year-old Oliver during his engineering challenge. The challenge was a bridge that animals can safely cross.

EcoTarium arrives at the Town House

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

HARDWICK – The Paige Memorial and Gilbertville Public Libraries welcomed an EcoTarium program to the Town House last Thursday.

The EcoTarium is a science and nature museum based out of Worcester, and features a fun learning experience for kids with a workshop that involves a world-building interactive workshop. The EcoTarium was founded in 1825 and recently celebrated its 200th anniversary.

Museum Educator Elizabeth Baldwin brought some engineering challenges for children to explore by planning, testing and building.

This program allowed children to “build your world” and solve problems through an engineering design process. They explored forces and motion by building all sorts of structures with Keva blocks and using animal figurines to test them out.

The Keva blocks were used to build houses and bridges for animals. Split Peas were used to test weight, and Baldwin brought an air cannon to do a mock windstorm to test the structure of the towers built by the kids.

Participants tested the strength of their bridges by having their animal figurines cross safely over a model river.

Baldwin also brought the book “The 3 Little Dassies” by Jan Brett. This story is a variation of The Three Little



EcoTarium Museum Educator Elizabeth Baldwin demonstrated the use of an air cannon to simulate a windstorm.



Oliver and EcoTarium Museum Educator Elizabeth Baldwin were building towers to see if they could withstand the wind.

Pigs, where the eagle tries to blow down the dassies’ houses.

Like the children who attended the EcoTarium program, the dassies try to build homes from grass, sticks and stone to protect themselves from this hungry eagle.

Oliver, age 6, was ready to try some engineering chal-

lenges at the Town House. He carefully built a structured bridge to get a couple animal figurines safely across.

The Paige Memorial Library will be hosting Drumming with the Wendell Warriors on Thursday, June 18 at 7 p.m. at the Town House, 40 Common St. This activity is funded by the Hardwick-New Braintree Cultural Council.

Are You Old News?

Each week the Ware River News digs into its submitted photo archives and selects a people photo to publish. We need your help to help identify those pictured.

File Photo
Last week's photo from 2022 showed Lily Caputo with her face painted with fireworks to match the impressive display put on by the Ware Lions Club at Greenville Park.

If you recognize the folks in this week's photo, please send their names and your full name to pouimette@turley.com.

Paige Memorial Library lists June/July events

HARDWICK – On Thursday, June 18 from 7-8 p.m., the Paige Memorial Library will host Drumming with the Wendell Warriors on the Common outside the Town House.

Join this drumming experience where you will learn to play different tones on the drum before you make music together. This activity is funded by the Hardwick-New Braintree Cultural Council.

Look for the Paige Memorial Library table at the Health and Wellness Fair at Eagle Hill on Saturday, June 20 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. The library will still be open regular hours.

Drop by both places to see how a library can support health and wellness.

“Dig In and Read” Summer Reading begins June 23 and offers activities and prizes for children through adult readers. Join the fun and explore history, science, and culture and dig into dinosaurs, paleontology, archaeology, American history and plants, nature and gardening.

Wellness check with Registered Nurse Sandi Knipe of the Leicester Regional Public Health Coalition will be held on Wednesday, June 24 from 2-3:30 p.m. for blood pressure and glucose screening. No appointment necessary.

Avoid the stress of vis-

iting a doctor’s office to get a free monthly wellness check and chat with Knipe.

The Friends of the Paige Memorial Library will sponsor Rainforest Reptiles on Saturday, June 27 at 10 a.m. at the Town House.

These animals were rescued from law enforcement seizures, abuse or neglect cases, or were surrendered by owners. Now, they help people connect with wildlife and learn about conservation.

You will see frogs, bugs, snakes, lizards, and real animal artifacts. A uniformed, trained herpetologist will present a red or yellow-footed tortoise, a monitor or tegu lizard, a six-10 foot boa or python, a three-four foot American Alligator.

You will have the chance to safely touch some of the animals and to volunteer to assist.

Vintage baseball will be played on Saturday, July 11 at Roach Field. Join the library’s team, the Hardwick Haymakers, to defeat the Westfield Wheelman in a baseball game with Civil War rules or just come to watch the action and eat hot dogs and popcorn provided by the Parks and Recreation Committee to support their work. Please call 413-477-6704 or email paigelibrary.hardwick@gmail.com for any questions or to secure your place at an event.

Residents reminded to return annual census forms

WARE – Town Clerk Nancy Talbot said it is the last call to return your annual town census forms.

Massachusetts General Laws require each city and town to send an annual census to each household every year. The census was sent out to all households in Ware several months ago and currently the return has not been done by many households.

The law also requires that an inactivation of voters is done for those voters who have not returned the census. This will be done in the next week for those who do not mail or return their census in the blue drop box outside the lower-level offices.

When a voter is inactivated, a confirmation card is mailed and must be returned to the Town Clerk to reactivate them.

There are three choices listed on the card: 1. I am still living at the same address in the Town of Ware, 2.

I have moved to the following address (fill in the blank) in the Town of Ware or 3. I have moved out of town and wish to be deleted as a voter. My new address is (fill in the blank).

The card must be signed and dated by the voter and returned to the Town Clerk (it is a postage paid card).

If and when the card is not returned, the voter will need to complete paperwork when they come to vote at the next election. Proof of residency at the address the voter is listed at will be needed at that time.

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ACCURACY WATCH

The Ware River News will gladly correct factual errors that appear in this paper. Corrections or clarifications will always appear on Page 3. To request a correction, send information to pouimett@turley.com, or call 967-3505. Corrections may also be requested in writing at: Ware River News, Attn: Editor, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069.

Glenda's

Saturday, June 20th
7pm-10pm

Caboodle

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MUSICAL BINGO
7:30-9pm

Upcoming
Saturday, July 11th
7pm-10pm

Uncle Country

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Look who's turning...

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Happy Birthday on June 24th

M. Phyllis Zaganiacz

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Ware Senior Center
NEWS

WARE – The Ware Senior Center, 413-967-9645, located at 1 Robbins Road, is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

The thrift store is open each of those days from 9 a.m.-noon. Donations to the store are only accepted by Sue LaBarge, who can be reached by calling 413-544-1574.

- ACTIVITIES**
Monday, June 22
- 9 a.m. Tai Chi
 - 10 a.m. Scat
 - 11:30 a.m. Lunch
 -
- Tuesday, June 23**
- 9 a.m. Exercise Class at Valley View Housing
 - 10 a.m. Scat
 - 11:30 a.m. Lunch
 - 12:30 p.m. Knit-Crochet-Laugh
 - 5:30 p.m. Scrapbooking. \$3 per class.
 - 6 p.m. Pitch (doors open at 5 p.m.)
 -
- Wednesday, June 24**
- 9 a.m. Tai Chi
 - 9:30 a.m. Quilting Club
 - 10 a.m. Scat
 - 11:30 a.m. Lunch
 - 1 p.m. Chair Yoga with Lori
- Thursday, June 25**
- 9 a.m. Exercise at Valley View Housing
 - 9 a.m. Walking Club (weather permitting)
 - 9:30 a.m. Line Dancing for Beginners
 - 10 a.m. Line Dancing
 - 10 a.m. Scat

- 11:30 a.m. Lunch
 - 12:15 p.m. Art Class
 - 12:30-2:30 p.m. Movie Matinee “I’ll See You In My Dreams” with Blythe Danner, Martin Starr and Sam Elliot.
- Friday, June 26**
- 9 a.m. Tai Chi
 - 10 a.m. Scat
 - 11:30 a.m. Lunch
 - 1 p.m. Chair Yoga with Lori
 - 6 p.m. Pitch (doors open at 5 p.m.)

LUNCHES DINE IN
11:30 a.m.
All meals \$3.50 unless otherwise noted
Required: call 413-967-4595 by noon on the business day before, to put you name on the lunch list.

- Monday, June 22**
Chicken Parmigiana over Pasta, Tossed Salad, Dessert of the Day
- Tuesday, June 23**
Meatloaf, Baked Potatoes, Veggie of the Day, Dessert of the Day
- Wednesday, June 24**
Macaroni and Cheese, Stewed Tomatoes, Dessert of the Day
- Thursday, June 25**
Brunch
French Toast, Scrambled Eggs, Corned Beef Hash, Bacon, Dessert of the Day
- Friday, June 26**
Baked Fish, Au Gratin Potatoes, Veggie of the Day, Dessert of the Day



WORKSHOP from page 1

kids got to learn about flow-ers and why pollinators are important.

A pollinator is an animal that helps plants produce fruits and seeds. Examples of pollinators include birds, bees, bats, butterflies, and other small mammals.

These pollinators eat the nectar from plants. The pollen from one plant can fertilize the next plant that the pollinator gets nectar from.

The Ware Grange had several activity stations to teach kids about different pollinators and what they can do to protect them. There was information about how to create your own pollinator watering station.

A pollinator watering station is a fun and educational project for kids. The station provides insects a place to drink and rest and also helps support their population.

One of the activity stations in the Ware Grange was a bee watering station for kids to make and take home.

McNally’s daughter Mackenzie was helping kids make their own hummingbird feeders. Mackenzie made one of her own as an example.

Every Kids’ Corner Workshop features a scavenger hunt. The kids receive a prize from McNally if they find all the pollinator symbols in the Grange.

Another fun activity was the hummingbird station where kids used pipettes to demonstrate how the beaks of the hummingbirds work when they collect nectar. The kids used the pipettes and collected water with it just like when hummingbirds use their beaks.

Kids got to build a lot of pollinator-themed crafts and

got to plant sunflowers.

Terry Vaill of the Ware Grange baked some creative pollinator-themed treats. There were butterfly cookies, bumble bee cookies and other bug-like treats.

McNally also entertained her friends with a couple stories about pollinators. Copies of books related to flowers and pollinators were available for kids to read.

The next Kids’ Corner Workshop will be on July 25 at 10 a.m. at the Ware Grange, 297 Belchertown Road. This workshop will talk about birds.

For more information, visit www.waregrange.org, or follow the Ware Grange on Facebook at Ware Grange #164.



Cookies decorated as bumble bees were baked by Terry Vaill.

The next adult gardening workshop at the Ware Grange will be on July 13 at 7 p.m. and will be about composting.



AT LEFT: The kids got to make bee watering stations at the Ware Grange.



Turley Photos by Ryan Drago
Mackenzie made a hummingbird feeder and showed kids how to make one during the Kids’ Corner Workshop, “Pollinators and Flowers.”

HARDWICK from page 1

O’Brien said the Barre Senior Center is open from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and open from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. on Friday, and they offer meals five days a week. The board signed the agreement as presented.

IT services

Town Administrator Justine Caggiano said the town received five bids for IT services, with their current provider submitting the lowest bid.

The bid that was presented at the meeting was the second lowest received, as the town is having issues with the current provider.

Select Board Clerk Zack Spencer said the second lowest bidder, Anevry, is a local company, and they have a cart to wheel the camera where it needs to go, a wide view camera, and other boards could put their meetings online.

Caggiano said it seems like the company wants to work for the town, and they also help with public records requests and IT grant writ-

ing. She said the cost of the service would be \$38,400 for the first year, which is only \$400 more than their current provider.

The board will revisit this topic at the June 22 meeting.

Warrant review process

Spencer said the warrants should be put in front of all board members so they can see what the town is paying for, instead of it just being signed by the chair.

Schaaf said he has been the only one signing off on the warrants, and it makes him “uneasy.”

Select Board Vice-Chair William Tinker said the warrant review is one of the primary financial oversight responsibilities of the Select Board, and the board members should have all of the information available to review and ask questions. Tinker also said there should be a policy that any warrants signed in between meetings should come before the rest of the board at the next meeting. He also made a draft policy for the board to review.

Spencer said he would sign off on the warrants if

everyone can see them, and said once they are approved, they could be put on the town website for transparency. He said the goal is to reduce overspending.

Tinker said nobody will be “rubber stamping” anything on the warrants.

Appointments

Caggiano said the Board of Assessors have recommended Lucinda Childs to the Capital Planning Committee. The board voted to appoint Childs to the committee for a three year term.

STM

The board said they would send the Planning Board’s proposed bylaw changes to legal counsel for review before they set a special town meeting date. Caggiano said the updated Quabbin Regional School District agreement would also need to be on the warrant.

Public comment

Resident Judy Kohn said the escalation of personal differences is not a police matter, and there have been “stringent or too stringent

measures” regarding differences. She also said the board has failed their job descriptions.

Kohn also said the tree on the Hardwick common should be saved, as it is being slated to be cut down. She said she contacted a local arborist who said the tree is fine.

She said the common should be beautiful, and the tree represents a symbol. She said paying for a new tree to replace it might not be good compensation.

Caggiano said the insurance company and arborist said the tree, which was scarred by a fire, would not live.

Resident Liz Cyran presented two pages of complaints, and called for the firing of Caggiano, as Cyran accused her of fostering prob-

lems, and costing the town money. Caggiano said the board should shut it down “before someone gets sued for slander and libel.”

Town Administrator’s report

Caggiano said the bids for 179 Main St. and fuel are out. She said she held a financial meeting, a meeting with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, and submitted a \$250,000 application for the Community One Stop grant.

She said the town has positions available at the wastewater treatment plant, highway department, accountant and van driver, and they will be appointing someone to the recycling center at their next meeting. She said there will be a draft employee handbook presented at the

next meeting.

