

The Journal Register

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Scouts assist with grave flagging ahead of Memorial Day

Submitted photo

On Monday evening, May 18, the American Legion Palmer Post 130 along with Troop 164 and Pack 163 together replaced all the veteran flags at Oak Knoll and St. Thomas Cemeteries. The scouts thank legionnaires and family members who attended. The scouts would also like to thank the groundskeepers for having both cemeteries ready for us before Memorial Day.

PALMER

Pathfinder students wow community with Arts & Culture Night

By Marcelo Gusmão
Staff Writer
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PALMER – The community was recently invited to experience creative projects put together by the students at Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School.

Pathfinder hosted its fourth annual Arts and Culture Night on Thursday, May 7, from 5-7 p.m. The open and free event showcased students' creative work in a number of mediums to provide an experience to about 250 people who filtered in and out, some staying all evening.

The idea for this event originally came from Art Teacher Darlene Henshaw, who wanted to create an art gallery experience for the students in her studio art program. Since its inception, participation has increased annually. Caitlin Phelps was the administrator overseeing the event.

"Arts and Culture Night has become one of our favorite community traditions, because it showcases the incredible creativity, talent,

STUDENTS | page 7



Submitted Photos
Hospitality student
Corrina S.
served hors d'oeuvres
to the attendees.

MONSON

Town Meeting approves bylaw change, development projects

By Marcelo Gusmão
Staff Writer
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MONSON – Last week, the town held its annual Town Meeting to vote on several articles in the town, most notably an amendment to the zoning bylaws to allow a Planned Village District, and construction of the Macomber Road Bridge.

There were 35 articles being voted on at the meeting on Monday, May 11.

State Developmental Center

The second article was to amend the town's Zoning Bylaws and Zoning Map to create a new Planned Village District. The agenda described the district as featuring a residential building with two to eight dwelling units in a row,

a cottage cluster development, a measure of residential density, a building for mixed-use development, multifamily residential developments, a single-family detached dwelling, and to reuse or renovate an existing structure that is already in the area.

Planning Board Member Craig Sweitzer read the report of the board, saying it "held a public hearing on Jan. 20 and

continued it until Feb. 17 to hear testimony on the Zone Change Proposal. WestMass Development Corp. gave information describing their proposed Bylaw and Zoning Map Change."

"The public was given a chance to ask extensive questions and to have them answered to further their knowledge of this proposed bylaw change," Sweitzer continued.

"After hearing the presentation of Western Mass Development, and input from the public, who were, by far, in favor of this bylaw change, the Planning Board voted to recommend Town Meeting vote in favor of this proposal."

"If Monson State Developmental Center returns to state ownership, which could occur if this bylaw change doesn't pass, and the state

wants to develop it as such, the state can be exempt from zoning," Sweitzer said. "Monson won't be able to control the development and income to the town through normal taxes, would this occur?"

WestMass Vice President of Operations, Dan Knapik, made a presentation on the project.

MEETING | page 8

MONSON

Cross-town collaboration to clean up veteran memorials

By Marcelo Gusmão
Staff Writer
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MONSON – The Cemetery Commission and Veterans Services Departments have been collaborating to preserve local veteran memorials.

Two weeks before Memorial Day, Cemetery Commission Foreman Mat Wawrzyk and Veterans Services Officer Patrick Renna met in Crane Park in Wilbraham to collaborate on cleaning the veterans' memorials.

"Pat is a Monson resident and has previously volunteered for our Wreaths Across America Program we hold in our Monson cemeteries," Wawrzyk said. "Earlier this month he reached out to me after seeing a video I posted online demonstrating some new products

the cemetery will be using for restoration projects, and asked if I could give him any tips for improving the Veterans Monuments in downtown Wilbraham."

Renna has worked with the town of Wilbraham's Rotary Club and the Minnechaug Military Community Club to clean the monuments once before, for Veterans Day last year.

"I originally met Mat because I volunteered to help out at the Wreaths Across America event in Monson, which he's heavily involved with," Renna said.

Renna had worked on cleaning the monuments the previous fall before Veterans Day, with volunteers from the local Rotary Group and Minnechaug High School's Military Community Club.

CLEAN UP | page 6



Submitted Photo

The Monson Cemetery Commission Foreman and Wilbraham Veterans Services Officer collaborate to clean monuments before Memorial Day.

PALMER

Town Clerk provides updates on election

By Marcelo Gusmão
Staff Writer
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PALMER – At last week's Town Council meeting, the Town Clerk provided a report on the goings-on of her department, and clarified some information regarding the upcoming town election.

The meeting began with the council voting to appoint Lauren Perry to the Conservation Commission, with a term ending on June 30, 2027. The council then voted to appoint Director of Administrative Services Ashley Place as the Alternate Municipal Hearing Officer, noting that she completed the training program.

"Right now, I'm the sole Municipal Hearings Officer," Town Manager Brad Brothers said. "Sometimes I don't have a lot of time to commit

to these things, and they need full attention to review, so I'm excited to have Ashley as an alternate."

The council voted unanimously to appoint Place to the position. Brothers said he expects Place to take on the majority of the cases, and that he is happy to have her help.

The council then had a departmental update from Town Clerk Susan Coache, who provided an overview of what goes on at the office, as well as highlighting things to look forward to.

Coache started by emphasizing the importance of the Town Census

ELECTION | page 6



Agricultural Commission shares Conservation Easement Programs

By Marcelo Gusmão
Staff Writer
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MONSON – At last week’s Select Board meeting, the Agricultural Commission announced that farms in town qualify to be designated as farmland of local importance.

The meeting on Tuesday, May 12, began with a report from the Town Administrator, Jennifer Wolowicz, who praised the coordination of the Town Meeting the night before, which was attended by 400 members of the community.

“I actually spoke to a couple of residents today, and they told me it was their first time attending,” Wolowicz said, “and they didn’t really understand what was happening. So, I’m going to talk to the moderator about possibly trying to do some sessions throughout the summer about learning about Town Meeting, because if you’re going to something and you have no idea what the process is, it’s kind of hard to follow along.”

Wolowicz also reported that the Chief of Police made a surplus request for two 20-year-old ATVs that he intends to dispose of, and a trailer that Wolowicz will see if any other department can use, to be discussed in more detail at a later meeting.

The board voted to appoint Mead, Talerman & Costa to the position of Town Counsel until 2027.

Robert Skalbite of the Agricultural Commission spoke to the board about the Farmer’s Market. He described meeting with Kellie Hummel, formerly the Market Manager for the recently dissolved Wilbraham Farmer’s Market, who was looking for a new place to hold the market.

“We’ve had a number of people mention to us at the annual Harvest Festival that we were doing down by Town Hall that they wanted to see a more regular market in town,” Skalbite said.

After collaborating with Hummel over the winter on pertinent details, Skalbite was able to announce that they will be collaborating here in town.

“We have officially announced that we will be having a weekly farmer’s market,” Skalbite said. “It will be at the Senior Center, like it was before. It’s going to start on June 24 and run through August 26, it will be on Wednesdays from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.”

Skalbite said that the market has already confirmed 14 vendors, with several more under review. He said that the vendors include various farms

and baked goods, as well as a popsicle vendor.

“We’re excited to have that going on,” Skalbite said.

Skalbite went on to talk about conservation easement programs that can designate local farmland as being of local importance, providing access to funds and protections.

“I had been approached by American Farmland Trust, which was working on a program to help local municipalities designate farmland of local importance,” Skalbite said. “There are certain agricultural programs, conservation easement programs, that allow farmers to apply to put a conservation easement on their land, and they receive the difference between the buildable value and the agricultural value of their land, and then it puts a permanent easement on that land so that in perpetuity it will be farmland.”

Skalbite said that these programs are based on designated soil types, with a survey online that can determine what kind of soil you have. For farms, that’s based on land that’s considered prime farmland, such as the Connecticut River land, statewide significant land, and locally important farmland.

“The locally important only comes into play if a town has had their farmland sur-

veyed and certain soil types, like rocky soil types, are designated as locally important because they’re being actively farmed in the community,” Skalbite said.

Through AFT, the Agricultural Commission worked with a soil scientist from the Natural Resource Conservation Service who produced a list of 30 different specific soil types that are not considered to be prime or of statewide significance, which are the town’s soils of local importance.

“So now, if a farmer in town is interested in applying for one of these easement programs,” Skalbite said, mentioning a few that could apply, such as the Agriculture Preservation Restriction, and programs that can be applied for through NRCS, “they can do that.”

“Hopefully we’ve opened the door for some farms in town to be able to apply for this conservation program, protect their land, and be able to access capital to expand or do whatever they need to do,” Skalbite said.

Skalbite added that if anyone is interested in the program and wants to reach out to the Agricultural Commission for more information, they can reach the commission at MonsonAGComm@GMail.com.

‘Defending democracy’ meeting welcomes new participants

MONSON – Residents and neighbors from across the area to gather each week in support of democracy, civic engagement, and community dialogue during the ongoing “defending democracy” meeting held every Saturday at Monson Town Hall.

The peaceful gatherings take place at 11 a.m. and are open to anyone interested in standing together in support of democratic values, public participation, and respectful civic discussion. Organizers say the weekly events are in-

tended to create a welcoming space for community members to connect, share concerns and encourage involvement in issues affecting the nation and local communities alike.

Participants are encouraged to bring signs, conversations, and a spirit of unity. Supporters describe the events as positive, community focused opportunities to stay engaged and visible during a time of growing public concern over the future of democracy and civil discourse.

Memorial Day parade announced

PALMER – This Memorial Day, take the time to join fellow community members at our annual parade to remember those that made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. The parade will take place on Monday, May 25 beginning at the St. Thomas Church parking



lot. People should arrive at 10:15 a.m. with the parade stepping off at 10:45 a.m. The route is: Down Thorndike, take a left on Main Street, take left onto Central Street, left onto Converse Street, arrive at former Converse School.

