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PALMER

Asst. principals share journey

By Marcelo Gusmao
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PALMER – Assistant Principals Week was Apr. 6 to 10, and the high school celebrated by honoring its two Assistant Principals, Amy Herring and Enrique Sanchez.

The school celebrated by presenting gifts to the Assistant Principals throughout the week, including daily tokens from Principal Sue North, and notes that had been written by students. Herring said that the best gifts were the notes from students, thanking the Assistant Principals for being there for them during rough periods of their life, helping them sort things out in difficult classes, or just understanding them.

“It’s a small, close-knit community,” Herring said. “We get to know the kids, their siblings, their families, the good and bad and everything in between. It’s a really great environment to work in, because we have

that connection with all our students. Not only do we know students by name, but a little bit about them, which is unique, I think, to being in a small town.”

Herring has been an educator in town for 32 years, having grown up in Palmer and graduated from the high school in 1990. She graduated from Westfield State in 1994 and got her Master’s from Cambridge College in 2005, then got her administrator licensure through Performance Assessment for Leaders, followed by an apprenticeship under Principal Sue North prior to becoming Assistant Principal.

“I always planned on being a teacher,” Herring said. “I always took a lot of leadership roles within teaching, and Principal North said, ‘you really should look to be administrator, it would be really helpful to have a larger impact on the school and all of the students.’ An opportunity came about when the principal at OMP

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Submitted photo

Assistant Principals Amy Herring and Enrique Sanchez.

MONSON

Select Board notes

Nine-year-old recognized for bravery during fire

By Marcelo Gusmao
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MONSON – Last week’s Select Board meeting featured an appeal from the Parks and Recreation Director, upcoming road warnings from the Highway Department, and the recognition of a very brave resident.

The Tuesday, April 14 meeting began with Chair Peter Warren announcing that assisted listening devices were available for members of the public to request from the staff.

During the meeting, Fire Chief Brian Harris and the Select Board recognized Anna-leah Buffington for her bravery in alerting her family and evacuating her house during a fire. She was awarded a Fire Department Coin, which is given out when someone does something exceptional, and a gift bag from Better Bean.

Public Comments

Parks and Recreation Director Tim Pasco approached the board during Public Comments to address the vote on closing down the Parks and Recreation Department and Cemetery Department. Pasco mentioned that Parks and Rec was formed in 1976, and that his father had worked on it before he did.

“The thought of just eliminating the Parks and Rec Department and not maintaining to a certain standard our fields and having any programs for kids, not only breaks my heart for the kids

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PALMER



Community collaborates on mock accident

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PALMER – On Thursday, April 16, at 9 a.m., the high school held a Mock Accident demonstration to show its students the importance of practicing safe driving.

If you spotted a group of teenagers with blood and bruises on their faces, crawling out of a wrecked car on the high school campus, there’s no need for alarm; it was just a part of the school’s annual Mock Accident, which is held every year to raise awareness of the dangers of reckless driving.

“This event is so important to educate our students on the importance of driving safely, and to not be distracted by drunken driving, being impaired, or using cell phones,” said Principal Sue North. “It helps students realize the severe consequences of reckless driving behavior, and allows awareness for responsible decision making.”

The event is made possible through collaboration with the fire departments of Palmer, Three Rivers, and Bondsville, the police department, Beers Story Funeral Home, Gary Labonte Towing, Pathfinder Techni-



Submitted Photos

Top photo, Firefighters were on the scene to demonstrate how to safely remove victims from the wrecked car. Kodah, under heavy makeup, took the driver’s seat of the wrecked van for the mock accident.

cal Vocational School, and UMass LifeFlight.

“Unfortunately, due to weather, the helicopter couldn’t fly in,” North said.

Volunteers for the event included Abigail Labier, Kodah Laviolette, Avigail Lee, Chris Stapleton, and Wyatt Tindlund. The EMTs were Kelsey Coyle, Garrett Lafond, and Paige Venneri.

“I think it’s an incredible opportunity that our students get to take part in, as well as observe,” said Assistant Principal Amy Herring. “Some of our students are victims,

while some, the students that take EMT course, are actually first responders.”

Herring quoted Principal North saying, “if it impacts one life and one decision that a student makes, then it’s worth it.”

“We have kids that say that they’ve thought of that accident when they’ve made certain decisions,” Herring said. “You’re not always sure how seriously they take it in the moment, because it’s all dramatized.”