She read a letter from the Ware River Valley Domestic Violence Task Force to the police department. She also thanked Hardwick residents for messages after the town meeting.

Executive session

The board entered into executive session “to discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against an employee not to reconvene in open session” per Mass General Law chapter 30A section 21 (a) (1). Tinker recused himself from the executive session as the matter involved an immediate family member.

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viewpoints

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters By Russell Gloor

Why don't we have a minimum Social Security benefit?

Dear Rusty:
I think we should have a Social Security baseline of \$2,500 for each person. When I retire, my Social Security benefit will not be enough to survive. There are many of us, who worked low paying jobs all our lives because we raised families and only started saving later in life. Considering all the money our government wastes on other countries and welfare programs for people who have not worked, it seems unfair that they will not reward those of us who contributed to society all our lives.

Signed: Needs More Social Security.

Dear Needs More:
For information, the concept of a “minimum” Social Security benefit is not new and, indeed, already exists, but it is one which few beneficiaries qualify for.

The so-called “special minimum benefit” was meant to lift low-earning workers above the poverty line, but less than 32,000 SS beneficiaries (out of about 59 million retirees) currently qualify.

That’s because Social Security’s benefit formula turns out to be more generous because it is based on lifetime earnings (wages), while the “special minimum benefit” program is based on consumer prices. That causes the SS benefit formula to provide a higher SS benefit than is provided by the “special minimum benefit” option. In other words, people get a higher benefit because their SS benefit is based upon their actual lifetime earnings vs. an artificially created special minimum benefit.

In short, the existing SS benefit formula usually provides more than the established “special minimum benefit.”

The SS benefit program is based on each person’s average monthly income over their lifetime.

However, it is very important to understand that the program is also designed to provide a higher monthly benefit to those with a lower lifetime income.

Thus, the percentage of “replacement income” for those with lower lifetime earnings is more than it is for those with higher lifetime earnings.

Typically, a lower-lifetime income person will get about 40% of their average pre-retirement monthly income as their Social Security benefit, whereas a higher-income person will get about 20%

or less of their pre-retirement monthly average income.

In this way, Social Security is already a “progressive” program. But it’s important to understand also that Social Security, from its beginning, was never meant to provide 100% of a person’s income needs in retirement.

Thus, each beneficiary should plan to supplement their retirement income in other ways such as retirement savings, investment income, working longer, working part-time, etc.

Having said that, it is also important to know that Social Security is a completely self-sustaining program and not dependent on general public funding, which would make it more susceptible to political shenanigans (imagine giving re-election seeking politicians easy access to Social Security’s separately held resources).

While it is certainly true that the government spends freely on “welfare programs” for those who have not worked, Social Security is not a program, which is dependent on government largesse. Rather, it is a benefit which is earned by working and contributing to the program, which provides retirement benefits based upon each person’s average lifetime work income.

If you expect financial difficulties when you retire, I encourage you to visit this website sponsored by the National Council on Aging (www.benefitscheckup.org). Here you can enter your zip code and find many public programs which you might be eligible for where you live, including assistance with healthcare costs, housing, utilities, etc.

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.

Strawberry culture 101

Melissa, who gardens in Belchertown asked this question of the Garden Lady.

“It’s always so hard to install strawberry plants and pinch off the flowers the first year. Do you really have to? It would be so wonderful to enjoy some fruit.”

I completely understand where you are coming from! Last year I was in the same boat. This year, the fruit is coming in and boy, am I enjoying it!

Removing the flowers redirects the plant’s energy away from reproducing to forming strong roots and more shoots, so yes, it recommended practice.

I thought you might find this column, one of my very first, helpful. It contains lots of good tips for strawberry culture.

I have fond memories of strawberry picking. One of the first days of summer vacation was always spent at a local pick-your-own farm with my mom, filling boxes with luscious red berries.

Like any kid I did my share of sampling out there in the rows, and my taste buds never forgot the intense sweetness found only in fresh picked fruit. Now that I have my own space to garden I am able to go strawberry picking in my backyard.

With a lot of patience and a little labor, so can you!

My bareroot strawberry plants arrived by mail in early spring. I had prepared the sunny space intended for them ahead of time, by eradicating all weeds and tilling in two-inches of finished compost and some slow release organic fertilizer.

Lime wasn’t necessary, as strawberries prefer a slightly acidic soil.

The plants looked a bit limp from their trip so the roots were soaked in water for an hour to rehydrate them prior to planting. I set the crown of the plant right at soil level with the roots spread over a small mound of soil in the hole.

Keeping in mind that strawberries send out runners (daughter plants), I set my



slugs can be captured in shallow containers filled with beer and buried at ground level. Remove dead slugs and top off the beer nightly.

June-bearing strawberries bear fruit for two-three weeks. Harvest when the berries are bright red; if fruit is picked unripe it may turn red, but flavor will be sacrificed.

The season can be extended a bit by growing early, mid and late season varieties, or by growing day-neutral types which bear smaller amounts of fruit over a longer period, from June-October.

Nourse Farms (noursefarms.com) of South Deerfield is an excellent local source for strawberry plants.

After fruiting is complete mow down the plants with a push mower. I had to cross reference a few advice books before I had the courage to do this, but it surely did wonders to renovate the bed.

Rake away the mowed leaves, thin runners that are too close, and remove the oldest plants. Top-dress with compost and a sprinkling of fertilizer before remulching.

Although labor intensive, strawberries are worth the work. Managing a strawberry patch in this manner will likely keep it productive for five years. Imagine, your own flavorful memories!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 34 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.

Keep up with watering. Lightweight netting works well to deter birds, while

WARE RIVER NEWS

We Want to Hear From You

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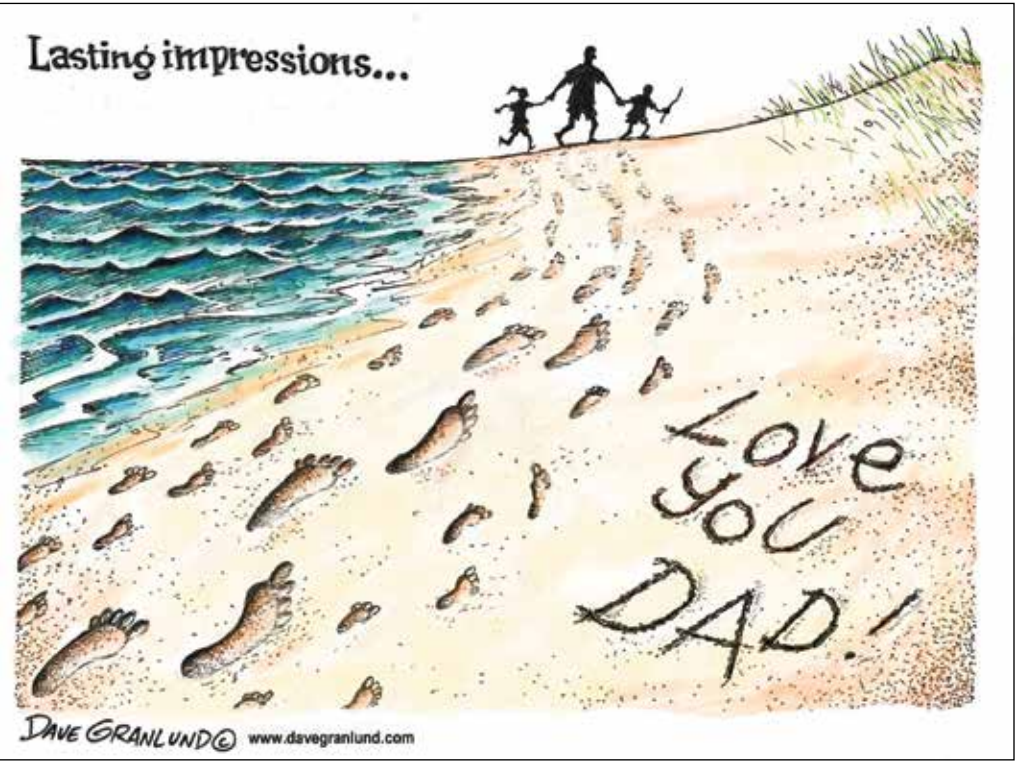
The deadline for submissions is Monday at noon.

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in my BACKYARD By Ellenor Downer

A reader emailed she saw an indigo bunting at her feeder.

The indigo bunting is sometimes called the “blue canary.”

However, the indigo bunting like all blue colored birds, lack blue pigment. Their color comes instead



from microscopic structures in the feathers that refract and reflect blue light, much

like the airborne particles that cause the sky to look blue.

Bunting plumage contains

the pigment melanin, whose dull brown-black hue is seen when holding a blue feather up so the light comes from behind it, instead of toward it.

The bunting is sparrow size and about 4.7–5.5 inches long. The adult male Indigo Bunting is dark blue in the spring and summer. Females are brown, usually with fine streaks on the chest and a blue tinge on the tail. A one-year-old male in summer may be blue with a white belly.

Males are often seen singing from a perch in a tall tree. For years, a male indigo bunting sang from a dead limb on a tall tree. Rarely, I spotted the female usually in a brushy

area.

They inhabit brushy pastures and bushy wood edges. For nesting, the indigo bunting favors roadsides, old fields growing up to bushes, edges of woodlands and other edge habitats such as along rights-of-way for power lines or railroads.

The male indigo bunting establishes territory in the spring and defends it with song. A male may have more than one mate at a time living on his territory.

The nest site is usually one to three feet above ground,

Please see **BACKYARD**, page 5

A 320-mile hike on the Appalachian Trail

By Julie Midura

When we stepped onto the

Appalachian Trail for a 26 day, 310-mile backpacking trip from Fontana Dam, North Carolina to Damascus, Virginia, we had no idea what adventures-and misadventures-lay ahead.

We had no idea that on our very first night in the Great Smoky Mountains, we would come face to face with a large black bear, who would lunge forward, clamp his enormous jaws around another hiker's backpack – which happened to be lying by my feet – and lumber off into the woods with it.

We never imagined that the same fearless bear would return to the campsite a half a dozen times throughout the night while we were snuggled in our two-person sleeping bag. Or that we would be standing outside of our tent at midnight blowing whistles as the bear slowly approached us –the beam of light from our headlamps igniting the bear's eyes a golden yellow.

Or that Tom would pick up a medium-sized boulder and lift it over his head in case the bear came any closer. Or that other backpackers who had been sleeping in the nearby shelter would race towards us with headlamps shining like spotlights through the shadowed forest, and one of them would dispense bear spray directly into the bear's face to finally ward



Submitted Photos

it off for the last time.

Or that, due to this close encounter, Smoky Mountain National Park officials would close the campsite to hikers the following day.

This is the longest backpacking trip Tom and I have ever embarked on.

In our attempt to hike all 2,200 miles



of the Appalachian Trail, we know that we need to amp up the mileage with each trip we take. At 61 and 69 years old, we likely have limited time before our bodies protest against this type of strenuous activity.

But being out here is about so much more than making miles and achieving a goal. It's about rediscovering who we are away from

the creature comforts we are accustomed to.

Away from the chaos. Away from the responsibilities. Away from the noise.

As I write this, we are halfway through our trip. We've been out here on trail for 13 days, hiking between nine and 11 hours each day.

We have been awed by the power of nature in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. Been pelted by torrential rain while thunder rumbled overhead and have melted in 90-degree heat under a blazing sun.

We have stood on the highest mountain on the entire Appalachian Trail, the 6,640-foot summit of Kuwohi, formerly known as Clingmans's Dome. Played "who's going to blink first" with a five-foot long snake.

We've stood atop mountains looking at views that have taken our breath away, and we've sat side-by-side on the ground in the middle of the forest, our legs stretched out on the dirt and our heads leaning back against our backpacks, simply watching the clouds dance across the sky.

Tonight, we have pitched our tent on a bed of pine needles under a tree, not far from the summit of Big Bald. We are surrounded by twisted, gnarled trees and rocks the size of mobile homes.

It feels as though we are in a cloak and dagger mystery novel.

After eating our freeze-dried dinner of beef and pasta, we walked 150 feet up the trail to a small viewpoint, where we sat down on a large flat rock for almost an hour while waiting for the sun to meet the horizon.

We talked about everything. And nothing. Important things and nonsensical things.

We relived our days out here so far. Reminiscid about past adventures and future

Please see **HIKE**, page 12

BACKYARD from page 4

rarely up to 30 feet or more, in dense shrub or low trees.

The female lays three to four white to bluish-white eggs with brown or purple spot. Females incubate the eggs and feed the young.

Males will help feed young when they are nearly old enough to fly. Young usually leave nest 9-12 days after hatching.

The male sometimes takes over feeding of fledged young while the female begins second nesting attempt as she has two broods per year.

Indigo buntings forage at all levels from the ground up into shrubs and trees. They take insects from leaves, seeds from the ground or stems and berries from shrubs.

They eat mostly seeds and insects. In breeding season, the indigo bunting feeds mainly on insects and spiders and also some seeds and berries.

Young in the nest are fed mostly insects at first. In win-

ter, they eat many seeds and also some insects.

Indigo buntings migrate at night, using the stars for guidance.

The oldest recorded wild indigo bunting was a male and at least 13 years, 3 months old when he was recaptured and rereleased during banding operations in Ohio in 2013.

Other birds

Besides seeing an indigo bunting, the reader also has several Baltimore orioles, rose breasted grosbeaks and goldfinches.

