



COMMUNITY

Pet of the week: meet Minou

Page 2



MONSON

Town wide clean up April 27

Page 3



SPORTS

Pioneers get win against Sci-Tech

Page 7

SERVING PALMER, MONSON, BRIMFIELD, HOLLAND & WALES

# The Journal Register

A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

April 11, 2024 | Vol. CLXXIII, No. 11 | \$1.00

www.journalregister.turley.com

PALMER

## Street pipe repaired, Commission still has questions

By Marcelo Gusmão  
Staff Writer  
mgusmao@turley.com

PALMER – At the Conservation Commission’s April 2 meeting, the members discussed the aftermath of an emergency incident on Palmer St.

“This past Thursday there was a little bit of a situation that happened on Palmer St. down in Three Rivers,” Enright said.

Enright went on to describe an employee from the Department of Public Works informing him about a then-ongoing sinkhole situation that had formed on the straightaway by the rail line. He said that a 15-inch drain line used for stormwater had succumbed to age and over-taxation and failed, causing a spurt of water which compromised the integrity of the road and made a pathway under the rail line, before exiting into the Quaboag River.

“With this, there was a lot of silt deposition into the river,” Enright said. “As soon as those details were told to us, we got on the telephone line with the Department of Environmental Protection and immediately began formulating conditions for an emergency certification form so all the outfits that would be involved with the project, between town, private excavation and the rail line body itself, because everybody would have to act on it for them to be able to enter the area and perform the necessary work to abate the emergency and start making repairs to the area as a whole.”

By the time the meeting was held, however, Enright was able to confirm that the rail line had been repaired and was once again active. The drain line had been taken care of and filled and the riverbank had undergone treatment in order to restabilize it after the event.

“We’re on the back end of the PALMER | page 4



Superintendent Matthew Francis and Principal Sue North honored Shawn Troche, Jr., alongside his family, at the Academic Excellence Award dinner at Pathfinder’s Perso Restaurant.

## Students honored with Academic Excellence Awards from Superintendents

Mass. Association of School Superintendents present Academic Excellence Awards at dinner on Pathfinder Tech campus

By Marcelo Gusmão  
Staff Writer  
mgusmao@turley.com

Pathfinder Technical Vocational School hosted a dinner on March 27 to recognize the winners of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents’ Academic Excellence Award.

“This is the second time I’ve hosted this since I’ve been Super-

intendent,” Eric Duda said. “There was a history prior to COVID of this being an annual event, so I try to carry on that important tradition.”

The MASS Academic Excellence Award is given to the student with the highest academic achievement as selected by the superintendents.

“For the nine towns we serve, there is no event to recognize that particular award in Western Massachusetts,” Duda said. “A couple decades ago, as is my understanding, there was a tradition started by a former superintendent that we would do a recognition here. It’s turned into a really special event.”

The event was attended by the superintendents, the students and their families, and was hosted

in Pathfinder’s Perso Restaurant, with a table for each school district. The superintendents each submitted write-ups for the students they had awarded, which were featured in the event’s program.

From the Belchertown Public Schools, Superintendent Brian Cameron presented an award to Rainer Kristensen.

“From his earliest days at Belchertown High School, Rainer has distinguished himself as a first-rate scholar as well as a tireless worker in the arena of athletic competition,” Cameron said. “Add to this a wry and knowing sense of humor coupled with an affable personality, and a picture of Rainer Kristensen begins to emerge.”

“In a recent conversation with the educator who has facilitated

Rainer’s Advisory section over the past four years, he shared the following observation: ‘As teachers, we are always looking for students who ‘get’ what we are putting out there in class exercises and discussions. Rainer epitomizes that exemplar; engaged and engaging, wise and witty, understated and unparalleled. It has been my privilege to work with him.’”

From Granby Public Schools, Superintendent Stephen Sullivan presented an award to Cindy Kusomo.

“Academically, Cindy strives for perfection,” Sullivan said. “Teachers say her strength is her attention to detail. This keeps her focused in and out of school and has contributed to her currently

AWARDS | page 6

MONSON

## School Comm. discusses cuts to proposed budget

By Marcelo Gusmão  
Staff Writer  
mgusmao@turley.com

MONSON – The School Committee discussed the proposed budget with the superintendent at its March 27 meeting.

