



TODAY'S QUOTE

"What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly."

Thomas Paine

LOCAL



South Pond celebrates America with boat parade Page A2

SPORTS



Oxford Senior Leaguers win wild affair to move to state final Page A10

WINNING LOTTERY NUMBERS

MASS. DAILY NUMBERS drawn Tuesday afternoon were: 9-9-9-8

MASS DAILY NUMBERS drawn Tuesday night were: 4-7-5-1

MASS CASH 06-10-11-18-30
MEGAMILLIONS 02-04-17-36-40
MEGABALL: 05

OPINION



Running for Kyle Page A4

OPINION

GET YOUR POINT ACROSS PAGE A4

WHAT TO DO

A CALENDAR OF AREA EVENTS PAGE A5



Sturbridge natives reaching 'Tall Heights' in music scene

ACOUSTIC DUO BRINGING THEIR SOUND BACK HOME NEXT WEEK



BY JOY RICHARD
STONEBRIDGE PRESS STAFF WRITER
STURBRIDGE — Tim Harrington and Paul Wright are coming home. Making music their lives, Harrington and Wright, also known as folk duo "Tall Heights," will bring their

sound back to the area during an upcoming concert on the common.

For the Sturbridge natives, making music is not only their passion — it is now their livelihood.

Tall Heights has been performing together since 2010, and are now taking their signature brand of acoustic/folk/pop to the masses. Wright said their next show in the area will be on Tuesday, July 22, at the Brimfield Town Common from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Wright, who plays the cello,

Courtesy photo
Sturbridge natives Tim Harrington and Paul Wright get into a recent performance with their musical duo Tall Heights. The pair will perform in Brimfield during an upcoming concert on the common on Thursday, July 22.

Please Read TALL HEIGHTS, page A8

A better way to battle a blaze

GRANT FUNDING BRINGS UPDATED FIRE APPARATUSES TO STURBRIDGE, NORTHBRIDGE

BY JOY RICHARD
STONEBRIDGE PRESS STAFF WRITER

With municipal budgets tight for the foreseeable future, and seemingly only getting tighter, local public safety departments are depending more on federal funding for projects and equipment.

According to Sturbridge Fire Chief David Zinther, the Sturbridge Fire Department's recent acquisition of funding for a new brush truck couldn't have come at a

better time.

He said the money, which was awarded through the highly sought after Assistance to Firefighters Grant, which is through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), will go toward a new "state-of-the-art brush firefighting truck."

According to Lt./EMT-I Nicholas DaDalt, the department was presented with \$159,600 on Friday, July 11.

Zinther said the truck would replace

the department's current brush truck, which is many years old and was converted from a former military truck to the current brush apparatus.

He said with the new official truck, which will be designed especially to fight off road blazes, will be a big help in the instance of a forest fire, or to travel anywhere a heavier fire rig can't.

"This was a year-long process," said Zinther,

Please Read GRANT, page A9



Amanda Collins photos

The museum's director, Dick Whitney, kneels to show one of the many parts of American Optical preserved and displayed at 12 Crane Street.

Visions of the past

OPTICAL HERITAGE MUSEUM TAKING SHAPE, SEEKING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

BY AMANDA COLLINS
NEWS STAFF WRITER

SOUTHBRIDGE — From lensometers and spectacles to funky frames and even goggles used to view atomic blasts, a treasure trove of all things optical sits tucked into a bright upstairs space in the 12 Crane Street Building.

With trinkets dating from the very beginnings of the American Optical Company in the 19th century to modern day, the Optical Heritage Museum is a place where the history of an industrial giant and the town of Southbridge meet.

The stories of the people who grew up and worked in the Eye of the Commonwealth and the ophthalmic company that gave the town its nickname are truly intertwined — and they're all told through pictures and paintings, tools and artifacts, lenses and frames, gathered and preserved over the



The "AO" room has trinkets, tools and treasures dating back to the 1800's.

course of more than 180 years and displayed for the public to freely view.

