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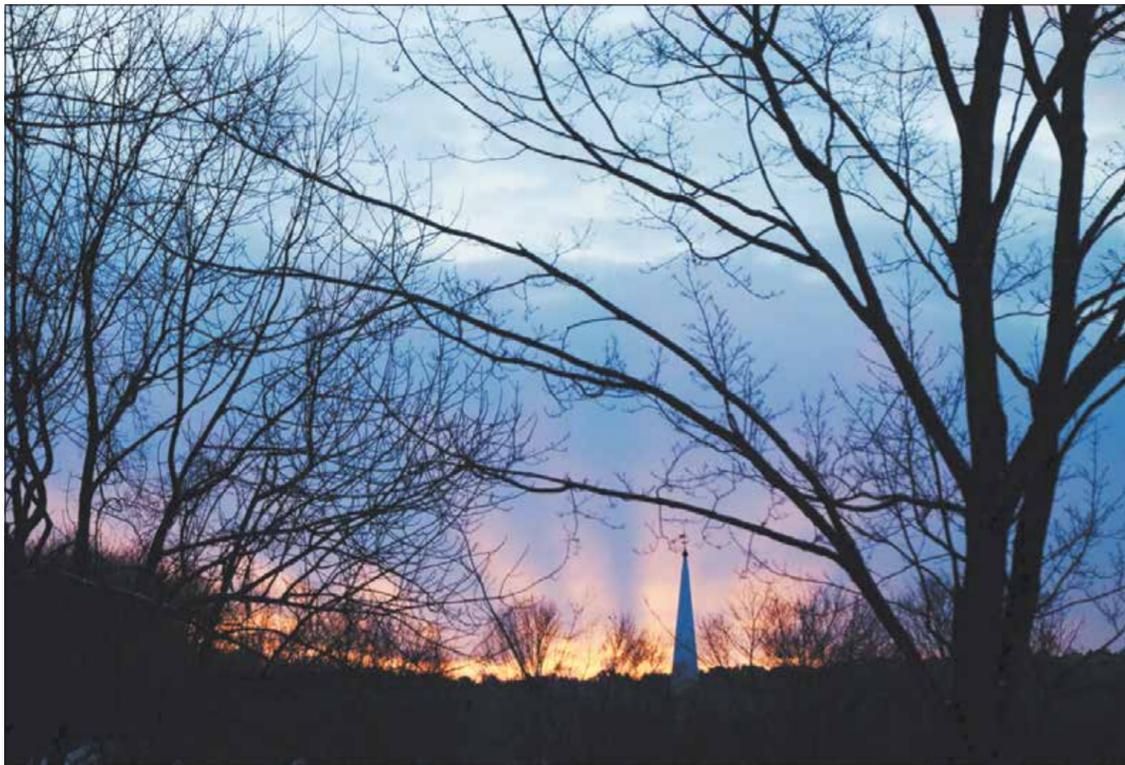
Quaboag Coalition shares substance use surveys

By Eileen Kennedy
Staff writer

WARE – Last spring, 1,681 students in eighth, 10th and 12th-grades at six area school districts answered questions about their use of tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, prescription opioids and heroin as part of a five-year drug awareness education grant the Quaboag Hills Community Coalition received from the federal government. It is a five-year, \$625,000 federal Drug-Free Communities grant awarded in the fall of 2016.

Ware, North Brookfield, Palmer, Belchertown, Quaboag Regional and Quabbin Regional students all answered the 121-question survey, which asked many questions about their use of the substances, including where and how they obtained them and whether their parents and peers disapproved of using the substances.

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Turley Publications courtesy photo, Michael Moscatelli

SUNRISE STREAMS OVER WARREN

WARREN – Early Tuesday morning saw the sun beginning to rise up over Emmanuel Orthodox Church on Winthrop Street in Warren. Warmer temperatures may have contributed to the beautiful colors streaming into the sky.

Ambulance calls, payments discussed

By Melina Bourdeau
Staff writer

WARE – The Ware and Hardwick Regional Ambulance Committee held a meeting on Monday, Jan. 8, to provide updates on ambulance use and receipts. The committee discussed the ways to resolve potential issues and improve communication.

After the Hardwick-Ware ambulance agreement was approved in July of 2017, a regional committee was formed to oversee and present potential concerns and ways to improve the ambulance service to the towns.

The committee is comprised of one resident from each town, one selectmen from each town, town administrators and Ware Fire Chief Thomas Coulombe.

Coulombe provided the committee with a list of the ambulance trips Ware has made to Hardwick from July to December of last year as well as the billable charges, payments and the average payment per trip.