Superintendent Dr. Cheryl Clarke said that the town required the school to submit a budget of \$10,600,000, as opposed to the \$11 million dollar budget the school had previously submitted.

“So we went back to the drawing board,” Clarke said. “And after many, many hours, the changes are: at the Early Childhood Center, there would be one less preschool classroom; at Granite Valley, the two classroom teachers, an administrative assistant and a building age, and then the ESSER positions of math and reading interventionists would also be eliminated but we would fill those intervention spots in other ways.”

“The addition of a part-time health teacher at Granite Valley is in the budget, class sizes still remain 20 or fewer for our students, grades 1-6.”

At the high school, one science teacher, one elective teaching position, one virtual class teacher oversight, and two part-time positions for grades 7 and 8 have been proposed to be eliminated, and a guidance counselor who is retiring will not be replaced.

“We are also exploring the idea of a Dean of Students/Director of Counseling as opposed to a strict Assistant Principal,” Clarke continued. “Impacts would be, we would have instructional aid to supervise our virtual learning students, some electives and science classes would be reassigned, but not lost, and in Special Education we are adding a teacher so that grades 1-6 all have a

MONSON | page 3

FUNDRAISER

## Sock Hop at Amvets Post to support Wreaths Across America

By Marcelo Gusmão  
Staff Writer  
mgusmao@turley.com

PALMER – The Recreation Department and Veterans Services are collaborating with Wreaths Across America and Amvets Post 74 to put on a 1950s style Sock Hop this weekend.

On April 12, a nostalgic dance party will be held at the AmVets Center on Main Street in Three Rivers. The Sock Hop will start at 5 p.m. and will feature dancing, trivia, food, and raffles lasting all the way to 9 p.m.

Recreation Director Andrew St. George, who had previously done a nostalgic party with last summer’s 1980s party at Hryniewicz Park, credited Veterans Services Agent Tina Brohman as having the idea of a ‘50s nostalgia night to collaborate with Wreaths Across America.

“We’re trying to mix things up,” St. George said. “We’re going to have food, dancing, it’s going to be a lot of fun.”

As a lifetime member of the organization, Brohman made ar-



rangements with Post 74 to hold the party at the hall.

The big draw of the dance, of course, will be the live musical entertainment. As a musician himself, St. George was able to use his connections to find a musical act that would embody the style of rock and roll from the 1950s and

’60s.

“The band is called Decades,” St. George said. “Because I’m active in the music community, I put it out on a Facebook group for local musicians that I was looking for recommendations. Decades came highly recommended by several other musicians as the ones we wanted to hire.”

On their website, Decades has a list of songs that they regularly perform, including hits by Elvis Presley, The Beatles, The Monkees, Chuck Berry, Creedence Clearwater Revival, The Foundations, Roy Orbison, and many, many more.

“Since 1993, Decades has been entertaining audiences all over New England and beyond with their energetic cover renditions of all your favorite songs from the 1950s and 1960s,” the Decades official website says. “The members of Decades have been entertaining audiences young and old together for over 31 years, from the most

SOCK HOP | page 3

SPORTS

## Meet the voice of the Palmer Panthers

By Ryan Drago  
Staff Writer  
rdrago@turley.com

PALMER – The voice echoing through Legion Field at Palmer High School is that of public address announcer Mike Wadas.

Growing up in the village of Thorndike and Palmer, Wadas is a Panther by heart.

Starting off as a student at Palmer High School, Wadas was heavily involved in sports. As a high school athlete, Wadas participated in baseball, football and hockey.

As a hockey player, Wadas had 85 career points in high school. The highlight of playing hockey was being a part of a high school all star team, Team USA New England.

Wadas alongside his USA New England team got play in the European countries of Switzerland, Italy and France.

Wadas shared the fact that playing in Europe and representing the U.S. was one of the best memories he had as a Panther.

It was “a thrill to have USA on my jersey,” Wadas said. “Representing my country as a teenager.”

In his junior year of high school, Wadas was the alternate captain of his team and later captain in his senior year. Wadas played center as a hockey player and sported #22 on his jersey.



Submitted Photos

Mike Wadas is the public address announcer for the Palmer Panthers. His journey with the Panthers began when he was a student and athlete.

Wadas is still in contact with his former hockey coach, Jim Cerbo, to this day.

As a football player, Wadas played as a wide receiver, cornerback and linebacker.

