

WARE RIVER NEWS

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Ware: A Year In Review



File Photos
Fire Chief Christopher Gagnon was honored by colleagues and community members at his retirement celebration held on Dec. 31, 2022, at the Fire Station.

Town weighs the value of assets, hospital

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

WARE – Residents and town officials were involved in a number of discussions about what to do with aging water and wastewater infrastructure, and the now vacant Baystate Mary Lane Hospital.

The town also said goodbye to two department heads as they retired or moved on from their positions, and welcomed their replacements.

Fire Chief retirement

The last day of 2022 also marked the end of a 33-year career with the Fire Department for Fire Chief Christopher Gagnon.

In his three decades in Ware, Gagnon has likely held all of the available positions at one point or another, including firefighter/EMT, SAFE Educator (of which he was one of the first involved in the program), fire investigation, EMT/paramedic, shift commander, lieutenant, and of course, chief.

Please see **WARE** page 5



Michael Lovato was selected to serve as Superintendent of Ware Public Schools.

Year in Review 2023



Trinitarian Congregational Church member Gloria Judd, left, stands with the Friends of the Stone Church (from left), Mary Warbasse, Cheryl Wolfe, Paula Roberts, Judy Knight and Phillip Warbasse.

Hardwick: A Year In Review

Town makes progress while keeping tradition alive

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
pouimette@turley.com

HARDWICK – This year saw a lot of change for Hardwick, with the U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded wastewater treatment project firmly underway, and the refinishing of Gilbertville's Main Street and sidewalks completed.

Project proposals
Large projects continue to be proposed to townspeople, causing many to be divided about which ones would provide an economic benefit, and which ones carry too great a risk to Hardwick's rural atmosphere.

A draft Host Community Agreement with Commonwealth Equine and Agricultural Center, LLC presented to the town guaranteed a \$500,000 annual payment, which could be used for any town need. It also offered job opportunities for residents and those in surrounding towns.

With the town facing a variety



The Gilbert Players put on a sold-out performance of "Chicago" at The Center at Eagle Hill.

ety of needs, including repairs to their Municipal Building, ambulance service in town, a police station, a fire truck and more, those voting "yes" on the ballot saw the benefit this annual payment could have. But for those voting "no," the increase in traffic and the placement of a horseracing track on land that is in Agricultural Preservation Restriction would have a lasting negative impact.

Signs went up around town, urging residents to take a stand on either side.

At the start of this year, a Special Election was held and 57.4% of voters cast their ballot on a single question, "Shall the Town of Hardwick approve the Nov. 9, 2022, vote of the Board of Selectmen authorizing the location of a horse race track

Please see **HARDWICK**, page 7

Warren: A Year In Review



Trophies and memorabilia from Warren High School were removed from the basement of the Shepard Municipal Building, and permanently displayed in a trophy case at Quaboag Regional Middle High School this past February.

Town keeps focus on past, present and future

By Paula Ouimette
Editor
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WARREN – Following concerns raised in the past about the condition of town owned buildings and infrastructure, town officials continued working on making improvements and finding solutions in 2023.

Public safety/municipal buildings
After the Board of Selectmen deemed that the Town Hall needed significant repairs and the Police and Fire stations were limited in meeting the needs of the growing departments, the town started a financial feasibility study for a combined public safety and municipal complex.

The Shepard Municipal Building received a number of maintenance improvements and upgrades, including a new sign outside of the building, made possible by the Shepard family.

In May, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development inspected the Town Hall and Police Station, issuing the Board of Selectmen orders of corrections for the building.

Please see **WARREN**, page 10



This kayaker passing through Lucy Stone Park braved the blustery March weather to participate in the Mousehole Run, a canoe and kayak race that took place on the Quaboag River from West Brookfield to Warren.

Santa Claus and Santa Paws

Children enjoy visit from jolly elf and pup

HARDWICK – Children at Hardwick Playgroup, held Friday mornings at the Myron E. Richardson Municipal Building, 307 Main St., Gilbertville, enjoyed a special visit from two North Pole friends last week.

Santa Claus made a surprise visit to Gilbertville one last time before he returned with his reindeer and sleigh on Christmas Eve. Also arriving, was Santa Paws, a four-legged, tail-wagging spreader of holiday cheer.

Children enjoyed telling Santa Claus what they would like for Christmas, and made sure to give Santa Paws pets and hugs.



See more photos on Page 2.

Santa Claus and Santa Paws paid a visit to Hardwick Playgroup last Friday.

Warm up for the holidays

Recovery Center of Hope brings joy and fellowship

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

WARE – It was a time of giving and fellowship at the Recovery Center of Hope in Ware as they provided a warm-up for the holidays this past week.

This event was a joyful addition to the Recovery Center of Hope's offerings, as they provided a fun gathering with pastries, hot drinks and fellowship.

Please see **CENTER**, page 8



From left to right, Julie Lutz and Erika Bentley of Recovery Center of Hope provided a welcoming atmosphere to celebrate the holidays on Main Street.

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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 \$225, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice 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.



Submitted Photos by Lynn Lak

Students from Ware High School volunteered time to help setup the display of Christmas trees at Town Hall earlier this month.

Ware Center Meeting House designed Noah's Ark Christmas tree

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

WARE – A holiday tradition was showcased during the Ware Holiday Stroll in the form of decorated Christmas trees, displayed during the second weekend in December at the Town Hall.

Every year for the last six years a team of decorators have come up with a unique theme to put together on a Christmas tree. Back in June, Vice-President of the Ware Center Meeting House Marty Rohan came up with the idea of creating Noah's Ark as a display for a Christmas tree.

Rohan accomplished this fun project with help from

friends Corrine Campbell and Georgeann Koziol.

This project took nearly all day to design all the animals for the tree and they were made of edible gingerbread. Icing decorations and gingerbread cookies featured elephants, giraffes and zebras to symbolize Noah's Ark and the animals.

The tree size was well over six feet tall and was entered into the raffle during the town's Holiday Stroll and was displayed in the halls of Town Hall and was won by a lucky participant of the raffle.

Putting the theme together was "a lot harder than we thought," Rohan said, as the tree and its decorations took a lot of work.

The animal decorations

for the tree were about 12-inches long. About two dozen decorations including cookies and Noah's Ark that was also made of gingerbread.

The Ark was placed on the top center of the tree.

Rohan and her friends have created other uniquely themed Christmas trees, including one decorated with seashells. Every year the theme is different for their special Christmas tree, and they will soon be working on ideas for next year's tree.

A special "thank you" was given to the students from Ware High School who volunteered their time to help with the setup at Town Hall for the display of Christmas trees.

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 1990 showed two of Ware High School's most enthusiastic sports boosters, Mike (left) and David Deslauriers with volleyball championship jackets. If you recognize the folks in this week's photo, please send their names and your full name to pouimette@turley.com.



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Santa Claus & Santa Paws



Santa Paws (who is rumored to be Gilbertville's own Abbie Jo in costume), watches the children play at Hardwick Playgroup, held upstairs in the Myron E. Richardson Municipal Building in Gilbertville.

Turley Photos by Paula Quimette
Santa Claus waits patiently while a child prepares a make-believe snack for him.

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Please use QR Code or the link to pre-register:
<https://tinyurl.com/ycky5da>
Please direct any questions to Arianna Palano at
apalano@townofware.com, 413-478-2526.

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Lyle's Leftovers

Ware guitarist joins his band at American Legion

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

WEST SPRINGFIELD – Performing at one of their regular locations, Lyle's Leftovers had a live show at the American Legion last week.

Joining them is lead guitarist Shawn Donnelly of Ware who loves to play music and perform with his fellow band members.

Lyle's Leftovers has performed under the name for seven years. They are an original band that plays covers and original songs on the heavier side of life, combining rock 'n roll and heavy metal.

The name originates from their bass player, Lyle Norcott, who has performed in bands for many years. Jokingly coming up with a new band name, the group was reflecting on who was leftover from Lyle's time performing.

The name seemed to stick, and Lyle's Leftovers was made official and still rolls on to this day. Drumming for Lyle's Leftovers is Josh Cote and Jeff Marek is the lead singer.

Marek has been performing with Lyle's Leftovers for four years and enjoys the thrill of performing in front of the crowd. Having the opportunity for exposure is the best part about playing in a band as they move forward in the music world.

"Exposing yourself to performing in front of a lot of people," said Marek.

For their bass player, Lyle Norcott its about filling the venue they perform in that makes the band feel good.

"Love drawing the crowds in to fill the space," said Norcott.

Lyle's Leftovers perform covers and original songs of their own.

At their live show at the American Legion, the band started off playing familiar rock and metal favorites. Later in the night, they ease into their original songs and that is when the heavy metal kicks in.

The cover songs played by Lyle's Leftovers included "Alive" by Pearl Jam and "Man in the Box" by Alice in Chains. Folks can listen



Lyle's Leftovers performed at the American Legion in West Springfield this past Friday night. The backdrop featured the band's logo.

to music by Lyle's Leftovers on their YouTube page and Facebook page. Some of their original songs including "Longest Day" is available on Pandora and Spotify.

Every song was played well by Lyle's Leftovers and guitarist Shawn Donnelly expertly played the guitar solos. What's unique about Donnelly's performance behind the guitar is that he plays guitar left-handed.

Donnelly mentioned it's hard to find a left-handed guitar in stores but he seizes the opportunity to get one once spotted.

"If I see it in the store, I'm buying it," said Donnelly.

The American Legion in West Springfield is a regular performance venue for Lyle's Leftovers and the guests always appreciate the sound of music.

For some cool merchandise, Lyle's Leftovers had merchandise available for purchase at the American Legion. Folks can pick up some hats, T-shirts in several colors and stickers featuring logos of Lyle's Leftovers.

Lyle's Leftovers throughout the years have also performed in clubs



Turley Photos by Ryan Drago

Lyle's Leftovers features members, from left to right, Lyle Norcott on bass, Josh Cote on drums, Jeff Marek on vocals, and Shawn Donnelly on guitar.

in the Worcester area. A new music studio is currently in the works for Lyle's Leftovers and is expected to be in Donnelly's hometown of Ware.

The band is currently taking a break for the holidays and will be returning to the stage in 2024.

The next performance by Lyle's Leftovers will be in the new year Friday, Feb. 9 at the American Legion in West Springfield. Learn more about Lyle's Leftovers on their Facebook page and listen to them on YouTube, Spotify and Pandora.

BOH OKs septic plans for Tractor Supply

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
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WARE – The Board of Health reviewed and approved septic design plans for the proposed Tractor Supply store at 256 West St. that is being designed by Solli Engineering, LLC.

Solli Engineering provides land development consulting and engineering for public and private clients throughout the northeast. The representative of Solli Engineering provided site plans and test pit locations on a map and where they're working to place septic in the building of the new Tractor Supply.

Solli Engineering will begin the project on septic plans as soon as they get official approval sometime in April of 2024. Once approved, the engineering company will also be issued an order of conditions and building permits to further advance the new Tractor Supply store.

Private well regulations
The Board of Health discussed regulations on private wells. There is currently no requirement for residents to do tests on their private wells and Board members shared concerns about lack of oversight.

The Board of Health decided that model regulations will be reviewed and during a public hearing there will be a review of private well regulations.

Grease traps
Other business brought to the attention of the Board of Health was grease traps. This plumbing device is designed to intercept most grease and solids before they enter a wastewater disposal system.

The Board of Health was concerned about some restaurants not having a grease trap which is part of a plumbing code. This code also requires restaurants to have a three-bay sink.

Without being properly maintained, grease traps can have plumbing and sewer issues. One of the biggest concerns is the waste oil and grease going into the sewers.

According to the Board of Health, grease should not be in the sewer lines and needs to be properly disposed of.

Regulations can help keep restaurant operators informed that these traps must stay maintained and properly cleaned. The Board of Health was informed that food inspections are being proactive on grease trap check-ins.

Ware Senior Center news

WARE – The Ware Senior Center, 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, Jan. 1

Closed
Happy New Year!

Tuesday, Jan. 2

9 a.m. Exercise at Valley View Housing
9 a.m.-3 p.m. Foot Nurse Allison Williams (Call 413-967-9645 for appointment)
9:30 a.m. Quilting Club
10 a.m. Scat
11:30 a.m. Lunch
New Year's Party

Dessert and entertainment courtesy of the Friends of Ware Senior Inc.
5:30 p.m. Scrapbooking (\$3 per class)
6 p.m. Pitch (doors open at 5 p.m.)

Wednesday Jan. 3

9 a.m. Tai-Chi
10 a.m. Scat
11:30 a.m. Lunch

Thursday, Jan. 4

9 a.m. Senior Walk (meet at Senior Center)
9 a.m. Exercise at Valley View Housing
9:30 a.m. Line Dancing for Beginners

10 a.m. Line Dancing
10 a.m. Scat
11:30 a.m. Lunch
2:45 p.m. Art Class

Friday, Jan. 5

9 a.m. Tai Chi
10 a.m. Scat
11:30 a.m. Lunch
1 p.m. Chair Yoga
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 your name on the lunch list.

Monday, Jan. 1

Closed
Happy New Year!

Tuesday, Jan. 2

New Year's Party
BBQ Chicken, Baked Potatoes, Veggie of the Day, Dessert and Entertainment by Friend of the Ware Senior Center

Wednesday, Jan. 3

Brunch
Confetti Pancakes, Scrambled Eggs, Bacon, Dessert of the Day

Thursday, Jan. 4

Hot Turkey Sandwich, Boiled Potatoes, Veggie of the Day, Dessert of the Day

Friday, Jan. 5

Mild Chili Over Rice, Caesar Salad, Dessert of the Day

Friends of the Library host lotto calendar fundraiser

WARE – The Friends of the Library are hosting a lotto calendar fundraiser for the month of January, with proceeds to support programs and events at the Young Men's Library Association, 37 Main St.

Calendars are \$10 each and you have a chance at winning every day of the month. Prizes range from \$25-300, and winners will be notified by phone.

Only 1,000 calendars will be sold. For more information, stop by the library.

Knights host spaghetti dinner on Jan. 13

WEST BROOKFIELD – Knights of Columbus Council 11080, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish, is sponsoring a spaghetti dinner on Saturday, Jan. 13, 2024, in Dugan Hall, Sacred Heart Church, 10 Milk St.

Dinner includes pasta fagioli, garden salad, meatballs and sausage, spaghetti and sauce, garlic bread, dessert, water, soda and coffee. The cost is a \$15 donation and \$10 for children under 12 years old.

Take-out is available at 6 p.m. and sit-down dinner is served at 6:30 p.m.

Advance ticket purchase is encouraged and appreciated. Tickets are available from any Knight or by calling 508-612-1649 or 41-813-8100 or by emailing bobfalter@gmail.com or wallyconnor122@gmail.com.

Tickets will only be available at the door while they last. Admission tickets are also good for entry for special door prizes.

Raffle tickets for a 50/50 raffle and more will be available.

Proceeds from this event will help provide ongoing support to children orphaned by the conflict in Ukraine coordinated by

Supporting Orphans Nationally & Globally (S.O.N.G.) of Brookfield.

Wally Connor, past Grand Knight of Council 11080, and Executive Director of S.O.N.G., Inc. recently returned from Rzeszow, Poland, and Irpin, Ukraine coordinating support for orphaned children in Refugee Centers and for children who have recently lost a parent, and some cases, have lost both parents in the war. S.O.N.G. has been providing ongoing direct support to these children since shortly after the invasion.



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 ekennedy@turley.com, or call 967-3505. Corrections may also be requested in writing at: Ware River News, Attn: Editor, 80 Main St., Ware, MA 01082.

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Are spousal benefits always a factor?

Dear Rusty:

Both my wife and I have worked our entire lives.

When we retire, will we both be entitled to full benefit amount each or will there always be a spousal factor in there? Also, how are those benefits calculated – based on your highest salaries throughout your career, or your ending salaries when you retire?

Signed: Looking Ahead

Dear Looking:

Prior to retiring from work is a smart time to investigate how Social Security will fit into your golden years. To answer your second question first, each person's personal SS retirement benefit is based on the highest earning 35 years over their entire lifetime, with earlier years adjusted for inflation.

The person's Average Indexed Monthly Earnings, essentially the person's lifetime average inflation-adjusted monthly earnings amount, is first determined.

Using AIME, the person's Primary Insurance Amount is calculated using a special benefit formula which will yield a PIA of about 40% or less of the person's AIME. The PIA is the amount received if benefits start in the month full retirement age or "FRA" is attained, as you can see, Social Security likes acronyms.

Since you and your wife were both born after 1959, FRA for both of you is 67. The age when you claim benefits, relative to your FRA, determines how much you'll get. Claim before FRA and your benefit is reduced; claim after your FRA and your SS retirement benefit will be more (up to age 70 when maximum is reached); claim at your FRA and your benefit will equal your PIA – the full (100%) amount you've earned from a lifetime of working.

Spouse benefits only come into play if the PIA for one of you is less than 50% of the other's PIA. In that case, the spouse with the lower PIA gets a "spousal boost" to their own SS retirement benefit when claimed.

The amount of the "spousal boost" will be the difference between the lower PIA and half of the higher PIA, but the amount of the "spousal boost" (as well as the person's own SS retirement amount) will be reduced if benefits are claimed before full retirement age. Any time SS benefits are claimed before full retirement age, those benefits are permanently reduced.

If one spouse is entitled to a "spousal boost" from the other, the spousal amount will reach maximum at the recipient's full retirement age. Thus, if the lower earning partner's highest benefit will be as a spouse, then that spouse should not wait beyond their FRA to claim. If, instead, the lower earning partner's own SS benefit at age 70 is more than their spousal amount, waiting longer than FRA to claim could be prudent, depending on life expectancy.