Brimfield Memorial Day services May 24

BRIMFIELD – The Town of Brimfield will hold its annual Memorial Day Services on Sunday, May 24 at 2:00 pm on the Town Common. The committee encourages everyone to gather for this important day of remembrance and extends a special invitation to all area veterans, enlisted service members, and reservists.

As the nation celebrates its 250th, Brimfield is proud to pay tribute to the brave citizens who played a part in the establishment of our country and our freedoms. Town historian Mike DeFalco will speak and share poignant details of the monumental impact of this milestone.

Ceremonies begin with the drum roll, and the Veterans call to order, followed by patriotic music and poems reflecting on the day, remembrance of current and former town residents who have died in the last year, and the ceremonial tolling of the bell.

State Representative Todd Smola will speak, Brimfield elementary sixth grade twins Emma and Bria Commeaux will recite the poems, and Father Jack Brennan of St. Christophers will lead the prayers. The musical performances will include

the Brimfield Elementary Band, Lillian Donahue, Audrey Spicer, and members of St. Christophers Folk Group.

“Brimfield has held services for Memorial Day as a town tradition that goes back beyond the memories of its oldest residents. As a committee, we believe it is important to take time to honor those who sacrificed everything,” said committee chair Cindy Skowrya.

Committee chair Cindy Skowrya said, “Brimfield has a proud tradition to pause and reflect on the significance of Memorial Day and those that we honor on that day, especially those who sacrificed everything and helped make it possible for us to enjoy our freedoms because of their sacrifice and selflessness.”

A parade immediately follows the ceremony, and all are invited to participate. A wagon is available for veterans and others who want to join the parade but are unable to march, courtesy of Village Green Campgrounds, who will also provide ice cream to all who participate in the parade. Children are encouraged to decorate their bikes and doll carriages in patriotic themes.

The parade will stop at

the cemetery and war monuments in town to pay respect with ceremonial gun salute, the laying of wreaths donated by Green Thumb Florist, raising of the flag and the playing of Taps by Grant MacFarlane and Cassandra Mungai. Tina Harkness and Linda Mercier will play the bagpipe at the cemetery.

During the American Civil War, citizens placed flowers on the graves of those who had been killed in battle. In recognition of that tradition, red carnations will be handed out to place on veterans’ graves marked with flags placed by Scout Troop 7 and additional volunteers. Girls on the Run planted the geraniums at town monuments.

The committee wants to thank all who worked behind the scenes to make this possible especially the Brimfield Police Department and the Champeau-Vilandre American Legion Post 109 for their support.

Be sure to join us on this Day of Remembrance in honor of those who have sacrificed so much for the freedoms that we enjoy. In case of rain the ceremony will be held at St. Christopher’s church.

Town-Wide Tag Sale takes on Flea Market Town

BRIMFIELD – Brimfield is known world-wide as a destination for treasure hunting, but once a year, the entire town turns into a secondhand shopper’s paradise. Organized by Hitchcock Academy, the area’s community center located in Brimfield, the 16th annual Brimfield Town-Wide Tag Sale will take place on Saturday, May 30 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

All of the sales are included on a map complete with listings that describe what shoppers can find at each site, also noting any sales that will continue through Sunday. Several garage sales are on-site at Hitchcock, so the community cen-

ter is a great place to start your shopping. The Brimfield Farmers’ Market is also running in the organization’s parking lot that day from 9am to 1pm, so consider fueling up with kombucha and baked goods, or adding some fresh farm and handcrafted goods to your day’s loot.

Shoppers can pick up a printed 11x17 map at Hitchcock for \$2 on the day of the event or download it from Hitchcock’s website the day prior. So far, listings include typical tag sale fare such as clothing, household items, toys, tools, housewares, small appliances, free garden pots, cleaning supplies, kitchen items, dishes, jew-

elry, holiday décor, crafts, baking, books, cds and dvds, baby items, furniture, pet supplies, assorted tools and tech items, and knick-knacks, along with vintage and antique items.

Unique items in the listings include an original Atari system, kayaks, truck boxes, Amazon Mystery Boxes, a 12-foot aluminum boat, tin toys, andirons, prints, baseball cards, a bamboo fly rod, a Modern Glenwood Home Grand Wood Burning Cook Stove, antique sewing machine, table saw, bench sander, and more.

“It’s such a fun day and a unique way to foster a sense of community,” says Hitchcock Executive Director Cindy Skowrya. “We hear often how people enjoy interacting with one another as much as they enjoy the hunt.”

For more information, visit www.hitchcock-academy.org. Hitchcock Academy is a community center located at 2 Brookfield Road in Brimfield serving the community with educational, recreational, and cultural programming. Hitchcock is celebrating 70 years this year following its 100-year history as a school.



Are you having difficulty communicating with your partner, struggling with boundaries, and healthy relationships?

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The Vinica Brook Restoration at Norcross Wildlife Foundation

WALES – The Norcross Wildlife Foundation is undertaking one of the largest stream and freshwater restoration projects ever undertaken in Massachusetts. This effort brings together the regional conservation organization Mass Audubon, the national conservation organization American Rivers, faculty and students from UMass Amherst, and staff of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife to undertake this important ecological restoration project.

On May 30th the Executive Director of Norcross, Ed Hood, along with Linda Hutchins, the Senior Restoration Ecologist at Mass Audubon, will provide the public with a presentation about this project and answer questions individuals may have. Following the program there will be a guided field tour to one of the dams planned for removal, and a nearby beaver meadow.

The program will take place from 10am to noon at the Norcross Visitor Center at 30 Peck Road in Wales. Please RSVP by contacting Holly Sousa at hsousa@norcrosswildlife.org, or by leaving a message at 413-245-1264.

During the lifetime of the Foundation's founder, Arthur Norcross, there was significant

construction of infrastructure - including 9 dams and lesser water control structures - to impound and re-direct water, to drain and fill swamps and to create large freshwater ponds where previously there been only a free-flowing cold-water stream (Vinica Brook). Arthur Norcross constructed 26 miles of roads on the property in pursuit of his vision, with the roads providing open areas for "wildflowers", providing access to feeding stations for wildlife and to patrol for poachers. These roads criss-cross streams and wetlands, impairing the ecology of the landscape and causing harm to wildlife.

For more than a decade it has been clear that a new approach to caring for Norcross's lands was needed - adopting the science and best practices of land and wildlife conservation in the 21st century. The Norcross Wildlife Foundation is undertaking an ambitious effort to advance Arthur Norcross's original vision while reassessing the methods he and subsequent



staff employed during the 20th and early 21st centuries.

In 2019, Norcross was required to do a 10-year engineering assessment of the 4 licensed dams, Numbers 1-3, and Vinica Pond Dam, all of which are classified by the Massachusetts Office of Dam Safety as "low hazard" dams. The landowner - Norcross - is

responsible for ensuring their safety from potential failure, and the 2019 engineering report from a third-party firm identified what today would be over \$1,000,000 in needed repairs to keep the dams compliant with Massachusetts regulations.

Facing the high costs of repairing and maintaining the

Norcross dams, and with a better-informed understanding of stream and wetland habitat functionality, the Norcross staff began a multi-year assessment to evaluate the role of the dams and ponds. With a large group of outside experts and conservation partners, Norcross has determined that removing

the dams and water control structures, and more than half of the road network, will enhance the habitat quality of the Norcross property and best fulfill Arthur Norcross's original vision that this property be "be a place of refuge where all wildlife is encouraged not just to survive but also to proliferate naturally and where certain species, now threatened with extinction, may again attain more normal distribution and benefit the public by their survival" (c. 1964).

Beaver created wetland meadow on Vinica Brook (2024). In the 1990s or early 2000s Norcross staff demolished the dam and eliminated the beavers from this landscape - but the beaver's excellent ecosystem engineering remains. Today Beavers are allowed to undertake their work by the Norcross Wildlife Foundation.

Old meadow c. 1941 prior to the construction of pond #2 which flooded this landscape. Stone structure was for a private recreational boat dock on the soon-to-be pond #2. With the breaching of dam #2, a wet-meadow or beaver pond/swamp will return to this location.

For more information about the Norcross Wildlife Foundation, go to: www.norcrosswildlife.org.

Brimfield to host first living history cemetery tour

BRIMFIELD – On June 13, 2026, the Spirit of Brimfield - 250th Committee and the Brimfield Historical Commission will co-host a Revolutionary War themed cemetery tour at the Brimfield Cemetery located at 28 Wales Rd. Guided groups will depart every 30 minutes, beginning at 10:00 a.m. from the Brimfield Elementary School parking lot. Along the route, narrators and costumed interpreters will present powerful stories of the Brimfield men who left home to serve in the patriot cause, and the families they left behind. Stories told by actors in role, include the following:

James and Mary Thompson, a husband-and-wife duo, telling their story of pride and sacrifice, and the family's

concern for a certain cousin who led the patriot cause.

Eudocia Janes, sharing her father William's service beginning at age 17, and the emotional court testimony he gave in detail 55 years later to secure his war pension.

Joseph Hitchcock, the first English child born in Brimfield, who watched a wilderness become a town and colonies become a country. He answered the Lexington alarm, stood at the siege of Boston, and proudly sent his sons and grandsons to fight for freedom.

Deacon David Morgan, from a Springfield love story to a Revolutionary legacy, not to mention a family tree that stretched all the way to a Gilded Age financier.

Beulah Danielson, the

steady support behind her husband, General Timothy Danielson, who held the home and family together while he was away. When peace finally came, would she be there to enjoy the liberty so dearly won?

The tour will also feature the short stories of Captain John Sherman and his son Bazaleel, Nathaniel Danielson, Abner Morgan, Christopher Ward, and the infamous General William Eaton. Members of the Brown family, the Blodgett family and the Blashfield family will also be recognized as their graves are passed, among others.