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THREE RIVERS

Goodspeed Entertainment returns for Pitch Please Karaoke Night

By Marcelo Gusmao
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THREE RIVERS – Last week, the St. Stanislaus Polish Club held a “Pitch Please” Karaoke Night in partnership with the Domestic Violence Task Force.

Kathy Goodspeed has recently returned to the area to re-open her entertainment business, Goodspeed Entertainment.

“I haven’t done it in a while, so I’m just starting to get back into it,” Goodspeed said. “I had moved to New York for about eight years, but before that I was booked steadily about six nights a week. Sometimes I had three or four shows a night, so I had people that worked for me



Photo by Marcelo Gusmao

Dominique performed several songs for the crowd, ranging from hits by Ariana Grande to the soundtrack from Disney’s Mulan.

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PALMER

Bid goes out for Converse Middle School

By Marcelo Gusmao
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PALMER – The Town Council met last Monday to address some old business, vote on previous discussions, and make an appointment to the Redevelopment Authority, as well as providing an update to the sale of Converse Middle School.

Old Business

The council voted on adopting the provisions from Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40u. Town Manager Brad Brothers provided a legal follow-up from a previous discussion.

“The key driver on this is that ‘they do not feel like a separate fee schedule’ means that we can avoid the ordinance review process,” Brothers said. “Their recommendation was to leave that

in there as is.”

As for concerns that the process might need to be started over with a Public Hearing Notice, Brothers said, “they did not feel like any changes that are put forth in this were substantive enough to start the process over again.”

The last change from the prior meeting was to remove a revolving fund. “After discussion with legal and the Department of Revenue, it’s recommended to increase our revenue projections and add a budget line into our expense lines to off-set that,” Brothers said.

“Rather than create a special revenue fund that has

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BASEBALL

Tough start for Pathfinder baseball

PALMER – Last Monday afternoon, Pathfinder baseball fell to 0-5 on the season with a 15-1 loss against visiting St. Mary's. The Saints scored 10 times in the first inning to pace win. Pathfinder just managed two hits, including a Brody Wetnicka RBI hit. The Pioneers are now 0-6 on the season.



Zack Smith hits a grounder into play.



Jake Kokoski catches a strike.

Turley photos by Maddox Baer

Emerson Boronski catches a pop fly.



Brody Wetnicka winds back for a pitch.

Sebastian Mayberry delivers a pitch.

BASEBALL

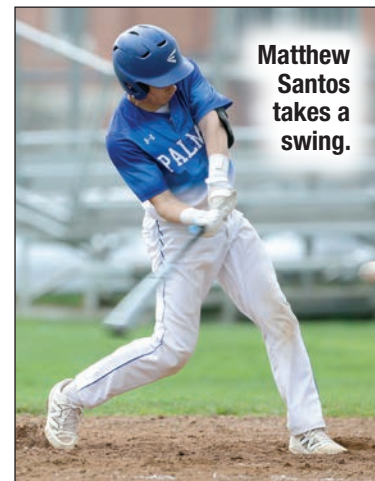
Panthers grab win over Saints

PALMER – Last Wednesday afternoon, Palmer High School baseball did not have a lot of offense, but defense and pitching led the Panthers to a

4-1 win over St. Mary's. Sebastian Mayberry went 6 2-3 innings, allowing a run and three hits while striking out seven and walking three. The Panthers are up to 5-2 on the regular season.



Josiel Ortiz slides safely into third base.



Matthew Santos takes a swing.



Theo Haley watches the ball into his glove.



Brendan Hess slings a throw to first.



Josiel Ortiz takes a swing.

BASEBALL

MHS overcomes sluggish start to beat Ludlow

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW – Making his first home start of the 2026 regular season, Ludlow sophomore lefthander Ryan Sargent was nearly unhittable during the first three innings against the Monson Mustangs.

Sargent struck out eight of the first 11 batters that he faced, but the momentum changed sides in the top of the fourth inning. The Mustangs erupted for seven runs during that frame, which led to a 12-3 victory at the Ludlow Sports Complex, last Tuesday afternoon.

"The Ludlow starting pitcher did a very good job of keeping us off-balance early in the game," said Monson head coach Curtis Orlik. "Our bats finally came alive in the fourth inning, and we didn't let up after that."

Sargent, who finished his outing with 10 strikeouts, made several relief appearances for the Lions varsity team a year ago. He hurled a one-hit shutout in his first start of this season which was an 11-0 win at Mahar Regional on April 1. He recorded nine strikeouts and issued four walks in the complete game performance.

