Classical graduate is MBTA’s top cop

Green in charge of Transit Police

BY PAUL HALLORAN

Ken Green recalls listing “police detective” as a career goal in the 1978 Classical yearbook. As it turns out, he was underestimating himself.

Green was named permanent chief of the MBTA in October, after serving as acting chief for a year. He was the internal candidate in a pool of 69 applicants who sought to replace Paul MacMillan.

When it became known that Green was one of six finalists, he drew the strong support of

See GREEN page 10

Extra credit: College starts in high school

BY PAUL HALLORAN

There is no shortage of talk about making college more accessible and more affordable. In Lynn, talk has led to action, and high-school students stand to benefit greatly.

The initiative is called CommUniverCity, and it was formalized Dec. 11 at North Shore Community College when Superintendent of Schools Dr. Catherine C. Latham and NSCC President Dr. Patricia Gentile signed a memorandum of understanding. Also participating were Mayor and Lynn School Committee Chair Judith Flanagan Kennedy and Salem State University President Dr. Patricia Maguire Meservey.

CommUniverCity is an urban education-workforce development collaboration that aims to provide effective and affordable educational pathways from pre-school to graduate school and into the workforce.

The cornerstone of the CommUniverCity initiative is a dual-enrollment program whereby Lynn Public Schools students can take college courses at NSCC.

See COLLEGE page 11
Local author shares gift of reading with students at three Lynn schools

As part of Lynn Public Schools’ celebration of Literacy Awareness Month in November, local author Nila J. Webster visited three schools — and she did not show up empty-handed.

Webster, of Revere, donated new books to more than 3,000 students in grades 3, 9 and 10.

Starting her literacy tour at the Harrington School, which she has been visiting for the last 10 years, Webster gathered with third-graders in the library and encouraged them to explore the “magic of creative writing and your imagination.”

Webster gave students a copy of her children’s book *The Gift of You,* *The Gift of Me,* a book about courage, friendship and anti-bullying, written in English and Spanish. She asked the third-graders if they would help with a special project. Next month, another new book will be provided for each third-grader to deliver to a second-grader, as a way of paying forward the positive energy.

When each third-grader gives a book to a second-grader, both students will pledge not to engage in bullying, and to see the gift in everyone. This will allow the third-graders to be role models for younger children, and to know the joy of giving as well as receiving.

“The program is called “Get a Book / Give a Book” and Lynn Public Schools is the first district in Massachusetts to provide this added dimension of the book donations. “The leadership of Lynn Public Schools is in the vanguard,” said Webster, who has donated more than 70,000 books around the world.

“Without the support of Dr. (Catherine) Latham, principals and librarians, these donations would not be possible.”

Webster also visited English and Classical, where she gave freshmen and sophomores a copy of *Where the Poems Dance,* a creative workbook that invites students to reflect and create through poetry, artwork and stories.

Latham, who accompanied Webster to all three schools, said the author continues to be an inspiration for students and staff.

“Nila’s message resonates with students every time she visits,” Latham said. “She has left an indelible impression on thousands of our students over the years, and her generosity is amazing.”

Webster first visited Harrington School in 2006 at the request of Carole Shutzer, the school librarian. She has come back annually since then, reading to students and talking about creative writing and poetry.

After her mother’s death, and faced with her own mortality after being diagnosed with terminal lung cancer in 2010, Webster decided to donate books as a means of leaving part of herself behind.
Elementary school students in Lynn are studying a new science curriculum that is designed to give them a deeper understanding of what they learn. “The lessons start by teaching content, then there is an activity to deepen the learning,” said Rick Held, assistant director of science for Lynn Public Schools.

Teachers utilize SMART boards, videos and books to engage the students. The activities are not only hands-on, Held said, but also “minds-on.” “We want to get the kids thinking about science,” Held said, “so they can take the content and learn more deeply.”

Held and a half-dozen educators wrote the curriculum over the last nine months. “It was created by a team of Lynn teachers for Lynn students,” he said.

Working on the new science curriculum were: Kelley Breen, Ashley Burke, Kristen Burke, Christine McCarriston, Carole Shutzer and Katia Spiess.

“Rick Held and the teachers and staff who worked on this curriculum did a fantastic job,” Superintendent Dr. Catherine C. Latham said. “Thanks to their efforts, our elementary students are learning science in a new and exciting way.”

The activities in the lessons include studying butterflies, the life cycle of a frog, solar power and electrical circuits. There are also twin textbooks – a fiction and non-fiction – in grades 1-2. For example, when studying rocks and minerals students will read “Sylvester and the Magic Pebble” as well as non-fiction books about rocks.

There are embedded videos for each unit intended to engage students and help teachers in their presentation of the material. “There is a lot of teacher support,” Held said. “Elementary teachers are typically English Language Arts and math specialists. We want to make it easy for them to teach science.”

The feedback has been positive. “The teachers are very excited about it and the students are really enjoying it,” Held said. “It’s simple to use and it really engages students.”