Registration for this free event is required and space is limited. Call Sue DeBruin (508)-523-9544 to register or to learn more information.

Keep Museum presents musician David Polansky

MONSON – The Keep Homestead Museum is pleased to welcome career musician David Polansky with his program "Music Through the Decades" on Sunday, June 7 at 1:30 p.m.

Using keyboard, trumpet, and vocals, David presents music inspired by the advent of the automobile, two world wars, the Roaring 20's, the wild west, and more. He engages the audience taking questions, performing requests, and telling funny anecdotes about famous musicians as well as his own life as a musician.

The concert will be held on the side lawn so plan to bring a chair or blanket for comfort. If there is inclement weather, it will take place in the barn. There is no admission fee though donations are accepted.

This concert is funded by a grant from the Monson Cultural Council, a local agency of Massachusetts Cultural Council.

The museum will be open for viewing from 1 to 3:30 p.m. and more information about it can be found at www.KeepHomesteadMuseum.org.

Volunteers needed for water quality sampling

PALMER – Chicopee 4Rivers Watershed community project is seeking volunteers to conduct water quality sampling at sites in Wilbraham and Palmer twice a month on Thursday mornings in June, July and August and once in September.

Crafters wanted

LUDLOW – Crafters Wanted for the Rosary Sodality's St. Nicholas Craft Fair and Raffle on Saturday, Nov. 14, 2026, at Christ the King Church located at 41 Warsaw Avenue in Ludlow from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The cost is a non-refundable \$40. fee for an 8-ft table, which will be provided by the church.

To reserve a table or for more information contact Debbie Martell at 413-547-8739 or Lorraine Bernier at 413-519-7658.

Light refreshments will be available.

Patriotic music program on June 7

PALMER – The Fanfare Brass presents a Patriotic music program celebrating the 250th founding of our country on Sunday, June 7 at 3 p.m. at St. Paul Church located at 1060 Central Street in Palmer, Mass.

The program starts 1768 to current songs and we speak a little about the history of each song. A program/song sheet will be passed out for

those who would like to sing along.

Program songs include: The Liberty Song, God Save Good Washington, The Girl I Left Behind, My Country Tis of Thee, British Grenadiers, Chester, Yankee Doodle, Shenandoah, The Star Spangled Banner, Columbia, Battle Hymn of the Republic, Battle Cry of Freedom, Dixie, Cruel War in Over, When John-

ny Comes Marching Home, Eternal Father, America the Beautiful, Stars and Stripes, You're A Grand Old Flag, God Bless America, It's A Long Way to Tipperary, Pack Up Your Troubles, Armes Forces Themes, Hail to the Chief, God Bless the USA.

For more information contact David Neill at 413-686-5027 or email tdn8@aol.com.

Actors sought for Living History Cemetery tour

BRIMFIELD – As part of Brimfield's 250th celebration of the American Revolution, a living history cemetery tour is being planned for June 13, 2026. The tour includes powerful stories of the men who left home to serve in the patriot cause and the families they left behind. Registration details to follow.

Organizers are seeking a male actor to portray a notable Brimfield resident whose family sent fourteen men to fight for freedom. Narrators, who will read short graveside scripts, are also needed.

Contact Sue DeBruin through the Friends of Historic Brimfield at 413-239-0288 to lend your talents and make history come alive.

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DEADLINE

The Journal Register deadline for public submissions to Mondays. To get your submission in for that week's edition space permitting, email Editor at journalregister@turley.com or call the office at 413-283-8393 by noon on Mondays. We appreciate the cooperation of our readers.

CORRECTIONS The Journal Register will gladly correct factual errors that appear in this paper. Corrections or clarifications will always appear on Page 2 or 3. To request a correction, send an email to: journalregister@turley.com, or call (413) 283-8393. Corrections may also be requested in writing at: Journal Register, Attn: Editor, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA, 01069

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND

Ceremonies

Monday, May 25th

PALMER

St Thomas Church parking lot

Arrival Time 10:15 a.m.; Step off 10:45 a.m.

Parade Route down Thorndike Street, take a left onto Main Street, take left onto Central Street, left onto Converse Street, arrive at former Converse School

MONSON

Step off 10:00 a.m at Monson Animal Clinic and will stop at cemeteries to pay respects.

Parade will conclude at Memorial Hall on Main Street

WALES

Ceremony 10:00 a.m. Veterans Memorial Park, 5 Main Street

Sunday, May 24th

BRIMFIELD

Ceremony will be held at 2:00 p.m. at the Town Common.

Parade will commence after the ceremony, stopping at War Monuments and the cemetery to pay respects.

Children are encouraged to dress up bikes and doll carriages. Ice cream will be provided to parade attendees.

On Memorial Day and every day, we remember.



Viewpoints

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor

Social Security's 'First Year Rule' and Withdrawing from SS

Dear Rusty:

I am 63 years old, and about to apply for my Social Security benefits.

I am self-employed but only working part time. I know about Social Security's annual earnings limit but recently I learned I must also be concerned about a monthly earnings limit of \$2,040. My questions are:

1) How do I find out if I will be subject to a monthly earning limit of \$2,040 per month? I thought it was only evaluated annually.

2) If I choose to cancel Social Security within the first year or after, what are the penalties? Would I have to pay them back for the whole amount for the whole time that they paid me? Which makes no sense, since I have been paid into SS since I was 13 years old.

Can you help me understand this?

Signed: Claiming Early and Still Working

Dear Claiming Early:

It can get tricky if you are still working after claiming your Social Security before your SS Full Retirement Age, especially during your first year collecting. I'm happy to answer your specific questions:

1. There is a special rule which applies during your first year collecting early Social Security benefits (e.g., before your Full Retirement Age or "FRA," which for you is age 67). What will happen is this: when the IRS provides SSA with your 2026 earnings (in 2027), SSA will review to see if your total 2026 net earnings from self-employment exceeded the 2026 annual limit of \$24,480.

If not, no further action is necessary. But if

you did exceed the full year 2026 earnings limit, SSA will contact you and ask you to provide them with details about your monthly 2026 net earnings. If you have exceeded the monthly limit in any 2026 month after your SS benefit started, you will not be entitled to SS benefits for that month.

Essentially, if you have exceeded the annual limit, you cannot exceed the monthly earnings limit in any remaining month during your first year of collecting. If you exceeded the annual limit and also any monthly limit, SSA will send you an overpayment notice saying you must repay them for the benefits you were not entitled to receive because you exceeded the monthly earnings limit.

2. You can, within 12 months of applying for Social Security, ask SSA to withdraw your application for SS retirement benefits. They will do that for you, but you will also be required to repay them all SS benefits that they have already paid to (or for) you.

This essentially would "wipe the slate clean" and enable your SS benefit to continue growing, allowing you to apply for a larger monthly benefit later. But if you wait longer than 12 months after you first apply for SS benefits, you can no longer withdraw your application for Social Security. Thereafter, you would be subject to the annual earnings limit (the monthly earnings limit would no longer apply).

FYI, after you reach your FRA, there is no limit on your earnings and you could choose to suspend your benefit payments and earn Delayed Retirement Credits (DRCs) to get a

SECURITY | page 5



Why do we wait until Memorial Day to plant?

For as long as I can remember, the "safe date" for planting tender crops was always Memorial Day.

This year in particular the holiday is on the early side, the 25th of May, as opposed to the 30th or 31st. Here in New England, five or six days can make all the difference in the world.

Sure, as I write, the mercury is set to rise well into the high eighties for three or four days, then become more seasonable again. It's a wonder the plants know what to do.

Anyhow, read on to learn about some tender plants and how they respond better when soil or air temperatures have warmed.

Although cool loving peas and warmth loving beans are both legumes, bean seeds in particular crave seventy to eighty degree soil in which to germinate. This is particularly evident with white seeded bean varieties, since the white seeds reflect the heat instead of holding on to it like dark seeds do.

Oftentimes, white seeds will rot before they

In the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



Speaking of seedlings, it's also important not to shock our home grown pepper or tomato seedlings by transplanting them into cold soil or cold air. Night temperatures should be a consistent 50 degrees before planting out peppers.

I typically preheat the soil my peppers are to be planted in with black plastic, laying it right down in the garden bed for a week prior to planting. I cut holes into it at transplanting time, amending each hole as I go.

For added warmth, some gardeners looking to get a head start often use a row cover to add a few degrees of warmth and protect plants from the wind.

Tomatoes are planted outside after all danger of frost has passed. Typically on Memorial Day! In fact, I think the whole "safe date" theory came to be because of tomatoes! When I was just getting started in horticulture I remember all sorts of contraptions people used to use to try and get the first ripe tomato in the neighborhood.

By planting tomatoes transplants earlier you could get earlier fruiting. Cloches

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The Journal Register

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The submission deadline for consideration is Monday at noon.

Election letters to the editor welcome

The Journal Register welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to The Journal Register, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to journalregister@turley.com. Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by noon Monday to be considered for that Thursday's newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the newspaper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election.

For more information, call the editor at 413-283-8393.

Campaign news
As part of its election coverage, the newspaper plans to print stories about contested races for Congress, state Senate, state House, district attorney and Governor's Council during the weeks leading up to the election, as well as a question-and-answer voters guide. In order to ensure fairness to all candidates, no political press releases will be printed, nor will reporters cover political rallies or fundraisers.

Candidates who wish to further publicize their candidacy, beliefs and events may contact advertising, 413-283-8393 about paid advertising in The Journal Register.



Photo by Connie Schwaiger
Brown thrasher

Western Massachusetts resident spotted this brown thrasher in the Berkshire foothills.

Sometimes they visit feeders like the one in the attached photo. Brown thrashers blend in with their surrounding and are tricky to spot.