She stated, "Around the corner at the Brook Road pond in West Warren, there was a lone swan. There was a lone swan there for a couple years about six years ago and it made me wonder if it was the same one."

Pileated woodpecker

I received another email on June 6 from a Belchertown resident.

She stated, "My husband and I witnessed a beautiful pileated woodpecker mating ritual in our backyard this

morning.... They jumped around the tree on opposite sides going around several times before then jumping to other trees moving farther back into the woods during the process."

She stated, "After looking them up, I realized that I have heard their calls and rapid pecking sounds in my backyard for the past two years, but never saw them until now. What a joy to watch and video. They are beautiful birds."

She also stated her home has semi dense woods immediately behind that is a haven for several bird species, robins, yellow finch, bluebirds and blue jays. The property also borders some wetlands that attract a variety of species from time to time, including hawks, owls and ducks.

Mute swans

My brother, who lives in Sutton, has a pond bordering his property. For several years, a pair of mute swans have raised their family on the pond. They are back this year.

Bluebirds

I often see a pair of bluebirds in my yard. After seeing them, I put out dried mealworms for them. I don't feed the birds in summer because of the black bears. Hopefully, bears are not interested in a few mealworms and the

birds will eat the mealworms before the bear.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box

448, Barre, MA 01005. The Palmer office has a new phone system and I will be getting an extension where messages may be left. I will publish the number as soon as it is set up.

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PB continues site plan hearing

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

WARREN – The Planning Board continued the public hearing on the site plan approval application of Paquette Bros. Contracting. During their meeting on June 15, the board met with Justin Paquette of Paquette Bros. Contracting who provided some updates from the previous meeting. The applicant is requesting site plan approval to allow construction of six two-family dwellings served by a single driveway at Cemetery Road. One of the changes Paquette Bros. made was adding three-foot wide sidewalks to the plans. The Planning Board conducted a site visit prior to this meeting.

Paquette showed in the plans where the dumpster would be located and he said he is planning on installing a white vinyl fence around it. The Planning Board members wanted to make sure there was plenty of space for cars.

Paquette also provided drawings of what the complexes would look like. The drawings included backyards, dividing fences and dimensions of rooms.

Paquette said the basements will be used for heating and cooling systems, as well as for mechanical uses. As of now, everything in the drawings is preliminary.

Planning Board Chair Derick Veliz described the area as looking like a little village and thinks the project will look nice when it is complete.

“It’s in the center of town, but is hidden,” Veliz said.

The Sewer Commission Chair Travis Baker came in and had some questions about the sewer for this property off Cemetery Road.

According to the applicant, the sewer connection is coming off the main lines through the yard. The responsibility for the main would be on the condo association.

The applicant is also speaking with the Conservation Commission. The board will see if they could hold a joint meeting with the Conservation Commission to try and get this project moving forward.

“This is an important project for Warren,” Veliz said.

PTO hosts summer 5K and family festival on June 20

WEST BROOKFIELD – The West Brookfield Elementary School PTO is hosting a summer 5K and family festival on Saturday, June 20.

The event will include a 5K, a fun run for kids, family games and activities, food trucks, vendors and more.

The PTO is looking for sponsors to help make this event memorable for everyone. In return, sponso’s logos

The public hearing was continued to July 20.

Hearing for Verizon New England

The Planning Board held a public hearing on the special permit and site plan approval applications by Verizon New England to allow replacement of an existing standby generator at 21 Quaboag St.

Representing Verizon New England Inc., Dan Moody of WB Engineering shared pictures and plans for the project off Quaboag Street. Moody said the existing generator is not running at full power and noise is minimized.

The Planning Board approved the special permit and site plan approval.

New business

Planning Board Vice-Chair Richard Eichacker brought up two subjects during the discussion of new business. The first was the cell tower on Southbridge Road.

According to Eichacker, it is in need of a new generator.

The Building Commissioner contacted Eichacker and the he wanted to know if a special permit was needed or not. The board members also wanted to check the noise level of the generator.

The next subject involved Copart of Connecticut, Inc. and their special permit for work being done at 600 Old West Warren Road. Their special permit is set to expire on June 21.

The Planning Board wanted to know if the Building Commissioner should send a letter to them or if it should be sent by the Planning Board.

Eichacker said he believes that no substantial work has been done in the last couple of years under the special permit. The applicant could file a formal request for an extension.

Another important component is this sort of project is it involves a pre-construction meeting and a peer review.

Veliz said he thought it was best for the board to send a letter to Copart and “let them know it’s going to expire.” The Planning Board agreed to send a letter to Copart of Connecticut, Inc. to notify them that the special permit will expire soon.

will be placed on runner’s T-shirts.

Sponsorship tiers include bronze \$100, silver \$200, gold \$300, diamond \$1,000. If you are interested in being a sponsor or a runner please email wbrookfieldpto@gmail.com

Proceeds of the 5k event go to the nonprofit WBES PTO to fund a variety of student events throughout the year.

WPS offers Summer Food Program

WARE – Ware Public Schools is committed to providing our students nutritious food.

Free meals for youth ages 18 and under will be offered Monday through Friday, July 1-31 at Stanley M. Koziol Elementary School for congregate eating and at the Municipal Parking Lot on Pleasant Street for to-go.

Breakfast will be served from 8-9 a.m. and lunch from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

at SMK. Lunch will be distributed from the Pleasant Street parking lot from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

No meals will be served on July 3. Dates and times are subject to change. No registration or ID is required.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Food Service Department at 413-967-5977. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Student art and music celebrated at

STEAM Night

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

WARREN – STEAM Night was celebrated at Warren Community Elementary School.

Students, kindergarten through sixth grade, arrived at their school with family and friends in attendance to witness the talented work they put in throughout the school year.

The tradition of STEAM Night started at Warren Community Elementary School about four years ago. STEAM encourages students to approach complex, real-world problems through questioning, collaboration and creativity.

STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics. School art teacher Kelly Mundell says STEAM Night is a “combination of what all the kids have done in art and music throughout the school year.”

This popular night of the school year celebrates the students’ creative accomplishments. As the art teacher, Mundell has seen her students in all grade levels trying out various art mediums



Principal Carol Forward welcomed parents to STEAM Night.



Second grader Blake posed with the Bob Ross backpack in the art room during STEAM Night at Warren Community Elementary School.

such as ceramics, two-dimensional art, oil pastels and much more.

For music, every class was performing during STEAM Night and was taught by music teacher Ian Wykes. Band and chorus performances were held inside the school gym on stage.

STEAM Night is a highly attended night to celebrate the students as they get to celebrate with their family and friends. During STEAM

Night, there was some added fun to the celebration, a scavenger hunt.

Students have a chance to win two prizes, one for getting signatures from STEAM, and a second prize for completing the scavenger hunt. Sheets for the scavenger hunt were being handed out by Dean of Students, Brian Guimond.

The entire school building was busy with some of the classrooms hosting the scavenger hunt obstacles.

One of the obstacles was Keva Planks. Kids explored Keva activity cards and tried to use the planks to build a ball run.

Another unique activity was building a boat out of aluminum foil and seeing how long they could stay afloat with the added wait of gems. In kindergarten classrooms, the teachers were explaining the art of static electricity butterflies.

Please see **STEAM**, page 12



Third grader Kayleigh tested out how many gems can fit on her aluminum boat.



Kindergarten teachers Heather Gaudreau, left, and Karen Bys tried to make static electricity with a balloon and a tissue papered butterfly.



Warren Community Elementary School Dean of Students Brian Guimond handed over a pen he made during STEAM Night.



Turley Photos by Ryan Drago
Students participated in a scavenger hunt during STEAM Night. One of the tasks was participating in an egg zipline challenge.

Ceramic cupcakes were made by grade five.



Students took portraits of teachers and incorporated them into art portraits based on hobbies and personalities.



WCES Music Teacher Ian Wykes talked about the performances students will be doing on the school stage.

Community clean up day held at Comins Pond

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

WARREN – This annual community clean up event at Comins Pond hosted by the Warren Parks Department and was successfully completed thanks to volunteerism.

Jessie Sweeney is one of the Park Commissioners and was joined by several lifeguards and volunteers who started raking out the public swimming area. This pond clean up weekend has been going on for many years and helps keep Comins Pond more beautiful than ever.



A community clean up day took place this past weekend at Comins Pond in Warren. Lifeguards and volunteers came prepared to clean the swimming area of Comins Pond.



A bench at Comins Pond dedicated to the memory of Garret T. Laliberte.



Volunteers worked to prepare Comins Pond for the summer season.

Turley Photos by Ryan Drago

Once the clean up is complete, the Parks crew will put out the buoys for the designated swimming area in preparation for swimming lessons.

The first thing is to clean out any build up that has happened over the winter. This build up consists of seaweed, dead leaves, overgrown plants, branches and other debris that develops in the pond during the winter months.

Sweeney said there will be new additions added to the beach of Comins Pond. There will be elephant and gorilla seats added to the beach, a fun feature kids will enjoy when they go to the pond.

On the first day of cleaning up the pond, eight people signed up to volunteer and helped clean the beach and the swimming area of Comins Pond. Some of the lifeguards, who will be on lifeguard duty at Comins Pond this summer, brought their rakes and helped out as well.

Jim McKeon stopped by to help pick up the debris that was raked up and put in a pile on the beach.

Town Wide Tag Sale to be held June 20-21

WARE – The Town Wide Tag Sale to benefit the Ware Center Meeting House will be held on Saturday, June 20 and Sunday, June 21 from 8 a.m.-3 p.m., either or both days.

Hosted by the Proprietors of the Ware Center Meeting House Inc.,

a nonprofit that owns the Meeting House and runs the tag sale as a benefit for the Meeting House restoration.

The tag sale will be held rain or shine. Maps will be available at the Ware Center Meeting House, 295 Belchertown Road.

Lions Club hosts Concerts in the Park

WARE – The Ware Lions presents Concerts in the Park on Thursday evenings at 6:30 p.m. in Grenville Park, 73 Church St.

Admission to concerts is free and concerts are weather dependent.

Concert dates include June 25, The Project; July 2, The 60's Experience; July 9, Wicked Biscuit;

July 16, Bigelow; July 23, The Bridge; July 30, Charlie Lask and Forever Diamond with special guest Jimmy Mazz and Aug. 6, Woodshed.

During each concert, the Ware Lions will have a concession stand selling hot dogs, chips, popcorn and beverages. Raffle tickets for prizes will also be available.

Rail track rehabilitation project starts June 22

The Massachusetts Central Railroad Corporation, in conjunction with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, will be embarking on a project to rehabilitate its main rail track, scheduled to begin on Monday, June 22.

This project has an estimated time for completion to be somewhere toward the fall of this year.

The daily train schedule will operate Monday through Friday starting at 7 p.m. (up to a possible 12-hour period) to service rail customers from Palmer to South Barre to then return to Palmer.

The train schedule will resume back to daytime service beginning at 7 a.m. (up to a possible 12-hour period) by the end of August.



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Hampshire Towing of South Hadley arrived at Dean Park.



ABOVE: Guests checking the “retail store on wheels” of Cornwell Quality Tools. AT LEFT: The side view of the Cornwell Quality Tools truck, a business that has been operating since 1919.



Fountain & Sons Construction Co, Inc. of Warren arrived with their truck during the Touch a Truck at Dean Park.



The Highway Department's truck was checked out by dozens of kids.



TOUCH-A-TRUCK
from page 1

The Highway Department brought a couple trucks for kids to explore. Highway Surveyor Jeremy Olson had the Western Star truck and a miniature loader at the park. This was the fourth year Dean Park has hosted a Touch a Truck event and is always enjoyed by both patrons and by the departments who provide the vehicles.

The oldest vehicle on display during the Touch a Truck was a 1929 Ford Model A. This vintage, 97-year-old vehicle is owned by Daniel Snow of West Warren. Snow has owned this classic car for 12 years and has done some restoration work to keep it operating.

Snow said he still drives the vehicle all the time.

The Ford Model A still has its original interior. The seats are made of mole hair, and the door panels are made of beaver skin.

Snow brings the Ford Model A to car shows and Touch a Truck events in the area.

The Fire Department brought several vehicles to the Touch a Truck and even had a fun firefighting game for the junior firefighters. There was a house prop with fire targets attached to the

The Engine 4 Bellmen of Monson could be seen at Dean Park. A vintage fire department vehicle.

doors and windows. Kids learned how to use the water hose and see if they can take out the fire spots on the prop house.

Fire Chief Adam Lavoie said the kids' favorite fire truck is Engine 4, the brush truck, which holds around 300 gallons of water.

The Police Department had a cruiser parked on the field of Dean Park. Officer Rene Cote was showing the police cruiser and had dozens of kids sitting in the front seat and learned about the different controls. The siren was used quite a bit during the Touch a Truck event.

Over by the pavilion, many guests brought their picnic blankets and lawn chairs to listen to guitar player and singer Dusty Briggs. Refreshments were available for purchase during the concert and Touch a Truck.

Cornwell Quality Tools had one of their trucks parked at Dean Park with a walk-in trailer. Dan Santiago of Cornwell Quality Tools calls it the “retail store on wheels”, as many tools were stocked on shelves and even strapped on the ceiling of the trailer.

“It is an ice cream truck for mechanics,” Santiago said.

Cornwell Quality Tools is planning on adding kid work-



Turley Photos by Ryan Drago
Snow of West Warren.

stations next year. Cornwell Quality Tools has been in business for over 100 years.