Callahan School second-grade teacher Kim Staples said students particularly enjoy the interactive nature of the lessons. “It’s highly visual, which is fantastic,” said Staples, a 30-year teacher. “The graphics are fantastic. It’s teacher-friendly and user-friendly. The kids are eager to learn science.”

**Hour of Code**

The Hour of Code is a one-hour introduction to computer science, designed to demystify code and show the students that anybody can learn the basics. It takes place each year during Computer Science Education Week which was Dec. 7-13, 2015.

At left, Cobbet Elementary students Billy Chavez and Jazlie Contreras work together on their code project.

On the right, Cobbet students Franklin Gonzales and Neidy Merida-Lopez display their certificate of completion. Shannon Bansfield, assistant director of technology for LPS, teaches the introductory class.
Kathy Hood
a ‘true leader’
at Cobbet

BY MICHELE DURGIN

Cobbet Elementary School Principal Susanne Garrity knows Kathy Hood is a “special” teacher – in more ways than one.

“Kathy is an exceptional teacher,” Garrity said of Hood, the lead special education teacher at Cobbet.

Hood has been an elementary/special education teacher in Lynn Public Schools for 32 years, the last 22 at Cobbet. She can be found daily in a transitional kindergarten class for students who are developmentally delayed due to language skills, autism or physical disabilities. She currently works with 12 students along with Karen Patrikas, a paraprofessional who has been at her side for 20 years.

“We make a good team,” Patrikas said as Garrity smiled in agreement.

Hood takes her job seriously, arriving at school to plan out her day at 6:20 a.m., 90 minutes before students arrive and the school day begins.

“My children start with breakfast in the classroom and then we break into reading groups and we’re in full swing,” Hood said. Soon it is lunchtime and the children enjoy play time. The afternoon is spent working on other subjects including phonics, music, art and physical education. Math rounds out the day and before she knows it another day has come to a close.

Hood says goodbye to her students and looks forward to the next morning when she will see them again. “They make me so proud each and every day,” she said.

The day does not end there for Hood, who often finds herself talking with other teachers about best practices for their classrooms and sharing ideas to inspire the young learners in their care.

Garrity calls Hood a “true leader in the building” who runs a successful mentoring program for all new teachers at Cobbet. Hood is quick to deflect credit. “I get new ideas from other teachers and we all work together as a team,” she said. “I think the staff here is fantastic. The advice I usually give is to take it one day at a time.”

She is thankful to feel the support of many parents, too. “They are so cooperative and really value the learning going on inside the classroom,” Hood said. “This is a wonderful school and we are lucky to have such a supportive principal.”

Hood said she is not ready to end her time as a teacher anytime soon. “I love my job and I will know when it is time to retire. I can tell you for sure that I plan to be here for awhile.”

Kathy Parker’s story is a balancing act

BY MICHELE DURGIN

Many people might say that wife, mother, Lynn schoolteacher and children’s author Kathy Parker wears so many hats that she must be going in 33 directions every day. And while that might be true to an extent, she would say the fact that her various roles are so interconnected allows her to keep everything in its proper perspective.

Parker’s first children’s book, Fred Freckle, a heartwarming story about a little boy’s desperate desire to find just one freckle somewhere on himself, was published in 2010. She published her second book in 2015, Germ Boy, which addresses the burning question of so many youngsters: “If I don’t wash, will I turn into a germ?”

Both books are written for children ages 3-9 and have been well received by readers. Parker is quick to give her own children, Jake and Aaron, credit for the topics of the books.

“I have gained insight through a mother’s eyes,” said Parker, a special education teacher at Lynn Woods Elementary School. “Kids notice the little things in life, such as freckles and germs, and as a result, the stories were brought to life for me.”

Parker is a lifelong Lynner and a proud product of Lynn Public Schools, graduating from Lynn English. She earned a bachelor’s degree in special education and English at Bridgewater State University and a master’s in English at Salem State.

When asked who or what has been her motivator and inspiration Parker was quick to answer. “Both my mother, Joanne, and my husband, Frank, encourage and motivate me,” she said. “My mother has always been a strong role model for me as a hard-working mother. Somewhere, she did it all. I try to emulate her. My husband encourages me to take the time to continue with my writing. He believes in me and is my biggest cheerleader.”

Success is a word that has many interpretations, depending on where one is on life’s journey. For Parker, success is difficult to define and ever changing. “For me, success is achieving a goal I set for myself,” she said. “It could be in the daily juggle of being a full-time teacher, a mother and wife, author, and household manager. Lately, success feels like packing a homemade lunch for my kids, remembering it’s recycling day, or just knowing we are providing for our children.

“In terms of writing,” she added, “success was when Mirror Publishing said ‘yes’ when others had said ‘no thanks.’ But the greatest feeling of success comes when children and parents stop to tell me that they love my stories. That is a truly heartwarming and successful feeling.”

Parker takes none of her experiences for granted and is grateful for the literary accolades she is receiving. She still considers herself to be an “aspiring author.”

