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New electricity program coming to Rutland

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
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RUTLAND – Starting in October, a new municipal aggregation program will launch in Rutland, where residents using National Grid Basic Service will be automatically enrolled.

The service will come from Direct Energy, and consulting service Good Energy which gave a presentation on Aug. 19.

Per the frequently asked questions sheet distributed at the public meeting, residents using National Grid should have received a letter in the mail about the new service, with instructions on how to opt-out. The deadline to opt out before the program begins is Sept. 12, but one can opt-out at any time with no penalty.

The representative from Good Energy said people should check contracts with their current providers in case there are early termination fees. The FAQ notes the reason this is an automatic enrollment program comes from a Massachusetts state law designed to give a town

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Annual Dinghy Dash returns to Brigham Pond



Turley Photos by Camren Robertson

Cherry Jackson, Avery Jackson and Ari Jackson paddled the Sailor's Sundae on Brigham Pond during the 9th annual Dinghy Dash. The Sailor's Sundae won "Most Creative Vessel."

By Ryan Drago
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HUBBARDSTON – The 9th annual Dinghy Dash took place this past Saturday at Brigham Pond.

Participants in the Dinghy Dash made their own boats out of cardboard and duct

tape and tried to see if they could withstand the pond.

Katie Young runs the annual Dinghy Dash, which has always been held at Brigham Pond.

This year's event consisted of entries divided into three categories: single occupant adult, single occupant youth and group vessel.

Trophies were awarded to each category as well as gift card awards. There are also awards for best sink, extended voyage and the most creative vessel.

The participants of the Dinghy Dash put a lot of effort into their boats, choosing creative themes and names of their cardboard

and duct taped vessels. The course was set with bright yellow flag buoys on the pond.

While timed, the boaters had to complete the course by going around the buoys and back to the starting point.

Providing support on the pond during the Dinghy

Dash were members of the Hubbardston Fire Department. Members of the Fire Department were on a water raft to aid boaters in case they had their boats surrendered to the water.

Spectators surrounded

See DINGY DASH, page 6

First Meetinghouse committee discusses warrant articles

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
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HUBBARDSTON – The First Meetinghouse Preservation Committee met last Tuesday to discuss placing articles on the special town meeting warrant, which closes on Sept. 17 with a town meeting date of Oct. 27.

The articles discussed

include building assessments and leveraging town funds for a Mass Historical Commission grant.

At the Aug. 18 meeting, committee member Susan Worth updated the rest of the board about her meeting with the Community Preservation Committee, as the First Meetinghouse committee has been working to get funds approved from the

Community Preservation Act account to leverage toward the MHC grant.

At that meeting, Worth said, the CPC recommended hiring a consultant to sequence necessary repairs, and to understand every part of the building is interconnected, and to not go into it with blinders.

Worth said there also seems to be consensus

between both committees that a structural assessment is needed, saying it has been talked about at various times since April 2025, so nearly a year and a half.

The assessment would look at current conditions, physical problems, recommendations for repair and cost estimates.

The other study would be done by an expert in historic

buildings, and would look at the sequence of construction, history, significance and the people behind the construction.

Worth said at the next CPC meeting on Sept. 17, she will recommend some of their funds to go toward consultants. Worth sits on both committees.

Since the special town meeting warrant closes on

the same day of the meeting, Select Board member Katie Young, who is the liaison for the committee, said they can submit placeholder articles, but they have to be close to what they are expecting to ask for.

Typically, the money amounts are in the motions, which are a separate draft

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Change of manager approved for Whistle Stop

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
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HARDWICK – A public hearing was held Monday to approve a change of manager license for the Whistle Stop restaurant, which recently re-opened two weeks ago, to allow for

liquor to be sold on site.

Town Administrator Justine Caggiano said the applicant made their payments and passed the CORI check. The license will now be sent to the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission of Massachusetts before it is finalized.

Cable access/YouTube

At the Aug. 24 meeting, the board discussed the contract with a vendor who helps run the YouTube channel and cameras during Select Board meetings live.

There was confusion among the board members at the meeting of Aug. 10 about whether that vendor

had a contract. It was not on file anywhere, so it was unclear how much the vendor was being paid.

During the meeting, Caggiano received a text from the vendor, saying it is \$100 per meeting. According to Caggiano, the

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School district prepares for first day of school

By Paula Ouimette
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NORTH BROOKFIELD – Superintendent Timothy McCormick said the administrative team "hit the ground running" back in May to fill staff vacancies over the summer for the start of the school year.

At the Aug. 17 School Committee meeting, McCormick said they have filled 15 positions to date.

He gave the School Committee an update on staff training, including Investigative History, a high-quality instructional material curriculum.

"We're excited about this," McCormick said.

This curriculum is for grades three through seven, and is made possible with support from the One8 Foundation.

McCormick said the school district is also phasing in its second Career Pathway in healthcare and social assistance. He said healthcare is one of the top job sectors in the region right now.

"There is a definite need for people to go into these Career Pathways and again, we want to set up our students for success," he said.

McCormick said the school district received a \$15,000 support grant for this program, and he expects to phase it in for the 2027-2028 school year.

He said they have also received a \$50,000 grant for an Advanced Manufacturing Pathway, which just concluded its first year with "great success."

McCormick said this grant will offset some salaries and supplies. He said the school district is using a new student information system called School Insights. He said information will be sent out to families to register their students.

McCormick said the school district is also launch-

See FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL, page 7

UMASS professor discusses drought and water supplies



Turley Photo by Ryan Drago

UMASS Amherst Professor Konstantinos Andreadis provided a presentation on drought and water supplies at the Belchertown Town Hall.