They are fairly large, slender songbirds with long proportions: the legs are long and sturdy, the bill is long and slightly down curved and the tail is long.

They often cock the tail upward in the manner of wrens. A bright yellow eye, gray brown face and black and white wings bars are other identifying features.

Thrashers are reddish brown on the head, back, tail and wings. They have a white breast and belly with darker speckling.

They are 9.1 to 11.8 inches long or slightly smaller than a blue jay. The brown

in my BACKYARD

By Ellenor Downer

thrasher is the only thrasher species found east of Texas.

Thrashers have one of the largest repertoires of any North American songbird over 1,000 different songs. Since they rarely venture far from thick undergrowth, there singing give their location away especially when perched in a treetop or shrubs.

Their songs are a complex string of many musical phrases, many copied from other birds' songs with each phrase typically sung twice. They also make a distinctive, harsh "tsuck" note.

They imitate other birds including Chuck-will's-widows, wood thrushes and northern flickers.

Both males and females incubate the eggs and feed the young. Nestlings sometimes leave the nest fully feathered within nine days of hatching, earlier than either of their smaller relatives, the northern mockingbird and gray catbird.

An aggressive defender of its nest, the Brown Thrasher is known to strike people and dogs hard enough to draw blood.

Shrubby habitats are

popular hideouts for nest predators, which may explain why the thrashers fledge so quickly for birds of their size. Brown Thrashers are the largest common host of parasitic brown-headed cowbirds.

The oldest Brown Thrasher on record was at least 10 years, 11 months old. It was found in Florida in 1978 where it was banded in 1967.

Rose-breasted grosbeak

A Worthington resident saw a rose-breasted grosbeak showed up at his feeder earlier than usual on May 1. He said they always arrive the first week of May. Last year it was not until May 7.

Belchertown birds

A Belchertown resident sent an email reporting birds seen and heard on his property. They included Baltimore oriole, grey catbirds, a Blackburnian warbler in the maple tree, and he heard, but not seen, a northern parula. He also has a pair of eastern phoebes nesting under an eave of the house.

At nearby Lake Wallace,

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POETRY CORNER

Memorial Day Revisited

Looking back, into unbroken-green,
Fields one day - entered there the machine:
Marching one-after another one, -
Until it was done.

To take the war, against nature. -
Who is not given to whimper.
An act meant as kind; (for succession);
And less indentured, man.

In order to make the world,
Work, easier; (and harder) it's found;
Not long hours under the sun -
But glass structures, where the sweat's unseen.
Topped the ancient regime -
For puppet kings and queens of this time.

Where boys grow up, starved for the kingdom -
Taken by the reapers who had filled in.
No great quest to search the earth for,
'Til no longer believing a loftier air -
As if it never were, or would be again.
Resentment twisting the face of the young.

Tis no Flanders Field, where the brave now go -
From wars abroad, that time unplows ...
No, it's here - where fathers don't reach out to sons -
All but as deadly, as silent guns.
Somewhere in this - is needed your hand -
And with it the spark, to make them men ...
Else the drugged, in all ... will never understand.

By that which is not, waste and lose their days,
Battleless, save to the modem ways.
But far deeper than can be seen -
Except from the soil that has been:
They come with the easiest form of green,
Growing again, a dark division.

- Charles Barnes

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

E-mail items to journalregister@turley.com or mail to Calendar Editor, Journal Register, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, for receipt by Monday of week for publication.

The Journal Register encourages readers to contact event coordinators and organizers for updated event times. Have an event to promote? Email the information (in sentence form and as a Word doc or plain email text – no PDFs or flyers, please – to journalregister@turley.com.)

UPCOMING

VENDORS FOR THE BAYSTATE WING HOSPITAL GIFT SHOPPE

May Vendors

May 27 - Hobbit Hollow Herbs

June Vendors

June 3 - Generations of Cookies
June 10 - How Charming
June 16 - Wicked Good Treats
June 18 - Hobbit Hollow Herbs

July Vendors

July 1 - Generations of Cookies
June 9 - Hobbit Hollow Herbs
July 15 - How Charming
July 21 - Wicked Good Treats

May 30

Brimfield Town-Wide Tag Sale will take place on May 30.

June 6 and 7

7th Annual Pioneer Valley wine festival. Brimfield Auction Acres, Birthplace of the world-famous Brimfield Antique Shows will host the 6th annual Pioneer Valley wine festival on Saturday, June 6 and Sunday, June 7 from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. 2026 Marks the 7th year of the Pioneer Valley Wine and Food festival. This exciting event brings together New

England Wineries, Cideries, Distilleries, and Meaderies from across the Pioneer Valley and Farmers of many sorts selling their wares.

ONGOING

WALES CHURCH FARMER'S MARKET - Located in the church pavilion across from the post office on the corner of Route 19 and Monson Road. We will be open every Saturday morning from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. beginning on Memorial Day weekend and running throughout the summer until Labor Day weekend. We offer homemade baked goods, local honey, crafts, flea market items, antiques, and fruits and vegetables when in season. Vendors are welcome and there is no charge to set up a table.

2025-2026 Drama & Dance Program Beginning September 11th and running through May on Thursdays at PHCC. Does your child love dancing and acting? Have they always been interested but never tried? All levels and ages 5 plus welcome. (Drama students must be able to read.) Also offering Adult Hip Hop & Lyrical Dance Classes. Students must be available for show date in May. Date TBD. Adult class students can dance in show or choose not to as long as requested ahead of time. Contact: trulytorie2000@gmail.com for more info and to register.

THURSDAYS - WESTERN LINE DANCE CLASSES 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. and 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. \$10 for one lesson or both. Brimfield Winery at 35 Main Street in Brimfield. Check brimfieldwinery.com for any variations.

CRAFTERNOONS: Drop in 2 to 4 p.m. daily at the Holland Public Library, 23 Sturbridge Road to learn or practice different crafts. There are new crafts every Wednesday. For more information, call 413-245-3607.

KEEP HOMESTEAD MUSEUM: Located at 35 Ely Rd., Monson, nature trails are open daily until dusk for hiking,

snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Trail maps can be found in the parking lot. For more information call 413-267-4137, email khm@keephomesteadmuseum.org or visit keephomesteadmuseum.org.

QUABOAG VALLEY QUILTERS GUILD: Members meet at 1 p.m. on the first and third Thursdays of the month in the Amvets post at 2150 Main St., Three Rivers. The Guild is a no-pressure group with varying degrees of accomplishments, from novice to Big E "Best In Show" winners. Dues are \$55 a year. For more information, contact Barbara Beaulieu at 267-4044 or Merry Mombourquette at 283-7577. Follow them on Facebook for more.

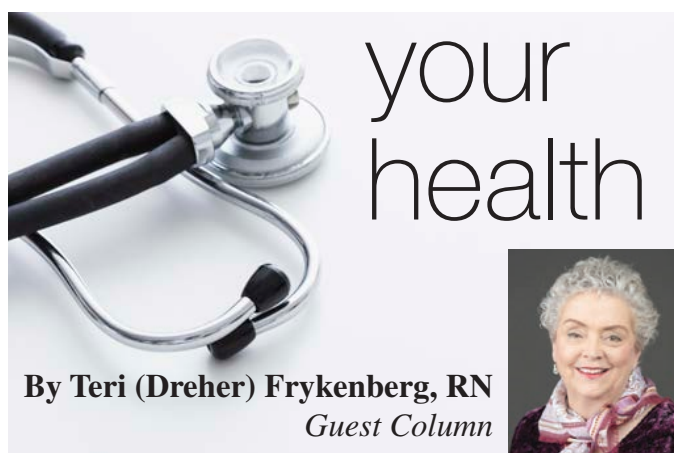
LINE DANCING CLASS: 3-5 p.m. and/or 6:30-8:30 p.m., every Thursday at the Monson Polish Club, 7 Bliss St, Monson. Rose's line dancing classes include absolute beginners and beginners, and participants get to dance to all types of music. \$10 per class. Please wear comfortable footwear, no sandals.

GAME NIGHT: 6-7:45 p.m. the second Tuesday at the Palmer Library at 1455 N. Main St. Free and open to the public. Play available board and card games or bring your own. Must be 16 or older unless accompanied by an adult. No Registration Required – just show up! Questions? Call 283-3691, or email palewis19@yahoo.com.

NOTCH VISITOR CENTER OPEN FOR WINTER SEASON: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Thursday-Monday. The center is located on Rt 116, at the center of the Holyoke Range State Park. DCR Interpretive staff will be available for visitors. Coming in January, programs will also be offered to highlight the Range's special nature in winter, see the park web site for details.

QI GONG: Qi Gong at Monson Free Library with Randy Emerson. Every Tuesday from 5:45 to 6:45 p.m.

Viewpoints



your health

By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

Approximately 22 million adults age 55 or over live alone in America, with an estimated 28 percent of them being childless. While specific numbers for Massachusetts are not available, this national statistic gives a general idea of the breadth of the solo-ager population.

When Senior Living News interviewed a selection of solo agers in 2025, it found that more than half hadn't designated a health-care advocate or intended to do so. As solo agers are a growing senior demographic, this could leave a lot of people without a safety net should they become unable to advocate for themselves.

Health-care advocates go by a variety of terms: HCPOA (healthcare power of attorney), POAH (power of attorney for healthcare), health-care proxy or surrogate decision-maker, but they all mean the same thing: It's a person you legally designate to make medical decisions for you if you become unable to make them for yourself. For my purposes today, I'll use POAH.

For people with spouses, children or close-by family, this decision usually isn't that difficult. For people who are aging alone, miles from family or with no family at all, it becomes a decision that shouldn't be made on a fly-by-night basis.