"Ryan has the potential to be a very good pitcher," said Ludlow head coach Cam Rivest. "He just needs

to continue working on his craft. I'm looking forward to watching him develop over the next couple of years. He has a very high baseball IQ."

It was a homecoming game for Orlik, who spent a couple of summers playing baseball at Whitney Park, which used to be the home field of the Lions varsity baseball team. Two of Orlik's baseball coaches were Bob Bohl and Lou Casagrande, who attended the Bi-County North League match-up.

"Those were some of the best summers of my life," recalled Orlik, who graduated from Tantasqua Regional High School in Fiskdale. "I still keep in touch with Bob, but I haven't seen Lou since we played here last year. He's one of my all-time favorite baseball coaches. I'm very glad that he was able to come to today's game."

A year ago, Orlik guided the Mustangs to an 11-1 victory over the Lions in the first ever varsity game played on the baseball field located behind Ludlow High School.

Monson (3-2) has now won the last six meetings against Ludlow (3-2).

Things didn't start out very well for the Mustangs in their first meeting with the Lions this spring.

Sargent struck out the first two batters that he faced before senior Austin Meacham, who was Monson's

"Our bats finally came alive in the fourth inning, and we didn't let up after that."

Curtis Orlik
Monson High School head coach

starting pitcher, hit a pop-up that landed in shallow left field for a single. Senior first baseman Shane Szado followed with a walk. Sargent quickly ended the threat with another strikeout. He then struck out six of the next seven batters.

The Lions took a 1-0 lead against Meacham in the bottom half of the opening frame.

Senior second baseman Mason Morace hit ground rule double to left field leading off the inning. Senior centerfielder Alex Spurlock (2-for-3) then smacked the first pitch that he saw to center field for a run scoring triple. After the next batter struck out, junior third baseman Christian Kochanek drew a walk putting runners at the corners. Meacham managed to get out of the jam by recording back-to-back strikeouts.

"I did get off to a rough start in today's game," said Meacham, who recorded eight strikeouts. "I threw two fastballs over the plate in the

first inning, and their first two hitters hit it hard. I pitched well after the second inning. This is a big comeback win for us and we're looking to keep it going now."

With two outs in the following inning, an infield hit by junior first baseman Nick Dion (2-for-3) scored junior right fielder Connor Castro (walk) which gave the home team a 2-0 advantage.

Meacham, who was also the winning pitcher in last year's game played at the Ludlow Sports Complex, settled down after that. The righthander, who gave up two runs on four hits in the first two innings, only allowed one run on just two base hits before trading places with sophomore third baseman Anthony Tulloch with two outs in the seventh inning.

The only reason why Orlik was forced to make a pitching change was because Meacham had reached the 115 pitch limit.

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LACROSSE

Warriors get late surge to beat Orioles

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN – The non-league girl's lacrosse match-up between the Tantasqua Lady Warriors and the Belchertown Lady Orioles was a tightly contested affair until the middle of the third quarter.

With the score tied, 7-7, the Lady Warriors outscored the Lady Orioles, 8-1, over the final 18 minutes of the contest leading to a 15-8 road victory last Friday afternoon.

"I thought my team played very well, especially during the second half," said Tantasqua head coach Heather Egan. "We lost a tough game yesterday and it feels very good to enter the vacation week with a victory."

Tantasqua (5-4), who aren't scheduled to play any games during the April vacation week, suffered an 8-3 road loss against Northbridge High School twenty four hours earlier.

The Lady Warriors have now won five of the last six meetings against Belchertown, which includes a 15-7 home win a year ago.

The only time that the Lady Orioles (5-3), celebrated a win in the series

was a 14-9 victory on their home grass field two years ago.

"We did win at Chicopee High School (19-9) yesterday," said Belchertown head coach Jarrod Lemke. "This has always been a tough match-up game. They're just a fundamentally sound team."

Belchertown, who never held the lead against Tantasqua, is scheduled to play two home games this week.

The Lady Warriors, who play their home matches on a turf field, played their second game on a grass field this spring. They posted a 21-9 win at Notre Dame of Worcester on April 14.

"We've practiced on grass to get ready for our two grass games," Egan said. "It's a lot slower game on grass."

The duo of senior Tess Alexander and sophomore Maeve O'Neil combined to score eight of the Lady Warriors 15 goals in the only meeting of the regular season against the Lady Orioles.

O'Neil scored five goals, which tied her career high. She was also credited with an assist.

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