So, as you can see, deciding when to claim Social Security benefits should consider many things, including financial need, work status if claiming before FRA, marital status and life expectancy. But it is your lifetime earnings which determines your SS retirement benefit amount, and it is how your FRA entitlements compare to each other that determines whether spousal benefits will be paid.

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 informational 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.



Pre-planning this year's vegetable garden

It's so exciting to think about planning my vegetable garden; all kinds of possibilities await.

Right after Christmas is usually when I get started. There are less paper catalogs arriving in the mail lately, but it is still my preferred method of shopping.

I like to peruse the pages, "starring" items and bending the corners of the pages so that I know to come back and consider whatever vegetable variety I think I must have. It's here in the early stages that I dream big.

I save the tailoring to later, once I've inventoried my seed stash and know exactly what I need.

But before I even get out the blue container that contains all of my seeds, I have some thinking to do. What did I have too much of last year? Too little? What consistently performs well in my garden? What doesn't do well? Am I ready to simplify by paring back or do I like the challenge of a big garden?

So many things to consider. What did I have too much of? Roasting peppers come to mind.

I roasted and roasted and roasted some more. In between roasting I was giving them away.

"Carmen" is grown specifically for that purpose, and last year I grew eight plants

more than normal. Maybe I'll cut back this year.

My "Picnic" peppers did well, too. They were great to eat right from your hand, and in yellow, orange and red, they certainly made my husband's salads colorful.

I was pretty well spot on with 12 total plants.

Sadly, I struggled with tomatoes last year. I didn't have anywhere near enough!

This was the year that the girls grew to love my roasted tomato sauce, too. I couldn't make very much of it because the tomatoes petered out early.

Oddly enough, I enjoyed tomatoes that self-sowed in different spots of my yard much later into the season. It gave me an idea that I ought to make a couple of indoor sowings. One the third week of March as always, and maybe another two weeks later.

Regardless, now that the sauce is a hit, I'm going to increase the number of transplants I grow, and definitely improve the soil where the tomatoes are planted. Something that probably went unthought of is that the buckets of rain we had last summer likely leached nitrogen from the soil.

I had best remember to fertilize at planting then supplement after the first month or so.

Another area where low nitrogen may have been a factor is with my winter squash. My harvest wasn't just disappointing, it was embarrassing!

The Garden Lady better figure this one out, especially with the squash habit she has. Soups, breads, lasagna, and more all require that amazing orange flesh; and if you don't grow your own it can certainly get expensive.

I definitely want to grow butternuts in abundance again.

On the flip side, I didn't need as many cabbage or broccoli plants. The sauerkraut is taking up lots of space in the fridge, but hasn't made its way into our bellies for some reason,

and as far as broccoli goes, I just can't seem to freeze it in a way that is palatable.

Someone told me to give up blanching it. Just cut it up and throw it in bags in the freezer. After all, it worked well for kale, and they are cousins, right?

I tried a stalk that way, then thawed it out and ate it the next day. I thought it worked great, so I froze the rest of my harvest that way.

A month or so later I steamed some up and it was the most inedible thing that ever popped out of my freezer. Silly me, if this was the preferred preservation method it would have been touted as such long before I hit the gardening scene.

Maybe I should grow three or four different varieties of broccoli with different days to harvest, so that the majority of the harvest can be enjoyed fresh over a longer period.

I always analyze if my vegetable garden is too big for my lifestyle these days. I really don't want to pare back because it is important that I grow a good amount of our family's food.

What I have to accept is that it may become a jungle. I will keep up until I can't anymore. Someday there will be time for more order, but these are not the days, at least for me, and that's okay.

As you begin planning this year's garden there are a lot of things to consider. But maybe for now, make a lot of "stars" and bend those corners.

Enjoy dreaming! Reality doesn't really have to play a part until the order is placed.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 31 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.



Sandhill cranes

Rick Hendra of Oakham took this photo of sandhill cranes foraging in a field on Stone's Road in Oakham.

In his email, he wrote, "I took this picture this morning (Sunday, Dec. 17) about halfway up Stone Road. Their call was so loud it startled me from 50 yards away. And they were large, but oddly colored."

The sandhill crane is a tall bird about 45 inches, gray colored with a dark red patch on the forehead and a black bill. They have staining of feathers on their back and tail caused by the iron rich soil on its beak when it preens feathers.

The immature crane lacks the red patch and has an orange bill. It also may have more rust colored feathers on the back and tail.

The sandhill crane summers on prairies and tundra and during winter feed on agricultural fields and roost in shallow water. For several years now, Hardwick had a pair of nesting sandhill cranes, who successfully raised chicks.

The female lays one to three olive eggs with dark marks in a mound like nest of marsh plants, grasses and weeds either placed on the ground or shallow water. Courtship displays are seen during migration and involve graceful jumps off the ground in a dancing manner.

Many years ago, Richard Jankauskas, saw some in a field on South Street in Barre. He commented about a pair jumping up and down and dancing.

Their voice is a low pitched "karoo, karoo, karoo." Rick Hendra mentioned their call in his email printed above.



Bird count

A Brimfield resident, who visits ponds in Warren, Brimfield, Holland and Sturbridge with his wife listed birds seen on Dec. 8. They included 210 Canada geese, 93 mallards, 70 hooded mergansers, three black ducks, two pied-billed grebes, one great blue heron, one bald eagle, two crows, one white-breasted nuthatch, two black-capped chickadees, three bluebirds, four house finches, one goldfinch, six white-throated sparrows, six dark-eyed juncos and three cardinals.

He also emailed in late November, "I checked the ponds in Warren and there were 14 hooded mergansers very actively feeding and a very cold looking great blue heron that looked like it was not enjoying the 36 degree temperature."

Christmas bird count

For over 120 years the Audubon Society has been doing a Christmas bird count and this year is no different. People can participate in an organized count or just do one on

their own in their backyard.

Decline in bird numbers

I received an email on Wednesday, Nov. 29 from a long time birder. He said, "[I] regularly feed them but have noticed a steep drop off of the number and type of birds since around September. Right now we have a loyal troop of blue jays and that's about it. Usually we have copious amounts of starlings, chickadees, grackles, crows, titmice, cardinals, juncos, etc."

He said he asked many people about this phenomena and "they have noticed the same thing but can't explain it either. We are all aware of some birds heading South but the sheer volume has dropped dramatically."

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.



Kissinger left complex foreign policy legacy

Possibly no one had more influence on American foreign policy in the late 20th century than Henry Kissinger, who died last month at age 100. In his long and active career, he advised presidents, carried out policies and initiatives, and was a highly visible figure around the world.

While it's early to pronounce judgment on his legacy, it's clear that his impact is deeply mixed. His accomplishments were both positive

and negative. He was respected and he was reviled.

Kissinger is the only person to have served as national security adviser and secretary of state at the same time, positions he held in the Nixon and Ford administrations. He was brilliant and secretive, and he wasn't much focused on the human cost of his policies.

He was interested in strategy, not values.

He showed little interest in democratic governance or transparency. A creature of the executive branch, he seemed to almost scorn the idea of three separate and coequal branches of government.

You sometimes got the impression he had contempt for Congress.

I was not close to Kissinger, but our paths did cross on foreign policy matters. I served in Congress, and we approached policy from different perspectives. Coincidentally, we were both connected to the commission that investigated the 9/11 attacks.



Courtesy of the Wells Library Lee Hamilton Photo Collection

Rep. Lee H. Hamilton is shown shaking hands with Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in this circa 1969 photo; with Rep. William Broomfield in the background.

Kissinger was the original pick to chair the group, and former Sen. George Mitchell was to be vice chair. Both stepped down because of

perceived conflicts of interest.

Former New Jersey Gov. Tom Kean chaired the 9/11 Commission, and I was vice chair.

Kissinger's view of the world, which he characterized as sober realism, may have been influenced by his background as a Jew who spent his childhood in Nazi Germany, before his family fled and settled in New York. He was a very talented man and, wherever he went, in academic, policy circles and government, he rose to power very quickly.

In the 1970s, Kissinger was widely praised for his diplomatic work. When he was named secretary of state in 1973, a Gallup Poll found him to be the most respected man in the world.

He engineered President Richard Nixon's historic visit to China in 1972, opening the door to improved U.S.-Chinese relations and ultimately reshaping the geopolitical map. He promoted détente with the Soviet Union, helping to reduce Cold War tensions.

Please see **HAMILTON**, page 6

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Send opinions to:
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Letter to the Editor
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The deadline for submissions is Monday at noon.

Turley Election Policy

This newspaper will print free self-submitted statements of candidacy only four weeks or more out from the election. All candidates running in both contested and uncontested races are asked to submit their statements to the editor to include only biographical and campaign platform details. Total word count for statements is limited to between 300-500 words maximum. Please include a photo. We will not publish any statements of candidacy inside the four weeks from election threshold. To publish any other campaign publicity during the race, please contact our advertising representatives. We also do not allow personal attacks against other candidates or political parties in statements of candidacy, nor do we publish for free any information about key endorsements or political fundraisers.

Letters to the editor of no more than 250 words from supporters endorsing specific candidates or discussing campaign issues are limited to three total per author during the election season. No election letters will appear in the final edition before the election. We reserve the right to edit all statements of candidacy and letters to the editor to meet our guidelines.

Year in Review 2023



Mass Central Rail Trail advocate Steven Hawk and Selectboard Vice-Chair Josh Kusnierz attend the official grand opening of the Gibbs Crossing section of rail trail.

WARE from page 1

Gagnon has also been a training officer and EMS and ALS coordinator.

His greatest accomplishment in his career, he said, has been serving the community and the people in town.

"I like being on the positive side of a crisis. We see people at the worst possible time of their lives, and they remember a friendly face," he said.

While the end of 2022 may have closed out a chapter for Gagnon, it opened a new one for his Deputy Fire Chief, Jim Martinez, who officially accepted the role of interim Fire Chief on Jan. 3.

"Martinez has been my righthand man since the day I came in," Gagnon said. "He has over 20 years on the job. He's been a very good friend and I think he'll do well there."

With Martinez's promotion, Lieutenant Jeremy Boulrice was elevated to the position of Deputy Chief, and Jeff Zacharie to Lieutenant.

Superintendent of schools

Following the interviews of three finalists for the position of Superintendent of Ware Public Schools, School Committee members selected Michael Lovato to replace outgoing Superintendent Dr. Marlene DiLeo.

School Committee members agreed that all three of the finalists, Lovato, Dr. William Collins and Dr. Robert Gerardi, were strong contenders for the position, but they all felt Lovato was the "best fit" for Ware Public Schools.

Lovato has 22 years of experience in education with a specialty in special education.

He has prior experience in administration as an assistant principal in Santa Fe public schools and as a superintendent of Questa Independent School. Lovato also served as New Mexico State Director of special education and acted as assistant superintendent for Chelsea Public Schools starting

in summer 2021.

Lovato is also a veteran with 13 years of military service.

When asked what kind of teaching and learning environment would be present in Ware Public Schools in the next three and five years as superintendent, Lovato said, "I'm going to add to what happens now."

He said he would identify what struggles and challenges are present within the Ware school district and specifically hone into seniors because there is an urgency there.

He added he is competitive, as well as data and goal driven, and would create a "turnaround plan" by talking with teachers and principals as well as support them by setting goals for the district that would "push us ahead of schools around us."

When asked why he would want to work in Ware during the interview process, Lovato said he grew up on a farm in a small town with about 16,000 people and at age 17 felt like he had to "get out."

"I can't tell you how important it is to come back to a small town," he said.

Lovato said another appeal for him is that Ware is a "military heavy" town, and it stood out to him because of how friendly everybody is.

Water/sewer assets

At a press conference held on March 16, Town Manager Stuart Beckley, along with Department of Public Works Director Geoff McAlmond and Selectboard Chair John Morrin, announced that the town was considering selling its water and wastewater assets.

Beckley said the town has issued a request for proposal to "look at the possibility of selling the assets" to a private agency.

Beckley said the Selectboard and McAlmond have been "deeply researching" the town's options "to support and provide, a safe and reliable water and sewer services to the residents of Ware."

According to a press release,



The Les and Terry Campbell Quabbin Visitor Center was officially renamed in June to honor the late Ware native and his wife.

"The required capital investments to address the Iron & Manganese quality issues that have plagued the Town's potable water system are extensive and have been well documented," and that the town's wastewater system "has been issued a more stringent National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit as of February 2023; requiring a significant amount of capital investment necessary to comply with discharge (effluent) limits into the Ware River."

Morrin said the cost for the town to construct a water filtration plant is a "huge amount," in addition to sewer upgrades.

McAlmond said other municipalities in the commonwealth have privatized their water and/or wastewater, including nearby Sturbridge and Charlton.

"A lot of utility infrastructures are aging out," he said.

Morrin agreed that the aging systems and regulations make it "almost impossible to run [systems] without huge fees."

Morrin said this was a big decision for the town, but "it was a long time coming."

"It's a big change," he said, but it brings the potential for lower rates if it's approved by voters.

The town received one RFP from Aquarion Water Company, the largest water utility in New England, and about the seventh largest in the U.S.

Nick LaChance, director of Business Development, accompanied by President Donald Morrissey and Vice-President of Engineering and Planning Daniel Lawrence, came before the Selectboard on Aug. 22 to review the offer.

LaChance said there were four significant areas to discuss, including the purchase price for the water and wastewater assets, at \$9.688 million; a rate freeze for at least 24 months upon the closing; retention of all employees; and transfer of all operational and compliance risks from the town to Aquarion.

With cash and other current assets, including paying off some long-term debt, pensions, other post-employment benefits and other liabilities, would bring the town's net proceeds to \$9.993 mil-

lion.

After Aquarion changed the scope of the RFP, the Selectboard voted to reject it at a Nov. 14 meeting, and discontinued any future talk of selling the assets.

Mary Lane Hospital

Late in the afternoon on June 25, the emergency room at Baystate Mary Lane Hospital became part of the movie set for "Birthrite", as people dressed in scrubs and uniforms walked into the building to set up for the scene being filmed.

"Birthrite" is directed by Ross Partridge of Los Angeles, California, who has appeared in the hit series "Stranger Things" as Lonnie Byers, the estranged father of Jonathan and Will Byers.

While the nearly vacant hospital may seem like an unlikely place to film a movie, it feels like home for many of the movie's cast and crew.

His wife, Jennifer Lafleur, who is also an actor, was born at Mary Lane Hospital, and grew up in Brookfield.

Also joining the cast is Lafleur's father, Roger and mother, Donna.

"I spent a lot of time visiting my



State Senate candidates Peter Durant and Jon Zlotnik participated in a candidates' forum hosted by the Ware Business and Civic Association.

dad here," Lafleur said of the hospital. She also worked as an EMT in Brookfield with her mother.

Roger spent over 30 years in the medical field, starting as a physician's assistant under Dr. Grace for 10 years before becoming a physician in the emergency department. He then moved to the urgent care department until it closed.

Roger, along with many familiar faces from Mary Lane Hospital, is starring as an extra in the film; his second acting role under his son-in-law's direction.

Donna works as an EMT in Brookfield and remembers spending a lot of time at the hospital.

"It's sad, but it brings back a lot of good memories," she said of returning to the emergency room.

Jean Comeau worked in Mary Lane Hospital's emergency room for 35 of her 50 years as a nurse, retiring before it closed.

"Roger and I were like brother and sister," Comeau said. "All of us worked well together."

Nurse Michelle Kurilova works in the operating room at Baystate Wing Hospital in Palmer, but looked back fondly on her days spent at Mary Lane Hospital.

"It's wonderful to have the opportunity to see it again," Kurilova said.

Emergency room nurse Marylynn Pratt echoed Kurilova's words, adding that working in the hospital created a deep, lifelong connection between the staff.

The fate of the hospital has been a topic of heated discussion since Baystate Health announced its decommissioning.

At a Nov. 15 meeting, Hospital Review Committee Chair Howard Trietsch gave an update about the timeline the remaining departments would follow before vacating at the close of the year.

He said the radiology department had left, and earlier that day the mammography and bone density department had also relocated

ed from the Ware site to Baystate Wing in Palmer. The remaining departments will leave by Dec. 11.

Michael Knapik, vice-president of Government and Community Relations at Baystate Health, said the decommissioning continues to be on schedule, and that Baystate has a signed a nonbinding letter of intent with Westmass Area Development Corporation.

Knapik also told the committee that Baystate Health will be selling its external laboratories to Labcorp.

President and CEO of Westmass Area Development Corporation Jeff Daley said Atlas Engineering will be taking core samples of the soil for phase two of the site assessment. They will be testing the whole campus.

Soil samples will be tested with results available in December.

Daley said every building in the hospital complex is "loaded with asbestos."

"Any reuse of any building, it would need significant upgrades...I was surprised Davis was a loaded as it was. It has pages and pages [of asbestos findings]," he said. "Every window, wall, ceiling, has asbestos."

Abating this asbestos would cost millions of dollars, he said.

Daley said in meeting with Baystate Health earlier that same day, he told them in order for Westmass Area Development Corporation to take over the property, it cannot have any deed restrictions placed on it.

Knapik said there are no deed restrictions on the property, and he said he has never heard anything internally at Baystate Health suggesting a restriction be placed on the deed, to prevent other medical/health care facilities from reusing the site.

Residents at the meeting said hearing this information was "reassuring."

Please see **WARE**, page 6



Shown from left are Dr. Roger Lafleur, nurses Michelle Kurilova and Marylynn Pratt and David Pratt. The former Baystate Mary Lane Hospital staff were part of the cast of a movie being filmed at the hospital called "Birthrite".



