



TODAY'S QUOTE

"The only gift is a portion of thyself." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

TOMORROW'S WEATHER



Scattered T-storms
High 82
Low 67

WINNING LOTTERY NUMBERS

MASS. DAILY NUMBERS drawn Monday afternoon were:
8-4-2-3

MASS DAILY NUMBERS drawn Monday night were:
2-6-1-3

Cash Winfall
6-10-14-2-34-37

LOCAL



The Hot Spot
Page A3

SPORTS



PBA Championship
Page A10

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

WHAT'S HAPPENING 'BEYOND OUR BORDERS'
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OPINION

GET YOUR POINT ACROSS
PAGE A4

WHAT TO DO

A CALENDAR OF AREA EVENTS
PAGE A5

TIME PASSAGES ...



Christopher Tanguay photo, above/ NOAA chart, center/ courtesy photo below

Dot Warren examines photos she took as a young girl, depicting the damage caused to her family's East Brimfield homes during the flood of 1955. A weather map shows the path of hurricanes Connie and Diane in August, 1955. Floodwaters are seen approaching the front door of Warren's sister's home in East Brimfield.

When the waters came

HOW THE FLOOD OF '55 KILLED EAST BRIMFIELD

BY CHRISTOPHER TANGUAY
NEWS STAFF WRITER

(EAST) BRIMFIELD — Fifty-four years ago today — Aug. 19, 1955 — the Quinebaug River swelled to previously unseen levels, devastating homes throughout southern Worcester County, as the result of hurricanes Connie and Diane.

One of the most heavily damaged areas was the village of East Brimfield. Originally settled as a mill village in the early 19th century using the Quinebaug for power, East Brimfield sprang up literally feet from the river's normal edge, which made it a prime location for a flood plain.

As part of the Army Corps of Engineers' flood protection project, initiated by Congress in response to the Flood of '55, the village was vacated, the buildings either moved or demolished, and the East Brimfield Dam was built, hiding what was once a bustling town beneath the unassuming water of the East Brimfield Reservoir.

"That dam is right in my backyard," said Dorothy "Dot" Warren — or Dorothy St. Pierre to her East Brimfield



Please Read FLOOD, page A14

Man charged with stabbing

QUESTION REMAINS IF VICTIM IS PREGNANT OR NOT

BY GUS STEEVES
NEWS STAFF WRITER

SOUTHBRIDGE — Claiming that he told police he was "going to abort the pregnancy 'one way or the other,'" court documents accuse a young Southbridge man of trying to murder his pregnant girlfriend over the weekend.

Alex Santana, 18, faces trial for assault with intent to murder and assault with a dangerous weapon (knife). He's being held on \$500,000 cash bail or \$5 million surety at Worcester County House of Correction.

Very early Friday morning, police received a 911 call reporting that a woman was

bleeding and allegedly stabbed at 78 Pine St. When Officer Michael Corriveau arrived just after 2:30 a.m., he found Leah Diver, 28, "laying on her right side in a large puddle of blood."

She was still conscious, telling him she had just had an argument with Santana and "had been stabbed several times." Santana, however, had already fled the scene.

Diver "became very weak and began falling in and out of consciousness" before the ambulance arrived, Corriveau wrote.

Police Chief Daniel Charette said paramedics

Please Read STABBING, page A8

A 'frequent fliers' fine?

PROPOSAL AIRED FOR RECOUPING SOME POLICE COSTS

BY GUS STEEVES
NEWS STAFF WRITER

SOUTHBRIDGE — Should owners of houses repeatedly visited by the police pay for the service?

That's an idea proposed last month by Sgt. Gerald Arvelo in a letter to Police Chief Daniel Charette obtained by the *Southbridge Evening News*.

Arvelo argued more than three calls for service to the same address per year should be subject to "a \$100 service fee for each additional response."

"It has been my observation that the vast majority of disturbance calls seem to be originating from the same handful of buildings and residences in our town,"

Arvelo wrote, in his letter dated July 3.

After listing five specific addresses as examples, he claims "several neighbors" have expressed fear for themselves and their children and that the "disturbances are a result of constant partying, drug activity and firearms."

Town Councilors Steven Lazo and Al Vecchia said they had never heard of the proposal as of Monday evening and could not recall ever seeing such a letter. Vecchia's subcommittee, Protection of Persons and Property, reviews almost everything having to do with the police department.

