

QUABOAG CURRENT

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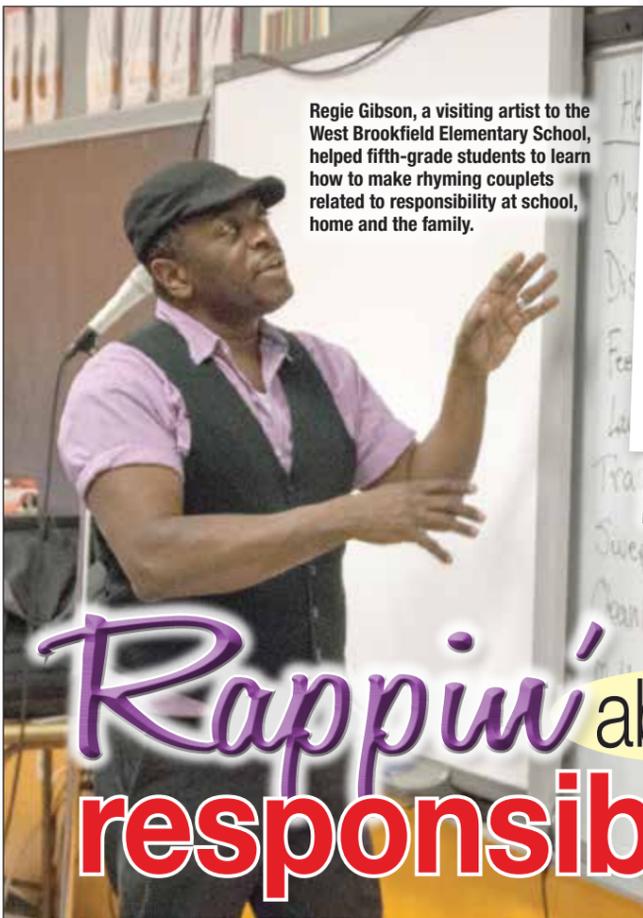
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Friday, February 2, 2018



Regie Gibson, a visiting artist to the West Brookfield Elementary School, helped fifth-grade students learn how to make rhyming couplets related to responsibility at school, home and the family.



Fifth-graders Juliana Sutter, Sadie May and Ella Martin rapped their rhymes about their responsibilities to take care of animals in their homes as part of an assignment for their music class.

Rappin' about responsibility

By Melina Bourdeau
Staff writer

WEST BROOKFIELD - Using a loop machine, drums or humming, fifth-graders at West Brookfield Elementary School rapped about responsibility with the aid of a visiting artist, Regie Gibson. Students in Stacy Simonson's music class read "The Lorax" by Dr.

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Master Plan adopted

By Tara Vocino and Eileen Kennedy

WEST BROOKFIELD - The Planning Board voted unanimously to adopt the town's first Master Plan on Jan. 8, making the Master Plan process complete. The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission has been working with the town for about a year, and the process is tentatively set to culminate with adoption by the Planning Board in January, according to Project Manager Jeff Bagg. Keith Arsenault, who served on the Master Plan Committee and still serves on the Planning Board said an implementation

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Pasta dinner helps with heating bills



TURLEY PUBLICATIONS CORRESPONDENT PHOTO BY TARA VOCINO
Guests stand for the national anthem during Hearts for Heat's spaghetti dinner Saturday night, which raised money to help low-income North Brookfield residents with their home heating bills.

By Tara Vocino
Correspondent

NORTH BROOKFIELD - Hearts for Heat's spaghetti dinner drew about 100 people to raise money for low-income residents during a very cold winter season. "We went to a breakfast in 2008 in Princeton, which was a plea for people to start their own chapters," Hearts for Heat President Suzanne Lewandowski said. "Besides North Brookfield, other chapters were launched in Leicester and Spencer." Disbursements facilitator Ellen Smith said preference is given to oil heat customers since oil trucks either come or

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Story of social acceptance, love, loss, art shared

QRMHS Drama Club performs 'RENT'

By Colleen Montague
Staff Writer

WARREN - The streets of New York were brought to life in the halls of Quaboag Regional Middle High School this past weekend as members of the Drama Club shared their production of the school edition of "RENT." The musical, loosely based on "La Boheme" by Puccini, follows a group of young musicians and artists—musician Roger (Sam Berthel), aspiring filmmaker Mark (Hunter Lynch), their neighbor Mimi (Sam Lacey), professor Collins