What the future holds for this energetic and talented woman is anyone’s guess, including Parker’s. “I’m happy in each of my roles and I look forward to many happy and wonderful days to come,” she said.

And so as Kathy Parker gathers her hats and prepares to move on, one thing is certain: She wears them all very well.
Sewell-Anderson Elementary School was one of only five schools in Massachusetts and 335 nationwide to be named a 2015 National Blue Ribbon School.

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

At county fairs, science fairs and certain athletic events, the blue ribbon is the most sought-after prize for any competitor. Thus it should come as no surprise that being recognized by U.S. Department of Education’s Blue Ribbon Schools Program is one of the highest honors for any school to receive.

Sewell-Anderson Elementary School is one of only five schools in Massachusetts and 335 nationwide to be named a 2015 National Blue Ribbon School.

The program recognizes public and private K-12 schools that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement and celebrates some of the most skilled and effective educators in the country. In its 33-year history, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has bestowed this coveted award on 8,000 schools. Sewell-Anderson was specifically recognized for having made the greatest advances—among the top 15 percent in the country—in closing subgroup achievement gaps in English and mathematics over the past five years, measured by state assessments. Last year, the school was named a Commendation School by the state’s Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for its work in narrowing proficiency gaps. It has continuously met state requirements to maintain the honor of Level 1 status by meeting benchmarks of Annual Yearly Progress, Student Growth Percentiles, and Progress Performance Indexes.

“This is such an honor for Sewell-Anderson, Lynn Public Schools and the city,” said Superintendent Dr. Catherine C. Latham. “The school has made great progress in closing the achievement gap at every level and we can all learn from the exemplary work going on there.”

“Everyone associated with Sewell-Anderson should be very proud of this recognition,” said Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy, chair of the Lynn School Committee. “In a time where there is more emphasis on standardized testing than ever, it is a credit to the students and staff that they were able to make such significant progress.”

“I believe the success comes from the collaboration between school and home, the high expectations of our teachers, and the belief that all children can learn,” said Sewell-Anderson Principal Mary Panagopoulos. “This award proves that hard work and effective effort pays off, but also reminds us how important it is to keep the momentum going.”

Panagopoulos, a teacher for more than 30 years, is in her first year as principal. She replaced Patricia Mallett, who retired at the end of the 2014-15 school year. Mallett returned for a school-wide photo and was greeted with loud applause by her former students.

Lynn Public Schools Directory

Elementary schools

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<th>School</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aborn</td>
<td>Patricia Musie</td>
<td>409 Eastern Ave., Lynn, MA 01902</td>
<td>781-477-7320</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brickett</td>
<td>Eileen Cole</td>
<td>123 Lewis St., Lynn, MA 01902</td>
<td>781-477-7333</td>
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<tr>
<td>Callahan</td>
<td>Brian Fay</td>
<td>200 O’Callaghan Way, Lynn, MA 01905</td>
<td>781-477-7340</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cobbet</td>
<td>Susanne Garrity</td>
<td>40 Franklin St., Lynn, MA 01902</td>
<td>781-477-7341</td>
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<td>Connelly</td>
<td>Mary Dill</td>
<td>50 Elm St., Lynn, MA 01902</td>
<td>781-477-7344</td>
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<td>Drewicz</td>
<td>Patricia Herbert</td>
<td>34 Hood St., Lynn, MA 01905</td>
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<td>Ford</td>
<td>Joanne LaRivee</td>
<td>49 Hollingsworth St., Lynn, MA 01902</td>
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<td>Harrington</td>
<td>Debra Ruggiero</td>
<td>21 Dexter St., Lynn, MA 01902</td>
<td>781-477-7380</td>
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<td>Hood</td>
<td>Gayle Dufour</td>
<td>24 Oakwood Ave., Lynn, MA 01902</td>
<td>781-477-7390</td>
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<td>Ingalls</td>
<td>Irene Cowdell</td>
<td>1 Collins Street Terr, Lynn, MA 01902</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lincoln-Thomson</td>
<td>Helen Psallidas Mihos, Principal</td>
<td>115 Gardiner St., Lynn, MA 01905</td>
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<td>Lynn Woods</td>
<td>Ellen Fritz</td>
<td>31 Trevett Ave., Lynn, MA 01904</td>
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<td>Sewell-Anderson</td>
<td>Mary Panagopoulos, Principal</td>
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<td>Sisson</td>
<td>Jane Franklin</td>
<td>58 Conomo Ave., Lynn, MA 01904</td>
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<td>Julie Louf</td>
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<td>Marshall</td>
<td>Molly Cohen</td>
<td>19 Porter St., Lynn, MA 01902</td>
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<td>Pickering</td>
<td>Kevin Rittershaus</td>
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<td>Gene Constantino</td>
<td>235 O’Callaghan Way, Lynn, MA 01905</td>
<td>781-477-7404</td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Thomas Strange</td>
<td>50 Goodridge Street, Lynn, MA 01902</td>
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Lynn Vocational Technical Institute