Please Read FINES, page A7

Water requests before Sturbridge

PROPOSED GAS/SERVICE STATION AT ROM'S SITE AGAIN DISCUSSED

BY CHRISTOPHER TANGUAY
NEWS STAFF WRITER

STURBRIDGE — Bertin Engineering's Mike Loin is becoming a fixture at the Sturbridge Senior Center.

Following up on an ongoing public hearing with the Planning Board, which entered its fourth session last Tuesday, Loin met with the Board of Selectmen on Monday to again discuss the fate of 173 Main St.

The parcel, which consists of approximately 44 percent of the parking lot outside the former Rom's Restaurant on Route 131, is currently owned by JCJ Realty Trust. Before the town is a proposal for a gasoline/service station and convenience store on the property. Loin was before the selectmen this

week to request an additional 607-gallon-per-day allocation of water to the locale.

Loin explained that little more than 800 gallons of water would be used by the facility each day under the heaviest circumstances. With 200 gallons already allocated to the parcel, Loin explained the additional 600 gallons should have come with the land.

By selling off 44 percent of the parking lot, Loin said the restaurant facility can never operate at the same capacity as it once did, therefore using less water if it were to reopen.

Without permission from the Roscioli family — proprietors of Rom's and

Please Read WATER, page A7

FRONT ROW, CENTER



Shawn Kelley photo

SOUTHBRIDGE — Patrons sit back, relax and enjoy the show as Weight of Gravity performs on the Town Common this past Sunday evening. The 2009 Concert on the Common series is sponsored by the Southbridge Downtown Partnership. Next up on the concert schedule is Beatles tribute and oldies band, Skidmarks. See additional photos, Page A-12.



Brimfield resident recalls the Flood of '55

FLOOD
continued from page A1

neighbors — a former resident of East Brimfield who, after more than half a century, recalled life in the lost village and what it was like to move after the flood.

"I was 16 years old when that hit the village," Warren said of the flood as she leafed through black and white photos she took with her own Brownie camera, depicting the floodwaters rising against the side her family's home and business, Ann's Country Store.

"I was born the year they bought that building," Warren, one of 10 children, said. "1938," — the year of another devastating New England hurricane.

Growing up in the village, Warren said she was surrounded by hardworking, humble people, many of whom were employed at Southbridge's American Optical company, including Warren's father and mother

SNAPSHOT OF A DISASTER

Editor's note: It was a devastating one-two punch for southern New England. Hurricane Connie skirted the Atlantic coast, veering west through Pennsylvania and dropping as much as 6 inches of rain on the region from Aug. 11-12, 1955. A week later, Hurricane Diane dealt a heavy blow to New England traveling Long Island Sound after making initial landfall over the Carolinas. This region was soaked with another 18-20 inches of rain in two days. Towns along both sides of the Connecticut/Massachusetts border saw flooding on Aug. 19 as the Housatonic, Naugatuck and Quinebaug rivers saw near record flows. Another four-day storm in October would inundate western Connecticut a second time.

More than 200 dams in New England sustained partial to total failure — many south of Worcester in the Thames and Blackstone headwaters. When it was all over 180 lives had been lost and more than \$680 million in property damages recorded.

— Source: www.erh.noaa.gov/nerfc/historical/aug1955.htm

who worked there for more than 40 and 20 years, respectively.

"We didn't have that much, but we appreciated what we had," Warren said.

Warren recalled playing pick-up baseball games and

jumping hop-scotch in the road near her house, as the only time children had to worry about any traffic were early in the morning and late in the afternoon when everyone's parents were making their daily commutes to and from work.

Roller-skating, ice-skating, sledding and other activities are all things Warren remembers taking part in with the children of the village. She remembered purchasing fresh corn and homemade blueberry muffins from neighbors in the village as well.

A center of activity, she recalled, was the Bonnette's house, where an evening movie could be viewed for 10 cents.

"They had a dance now and then for the kids of the village," Warren added about the Bonnettes.

At 16, Warren got her first summer job, working in Palmer. She recalled the morning of Aug. 19, standing outside with her umbrella and lunch, waiting for her ride to work.