Solo-agers need health-care advocates too

Without a POAH, hospitals and doctors lack clear guidance. This often leads to doctors making treatment decisions based on medical standards alone, which may not align with what you actually want. Choosing a POAH in advance makes it more likely that your wishes, values and medical preferences will be respected.

Before I get into how a solo ager can identify a POAH, I want to explain the differences between that and a living will, known in some states as an "advance directive." Essentially, the POAH designates the "who" and the living will details the "what": You can say "yes" or "no" to, for example, CPR, resuscitation, intubation or other life-sustaining treatments. You can also designate how long you'd want those treatments to go on before you want them discontinued.

The role of your POAH is not to make the decision they think is best for you, but rather to make the decision you would make for yourself if you could.

That means you want

someone you trust, who's willing to advocate for you, can handle stressful medical situations and can be easily reached. So, your POAH doesn't necessarily have to be geographically nearby, but they need to be within a phone call.

What that person looks like for a solo ager varies.

• **A private patient advocate:** This is usually a board-certified professional with a medical background who understands the situation and whom you trust to act appropriately on your behalf.

• **A non-family POAH:** You can legally appoint someone who is not related to you. Many people choose close friends or neighbors, someone who knows you well and understands your values, or former colleagues who can remain objective in a crisis.

• **Professional fiduciary:** Under a durable power of attorney, a professional fiduciary is an individual entrusted to act as your proxy for either financial matters, health-care matters, or both, if you become incapacitated.

Because each of these lacks "next-of-kin" status, it's important to make your documentation bullet-proof, and I suggest working with an elder law attorney to develop them.

Your advance directive should be detailed and specific in your treatment goals. Your POAH should be durable under your state's requirements. If your health-care providers use patient portals, make sure your records are complete in order to avoid fragmented care.

What happens if you don't choose?

If you become incapacitated without a designated POAH and have no next of kin, you are considered "unbefriended" or "unrepresented." In these cases, decisions are often made by a hospital ethics committee, public guardian or independent physician, who can only act on what they perceive as your wants and values.

In Massachusetts, the Health Care Proxy is a simple document, legally valid in Massachusetts, which allows you to name someone

(an "agent") to make health care decisions on your behalf if you are unable to make or communicate those decisions. You can find it on the Massachusetts Medical Society website, massmed.org.

By proactively naming a proxy – whether a professional patient advocate, friend or other trusted individual – and carefully documenting your wishes, you maintain control over your health care and ensure your dignity is respected.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, R.N., a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate, is the founder of www.NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com, which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. A Monson, MA resident, she is the author of "How to Be a Health-care Advocate for Yourself & Your Loved Ones" and her new book, "Advocating Well: Strategies for Finding Strength and Understanding in Health Care," available at Amazon.com. Contact her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com to set up a free phone consultation.

BIRDS | from page 4

he took photos of yellow warblers and a green heron catching fish.

Red-shouldered hawk

A Montgomery resident saw a red-shouldered hawk recently.

Nesting sparrows

A Belchertown resident said she had sparrows using a nest box in her yard. She found a few of their babies on the ground. At first, I thought something got into the nest, but today a found another one. I think the nestling had died and the parents got them out. She said she may remove the nest box and replace it with a new one in case the sparrows succumbed to disease.

Brimfield birds.

A Brimfield resident said he put up the hummingbird feeders in late April when he learned of a ruby-throated hummingbird in Ware. A couple days later he had an adult male ruby-throated hummingbird and a few days later he saw a female.

He said, "One each gray catbirds, male Baltimore oriole and males rose-breasted grosbeak showed up last week. This week a second male oriole and two more grosbeaks show up, another male and a female. He also has a male eastern towhee in his yard. He said, "A couple of years ago we had two male towhees in the yard and one spent the summer attacking its reflection in the many windows despite best efforts to dissuade it."

He said elsewhere, in Warren on South Street there are three occupied great blue heron nest and two others he was not sure if they were being used. The osprey pair has been around for awhile. The nest has gotten deeper over the years and on a recent visit he could only see the tail or maybe wing feathers barely showing above the nest. I think incubation has started, but can't be sure.

He also has a male common yellowthroat and house wren in his yard.

He said, "House wrens have nested in nesting box-

ers in the yard several times and I saw feathers near the entrance hole on a box they have used before. The wrens have a habit of building false nests in a couple of boxes that they never use."

He also said, "A male yellow-bellied sapsucker spent some time on a native dogwood and today a sapsucker, probably the same one, spent several hours tapping away at the same tree."

Geese in a pavilion

On May 12, I drove by Camp Putnam in New Braintree and saw four geese under their pavilion near the pond. I see many Canada geese in fields or ponds, but I have never seen them in a pavilion.

Other birds

On May 8 I received an email reporting a scarlet tanager, grosbeaks and hummingbirds.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowne@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.

GARDEN | from page 1

or wall-o-waters were popular before the floating row covers became the rage.

I typically wait to transplant my tomatoes. Mine are huge this year.

Remember, if your plants get big and your are still a few weeks away from

getting them from the six pack into the ground, "pot them up." It's a term for going up a size, say from a cell to a four inch pot, so roots don't get bound before they get the chance to live happily ever after in the garden.

Soon enough, for sure.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge

School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 34 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

SECURITY | from page 4

higher monthly benefit. Also at your FRA, if SSA withheld any of your benefits because you exceeded the earnings limit before reaching your FRA, you would get time credit for the number of months your benefits were withheld. Essentially, they would advance your benefit-start month by the number of months your benefits were withheld, yielding a slightly higher monthly amount after your FRA.

Finally, it's important to know that the contributions you made to Social Security from payroll taxes (FICA/

SECA) over your lifetime are not what determines your monthly SS benefit amount. Your monthly SS benefit is based on two main factors: a) your average monthly earnings (indexed for inflation) for the highest earning 35 years over your lifetime as reported to the IRS, and b) the age at which you claim your SS benefits.

Your contributions to Social Security while working only provide you with eligibility to collect SS benefits; the contributions aren't put into a separate account for you and are not used to calculate your monthly SS benefit. The Association Mature

Citizens Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. This article is intended for information purposes and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

ELECTION | from page 1

"It aids residents with proof of residency, voting status, housing benefits for the elderly and other eligible people, and school enrollment grants," Coache said, "and it produces the street list, that is a necessity that the state mandates that we do."

Coache said that the office only gets about 60% of the census forms returned, which creates difficulties for the process, as the 40% of people who don't return it are marked inactive.

"It's very important to return it," Coache said. "If you still have it, please send it in."

In addition to the census, the Town Clerk's office processes business certificates, dog licenses, elections, fuel storage permits, genealogy, assistance with employees' conflict of interest, meeting postings, notary services, pole hearings, voter registration, processing birth, death, and marriage certificates, as well as marriage intentions, the Public Records Officer, swearing in elected and appointed officials, and tag sale permits.

Coache then elaborated on some of these items, saying that so far this year, the Town Clerk's office has filed 27 birth records, 76 death records, 15 marriage intentions and 13 records, 125 meetings and hearings posted, 814 dog licenses, and 170 notarized documents.

Coache also talked about the upcoming elections on June 9, noting that Precincts One and Four will be voting at the Saints Peter and Paul Parish Center on 2267 Main St. in Three Rivers, and Precincts Two and Three will move to AmVets Post 74 at 2150 Main

St. in Three Rivers.

"We'll see how that will affect the voters," Coache said. "The state came out and they audited, and they said it was a spot that was feasible, and I'm happy to make the move."

Coache added that the previous site, at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church, was very hospitable and good to work with, but "the goal is to have all of the voting locations in one space," Coache said.

Council Vice President Jessica Ferry asked Coache to elaborate on how consolidating voting locations to one site will benefit the town. Coache explained that it's to accommodate changes to the commonwealth's voting acts, particularly voting by mail.

"Voting by mail is now less people, more paper," Coache said. "When we have elections, we do everything that we can to get people to come out and vote. They have many opportunities to have their vote."

Coache added that there is sometimes a fee associated with municipal elections, and so having it in one place is more convenient for a population of this size.

Council Member Matthew Lemieux asked about the voter turn-out for the last election, and was told that it was 3.8%.

"Historically," Coache said, "if the state mails you a ballot or the postcard and we have to do that process, you'll have a 70-80% turnout. If you have to make the effort to come do it physically, it's 3%."

Coache said that residents that want to vote by mail have

to request a ballot by contacting the clerk's office.

Coache then explained the importance of business certificates, describing the process of checking applications with the Tax Collector to see if the applicant owes any taxes, and with the Building and Zoning Department to make sure everything is in compliance with the location.

"If you want to open up a business in town, you have to apply for a business certificate," Coache said. "We encourage them or guide them in the way to get to the Planning Board and assist them with what they need to get the business certification."

Coache clarified the state General Law that requires residents to register their dog, noting that, up to the Feb. 28 deadline, it costs \$10 for a dog that's been spayed or neutered and \$20 for one that has not, with an additional \$10 to either charge after the due date.

"Ollie's Law came into effect two years ago for kennels, and that requires more inspections and reporting to the state to make sure all domestic animals are up to code with where they're at," Coache said.

Both appointed and elected officials are expected to complete a State Ethics Commission Conflict of Interest training, and Coache reported that 719 people completed that since last year.

"Once a year you have to do the online acknowledgment, and every other year it is the course you have to take, which probably takes about an hour," Coache said.

To contact the Town Clerk's office, you can call them at 413-283-2608.

CLEAN UP | from page 1

"We got them pretty clean, but they weren't quite where I wanted them to be," Renna said. "But I happened to catch a Facebook post (Wawrzyk) put up recently, where he was getting the staining off using these glass sanding blocks."

Renna reached out to Wawrzyk to ask for pointers on his own cleaning project, and said that Wawrzyk got excited to help work on the monuments, since he works on it a lot in his official capacity. After coordinating their schedules and with the weather, Renna and Wawrzyk met at Crane Park and spent between three and four hours sanding, scrubbing, cleaning, and washing the monuments.