A food pantry was opened at All Saints Church earlier this year and it is staffed by the Knights of Columbus and volunteers.

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An Americans with Disabilities Act Commission was formed and set to work to identify areas of need in town to improve accessibility.

WARE from page 5

Knapik said he was not aware of any health care facility that was interested in the site, and Daley said larger facilities from Boston and Connecticut, aren't coming to Ware.

Daley encouraged anyone who had ideas about a medical/health care facility interested in the site, to contact him.

"There's not likely a business that does medical," Daley said. "There's not a market for it in Ware."

Daley said in addition to asbestos, the buildings on the site pose other challenges for redevelop-

ment, including having the HVAC system and utilities connect from one building to the next, instead of having separate systems.

Daley said the easiest decision about the buildings on the site would be to remove all of them and start fresh, but it's not something he takes lightly or would like to do.

"I haven't convinced myself to do that yet," he said. But "right now, I don't have enough data to say it's worth saving buildings."

Blessing of the Swords

For the first time ever, a Procession of Masters of the Fourth Degree and "Blessing of the Swords" were held together,

Year in Review 2023



The town hosted its first ever Wreaths Across America ceremony on Dec. 16.

followed by a luncheon with Honor Guard Certifications.

The Fourth Degree is the high-

est degree a member of the Knights of Columbus can reach, and its focus is on patriotism and love of country. The Fourth Degree was approved in 1900 and as of 2012, there were 327,415 Fourth Degree Knights.

Representing 10 Knights of Columbus assemblies, 54 members of the Honor Guard lined the center aisle of the sanctuary to have District Friar Rev. Piotr Pawlus, the Church's pastor, bless their swords with holy water.

"This is the first time in Massachusetts' history doing this," Stanley Ciukaj, Master of the Fourth Degree, Massachusetts Knights of Columbus said.

Pawlus gave a sermon about being a "living stone" as referenced in the Bible in the book of Peter.

Playgrounds and pool

Parks Commissioners reviewed and selected a pool design to replace the Reed Municipal Pool. The cost to replace the pool and make improvements to the parking lot is estimated at over \$3 million and would need to be approved by voters at town meeting.

This price will be higher with the inclusion of bathhouse renovations, in order to meet accessibility requirements.

A spray deck is also included in the design, and would be located near the Beauregard Memorial Park.

New playground equipment was installed at Grenville Park, as well as Stanley M. Koziol Elementary School.

"A lot has been replaced and updated," said Principal Pamela Iwasinski of the SMK playground.

For the kindergarten-third grade playground, new additions include an additional swing set, monkey bars, three new slides, a saucer swing and new obstacle course.

Trails

In May, a group of canoers and kayakers took to the Ware River for an 8.5-mile paddle from Robbins Road to Bennett Street in Palmer.

This event was the opening day paddle for the Chicopee 4Rivers Watershed Council, and also the inaugural launch for the new section of Blue Trail, the Lower Ware River Blue Trail.

C4R Team Coordinator Keith Davies along with Events Coordinator Jim Emerson talk



Community members gathered to discuss the Baystate Mary Lane Hospital property.



The Friends of the Town Hall and the town worked to refinish the floors of the Main Street building.



Volunteers worked to spread wood chips at the updated playground at Grenville Park.

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HAMILTON from page 4

In the Middle East, his tireless shuttle diplomacy improved relations between Israel and its neighbors. These were real accomplishments.

Kissinger shared the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize for negotiating the agreement that ended the Vietnam War. His critics found that highly ironic.

During the war, Kissinger orchestrated the U.S. bombing and invasion of Cambodia, which expanded the conflict and fueled a civil war that eventually brought

the Khmer Rouge to power, resulting in up to three million deaths. The Cambodia disaster was Exhibit No. 1 for critics who accused Kissinger of war crimes, but he was also tied to a brutal military coup in Chile, Indonesia's bloody invasion of East Timor, a violent civil war in East Pakistan and other foreign policy disasters.

Kissinger later had a lucrative career in consulting. He clearly enjoyed being a celebrity, rubbing elbows with rich and powerful people and being photographed with glamorous women.

He became a great figure on

the social circuit in Washington. Getting Kissinger to attend your dinner was a big achievement.

Henry Kissinger left quite a stamp on American foreign policy. He was a master of developing strategy and exercising power.

But American greatness isn't just about using force and gaining advantage. It also relies on our faith in democratic governance and our belief in human rights and the dignity of all people.

There's a place for sober realism, but American foreign policy should be grounded in our values.

Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar at the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice at the IU O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

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The annual town Easter egg hunt was held at Memorial Park in Gilbertville.

HARDWICK from page 1

at the property known as Great Meadowbrook Farm and located at 228 Barre Road?"

The answer to that question was no, with 831 against it and 313 in favor. Four of the ballots turned in were left blank.

Signs went back up in July, when Brian Oliver, vice-president of Casella, one of the largest landfill operators in the northeast, presented a project proposal to the Select Board to reopen and expand the old landfill on Patrill Hollow Road.

If approved, this project to not only reopen the town's landfill, but expand it by 38 acres onto adjacent David G. Roach & Sons gravel pit.

Casella had previously proposed reopening the landfill years ago, Oliver said, but this project would be significantly smaller, totaling 48 acres. Of that, 10 acres overlay the old landfill.

Reopening and expanding the landfill could provide the town and the state some "much needed disposal capacity," he said.

Oliver said the proposed landfill would accept 350,000 tons of municipal solid waste and construction and demolition waste a year. David G. Roach & Sons will be involved with the landfill operations.

Oliver said Casella would enter into a Host Community Agreement with the town, which includes a host fee payment of \$6 per ton, or approximately \$2.1 million a year.

"We would have to have an HCA for the life of the landfill," Oliver said, which is about 13 years.

The Select Board acknowledged receipt of a draft HCA from Casella at its Sept. 25 meeting.

Casella also expects to pay the town an additional \$500,000 annually in leachate delivery payments for use of the Gilbertville Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Oliver said a public forum will be held at a future date to allow for feedback from residents.

In order for the project to move forward, voters would need to decide on the relocation and termination of Patrill Hollow Road; a bylaw amendment to increase the maximum allowable structure height; rezoning of the landfill property; and a zoning amendment to permit the landfill in the industrial district.

Dam removal

Representatives from MassWildlife were joined by engineers from Tighe & Bond in November, to discuss the Patrill Hollow Dam removal, located within Muddy Brook Wildlife Management Area.

Patrill Hollow Dam is a 13-foot high, 190-foot long earthen embankment structure that impounds Muddy Brook and has a primary and auxiliary concrete spillway. The dam is located within the 1,937-acre Muddy Brookfield WMA and holds about 75 acre-feet of water.

Removal of the dam is expected to decrease stream temperatures and restore natural flow and habi-

tat, benefiting many types of fish.

The Patrill Hollow Dam is considered a "low hazard dam" and is of intermediate size. The dam is considered "unsafe" according to conditions defined by state legislation.

The dam was originally built by the Mixer family prior to the 1940s, and it was potentially used to power a sawmill or a forge. The Mixer family owned the land prior to selling it to MassWildlife.

The dam removal project would also include the removal of an old boathouse, which is submerged in the pond.

MassWildlife and Tighe & Bond are still in the early stages of the Patrill Holl Dam removal process, and will need to go through various permitting considerations at a state and local level.

Now through the winter, field work and data collection will continue, and design work will be developed. Public hearings will be held in the spring and summer of 2024, with construction expected to start in the spring of 2025.

Stone Church deed

On Jan. 14, Gloria Judd, a member of the Trinitarian Congregational Church, signed a quitclaim deed transferring ownership of the Stone Church to the Friends group.

The Stone Church has been owned by Trinitarian Congregational Church since it was built, FOSC President Judy Edington said.

"When we began to take on the mission of preserving the church, and to broaden the usage so it would become more part of the community, we worked closely with Trinitarian Congregational Church and developed an understanding about use," she said.

Edington said the FOSC welcomes the Tri-Parish Community Church (of which Trinitarian Congregational Church is a member) to continue using the Stone Church as they have been all along.

"In a way it's a big step," Edington said of the deed transfer. "It's a responsibility for the FOSC but we have been doing this for a while now, we've been stewards of the building for some time...now we also have responsibility and the authority of ownership."

The FOSC continue to offer a full slate of musical performances and community events year round.

Municipal building repairs

Town Administrator Nicole Parker said because of more water damage caused by the heating system, all of the walls had to come down in the Board of Health/Conservation Office as well as the entire wood floor of the playgroup room.

There was also a small amount of mold found in the Treasurer and Collector's office.

Replacing the boiler would cost approximately one million dollars.

In April, Parker announced that the electric vehicle chargers at the Municipal Building were broken, and that she was working with Green Communities about poten-

Year in Review 2023



Hardwick Elementary School fifth grader Maggie Ward shows her award-winning poster with art teacher Tamra Cook. Ward placed third in the commonwealth for the 2023 Massachusetts Arbor Day poster contest.

tially obtaining a grant to replace or repair the charger as it was initially acquired through a Green Communities grant.

A safety shutoff has been installed on the boiler to prevent pressure from building up, and three new EV charging stations have been installed.

Board of Health

The Board of Selectmen received notice from Francis Dagle, health and human services director of the Leicester Regional Public Health Coalition, that they will terminate services to the town on Jan. 31.

Dagle said the coalition will transfer all files to the town's administration, and remove all mention of the town from their website and asked the town to do the same after termination.

In his email, Dagle said the coalition will consider working with the town in the future, if the Board of Health's chair were to change.

At a following meeting Parker announced that the Board of Health had hired another agent to use on an "as-needed" basis.

In July, members of the Board of Health, Judith Kohn, Paul Mailhot and Patricia Tinker, attended the Select Board meeting to give an update on the regional agreement with the Leicester Regional Public Health Coalition.

Kohn said Leicester had asked for a newly elected person on the Board of Health to engage with them, and the Board selected Ernest Warburton.

Mailhot said the Board has been in communication with Leicester about their terms, and they were supposed to receive a contract from Leicester to review, but did not. He expressed concern about communication between Leicester and the Board.

Kohn said the Board of Health wants to work with Leicester, but agreed that communication has been an issue.

Land conservancy and recreation

The Conservation Commission saw the culmination of years of work to bring Ware River Park in Gilbertville to reality. Ware River Park, spans from the gazebo at New Furnace Landing to the area across from St. Aloysius Cemetery on Lower Road (known as the Thompson tract).

Ware River Park started as the Conservation Commission's "COVID project," three years ago, when Bottomley and Conservation Commission Chair William Zinni sat outside on a deck and worked on a plan for the 10-acre parcel.

Volunteer efforts at Ware River Park continued following its grand opening, with work being done to repair and improve the gazebo at New Furnace Landing.

The gazebo was built in 1999 by former Hardwick Post & Beam owner Ridge Shinn, using a grant secured by the East Quabbin Land Trust to develop the parcel of land. The gazebo provides breathtaking views of the Ware River and is a popular spot for picnickers and

Please see **HARDWICK**, page 8



Research indicates that this 1789 powder horn belonged to early Hardwick resident Joseph Allen. He was a church deacon, a housewright, a captain of militia, selectman, assessor, clerk and treasurer.



Conservation Commission Vice-Chair Rebecca Bottomley cuts the ribbon at the official grand opening of the Mass Central Rail Trail at Ware River Park in Gilbertville. Joining her are Conservation Commission Chair William Zinni (third from right), Clerk Peggy Baxter (second from right), Conservation Commission member Neil Halin (right), along with members of Brown's Trucking & Excavating, Inc. and the Highway Department.



Classic Christmas on the Common was held the Sunday following Thanksgiving, with a record number of participants.



This year's Hardwick Community Fair was dedicated to the memory of Bob Sanderson. Shown are Bob's family members, including his wife, children and grandchildren.

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Year in Review 2023



Hardwick Elementary School families get ready to roll their pumpkins down the hill for a prize.

HARDWICK from page 7

those passing through town. Efforts to fight the growth of invasive aquatic plants at Hardwick Pond have begun to pay off, with strategic treatments showing a noticeable improvement in the ecological health of the pond.

The Hardwick Pond Preservation Association has contracted with SOLitude Lake Management to treat the Hardwick Pond in an effort to combat ongoing invasive weeds.

The East Quabbin Land Trust continued to offer a number of programs helping to connect people of all ages to the natural world around them.

In February, EQLT volunteer Mark Mattson led a "Lost in the Woods" program for young children, helping them to navigate their way out of potentially dangerous situations.

EQLT also held a woodcock walk off Creamery Road in April, and hosted several work days to clean up the site of the former music camp off Turkey Street.

The former music camp is part of a "rewilding" project EQLT is facilitating, which included removing the dilapidated buildings and removing refuse.

To celebrate this accomplishment, EQLT hosted its annual spring paddle on Hardwick Pond, launching from the beach of the music camp property.

Keeping history alive

This year, the Hardwick Community Fair was dedicated to the memory of longtime volunteer, Robert "Bob" Sanderson. A volunteer for over 30 years, Bob was involved with the Lumberjack Contest on Friday nights, and even

held the record in the cross-cut competition with his son, Eric.

Bob's wife Gina Sanderson, their children and grandchildren, all gathered by the flagpole on the Common to accept the honor in his memory, and receive a citation from the House of Representatives from state Rep. Donnie Berthiaume.

Sanderson said nothing made her husband happier than stopping to talk to friends and neighbors at the Fair, and that he was proud to "pass the torch" for the Lumberjack Contest on to their children.

Former state Sen. Anne Gobi said family tradition is what the Hardwick Community Fair is all about.

"Nothing says 'small town America' like the Hardwick Fair," she said.

The Hardwick Historical Society continues to offer programs and open its museum to share the town's rich history.

This spring, members of the Hardwick Historical Society and friends gathered in the Town House to unveil the newest addition to the museum's collection, an 18th century powder horn with direct ties to the early days of the town.

Belchertown resident and collector Don Madden shared the story of how he first discovered the powder horn, and how he eventually came to own it.

The powder horn is said to have come from a house located between the common and Gilbertville before it ended up in the Easthampton antique shop where Kasinski purchased it from.

Carved with the initials "J.A." (with the "J" looking like an "I"), and decorated with a heart, deer,



FILE PHOTOS

Hardwick Fire Chief Raymond Walker helps run the auction at the First Alarm fundraiser.

turtles, shad fish and more, the powder horn is dated "December 24, 1789." With the owner's initials are carved the words "Hardwick," along with "Liberty."

The powder horn is believed to belong to Joseph Allen, an early settler of the town who moved here in 1736.

"He was a prominent citizen and long-time deacon of the church," Historical Society Curator Emily Bancroft noted in her research detailing the history of the powder horn.

The year 1789 was significant for Allen, as his wife Mercy died in March of that year; a new minister was ordained at his church; and he remarried in August.

Bancroft noted that Allen began writing a book titled, "Being Dead, Yet Speaketh" in which he referenced that in 1789 he was the last of the original members who organized the church in 1736.

Perhaps the most significant carving found on the powder horn is an image of Allen's beloved church, which used to stand where the First Universalist Church is today.

This carving is the only known image of the church, which was torn down and replaced by the church at the corner of Ruggles Hill Road that overlooks the common.



Fire Chief Raymond Walker leads Santa Claus through town for the last time before his Dec. 25 retirement.

She added she keeps an updated list of classmates she can contact via mail, phone, or social media. "It's important to stay with your past," said Gage.

She added the graduating class only had about 30 students and were relatively close.

In addition to the 13 class members in attendance, several spouses and even the class teacher, Lucille Canavan, shared the opportunity to remember the class of 1958.

Fifth grade students at Hardwick Elementary School, under the guidance of teacher Elecia Bray raised nearly 200 brook trout from egg to fry, as part of a program organized by Dan Marchant, manager of the Roger Reed Hatchery in Palmer, and Cameron Young, hatchery technician.

With the tank set up in the entryway of the school, students could track the trout's growth each

day as they walked by.

At the end of May, the fish were ready to be released, and with the help of Police Chief James Ayotte and Lieutenant Kevin Landine, they were transported by bucket to the Ware River. Students walked from the school while Ayotte drove the heavy buckets in his truck.

Each fifth grader was able to release a few fish into their new habitat, helping to keep the waterways alive and well.

Retirements

Several longtime town employees have reached their retirement this year, including Officer Edward Pollock, who served on the Police Department for 21 years.

Fire Chief Raymond Walker retired from his position on Dec. 25, with Deputy Chief Joshua Pease selected to serve as interim Fire Chief.

Madden said he is happy with his decision to return the powder horn to Hardwick, just a stone's throw from where its owner is buried in the cemetery on the other side of the Town House.

"It should go back here. I'm glad to see it come home," he said.

School days

Hardwick High School's Class of 1958 gathered to share each other's company and reflect on memories of their youth during their 65th reunion celebrated at Hardwick Crossing Country Club.

Class of 1958 graduate Mary Gage was in charge of organizing the event, including the outreach.



Runners take off at the East Quabbin Land Trust's Station Loop Ramble.



Turley Photos by Ryan Drago

Recovery Center of Hope gathered for a fun holiday event for hot drinks, pastries and fellowship.

CENTER from page 1

Following their holiday gathering the Recovery Center of Hope had their All Recovery meeting.

Julie Lutz of Recovery Center of Hope was keeping busy in her kitchen making many delicious snacks and refreshments for her guests. Offering fruit cups, oranges, coffee, donuts, muffins and cupcakes were all a part of their holiday warm up party.

The idea of the Warm Up for the Holidays was originally thought of around Thanksgiving as the Recovery Center of Hope wanted to offer an event for those in recovery during the holiday season. The Recovery Center of Hope plans on offering this even more often during the holidays as it brings happiness during the holidays.