The highest number of trips per month was in November with 22, which was \$33,703 worth of billable charges, \$10,317 of which was paid. The lowest number was in December, with seven calls, \$8,352 worth of billable charges and \$5,773 in payments made.

The total billable charges from July to December of last year were \$112,296 for 86 calls and \$34,608 was paid.

Ware resident Jen McMartin asked that more specific financial details be provided moving forward.

“We are here figuring out exactly what we want the committee to be,” said McMartin. “We want to make sure that its mutually beneficial having representation from each side, and then the chief oversees the operations of that. I was thinking tonight about what it is that we do want to look at. Money is coming in, going out, what is the cost, economically and socially is it working?”

Coulombe said that the reimbursement rate, on average, is higher from the town of Hardwick than Ware because Hardwick has more people with private insurance.

One of the issues is that not everyone pays their bill, which is a problem in other towns as well.

“In general, it’s a constant battle, all the private insurance base their rate on Medicare/Medicaid they’ll pay a little bit better but not a lot better,” said Coulombe. “Our Medicare/Medicaid is [low], doesn’t matter what we do. That’s why I get excited over that number versus the Medicare/Medicaid.”

Hardwick selectman Julie Quink said there is no ambulance company that can cover the full cost of running the service.

Coulombe said in order to help offset the budget needed to run the ambulance and fire services for Ware, the \$60,000 annual stipend from Hardwick as well as the insurance payments help to offset the cost as much as possible. He said it was an improvement over not having the agreement when Ware was not receiving the stipend or the insurance payments.

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Input wanted for town pool’s future

Playground wanted in Grenville Park

By Melina Bourdeau
Staff writer

WARE – The Ware Parks and Recreation Commission met Monday in Town Hall to discuss updates on the town pool, a woodland playground for Grenville Park and a potential fundraiser the town pool.

Parks Manager John Piechota said since the pool’s aquatic director position is vacant, the commission may want to consider advertising that they seek resumes.

He said last year some life-guardians that took extra training, and he would like to have the young

people coming up through the ranks considered as candidates.

Parks and Recreation Commission Chairman Bill Imbier asked Piechota if there should be a survey of townspeople to determine what they want done if something breaks at the pool and there isn’t enough money to repair it.

“If this pool kind of stumbles as far as the pump or the wall gets a severe crack and we’re not able to fix it, what do we do? Do we try and fix it?” said Imbier.

Piechota said that he believes the commission needs to address the future of the pool. He said there is a major problem with the pool, it would have to be closed until funding could be found to fix it.

“Anything that I would say

would be major, say we’re going for three weeks, we’re basically shut down for the year,” said Piechota. “You lose the pool, everything that you’ve started for the water chemistry. As far as going forward, it would ultimately depend on where the break is, where the funding is coming from.”

Imbier said he would like to be able to determine if townspeople want to keep the pool.

Piechota said that in the event the commission would like to pursue a grant, Beckley would be able to help as well as Town Planner Ruben Flores-Marzan.

“Looking down the road, long-term, is this something that

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Daughter takes mother’s safe during funeral

By Tara Vocino
Correspondent

WARREN – A victim said drugs were to blame after a daughter and her boyfriend allegedly took a safe from a Sarty Road home Friday during her mother’s funeral service last Friday.

“I told the judge that she should be locked up for her own well-being,” stepfather Thomas Baillet, who attended the court hearing Monday in East Brookfield District Court, said. “She’s been using drugs, and it’s gotten out-of-control.”

Baillet’s fiance, Audra



Alyce Davenport



Diron Conyers

Johnsons, had just died, and he had just returned home from her funeral. Baillet said at the station that he discovered items from the safe was stolen Friday from their

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Turley Publications staff photo by Melina Bourdeau

Ware School Superintendent Dr. Marlene DiLeo spoke about the work done for the future of Ware schools to parents, teachers and community members that attended a stakeholders meeting on Tuesday evening.

Stakeholders discuss school goals

By Melina Bourdeau
Staff writer

WARE – More than 30 people gathered in the Ware Junior Senior High School library to discuss the future of the school district. The brainstorming session discussed the state of the schools but also projected 2020 goals for the school district.

High school faculty and staff, selectmen, hospital staff, parents, Town Manager Stuart Beckley, Police Chief Shawn Crevier and Fire Chief Thomas Coulombe attended the session.

Principal Darren Elwell led the discussion about the future of the Ware School District by 2020, as if the changes were already made.

Many of the topics people brought up included increased com-

munity involvement and awareness as well as building on electives and extracurricular activities.

