

# WARE RIVER NEWS

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## Community, town officials rally against hate crime

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
pouimette@turley.com

WARE – School Committee Chair Brian Winslow read a statement from its members condemning an anonymous, racially charged letter targeting Superintendent Dr. Michael Lovato.

**“It is not okay, it is not acceptable, and it is not the majority point of view.”**

– Aaron Sawabi

“Recently, several incidences of harassment directed toward Dr.

Lovato have occurred and the Ware School Committee is committed to addressing them,” Winslow said at the Feb. 12 meeting. “Racism and hatred have no place in our schools, our community or our society...such behavior does not reflect the values of Ware, a community that has

always strived to be inclusive and welcoming to all. We urge everyone to join us in speaking out against these acts, standing in solidarity against hatred and fostering a culture of respect and unity in our schools and beyond.”

A police investigation is ongoing into who wrote this letter, which was placed on Lovato’s vehicle.

Committee member Christopher Desjardins made reference to the anonymous note, which named both himself and Winslow as agreeing with what Desjardins called, “disgusting thoughts.”

“This is not who I am as a person, who we are as a committee,

Please see **CRIME**, page 12

## A Valentine's Day celebration

Knights of Columbus served chicken dinner Saturday night

By Ryan Drago  
Staff Writer  
rdrago@turley.com

WARE – It was a Valentine’s Day celebration as guests gathered at St. Mary’s Church Hall for a baked stuffed chicken dinner prepared by members of the Knights of Columbus Ware Council 183.

Fifteen members of the council were on duty in the kitchen preparing the meals that featured chicken, mashed potatoes, gravy, corn, cranberry sauce and a dinner roll. Grand Knight of the Ware Council 183, Paul Harper was at the dinner and said the Knights made a total of 159 meals.

“Meals assist the Knights in paying for the community events we do throughout the year,” Harper said.

There are 150 members of the Knights of Columbus Ware



Turley Photos by Ryan Drago  
Sonny K, left, with Rachel and Ed Mace enjoying their baked stuffed chicken dinner cooked by Knights of Columbus Ware Council 183 at St. Mary’s Church Hall.

Please see **DINNER**, page 7

## Forum explores CDBG projects

By Ryan Drago  
Staff Writer  
rdrago@turley.com

WARREN – The Town of Warren is working with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission to pursue fiscal year 2025 Community Development Block Grant funds for some proposed activities.

There are several projects currently underway in Warren, including a Design Improvement Project for Cutter Park and the town common and infrastructure improvement projects for River Street and Central Street. This community forum was an opportunity for residents to learn about these projects and share their thoughts.

Please see **FORUM**, page 6

## CDA considers projects to benefit from CDBG funding

By Paula Ouimette  
Editor  
pouimette@turley.com

WARE – The Community Development Authority and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission held a public forum to discuss use of Community Development Block Grant funding for fiscal year 2025.

At the Feb. 10 forum, Erica Johnson, Principal Planner with PVPC, said CDBG funding is available every year and gives towns the opportunity to apply for a broad range of grant opportunities. She said the purpose of the forum is to talk about what com-

munity needs can be covered by the funding.

This year, the town can seek up to \$850,000 in CDBG funding, of which no more than 20% can be used for social services.

“It is federal funding that comes through the state,” Johnson said. “There’s a lot of regulation that comes along with it.”

Director of Planning & Community Development Paralee Smith said CDBG funding is how the town is able to help pay for social services, which have included the Ware River Valley Domestic Violence Task Force, The Literacy Project, Behavioral Health Network, the Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation’s Senior Outreach Program and more. The town is

Please see **CDA**, page 2

## Cards & Cupcakes enjoyed at Ware Library

By Ryan Drago  
Staff Writer  
rdrago@turley.com

WARE – The feeling of love was in the air at the Ware Library as guests got to enjoy making cards and decorating cupcakes.