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<td>Early Childhood Center</td>
<td>Marilyn Mahoney</td>
<td>90 Commercial St., Lynn, MA 01905</td>
<td>781-477-7220</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fallon Elementary</td>
<td>Nancy Takis-Connay</td>
<td>100 Robinson St. Lynn, MA 01905</td>
<td>781-477-7470</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fecteau-Leary Junior-Senior High</td>
<td>Mauro Scully</td>
<td>33 North Common St. Lynn, MA 01902</td>
<td>781-268-3000</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEEP Evening Program</td>
<td>Karen Teamey</td>
<td>50 Goodridge St., Lynn, MA 01902</td>
<td>781-477-7361</td>
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By Michele DiGenova

The Lynn Public Schools Early Childhood Center is a vibrant school educating students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. It opened in September 2013 with a staff of 28 and 10 classrooms. Principal Marilyn Mahoney proudly reports that in just two years the program has grown into a staff of 57 and 18 classrooms full of active learners.

According to Mahoney, the ECC – located in Lynn Tech's Commercial Street building – educates approximately 300 children and benefits from being in the same building as Lynn Tech students who are involved in the early childhood course of study.

“I am grateful to (Superintendent) Dr. (Caroline) Loutzen for creating the ECC,” she said. “We've grown so much in such a short time and our collaboration with Lynn Tech has been a win-win for everyone involved.”

Mahoney explained that the ECC students serve as the “shop” for the vocational students. “It's been a very successful and powerful partnership and it means my heart to see the high school students interacting and supporting our very young children. Our hope for the future is that many of them will pursue a career in education and return as an integral part of our staff.”

Currently, Tech students spend varying amounts of time at the ECC depending upon their grade level. Sophomores spend one week with the toddlers and four days in their high school classes, while juniors and seniors alternate between five days of high school classes followed by five days at the center.

In the ECC, students teaching students

Courses include Child Growth and Development, Classroom Management, Portfolio Development, and CPR/First Aid. Upon successful completion of the program, career opportunities are available in the field of education.

Teacher Erin Rogers has worked at the ECC for three years and takes pride in the program that her students make during their time in her classroom. “It's a great team here,” Rogers said. “The little ones are so anxious to learn new things and love the activities we provide for them each day. We love the high-schooler environment and are grateful for the help they provide.

Lynn Tech senior Caroline MacDonald “interns” in a special education classroom and enjoys helping teacher Jonathan Norwood with lessons and activities. “When I graduate I will be able to work as a teacher's aide, but I am considering continuing in college to become a teacher,” MacDonald said, whom Norwood considers a valuable assistant.

“Just to have an extra set of hands is great. It's been a terrific two years and I’ve grown to really depend on Caroline. I will miss her very much when she graduates,” Norwood said.

Kindergarten teacher Jan McDonald also has had a positive experience with the program. “I am happy to report that the children love the team and look forward to seeing them every day,” she said.

The Early Childhood Center is proud of its school motto, which is rooted daily and reads in part, “I am here to learn all I can, to try my best and be all I am.”

By Rich Fahey

Educators at Lynn Vocational Technical Institute’s health technology program can see the expansion of the program as a win for everyone – an opportunity to serve the community at large and give students a chance to fill openings in a rapidly growing field.

Lynn Tech students are currently working to become a certified nursing assistant (CNA) or are already working in the field in the form of senior co-op jobs. By the end of this school year, that total will rise to 70 students who will enrolled in exploration courses join the ranks. “There’s a need for qualified people to fill these jobs,” said health tech instructor Kim Conway. “As the Baby Boomers age, they’re replacing homes or jobs, or requiring long-term care.”

The program is taught by three registered nurses: Constance Gargiulo and Richard Frank, the latter two having joined Conway this year.

Director Robert Buontempo credited Conway and former health tech instructor Suzanne Arnold with teaching closely together for years before building the program in which it has become one of our most sought after programs at Tech.

“We have been very fortunate to have been able to bring both Suzanne Gargiulo and Richard Frank on as health tech instructors, one due to Ms. Arnold leaving the region to be near family and a second instructor due to the popularity and demand of students wanting to become involved in the health field,” Buontempo said. “Both instructors have brought much enthusiasm, new ideas and approaches to the classroom which has made the transition almost seamless. We’re excited to have them as part of our team.”

The federal Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that the demand for certified nursing assistants will increase by 21 percent from 2012-2022, with 120,000 new opportunities. “I’ve seen some studies that put the actual number closer to 50 percent,” said Conway.

Students take the test to become CNAs, administered by the Red Cross, at the end of their senior year. If they pass, they have three chances to retake their senior year, getting their first six out of the field under the school’s co-op program, which alternates periods of work in the field with periods of classes. CNAs start at $10-15 an hour. Conway said 12 of 15 seniors are currently working at facilities such as Union and Salem hospitals, Lynn Community Health Center, Greater Lynn Senior Services’ PACE program, and Brookview Village in Peabody.