The Parks Department will be hosting its annual fireworks show on Friday, June 19 at 6:30 p.m. at Quaboag Regional Middle High School. There will be food trucks, face painting, a bounce house, live music and much more.

Friday, June 26 will be Bounce House Night at Dean Park, starting at 6 p.m. during Concerts at the Park. Guests can purchase a wrist band to bounce unlimited in the bounce houses during the entire concert.

More information can be found on the Warren Parks Department Facebook page, and at www.warren-ma.gov/251/Parks-Recreation-Commission.

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SPORTS



Kyle Kaczuwka frames up a pitch.



Grayson Griswold slides into second.

Post 241 edged in extras

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

PALMER— Before the start of the high school baseball season, the Palmer Parks Department installed a portable outfield fence at historic Legion Field.

While the new fence is a nice addition to the field, it didn't help the Monson Post 241 Legion team very much in their season opening 4-3 extra inning loss to Westfield Post 124, last Wednesday night.

After Westfield Post 124 took the lead with an unearned run in the top of the eighth inning, Monson loaded the bases with two outs in the bottom half of the frame.

Their rally began with catcher Kyle Kaczuwka drawing a walk against righthanded relief pitcher Jakob Elmer. Then first baseman Liam McGrath blasted a shot to deep left field. In previous years, it most likely would've been an inside the park home run and Monson would've celebrated a walk off victory. However, the ball bounced over the new fence for a ground rule double.

"If the fence wasn't there, Liam's hit would've tied the score and we probably win the game," said Monson

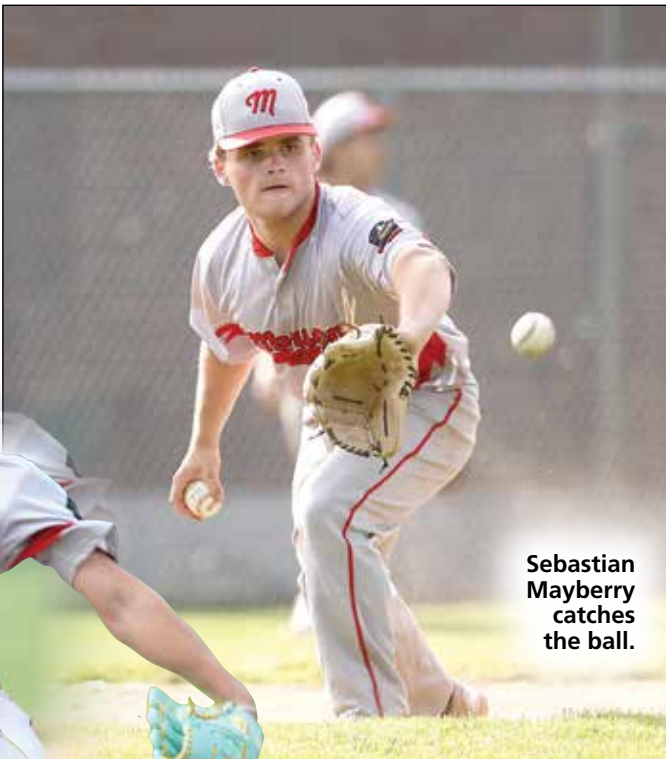
manager Steve Tripp. "This is the first year that they put up the outfield fence during the high school baseball season. I asked Jeff Pardo, who's the new Director of the Parks Department, if they



Brayden Mega sends a pitch home.

game."

With runners on second and third base, Westfield manager Don Irzyk, who's the former Athletic Director,



Sebastian Mayberry catches the ball.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

and varsity baseball coach at Pathfinder Tech, elected to intentionally walk shortstop Matt Santos, which loaded the bases. The move worked out in Westfield's favor as Elmer retired the next batter on a pop-up which was caught by the second base-

Please see **LEGION**, page 10

Quabbin hosts basketball clinic, sponsored by Barre Recreation Dept.

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

BARRE—Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the boys' basketball players at Quabbin Regional would spend the offseason playing for different AAU organizations and attending summer basketball camps throughout Central Massachusetts.

During the past several years, the Barre Recreation Department has sponsored a clinic for the Panthers basketball players, which is

held throughout the year at the Quabbin Regional Gymnasium.

"We'll be conducting twelve clinics this year, which are sponsored by the Barre Recreation Department," said longtime Quabbin boys' varsity basketball coach Dennis Dextradeur. "The clinics are more important to us than having the players attend summer camps. Our players really didn't improve their skills very much at the camps. This clinic is also less expensive than AAU programs.

This model has worked very well for us."

Dextradeur is also a member of the Barre Recreation Committee.

A player only has to pay five dollars to attend each clinic.

"The financial aspect of attending the clinic is much better for the parents. They're paying less than one hundred dollars for their sons to attend all twelve clinics," Dextradeur added. "Most AAU programs cost more than \$700."

The four clinicians at

the Quabbin clinic are Gene Rich, Bob Catalini, John Leonard, and Chris Kirkland.

Rich, who graduated from Quabbin Regional in 1995, was the starting point guard for the boys' basketball team. His senior season was a very memorable winter, as the Panthers captured the Central Mass. Division 2 title for the first time in school history. They also finished in first place in the Mid-Wach League standings.

Rich is currently the boys' varsity basketball coach at

Ware High School and will be inducted into the Quabbin Athletic Hall of Fame on November 8.

"Gene was an outstanding three-sport athlete in high school," Dextradeur said. "I think his best sport was basketball and he helped us win a championship title as a senior. He really enjoys teaching the game of basketball and he has a lot to offer. He has had a great coaching career at Ware High School."

The Quabbin and Ware boys' basketball teams are

scheduled to renew acquaintances on the hardwood for the first time in many years during the 2026-27 regular season.

Quabbin Athletic Director Mark Millville and Ware A.D. Thomas Shamgochian, who's another Quabbin graduate, are in the process of ironing out the game details.

Rich, who has won more than 100 career games at the varsity level, conducted his first clinic, which are normal-

Please see **CLINIC**, page 10



See more story & more photos on page 10.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

MUTINY DEFEATS MAINE FOOTY

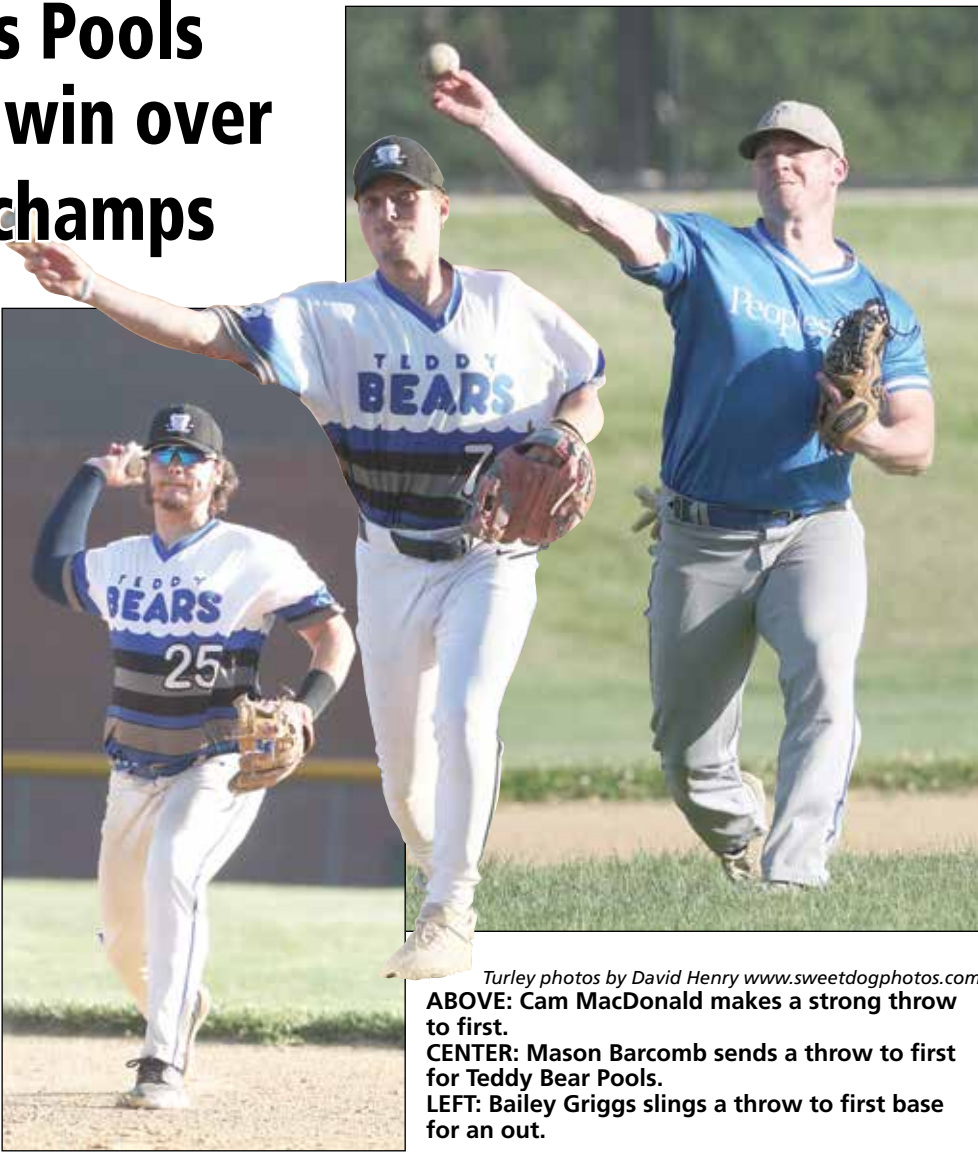
Milla Lee starts up the field to defeat the Maine Footy.

Teddy Bears Pools scores rare win over defending champs

SOUTH HADLEY — Teddy Bear Pools and Spas wasted no time last Monday evening at South Hadley High School, sending eight men to the plate in the bottom of the first and not looking back en route to a 15-0 blanking of PeoplesBank. The margin was never in question.

The first inning established the tone with swift and relentless efficiency. Bailey Griggs drew a walk that scored a run, Xavion Maldonado doubled to bring home two more, a PeoplesBank error allowed another pair to score, Sean Rosemond drew a walk to push across yet another, and Alex Gochinski grounded out with enough to score one more. Six runs — before PeoplesBank could exhale.

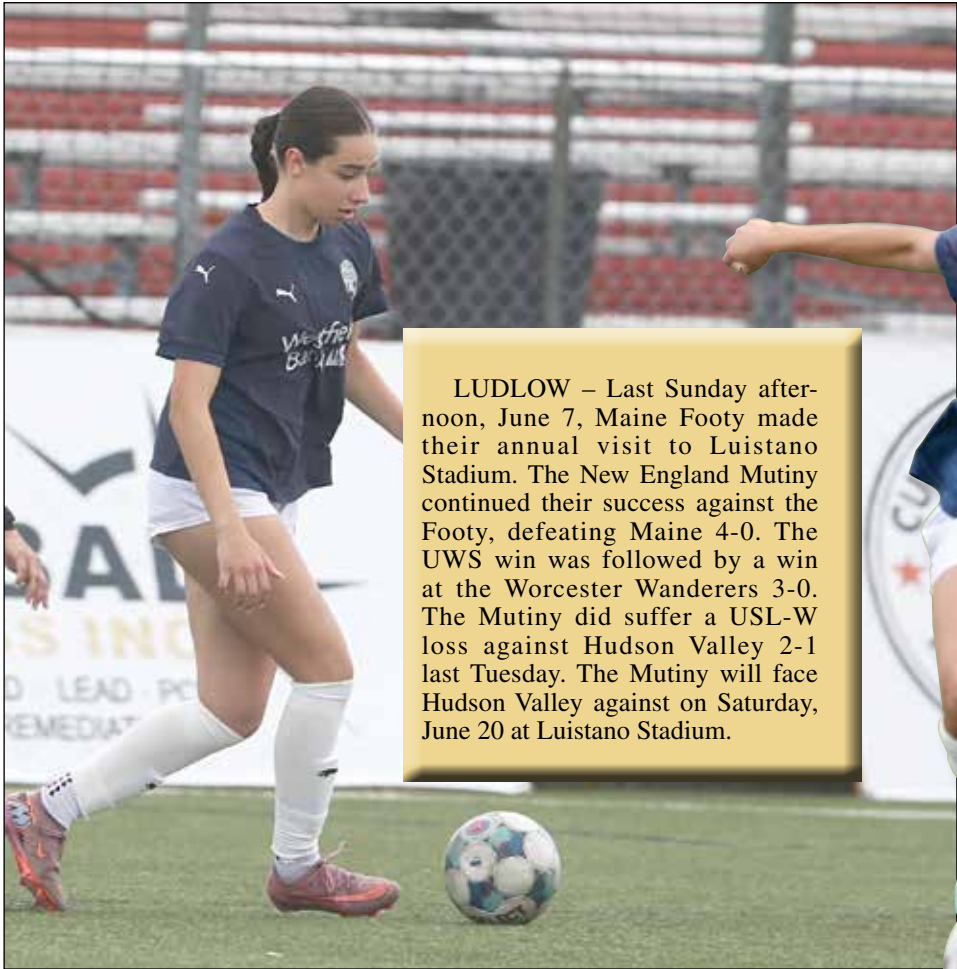
Please see **TRI-COUNTY**, page 11



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

ABOVE: Cam MacDonald makes a strong throw to first. CENTER: Mason Barcomb sends a throw to first for Teddy Bear Pools. LEFT: Bailey Griggs slings a throw to first base for an out.

sports



Valentina Molinari looks to get around an opposing player.