Sports like lacrosse or track and field as well as others were proposed, through potential collaborations like those that exist with the Palmer School District for the swim and wrestling teams.

Liz Nicholas said she would like each of the schools to be welcoming to parents/guardians where they can feel at home and build more of a community.

“I would like to see the ability to offer an after-school program district-wide to enrich learning,” said Selectmen Chairman Nancy Talbot. She added that grants could offer funding for the program.

Kristen Bateman said she would like to see a designated behavior

specialist in each of the schools.

“As a teacher in the elementary school, from a teaching point of view, maybe more teaching staff, smaller classroom sizes so we can do more enrichment during the day,” said Stanley M. Koziol Elementary School teacher Megan Lagimoniere.

Andy Paquette, the district’s financial officer, said he “would like to see less of a focus on high stakes testing and more focus on a solid K through 12 curricula as well as a balance of technological and constructional learning.”

Kate Marceau said she would like more communication about the school’s successes.

“The elementary school is a

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SPORTS

St. Onge hits milestone mark

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

GRANBY - While most high school basketball players dream about scoring 1,000 career points, only a handful of players actually accomplish the impressive feat.

The newest member of the elite 1,000-point club is Jocelyn St. Onge, who's a senior guard on the MacDuffie girls varsity basketball team.

St. Onge, who lives in Ware, achieved the milestone on a 3-point shot taken from the top of the key late in the first half of her team's 61-25 home victory over the Providence Country Day School, last Saturday afternoon.

"I've been putting a lot on myself during the past couple of games, so it feels amazing to finally get it done," St. Onge said. "Our next four games are on the road, so I'm extremely happy that I was able to share this moment with my family, friends and teammates. All of them have helped me get to this point."

A couple of Jocelyn's biggest supporters are her parents, Brian and Jolene, along with her older brother, Brett. Jocelyn's grandmother, Arlene, and several other relatives and friends attended last Saturday's game.

"My parents are my biggest cheerleaders," Jocelyn said. "It's really great to have their support. My older brother, Brett, is another big supporter of mine, along with my grandmother."

Brian St. Onge, who played basketball at Ware High School and is a member of the school's Athletic Hall of Fame, has broadcast local high school basketball games on WARE radio for the past 20 years. He hasn't missed any of his daughter's basketball or volleyball home or away games since she came to MacDuffie in the seventh grade. Following the milestone basket, Jolene St. Onge unveiled a 1,000-point banner.

Entering last Saturday's game, Jocelyn St. Onge was 19 points away from reaching the 1,000-point plateau. She finished the contest with a game-high 26 points. She has scored 10 or more points in all six games so far this season. She scored a season-high 30 points in the season opener at the Williams School, which is located in New London, Conn.

St. Onge has been a starter for the MacDuffie girls varsity basketball team since she was in the seventh grade.



Photos by David Henry sweetdogphotos.com

Jocelyn St. Onge, of Ware, drives to the basket. She scored her 1000th career point in the victory over Providence Country Day School.

Jocelyn St. Onge (second from the left) is joined by (from left to right) her father Brian, brother Brett and mother Jolene.

"Scoring 1,000 points has always been in the back of my mind since I became a member of the varsity team in the seventh grade, but my main focus has been to help my team win games," said St. Onge, who was also a member of the volleyball team. "I first realized that I would actually be able to score 1,000 points last year."

St. Onge is the only member of the Mustangs girls varsity basketball team who has scored 1,000

career points during the past five years. She has been the team's leading scorer in four out of the past five years. She also made a school record 18 consecutive free throws.

Prior to coming to MacDuffie, St. Onge attended St. Mary's Catholic School in Ware.

"I like a lot of things about MacDuffie and it has definitely been the perfect fit for me," St. Onge said. "I have wonderful

friends and teachers here. I've also met many people with different cultures. The school work is very challenging just like it was at St. Mary's."

Her two favorite subjects in the classroom are English and History. While St. Onge is an outstanding volleyball player, basketball

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Staff photo by Dave Forbes

Ware's Lexie Orszulak (4) goes up for a shot in the paint.

Third quarter run separates Palmer from Ware

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

PALMER - The rivalry girls basketball game between the Ware Lady Indians and the Palmer Lady Panthers was a very close affair during the first half.

The Lady Panthers took control of the non-league game with the help of a 10-0 run in the middle of the third quarter and they also ended a three-game losing streak against the Lady Indians with a 49-40 home victory, last Tuesday night, Jan. 2.

"It was a close game in the first half, but we played with a lot more intensity in the second half," said Palmer head coach Gerry Calvanese, who earned his first win against the Lady Indians. "It's a very big win for us against one of our biggest rivals."