Conway credited Tech co-op director Bonnie Bonnett with finding the opportunities for the students, who learn basic physiology and the fundamentals that will allow them to become effective assistants. Students are provided with a knowledge base in human behavior and development, geriatrics, nursing assistant skills, medical terminology, and nutrition.

“Nursing 101 is what they learn here,” Conway said. “They get the basics.”

The CNA can be the gateway to other opportunities in the health care field such as better health skills, hospital clerk, surgical technician, and occupational or physical therapy.

Conway said one student who went through the program earned an associate degree at Bunker Hill Community College and is now at UMass Boston on schedule to get her RN next year. “It’s up to the kids what they do after the program,” she said. “Some may go on to other areas of healthcare and some may leave the field. But they’ll leave with a better understanding of people and healthcare, and with a personal sense of personal growth and maturity.”

She also left open the possibility of adding a medical assistant program. Either way, the expansion of the health tech program is a win-win.

“With the health center being treated to where it has become one of our most sought after programs at Tech.”

The important part is that the program is meeting the needs of both the community and the students,” Conway said.

Heidi Tech education student from left, Diana Frias, Faume Adon, Jaclyn Perry, Sarin Umaner, Lezy Hansen, Lilian Soli, Oury Bah and Pualus Mian are seen here.

Student Hector Valdivieso feels better now that nurse Kim Conway is at his bedside.

Lynn Tech senior Licensee Martinez reads The Gingerbread Bear to a group of students.

Soranyela Rosario assists during morning meeting time.
Lynn Woods Elementary School fifth-graders performed in their last drama club show, Alice in Wonderland Jr., on Dec. 12-13. Both shows played to a sellout crowd.

Working with the Food Project, students and staff at the Callahan School planted “garden boxes” in which they will grow greens and vegetables. From left, Superintendent Dr. Catherine Latham, school garden coordinator Liz Gaeta, Jhomar Cuevas and Kelvin Imalenowa of the Food Project, Principal Dr. Brian Fay and Michael Geary, LPS assistant director of Physical Education and Wellness. Jhomar and Kelvin are Callahan graduates.

Abigail Valencia, a Marshall Middle School student, is congratulated by her former principal, Debra Ruggero of Harrington, on being one of 10 students nationwide to have her artwork chosen to appear on cafeteria tray liners as part of a Preferred Meals contest.

Feeding America films Kerri Katsos’ fifth-grade class at Connery Elementary School for a documentary on why nonprofits such as the Greater Boston Food Bank need increased funding. Katsos spoke of how hunger impacts student learning. Connery hosts one of only eight school food pantries in the state.

Fatou Bah of the Food Project evens out the soil in one of the garden boxes.

Thirty Ingalls Elementary parents participated in four sessions of “Love and Limits: Positive Approaches to Discipline,” a parenting course offered by Families First Parenting Programs and Lynn Public Schools. Topics discussed included motivation, child development, positive discipline strategies and creating acceptable limits in parent-child relationships.

Former NFL star and best-selling author Tim Green, shown with Breed Middle school librarian Irene Kszepka-Daly, visited Breed to deliver an important message about the opportunities available to students if they are willing to put in the required effort. Green has written 32 books, including 16 for young readers. “Unstoppable” made it to No. 2 on the New York Times bestseller list and it was the book selected for the Breed Reads school-wide reading program this year.
A number of Lynn students from Aborn, Cobbet, Harrington, Lincoln-Thompson, Shoemaker and Washington STEM were thrilled to see their artwork on display at the Peabody Essex Museum. The experience was made possible through the museum’s Creative Collaborations program, which creates meaningful partnerships with Title I schools and teachers in grades 3, 4 and 5 in Lynn and Salem through sequenced museum visits and object-based lesson plans.

Students engage with museum staff and the collection in interactive, inquiry-based learning experiences and have opportunities to make personal connections with works of art. Teachers integrate museum visits into classroom curricula and identify final projects for their students to create back at school. Students had the opportunity to present their work at PEM for parents and friends during a culminating Family Night celebration, which was held last June.

Inspired by contemporary Dutch artist Theo Jansen, the portfolio art class at Lynn Classical High School is fusing creativity with engineering to create animated works of art. Jansen, who is famous for his kinetic sculptures, blurs the line between art and science and sculpture and performance. His self-propelling beach animals, known as Strandbeests, rely on wind and engineering to move. The Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) kicked off the first U.S. tour featuring Jansen’s sculptures, which was on display from Sept. 19 to Jan. 3, before moving on to Chicago and San Francisco. Teacher Patty Klibansky had the opportunity to visit the exhibit during a professional development course at the PEM. Inspired, she had her students—all of whom are planning to pursue a major in art in college—construct a small version of Jansen’s “Rhinoceros Strandbeest.” They also plan to construct a large-scale ram in honor of Classical’s mascot in the spring.