Peer Supporter Erika Bentley enjoyed setting up the Warm Up for the Holidays event. It is an opportunity to get to know your community members and be aware

that the Recovery Center of Hope is a welcoming and supportive atmosphere.

"Holidays are a good time to come together, especially for those in recovery," said Bentley.

Guests had a lot of fun gathering for the holidays as the Recovery Center of Hope had plenty of holiday cheer to go around. Holiday classics were played in the background as guests enjoyed the refreshments provided.

Keeping the party jolly and in the holiday spirit, one of the guests at Recovery Center of Hope was the Christmas Elf Kellyann. In a cool red Christmas sweater, the Christmas Elf brought laughter and joy as she enjoyed time with her friends.

Warm Up for the Holidays is now a new tradition to enjoy at the Recovery Center of Hope.

The Recovery Center of Hope is located at 52 Main St. Join them Monday through Friday for All Recovery meetings at 11:30



Donuts, coffee, fruit bowls and fellowship were offered during Warm Up for the Holidays at Recovery Center of Hope in Ware.

a.m. On Fridays at 10:30 a.m., the Recovery Center of Hope offers flapjacks during their food and fellowship prior to their All Recovery meeting.

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Bogey Lanes hosts WNECA doubles tournament

Light the Night contest winners announced

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

EAST BROOKFIELD – The Western New England Candlepin Tour continued at Bogey Lanes for a doubles tournament.

The best candlepin bowlers in the western New England region had the opportunity to partner up as the 2023-2024 season rolled on for the WNECA. Two shifts were available on both Saturday, Dec. 1 and Sunday, Dec. 2 as the tournament drew a big turnout.

For each shift, a doubles team

bowled a total of three games and many bowlers chose to bowl again on a separate shift.

After a total of four shifts bowled over one weekend, the WNECA have declared winners of the Bogey doubles. In first place, the team of Chris LaFreniere and Aaron Fontaine won Bogey doubles.

LaFreniere of Suffield, Connecticut bowled another shift and had a sensational day scoring 406 for three games. His scores consisted of 128, 151, and 127. LaFreniere and Fontaine along with their team handicap had a

total of 860 to finish in first place. In second place, just five pins behind, the team of Allie Atwell and Devon Griswold scored 855.

In third place, James Nester and Brandon Martins finished with 822. Nester bowled 165 in one of his games during the first shift on Saturday, Dec. 2.

The WNECA paid the top nine teams and have posted the results and standings on their Facebook page. Tournament directors Elaine and Paul Barnard want to thank Dan Luksha and Bogey Lanes for hosting the great event.

For many bowlers in the west-

ern part of the region it was a long drive. However, the turnout was significantly supported by a great number of entries in the doubles tournament.

The next WNECA tour stop will be in January at Adams Turn Hall in Adams. The event will be a singles tournament consisting of three games and your handicap. There will be a total of four shifts over the weekend of Jan. 6-7.

To learn more about the Western New England Candlepin Association or to view updates, visit their Facebook page by searching WNECA.

WARREN – The Parks and Recreation Department announced the winners of this year's Light the Night holiday decorating contest.

First place went to 144 Quaboag St.; second place, 1213 Reed St.; and third place, 321 Brimfield Road. The Best

of Quaboag went to the Class of 2030 (grade six).

Random prize winners were 732 Old West Warren Road, 719 Keys Road, 20 East Road, 122 East Road, Quaboag Class of 2027 (grade nine) and Quaboag Class of 2024 (grade 12).



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Training provided courtesy of the following organizations:





File Photos
Stephen Duff, Quaboag Regional School District's newest superintendent, participated in Community Reading Day at Warren Community Elementary School.

WARREN from page 1

"We have been diligently working on those matters since that inspection," Town Administrator James Ferrera told the Board of Selectmen at a July 13 meeting.

Some of the corrections needed included wiring illuminated exit signs over the doors.

The electrician also addressed another corrective order, which involved there being too many plugs and a lack of receptacles. Ferrera said they were able to eliminate the use of surge protectors and can plug directly into outlets.

The door into the new conference room was also replaced, even though it wasn't noted in the report as a corrective action.

A stair railing's height and length were also adjusted, and a new step was put in, as it had a hairline crack. The electrical service to the building was also replaced.

Now, everything in the Police Station is connected to the generator. A commercial-grade dehumidifier was also connected in the basement.

At the annual town meeting, voters approved the transfer of \$30,000 from free cash to pay for office/building improvements to the Shepard Municipal Building and the Senior Center. This includes the costs of flooring, upgraded furniture, painting and more.

Repairs to the Senior Center included vinyl siding to the front and sides of the building, adding insulation to the front, replacing gutters with seamless gutters

Year in Review 2023



Bryce Douglas and Grayson Patchkofsky, Warren Fire Department's newest Junior Firefighters, center, were joined by Firefighter/EMT Shawn Boulette, state Rep. Todd Smola, Lieutenant P.J. Russell, Firefighter/EMT Matthew Bonneau and Fire Chief Adam Lavoie.

and scraping and repainting painted areas, as well as power washing.

Ferrera said electrical work was also completed at the Senior Center, including emergency exit signs, wiring of exterior lighting, and light switches inside of the building that were not functional.

At the fall special town meeting, voters approved the allocation of an additional \$18,000 for building maintenance and improvement for the Shepard Municipal Building, Town Hall and Council on Aging.

At a July 6 Board of Selectmen's meeting, Ferrera

presented a contract from Tecton Architects for the phase one financial feasibility study to potentially build a complex.

Up to three sites will be assessed for the potential to be developed as a location for a public safety/municipal complex. Included in the proposal is accommodation for future growth at the public safety/municipal complex, which would allow for greater use of the space, Ferrera said.

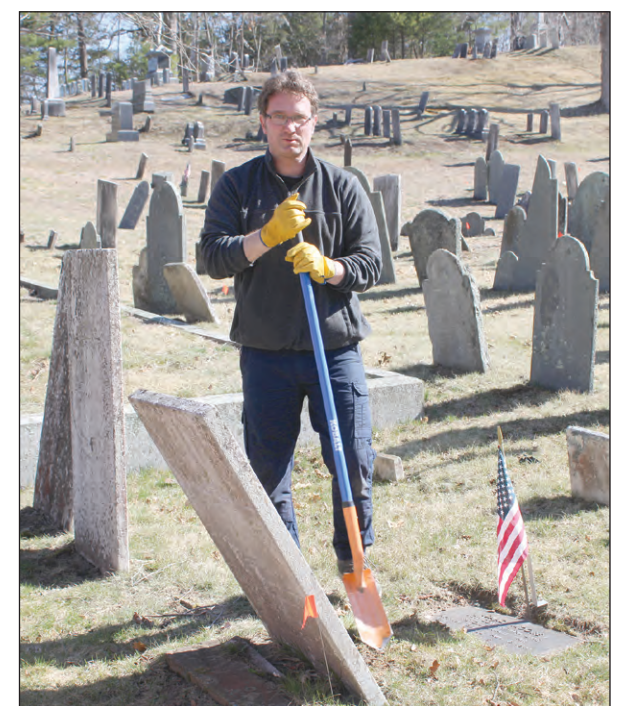
Tecton Architects will do preliminary schematics including conceptual designs.



Toto the Tornado Kitten visited with Warren Public Library's summer reading participants. Sadly, Toto's owner and book author Jonathan Hall announced the beloved cat's passing just before Thanksgiving.



Students finish folding the American flag for retirement during the Veterans Day ceremony and Quaboag Alumni Veterans Wall induction.



Kai Nalenz, founder and president of Gravestone Services of New England, LLC, reset gravestones in the founder's section of Pine Grove Cemetery.

They will also assemble a comprehensive analysis of the financial impact of such a project.

The cost of this study would be paid for with a \$40,000 grant along with \$35,600 from American Rescue Plan Act funds. The study should be completed within six months.

Board of Selectmen Chair David Dufresne said the current Police Station is "riddled with health risks," and the Fire Department building is really just a garage with an office attached.

"They don't have enough room to store their equipment," Dufresne said of the town's two fire stations.

At a Sept. 21 Board of Selectmen's meeting, Ferrera said he met with Tecton representatives along with Police Chief Gerald Millette and Fire Chief Adam Lavoie. The town would need 19,125 square feet of space in order to have the space needs it currently has, in addition to a 30% adjustment for growth.

Ferrera said square footage adds up, and with it the cost. But they also need to leave room for future growth in the event the town's population grows. He said they scaled back the Police Department size from almost 12,000 square feet to around 9,000 square feet.

He said the municipal office building would require about 1.75 acres of land and the public safety building around 1.1 acres. He said Tecton was reluctant to design a two story building, due to Americans with Disabilities Act requirements and the need for elevators.

Ferrera said Tecton is currently looking at the possibility of constructing these buildings at the site near the Highway barn.

Tecton Architects will meet with the Board of Selectmen to discuss the results of the financial feasibility study for a public safety complex at the Jan. 11 meeting at 6 p.m.

Water treatment plant

The Warren Water District, its Board of Commissioners, government officials and members of the community celebrated a major accomplishment in providing clean water to residents.

On June 10, the newly constructed Comins Pond Wells Water Treatment Plant located at the end of Comins Pond Road, was dedicated at a ribbon-cutting ceremony, followed by an open house.

Even though the water treatment plant has been online since May 9, the Commissioners and Water District staff wanted to celebrate not only its completion, but also those who have worked diligently over the years to see this dream become reality, including the late Armand Dimo and Tom Couture.

The building is dedicated to Dimo and Couture, both of whom were persistent and passionate in their quest to give residents the quality water they deserve.

Inside the 3,600 square foot metal building, the water treatment plant filters iron and manganese from two gravel-packed groundwater wells that are located at the southern end of Comins Pond Road.

The maximum withdrawal rate of Well 1 is 300 gallons per minute and Well 2 is 150 gallons per minute. Raw water from the two wells enters the water treatment plant and is pretreated with the chemicals sodium hypochlorite (chlorine) and potassium hydroxide for oxidation and pH control.



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Indians fall at Granby



Finn McFaul looks for an opening to shoot.



Mia DiRienzo goes after a loose ball.



Madisyn Slattery gets ready to go for a layup.

WARE – The Ware High School girls basketball suffered a loss 38-31 at Granby High School. The Indians trailed by just two after one quarter. But the Indians only managed one basket in the second frame and fell further behind. Ware was led by Emily McGrail with 11 points. Finn McFaul added eight points in the defeat. The Indians are 2-3 and face Hopkins Academy Jan. 2 at 7 p.m.



Amelia Orszulak takes a free throw.



Emily McGrail goes for a shot under pressure.



Bruno Medionero gets the leverage.

Forfeits help lead Pioneers to win



William Burke locks up in his match.

PALMER – Last Wednesday night, there were few matches, but Pathfinder was able to pick up the 41-30 win over visiting Frontier Regional. Taran Prak got a big win at 113 pounds with a technical fall by a 16-1 score. Pathfinder faced Northampton earlier this week. The Pioneers head to Mohawk on Jan. 3 at 7 p.m.



Gustavo Vega tries to break down his opponent.



Rickey Jenoure takes a hook shot.



Nick Whitelaw hits a jumper from the top of the key.



Jacoby Dilling brings in the layup.



Quinn Geary goes for a three-point shot.



Kyle Clark with a jump shot over the defenders.



Max Alicnegenia tries to turn over his opponent.



Taran Prak gets the tackle takedown.

Quabbin falls to Maynard at home

BARRE – Last Friday night, Quabbin boys basketball was defeated by Maynard 59-41. In the defeat, Quinn Geary had 11 points while Kyle Clark and Frederick Jenoure had eight points each. The Panthers are 2-3 heading into the holiday break.

AMHERST HOCKEY PERFECT TO START SEASON

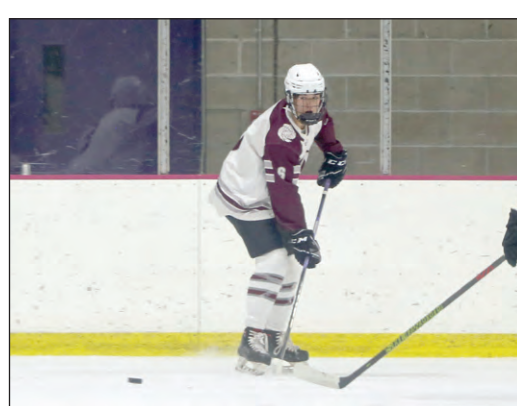


Sawyer Ferro makes his way up the ice.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com



Liam Flynn looks to flick the puck up the ice.



Ethan Nompleggi sends a backhand pass away.



Josh Goodhind chases down the puck.

AMHERST – Last Monday night, Amherst hockey welcomed Chicopee to Orr Rink on the campus of Amherst College. The Hurricanes got a great offensive effort in a 6-1 win to improve to 4-0 for the season. Jack Dyjack had two goals and Benjamin

Remensnyder also added a pair of goals. Pathfinder's Ethan Nompleggi had a pair of assists in the matchup. Amherst has vacation week matchups with Taconic and on Saturday, Dec. 30 against Agawam at Olympia Ice Center at 6:30 p.m.

sports

Candlepin League News

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

Tuesday Night Commercial Elks League

PALMER – It was a night of celebration as the Commercial Elks League participated in a fun night and Christmas party.

The Standings as of Dec. 19 shows Acres as the #1 seed with a record of 12-4. Life is Good, who held the #1 spot since the start of round two is now the #2 seed with a record of 11-5.

The Champs R Here and Team BK are tied for third place with a 10-6 record. Compression stands in fifth place, Blue B's in sixth place and Last in Line in seventh place.

In celebration of the holiday season, the Commercial Elks took a break from regular league play and had a fun night. The league voted a week earlier to decide what kind of bowling formatted game they want

to play during their Christmas party. The popular went to random draw doubles.

Each bowler would bowl a total of two games and would bowl with a fellow league bowler. Prize money was paid out to the top three finishers. After a fun tournament on the lanes, the league moved to the dining hall and enjoyed a catered meal and dessert.

Following their meal, the league bowlers participated in a 50/50 raffle for a chance to win some neat prizes and early holiday gifts. The league gave a round of applause to league president Steve Manolakis and treasurer Dino Tessicini for putting on a great party for the league.

The Tuesday Night Commercial Elks will return to Diamond Junction Bowling Lanes for regular league play the first Tuesday of 2024, Jan. 2.



Thursday Night Mixed League

The Thursday Night Mixed League had a fun night instead of regular league play to celebrate the holidays with each other.

Many bowlers brought in homemade meals and desserts to enjoy while participating in fun bowling games. The games included one ball, two ball and a regular game of candlepin bowling.

The standings as of Dec. 14 have Team Six as the #1 seed with a record of 34-22. In second place is Team One at 31.5 wins and 24.5 losses. Team Three is in third, Team Two is in fourth, Team Five in fifth and Team Four in sixth.

The Thursday Night Mixed League wishes everyone a safe and happy holiday season and will return to regular league play on Thursday, Dec. 28.

Visit Diamond Junction Bowling Lanes at 1446 North Main St. The alleys can be reached by calling 413-289-0013.

Panthers pick up fourth win

BARRE – After just barely edging into the state tournament last year, Quabbin is almost halfway to a tournament berth and the calendar has not changed to 2024.

Last Friday night, Quabbin girls basketball defeated Maynard 36-29.

It was a bit of a lower-scoring affair, but the Quabbin defense played excellent throughout the matchup. Their strength was early on, limiting host Maynard to just two points in the opening frame. The Panthers held the Tigers to just six points in the third, holding strong off the break as well.

For Quabbin, Meaghan Doyle had 12 points to lead the team. Riley Bassett and Mia Ducos had seven points each.



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Turleysports

Athlete of the Month

EMILY MCGRAIL

Ware High School

Off to a great start with Ware girls basketball this season, McGrail led the Indians with 11 points in a matchup with Granby on Dec. 19.

To nominate someone for Athlete of the Week, contact Managing Sports Editor Gregory A. Scibelli at 413-283-8393 ext. 258 or send an e-mail to gscibelli@turley.com.

Granite State announces Pro Stock Series 2024 schedule

WALPOLE, N.H. – Granite State Pro Stock Series officials announced Friday the schedule of events for the 2024 racing season. The series slate includes a nine-race championship battle spread from May to October, with the championship event taking place at Lee USA Speedway's Octoberfest weekend.

The Granite State Pro Stock Series will visit five different tracks in 2024: Lee, Star Speedway, Claremont Motorsports Park, Riverside Speedway and Speedway 95. The schedule begins with the annual 100-lap spring event at Star Speedway in Epping, New Hampshire, this year on Saturday, May 4 with a Friday night practice on May 3. From there, teams will roll to Claremont Motorsports Park for the

Memorial Day weekend, with a main event set for Sunday, May 26.

On Saturday, June 8, the series will make the first of two visits to Lee USA Speedway. That will be followed by the first of two races at Hermon, Maine's Speedway 95 on Saturday, June 16. After a few weeks off, the schedule continues with a return to Claremont for Independence Day weekend on Friday, July 5 with a special event.

The high-banks of Hudson International Speedway will host the series again on Sunday, July 14, while Riverside Speedway returns to the schedule with an event on Saturday, August 10. The final two events of the year will take place at Speedway 95 on Sunday, September 15 and Lee's Octoberfest weekend,

where the champion will be decided, on Saturday and Sunday, October 5-6.

"Our 2024 schedule is shaping up to be one of the best in our history," Mike Parks, President of the Granite State Pro Stock Series, said. "Return trips to places like Star, Speedway 95, Lee USA and Riverside, mixed with us getting back on the high-banks of Hudson, will produce an exciting championship battle for fans to follow during the summer of 2024."