Darcy Dwyer winds up for a long kick.



Eva Blatz sends a free kick away.



Sophia Scyocurka tries to overcome an opponent.

Blue Sox out to great start this summer

HOLYOKE – The Valley Blue Sox (6-1-1) took down the Danbury Westerners (3-5) by a score of 4-2 June 13, driven heavily by strong pitching performances from RHP Jackson Hinchliffe (Richmond) and RHP Jake LeFrancois (UMass Lowell).

It was the second night in a row where the Blue Sox’s starter pitched at least five complete innings and was relieved by one pitcher who finished the rest of the game.

The ability of Valley’s starters to consistently work efficiently through the fifth inning as well as head coach John Raiola’s willingness to keep his starters in the game seemingly have a correlation to the team’s early success. Opponents in 2026 have not left a starting pitcher in more than 3.2 innings against the Blue Sox. Valley has done so in all but one game this season.

“It’s all them and their ability to throw strikes and to get off the field,” Raiola said. “We talk a lot about trying to get length in five or six innings, whatever it is. But the reality is, it’s pitch count more than anything. And if we have quick, efficient innings, then they can keep going.”

Hinchliffe did exactly that on Saturday night. His final line from June 13 was six innings pitched, four hits, zero earned runs, three strikeouts, and zero walks, all on 70 pitches. LeFrancois, who earned the nine out save, pitched three innings, allowing one hit, one earned run, striking out two and walking none.

“100 percent,” Hinchliffe said when asked if his per-

formance showcased the kind of pitcher he’s built himself to be. “With the two-seam sinker thing, just getting weak contact early in counts allows you to get deep in games, save the bullpen and let the defense work.”

As of the morning of June 14, Hinchliffe and RHP Dylan Reid (Brown) lead the NECBL in innings pitched, each with 11.0.

Hinchliffe’s second start was a nice recovery after his first start of the season where he lasted five innings, but allowed five earned runs and five hits. For LeFrancois, it was his fourth appearance of the season and his second in three days.

With the Blue Sox still waiting on select arms to join the team for the summer, the bullpen has stepped up in a major fashion with relievers recording longer outings in order to preserve other pitcher’s arms.

“When you play every single day you can’t just go 1-1-1 and not have guys available,” Raiola said. “You need some length at times and you have in this case, [LeFrancois] down for a couple days. We have the off day on Tuesday, and we’ll get him back on Wednesday. And so, it sets us up nicely for Sunday and Monday.”

With the Blue Sox off to one of the hottest starts in the NECBL, the team mentality will not change.

“We talk about it all the time, it is: short memory, show up, continue to get better every single day,” Raiola said. “Let the process dictate what the results are going to be.”

Obie wins rain shortened \$5k Winchester 101 Modified

WINCHESTER, N.H. - Modified superstar Brian Robie added to his legacy at the great race place Saturday, topping the \$5,000-to-win Open Modified Winchester 101 at Monadnock Speedway.

The reigning and multi-

time speedway 604 Modified champion set fast time in qualifying and then outran a stout 18-car field to earn the big payday at his home track, the site of scores of feature victories by the Sunapee speedster over the last decade.

In other events Saturday on the high banks, Hillary Renaud survived a wild one to notch her first Limited Late Model victory of the season, Eric Pomasko ended a long drought by topping the Mini Stocks, and Young Guns sensation Dylan Stati

won for the sixth week in a row.

The start of Saturday’s main event was postponed earlier for one hour, ten minute rain delay but when the night’s top show went green, nobody was more ready than Kimball, except maybe

Robie, who started back in row four.

In qualifying Robie set fast time with a lap of 11.713 around the high banked quarter-mile. He, Meservey, and Joey Jarvis

Please see **OBIE**, page 13

CLINIC from page 9

ly two hours long, in the middle of May.

Each of the clinicians usually conducts three clinics.

Catalini, who’s a former boys’ varsity basketball coach at Groton-Dunstable, conducted a clinic at the Quabbin gymnasium during the second week of June.

“I don’t know if any other high school in the area holds basketball clinics, which is unique,” Dextradeur said. “All of the kids enjoy coming here and they get one on one coaching from our clinicians. They just want to become better ballplayers, and this is the best environment for them to learn.”

The seven Panthers players, who attended the June clinic, are seventh grader Bryce Pariseau, seventh grader John Cook, freshman Isaac Patchen, freshman Jack Leclair, sophomore Brady Patchen, sophomore Collin Leclair, and sophomore Aiden Crane.

“This clinic helps us prepare for the basketball season,” said Crane, who was a member of the Panthers varsity squad this past season. “It’s a lot of hard work, but it’s also a lot of fun playing basketball with my teammates. We mainly did a lot of shooting and ballhandling drills at tonight’s clinic. I also came to the clinic in May that coach Rich conducted. We worked on our passing skills on that night.”

Hopefully all the hard work that the Panthers basketball players are doing during the offseason will pay off for them during the 2026-27 regular season.

LEGION from page 9

man ending the ballgame.

Monson, who had won their previous two season openers, finished the 2025 regular season with a 7-6 record and went 1-2 in the state playoffs. There are nine returning players this season.

“We do have a lot of returning players, but we’re a young team,” Tripp said. “We have a couple of eighth graders and a freshman on our roster. We’ll be losing only four players due to their age.”

McGrath, who’s wrapping up his junior year, is the only member of the Quaboag Regional baseball team listed on Monson’s roster. Besides being a first baseman, McGrath was the ace of the Cougars pitching staff this past spring.

Kaczuwka, who graduated from Ware High School a couple of weeks ago, is the only member of the Indians baseball team playing for the Legion team this summer.

Both McGrath and Kaczuwka are returning Legion players.

Most of the Monson Legion players either attend Palmer High School or Pathfinder Tech.

One of the players from Palmer High is Theo Haley, who suffered a season ending injury at a preseason practice.

Monson’s starting pitcher in the season open-

er versus Westfield (1-1) was righthander Brayden Mega, who graduated from Pathfinder Tech a year ago. He was a member of the Monroe University baseball team this past spring.

Mega pitched the first five innings allowing three runs (two earned) on five base hits. He walked four and recorded seven strikeouts.

“Mega had around a 1.28ERA for us last year,” Tripp said. “He only allowed three runs, and I thought he pitched well in his first start of the season.”

Two of Mega’s walks came in the first inning, but he ended that frame with a pair of strikeouts.

The righthander, who made a throwing error in the first inning, wasn’t as fortunate in the following inning.

Westfield took a 1-0 lead when leftfielder Jacob Maynard smacked an RBI single into right field. Second baseman Camden Wiczak (2-for-4) knocked home two more runs with a flyball double to left field.

The visiting team managed to put the leadoff hitter on base in seven of the eight innings. They left a total of 13 runners on base, including the bases loaded twice.

“We issued too many walks and made a couple of errors,” Tripp said. “We were on the edge of being blown out in tonight’s game. We did

get out of a couple of jams, which is good to see.”

Centerfielder Dylan Holbrook and right fielder Emerson Boronski both made outstanding diving catches for the home team.

Mega got himself out of one of those bases loaded jams in the fifth inning,



Mathew Santos goes high to make a catch.



Liam McGrath is safe on a pickoff throw.

which kept the score 3-0.

Monson tied the score against righty starting pitcher Donovan Cummings with one out in the bottom of the fifth.

Boronski walked on a 3-and-2 pitch before scoring on a wild pitch.

Mega was hit-by-a-pitch and he also crossed the plate following a wild pitch. After the next hitter struck out, third baseman Sebastian Mayberry belted a double to left field, which scored the game tying run.

“The double by Mayberry got us back into the game,” Tripp said. “It was a big hit.”

TRI-COUNTY from page 9

The scoring resumed in the second when Travis Kagan singled to plate one, and the third inning became an exercise in patience and plate coverage. Ray Toth hit a sacrifice fly, Willie Landman singled to center, Griggs singled to right, Kagan grounded into a fielder's choice, Ty Evans doubled to center, Rosemond singled down the right-field line, and Ryan Magni singled down the left-field line — each driving in a run. Seven different players contributed to that inning. Kagan finished the night with four RBI on a single hit, the most efficient line on the card.

Nate Kelleher-Mochak was untouchable on the mound. The starter worked five innings without allowing a run, giving up just two hits, striking out four, and walking one. It was the kind of outing that makes a winning pitcher's night feel almost anticlimactic — he threw strikes, got outs, and watched his offense do the rest.

Jackson Lavalley absorbed the loss for PeoplesBank, lasting just one inning and allowing one run on one hit. The final score reflected a difficult evening for the visitors, who managed only two hits on the night — one apiece from Hogan G and Macdonald.

Teddy Bear collected 10 hits as a club, with Magni, Rosemond, and Maldonado each going 2-for-the-night. Equally notable was the



Dave Clark picks up a grounder for PeoplesBank.

Tyler Evans makes a catch at first.

team's discipline at the plate: eight walks drawn, with Griggs and Gochinski each earning two. Teddy Bear also played a clean game in the field — no errors, with Evans handling the most chances at five. On this Monday, everything worked.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Danny Gaines pitches for the Bankers.

T-Birds agree to bring back head coach Steve Ott

SPRINGFIELD — St. Louis Blues President of Hockey Operations and General Manager Doug Armstrong announced today that the team has signed Steve Ott to a two-year contract extension as head coach of the Blues' AHL affiliate, the Springfield Thunderbirds.



Ott, 43, took over as Springfield's head coach on January 19, 2026. In the club's final 34 regular-season games, he led the team to an 18-14-2 record, clinching a berth as the sixth seed in the Atlantic Division for the 2026 Calder Cup Playoffs. Ott then guided the Thunderbirds to the Division Finals following a first-round series win over the third-seeded Charlotte Checkers and a historic victory over the Macgregor Kilpatrick Trophy-winning Providence Bruins (the regular-season champions) in the Division Semifinals. Springfield's win over Providence marked the single biggest upset in AHL history, as the two teams were separated by 38 points

in the regular season. Ott originally joined the Blues' coaching staff on May 25, 2017, spending seven seasons as an assistant coach before being elevated to associate coach ahead of the 2024-25 season. During his tenure, the Summerside, Prince Edward Island, native helped the Blues compile a 350-244-74 regular-season record and make five postseason appearances, including 2019, when he played an instrumental role in helping the organization capture its first Stanley Cup championship.

As a player, Ott put together a 14-year NHL career, including 122 regular-season games and 21 postseason games with the Blues after the team acquired him via trade from the Buffalo Sabres on February 28, 2014. Overall, he appeared in 848 career regular-season games, totaling 288 points (109 goals, 179 assists) and 1,555 penalty minutes.

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public safety

Ware Police Log

During the week of June 2-8, the Ware Police Department responded to 13 miscellaneous calls, 16 administrative calls, 13 traffic violations, nine emergency 911 calls, nine harassments/stalks/threats, six trespasses, one theft/larceny, 10 disturbances, one damage/vandalism, one safety hazard, one fire investigation, two frauds/deceptions, one motor vehicle accident, 10 animal calls and 13 motor vehicle stops in the town of Ware.

- Tuesday, June 2**
2:16 a.m. Suspicious/Wanted, Palmer Road, Services Rendered
9:27 a.m. Fraud/Deception, North Street, Services Rendered
10 a.m. Abandoned 911 Call, Dugan Road, No Action Required
2:54 p.m. Assault, West Street, Investigated
3:06 p.m. Trespass/Unwanted, West Street, Could Not Locate
3:25 p.m. Disturbance/Nuisance, Vigeant Street, Services Rendered
7:41 p.m. Disturbance/Nuisance, Pleasant Street, Investigated
8:35 p.m. Fire Investigation, Elm Street, Investigated
10:52 p.m. Damage/Vandalism/Mischief, Eddy Street, Unfounded
- Wednesday, June 3**
2 p.m. Harassment/Stalk/Threat, West Street, Advised
2:43 p.m. Trespass/Unwanted, Storrs Street, Advised
2:46 p.m. Harassment/Stalk/Threat, Main Street, Services Rendered
5:38 p.m. Harassment/Stalk/Threat, Eddy Street, Services Rendered
6:16 p.m. Harassment/Stalk/Threat, North Street, Services Rendered
8:18 p.m. Suspicious/Wanted, Main Street, Verbal Warning Issued
- Thursday, June 4**
3:19 p.m. Harassment/

- Stalk/Threat, Church Street, Advised
3:30 p.m. Harassment/Stalk/Threat, Eddy Street, Services Rendered
3:30 p.m. Harassment/Stalk/Threat, North Street, Services Rendered
4:42 p.m. Abandoned 911 Call, Monson Turnpike Road, Dispatch Handled
5:57 p.m. Abandoned 911 Call, West Main Street, Investigated
5:59 p.m. Harassment/Stalk/Threat, North Street, Services Rendered

- Friday, June 5**
5:39 a.m. Abandoned 911 Call, Anderson Road, No Action Required
2:53 p.m. Suspicious/Wanted, Upper Church Street, Appears Secure After Check
2:53 p.m. Indecency/Lewdness, River Road, Could Not Locate
3:42 p.m. Fraud/Deception, North Street, Services Rendered
4:04 p.m. Trespass/Unwanted, West Street, Advised
4:09 p.m. Trespass/Unwanted, West Street, Advised
5:43 p.m. Public Service Check, East Main Street, Arrest Made
Arrest: Corky O. Schipper, 35, Ware
WMS Warrant (Eight Counts)
7:57 p.m. Disturbance/Nuisance, Aspen Street, Investigated
9:04 p.m. Warrant Service, North Street, Arrest Made
Arrest: Julius Ross, 33, Ware
WMS Warrant
11:55 p.m. Disturbance/Nuisance, East Street, Criminal Complaint Request
- Saturday, June 6**
1:17 a.m. Disturbance/Nuisance, West Street, Services Rendered
12:24 p.m. Abandoned 911 Call, West Street, Dispatch Handled
1:22 p.m. Abandoned 911 Call, West Street, Dispatch

Editor's Note: People in this country are presumed to be innocent until found guilty in a court of law. Police provide us with the information you read on this page as public record information. If you or any suspect listed here is found not guilty or has charges dropped or reduced, we will gladly print that information as a follow-up upon being presented with documented proof of the court's final disposition.

