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Photos of those who lost their lives to overdose were displayed at the International Overdose Awareness Vigil held at Veterans Park in Ware on Aug. 31.



Overdose Awareness Day



Candlelight vigil held downtown

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
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WARE – A candlelight vigil was held at Veterans Park to observe International Overdose Awareness Day this past Monday evening.

July Lutz, Program Director of the Recovery Center of HOPE led the ceremony on Aug. 31, and she shared promising statistics about declining opioid overdose deaths in the commonwealth.

Turley Photo by Paula Ouimette
Randy Gratton spoke about staying vigilant to prevent overdose death.

“For the first time in over a decade, overdose deaths fell below 1,000,” Lutz said. “Every number is a person.”

This marks a 27% decrease in opioid overdose deaths over the previous year.

“It matters the work that’s happening all over the state right now,” she said.

Lutz said the Recovery Center of HOPE has two locations in town, one at 52 Main St., and the other at 78 Main St. She said it is a place where people are treated with dignity, no matter where they are in their recovery journey.

“The center is a place where people can come as they are,” Lutz said.

Lutz welcomed speaker and resident Randy Gratton, who said he is “always honored and

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79th Annual Ware Grange Fair celebrated

By Ryan Drago
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WARE – The 79th Annual Ware Grange Fair took place this past weekend with another strong turnout.

Judging took place the day before and there were 350 exhibits entered.

Randy Vaill of the Ware Grange said this year’s fair was “another good year”, as the traditions of the Ware Grange Fair continue.

In 2025, the fair had a record setting year with 419 exhibits.

This year, the Grange received 294 adult entries and 56 youth entries. There were 81 exhibitors at this year’s fair with 13 new exhibitors.

The State Grange is the parent organization that

helps support the annual Ware Grange Fair every year. There were a few “eye catchers” as Vaill described in this year’s fair.

One outstanding exhibit it was a giant field pumpkin that was entered by Rosalie Belisle of Ware. The field pumpkin received a Special Agriculture Rosette from the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture Resources.

Some spectators at the Ware Grange Fair referred to it as “the Great Pumpkin.”

Another eye-catching exhibit was a non-agricultural entry. April Rose Carter of Barre made a crocheted afghan that received a Special Rosette from the Ware Grange Fair.

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Turley Photo by Ryan Drago
Mackenzie McNally of Brimfield received a Special Agriculture Rosette ribbon for her wildflower arrangement, which was exhibited during the 79th Annual Ware Grange Fair.

Family works to save veteran’s home

By Paula Ouimette
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WARREN – West Warren resident Stuart McClelland, age 79, has lived at his house

since the late 1980s, where he has built a lifetime of memories not only for his family, but for many in the community.

The pre-Civil War house was built in 1832 and sits on close to two acres of land not far from the Quaboag River. The property was once part of a larger farm.

McClelland grew up in

Springfield and moved here with his wife to get away from the city.

A U.S. Army veteran, McClelland served in Germany and Vietnam during his four year and three month service.

After the military, McClelland had a lengthy

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Ice Cream Social



SEE COVERAGE ON PAGE 6.

The Quaboag Regional School district kicked off the year with an ice cream social. Here we have a couple students enjoying ice cream cups during the social.

Turley Photo by Ryan Drago

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Jadrien Berthiaume takes the carry. Ware's season gets underway next week.

Ware football set to start season under new coach

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WARE— Kyle Whitney spent the past two seasons as an assistant football coach at Ware High School under

head coach Mike Fazio. Whitney was expecting to return to the same position this fall.

Those plans changed last spring when Fazio was hired as the varsity football coach

at David Prouty High School in Spencer, which is his alma mater. Whitney has replaced him as the Indians varsity football coach.

“I was planning on returning as an assistant football coach, but I’m very excited to be taking over as the head football coach,” said Whitney during a recent interview. “During the past couple of years, coach Fazio, along with coach (Scott) Slattery taught me a lot about the history of this program. I already know the players and I just want to continue the winning tradition here.”

Whitney, who’s lives in Ware, grew up in Rhode Island. He played football at Cranston East High School and college football at Nichols College in Dudley.

Whitney had only coached a youth football team in Rhode Island before arriving in Ware.

“I just love the game of football,” he said. “When I became the assistant coach here, my mind set was to learn as much as I could from coach Fazio and the other coaches.”

Whitney isn’t a teacher at Ware High School, but he’s built a very good relationship with the returning players.

In Whitney’s first season as an assistant football



Jayden Diaz makes a return.

coach, the Indians posted an 8-3 overall record. They finished with a 7-4 mark a year ago.

“It took me a couple of weeks to get to know the players and for them to get familiar with me,” Whitney said. “They quickly realized that I was there to help them improve as players. We haven’t qualified for the Division 8 state playoffs during the two years I’ve been coaching here. Qualifying for the state tournament is our number one goal. I just want to have a successful season.”

Back in the fall of 2023, the Indians finished the regular season with a perfect 8-0 record before losing to Randolph High School, 3-0, at home in a Division 8 first round game.

The Indians graduated nine players from last year’s team.

Whitney has named seniors Troy Jurczyk, who’s the returning starting quarterback, and running back Dalton Marquis as co-captains of this year’s team.

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Committee announces next Hall induction

BARRE – Tickets for the 11th Quabbin Regional Athletic Hall of Fame Induction are now available for the Nov. 7 ceremony to be held at Teresa’s Restaurant, 315 Palmer Road, Ware, MA. A social hour will begin at 5 p.m. with dinner at 6 p.m. followed by the induction ceremony.

Seven individuals and a pair of championship teams will be honored. Dating back to the first

induction in 2002, this will bring the total number of individual inductees to 72 in addition to 11 teams.

The induction class includes Louis Panaccione ’75, Eugene Rich ’95, Matthew Brunelle ’08, Stephany Halfrey ’15, Thaddeus J. Gumula Contributor and Athletic Director, Coach Cheryl Adams, Coach Debra

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AT LEFT: Jarett Skowyra takes the return toward the right sideline. With Palmer not fielding a varsity team for this season, Pathfinder will be representing Palmer in high school football this year.

Grayson Griswold takes the snap for Pathfinder.

The Pathfinder defense comes up with a big stop during last year’s final game with Belchertown on Thanksgiving.

Pioneers set to represent Palmer for 2026

PALMER – The Palmer High School football team is not fielding a varsity team this season due to lowering numbers. The team hopes to have a JV team this year and rebuild its varsity roster

for next season. Meanwhile, Pathfinder will be representing the town in the varsity ranks by itself this year. The Pioneers were scheduled to be in scrimmage action this week, but rain threatened that matchup. Pathfinder’s sched-

ule was slightly changed by some of the matchups being moved around this year. The season opener for the Pioneers will not be far away, however, as Pathfinder will make a very short trip to Ludlow to take on the

Lions on Friday, Sept. 11 at 6:30 p.m. Their season opener will take place on Friday, Sept. 18 against Commerce. The Pioneers will be using Legion Field as their home field once again this season.



Submitted photo

UMPIRES ASSOCIATION AWARDS SCHOLARSHIP

Western Massachusetts Baseball Umpires Association Board Member Chris Anderson awards a \$500 scholarship earlier this summer Sean Krol. The umpires’ association funds the scholarship through dues paid by its members. Anderson hopes in the future to fund more scholarships either through fundraising or donations, saying it’s important to give back to the sport they love, and promote education for high school seniors who play. Applications for next year’s scholarship will open up early in 2027.



Cassian Kowalik lumbers through the crowd on a carry.



Trevor Alexander makes a carry for the Pioneers.



Aiden Girard makes a great block.