Additional information regarding the 2024 Granite State Pro Stock Series schedule including event registrations, rules and more will be available soon. For the latest news, fans and teams are encouraged to visit gspss.net and follow the series on social media.

2024 Granite State Pro Stock Series Schedule

Saturday, May 4 - Star Speedway - Epping, N.H.

Sunday, May 26 - Claremont Motorsports Park - Claremont, N.H.

Saturday, June 8 - Lee USA Speedway - Lee, N.H.

Sunday, June 16 - Speedway 95 - Hermon, Maine

Friday, July 5 - Claremont Motorsports Park - Claremont, N.H.

Sunday, July 14 - Hudson International Speedway - Hudson, N.H.

Saturday, August 10 - Riverside Speedway - Groveton, N.H.

Sunday, September 15 - Speedway 95 - Hermon, Maine

Saturday/Sunday October 5-6 - Lee USA Speedway, Lee, N.H.

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T-Birds coach gets call to NHL, named interim coach of Blues

SPRINGFIELD – On Dec. 13, St. Louis Blues President of Hockey Operations and General Manager Doug Armstrong announced the team has relieved Craig Berube of his coaching duties and named Springfield Thunderbirds head coach Drew Bannister interim head coach. Bannister will travel to St.

Louis on Wednesday and serve his first game behind the bench on Thursday when the Blues host the Ottawa Senators.

Bannister, 49, has spent the past three seasons with the Blues' AHL affiliate in Springfield, leading the

Please see **T-BIRDS**, page 13

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Healey-Driscoll Admin. announces \$24 million for trail projects

BOSTON – The Healey-Driscoll Administration recently announced in a press release an investment of \$24 million to expand and maintain the state’s network of trails in environmental justice communities across the state.

Massachusetts has an ever-expanding network of trails that create connections between communities, promote tourism and economic growth, provide opportunities for transportation that help reach the state’s climate goals, and give residents access to the Commonwealth’s natural, recreational, and cultural resources.

“This funding is an investment in the well-being of our residents and our economy,” said Governor Maura Healey. “Already, outdoor recreation contributes \$11 billion to our economy. By investing in our trails system, more people will look to Massachusetts for their next vacation in nature, and we can get our own residents moving out on our trails, whether to work or just to appreciate Massachusetts’ natural beauty. We’re grateful to the Biden-Harris Administration and our Congressional delegation for making this transformational funding available through the American Rescue Plan Act.”

“Investing in our trails pays off for cities and towns. During my time as mayor, I saw firsthand how enhancing the trail system can improve public health and bring in new revenues,” said Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll. “By leveraging the power of our state’s trail network, we are uniting communities and creating opportunities for tourism, sustainable transportation, and exercise.”

“Trails are a key piece of our sustainable transportation infrastructure that many residents depend on to commute to work. It’s important that this infrastructure can withstand the impacts of climate change,” said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper. “This investment is a matter of equity. The trails sys-

tem belongs to all of us, and this funding demonstrates our commitment to clean and healthy spaces for our environmental justice communities.”

“DCR manages a vast trail network that helps us build healthy families through outdoor recreation and support sustainable transportation, tourism, and economic opportunity across the state,” said Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner Brian Arrigo. “These ARPA investments in our trail systems will enable us to create a more connected, accessible, and vibrant Massachusetts.”

The \$24 million investment, funded through the American Rescue Plan Act, will make possible projects in environmental justice communities that otherwise might have waited years. Of the total investment, \$15 million will be used for the construction of major trail systems within the DCR trail network, including the Charles River Greenway in Waltham, the Mystic River Clippership Connector in Medford, the Blackstone River Greenway, and the Massachusetts Central Rail Trail in Waltham.

Additionally, municipalities, through the MassTrails Grant program, will receive \$6 million to support the creation and upkeep of municipally owned trails in West Springfield, Agawam, Clarksburg, Wendell, Ashland, Boxford, Leominster, Beckett, Granby, Dorchester, Milton, and Mattapan, Waltham, Medford and Blackstone.

The MassTrails Grant Program is an inter-agency grant program through the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, EEA, and DCR, that provides matching grants, technical assistance and resources to individuals, municipalities, non-profits, and other public entities. These funds go toward the design, construction, and maintenance of diverse, high-quality trails, including hiking trails, bikeways, and shared-use paths.

The program supports projects that build public-private partnerships and provides essential funding for project development, design, and construction of shared-use pathways, facilitating connections to where people live, work, and recreate. In June, the Administration announced \$11.6 million in funding through the grant program to support 68 trail improvement projects across the state.

Additionally, \$3 million will be used for the upkeep of the DCR trails, ensuring their longevity and quality for years to come.

“The last few years have highlighted how important it is to have access to safe trails and outdoor recreational opportunities, especially for those in environmental justice communities,” said Senator Brendan Crighton, Senate Chair of the Trails Caucus. “This investment will make a tangible difference to our state’s expansive trail network, which benefits us all.”

“Shared-use trails are a key tool for connecting our communities and bolstering public health,” said Representative Michelle Ciccolo, House Chair of the Trails Caucus. “They are a particularly important transportation and recreational resource in underserved areas of our state where residents may not otherwise have access. I’m thrilled that the Healey-Driscoll Administration is prioritizing this important financial investment which will provide numerous benefits across the state.”

All existing trails are expected to remain open to the public while maintenance and construction take place, ensuring the continued enjoyment of these important pathways.

This announcement is part of the Administration’s ongoing work to connect environmental justice communities across Massachusetts with access to open space for recreation, economic development, and environmentally friendly transportation.

Opacum Land Trust protects land, water, wildlifew, and plants trees

Year-end matching challenge kicks off with \$15,000 matching gift

BRIMFIELD – The Opacum Land Trust, a 13-town regional land conservation organization that protects land, water, and wildlife in south central Massachusetts, has launched a year-end matching gift challenge supported by an initial gift of \$15,000 in combined personal donations from members of its board of directors and other generous supporters.

According to Executive Director Laney Wilder, Opacum is a nonprofit organization that works hand-in-hand with local communities and landowners who want to protect and conserve land, water, and wildlife for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

“Opacum’s Year-End Matching Challenge is an opportunity for local residents to support the protection of natural properties and forests in our local community,” said Wilder in a press release.

“In the past year, thanks to the support of our members, we have made great progress on a number of important projects,” said Wilder. “We’ve also been able to permanently conserve over 2,441 acres of critical land and water on 28 properties in Brimfield, Brookfield, Charlton, Dudley, Holland, Monson, Palmer, Southbridge, and Sturbridge. Many of these properties are open to the public with trails for local residents to enjoy.”

“This year, we’ve continued work on the Emerald Forest Borderlands project. This is an ambitious multiyear conservation project that will protect 1,011 acres of forests, wetlands, and wildlife habitat. This project is made possible by grant funds from the USDA Forest

Legacy Program, an Anonymous Foundation, and individual donors, which allows Opacum to conserve even more land, and protect even more local forests, water, and wildlife habitat than what we could do alone,” Wilder added.

In addition, Opacum Land Trust is heading into their fifth year of urban tree planting in Southbridge. To date, they have planted 427 trees and have been lucky to work with hundreds of residents and businesses to bring the benefits of trees to their community.

This program, funded by the U.S. Forest Service and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, provides free trees to homeowners, renters, businesses, and organizations in urban areas of Southbridge.

Modeled on Massachusetts’s Greening the Gateway Cities Program of urban tree planting, the goal of this project is to improve community health and provide economic benefits to residents by improving air quality and reducing temperatures through increased tree cover.

Opacum Land Trust will continue to plant trees in Southbridge in the spring of 2024; if you are a Southbridge resident and are interested in getting a free tree, visit Opacum’s website to sign up at www.opacumlt.org.

Exciting work for 2024, thanks to a donation of land, Opacum Land Trust is working to acquire, revive, and reopen the former Sleepy Hollow property in Brimfield. This unique property has both a rich cultural history, as a former Scout camp and community center, and a rare ecological environment, thanks to the early successional forest habitat created by a tornado that ripped through the property in 2011.

This habitat type is increasingly rare and favored habitat for many species of birds and other wildlife.

Throughout the year, Opacum

holds educational events and meet-ups, which are free and open to the public. They also host the popular Tour Opacum Bike Ride for Land Conservation every September, which takes riders past conserved properties and forests throughout the area. Information about upcoming events in 2024 will be shared on their website, www.opacumlt.org, and on their Facebook page.

To support local land conservation and double your donation by participating in the Year-End Matching Challenge, you may donate online at www.opacumlt.org/donate or mail a check to Opacum Land Trust, PO Box 233, Sturbridge, MA 01566.

About Opacum Land Trust
Opacum Land Trust, Inc. is a regional land conservation organization formed in 2000 to protect natural and cultural resources in the towns of Brimfield, Brookfield, Charlton, East Brookfield, Holland, Monson, North Brookfield, Palmer, Sturbridge, Southbridge, Wales, Warren and West Brookfield.

These non-renewable resources include fertile farmland, forests, river corridors, wetlands and watersheds, vernal pools, habitat for endangered animals and plants, scenic vistas, and historic and prehistoric sites.

Its mission is to protect the New England charm and rural character of our communities, promote proactive conservation, and the creation of greenways and wildlife corridors.

Opacum Land Trust is able to permanently protect open space through donation or purchase of land, bargain sales, or by holding a conservation easement. Opacum Land Trust is a member of the Mass Land Trust Coalition, The Land Trust Alliance, MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership, and Central Mass South Chamber of Commerce.

Oliveira, colleagues pass tax relief package

BOSTON – Recently state Sen. Jake Oliveira, D-Ludlow, and his colleagues in the Senate passed one of the most generous tax relief packages in decades aimed at providing responsible tax relief to Massachusetts’ residents and businesses and making the commonwealth more affordable, equitable, and competitive.



State Sen. Jake Oliveira, D-Ludlow, and his colleagues recently passed a tax relief package.

The total impact for fiscal year 2024 will be \$561.3 million, with a \$519.3 million on-budget impact. In fiscal year 2027, when fully phased in, the total impact will be \$1.02 billion, with a \$969.3 million on-budget impact. Oliveira was encouraged by the package that will “put money back into people’s pockets.”

“When you look at this considerable and well thought out package, you’re going to see tax relief that is focused on not only bringing equity to those who need it the most but also one that is both inclusive and far-reaching,” said Oliveira in a press release.

Oliveira highlighted the significant impact the package would have on families.

“The expanded Child and Dependent Tax Credit will more than double what families can claim per dependent by 2024, going from \$180 to \$440,” he said. “This will benefit more than 565,000 families and become the most generous universal child and dependent tax credit in the country. I’m grateful to the Conference Committee for this incredible expansion and my colleagues in the Legislature for agreeing to support families as much as possible.”

Additional package highlights include increased earned income tax credit and the Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit. The earned income tax credit will increase from 30 to 40% of the federal credit increase, and provide crucial support to working individuals and families, benefiting nearly 400,000 taxpayers with incomes under \$60,000.

The Senior Circuit breaker credit increase doubles the maximum senior circuit breaker credit from \$1,200 to \$2,400. This increase

will make it easier for approximately 100,000 seniors who struggle with high housing costs to stay in their homes.

Oliveira also praised the Conference Committee’s decisions to include credits for users of regional transit authorities. A choice he believes shows the Legislature’s commitment to regional equity.

“The decision to make regional transit passes eligible for the commuter expense tax deduction shows the Legislature’s commitment to all of Massachusetts, including the many folks out here in Western Mass who use regional transit in their daily lives,” he said.

“Another detail in the package that will provide relief to more rural areas of the state is the Septic System Tax Credit. This bill will triple the maximum credit from \$6,000 to \$18,000 and increase the amount claimable to \$4,000 per year, easing the burden on homeowners in Western Mass who are facing the high cost of tank replacement or repair,” said Oliveira.

Having passed the House of Representatives and Senate, the bill now goes to the governor for her consideration.

T-BIRDS from page 12

team to a 93-58-19 regular-season record. The Belleville, Ontario, native has also guided the Thunderbirds to consecutive playoff appearances, including 2021-22, when they won the Eastern Conference and reached the Calder Cup Final.

Bannister began his coaching career in the Ontario Hockey League (OHL), where he spent three seasons as an assistant with Owen Sound and three as head coach with the Soo Greyhounds. He also served as head coach of the AHL’s San Antonio Rampage and as an associate coach with the Utica Comets. As a player, Bannister’s career spanned over 20 years and included 164 NHL regular-season games between the Tampa Bay Lightning, Edmonton Oilers, Anaheim Mighty Ducks, and New York Rangers.

In addition, Thunderbirds general manager Kevin Maxwell has announced that Daniel Tkaczuk will take over the head coaching duties in Springfield on an interim basis.

Tkaczuk, 44, joined the St. Louis Blues organization in 2016 as an assistant coach with the club’s AHL affiliate, the Chicago Wolves. After spending the 2017-18 season as a Skills Coach with the Blues, he rejoined the AHL affiliate as an assistant coach under Bannister in 2018, a role he has held ever since, including a promotion to Associate Head Coach in 2022.

The Toronto, Ontario native began his coaching career in the OHL as an assistant coach with the Owen Sound Attack from 2011-15 before spending the 2015-16 season with the Kitchener Rangers. Tkaczuk and Bannister were co-assistant coaches with Owen Sound

from 2012-15.

Tkaczuk was the sixth overall draft pick in the 1997 NHL Draft by the Calgary Flames and played 12 professional seasons in both North America and Europe. As a member of the Saint John Flames, Tkaczuk captured a Calder Cup championship in 2000-01. He was tied for second among Flames skaters with 10 goals in the Calder Cup Playoffs that season.

In 286 AHL games with Saint John, the Worcester IceCats, Bridgeport Sound Tigers, Charlotte, Syracuse, Rochester, and Hartford, Tkaczuk posted 59 goals and 109 assists for 168 points. He was a career point-per-game performer in the playoffs, scoring 14 goals and adding 17 assists in 29 career Calder Cup playoff contests.

Tkaczuk also skated in 19 NHL games with Calgary, putting up 11 points (four goals, seven assists) in the 2000-01 season.

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The newly constructed Comins Pond Wells Water Treatment Plant located at the end of Comins Pond Road was dedicated at a ribbon-cutting ceremony in June.

WARREN from page 10

After passing through the filters, an orthophosphate chemical is added for corrosion control.

As water leaves the water treatment plant to serve users, some of it is returned to the plant for continuous analysis. Automatic alarms will alert operators if too much or too little chemical is being added.

Critical high and low alarms will shut down the water treatment plant, preventing water from entering the distribution.

Of the \$6 million cost, 40% was funded through a grant from the USDA, which also supplied a loan in the amount of \$3,733,000.

For years, the Water District had received complaints from users about the quality of the water and Tighe & Bond Professional Engineer Jeff Faulkner credits the Commissioners for doing something about it.

"They've been real champions of the project," he said. "The water is now going out in the system. This is the first big step for the Water District that they should be very proud of."

School district needs

Quaboag Regional Middle High School Principal Stephen Duff was named superintendent, following a year-long tenure by interim Superintendent Maureen Binienda. Casey Hanfield replaced Duff as the principal.

At a contentious annual town meeting, article 10, which was presented by the Board of Selectmen, asked voters to approve an above minimum contribution of \$110,000 for the school district's fiscal year 2024 budget, which would bring the town's assessment to \$4,045,809.

The School Committee had requested \$1.2 million above minimum in order to continue funding the programs and services the school district offers.

Binienda said 20-25 teaching positions would have to be cut with this proposed budget.

This article failed to pass at annual town meeting, and the budget was revisited at a special town meeting held on June 29 where voters approved spending \$609,903 for the town's above minimum contribution, bringing the total assessment for FY 24 to \$4,525,289.

This figure includes a total operating assessment of \$4,384,964 and minimum local contribution of \$2,886,067, as well as \$888,994 for transportation and \$140,334 for debt service capital payment. The assessment for transportation will be reduced through the use of state aid for regional schools.

With the help of a Green Communities Grant, an energy management system was installed

at Warren Community Elementary School to help reduce heating costs and provide temperature control for the building.

Veterans concerns

Longtime Veterans Services Officer Gary W. Lapine announced his retired from this position at the end of November, with Michelle Durkee stepping into that role.

The four members of the Veterans Council appeared before the Board of Selectmen during an Aug. 3 meeting, asking the Board to reconsider its decision to deny them "special municipal employee" designation.

Veterans Council Co-Chair Rebecca Acerra questioned why the Board wouldn't reconsider the decision, when 11 boards and committees have the designation, which covers 99 town employees.

Joining the Council at the meeting were many veterans and their families who credited Acerra and Co-Chair Richard Demetrius for ensuring the town's servicemembers were honored, respected and given a voice. Veterans came from Warren, Ware, West Brookfield and North Brookfield, to support the Council members.

Acerra, Demetrius and Council members Judith Rice and Lloyd Rice submitted letters of resignation from the Veterans Council after the Board of Selectmen declined to reconsider the decision.

At a Nov. 2 meeting, the Board of Selectmen appointed Christine Tatro to serve on the Veterans Council. Tatro is a lifelong resident of town, and comes from a military family.

Opportunities for youth

The Parks and Recreation Department continued its summer enrichment program for the town's youth, including swimming lessons at Comins Pond and summer camp at Dean Park. A free summer concert series offered fun and entertainment for people of all ages, with the inclusion of a petting zoo and the popular touch-a-truck.

This year also saw the return of the Haunted House, held in the basement of the Shepard Building. A steady stream of thrill seekers lined up each night the Haunted House was open, ready to face their fears.