The museum is sponsored by Carl Ziess Vision, and run by a Board of Directors and group of volunteers, including director Dick Whitney and curator Donna Silverberg. The Optical Heritage Museum has contin-

Please Read MUSEUM, page A16



ON PARADE

David Dore photos

EAST BROOKFIELD — East Brookfield's annual Independence Day Celebration, organized by the Friends for the Community and the East Brookfield Fire Association, was held Friday, July 11 and Saturday, July 12. Starting Friday night with a carnival, it continued Saturday with a pancake breakfast, parades, a firemen's muster, a children's jigsaw puzzle scavenger hunt, open houses, a softball game, music, plenty of food, a chicken barbecue sponsored by the Spencer Fire Association and the fireworks display.



Above :The Southbridge Fire Department brought Engine 3 to the East Brookfield Independence Day Celebration parade.

At left: The Sturbridge Fire Department was among the agencies from Massachusetts and Rhode Island represented in the Independence Day Celebration parade.

Decision to lay off Spanish teacher blasted at Quaboag

BY DAVID DORE
STONEBRIDGE PRESS STAFF WRITER

WARREN — Teachers, parents, students and alumni attended the July 14 Quaboag Regional School Committee's Budget Subcommittee meeting to send a message.

The message was sim-

ple: It was a bad idea to lay off a Spanish teacher and end foreign language classes at Quaboag Regional Middle School.

"I do not believe cutting the Spanish program in half is in any way in the best interest of our students," said Quaboag Regional Middle/High School teacher and

Athletic Director David Bouchard. "It's not. It limits our students' opportunities, and it limits their opportunities in the future. I can't believe that there is not a better solution."

The elimination of one of the two Spanish teaching positions at the middle/high school was

among three posts cut from the fiscal 2015 budget after the district and officials from Warren and West Brookfield agreed on a "compromise" budget that prevented even deeper cuts. Also eliminated were a math teacher's position and a vacant librarian's position, both at the

middle/high school.

"Those are not easy cuts to swallow," Superintendent of Schools Brent Kustigian said Monday night. "These are very difficult decisions that I don't take lightly."

Quaboag serves

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Optical Heritage Museum hitting its stride

MUSEUM

continued from page A1

ued to evolve since first opening its doors on Crane Street in November, but its roots go back more than three decades.

The original "AO Museum" opened in 1983, on the company's 150th anniversary, at American Optical's main plant, where it stayed until 2000. With more than 3,000 frames, the museum had one of the largest collections of spectacle frames and other optical items, and in 1987 was named the Optical Heritage Museum and was given a non-profit status. Over the years, traffic at the museum

became stagnant, and when the Southbridge Conference Center was torn down and rebuilt, the legacy of Southbridge's most successful company was stuffed into boxes and packed away in storage.

For seven years, Whitney, a self-proclaimed history buff with an affinity for preserving the past, was the guardian of the AO treasures, keeping it all stored above his office, and grabbing what else he could as more buildings were shut down.

"I saw everything around be changing, and I wanted to hold on to and preserve a little of what was," he said. "As a collector, I just felt a sense of responsi-

bility."

In early 2013, he began moving it all to its new home on Crane Street, starting with the "Beecher case," an old trunk with handwritten notes and various tools, belonging to William Beecher, who founded AO in 1833. Now, their six-room display has everything from vintage advertisements to safety glasses to some of the world's

first lens crafting and measuring machines.

Though the museum has been open since late last year, Whitney said it's just really started to take shape in the last few months.

"We're still not done - there is more we can do," he said, explaining that more than featuring optical treasures, he's hoping to preserve some other important parts of the town's his-

tory at the museum. In a way, a visit to the museum is more than a glimpse into the story behind AO - it's a walk through American history from the Industrial Revolution to the beginning of the new millennium.