"They look beautiful now," Renna said. "It took a lot of elbow grease for a really nice final product that will look good for Memorial Day."

To clean the memorials, Wawrzyk said that they used a recycled glass cleaning block that's safe on modern granite, which they used to remove some of the dark stains that remained from the cleaning last year. For good measure, they cleaned it a second time with D/2, which is a liquid cleaner commonly used for cleaning historic stone.

"I jumped at the opportunity to return a favor to the Wilbraham VSO," Wawrzyk said. "It came with great personal fulfillment for me, as I'm originally from Wilbraham, so a lot of these names that are memorial-

ized, I recognized as parents and grandparents of people I grew up with."

Wawrzyk said that two of the names are of his grandparents; Edward Arsenault, who served in the army during World War II and the Korean War, and Frank Wawrzyk who was a marine in the Korean Conflict.

"They have both since passed, over a decade ago, but I know they would be very proud of me," Wawrzyk said.

Renna invited the community to see the restored monuments in Crane Park on Memorial Day, where the town will have a ceremony that typically lasts 45 minutes, with guest speakers, and participation from the Boy Scouts and the local Veterans of Foreign Wars Post, who will be firing for the gun salute.

"It's another opportunity to take the time to recognize the people who came before us and gave their lives for our country," Renna said.

Renna also spoke of the Wreaths Across America event, where he has volunteered to place wreaths.

"The program is a nice way for the community and public to get together to honor veterans around the holidays and recognize which people in the cemetery are veterans," Renna said. "It's a good community event that's really nice to participate in."

Renna expressed his gratitude to continue working with the town's Cemetery Commission, and was supportive of Wawrzyk's work for the town.

"Mat does a fantastic job," Renna said. "He's a

very small department caring for all the cemeteries in town, and I'm happy to see that the position and the commission are still funded to take care of those cemeteries properly. To have somebody like him, who really cares about the job and helping families that need that support, as well as maintaining all the town's cemeteries and making sure the historical parts are kept as well, I'm just happy the department still exists and he's still doing the great stuff that he does."

The Wilbraham Memorial Day Observance will be held on Sunday, May 24, at 11 a.m. at Crane Park on Main Street in Wilbraham. It will be hosted by the Director of Veterans Services, Pat Renna, and Historian Dave Bourcier, State Representative Angelo Puppolo, Senator Jacob Oliveira, and members from the town's Select Board will all be addressing the assembly as part of the ceremony.

The town is holding events all Memorial Day weekend, including a Community Flag Placing Event on Saturday, May 23, at 9 a.m. at the Hillside and Bethany Cemeteries. The community is invited to replace all grave flags for Memorial Day.

The town will also hold its annual parade on Monday, May 25, starting at 10 a.m. at the Small Animal Clinic, and concluding at Memorial Hall for a short ceremony. After the ceremony, members of the community are invited to enjoy a complimentary lunch at American Legion Post 241, located at 143 Palmer Road.

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REFRESHMENTS!



STUDENTS | from page 1

and collaboration happening across every department at Pathfinder Tech," Phelps said. "Our students take tremendous pride in sharing their work with the community."

The Art Department and the Music department, led by teacher Dan Friedman, are consistent contributors, joined by a variety of other departments to add to the experience. Hospitality and Culinary Arts students served hors d'oeuvres to the event's attendees.

"This event gives students the opportunity to experience what it feels like to present their work in a professional setting while also celebrating the value of art, music, culture, and hands-on learning," Phelps said. "The energy in the room each year is remarkable."

This year, the event included contributions from the Foreign Languages Department, including hand-made piñatas; hood artwork from the Collision Repair Department; solder-bugs and circuit board creations from Electronics; bookshelves, bat houses, cutting boards and more from Carpentry students; ceramics from art classes; fantasy heads and nail art by cosmetology; geometric artwork and more from the math department; Computer Numerical Control items from Advanced Manufacturing; 3D-printed work from the IT students; photography from the year-book class; research projects from the Professional Skills classes; a 3D restaurant and menus; international desserts from Culinary Arts students; cultural diversity projects from Health Assisting; memorial garden design projects from the History department; and music performed by the school band.

"What began as an idea to create an authentic gallery experience for our art students has grown into a school-wide celebration of creativity and innovation," Phelps said. "Seeing so many departments contribute highlights the interdisciplinary nature of Career and Technical Education."

Some highlights included the freshman Biology classes' "monster" projects, which included creatures described on tri-fold boards and displayed in shoebox dioramas. Computer-Aided Design students had house models and a demonstration of a robot.

In addition to the music provided by the school band, the event also featured a solo performing artist, and had performances scheduled throughout the evening. Phelps said that the performances by the student musicians elevated the evening, drawing guests toward the stage throughout the night and creating a shared experience that brought students, families, staff, and community members together.

"Each year, the band has contributed to the atmosphere and quality of the evening," Phelps said, and described the growth and talent of this year's band as evident from their performance. "With the



Kaylie L.'s Nail Art won first prize at the Beauty School Battles.



The familiar cafeteria was transformed into an art gallery to display the students' artwork.



The Cosmetology Department showed its creativity with mannequin heads and styled wigs.

largest number of performing students, the songs bellowed through the room. Folks who were perusing the artwork stopped in their tracks and were lured towards the stage for a rousing set played in perfect harmony. Guests and students were tapping their feet, singing along, and even dancing."

Art, music, food are all things that build community through shared experience, and the school's goal for this event is to draw in the community and build up its creative student scholars, to strengthen the Pathfinder community.

"Arts and Culture Night reflects the heart of Pathfinder Tech," Phelps said. "It's students learning by doing, thinking creatively, and applying their skills in meaningful ways. From carpentry and manufacturing to culinary arts and music, every project represented curiosity, craftsmanship, and pride."

Phelps said that the dynamic learning model of Chapter 74 Career and Technical Education empowers tech instructors to foster curiosity, innovation, and problem-solving in developing minds. She said the academic instructors are able to match that energy with increasingly creative and engaging projects that challenge students to think critically, collaborate effectively, and connect classroom learning to real-world experiences.

"Our academic and technical instructors continue to create increasingly engaging projects and real-world learning experiences that inspire students to think critically, collaborate, and push their creativity further each year," Phelps said.

Attendees were im-



Music Instructor Daniel Friedman conducted the band as they provided ambient music for the event.



Families and students gathered around to look at the artwork produced by Pathfinder's finest artists.

pressed by the students' work, especially in hands-on projects that allowed them to apply skills in creative ways as they progress through their coursework.

"Events like this strengthen our community by bringing people together around shared experiences," Phelps

said. "When we celebrate and support our students' creativity, we also build stronger relationships and deeper community connections."

If you want to learn more about the events and courses offered at Pathfinder Tech, you can visit their website at PathfinderTech.org.

CAMPUS NOTES

Wilbur named to Dean's List at Cedarville University

CEDARVILLE, OH – Matthew Wilbur of Holland, was named to the Dean's List at Cedarville University for Spring 2026. This recognition requires the student to obtain a 3.50 GPA or higher for the semester and carry a minimum of 12 credit hours.

Barnes receives recognition for Excellence in Nursing

ELMIRA, NY – Each year, the Elmira College Nurse Education Faculty Recognition for Excellence in Nursing is presented to an outstanding graduating senior nursing student who represents the profession of nursing. He or she has actively participated in the Nurse Education Program, such as serving as a student representative with the standing committees, ad hoc committee, and/or active involvement in the Nursing Club of Elmira College. This year's recipient is Alexis Barnes '26 of Palmer, MA.

Noel Melnick named to SNHU Dean's List

MANCHESTER, NH – Noel Melnick of Thorndike, has been named to Southern New Hampshire University's Spring 2026 Dean's List. The spring terms run from January to May.

Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.500 to 3.699 for the reporting term are named to the Dean's List. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits over each 16-week term or paired 8-week terms grouped in fall, winter/spring, and summer.

SNHU announces Spring 2026 President's List

MANCHESTER, NH – is with great pleasure that Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) congratulates the following students on being named to the Spring 2026 President's List. The spring terms run from January to May.

Derrick Smola of Three Rivers; Jordan Brassard of Palmer; Tyler Cuzzone of Monson; Daniel Courtney of Monson; Emma Keith of Brimfield; and Josslyn Seals of Bondsville were all named to the President's List.

Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.700 and above for the reporting term are named to the President's List. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits over each 16-week term or paired 8-week terms grouped in fall, winter/spring, and summer.

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MEETING | from page 1

“When WestMass takes on a project,” Knapik said, “we put our flag up in the ground and work with the community to get to the project that the community would like to have, and we spend our entire time on that project to make sure that we get it right.”

Knapik noted a caveat the development is taking into account is the cost of housing, due to the lack of electricity, natural gas, or water and sewer in the area that’s being developed.

“To some degree, we need to move the needle a little bit on the cost of housing and not make it out of reach for middle class folks,” Knapik said. “That’s the goal of this development, is to make it affordable for folks that work for a living.”

There was discussion of two amendments, one of which passed, the town voted in favor of the new development.

The third article was also to amend zoning bylaws, to reflect a new zoning map, which passed unanimously.

Macomber Road Bridge

The first article presented at the meeting was on whether the town would accept or otherwise acquire a permanent easement for the construction of a portion of the property off Macomber Road and for town boards to take related actions necessary to accomplish the construction. The Finance Committee deferred the matter to Highway Surveyor Ben Murphy, who explained that developers would have to cross a property owned by WestMass to fix the bridge on Macomber Road.

“It’s something that I am fully in support of, because get-

ting that bridge done is very imperative,” Murphy said. “This is our best option, and working with WestMass on this is something that I definitely think is a huge plus for the town.”