The holiday decorating contest Light the Night returned, as did Santa Claus, for the town's annual tree lighting.

Warren Public Library and West Warren Public Library each provided summer reading opportunities with prizes and incentives, as well as a year full of activities and programs.

The Quaboag Regional School District continued to offer diverse educational opportunities for students in town, including participation in Project Lead the Way.

Year in Review 2023



Community members enjoyed Halloween fun at the annual Trunk or Treat held at Quaboag Regional Middle High School.

Twenty students in the PLTW Biomedical Innovations unit at Quaboag Regional High School had the opportunity to use their training to explore and create biomedical devices that improved upon existing designs.

Students divided into six teams and over the course of about two weeks, they not only researched and designed their devices, but they also built prototypes and prepared full marketing plans to sell their product to investors.

"Programs like Project Lead The Way give students hands-on experience of real-world labs and tasks of a variety of careers in the biomedical sciences field. This hands-on course gives students access to modern tools and techniques that are currently being used in hospitals and other lab settings every single day," said PLTW Biomedical Science Teacher Michelle Zawalski.

Several of the students presented their projects at PLTW's Boston showcase including Cameron Giroux, Matt Carter, Tristan Bosen, Alex Russo, Isabelle Burgess, Jenna Duff, Genesis Dembowski, Abby Long and Lexie Cacace.

Quaboag Regional High School offers several PLTW biomedical classes in the newly designated Biomedical Innovation Pathway, Assistant Superintendent of Development Madeline Smola said.

PLTW Biomedical Science applies real-world issues by exploring diseases, DNA analysis, public health, and more.

The school district received a \$100,000 Innovation Pathway Implementation grant from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for teacher training, supplies and materials, texts, student certifications and testing for certified nursing assistants, in addition to adding an EKG/phlebotomy course.

Warren Community Elementary School received national recognition as a 2022-23 distinguished school for their ongoing engagement in Project Lead the Way Science, Technology, Engineering and Math curriculum.

Dean of Students, Brian Guimond, said hands-on learning allows students "more ownership over their learning and freedom."

"They love to be able to create things...kids don't love to sit all day - they want to be involved in learning and collaborating with peers," said Guimond.

WCES is one of 13 elementary schools across the country "to receive honor for providing broad access to transformative learning experiences."

Preserving history

Community members continued efforts to preserve and honor the town's history.

Warren High School graduate Ken Pratt completed a project he had started the year prior, to display the trophies and memorabilia of Warre High School at Quaboag Regional Middle High School.

Pratt had removed Warren High's trophies from the Shepard Municipal Building, the site of the former high school, and restored them to their former glory.

"Warren High was the focal point and brought our community together," Pratt said, and now its memorabilia have a place of honor alongside Quaboag's.

In February, the Board of Selectmen authorized a \$3,000 contract with Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, to research South Warren Cemetery for the National Register. Earlier this month, the Board of Selectmen signed a letter in support of this effort.

In the spring, 39 gravestones in the founder's section of Pine Grove Cemetery were straightened and reset in their proper places.

Cemetery Commission Clerk Cynthia Baxter said this is going to be part of an ongoing project to restore this section of the Cemetery, as well as make other improvements to the Cemetery as



Students perform in Quaboag's production of "Camp Omigosh".



Santa and Mrs. Claus visited with children during the annual tree lighting celebration.

a whole.

Founded in 1746, the Cemetery is the final resting place for many of the town's founding members; and time and the elements have taken a toll on the gravestones.

Lichen covers the surface of many of the gravestones, most of which are either leaning, and some have even fallen over.

Some gravestones have laid on the ground so long, they are almost completely covered by the earth.

"There's probably a couple hundred needing resetting," Baxter said, including headstones and footstones. "It's going to take us years to get this done."

Helping to make this possible is Kai Nalenz, founder and president of Gravestone Services of New England, LLC, based in New Hampshire.

The first headstone Nalenz set to work on in Pine Grove Cemetery belongs to Isaac Moore, who was born April 18, 1753, and died Aug. 15, 1843. Moore was a veteran of the Revolutionary War and lived to the age of 90.

Nalenz reset the approximately 300-pound stone, in less than 15 minutes single-handedly, armed with a narrow shovel, hardpack and a customized hammer drill to pack the dirt around the stone.

After being reset, the stones

should remain in place for several decades, Nalenz said. Nalenz also removed lichen from the stones he reset.

A group of people joined together at Pine Grove Cemetery on Earth Day to continue a documentation project that started last spring.

Using the BillionGraves app, volunteers carefully cleaned and wet gravestones in order to take photos using the app. The app records both the GPS location of the gravestone, as well as the inscription on it.

Pine Grove Cemetery is one of three cemeteries undergoing this documentation, with the others being in Pittsfield and West Springfield.

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints have led the effort both years, organized through JustServe.

Despite cool and windy weather, 16 volunteers took part in the project, including members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in North Brookfield, residents, and even people from out of state.



The Shepard family presented a new sign at the Shepard Municipal Building.

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Tech Foundry, HCC celebrate opening of Tech Hub

New program seeks to bridge gaps in digital equity

HOLYOKE – Like many women in her position, Lasharie Weems often felt overwhelmed.

As a single, stay-at-home mother with young boys, one of the areas where she felt particularly overmatched was technology.

“My 5-year old was probably more digitally literate than I was,” she said in a press release.

The remote instruction her children required during the pandemic proved even more baffling.

“My older two sons go to a science and technology school,” she said. “I struggled to even help them with their homework.”

Motivated by her children, Weems enrolled in Tech Foundry’s free, 18-week IT Workforce Training program.

“Not only did I learn a tremendous amount about technology, but it brought my family closer together and helped me restore the confidence in myself that I hadn’t felt in a long time,” Weems said. “It truly helped bridge the gap for me.”

Weems, who lives in Chicopee, now works for Tech Foundry. She told her story earlier this week on Oct. 25 at the grand opening celebration for the Tech Hub, where she will be serving as an American Connection Corp fellow.

Tech Foundry’s Tech Hub is a vast collaboration that includes Tech Foundry, Holyoke Community College, the Western Mass Alliance for Digital Equity, the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, Comcast, The Accelerate the Future Foundation, Google, Bulkley Richardson and many other corporate and community partners.

Based at HCC’s Picknelly Adult & Family Education Center at 206 Maple St., Tech Hub offers free digital skills training workshops, walk-in IT support and troubleshooting, Internet connectivity consultations, and computer distribution, as well as community outreach and education.

“Today is an exciting occasion for all of us,” Weems said to the crowd assembled outside the Tech Hub’s digital classroom on the first floor of PAFEC. “But, for me, it’s a personal achievement as I celebrate the journey it took to get me here. Tech Hub is my opportunity to pay it forward, to help countless others identify and bridge the gap in digital equity.”

Tech Hub officially opened to the public on Oct 26.

Tricia Canavan, CEO of Tech Foundry, a Springfield-based nonprofit, said the Tech Hub project was an idea first discussed during the height of the pandemic and has been a top priority of Tech Foundry ever since.

“Tech Hub is a place where residents can gain access to the skills, computer equipment, tech support and reliable high speed internet connectivity needed to thrive in the digital world,” she said. “And we are offering these services free to all in our region thanks to our many funders and supporters.”

Dr. Frank Robinson, vice president for community relations and public health at Baystate Health and chair of the Western Massachusetts Alliance for Digital Equity, noted that Tech Hub is supported by a \$5.1 million grant the Alliance received from the Massachusetts Broadband Institute. That grant provides funding for digital literacy, digital skills training, outreach and education, and connectivity - delivering equipment and wi-fi hotspots to people such as those who are housing unstable, homeless, or living in shelters.

“We talked about a hub of services serving the entire region as one of our dreams,” Robinson said. “Well, we’ve gotten the cornerstone and foundation laid. We’re starting here in Holyoke.”

HCC President George Timmons said it was fitting for the Tech Hub to be based at PAFEC, one of HCC’s satellite campuses in the heart of the city. PAFEC also houses HCC’s Adult Learning Center as well as other community programs, including the Holyoke High Opportunity Academy, an alternative public high school program.

PAFEC represents access, he said.

“The mission of Holyoke Community College is to educate, inspire and connect,” he said. “Through this initiative, we hope to promote access to technology and connectivity, digital literacy and education while giving individuals the tools they need to be successful. Today we celebrate an awesome opportunity to create a pathway to a better life.”

Mayor Joshua Garcia echoed President Timmons’ comments and noted that four students who attend the Holyoke High Opportunity Academy at PAFEC have already signed up to be part of the Tech Hub program.

“I think we can all agree that digital literacy in 2023 is as vital as reading literacy was 50 years ago,” he said. “Whether it’s filling out a job application, communicat-



Representatives from Tech Foundry, Holyoke Community College and their many partners gather to cut the green ribbon to celebrate the grand opening of Tech Hub at HCC’s Picknelly Adult & Family Education Center, 206 Maple St., Holyoke, on Oct. 25.



Tech Foundry CEO Tricia Canavan, far left, and Holyoke Community College President George Timmons, far right, gather in the Tech Hub digital classroom with Tech Foundry graduates (now Tech Hub fellows) Lasharie Weems of Chicopee, Shanice McKenzie of Springfield, and Anelson Delacruz of Springfield. Tech Hub officially opened to the public Oct. 26.

ing with a customer, maintaining accessible records or even booking a flight, digital fluency is a necessary life skill. But the Tech Hub mission recognizes something else: that there exists a digital divide that is the result of inequities in access, opportunity, housing, income and schooling. The free training and support that will take place at this site and at community partner locations - it’s going to be a liberating game-changer.”

Tech Hub is open noon-6 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, with classes held from noon-1 p.m. and 5-6 p.m. On Mondays and Fridays, Tech Hub manager Shannon Mumblo and Tech Hub fellows take their IT services into the community all around western Massachusetts.

To learn more and register for classes and helpdesk support, visit techhubmass.net

Senators introduce Bill of Rights for paraprofessionals and support staff

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senator Edward J. Markey (D-Massachusetts), a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, introduced the Paraprofessionals and Education Support Staff Bill of Rights, a resolution that would call for living wages, good benefits, and fair working conditions for the paraeducators, classroom assistants, bus drivers, custodial workers, and others who serve as the backbone of our education system by providing essential services which keep schools running and students thriving.

Senators Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont) and Elizabeth Warren (D-Massachusetts) are cosponsors of the resolution.

Paraprofessionals and education support staff far too often work for low wages, few benefits, and without job security. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, 331,000 school staff have left their jobs.

A 2022 survey found that one in five paraprofessionals recently visited a food pantry, while 25 percent said they could not afford to live in the communities where they worked. Yet, families rely on paraeducators as often the only heritage language speakers in schools; on bus drivers to safely transport their children; on food service workers to provide healthy meals; and on instruction assistants to ensure all students access high quality education.

“For too long, we have asked paraprofessionals and education support staff to do too much with too little,” said Markey in a press release. “We have asked them to educate, feed, transport, and support students in their path to grow, learn, and thrive - all without the pay, benefits, and job security they deserve. My Paraprofessionals and Education Support Staff Bill of Rights is a call for action to provide these workers with the dignity, respect, and recognition that they have long deserved. Well-paid, well-treated, union staff make stronger schools and stronger communities.”

Markey’s resolution would call for paraprofessionals and education support staff to have:

• Livable, competitive wages, and access to benefits, including health care and paid leave;

• The supplies, resources, and training they need to do their jobs;

• Meaningful voice in workplace policies and the right to negotiate for better working conditions;

• The dignity of safe, healthy, and adequate staffed workplaces; and

• Year-round job security and opportunities for growth.

The resolution is endorsed by National Education Association, American Federation of Teachers, Service Employees International Union, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, Latinos for Education, National Rural Education Association, NREA Coalition, Autism Society of America, Citizens for Public Schools, Council of Administrators of Special Education, Network for Public Education, Milwaukee Teachers’ Education Association, the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates, First Focus on Children, National Urban League and Arc of the United States.



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public safety

Ware Police Log

During the week of Dec. 19-25, the Ware Police Department responded to 18 miscellaneous calls, 23 administrative calls, three traffic violations, 13 emergency 911 calls, three damage/vandalisms, two trespasses, one breaking and entering/burglary, seven animal calls and 28 motor vehicle stops in the town of Ware.

Tuesday, Dec. 19
3:19 a.m. Suspicious/Wanted, Hillside Terrace, Vehicle Towed
11:59 a.m. Damage/Vandalism, West Street, Investigated

Wednesday, Dec. 20
4:04 a.m. Bylaw Violation, North Street, Services Rendered
12:20 p.m. Assault, West Street, Services Rendered
3:02 p.m. Abandoned 911 Call, Dale Street, Services Rendered
7:52 p.m. Abandoned 911 Call, Church Street, Dispatch Handled
8:41 p.m. Abandoned 911 Call, Laurel Drive, Investigated

Thursday, Dec. 21
6:52 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, West Main Street, Citation/Warning Issued
7:59 a.m. Abandoned 911 Call, Pleasant Street, Dispatch Handled
9:24 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Belchertown Road, Vehicle Towed
10:22 a.m. Abandoned 911 Call, Main Street, Could Not Locate
12:32 p.m. Abandoned 911 Call, Cummings Street, Services Rendered
8:21 p.m. Abandoned 911 Call, Dugan Road, Dispatch Handled

Friday, Dec. 22
3:22 a.m. Bylaw Violation, North Street, Services Rendered
5:04 p.m. Damage/Vandalism, Aspen Court, Assist Given
7:11 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, West Street, Arrest Made
Arrest: Ashley E. Petrowski, 35, Ware
License Suspended, Operate Motor Vehicle With; Resist Arrest
8:18 p.m. Traffic Violation, Chestnut Street, Arrest Made
Arrest: Devin R. Dulak, 22, Ware
OUI-Liquor or .08%; Negligent Operation of Motor Vehicle; Leave Scene of Property Damage

Saturday, Dec. 23
3:15 a.m. Bylaw Violation, North Street, Citation/Warning Issued
10:26 a.m. Trespass/Unwanted, Old Gilbertville Road, Advised
12:50 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Upper Church Street, Citation/Warning
6:40 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Longview Avenue, Criminal Complaint
Summons: Imari Williams, 22, Holyoke
Unlicensed Operation of Motor Vehicle; Inspection/Sticker, No

Sunday, Dec. 24
2:38 a.m. Abandoned 911 Call, Homecrest Avenue, Dispatch Handled
4:13 a.m. Bylaw Violation, North Street, Citation/Warning Issued
6:52 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, West Street, Citation/Warning Issued

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.

11:38 a.m. Abandoned 911 Call, Castle Street, Investigated

Monday, Dec. 25
2:29 a.m. Breaking and Entering/Burglary, Walnut Street, Advised
9:03 a.m. Abandoned 911 Call, South Street, Investigated
11:16 a.m. Abandoned 911 Call, Cummings Road, Services Rendered
12:35 p.m. Trespass/Unwanted, Webb Court, Services Rendered
5:42 p.m. Damage/Vandalism, Otis Avenue, Report Made

Tuesday, Dec. 26
5:44 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Street, Citation/Warning Issued
6:09 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Street, Citation/Warning Issued
6:26 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, East Street, Citation/Warning Issued

Warren Police Log

During the week of Dec. 3-9, the Warren Police Department responded to 170 building/property checks, 42 community policing, 21 traffic enforcements, six radar assignments, 14 emergency 911 calls, two vandalisms, one illegal burn, two frauds/forgeries, two animal calls and 25 motor vehicle stops in the town of Warren.

Sunday, Dec. 3
12:29 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Criminal Complaint
Summons: Davina B. Alejo, 29, Warren

Registration Suspended, Operate Motor Vehicle With C90 S23
9:56 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Citation Issued
3:14 p.m. Medical Alarm, Winthrop Terrace, Transported to Hospital

7:33 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, North Street, Criminal Complaint
Summons: Juan P. Bonilla, 24, Warren
Unlicensed Operation of Motor Vehicle; Uninsured Motor Vehicle; Unregistered Motor Vehicle; Speeding in Violation Special Regulation

Monday, Dec. 4
6:50 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Columbus Avenue, Citation Issued
3:15 p.m. Fraud/Forgery, Old West Warren Road, Officer Spoke to Party
3:49 p.m. Disturbance, Cottage Street, Report Filed
Summons: Gary T. Quadrozzi, 30, Warren
Assault and Battery; Threat to Commit Crime (Murder)
6:59 p.m. Animal Bite, High Street, Message Delivered

Tuesday, Dec. 5
3:50 p.m. Fraud/Forgery, Chapel Street, Officer Spoke to Party
7:44 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Washington Street, Written Warning
9:38 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Written Warning

Wednesday, Dec. 6
12:16 a.m. Bylaw Violation, North Street, Citation Issued
10:21 a.m. Breathing Difficulty, Chapel Street, Transported to Hospital

Thursday, Dec. 7
8:26 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Southbridge Road, Written

Warning
4:45 p.m. Serve Warrant, Sarty Road, Report Filed
Summons: Michael D. Nichols, 45, Warren
Ammunition Without FID Card, Possess; Dangerous Weapon, Carry; Drug, Possess Class B, Subsequent Offense
9:08 p.m. Unconscious/Unresponsive/Syncope, Bemis Road, Transported to Hospital

Friday, Dec. 8
3:22 p.m. Vandalism, Little Rest Road, Report Filed
3:33 p.m. Breathing Difficulty, Brimfield Road, Transported to Hospital
3:58 p.m. Illegal Burn, South Street, Officer Spoke to Party
6:45 p.m. Stroke (CVA), Cottage Street, Transported to Hospital

Saturday, Dec. 9
4:30 a.m. Breathing Difficulty, Winthrop Terrace, Transported to Hospital
6:54 a.m. Falls, Main Street, Transported to Hospital
11:57 a.m. Vandalism, South Street, Negative Contact
11:39 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop, Main Street, Written Warning

MassDOT lists winners of 'Name A Snowplow' contest

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announced the winners of the second annual, "Name A Snowplow" contest for statewide elementary and middle school students in Massachusetts.