"You can visit Old Sturbridge Village, and see life in 1830's, and this is sort of what happened next," said Whitney. "This is

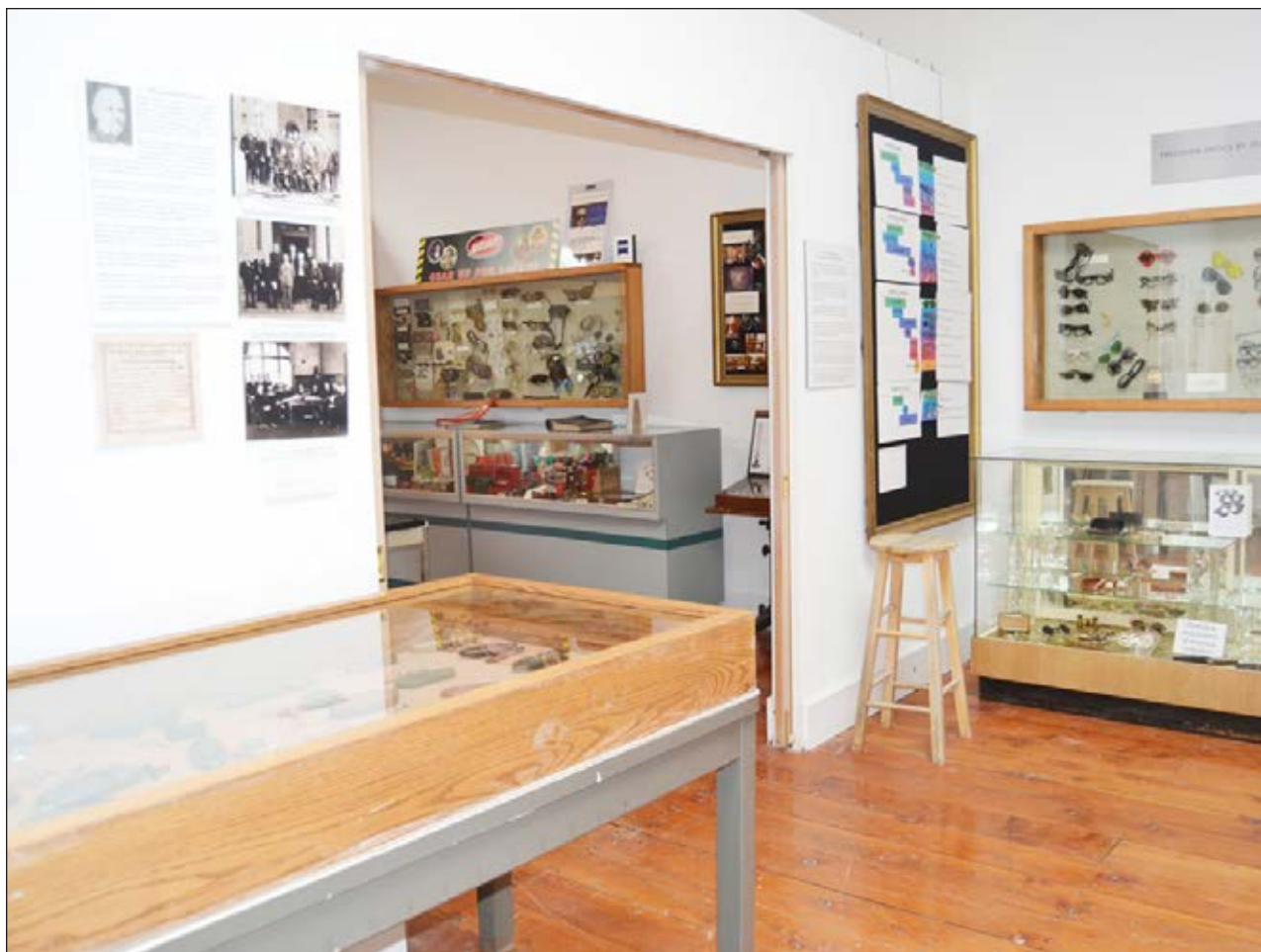
Southbridge. We want the town to know we're here, and get behind it."

The Optical Heritage Museum is open by appointment. For more information, visit opticalheritagemuseum.org.

Amanda Collins may be reached at (508) 909-4132 or by e-mail at acollins@stonebridgpress.com.



A display of step-by-step instruction guides used by AO employees.



One of the six display rooms at the Optical Heritage Museum.

Amanda Collins photos



The museum's curator, Donna Silverberg, stands under a Southbridge timeline that she's creating, that stretches the length of the museum.

Knight automotive

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