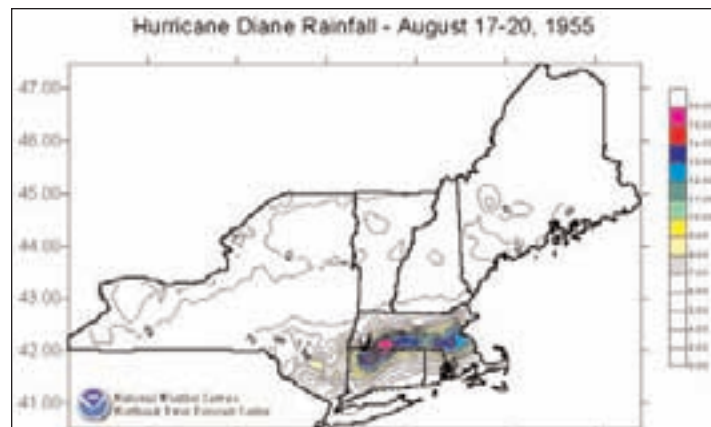
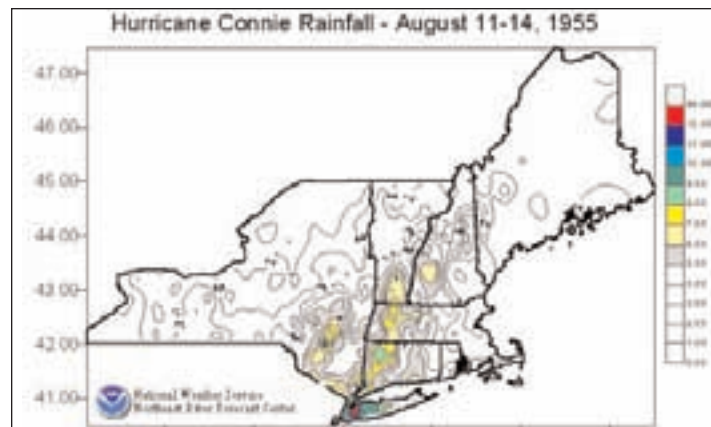
"It had rained for days already," Warren said. "I heard this noise — a terrible, terrible noise — and there went the bridge."



BIRD'S EYE VIEW, EAST BRIMFIELD, MASS.



Top, Courtesy photo Brimfield Historical Society/Bottom, courtesy Emily Faxon Gillman via Dick Whitney/ maps, NOAA
Above, East Brimfield is seen at its heyday before the 1955 flood. Bottom photo, the Flats in Southbridge at the height of the flooding on Aug. 19, 1955. NOAA maps outline the rainfall accumulations that resulted in the flooding.



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Seeing the torrent of water rushing toward her, Warren ran inside her house.

"I was shocked," she said. "It was scary."

"We moved everything that we could possibly move from the cellar up," she said.

Having lost electricity, Warren said her mother set up a makeshift burner using bottled gas and cooked all the food in the family's freezer so it wouldn't spoil.

"You had to kind of utilize what was in the house," she said.

As soon as the cooking

was complete, Warren said, the gas bottle dislodged and began drifting away. In a display of just how closely knit the people of the village were, Warren said a neighbor — who had previously lost an arm in a construction accident — dove into the water and retrieved the bottle.

During the flood, Warren said water filled their basement and reached just below their first floor. Her sister, who lived next door at the time, had the first floor of her home completely flooded.

In the days following the flood, Warren said the mess

left behind was unimaginable.

"It took forever to dry that place out," she said. "It took forever."

Warren left home the following year, in 1956, after graduating from Tantasqua High School, and moved to Chicopee where she was married and started a family.

Now a resident of Brimfield once again and a mother of four, grandmother of five, and great-grandmother of five, Warren recalled watching her childhood home leveled to the ground as part of the ACOE's flood control project, which began in 1957.

"The government gave everyone \$8,000 for their houses," she said. "Ours was the last one to be demolished."

Two homes from East Brimfield survived the flood control project by being moved to new locations. The Brimfield Congregational Church, which is now a Baptist church, is the only East Brimfield building still standing in its original location.

One building, though demolished in the ACOE project, was relatively unscathed during the flood. Warren said the owner was known to the whole village as, "Grandma Nichols."

"The house across the street from us never got touched," she said of Grandma Nichols' house.

Looking back on her childhood, growing up in a village that no longer appears on modern maps, and the experience of surviving a flood that changed the landscape of southern Worcester County, Warren she wouldn't have wanted to grow up anywhere else.

"It was a wonderful childhood growing up there," she said.

News staff writer Christopher Tanguay may be reached at (508) 909-4132, or by e-mail at ctanguay@stonebridgepress.com.

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Dr. Islam completed her residency in Family Medicine of the Family Medicine SUNY Health Science Centre of Brooklyn, N.Y. She is a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians.

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