By Ryan Drago
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BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown Town Hall hosted a presentation on drought and water supplies this past week.

Giving the presentation is Professor Konstantinos Andreadis of the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. Andreadis has been with UMASS Amherst for nine years and his research focuses on hydrology, water resources, drought, and climate impacts.

Many Belchertown res-

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SPORTS

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Quabbin Little League raises banner



Submitted photo

Last month, the Quabbin Area Little League baseball all-stars celebrated winning their district championship. The team, shown here at Felton Park, entered the state tournament was defeated twice to be eliminated from further contention. In the Little League World Series this year, Massachusetts was actually represented in Williamsport, PA by a team from Bridgewater.

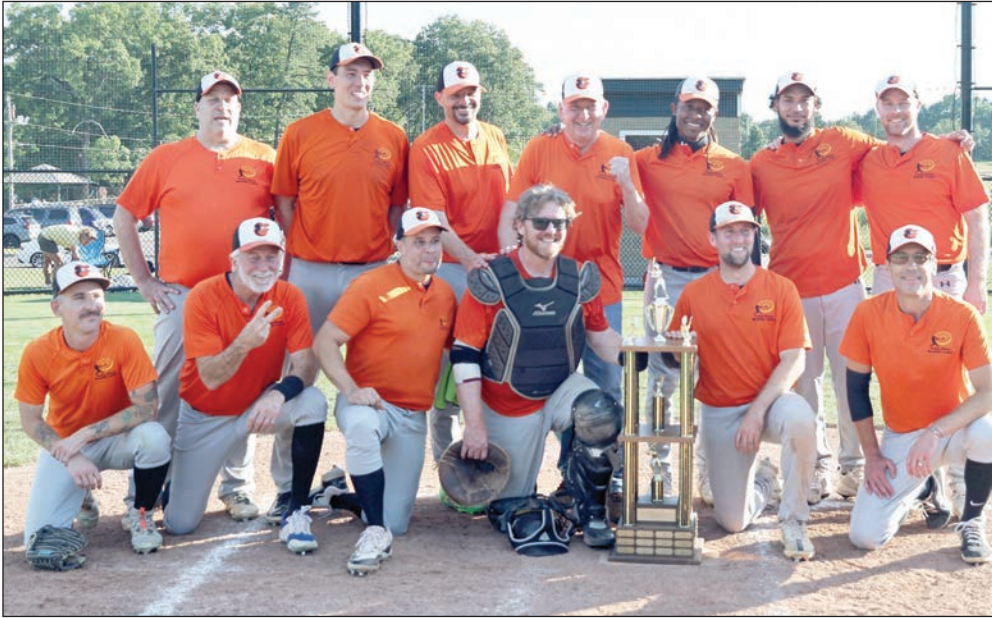
Committee announces next Hall induction

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

Seven individuals and a pair of championship teams will be honored. Dating back to the first induction in 2002, this will bring the total number of individual inductees to 72 in addition to 11 teams.

The induction class includes Louis Panaccione ’75, Eugene Rich ’95, Matthew Brunelle ’08, Stephany Halfrey ’15,

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Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

The Orioles are the 2026 Valley Wheel Over-28 Baseball League champions.

Orioles repeat as Valley Wheel champions

WILBRAHAM – On Saturday, Aug. 15 at Spec Pond in Wilbraham, the Orioles defeated the Angels 15-8 in the championship game.

The Orioles were propelled by nine runs in the first two innings. While the Angels would manage some offense later in the game, it was not enough to come all the way back in the matchup. The Angels were this year’s pennant winners, taking first place with an 11-4 record. The Orioles won the championship for the second year in the row. They defeated the Twins in last year’s championship game.



Henry Henriquez is focused as he swings.



The Angels’ Tom Cygan swings and connect.



Andy Roland fires a pitch for the Angels.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Teddy Bear Pools becomes the first new playoff champions in more than a decade.

Teddy Bear Pools takes playoff title in Tri-County

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

THORNDIKE—For the first time since 2012, the Tri-County League championship title belongs to a baseball team other than PeoplesBank.

The third-seeded Teddy Bear Pools & Spas ended the second-seeded PeoplesBank twelve year dynasty after sweeping the best of three semifinal series. Teddy Bear then captured the championship trophy for the first time since the 1980’s with an 8-4 victory over the top-seeded St. Joseph’s Saints in last Sunday’s night decisive game three held at St. Joe’s Park in Thorndike.

“Before the start of the

regular season, I thought we had the most talented team in this league,” said Teddy Bear player/manager Ryan Magni. “We have a couple of outstanding college baseball players on our roster, which made the biggest difference. It does feel great to win the championship title, but I do have a lot of respect for St. Joe’s.”

Ryan Magni played for St. Joe’s for eight years before switching sides a couple of years ago. His younger brother, Brandon, was the St. Joe’s starting first baseman in game three.

Ryan Magni started the game in centerfield before replacing righthander Brendan Fournier on the mound in the bottom of the



Jacob Hayes fires over to first.

seventh inning.

St. Joe’s scored two runs against the righthander in their final at-bats. The game came to an end when Brandon Magni hit a ground ball to the second baseman against his older brother.

“I’ve faced my brother many times over the years,” Ryan Magni said. “I didn’t have my best stuff tonight, but I didn’t make it very easy for him.”

St. Joe’s, who lost to Peoplesbank in last year’s championship series, was looking to win the TCL title for the first time since 2006.

“They just capitalized on our mistakes in tonight’s game,” said St. Joe’s manager Paul Marcinek. “It would’ve been nice if we could’ve scored a few more runs. We did win the regular



Alex Gochinski takes a swing.

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