“This is a perfect way to integrate the arts with science, technology, engineering and math,” said Klibansky. “The students have been very engaged in the process.”

Hood Elementary School first-graders designed rock art to decorate the courtyard of the school. Art teacher Simone Kivett introduced the idea after participating in a professional development class called “Project-based Learning for ELLs,” which featured a similar art lesson. Hood students studied different methods of installation art, including the work of contemporary artist Andy Goldsworthy, and then painted and arranged the rocks to beautify the school’s outdoor space.

“The project helped the students see how to use art in the real world, outside of the classroom,” said Kivett.
Middle schools add wrestling with support of business community

Lynn Public Schools is offering wrestling for the first time this winter. The team, which is open to all Lynn middle school students, will be run out of Thurgood Marshall Middle School. The program is supported by a generous donation from the Lynn business community, led by RCG LLC.

The wrestling program is the result of a partnership between Lynn Public Schools, Boston Youth Wrestling (BYW), local attorneys Jared Nicholson and Clint Muche, and a handful of local and regional businesses.

The start of that collaboration took place last spring, when Nicholson and Muche organized a visit by BYW to a Marshall gym class. The students loved the demonstration and many expressed enthusiasm about taking up the sport.

Matt Picarsic, managing principal of RCG, read The Item’s coverage of the event and was inspired to make a contribution and lead a private fundraising effort that will cover the start-up costs of a full-fledged program, including the purchase of a mat and equipment.

“RCG is proud to be a founding sponsor of Lynn wrestling,” Picarsic said.“Our business is very actively involved in the Lynn community, and we believe it has a bright future. That’s why we want to be a part of a new tradition in Lynn athletics.”

Picarsic said Biondolillo Associates, Inc. and the Gilberg family and Edison Realty LLC also stepped forward to help sponsor the program.

Since 2012, BYW has supported the creation of nine middle-school programs in Boston and Chelsea, two high-school programs, and a training center open during the spring and summer to all Boston wrestlers in grades 5-12. BYW will continue to be an involved partner in Lynn’s program, sharing its expertise and training resources.

“The fundamental skills of wrestling align to core values of dedication, perseverance and hard work,” said Mike Geary, assistant director of Health and Physical Education for Lynn Public Schools.

“Wrestling teaches discipline, builds confidence and gives student-athletes of all sizes a chance to participate,” said Nicholson, a Div. 1 wrestler at Princeton. “It is a particularly great fit for Lynn because of the low cost of participation for athletes and small space needs relative to other sports.”

Nicholson, a new member of the Lynn School Committee, realized that Lynn was without a wrestling program and approached BYW in the fall of 2014 with the hope that it could help him bring wrestling to Lynn.

The program, which began in January, runs for eight weeks.

Classical grad MBTA’s top cop

GREEN: From Page 1

minority civic leaders, clergy and lawmakers, among others. He said he feels his 25 years of experience in the department made him the best choice for the position.

“I’ve held every rank,” said Green, who joined the Transit Police in 1991 after eight years as a Winchester cop. “People were leery of an outside candidate coming in, not knowing the place. I know what’s important. It’s a morale killer when you get an outside chief coming in with a municipal mindset. It doesn’t work. Transit policing is much different than traditional policing. We’re much more customer-service oriented.”

Green’s 280-member force has jurisdiction in 175 communities and is responsible for the safety of 1.3 million riders per day. That requires a great deal or coordination and cooperation.

“We have to have relationships with all the communities in order to share information and resources,” he said. “There’s a lot of relationship building that goes with the job. I had already built those relationships.”

When called into action, the Transit Police must keep in mind the ramifications on the MBTA ridership. “We have to perform our duties quickly and efficiently in order to get the trains moving again,” Green said. “We don’t have the luxury of closing a road or rerouting traffic.”

Like public safety officials at all levels of government today, Green lives with the constant threat of terrorism.

“That’s one thing that keeps me up at night,” he said. “I wasn’t a big CNN guy; I am now. The transit system is a soft target. There are many access points. There’s no way we can cover them all. We try to strategically put officers in areas with a high concentration of people at peak ridership times.”

Green was a three-sport standout at Classical, where he played wide receiver and defensive back and made a cameo at quarterback in the biggest regular-season game of the 1976 season. “Eddie Thurman got hurt and they put me in,” Green recalled of the game which Classical won, 7-0, to earn a berth in the MIAA Div. 2 Super Bowl, where the Rams beat Wilmington.

“We had the best high-school coach you could ever have,” Greed said of Bull Wise. “He taught us things they were teaching at the college level. We would practice for 3-4 hours.”

Green went on to play defensive back at Boston University, graduating in 1983. When he got to BU, he felt he was far ahead of his teammates and opponents when it came to knowledge of the game.

“In high school, we were taught things that I assumed all coaches were teaching kids,” he said. “We were taught to a point that we knew if it was going to be a pass or run the ball was snapped. That’s why we were so good.”

Green was fortunate to play with a bevy of scholastic stars, including Thurman, Arthur Akers, and Jay Alcicido.