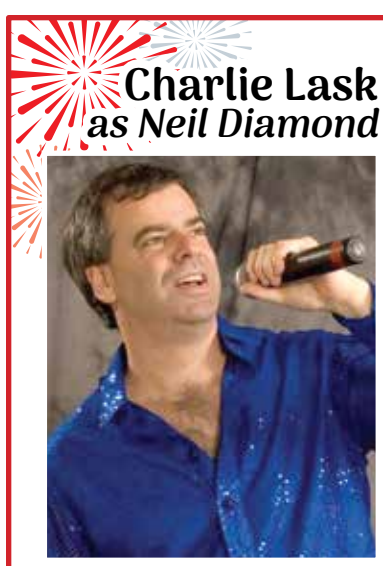
Children’s Room Librarian Cathy Goulet provided crafting materials and treats during a weekday craft called Cards & Cupcakes. Many of the supplies were generously donated by patrons of the library as card making is a fun annual activity the library puts together around Valentine’s Day.

Goulet recalls helping with starting the idea of card decorating at the library sometime around the years 2018 and 2019. Making Valentine cards in the Children’s Room is not only for kids, but adults love getting involved too.

Please see **CUPCAKES**, page 8



Turley Photo by Ryan Drago  
Brantley is shown with his Valentine’s Day card that he made during Cards & Cupcakes at the Ware Library.



Charlie Lask  
as Neil Diamond

## Celebrity Bartender & Wait Staff Night!!!

MONDAY, MARCH 3, 2025 at HANNA’S ON MAIN

5:15 P.M. to 7:30 P.M.

All Tips will be going toward the

Ware Fireworks Spectacular on August 8th!!!!

Help make this year’s show even bigger!!! Limited menu.

Come and enjoy the music of Neil Diamond featuring Charlie Lask

# SPORTS

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## Boys basketball finishes up with pair of wins



Noah Perry attempts the left-hand layup.



Justin Grout carefully angles into the paint.



Jack Gaudreau lunges for a shot.

**WARE** – The regular season came to an end last week with Ware scoring two more wins, a 72-46 win at home against Smith Vocational, and an impressive offensive outpour in a 92-50 win over Libertas Academy Charter School. The Indians finished with a very impressive 14-4 record. They will enter the state tournament next week. But this week, the Indians were scheduled to face off with Lee in the quarterfinals of the Western Mass. Class C Tournament.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com Owen McKeever heads for the paint.



Brodie Koczur goes for an off-balance shot during recent action.

### Amherst hockey gets top seed in tourney

**WEST SPRINGFIELD** – This week, the Amherst Regional High School ice hockey team will participate in the Western Mass Class B Tournament. The tournament, which will be held at Olympia Ice Center, will feature the top four teams in each class. Amherst, which co-ops with Pathfinder, will have the No. 1 seed, facing McCann Tech in the semifinals early this week. If the Hurricanes are successful, the Hurricanes would then face the winner of league rivals Agawam and Easthampton.

Amherst closed out its regular season with a 3-1 win against Taconic last Thursday evening at Orr Rink. All three goals in the game came from Benjamin Remensnyder. Amherst only allowed one first period goal to the Braves. The Hurricanes entered the tournament 11-5-1 and will be in action on next week in the state tournament. Seeds for that tournament will be announced this weekend.

### Indians can't hold lead at Palmer

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

**PALMER**—Holding onto a lead has been an issue for the Ware girls' basketball team this season.

The Lady Indians held a slim 19-18 advantage against archrival Palmer with 2:50 left in the third quarter.

**"Hopefully, we can play better in the state tournament."**

– Dan Orszulak

The Lady Panthers managed to score the final five points of the quarter, and they also added 14 more points during the fourth quarter for a 37-24 home victory on senior night, last Tuesday.

"We've had a hard time holding onto leads this season," said Ware head coach Dan Orszulak. "We struggled offensively in the second half of tonight's game. We missed a bunch of inside shots. We also gave up some easy shots defensively. It's a very frustrating loss."

While neither team qualified for the Western Mass. Class C tournament, the Lady Indians (10-8), who lost their fourth game in a

row, did qualify for the Division 5 state tournament because they finished the regular season with a .500 or better record. They were ranked 35th in the MIAA power rankings.

"We haven't played very well in two weeks," Orszulak added. "Hopefully, we can play better in the state tournament."