In the years 1985 and 1986 Wadas experienced tremendous success with the Panthers. The football team went back-to-back years undefeated, 11-0 and won two consecutive Western Massachusetts High School Super Bowl championships.

Wadas also played baseball

throughout his entire high school years. The positions he played were pitcher, shortstop and center field.

After high school, Wadas did have interest in further pursuing sports and attending college. However, at some point he decided not to pursue college and start a new life outside of Palmer.

In the 1990s, Wadas resided in Katy, Texas, a small town outside of Houston. A promotion at work brought him to Texas and his son Will attended school in Katy.

Will played baseball in high school and Wadas soon came across an opportunity that would get him involved in sports again.

Will’s school was looking to assign parents as volunteers to help out throughout the school year, especially during sporting events. The school was looking for an announcer during the games and it was a role Wadas never originally thought of taking.

The idea of announcing reminded Wadas of one of his favorite New England Sports teams growing up, the Boston Red Sox.

For years, Wadas always enjoyed listening to Sherm Feller, a radio personality and PA announcer for the Red Sox at Fenway Park for over 20 years.

WADAS | page 5



# SPORTS

A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

SEND US YOUR SPORTS SUBMISSIONS

www.sports.turley.com

## TRACK



Vanessa Baer tries to clear the high jump.

## Palmer track competes in first meet

PALMER – Earlier this week, Palmer track faced off with South Hadley. The Panthers held their meet at Minnechaug Regional High School in neighboring Wilbraham. Palmer's track is being renovated and will not be ready until next season. Results of Monday's meet were not made available as of press time. The Panthers next face Hampshire Regional on Monday, April 15 on the road at 4 p.m.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com



Annabella Ladue fires the discus away.



Aria Nompleggi competes in the long jump.



Basom Yaseen sends the shot put on the field.

## LACROSSE



Claire Wahlund picks up a loose ball.



After making a pickup on defense, Sedona Arbour heads up the field.

## Mustangs fall at Comp

CHICOPEE – On Monday night, Monson girls lacrosse suffered a defeat on the road at Chicopee Comprehensive 10-4. The Mustangs got two goals each from Nevaeh Chiacchia and Sedona Arbour. Olivia Clemons made 15 saves in a busy evening in goal. Monson will face Tantasqua in a makeup game on Friday, April 12 at 4 p.m.



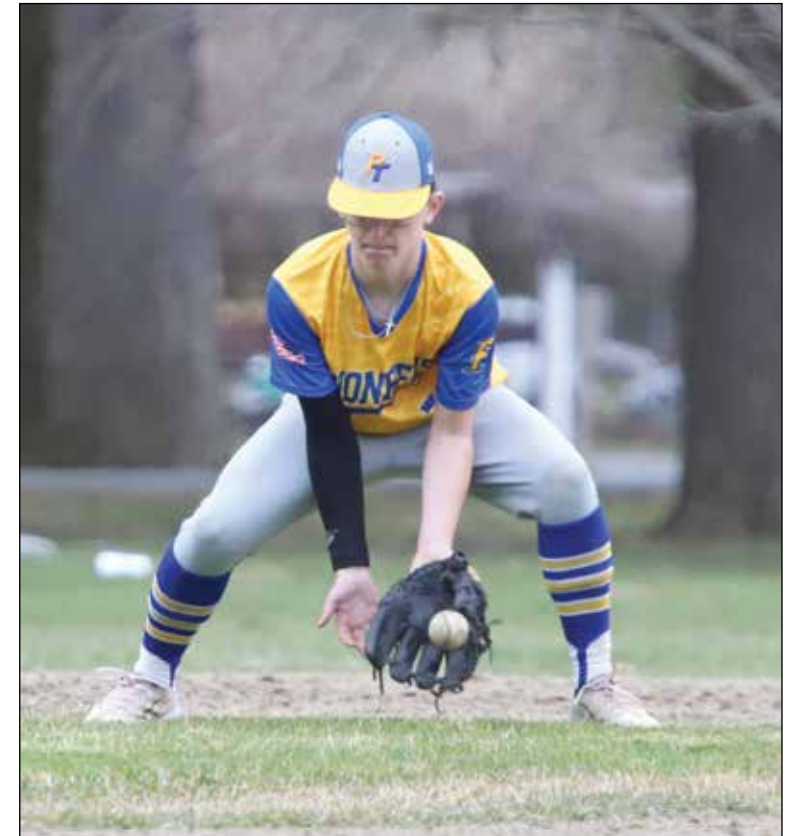
Goalie Olivia Clemons makes a save.