- Handled
3:02 p.m. Trespass/Unwanted, Pleasant Street, Canceled En Route
4:07 p.m. Disturbance/Nuisance, Webb Court, Services Rendered
5:41 p.m. Abandoned 911 Call, Longview Avenue, Investigated
5:58 p.m. Disturbance/Nuisance, West Street, Services Rendered
6:17 p.m. Disturbance/Nuisance, Main Street, Services Rendered
8:25 p.m. Safety Hazard, Sorel Road, Services Rendered
9:54 p.m. Weapons/Firearms, West Street, Investigated
- Sunday, June 7**
2:56 a.m. Abandoned 911 Call, East Street, Dispatch Handled
9:23 a.m. Harassment/Stalk/Threat, North Street, Services Rendered
10:11 a.m. Trespass/Unwanted, Main Street, Services Rendered
12:08 p.m. Disturbance/Nuisance, Highland Village, Services Rendered
4:20 p.m. Theft/Larceny, West Street, Services Rendered
5:20 p.m. Disturbance/Nuisance, North Street, Services Rendered
- Monday, June 8**
12:40 a.m. Suspicious/Wanted, Gilbertville Road, Investigated
7:53 a.m. Motor Vehicle Crash, West Main Street, Assist Given

Warren Police Log

During the week of May 34-31, the Warren Police Department responded to 319 building/property checks, one community policing, 12 emergency 911 calls, two complaints, two safety hazards, two motor vehicle accidents, one fraud, two illegal dumpings, two threats, one harassment, two parking issues, one vandalism, one animal call and 22 motor vehicle stops in the town of Warren.

- Sunday, May 24**
8 a.m. Chest Pain/Heart Problem, Bemis Road, Transported to Hospital
6:29 p.m. Noise Complaint, Comins Pond Road, Report Filed
6:36 p.m. Threats, Bacon Street, Report Filed
- Monday, May 25**
1:25 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Southbridge Road, Written Warning
1:44 p.m. Suspicious Vehicle, Town Farm Drive, Officer/Chief Advised
1:48 p.m. Welfare Check, Brook Road, Officer Spoke to Party
2:39 p.m. Illegal Dumping, Town Farm Road, Negative Contact
8:30 p.m. Falls, Richardson Street, Transported to Hospital
- Tuesday, May 26**
8:54 a.m. Parking Issues, Southbridge Road, Officer Spoke to Party
9:08 a.m. Illegal Dumping, Hawkes Road, Unfounded
9:11 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Southbridge Road, Written Warning
9:27 a.m. Motor Vehicle

- Collision, Main Street, No Action Required
12:26 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Criminal Complaint
12:35 p.m. 911 Hang-up/Misdial/Abandoned, Old West Brookfield Road, Officer/Chief Advised
3:04 p.m. Harassment, Crescent Street, Report Filed
10:54 p.m. 911 Hang-up/Misdial/Abandoned, Town Farm Road, Officer Spoke to Party
- Wednesday, May 27**
9:15 a.m. Safety Concern, Main Street, Area Patrolled
11:28 a.m. Disturbance/Disorderly, Old West Brookfield Road, Officer Spoke to Party
12:14 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Criminal Complaint
1:53 p.m. Vandalism, Old West Brookfield Road, No Action Required
4:40 p.m. Fraud or Forgery, Heritage Drive, Officer Spoke to Party
8:44 p.m. Threats, Cronin Road, Officer/Chief Advised
11:33 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Southbridge Road Extension, Written Warning

- Thursday, May 28**
12 a.m. Parking Issues, Allard Parking Lot, Officer Spoke to Party
12:27 a.m. Tree Incidents, Southbridge Road, Removed from Scene
2:30 a.m. Suspicious Vehicle, Boston Post Road, Officer Spoke to Party
8:28 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Written Warning
1:01 p.m. Sick/Unknown, Bacon Street, Transported to Hospital

- 10:48 p.m. Breathing Difficulty, Chapel Street, Ambulance Signed Refusal
11:37 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Written Warning
- Friday, May 29**
12:57 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Southbridge Road, Criminal Complaint
7:10 a.m. Safety Concern, Main Street, Report Filed
9:31 a.m. Breathing Difficulty, East Road, Transported to Hospital
12:47 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Written Warning
3:31 p.m. Motor Vehicle Hit and Run, Ware Road, Criminal Complaint
5:11 p.m. Complaint, Coy Hill Road, Officer/Chief Advised

- Saturday, May 30**
4:01 a.m. Abdominal/Back Pain, Main Street, Transported to Hospital
10:04 a.m. Sick/Unknown, Reed Street, Transported to Hospital
3:30 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Written Warning

- Sunday, May 31**
10:12 a.m. 911 Hang-up/Misdial/Abandoned, Knox Trail Road, Officer/Chief Advised
1:06 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Maple Street, Written Warning
7:15 p.m. Unconscious/Unresponsive/Syncope, Cronin Road, Transported to Hospital
7:44 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Written Warning

Hardwick Police Log

During the week of June 8-15, the Hardwick/New Braintree Police Department responded to 64 building/property checks, 42 directed/area patrols, nine radar assignments, five traffic controls, 13 emergency 911 calls, three citizen assists, two motor vehicle investigations, one stolen motor vehicle, one complaint, two safety hazards, one trespass, two fires, five animal calls and 16 motor vehicle stops in the town of Hardwick.

- Monday, June 8**
8:52 a.m. Stolen Motor Vehicle, Main Street, Report Taken
11:02 a.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Old Greenwich Plains Road, Patient Refusal
1:49 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Church Lane, Transported to Hospital
8:15 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Main Street, Transported to Hospital
- Tuesday, June 9**
2:50 a.m. Suspicious Activity, Delargy Road, Negative Contact
6:55 a.m. Assist Citizen, Delargy Road, Officer Handled
11:13 a.m. Assist Citizen, Police Department, Officer

- Handled
7:15 p.m. 911 Fire/Other, Main Street, Investigated
10:15 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Prouty Road, Transported to Hospital

- Wednesday, June 10**
7:23 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Written Warning
1:07 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Turkey Street, Transported to Hospital
1:59 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Written Warning
3:44 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Main Street, Transported to Hospital
4:38 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Greenwich Road, Patient Refusal
6:01 p.m. Motor Vehicle Investigation, Greenwich Road, Officer Handled

- Thursday, June 11**
2:25 a.m. Motor Vehicle Investigation, Main Street, Officer Handled
1:08 p.m. Utility Issues, Turkey Street, Services Rendered
5:10 p.m. Welfare Check, Collins Road, Services Rendered

- Friday, June 12**
2:35 a.m. Trespass, Main

- Street, Officer Handled
1:03 p.m. Assist Citizen, Barre Road, Services Rendered
2:56 p.m. 911 Misdial, Railroad Lane, Officer Handled
3:28 p.m. 911 Misdial, Old Petersham Road, No Action Required
3:37 p.m. 911 Misdial, Lower Road, Merge
5:09 p.m. Gunshots, Barre Road, Services Rendered

- Saturday, June 13**
12:07 a.m. Safety Hazard, Main Street, Removed Hazard
3:38 a.m. Complaint, Bridge Street, Services Rendered
12:19 p.m. Fire/Other, Brook Road, Extinguished

- Sunday, June 14**
7:56 a.m. Medical Alarm, Church Lane, Patient Refusal
9:09 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Lower Road, Arrest(s) Made
8:11 p.m. 911 Medical Emergency, Goddard Road, Patient Refusal

- Monday, June 15**
6:24 a.m. Safety Hazard, Thresher Road, No Action Required



Teachers Kimberly Welsh and Kristina Kenyon helped students prepare their aluminum floating boats that will soon have gems added to them.

STEAM from page 6

Kids took tissue paper and cut them into butterfly shapes. Kindergarten teachers Karen Bys and Heather Gaudreau were testing the static electricity as well.

One of the rooms became the black light room as kids got to draw under blacklights with various artworks glowing.

Over by fourth and fifth grade, kids were trying the egg zipline challenge. Ziplines were stationed throughout one classroom and kids had to put together the perfect ziplining easter egg to see if it can zipline from one side to the next without falling over.

Prior to the start of the music performances, Warren Community Elementary School Principal Carol Forward welcomed all the parents and guardians to STEAM



Turley Photos by Ryan Drago

Owls were made by the entire second grade class.

Night. Forward was excited to see a wonderful turnout and said the students did an amazing job with their art and music skills.

“The students and teachers did a fantastic job,” Forward said.

In the music room there were shadows and silhouettes. Kids used cardboard shapes, added them to a stick to make them look like puppets and brought the objects to life on screen.

There was also a cellophane station where kids can learn how color transforms light.

Throughout the entire school building parents and guardians were admiring the talented artwork displayed throughout the school.

HIKE from page 5

plans. Talked about family. Life. Dreams.

I snuggled in closer to Tom as the air chilled. And we waited.

The sun hung low. Clouds caught the fading sunlight and the golden orb blazed through them with such intensity that we briefly looked away. But when the sun drifted lower, we watched the world catch fire in shades of crimson, orange

and gold.

Like strokes on canvas, the sky was transformed, leaving us breathless.

Our conversation paused. The earth slowed. The world existed only in the present moment. Time stood still.

Once the sun disappeared behind the distant ridges-leaving the lingering shades of blue and pink and purple behind – Tom and I stood, bowed our heads, and praised God for his goodness.

Then we slowly walked hand in hand back to our tent as darkness descended on the forest.

Over the past eight years of backpacking, with well over a thousand miles completed, there are about five nights on trail that I will never forget.

This is now one of them.

Stay tuned for the second half of our backpacking trip in a future edition of the newspaper.

Onward!

obituary

ATM

from page 1

2.71% increase over FY 26.

“This is a level services budget,” he said. “The town is not reducing services, laying off staff, or asking for an override.”

Ferrera said over 50 communities across the commonwealth have had to seek overrides in order to balance their FY 27 budgets.

Ferrera also noted that no reserve funds or free cash were used to balance the town’s coming fiscal year’s budget.

The FY 27 budget’s increase is due to higher costs of insurance, retirement assessment, wages and school assessments.

The Finance Committee’s recommended budget for FY 27 was slightly different than the budget put forward by the Board of Selectmen, reflecting a salary increase of 2.5% for the Highway Surveyor compared to 5%.

The difference between the two recommendations was \$1,996.

Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen member Ray Kopacko said Highway Surveyor Jeremy Olson has received salary increases totaling 38% in the last five years, and that this is not sustainable.

Kopacko said earlier discussions between the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen agreed that 2.5% was an acceptable increase, however two of the Selectmen later changed their recommendation to the 5% that Olson requested.

Olson said he has been in this position for seven years, and it was “massively underpaid” when he started.

He said comparable towns with the same miles of roadway make about \$90,000 a year, compared to the \$84,124 he requested and the Board of Selectmen recommended.

“I truly feel like I put the extra energy and effort into this position,” he said.

A motion to amend the budget and reduce the Highway Surveyor’s salary increase from 5% to 2.5% failed to pass with 51 in favor and 65 opposed.

The FY 27 budget for the Quaboag Regional School District totaled \$22,386,462.29, with the town of Warren being responsible for \$4,948,469, which includes an above-minimum contribution of \$460,374.

Transportation costs continue to be a driver in the budget, with the town’s portion reaching close to a million dollars.

Superintendent Stephen Duff said the final FY 27 budget had over \$1 million in

reductions, and reflected the closure of West Brookfield Elementary School.

Duff said staff agreed to a lower salary increase (2%) than other town employees, after the teachers went without a contract for over six months.

He said the school district will continue to work with the towns it serves and he encouraged residents to attend School Committee and budget subcommittee meetings.

The town’s assessment for Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School increased with a total of \$457,851 for FY 27.

The FY 27 budget was approved 80-33, with total operation costs coming to \$12,744,585.

New firefighter/EMT positions

Article 3 asked voters to appropriate \$74,568 to fund two new firefighter/EMT positions in FY 27.

Fire Chief Adam Lavoie said this article is contingent upon the town’s receipt of a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

“This will only be filled and funded by the SAFER grant,” he said. “These positions will not be filled unless we receive that grant.”

Lavoie said the town should be notified in September if it received the grant or not, which is why the funding request only covers October through June.