Akers, who went on to play football at UCLA, was recruited by virtually every big-time program in the country, which brought increased exposure to the rest of the Rams.

“Arthur Akers is the one who brought the college coaches in,” Green said, recalling seeing the likes of Terry Donahue, Woody Hayes and Bo Schermacher in the stands at Classical basketball games.

Green took the police exam his junior year at BU. At the suggestion of a friend, he included Winchester on the list of six communities in which he would like to one day work.

“I had never heard of it,” Green said. “He told me it was a ‘bedroom community.’”

After graduating, Winchester offered him a position, which he accepted, and he enjoyed his eight years there.

“I enjoyed Winchester,” Green said. “They accepted me. I just got bored after awhile. There wasn’t much going on. I wanted to do more.”

Green wasn’t hiring and he couldn’t get on the Boston force, so Green followed a path set by his friend Herman Wheeler, who transferred from Lynn to the Transit Police.

“It didn’t take very long for him to realize he wasn’t in Winchester anymore.”

“The first week on the job was the first time I saw someone who had been shot in the head,” he said. “It was an eye opener. I almost went back.”

Fortunately, he was talked into staying and the rest is history.

“There’s opportunity to grow into transit policing,” he said. “There is a lot of standing around watching people. You are constantly on alert.”

Green may live in Saugus, but he will always consider himself a Lynner. “Lynn taught me discipline, perseverance, friendship and loyalty. I don’t see that out here today,” he said. “I do all my business in Lynn. The only thing I do in Saugus is buy coffee.”

Green has been best friends with Lynn Fire Department inspector Darrell Murkison for more than 45 years.

“We’ve been best man at each other’s weddings and Darrell has been my confidante. I’m a big loyalty guy,” said Green, 55, who lives with his wife, Patricia, and 7-year-old daughter, Krystin. He has three older sons: Kenny, Dewayne and Brian, all of whom graduated from Classical.

“I have a couple of close friends and that’s it.”

Good Shepherd tackles adversity

SHEPHERD: From Page 12

same.”

Football was also a heavier lift this year. “I expect a lot from the players – meetings, practices, film work,” Carroll said. “Daekwon kept pushing forward. He keeps his priorities in line. For him to handle everything that was put on him speaks volumes about his character and how impressive a young man he is.”

Between school, football and work, Shepherd’s typical day in the fall lasted about 16 hours — then he could think about starting his homework.

“I get no sleep,” he said. “People who come through the drive-through tell me I look tired.”

Shepherd lives with his sisters, Tanya Davis and Tatiana Shepherd, and his niece. His older brother, David Sanchez, is a Boston firefighter.

Wherever Shepherd attends college, he will likely find the transition to living on his own much easier than the average freshman.

“I’ve always been an independent kid,” he said. “I did everything myself. I didn’t rely on anyone for anything. Moving away to college is not going to be hard for me. I’ve already been by myself.”

That’s the good news — and the bad news.

But rather than succumb to the temptation to feel sorry for Daekwon Shepherd, be thankful that he has been able to absorb adversity’s swift kick and become a better man for it. Walt Disney would be proud.
Lynn students can start college in high school

**By Paul Halloran**

While it might seem unusual to see the police chief, superintendent of schools and district attorney signing the same document, it is a yearly occurrence in Lynn, and one all three individuals value very much.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Catherine C. Latham, Police Chief Kevin Coppinger and Essex District Attorney Jonathan Blodgett gathered in Latham’s office to sign a memorandum of understanding. The agreement recognizes the mutual goals of “educating students, keeping them safe and giving them direction to help them make good choices and avoid pitfalls.”

“You can’t lose when you have the superintendent, police chief and DA working together to help kids,” said Blodgett. “In my office, we have people who spend their professional life trying to help kids make good decisions. I want to interact with kids in schools, not courtrooms.”

“This enables us to share information and work collaboratively,” Latham said. “We are very grateful for the support from law enforcement.”

Coppinger said the memorandum is reflective of the mutual goals of “educating students, keeping them safe and giving them direction to help them make good choices and avoid pitfalls.”

An entry produced by Sisson School fifth-graders had been selected as one of 10 finalists in the Scotties annual Trees Rock® video contest.

The next phase of the contest, runs through Feb. 7. All videos may be voted on by the public to determine the grand prize winner. Voting will take place at www.scottiestreesrock.com. The school with the most eligible votes will receive $10,000 to use towards a sustainable project, such as tree plantings, outdoor classrooms, playgrounds, athletic fields, gardens and greenhouses.

Students are asked to create a video up to three minutes long on the importance of trees — to themselves, their school, and their community.

After rigorous scrutiny by a panel of judges, entries from around the country were narrowed down to the 10 best in grades 3, 4, 5 and 6 in the categories of most compelling relative to theme, clarity of message, and creativity.

The video was led by Donna Whalen, a 26-year teacher. “Winning the $10,000 would expand our students’ educational opportunities, and in turn make a huge difference in their lives,” Whalen said.