Nevaeh Chiacchia sprints up the field after collecting a pass.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

## BASEBALL



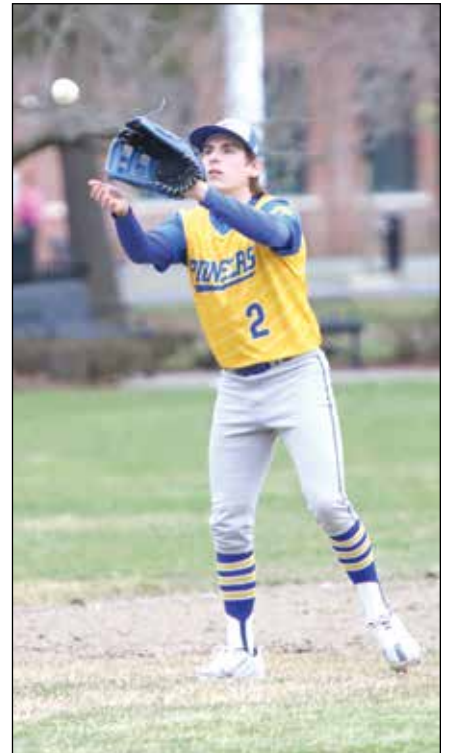
Brayden Mega cleanly fields a ground ball.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

## Pioneers look for another win

PALMER – Pathfinder Regional baseball got the win in their first matchup of the season against the High School of Science and Technology last Monday afternoon 10-9. But the action has been limited for the Pioneers since then thanks to poor weather. The Pioneers

PIONEERS | page 8



Zander Auffrey reaches up to make a catch.

## LACROSSE

# Monson suffers loss in opener

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

MONSON-- Ella Laliberte, who graduated from Granby High School last June, scored nearly 300 career goals for the Lady Rams girls' lacrosse team.

With Laliberte no longer wearing a Granby uniform, the trio of junior Kelly-Lynne Kennedy, freshman Brenna Moreno, and freshman Kalli White led the way offensively in the Lady Rams 16-6 season opening victory at Monson High School on April 1.

"We're certainly going to miss Ella a lot, but I think we'll have several different goal scorers in each game this year," said Granby head coach Gary O'Grady. "It feels very good to start the regular season with a win. One of our goals this season is to qualify for the state tournament. It was disappointing not making the state tournament last year."

While the Lady Rams, who finished with a 9-10 overall record last year, lost to Pope Francis in the Western Mass. Class C semifinals, they just missed qualifying for the Division 4 state tournament. During her senior season, Laliberte scored 99 goals and had 16 assists for a total of 115 points.

Her younger sister, Mylin, who's a sophomore, contributed with a pair of assists against the Lady Mustangs.

Kennedy, who scored a total of 22 goals as a sophomore, finished the season opening victory with a career-high six goals.

"I thought Kelly-Lynne played very well in today's game,"

O'Grady said. "We've been working on several different things with her."

Moreno and White scored four goals apiece, while sophomore Ava-Elizabeth Loughman chipped in with the other two goals for the visiting team.

The only senior listed on the Granby roster is Abigail Landry, who was credited with an assist.

"We're a very young team this year," O'Grady said. "We started two eighth graders in today's game. We should keep improving during the next couple of years."

O'Grady also gave a lot of credit to his defense unit, which is led by junior Ava Saunders, junior Lydia Kicza, eighth grader Kaelynn Slapski, and eighth grader Emily Durham.

"The defense played really well," he said. "I'm very happy with their performance."

Granby sophomore goalie Faith Ramos was credited with only two saves.

A year ago, the Lady Rams outscored the Lady Mustangs, 34-14, in the two games that they played against each other during the first week of April.

"I thought we played a lot better against Granby in today's game than we did in both of the games that we played against them last year," said Monson head coach Mickey Novak. "Everyone got some playing time."

The Lady Mustangs, who finished with a 7-11 overall record in 2023, are also a very young squad this spring.

"The majority of our players are either freshmen or soph-

MONSON | page 8