Lavoie said the SAFER grant will cover 75% of the salary costs of the new firefighter/EMTs for the first and second years, and 35% for the third year. After this, the town will absorb the cost of the two positions through the Fire Department’s budget.

The addition of these two positions would allow the Fire Department to extend its current 7 a.m.-11 p.m. staffing to 24-hours.

“These two positions allow us to be around the clock,” Lavoie said. “It will be very beneficial for the town.”

Lavoie said if the grant is awarded, he will request for a reduction in the appropriation in article 3 at the fall special town meeting.

Article 3 passed with 76 in favor and 36 opposed.

Senior Center articles

Article 9 asked voters to transfer \$300,000 from Capital Stabilization to fund heating, ventilation and air conditioning improvements at the Senior Center.

Ferrera said the town received a Green Communities grant, which

covered the installation of a new air handling unit at the Senior Center, but the past year’s extreme weather has identified deficiencies in the duct work.

Ferrera said engineers Tighe & Bond said the duct work (or duct board) is faulty and causing the new air handling unit to overwork in very cold or hot weather.

“It’s working too much to meet the needs of the building,” he said.

This project will also include the installation of mini-splits.

Senior Center Director Sharon Meli said it was difficult to maintain temperatures in the building over the winter, and again now with the arrival of hot weather. She said they have had to restart the system constantly and that it was not working as it was intended to.

This article passed 95-19.

Article 20 asked voters to appropriate \$6,000 from free cash to pay for a survey of the Senior Center property.

Ferrera said there is no survey on file, which has made it challenging to plow the Senior Center’s parking lot in the winter with residential parking. He said the town would also like to install a fence on the property, but would need the survey completed first.

This article passed with 77 in favor and 30 opposed.

Floodplain District zoning

Amendments to the town’s Floodplain District Zoning Bylaw (Section 10) were approved by a two-thirds majority vote, 89-15. The amendments were required in order to be compliant with FEMA and the National Flood Insurance Program.

Snow and ice deficit

Article 23 asked voters to approve the transfer of \$127,083.53 from free cash to fund the FY 26 snow and ice removal deficit.

Olson said there were 56 days where his department had to remove snow this past winter.

This article passed 86-9.

Recognition

Moderator Dario Nardi recognized his predecessor, Vincent McCaughey, who had passed away in the spring. Nardi said McCaughey was an attorney, and served as the town’s moderator from 2011-2023.

“He was a straight shooter,” Nardi said. “He did a lot for the community.”

Other articles

All other articles passed with the exception of article 16, which was dismissed.

Paul Mitchell, 98



Oct. 13, 1927-June 4, 2026

Born in Ware, to Thomas Andrew and Irene Beach Mitchell, Paul grew up in Hardwick and served in the U.S. Navy during World War II.

He attended St. Michael’s College for his undergraduate degree, and University of Chicago for his master’s degree.

Paul taught history at Lincoln Sudbury High School, specializing in all things Russian, from 1958 to 1990, was head of the history department and established a Russian History Book Section at the library.

He is predeceased by his brother Thomas P. Mitchell and his sister Mary

Mitchell Thompson.

He leaves behind three nephews: Michael, Mark and John Thompson.

Paul was passionate about teaching, Russian history, literature, Icon Art, cats, classical music, choral voices and his Corvette.

He loved to flip his tie over his shoulder and disrupt the norm. He had a far-reaching impact upon all the people he touched and was an optimist who invariably bid farewell with “SHINE ON.”

A graveside ceremony will held be August 21, 2026 at 11 a.m. at the Old St. Williams Cemetery, West St., Ware, MA.



United Church celebrates 100/200th on June 21

WARE – On Sunday, June 21, the United Church of Ware will be celebrating its 100/200th anniversary as a church in Ware.

The original church was dedicated in 1826 and burned in 1925. The church was rebuilt and the new sanctuary was dedicated in June of 1926.

The Methodist Church and the Congregational Church voted to join together officially in June 1968 as the United Church of Ware, which retains ties to both denominations. After the merger, a committee started the planning for building the church hall at the rear of the sanctuary.

Past ministers, choir members and former members who then became ministers have been invited to join the church in celebrating this occasion. The church would like to invite you to join its celebration/reunion at the church on Sunday, June 21 at 2 p.m. for a service celebrating its long history in Ware, which

began in 1826 as the population expanded from the Ware Center area to what is now known as the town of Ware.

As a former minister of the combined churches wrote in the first church pictorial booklet, “People attend the services and activities of our church for many reasons: inspiration, worship, education, concern, obedience, etc. One of the least mentioned reasons...is simply the need of people to be with others in a spirit of friendship and love and concern.”

The church community prides itself in continuing to be known as a church family, welcoming to all, which still exemplifies this statement today. The church has been known as a participant in volunteer activities such as the free Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners and hosting other events in town.

All are welcome to join in the celebration.

Death notice

Mitchell, Paul
Died June 4, 2026
Services August 21, 2026

Ware River News
OBITUARY
POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place. The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph.

Death Notices & Paid Obituaries should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

NOTICE

ERRORS: Each advertiser is requested to check their advertisement the first time it appears. This paper will not be responsible for more than one corrected insertion, nor will be liable for any error in an advertisement to a greater extent than the cost of the space occupied by the item in the advertisement.

OBIE

from page 10

each eclipsed the 12-second mark. With Kimball second and Meservy third in the main event, current weekly 604 Modified top points man Tyler Leary was fourth, and NASCAR Whelen Modified series regular Kyle Bonsignore was fifth.

Kimball, from row two, took the lead from Bleau on lap one, with Robie quickly up to third on lap six and blasting into second a lap later. Kimball then held an eight-length advantage.

With reigning MRS champ Brett Meservy storming into Robie’s shadow, Kimball rode all alone at the front, but his advantage vanished when a Chris Pasteryak spun that brought out the caution flag and, with it, brought Robie to the leader’s door on lap 29.

Robie was quick to cash in on the opportunity, taking charge on lap 30 and holding Kimball and Meservy at his bumper until heavy rain swept in mid-race, effectively ending the show. After a meeting of track management and the racing teams, the race was declared official.

Hillary Renaud was jostled backward early in the night’s Twin States Truck Services Limited Late Model main event but when the chips were on the line, the Vernon, VT star was in the right place at the right time to score her first win of the summer.

Wesley Stedt powered into the early lead, with Renaud and previous winner Robert Hagar close behind. With Renaud shuffled back in the top groove, Hagar held the point, just ahead of Stedt and Daniel Petrowicz, who, like Hagar, had trophied the night before at Claremont.

Petrowicz rubbed past Hagar on lap 28, but a caution flag put Hagar back at the top. Three laps later, with the checkered flag high in chief starter Chris Horton’s hand, Petrowicz again tried to muscle his way to the front, this time sending the top three cars spinning wildly across the finish line.

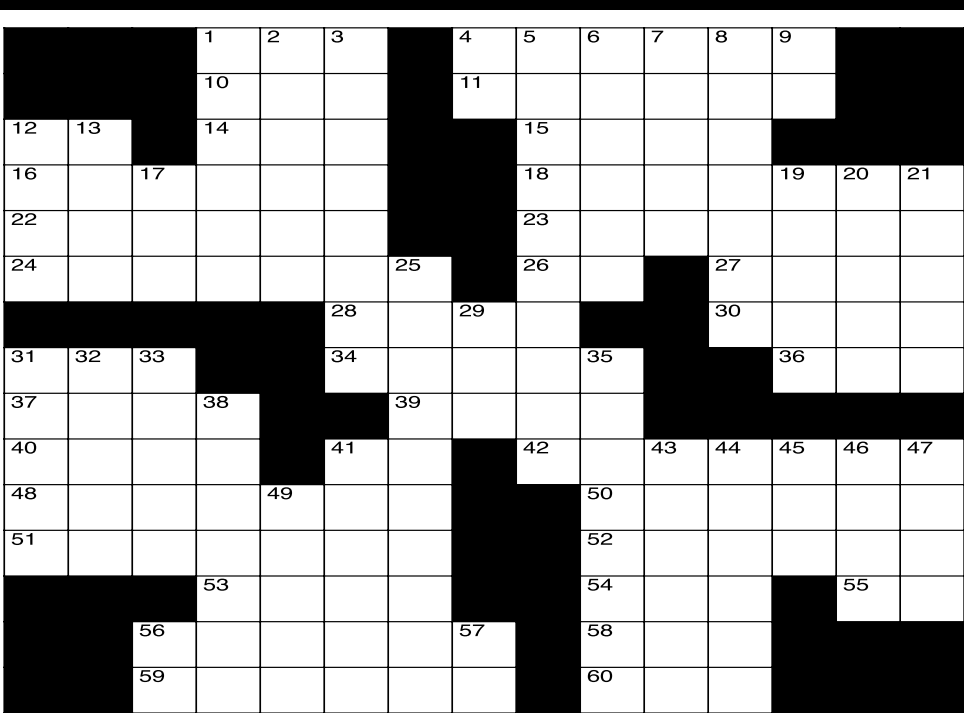
Renaud, whose ride ended half way to pit road, walked away with her first victory of the summer. Hagar, who was somehow able to drive away from the carnage, was second, and Erik Smith third.

Petrowicz, whose destroyed car had to be scraped from the frontstretch wall, was credited with fourth, and Michael Lashua was fifth.

Popular veteran Pat Houle led the first 15 laps of Saturday’s Keene Towing and Recovery Mini Stock 25-lapper, with Eric Pomasko challenging until inching ahead on lap 16 and the two crafty vets - each many moons from victory lane - went to work. When Houle’s ride quickly dropped off pace, former track king Louie Maher was quickly into second.

Maher tried over and over to wrest the top spot from Pomasko but the Peterborough speedster refused to budge, holding strong to earn his first win in years. With Maher a strong second, potent Craig Chaffee impressed in third, Tim Paquette finished fourth and Houle came home fifth.

Pre-teen ace Dylan Stati won for the sixth week in a row Saturday, topping the Doug’s Auto Body Young Guns 15-lapper with ease. Maeve Barry was second on the night.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Similar
- 4. Have an ambitious plan or a lofty goal
- 10. No (Scottish)
- 11. ___ Aires, city
- 12. Morning
- 14. Senior’s son (abbr.)
- 15. A notable achievement
- 16. European nation
- 18. Endings
- 22. Puts into place
- 23. Former
- 24. Grenadier
- 26. Sea patrol
- 27. Algerian port
- 28. Norwegian river
- 30. Precipitation
- 31. Sunscreen rating
- 34. New York is one
- 36. Patti Hearst’s

captors

- 37. Soft mineral with greasy feel
- 39. Retired Brazilian footballer
- 40. An Indian nursemaid
- 41. Atomic #24
- 42. Immobile
- 48. Insignia of royalty
- 50. Seeds from which chocolate is made
- 51. Begin again
- 52. Round root
- 53. Beginning to end (alt. sp.)
- 54. What newlyweds just said
- 55. Empire State
- 56. Give back
- 58. College hoops tournament
- 59. Unstable situations

- 60. Young women’s association

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Administer a drug
- 2. Holy places
- 3. Contrary opinions
- 4. Blood type
- 5. Gags
- 6. Micturating
- 7. Silly
- 8. A type of “cuff”
- 9. Spanish be
- 12. Austrian river
- 13. Messenger ribonucleic acid
- 17. Consume food
- 19. California supermarket
- 20. Electronic communication
- 21. Cassia tree
- 25. Written works

- 29. Cool!
- 31. Noteworthy 90s lawyer Kenneth
- 32. One who was compensated
- 33. National symbols
- 35. Raising
- 38. A type of talk
- 41. Cloud
- 43. Middle Eastern peoples
- 44. Pouches
- 45. 007’s creator
- 46. A cut of meat
- 47. Sports entertainment award
- 49. Christine ___, actress
- 56. Relief organization (abbr.)
- 57. Canadian province (abbr.)

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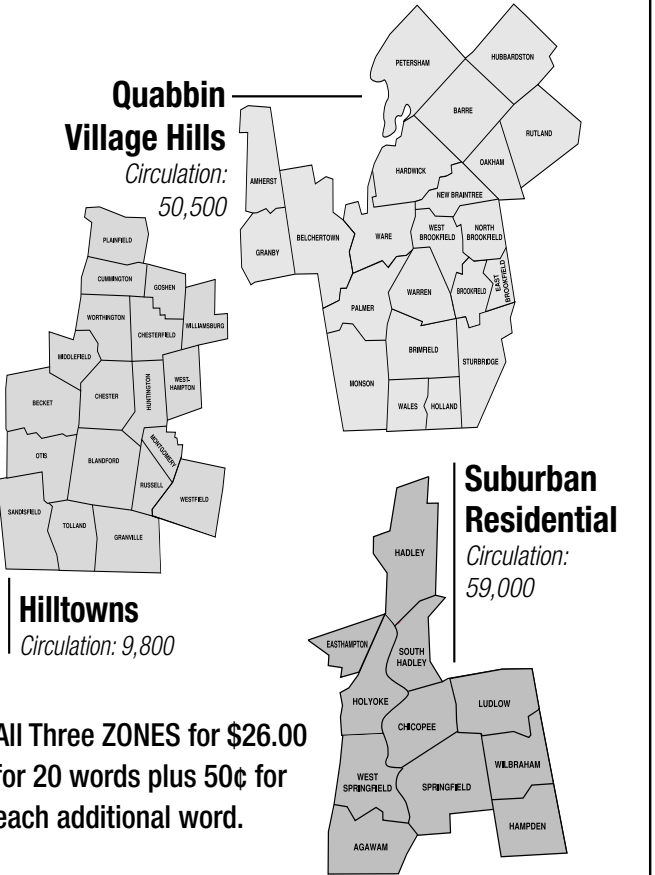
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Trinity Church hosts patriotic brass ensemble concert on June 21

WARE – The Fanfare Brass Ensemble will perform a patriotic concert on Sunday, June 21 at 4 p.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church, 17 Park St.