Murphy compared the proposal to suggestions to build a bridge on Hospital Road, which he said would not be approved by the Department of Transportation because of the intersection with Upper Palmer State Avenue. With no discussion, the article was passed unanimously.

Town Budget Appropriations

The fourth article that the town voted on was to transfer and appropriate funds from Free Cash to supplement town budgets, notably for salaries for the Police Department and to fund the first year of a Collective Bargaining Agreement with the International Brotherhood of Police Officers, the Law Department and Claims, the Highway Department for snow and ice, the Sealer of Weights and Measures, and an Audit and Actuarial Study, totalling \$392,478.

At the request of a member of the public, Town Administrator Jennifer Wolowicz announced that, if the motion passes, the remaining total in the town’s Free Cash fund will be \$487,401.26.

After a member of the public questioned the \$50,000 line item for the Law Department, Select Board Member Pat Oney addressed the question of whether the money was going to settle lawsuits against the town.

“None of the money that we’re asking for this evening is to cover a claim,” Oney said. “All of the money is going to the Law Department to cover

outstanding litigation and labor councils that are outside of the flat fee that’s been charged.”

Oney provided a non-exhaustive list of these charges, including Board of Health issues with properties on Aldrich Road and Bogan Road, an issue with a testamentary trust to which the Fire Department is a beneficiary, IBP-owned negotiations that ended up at the Joint Labor Management Commission, and changes at the Council on Aging after the Director left.

“Right now, the amount that we owe to our current Town Counsel that will be paid out of this is \$32,169,” Oney said. “We owe Bacon/Wilson \$10,891, as of May 1, because they’re still working on litigation for us.”

Oney said there are further outstanding charges, and the town is trying to limit the use of legal funds before the next fiscal year begins.

The town voted by simple majority to approve the appropriation.

Further articles that were voted on during the meeting included declaring a portion of Main Street to be a public way, transferring funds to repair a leak at Memorial Hall, selling a property on Wales Road, transferring \$1,259.47 to the Bills of Prior Years Account, transferring funds to cover retired town employees’ health insurance, and transferring funds from trash enterprise retained earnings to the trash operating expense budget, among several other articles.

The meeting can be watched in full on M-Pact.TV. The agenda for the meeting can be found on the town’s website at Monson-MA.gov, on the Town Meeting page.



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BASEBALL

Mustangs defeat Knights

MONSON – Last Monday afternoon, Monson High School defeated Holyoke 13-7 in baseball action.

The Mustangs were led by a first-inning home run by Benjamin Pignone. He finished with four hits and five RBI in the game. Among his four hits, he socked two doubles. He was a triple short of the cycle. Jake Beaupre also had two hits. Holyoke had two hits from Jeremy Francisco, while Aidan Robinson drove in two runs. Monson finished the regular season at 12-4.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Austin Meacham sends a pitch home for the Mustangs.



Benjamin Pignone is all smiles as he rounds second after hitting a home run over the fence at Monson High School.



Niko Mathieu swings and connects.



Jake Beaupre makes solid contact for Monson.



Shane Szado leads off first base.

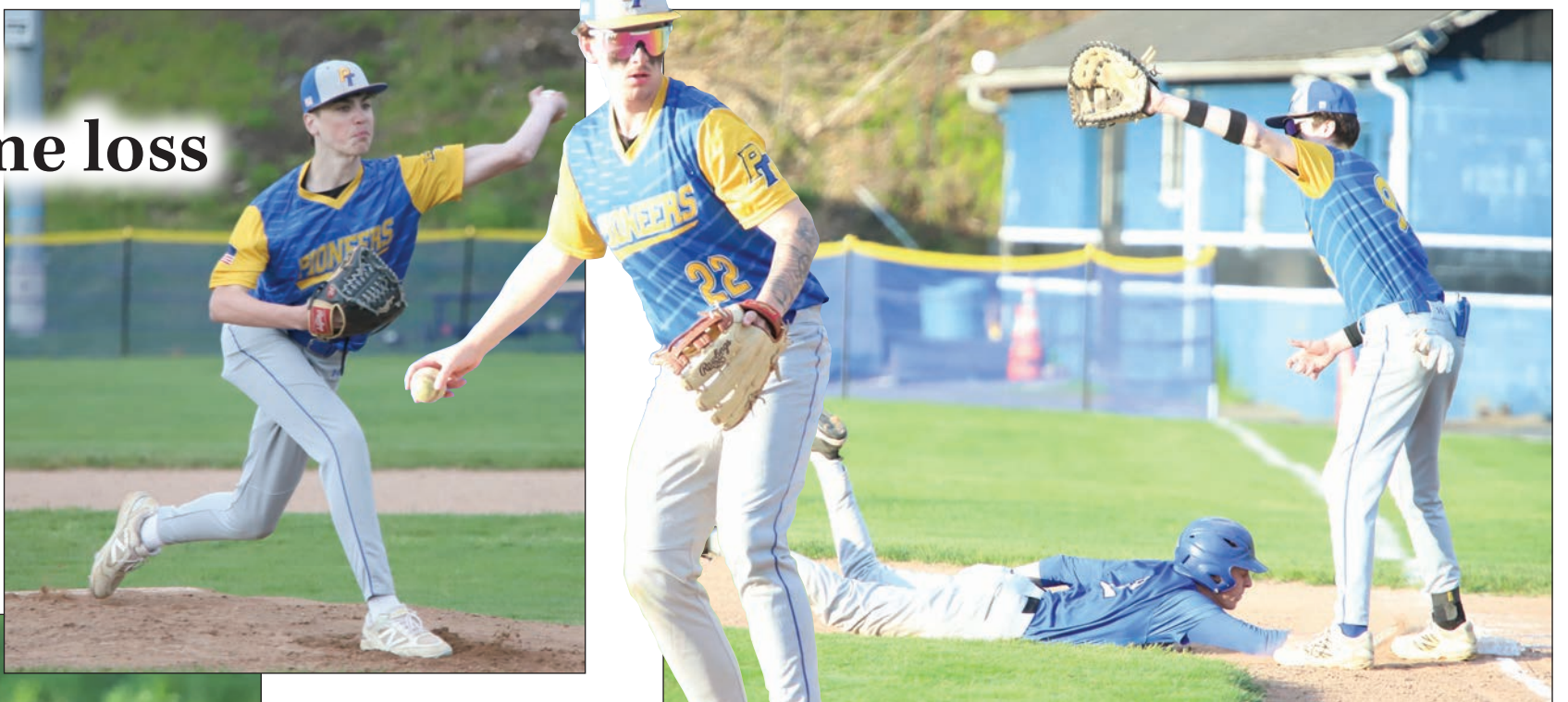


Benjamin Pignone fires back to the infield.

BASEBALL

Pathfinder suffers home loss to Granby

PALMER – Last Monday under the lights of Legion Field, the Granby High School baseball team had a 10-run third inning and it powered the Rams to a 17-4 win over Pathfinder that ended after five innings because of the mercy rule. Brandon Carillon and Anthony Santiago had three hits each. Carillon had five RBI. The Rams are just 4-12 on the season while Pathfinder fell to 1-13.

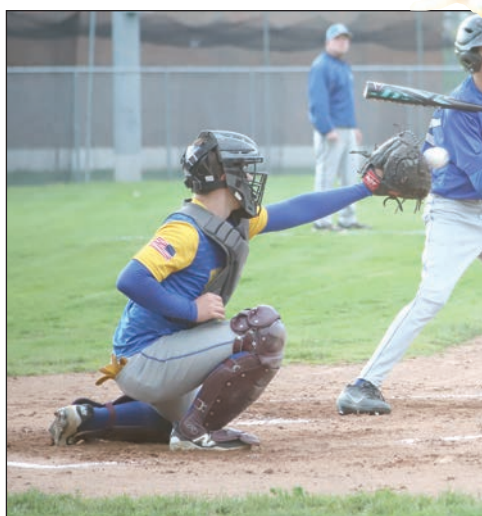


Above, Zachary Smith delivers a pitch for Pathfinder. Right, Aiden Girard slings a throw to first.

Dayne Shanley brings in a pickoff throw.



Brody Wetnicka sends a throw across the diamond.



Joseph Szostek tries to frame a strike.



Ian Suari Nieves looks to tag out a runner.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

Monson boys lacrosse falls to South Hadley

MONSON – Last Tuesday afternoon, Monson High School met a tough challenge, losing 13-3 at home. South Hadley got a huge game from Tyler Quist with seven goals and five assists. Gavin Quist and Mason Peters had two goals each. South Hadley, which now co-ops with Granby, is 9-7, while Monson, which has been co-oping with Pathfinder for the last few years, is now 9-6 on the season.



Riley Hurst gets ready to pass.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

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Athlete of the Week

Benjamin Pignone
Monson High School

Pignone had four hits, including two doubles and a home run last Monday afternoon in a win over Holyoke. He was just a triple short of hitting for the cycle. He had five RBI.

To nominate someone for Athlete of the Week, contact Managing Sports Editor Gregory A. Scibelli at 413-283-8393 or send an e-mail to gscibelli@turley.com.

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Landon Couture runs into traffic.



Caleb Becker runs for the goal.



Dom Menard runs through the middle of the field.



Brennan Peterson runs for the goal

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Warriors suffer walk-off loss to Comp

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

CHICOPEE – The first meeting on the baseball diamond between the Tantasqua Warriors and the Chicopee Comp Colts since 2019 saw a dramatic conclusion.

The non-league contest was tied, 2-2, entering the seventh inning before the two squads combined to score nine runs.

The visitors from Fiskdale hit for the cycle in the top half of the final frame leading to four runs, but they wound up leaving the bases loaded.

Comp responded with five runs in the bottom half of the inning and celebrated a thrilling 7-6 walk-off victory at the newly rededicated Coach Dulchinos Field in Chicopee on May 11.