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“Students can start taking college courses as sophomores in high school and earn up to 30 credits by the time they graduate from high school. “This opens up tremendous college and career opportunities for our students,” Latham said. “Many of our students will be first-generation college students. This gives them the opportunity to get college credits and see what college is like.”

Latham said the fact that the courses will be taught at NSCC evenings and weekends is a bonus.

“Students will come here and have all the privileges of North Shore Community College students,” she said. “It’s going to take away the fear of the unknown.”

There will be 11 courses offered this spring — six of them focusing on computers and information technology and the others general education. Gentile said one of the primary goals is to prepare students for a STEM — science, technology, engineering, math — career pathway.

Lynn students are already in good shape in that regard, Latham said, thanks to programs such as the CISCO courses Kevin Geaney has brought to the high schools. “We have students ready to take this pathway,” she said.

Gentile stressed that CommUniVerCity is the result of unprecedented collaboration between several entities, including: NSCC, LPS and Salem State; Kennedy’s office; Mary Sarris and the North Shore Workforce Investment Board; Lori Berry and the Lynn Community Health Center; Federal Reserve Bank of Boston; and individual donors Fred Schmid, founder of Crystal Systems Innovations, and Old Neighborhood Foods CEO Thomas Demakes, a director of the Gerondelis Foundation. She also credited Sen. Thomas McGee and Rep. Brendan Crighton with helping to move the project forward at the state level.

Faculty from all three institutions participated in an IT Academic Pathway Committee, with LPS represented by Shannon Bansfield, Shannon Gardner, Kim Powers, Jennifer Wu, Deputy Superintendent Patrick Tutwiler and Geaney. Key technology industry leaders also offered support and counsel, including: Attorney David Baer, founder and past president of the North Shore Technology Council; Tim Lasonde, president of NSK Inc. of Boston; and Chris Davia, general manager of Ellucian in Connecticut.

“This is system-changing work,” Gentile said. “The early-college model has many benefits.”

Students can start taking college courses as
THE GOOD SHEPHERD

English grid star tackles adversity

BY PAUL HALLORAN

Lynn English football standout Daekwon Shepherd hasn’t had much to smile about the last several months, so it is ironic that the all-time expert in making people smile once described Shepherd perfectly:

“All the adversity I’ve had in my life, all my troubles and obstacles, have strengthened me — You may not realize it when it happens, but a kick in the teeth may be the best thing in the world for you.” — Walt Disney

If Disney were to be taken literally, Shepherd would have needed a pretty good orthodontist by now.

He lost his mom, Sharral Hall, to cancer last summer, leaving him to live with his older and younger sister in an Astor Street apartment. Money has been tight, so he works up to 30 hours a week at McDonald’s on the Lynnway, in addition to not only fulfilling, but also excelling in his academic and athletic requirements.

On the field last fall, Shepherd made 135 tackles, had an interception return for a touchdown and recovered a fumble. At running back, he rushed for 897 yards and scored 11 TDs. He also handled all the kicking duties and returned kicks. He was named Northeastern Conference and Daily Item/Agganis Foundation Defensive Player of the Year.

“Daekwon never came off the field,” said first-year English coach Chris Carroll. “He was our best offensive and our best defensive player.”

While Shepherd was formidable on offense, he was downright dominant at defensive back, a position he will likely play in college. “He’s one of the best pure tacklers I’ve ever seen in high school,” said Carroll, an Item Player of the Year at English who went on to a very good career at Bentley University.

“What jumps out is how physical he is as a defensive player. He has a very high ceiling.”

It is no surprise that Shepherd, who also runs outdoor track, has drawn the interest of more than a handful of colleges, including Central Connecticut State, URI, Stonehill, Assumption, Springfield and UMass Dartmouth. He will get a well-deserved opportunity to play at the next level.

That does not set Shepherd apart from thousands of other student-athletes across the country. But there is so much more than football to the Daekwon Shepherd story. No one knows that better than Kara Baletsa, his guidance counselor at English.

“Daekwon has been a man since he was 15,” said Baletsa, who has played an integral role in Shepherd’s development, especially since his mother died. “If you didn’t know him, you would never know the circumstances he has to deal with. He doesn’t use it as a crutch or excuse. That’s the type of kid he is.”

Shepherd got off to a relatively slow start academically when he arrived at English in the fall of 2012, after moving back to this area from Carlisle, Penn., where he lived for seven years. He was an average student at best, and his grades reflected that.

He gradually improved, though, and had his best quarter ever last fall, getting all As, while rebounding from his mother’s death, adjusting to a new – and more demanding – football coaching staff and working five nights a week.

“He’s a really resilient kid,” Baletsa said. “He doesn’t let his circumstances dictate his future. He’s very independent, very mature and very respectful.”

Shepherd may be making it look easy, but that is far from the case.

“It’s been very hard,” he said, “to transition from coming home to my mom every day to her not being there. It’s definitely not the