The winning plow names are Flower Plower, Edward Blizzardhands, Glacier Gobbler, Polar Pathmaker, Snow B Wan Kenobi, The Snolar Express, Sleetwood Mac, Snow Place Like Home, Snow-hemian Rhapsody, The Mayplower, Snow Monstah, Fast and Flurryous.

This contest received entries from public school classrooms from across Massachusetts. The contest chose names for 12 MassDOT snowplows that will be

in service during this 2023/2024 winter season.

The purpose of the contest is to celebrate the snow and ice season and to help recognize the hard work and dedication shown by public works employees and contractors during the winter season. "Keeping our roads across Massachusetts clear and safe every winter is a tough job. We are glad to see educators engage their students in a fun competition that pays tribute to this essential public service," said Transportation Secretary and CEO Monica Tibbitts-Nutt in a press release. "I want to congratulate the winning classrooms and look forward to seeing all of the snowplows in the field."

"This is a fun way for schools across the state to connect with the crews who perform vital road work every year during New England's harsh winters," said Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver. "Congratulations to the winners, and our appreciation to everyone who participated."

Winning submissions for students in grades five through eight include Melissa Forni, grade five of Burgess Elementary School in Sturbridge with her entry of "The Snolar Express."

For more information on the contest, please visit: <https://www.mass.gov/name-a-snowplow-contest-2023-24>.

STUFF A CRUISER



Country Bank's mascot Buck helped to make the holidays fun for children in Ware.

Country Bank and Ware Police collect gifts for children

WARE – Country Bank and the Ware Police Department partnered to host a "stuff a cruiser" event earlier this month, collecting gifts to be distributed to children within the community.



Assistant Vice President of Retail Banking Blair Robidoux, right, helps Ware Police Officer Jeanine Bonnayer "stuff a cruiser" at Country Bank with bicycles donated by this resident.



Chris Jeffery, Michelle Montanez and Barbara Newton of Trinity Episcopal Church accepted over 200 presents from the "stuff a cruiser" event hosted by Country Bank and the Ware Police Department.

Legislation to protect children in state's custody introduced

LUDLOW – Sen. Jake Oliveira (Hampden, Hampshire & Worcester District) and Rep. Mike Finn (6th Hampden) are determined to make sure that tragedies like the death of 14-year-old autistic teen David Almond don't happen again.

In 2021, after David Almond died from starvation and neglect, his father was charged with second-degree murder. Then came the 107-page report from the Office of the Child Advocate that painted a bleak picture of David's suffering and the staggering errors made repeatedly, day after day, month after month, by the multiple state agencies involved in his care.

In direct response to David's death, what Oliveira describes as an "unacceptable systemic failure," he and Finn have filed legislation in the Senate and House to ensure children are safe while under the supervision of the State by expanding protections for children in the state's custody.

In the final week of September, Oliveira and Finn provided passionate testimony to the Joint Committee on Children, Families, and Persons with Disabilities, advocating for the committee to give the bills favorable reviews.

"When children are in the com-

monwealth's care, they must be protected. With the tragic death of David Almond, we witnessed the systematic failure of many of our state agencies up and down our state government. From DCF to the district attorney's office through the school district. This is why Rep. Finn and I have spent the last year or so working together to file legislation to address these failures and challenges within our system by strengthening the protections available to us to ensure our children are safe," said Oliveira.

Oliveira went on to highlight the four areas of the State's laws that their joint legislation would strengthen. Including ensuring that the Office of the Child Advocate has the tools needed to protect children in the commonwealth's care, strengthening the data reporting for DCF who need to submit annual reports to the Legislature, establishing a bill of rights for children and their families in foster care systems, and by providing educational supports for children.

Oliveira stressed the bill would build the gaps in communication between DCF, the school districts, and state agencies.

During his testimony, Finn highlighted their thorough and deliberate response when drafting

this legislation. "It took us months to go through all of the findings that were in the OCA report. It took us months to work with the past administration at DCF and the findings of the past administration. It took us months to understand the recommendations of the OCA and to make sure that the prior (DCF) administration had implemented all those changes. And through all of that, we realized there were still some things that needed addressing, and that's what you'll see in this bill."

In October 2017, David and his three siblings were removed from their parent's custody because of allegations of neglect and physical abuse of the children, parental substance use, unsanitary conditions of the home, medical neglect of the children, and excessive absences from school. This was the fourth time that they were removed from the house for the pattern of abuse and neglect.

OCA could not determine why the termination of parental rights was not completed, as a termination appeared to be the appropriate legal action under the circumstances. Oliveira and Finn are now prepared to ensure that the oversights that contributed to the tragedy never happen again.

Police make arrest in child pornography case

WARE – In June 2023, Officer Ryan Downing of the Ware Police Department was assigned to investigate a possible child pornography case.

According to a press release from the Police Department, an investigation identified Gregory Redmond, age 34, from 171 Upper Church St., where he resided with his mother. During the investiga-

tion, it was also discovered that Redmond had a previous conviction for possession of child pornography.

On Dec. 7 at approximately 12:30 p.m., Ware Police executed a search warrant at 171 Upper Church St. Members of the State Police Detective and Computer Crime Units assisted Ware Police with the search and collection of

evidence.

Redmond was arrested and charged with possession of child pornography, 2nd offense. Bail was set at \$50,000 on Dec. 7 and he was held until his arraignment on Dec. 8 at the Eastern Hampshire District Court in Belchertown.

State Police are conducting forensic examinations on electronic items seized from the house.

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

We invite you to join us Friday afternoons from 1-2:30 pm to explore these topics and more.

This group will be held in zoom, is educational, confidential, and free.

Please contact **Pat James 413-726-8661.**

PEOPLE/MILESTONE NEWS

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

For more information, or to submit people or milestone news for the Ware River News, please email warerivernews@turley.com.

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Country Bank and Bank Director announce first fully certified Board

WARE – Country Bank Board Chair, James Phaneuf, is pleased to announce that the Bank's Board of Directors recently became the first fully certified Board through Bank Director's Certification Program.

The certification provides participants with a thorough grounding in corporate governance and important industry issues that greatly enhance the performance of individual directors. The Board completed the comprehensive training program this past year and was certified in September.

Participants must complete 31 designated online training videos and board briefs focused on the role of the Board, audit and risk, compensation, governance, and fiduciary responsibilities. In addition to Bank Director's Online Training Series, participants must attend a day-long Corporate Governance Workshop in the Bank Director Certification Program or, alternatively, complete a virtual version of the program.

Completing the program and becoming a certified bank director sends a clear message to state and federal regulators that board members take their fiduciary duties seriously and want to be top-performing members of the Bank's Board.

"Country Bank's Board of Directors is deeply committed to the Bank's continued growth and prosperity. They understand their responsibilities to ensure Country Bank remains one of the strongest Community Banks in the region. I look forward to the future with great optimism, knowing that we have such a dedicated group of business professionals and the difference they make for the Bank's long-term success," said James Phaneuf in a press release.

"Bank Director is grateful for



Submitted Photo

Country Bank Board Members are Elizabeth Rappaport, Theresa Grove, Stacey Luster, Kathryn Crockett, Richard Maynard, Kenneth Riley, Jr., James Phaneuf, Edward Noonan II, Ross Dik, Robert Haveles, Steven Musso and Keith Blanchette.

Country Bank's enthusiastic support for the Certification Program," said Editor-at-Large Jack Milligan, who created the course curriculum. "This sends a very powerful message that the Country Bank Board of Directors takes its governance responsibilities seriously. It is a testament to our motto that 'Strong Boards Build Strong Banks.'"

About Country Bank

Country Bank is a full-service \$1.8 billion with 17.0% Tier 1 Capital mutual community bank serving central and western Massachusetts with 14 offices in Ware, Palmer, West Brookfield, Brimfield, Belchertown, Wilbraham, Ludlow, Leicester, Paxton, Charlton and Worcester. Country Bank is a member of FDIC, DIF and the SUM network.

Country Bank can be reached by calling 800-322-8233 or visiting countrybank.com.

About Bank Director

Bank Director reaches the leaders of the institutions that comprise America's banking industry.

Since 1991, Bank Director has provided board-level research, peer-insights and in-depth executive and board services. Built for banks, Bank Director extends into and beyond the boardroom by providing timely and relevant information through Bank Director magazine, board training services and the financial industry's premier event, Acquire or Be Acquired.

For more information, visit BankDirector.com.

Author Paula Grandpre Wood presents 'Letters to Ancestors' book talk

HARDWICK – Author Paula Grandpre Wood presents "Letters to Ancestors" on Saturday, Jan. 13 at 1:30 p.m. at Paige Memorial Library 87 Petersham Road.

Space is limited and registration is recommended by emailing director.paigelibrary@gmail.com or calling 413-477-6704.

Grandpre Wood's book "The Long Walk Home with the Ceinture Fléchée: The Arrow

Sash" invites readers to walk in the steps of real people with real joys and terrible heartache as they make the fateful decision to leave behind everything they knew in La Rochelle, France and begin life anew in New France.

After serving indentureships, they began families, and some of her ancestors were caught up in the Acadian Dispersal. In the more recent past her ancestors immigrat-

ed once again, this time to the U.S.

Through genealogical research of Grandpre Wood's ancestors that was gifted to her by a family member, she learned the bare facts of the many generations of her forebears' lives.

One day these ancestors began speaking to her heart. She responded by delving into the broader story

Please see **ANCESTORS**, page 19

Margaret M. Labossiere

WARE – Margaret Mary (Walsh) Labossiere, born in Jersey City, New Jersey on May 25, 1945, and passed away with her family at Baystate ICU on Dec. 21, 2023, at the age of 78.



Margie married the love of her life, Louis Labossiere in 1966 and was happily married for 41 years, before his passing in 2007. Margaret known by everyone as Margie or The AVON Lady started selling AVON in the early 1970s until the late 2000s winning many Presidents Awards.

She and Louis Labossiere owned and operated a store, Mar-Lou's, for many years. She also worked at Ware Public Schools Cafeteria and the Monson Development Center.

Margie is predeceased by her husband, Louis, her parents, brothers, sister, and her uncle Michael Kobis, whom she spent every summer with, in Massachusetts, as she was growing up.

She leaves behind her son, Michael Labossiere and his wife Alison of Ware, her caring daughter, Luann Lauzier and husband Richard Lauzier of Ware, her grandsons Chris, Kyle,

Death notices

Labossiere, Margaret M. (Walsh)
Died Dec. 21, 2023
Services Dec. 30, 2023

Russell, Gail A. (Roberts)
Died Dec. 23, 2023
Services Dec. 29, 2023

and Joshua (aka Grammie's Boy Wonder) and his loving wife Melissa of Ware, and her cat Baby. Margie leaves many nieces and nephews and their families, her amazing caregivers Tish, Ramona, and Sharon, along with her family at McDonalds, where you could always find her having a happy meal.

Margie was loved and will be missed by all.

Calling Hours will be held at Cebula Funeral Home on Friday, Dec. 29 from 4-7 p.m., with funeral services on Saturday, Dec. 30, starting at 10 a.m. at Cebula Funeral Home with a funeral Mass at 11 a.m. in All Saints Church in Ware. Burial will follow in New St. William's Cemetery, where she will be laid to rest with her husband.

In lieu of flowers and to share Margie's love for animals, donations can be made to Here Today Adopted Tomorrow in Brimfield or Dakin Animal Shelter in Springfield. For more information and an online guest book, please visit: www.cebulafuneralhome.com.

OBITUARY POLICY

Ware River News

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 \$225, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice 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.

Gail A. Russell, 84

WARE – Gail A. (Roberts) Russell of Ware, died on Saturday, Dec. 23, 2023, at Quabog Rehabilitation and Skilled Care Center in West Brookfield, at the age of 84.



Gail was born in Palmer on Feb. 10, 1939. She was the daughter of the late Edward W. Roberts, Sr. and Mary (Ward) Roberts.

She moved to Ware after marrying her husband, Charles Russell. They shared 54 wonderful years together before his passing in 2011.

She leaves her sons Paul. F. Russell Sr. and his wife Marlene, and Keith C. Russell and his wife Mona; her sister-in-law, Jane Roberts; grandchildren, Ann, Ned, P.J., Danielle, Kym, Carrie, and Kristen, as well as 15 great-grandchildren and two great-great-granddaughters, and many nieces and nephews. She

also leaves her two long-time pals, Phil Hamel and George Stati.

Gail had a zest for life and a great love of family.

She held many jobs in the town in the book-keeping field. She started working full time after her boys went to school, with her first jobs at Nor-els and Jam printing.

After that, she worked at Hampshire News, then in the medical billing office at the former Mary Lane Hospital, where she worked her way up to Patient Accounts Manager. After leaving Mary Lane Hospital, she worked at Cormier Jewelers, until deciding to take some time off to babysit her first grandchild.

Later, she worked part-time for 11 years at the Ware Fire Department Ambulance billing service. She then joined the former William E. Wright Co. in Warren, and ended her working

career in the medical billing field at Brimfield Family Medical with Dr. Thomas Clay until her retirement.

Her second love was doing crossword puzzles with her sister Karen and watching or babysitting her great-grandchildren.

Her family would like to thank the nurses and staff and Quabog Rehabilitation and Skilled Care Center for their dedicated care and love for Gail.

Her family would also like to thank the Ware Fire Dept. for their quick response.

A Funeral Mass for Gail will be held on Friday, Dec. 29, 2023, at 10 a.m. in All Saints Church, 17 North St., in Ware. Calling hours will be held on Thursday evening, Dec. 28, 2023, from 5-7 p.m. in the Charbonneau Funeral Home, 30 Pleasant St., in Ware. Burial will be in Quabbin Park Cemetery following the mass.

An online guest book is available at charbonneauafh.com.

public notices

See more PUBLIC NOTICES ON PAGE 18



Please check the accuracy of your legal notice prior to submission (i.e., date, time, spelling). Also, be sure the requested publication date coincides with the purpose of the notice, or as the law demands. Thank you.

Hardwick Planning Board

Notice of Public Hearing

Notice is hereby given that the Hardwick Planning Board, acting as Special Permit Granting Authority for the Town of Hardwick, will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at 6:45PM** at the Municipal Office Building, 307 Main Street, Gilbertville, MA 01301.

Pursuant to Hardwick Zoning Bylaw Sections 1.5.2.3 and 4.0, this Hearing is regarding the application by the Whistle Stop for a Special Permit to add an addition to extend kitchen and storage area at 248 Main Street, Gilbertville. All interested parties are asked to attend.

Interested parties can also view this Legal Notice at <http://masspublicnotices.org>
Hardwick Planning Board
Jenna Garvey, Chair
12/21, 12/28/2023

(SEAL)
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS LAND COURT DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT DOCKET NO. 23 SM 004710 ORDER OF NOTICE TO:
Anthony Serrano, Jazmin Velazquez Serrano
and to all persons enti-

tled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, 50 U.S.C. C. 50 §3901 (et seq):

NewRez LLC d/b/a Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing

claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in Ware, numbered 23 High Street, given by **Anthony Serrano and Jazmin Velazquez-Serrano to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for New Penn Financial, LLC, its successors and assigns, dated August 27, 2018, and recorded in Hampshire County Registry of Deeds in Book 13062, Page 102, as affected by a Loan Modification Agreement dated April 13, 2021, and recorded at said Registry of Deeds in Book 14108, Page 324, 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 **02/05/2024** 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 12/20/2023.
Attest:
Deborah J. Patterson,
Recorder
12/28/2023

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampshire Division Docket No. HS23P0821EA Estate of: EuniceF. Taylor Date of Death: 08/12/2023
INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE
To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **James E. Taylor of Ware, MA**, has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve with surety on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts

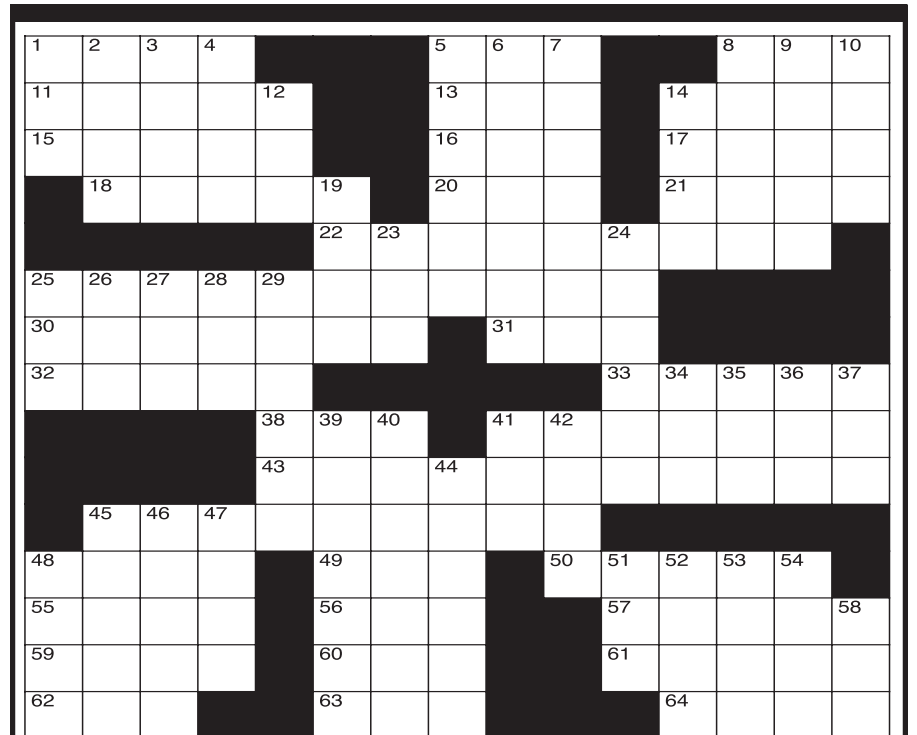
Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.
12/28/2023

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CLUES ACROSS

1. A way to injure
5. Mutual savings bank
8. Rock TV channel
11. Large number of fish swimming together
13. Military mailbox
14. Female of a horse
15. Category
16. City
17. Breezed through
18. Officer who bears a mace
20. Tax collector
21. "Cheers" actress Perlman
22. Pauses before acting
25. Extracted information from a wave
30. Tendency to revert to something ancestral
31. No seats available
32. Nocturnal rodents
33. Moves gently to

CLUES DOWN

1. "The world's most famous arena"
2. Polite interruption sound
3. Private school in New York
4. Refuse of grapes
5. Tomei, actress
6. Adult beverages
7. Supporter
8. Papier-___ art material
9. Forests have them
10. Most ancient Hindu scriptures
12. Downwind
14. Marketplace
19. Flowering plant genus
23. Street where nightmares happen
24. Admirer
25. Dip lightly into water
26. When you hope to get there
27. Partner to cheese

28. Egg
29. A way to disqualify
34. South American plant
35. Fold-away bed
36. Debbie Harry album "Koo"
37. Swedish krona
39. Displaying warmth and friendliness
40. Official orders
41. Bowling alley necessity
42. Stray
44. About milk
45. Expressed pleasure
46. Caribbean dance
47. If not
48. fide (Latin)
51. Swiss river
52. Hebrew calendar month
53. One easily swindled
54. Point that is one point south of southwest
58. Small island (British)

Classifieds

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- Work in the extreme cold and heat
- Have a valid driver's license
- High school degree or GED

Send letter of interest and resume to: William Sullivan, Interim Principal; Gateway High/Middle School, 12 Littleville Road, Huntington, MA 01050
Deadline: January 5, 2024
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ALL REAL ESTATE advertised herein is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination." We will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. All persons are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised are available on an equal opportunity basis.