(Michale Friedrich), performing activist Maureen (Cassidy Morrow) and her girlfriend Joanne (Mary LePage), and street drummer Angel (Jacob Para)—in the Lower East Side of 1990s New York over one year of their lives as they struggle with creativity and their way of life. The production show their relationships and the emotions and conflicts that rise within them, causing the couples to break up and then reunite in the second act. The audience got to see them following their dreams, from Mark trying to create his film to Roger's struggle to write one last song; and the shadow of HIV and AIDS

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Bank robbing suspect held without bail

By Tara Vocino
Correspondent

WEST BROOKFIELD - A Springfield resident who allegedly robbed a West Brookfield bank recently was deemed dangerous after a hearing at Western Worcester District Court in Belchertown on Monday morning. Gary LaViolette, 32, of 5 Madison Ave., Springfield was

held without bail, and is due back in court for a status review on Feb. 26. The decision to hold him without bail was due to the nature and seriousness of the danger posed to any person or the community, the nature of the offense charged, the potential penalty LaViolette faces and his records of convictions.



Gary LaViolette

LaViolette was charged with armed robbery from the West Brookfield location of North Brookfield Savings Bank on Tuesday, Jan. 23 around 2:20 p.m. "The employees of the bank stated that the suspect said he had a gun," West

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TURLEY PUBLICATIONS STAFF PHOTO BY COLLEEN MONTAGUE
Vive la vie boheme! The cast celebrates the bohemian life and their lives as artists at the bar, and the protests against development in a nearby lot.



TURLEY PUBLICATIONS STAFF PHOTOS BY COLLEEN MONTAGUE

Rotary Club of the Brookfields members Dana Lloyd (back, right), Joy Rehfeld (right), Sally Mularz (center left) and Eric Rehfeld work in the kitchen preparing the evening's meal before the dinner guests arrive

Dinner and a dead body

Murder Mystery Players put on mystery

By Colleen Montague
Staff writer

WEST WARREN – Unlike in some murder mysteries, the butler didn't do it this past weekend at the murder mystery dinner fundraiser held at the Warren Senior Center presented by the Rotary Club of the Brookfields.

Featuring members from the Murder Mystery Players, dinner guests from the community were joined by a number of superheroes at their annual gathering—not any of the big names like Spiderman or Batman, but some with more odd abilities, from bringing plants back to life and making paint dry to controlling facial hair and secreting toothpaste from their knee.

But as these B-List heroes and guests settled down for a full meal in the



As superheroes and guests alike take their seats, "Superman" reveals there is a more grim reason for gathering everyone for the dinner: the body of building contractor Bill Cody had been in that very hotel not long before the gathering.

front room of the senior center all were given the shocking news that one of these heroes was, in fact, a murderer, for the body of Bill Cody had been found earlier. The unfortunate building contractor had died after suffering a sudden asthma attack.

In a situation where every character had the motive—from threats

to their employment to spurned former partners—members of the audience were asked to help in solving the case, hearing the facts and later questioning the suspects for some slipped detail and then writing down who they thought committed the crime, how and why they did it. Upon the conclusion of dinner, it was revealed that Bill Cody's murderer was his former partner Steph "Turpswoman" Little, at the hotel, with the paint fumes to trigger the asthma attack that killed him.

The Rotary Club will use the funds raised from the dinner to fund scholarships for the four schools in the seven towns the club serves. Funds the club raised from selling raffle tickets will go towards Angels and Backpacks, as the Rotary Club works with them to try and get a matching grant, which would go toward getting a vehicle for delivering food for their backpack program.

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they don't, Smith said. She advises residents to apply to the Worcester Community Action Council first, and for residents to present a letter of acceptance or rejection. Residents are often referred from the Senior Center, police, town offices or other avenues, Smith said.

Since 2008, Hearts for Heat has served 161 families in North Brookfield, Treasurer Michelle Petraitis said.

The Otters, a bluegrass band based in North Brookfield, provided entertainment throughout the evening.

Among the raffle items were a green Celtics basketball signed by Celtics Coach Brad Stevens, Celtics game tickets for Feb. 28 and Boston Red

Sox game tickets for April 28.