The patriotic concert presents short songs of America and celebrates the 250th founding of our country and the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

The program has patriotic music starting from 1768 to current day, including

“The Liberty Song”, “God Save Good Washington”, “The Girl I Left Behind”, “My Country ‘Tis of Thee”, “British Grenadiers”, “Chester”, “Yankee Doodle”, “Shenandoah”, “The Star Spangled Banner”, “Columbia”, “Battle Hymn of the Republic”, “Battle Cry of Freedom”, “Dixie”, “Cruel War in Over”, “When Johnny Comes Marching Home”, “Eternal Father”, “America the Beautiful”,

“Stars and Stripes”, “You’re A Grand Old Flag”, “God Bless America”, “It’s A Long Way to Tipperary”, “Pack Up Your Troubles”, “Armed Forces Themes”, “Hail to the Chief” and “God Bless the USA”.

Free and open to the public. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Ware Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council a state agency.



The Fanfare Brass Ensemble will perform a concert of patriotic music at Trinity Episcopal Church, 17 Park St., Ware on Sunday, June 21 at 4 p.m.

PATHFINDER from page 1

The school had planned to hold the graduation on the main campus, but when the weather started to look questionable, the school announced that the ceremony would be moved.

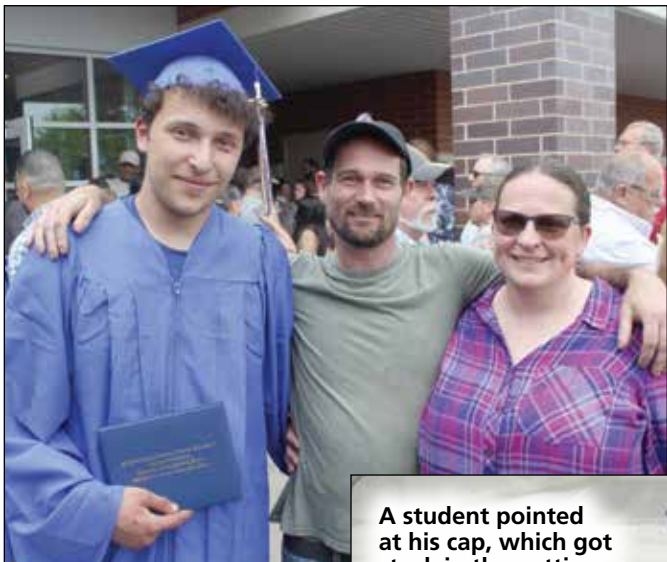
“Belchertown offered a year ago to let us use their space should we need it,” Duda said. “We’ve been very involved in Belchertown, so I guess it was all meant to be.”

During his address to the graduates, Duda made reference to the enormous American flag behind the stage, and tied it to the nation’s 250th anniversary that is being celebrated this year.

“This flag stands not only behind you physically, but symbolically as well today, reminding us that each of you has an important role to play in shaping the next chapter of our nation’s history, and change is key,” Duda said. “I stand before you today filled with pride, excitement, and anticipation for each of these amazing graduates seated before me. I have witnessed them embrace transformative change over the last four years.”

Duda compared the changes the students will make to the future to the school’s expansion into Belchertown, opening the Cold Spring Campus to offer 150 more seats to students.

Speeches were then presented by graduating students, offering encouragement to their classmates as they enter into the professional world. The valedictorian, salutatorian, and class president each

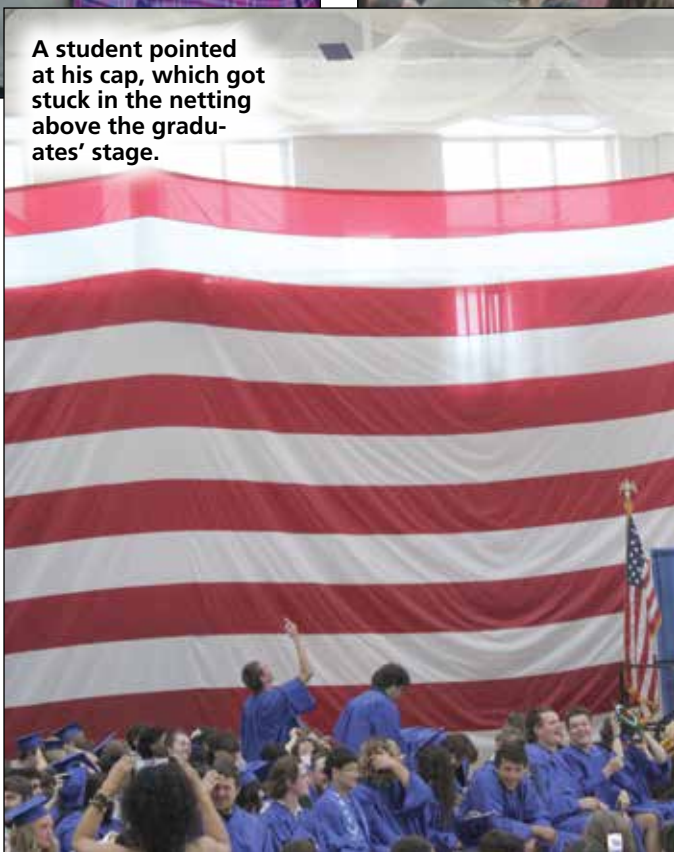


The proud Aliengena family walked away with a Pathfinder Tech diploma, (from left) Melissa, Max, and Michael.

had a speech prepared.

“High school students will always have something to complain about,” Valedictorian Noel Plumadore said. “They complain because they all will have to make sacrifices; whether it’s their career, their studies, their social circle, or something as simple as the time they have in the day, something will have to be lost. This does not go away when we enter adulthood, but to minimize the pain that comes from these sacrifices, we must seize opportunity where we can. By going to Pathfinder Tech, we have already learned to take advantage of an opportunity not everyone gets.”

“As we step off this stage today, we are leaving behind a place and environment we all became familiar with,” said Salutatorian Destiny



Rodriguez. “The future is unpredictable, and as much as we dislike change, it is a constant in our lives. Do not be afraid of the challenges



Pathfinder Tech seniors threw their caps in celebration as their graduation ceremony closed.

Turley Photos by Marcelo Gusmão

within these obstacles you face, that personal growth flourishes. Remember it’s okay to be human and make mistakes. But most importantly, remember success is not measured by how much you have accomplished or earned, but by the person you have become.”

“I owe a lot to both my brothers,” said Class President Rachel Roblinski. “My older brother Tommy, a ‘24 alum, taught me a lot about responsibility... My younger brother Jayden always reminded me that life wasn’t too serious, and to enjoy my senior year. My father Dr. Michael Roblinski, a name I hope to one day embed myself, thank you for dealing with all the busy schedules and late night study sessions.”

She then shared a phrase in Chinese, which translates to “I know life hasn’t been easy for the both of us but I couldn’t be more grateful I went through it all with you. Thank you for giving me a

life of endless support. I love you Mom,” before thanking her mother in English for the sacrifices she made so she could make it to the stage that weekend.

School Committee Chair Julia Quink sent the graduates off with a speech about resilience.

“Years from now, when you look back on this day, I hope you remember not just the diploma you received, but the lessons you learned about perseverance, friendship, responsibility, and growth,” Quink said. “Be ambitious in your dreams, be kind in your actions, be courageous when faced with uncertainty, and, when life presents obstacles, as it inevitably will, remember that resilience is not the absence of difficulty; it is the determination to keep moving forward despite it.”

The graduates then received their diplomas, and were played out with Green Day’s “Good Riddance (Time of Your Life)”.

public notices

(SEAL)
THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS LAND COURT DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT 26 SM 000415 ORDER OF NOTICE
To: **Elizabeth Ann Sanborn; John Allen Sanborn**
and to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, 50 U.S.C. c. 50 §3901 (*et seq*):
NewRez LLC

claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in Ware, numbered **207 Osborne Road**, given by **Elizabeth Ann Sanborn, John Allen Sanborn to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Northpoint Mortgage, Inc.**, dated **August 3, 2022**, and recorded in the **Hampshire County Registry of Deeds in Book 14637, Page 46** and now held by the Plaintiff by assignment, has/have filed with this court a complaint for deter-

mination of Defendant’s/Defendants’ Servicemembers status.

If you now are, or recently have been, in the active military service of the United States of America, then you may be entitled to the benefits of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If you object to a foreclosure of the above mentioned property on that basis, then you or your attorney must file a written appearance and answer in this court at **Three Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108** on or before **July 20, 2026** or you may lose the opportunity to challenge the foreclosure on the ground of noncompliance with the Act.

Witness, Gordon H. Piper, Chief Justice of this Court on June 5, 2026.

Attest:
Deborah J. Patterson
Recorder
28976

Notice of Public Auction
The contents of the following storage units will be sold for non-payment at **Country Corners Storage, 0 Greenwich Rd., Ware, MA on Sat. June 27, 2026 at 9:00 am:**
Felix Pequero: Bldg. 6 Unit 4
Ismael Fernandez: Bldg. 1 Unit 3; Bldg. 6 Unit 31
Christy George: Bldg. 6 Unit 20
The contents of the following storage units will be sold for non-payment at **Country Corners Storage, 120 Dresser Road, Southbridge MA at 11:30 am:**
Wendy Vazquez: Bldg. 2 Unit 3
Lynn Fairbanks: Bldg 2 Unit 24
06/18, 06/25/2026

(SEAL)
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS LAND COURT DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT 26 SM 001900

ORDER OF NOTICE
TO:
Verneda Stover, Personal Representative of the Estate of David L. Liggon; David K. Stover
and to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act: 50 U.S.C. c. 50 § 3901 (*et seq*):
Citibank, N.A., not in its individual capacity, but solely as owner trustee of the New Residential Mortgage Loan Trust 2019-2
claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in Ware, numbered **37 Indian Hill Road**, given by **David L. Liggon to Ameritrust Mortgage Company**, dated **May 17, 2004**, and recorded at **Hampshire County Registry of Deeds in Book 7839, Page 1**, as affected by a Judgment dated **May 4, 2026** and recorded at said Registry in **Book 15737, Page 329**, and now held by the plaintiff by assignment, has/have filed with

this court a complaint for determination of Defendant’s/Defendants’ Servicemembers status.

If you now are, or recently have been, in the active military service of the United States of America, then you may be entitled to the benefits of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If you object to a foreclosure of the above-mentioned property on that basis, then you or your attorney must file a written appearance and answer in this court at **Three Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108** on or before **July 27, 2026** or you may lose the opportunity to challenge the foreclosure on the grounds of noncompliance with the Act.

Witness, GORDON H. PIPER, Chief Justice of said Court on June 11, 2026.

Attest:
Deborah J. Patterson
Recorder
06/18/2026

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Police Officer

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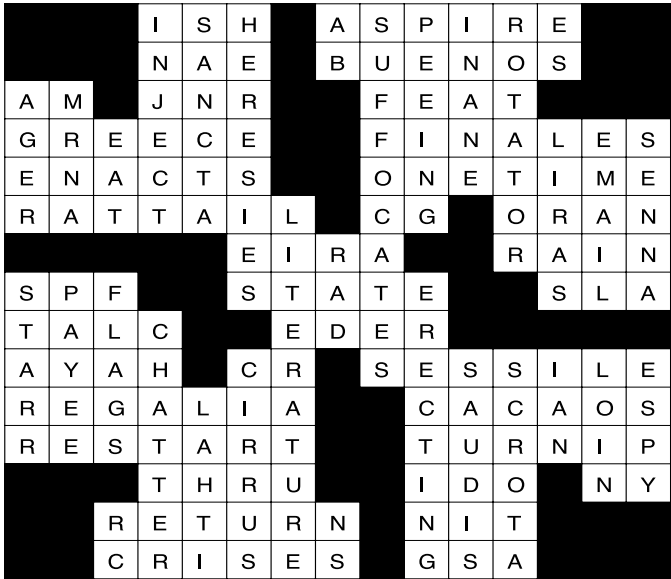
The Warren Police Department is accepting applications for the position of a full time Police Officer. Applicants are preferred to be academy trained and must be willing to work weekends, nights, and holidays.

Responsibilities include responding to emergency and non-emergency calls for Police, Fire and Ambulance services. It is preferred that applicants currently possess valid certification as a Police Officer. Candidates must have strong interpersonal, verbal, and written communication skills. Preferences include an associate degree or higher in criminal justice, serve in the US military, or experience as a Police Officer.

The Patrolmen’s contract provides an education incentive and a candidate with prior municipal policing experience may also be considered to start at a higher rate of pay.

Resumes and cover letters must be returned no later than Friday, July 3, 2026, to the attention of Lt. Kyle Whitcomb, WPD PO Box 606, Warren, MA 01083 or whitcomb@warren-ma.gov.

The Town of Warren is an equal opportunity employer.



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