Because the two teams are members of different leagues, it was their only meeting of the season.

While the Lady Panthers evened their season record at 3-3, the Indians (5-2) two losses have come on the road. They lost at Turners Falls by 15 points in the middle of December.

"I'm disappointed that we didn't take care of the ball a little bit better in the second half. We also didn't handle their pressure defense very well," said first-year Ware head coach Dan Orszulak, who previously had been the junior varsity basketball coach. "Palmer is a very talented young basketball team."

The lone senior listed on the Lady Panthers varsity roster is Allison King, who scored a team-high nine points. Junior Megan Wilson and freshman Madison Cole both finished the contest with eight points.

One of the Lady Indians four seniors is Jordan Halgas, who scored a game-high 16 points in her final appearance against Palmer.

Halgas, who joined the varsity basketball team as an eighth-grader, entered the game with a 3-2 record versus Palmer. She scored a total of 74 points in the six games against the Lady Panthers.

"We only play Palmer once this year, so this is a very disappointing loss for us. I really wish that we had another chance to play them again," Halgas said. "This is always a very big game for me because several of my relatives live in Palmer. It's the best feeling in the world whenever we did beat them."

One of her cousins is Kyle Mastalerz, who received the prestigious Leonard Bailey Award at halftime of the Panthers Thanksgiving Day football game against rival Ludlow.

Halgas, who's planning to play basketball at the collegiate level next year, spoke with Keri Doldoorian, who's an assistant women's basketball coach at Westfield State University, following the game.

The only other double-digit scorer See BASKETBALL, Page 10

Pioneers overrun by Duggan

By Dave Forbes
dforbes@turley.com

SPRINGFIELD - It was a tough night for the Pathfinder boys basketball team as they dropped a 101-34 decision to Duggan on Wednesday night.

Duggan rolled out to a lead quickly in this one as they jumped out to a 17-8 lead after the first quarter, 47-15 at the half and 73-24 at the end of the third.

Tyler Bienvenue led the charge for the Pioneers with 11 points. A.J. Oliveira was second with seven, followed by five from Joe Roman, four from Dylan Piscionari, three from Jon Lagrant, and two from Brandon McGee and Wilk Matthias.

Pathfinder was scheduled to play a pair of games this week as they had a game at Gateway on Tuesday and then traveled to the Dunbar Community Center in Springfield to face Hampden Charter at 7 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 12.

Orioles pull away from Indians

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN - Even though the Belchertown boys varsity basketball team held an eight-point halftime lead against Ware, second-year head coach Matt Stenuis thought his team should've had a double digit lead at the break.

Stenuis challenged his players at halftime to make a statement at the start of the second half.

The Orioles players responded very well, as they scored the first nine points of the third quarter en route to a 68-56 home victory over the Indians in a non-league contest, last Wednesday night. The 12-point victory also snapped Belchertown's two-game losing streak.

"We were up by eight points at halftime, but I really felt like we should've been leading by at least 16 points," Stenuis said. "We challenged the players at halftime to come out and make a statement at the start of the third quarter and they did. It also feels very nice to get a win after two road losses."

The Orioles, who lost at Renaissance and Mahar on back-to-back nights during the final week of December, improved their



Photos by David Henry sweetdogphotos.com

Robert Vierra (1) shoots a baseline jumper.

overall season record to 4-3. "We had chances to win our last two road games, but we're now back above the .500 mark again after winning tonight's game," said Belchertown senior forward Mitch Medina. "This was also the first time that we've faced Ware since I've been a member of the varsity basketball team. We really didn't know very much about them, but we did have the lead for almost the entire game, which was very

important." Medina, who scored a team-high 19 points versus Ware, needed 136 more points to join the elite 1,000-point club entering this week's action.

Two nights later, Medina scored a career-high 37 points in a 76-70 home loss to Pioneer Valley Regional.

Medina was aided offensively in last Wednesday night's game by senior guards Nolan Vogel,



John Soltys (3) dribbles the ball up the floor.

Michael Laughner, and Cyrus Raines, along with junior forward Nathan Wright. The foursome finished the contest with nine points apiece. Sophomore guard Owen Raines also scored seven points and junior guard Corey Lanoue rounded out the scoring column with six points.

"One of the things that I really liked was our balanced scoring. We had a lot of guys who finished with nine points," Stenuis said. "It

forced Ware to guard everyone and not just focus on one player."

The Indians, who defeated Turners Falls, 68-53, at home in a makeup game 24 hours earlier, had a 5-2 overall record following the road loss. In their first five victories of the regular season, the Indians were able to score 60 or more points.

"We played a game last night

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