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public notices

Notice of Public Hearing Planning Board LEGAL NOTICE SPR-2023-02

NOTICE is hereby given that the Ware Planning Board, acting as the Site Plan Permit Granting Authority, will hold a Public Hearing on **THURSDAY, January 18, 2023 at 7:05 PM** on the application of Palm Coast Capital LLC, for a Major Site Plan Permit for the construction of a commercial business, Tractor Supply Co., under section 4.1.1, of the Zoning Bylaw, and pursuant to MGL Chapter 40A. Pursuant to Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022, this hearing will be conducted in person and via remote means, in accordance with applicable law. This means that members of the Planning Board as well as members of the public may access this meeting in person, or via virtual means. In person attendance will be held in the Selectmen's Meeting Room, 126 Main Street, Town Hall, Ware, MA. It is possible that any or all members of the public body may attend remotely, with in-person attendance consisting of members of public. The meeting may be accessed remotely via zoom. Go to <https://zoom.us/join> or join by phone. Phone Number: 929-205-6099; Meeting ID: 784 604 1861; Password: 01082.

SITE LOCATION: 256 West St., Ware, MA. Said premises being further described in deeds recorded in the Hampshire County Registry of Deeds, Book 13093, Page 124 & 125. Property is also identified as Assessor's Parcel # 10-0-129. Zoned: Residential Business (RB) and Suburban Residential (SR).

A complete copy of the application can be found at the Town Clerk's office and on the Planning & Community Development Department website under Recent Filings. Anyone interested or wishing to be heard on the application should appear at the time and place designated.

WARE PLANNING BOARD
Ed Murphy, Chairman
12/21, 12/28/2023

the hearing that constitute public records under state law are available for public inspection during regular business hours and for reproduction at a reasonable fee. Members of the public are invited to attend and be heard on the topic: (a) whether the current cable operator is in full compliance with its currently existing cable license; and (b) what are the Town's future community cable-related needs. 12/21, 12/28/2023

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF WARE CABLE TELEVISION CABLE LICENSE RENEWAL PROCEEDINGS

The Selectboard of the Town of Ware, being the Town's Cable Television License Issuing Authority, hereby gives notice that on **Tuesday, January 16, 2024, at 7:15 p.m.** at Ware Town Hall, 126 Main Street, Ware, MA, the Selectboard will hold a public hearing concerning the cable television license renewal of Comcast of Massachusetts/Virginia, Inc. (Comcast). Members of the public may attend in person or participate remotely by video or audio using the video link or phone number(s) set forth below:

Video call link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7846041861?pwd=b1dFR0tscStPMWwScHFwRlFwbnRldz09&omn=82361877868>

Or dial: 1-929-205-6099 (US, New York), Meeting ID: 784 604 1861, Passcode: 01082

The purpose of the proceeding is to accept public comment on, formally consider and possibly take final action on the proposed Comcast Renewal License, a copy of which is available for public inspection and copying c/o of the Town Clerk or his/her municipal designee. Public comment is invited. For further information and copies of renewal records, contact William August, Municipal Cable Counsel, at 617-548-3735.

By order of the Selectboard as Cable Television License Issuing Authority.
12/28/2023, 01/04/2024

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF HARDWICK NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 138, section 12, the Selectboard will hold a public hearing on **January 8, 2024 at 6:30 PM**, Municipal Office Building, 307 Main Street, Gilbertville, on an application for multiple amendments- change of category from wine and malt to all alcohol and change of manager for Mimi's Coffeehouse of Hardwick located at 14 Barre Rd., Hardwick. A copy of the application is available at the Town Administrators Office, Municipal Office Building, 307 Main St, Gilbertville

Eric Vollheim,
Chairman
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
12/28/2023

Notice of Sale of Motor Vehicle under G.L. c. 255, Section 39A

Notice is hereby given by REGIN'S REPAIR 19 CHURCH ST GILBERTVILLE, MA 01031. Pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, Section 39A, that on 1/8/2024 at 10:00AM at: Regin's Repair 19 Church St Gilbertville, MA 01031 by private sale, the following Motor Vehicle will be sold to satisfy the garage keeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, care and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicle.

Vehicle description: 2016 Nissan Versa Registration#/State: 4WWG59/MA VIN: 3N1CE2CP8GL391000 Name and address of owner: Sarah J Aiken 97 Summer St. North Brookfield MA 01535

1997 Homemade Trailer Registration#/State: NONE/MA VIN: MATR268040352 Name and address of owner: Scott Malozzi 470 Main St. Fitchburg MA 01420

By: James M. Regin
Dated: 12/15/2023
12/21, 12/28/2023, 01/04/2024

See more PUBLIC NOTICES ON PAGE 17

NOTICE OF CABLE TELEVISION PUBLIC HEARING

Please take notice that the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Warren, Massachusetts, as Issuing Authority for a cable television license under M.G.L. c.166A, will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, January 4, 2023, at 6:00p.m.** The public hearing will be held in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at 48 High Street, the Shepard Building. The purpose of the public hearing will be to determine whether to issue a cable television license to Comcast. All applications, reports, statements, and license drafts to be considered at

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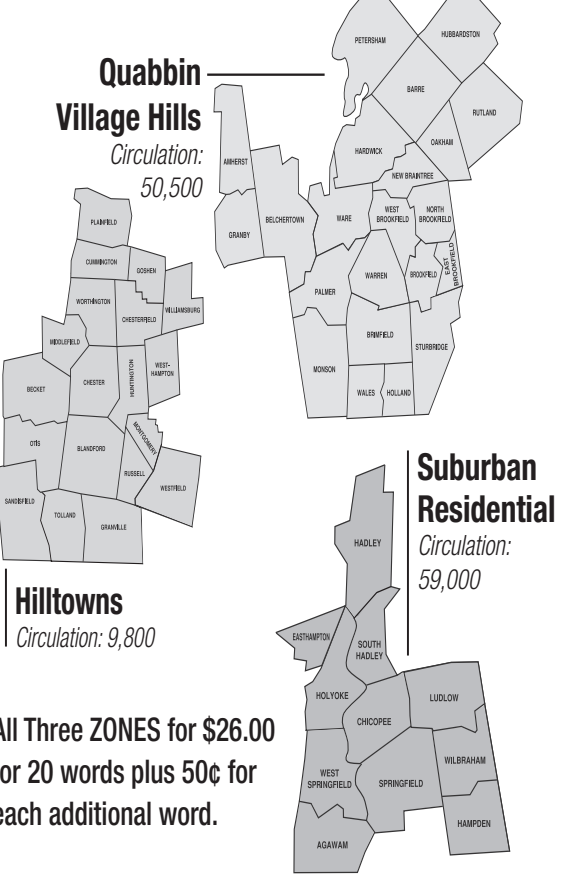
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21 Base Price \$28.50	22 Base Price \$27.00	23 Base Price \$27.50	24 Base Price \$28.00
25 Base Price \$28.50	26 Base Price \$29.00	27 Base Price \$29.50	28 Base Price \$30.00
29 Base Price \$30.50	30 Base Price \$31.00	31 Base Price \$31.50	32 Base Price \$32.00
33 Base Price \$32.50	34 Base Price \$33.00	35 Base Price \$33.50	36 Base Price \$34.00
37 Base Price \$34.50	38 Base Price \$35.00	39 Base Price \$35.50	40 Base Price \$36.00



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EARLY DEADLINE

In observance of **NEW YEAR'S PUBLIC NOTICES** WILL HAVE AN **EARLY AD DEADLINE** Place your public notice no later than **Thurs., Dec. 28 Noon**

A TURLEY PUBLICATION
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Dakin Humane Society announces humane award winners

SPRINGFIELD – Dakin Humane Society honored four people, a group of students, a network of animal hospitals and a K-9 comfort dog, at its 2023 Humane Awards, which were part of the organization's Barks & Brews event on Sept. 10 at Fort Hill Brewery in Easthampton.

Meg Talbert, Dakin's executive director, presided over the award ceremony.

The Humane Awards were originally created by Dakin in 2011 and are comprised of multiple community-based award categories for individuals making a positive difference in the lives of animals and people.

Award winners

The winners of the 2023 Humane Awards are:

Jerry Marchand - The Richard & Nathalie Woodbury Philanthropy Award. This award is bestowed to a leader in the community whose contributions are transformational and demonstrates extraordinary dedication. Marchand, a longtime Dakin foster caregiver and donor, recently took in his 600th Dakin cat, creating a new record for most pets fostered by a single volunteer.

Because of his experience, he is often asked to nurture the most challenging cats and kittens. He is also a volunteer taxi driver for Dakin, transporting animals, food and supplies around New England as needed.

2022-2023 First-grade Students at Milton Bradley School - The Youth Award. This award honors a hero, 16 or younger, who displays extraordinary care and compassion to make a difference in the lives of animals, and makes the world a kinder and gentler place.

This year's recipients are 2022-2023 first-grade Students at Milton Bradley School in Springfield, whose "Good Citizen" project-based learning experience led them to hold a donation drive for much-needed items at Dakin Humane Society. The students made videos for morning announcements, created flyers and conducted an interview with Dakin to help collect donations.

Marina Bayeva - The Frances M. Wells Award. This award, named for the Greenfield Animal Shelter's benefactor, is given to an individual recognized for notable contributions to the health and welfare of animals.

Bayeva, a native Ukrainian, lives in western Massachusetts. When Russia invaded Ukraine, she learned animal shelters there were in desperate need of help, and she successfully compiled a list of their needs.

She set up a nonprofit, Help Animals Survive the War in Ukraine, which raised nearly \$55,000 for shelters in her native Dnipro, and has assisted shelters in procuring grant funding.

Jessecah Gower - The Champion Award. This award honors an individual who serves in the public or nonprofit sector who has faithfully made life better for tens of thousands of animals and people.

Gower was named the recipient of this award based on her efforts as animal control officer and animal health inspector for West Springfield as well as her devotion to animals. Gower gives people the resources they need to keep animals in their homes, such as referring them to organizations that can provide assistance with vaccinations and spay/neuter surgery, among other things, and was cited for her tireless efforts to reunite lost pets with their families.

She also works with inspectors from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the MSPCA to ensure the health and well-being of animals during The Big E.

K-9 Frank and Officer Matthew Llewelyn - The Distinguished Animal Award. This award recognizes an exceptional animal (and human handler when applicable) whose extraordinary devotion to people has proved transformative or lifesaving in challenging or exceptional circumstances.

The team of K-9 Frank and Officer Matthew Llewelyn, his handler, received this award based on their efforts to deescalate mental health crises to which the Greenfield Police Department responds. K-9 Frank is a comfort dog-in-training and member of that department since November 2022.

Once trained, Frank and Officer Llewelyn will work primarily with the department's clinician to help defuse active behavioral health crises. When the program began a decade ago, Greenfield Police were the first comfort dog handlers in the country.

VCA Animal Hospitals - Corporate Leadership Award. This award is presented to a business or its corporate foundation, of any size, that demonstrates outstanding commitment to improve the lives of animals through employee giving, volunteerism, or partnership.

The VCA Animal Hospitals were selected for this honor in recognition of their commitment to making a positive impact for pets, people and their communities. VCA Charities is a nonprofit organization founded in 2005 dedicated to helping pets in need.

Together with VCA associates, clients and donors, VCA Charities has raised more than \$1 million providing free veterinary services, medication, food and financial support to more than 100 animal welfare organizations across the country.

Dakin Humane Society is located in Springfield. For more information, visit www.dakinhumane.org.

Baystate Children's Hospital welcomes facility dog

SPRINGFIELD – Baystate Children's Hospital's first-ever facility dog, Isabela (or Isa for short), joined the team thanks to a \$150,000 grant from the Dunkin' Joy in Childhood Foundation.

Baystate's newest employee goes to work every day to provide special animal assisted therapy to pediatric patients, their families and staff members.

The Foundation's Dogs for Joy program seeks to increase the number of in-resident dogs in children's hospitals across the country.

Facility dogs like Isa are professionally trained to work in a health-care setting. Unlike volunteer dogs that visit a hospital or medical center for a short time, facility dogs are at the hospital every day with their handlers. In most cases they are used exclusively for clinical work.

These dogs are trained to help with tasks like teaching kids how to take medication, keeping a child calm during medical intervention and providing incentives for kids to get out of bed for a walk, these dogs serve as a source of happiness and provide a sense of normalcy for patients.

"Dogs like Isabela are often described as better than any medicine. They just know when someone needs comfort, support, and love, and they give it unconditionally without judgement and expect nothing in return," said Dr. Charlotte Boney, chair, Department



Submitted Photo

Baystate Children's Hospital's first facility dog, Isabela, is shown at her meet and greet.

of Pediatrics at Baystate in a press release.

"We are thrilled to bring joy to patients and their families at Baystate Children's Hospital through our Dogs for Joy program," said April McGonnigal, Director of the Joy in Childhood Foundation.

"We have seen the incredible impact that these special pups bring to children's hospitals throughout the country and look forward to seeing the meaningful impact that Isa has on the patients, staff and families at

Baystate."

Isabela, a Golden Retriever, was born and raised at Canine Assistants in Milton, Georgia, a non-profit organization which teaches and provides service dogs for children and adults with physical disabilities or other special needs.

Already a star before arriving at Baystate Children's Hospital, Isabela, now almost 19 months old, began her education at just 7 weeks old. She has completed over 1,500 hours of individual instruction and

2,250 hours of group instruction and was the first of her litter to graduate at only 17 months old.

Isa and her handlers provide goal-oriented interventions. Isa will be working with pediatric patients across many areas of the children's hospital including inpatient units, the emergency department, radiology, and some outpatient areas.

Isa also has some designated time to support hospital staff across the medical center. She has a calm and intuitive demeanor and has been an added support for staff during debriefs following difficult situations, or when rounding on units to help uplift spirits.

"Isabela is a wonderful new addition to the Baystate Children's Hospital staff. As a dog lover and huge Golden Retriever enthusiast who has been blessed with many Golden Retrievers over the years, these lovable dogs are known for their gentle nature, goofy sweet smiles, and deep loyalty to and affection for humans. They make great service dogs, and we are lucky to have Isa as part of our team," Boney said.

Visit Isabela on Instagram @ Isabela_inspires.

For more information on Baystate Children's Hospital, visit baystatehealth.org/bch.

To learn more about the Dunkin' Joy in Childhood Foundation's Dogs for Joy program please visit www.bringjoy.org.

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ANCESTORS from page 17

of the times they lived through. She began writing a series of letters to specific grandparents, asking them unanswerable questions and telling them how she longed to know them better.

Her family's Ceinture Fléchée (Arrow Sash) has been passed down through six generations. The Sash binds the various parts of Grandpre Wood's story into a coherent whole.

Undertaking a quest to bring the family's heirloom to each ancestor's grave, she discovered one ancestor after the next. With each discovery, she wrapped the tombstones with the family's Sash.

While learning and then writing about her nine-times grandparents she walked the Long Trail in Vermont, discovering parts of herself she had never known existed. Along with her growing sense of closeness with these ancestors, she found her way back to the Catholic Church. Every step of her journey, she knew her ancestors were praying for her.

For more information about Grandpre Wood, visit paulagrandprewoodsash.com.

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