Freshman Amelia Orszulak scored eight of her team-leading nine points in the first half. Sophomore Reese McKeever checked in with five points and no other Ware player scored more than two points.

The only two seniors listed on the Lady Indians roster are Shelby Hogan and Tory Finocchio, who's sidelined with an injury.

Despite finishing the regular season with a 4-14 overall record, Palmer was ranked 32 in the latest MIAA Division 5 power rankings. The top 32 teams in each Division automatically qualifies for the state tournament.

"We're a young team this year and we really haven't paid very much attention to the power rankings," said Palmer co-varsity coach Denise Levasseur, who shares

the coaching duties with Amanda Theriault. "We won't be playing in the Western Mass. tournament, but we're still hoping to make the state tournament. You never know what's going to happen in the post-season tournament."

The four Lady Panthers seniors, who were honored in a pregame ceremony, are Jayda Pardo, Madison Rathbone, Nevaeh Solis, and Loretta Petrashewicz.

"We've been coaching three of the four seniors since they were in the second grade," Theriault said. "It's an end of an era for us, so it's a little bittersweet."

Solis, who didn't play basketball last year, is a first-year member of the Palmer varsity basketball team.

Loretta Petrashewicz and her younger sister, Addyson, led the way offensively against Ware with 10 points each. Pardo made a pair of 3-pointers for her 6 points.

Both teams had 5-0 runs during the first quarter.

The Lady Panthers took an 8-7 lead at the end of the opening quarter when 7th grader Anna King hit a 3-pointer from the top of the key.

Please see **INDIANS**, page 10

### Cougars grab victory over Pirates

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

**WARREN**—Quaboag junior forward Isaac Cower was forced to come out of last Thursday night's home game against SWCL rival Oxford late in the first quarter after he chipped a tooth.

Cower, who had scored seven points, returned to action at the start of the second quarter. He scored 25 more points over the final three quarters, as the Cougars wrapped up the regular season with a 63-48 senior night victory over the Pirates.

"I've never had a player score more than 30 points in a game after losing a piece of his tooth. Isaac is a very tough kid," said Quaboag head coach Chris Reilly. "It was a hard fought battle tonight, and we just found a way to come out on top."

Cower wound up making a total of seven 3-pointers giving him a season-high 32 points. His previous season-high was 22 points in a non-league 56-49 home win against Blackstone Valley Tech on January 10.

Even though Quaboag finished the regular season with a 5-13 overall record, they still qualified for the Central Mass. Class C tournament. The third-seeded Cougars were scheduled to play at second-seeded Oxford (4-14) in a semifinal game on Monday night. The semifinal winner was scheduled to face either top-seeded St. Paul or fourth-seeded Douglas in the Central Mass. finals at Shrewsbury High School on Wednesday afternoon. The losers of semifinal games also faced each other.

Reilly Comptois and Hart Waz, who are the only seniors listed on the Cougars varsity roster, were honored in a ceremony held prior to the start of last Thursday's contest.

Comptois didn't get to play on senior night because he suffered a left foot injury in Quaboag's previous game against Tantasqua Regional.

"It's sad that Reilly Comptois wasn't able to start on senior night,"

Please see **COUGARS**, page 11

### Panthers fall in Class B tournament



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli Bella Smith crosses midcourt.

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

**AUBURN** — The Quabbin girls' basketball team captured the Central Mass. Class B championship title last February with a 12-point victory over Notre Dame Academy at Worcester State University.

The members of this year's Lady Panthers squad were hoping to make another visit to the WSU gymnasium.

Third-seeded Quabbin, who graduated four starters, was trailing second-seeded Auburn, 36-33, entering the final eight minutes of this year's Central Mass. Class

B semifinal game.

It didn't remain a close game for very long, as the Rockets built a 15-point lead three minutes into the fourth quarter leading to 52-38 home victory, last Friday night.

"We really wanted to get back to the championship game again and I'm very proud of these kids," said Quabbin head coach Evan Barringer. "Give Auburn a lot of credit because they shot the ball very well during the second half. It's very hard to win a playoff game on the road."

Please see **PANTHERS**, page 10



Brooke Austin reaches out for a loose ball.