Ware resident Mona Dornan said she attended because fuel assistance for those is a good cause and she likes to listen to The Otters.

Ware resident Peg Trim said her husband, Craig, got lucky and won the Red Sox tickets a few years ago.

North Brookfield resident Karen McGrail said if she won the 50-50 raffle, she would give the money back to them. "It's been a cold winter," McGrail said. "People have trouble paying for their heat. This event helps them."

McGrail said as she was vying to win \$25 and \$50 gift cards, respec-

tively, from Inishowen Farms Perennials, of North Brookfield, and Spencer Greenery.

North Brookfield resident Bob LaFlamme was vying for \$217 worth of Celtics tickets as were nine high school and middle students.

"That's quite a value," LaFlamme said. "I hope I win. The only way I go is if I win tickets. I can't afford it."

His wife, Susan, said as winter gets cold, it is hard to pay for heat, and this dinner is great way to raise financial support.

Spencer resident Kelly Stevens said there's a big to help the needy with their heating bills.

ACCESS TO THE STARS



TURLEY PUBLICATIONS COURTESY PHOTO, RANDALL DECOTEAU

NEW YORK CITY – Pam Achilles, of Brookfield, meets Tony Shalhoub at the stage door following a performance of "The Band's Visit" at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre in New York as part of the annual Adventure Tours of Warren New York Theater Weekend.

MASTER PLAN | FROM PAGE 1

committee will be formed to focus on short-term and long-term goals the plan has focused on.

Among some of the goals selected by residents and elected officials, with help from CMRPC, are dredging Lake Wickaboag because of sediment build-up and invasive plants and putting together a handbook to make it easier for residents and developers to know what the rules are for a variety of permits. "It would indicate the steps that need to be taken and make it more simple and available all in the same place," he said.

Its focus on the Town Center has also led to a state grant that will let town officials, with help from CMRPC, focus on documenting what exists in that section, what may be needed and town bylaws that may need modification to make any zoning changes, he said.

On Dec. 12, 2017, a 95 percent draft of the plan was provided to town board and committee members, and the draft plan has been reviewed by the Planning Board, the Advisory Board, and the Board of Selectmen. The 100 percent draft version of the plan is currently available on the Master Plan project website: www.westbrookfieldmasterplan.com.

Directly resulting from the Master Plan process, residents identified a range of issues and opportunities in and around

the town center and portions of Route 9, Bagg went on to say. They held forums at Salem Cross Inn and at the elementary school.

"Over the course of the last year residents and business owners completed a survey with various land-use oriented questions, identified key preferences, and, learned about preliminary findings during community events," Bagg said. "Also, as part of the process, CMRPC completed an assessment of existing conditions, related to housing, land use, economic development, open space, historic resources, transportation, and town facilities."

In addition, a Route 9 and Route 67 corridor analysis was completed exploring existing uses, constraints and opportunities, Bagg said. Together, a series of issues and opportunities were identified, discussed, and mapped, and highlighted key areas to consider for zoning changes, and design standards. When the Planning Technical Assistance grant was announced by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs in October, CMRPC worked with the town to be included in a joint application, Bagg said.

A \$13,000 consulting services grant was awarded in mid-December, he said.

As a result of the funding, the town, through its Planning Board, will be able to explore in great

er detail the existing uses, buildings, and characteristics of the town center, and the types of new uses and development that may enhance and preserve its key qualities, Bagg said.

"This deeper dive represents a key step in beginning to implement goals and actions identified in the Master Plan," Bagg said. "Through amending the existing zoning bylaw, the town will be able to better ensure that new or changing land uses will be in line with, and representative of, the towns character and support its continued growth."

Some of the key elements of village center zoning include, at a minimum: tailoring the list of uses allowed to occupy existing buildings, creation of clearer standards for the location of parking, signs, and lighting and other items, and design guidelines for new construction, Bagg added.

"The process will include close consultation with the Planning Board, additional mapping of key areas of focus and identification of unique land use patterns," Bagg said. "At least one community event will allow residents to see and understand the nature and scope of any proposed zoning changes. Finally, the project will culminate with a zoning amendment or set of amendments being sent to a future Town Meeting for a vote."

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