“After the top of the seventh inning, it was as low as you could feel,” said Chicopee Comp head coach Justin Franczek. “There isn’t a better feeling than the jubilation following a walk-off victory. It’s just a great feeling.”

The victory kept the Colts dreams of qualifying for the Division 2 state tournament alive.

“We also kept our state tournament chances alive,” Franczek added. “We just need to find a way to win our final regular season game and our two non-playoff games next week.”

The Colts (7-11) hopes of playing in the state tournament came to an end following a 10-5 home loss to East Longmeadow the following afternoon.

The Warriors (5-11) were in a similar position. They were eliminated for the Division 3 state tournament after being shut out by Millbury at home two days later.

“This loss hurts our post-season chances,” said Tantasqua head coach Jon Leroux. “We did a very good job of taking the lead in the top of the seventh inning, but we couldn’t hang onto it. We just didn’t make any plays in the bottom of the seventh inning. It’s a very frustrating loss.”

Junior righthander Jacoby Haney, who was Comp’s starting pitcher, retired the first two Warriors batters

in the seventh inning on a strikeout and a groundball out. He couldn’t record the third out of the frame.

Tantasqua’s rally began with sophomore third baseman Paul Savage (2-for-4) hitting a triple to right field. He crossed the plate when sophomore leftfielder Jack Nichols blasted the first pitch

that he saw to deep leftfield for an inside-the-park home run. Following a line-drive single by senior centerfielder Brady Willitts, who was a perfect 4-for-4, junior second baseman Mason Boucher (2-for-4) tripled to left, which extended the Warriors lead to 5-2. Senior catcher Ethan LaPlante, who had walked twice, drove home another run with a double. Sophomore first baseman J.D. Gunagan and senior DH Chase Bond drew back-to-back walks, which loaded the bases.

At that point, Haney was replaced on the mound by senior righty Julian LaFlamme, who began the game behind the plate. LaFlamme, who wound up earning the victory, struck out the only batter that he faced which was the third out of the inning.

Trailing by four runs, senior leftfielder Jack Corriveau drew a walk against Savage, who had replaced Comp senior righthander Evan LaFountain on the mound with no outs in the fifth inning.

Freshman DH Brayden Klett also drew a walk against senior righty relief pitcher Jack Blood. Haney (2-for-4) followed with an infield hit, which loaded the bases. Then junior right fielder John Rentas was hit-by-a-pitch forcing home the Colts’ first run of the seventh inning. Senior first baseman Justin Lafontaine continued the Colts comeback with an RBI single to left field, which set the stage for senior third baseman Tanner Martell. He hit a fastball into centerfielder scoring a pair of runs. Lafontaine also scored the game winning run on the play following a throwing error giving the Colts their first walk-off win of the season.

“We were down four runs entering the bottom of the seventh and I knew that we could make a comeback,” Martell said. “This was my first game winning hit during my varsity baseball career. It just feels amazing.”

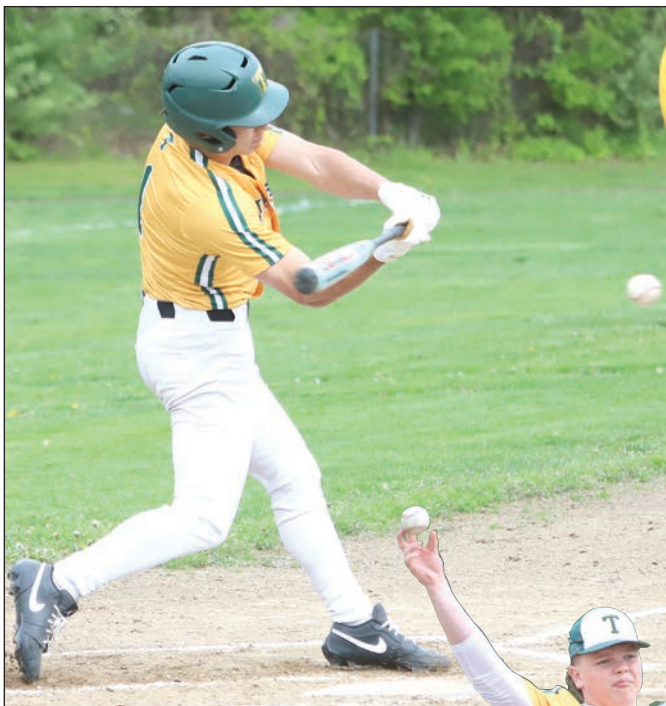
The Colts took a 1-0 lead in the second inning.

Senior centerfielder Jaylen Gonzalez hit a leadoff groundball single into centerfield before stealing second base. Martell drove him home with a line-drive single to left field.

Savage tied the score at 1-1 with two outs in the fifth with an RBI single to center. Then sophomore leftfielder Jack Nichols hit a groundball that glanced off the shortstop’s glove. The ball rolled to senior second baseman Zach Bajgier, who then made



Paul Savage makes contact on a grounder.



Tyler Truax takes a swing.

a throw to LaFlamme. He tagged out the runner trying to score on the play keeping the score tied.

Bajgier lead off the bottom of the fifth by blasting a double to left field. He scored the go-ahead run when a groundball hit by Corriveau was mishandled by the shortstop for an error.

Tantasqua junior second baseman Mason Boucher tied the score for the second time by hitting a run single to left field with no outs in the sixth inning.

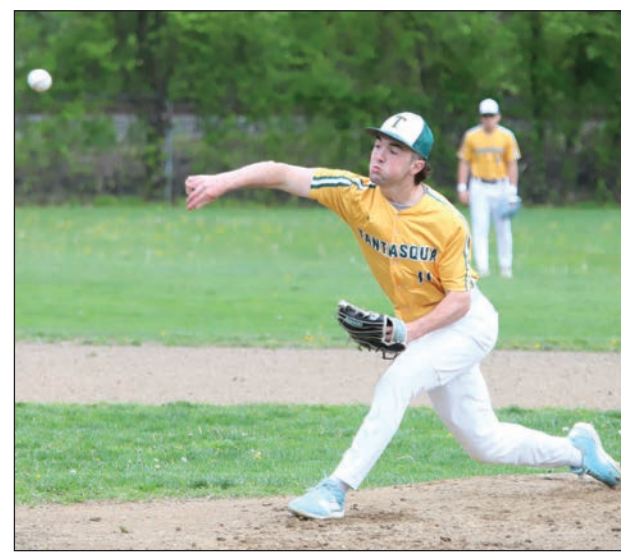
Haney struck out the next three batters and the Colts weren’t able to score in the bottom of the sixth, which led to the exciting final inning.



Mason Boucher sends a throw to first base.



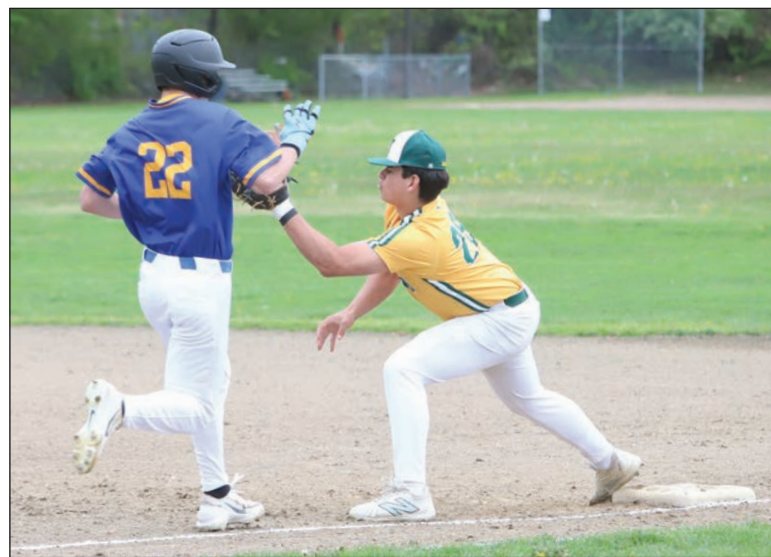
Gabe Lopez sends the ball back to the infield



Evan LaFountain sends a pitch away.



Brady Willitts fields a base hit to center.



JD Gunagan gets the out at first base.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

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Pioneers get 2026 campaign underway with win

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW – Since joining USL League Two in 2019, the Western Mass. Pioneers have qualified for the league playoffs each season. A new group of Pioneers players are hoping to continue the postseason tradition this spring.

In front of a large crowd at historic Lusitano Stadium in Ludlow, the Pioneers began the 2026 campaign with a 4-2 victory over the Albany Rush, last Friday night.

“Most of the players on last year’s team graduated from college, so we do have a lot of first-year players this season,” said Pioneers head coach Federico Molinari. “I thought we played well in tonight’s game. We had a lot of opportunities, especially in the first half.”

The Pioneers posted a 10-1-3 regular season record a year ago. They lost to FC Motown STA, 2-1, in the Eastern Conference quarter-finals.

A couple of the Pioneers players from last year’s squad have signed with professional soccer teams.

“It’s really nice to see your players playing soccer at a high level,” said Molinari, who’s been leading the Pioneers since 2012. “That’s our main goal every year.”

One of the local players listed on the 2026 Pioneers roster is Thomas Wadas, who’s played soccer for the Ludlow Lions and is currently a member of the UMass-Amherst men’s soccer team.

Wadas has been listed on the Pioneers roster for the past several years. He made his first start for the Pioneers in the season opening match.

“I used to watch the Pioneers games from the stands, so I’ve been looking forward to this moment for a long time,” said Wadas, who’s a midfielder. “Being a start-



Sam Montalto looks to pass.



Fernando Delgado dribbles up the field.



Michael Gouvin, of Monson, sends a pass away.



Jaiden Williams, of Belchertown, competes with an opponent.



Thomas Wadas, of Ludlow, is new to the Pioneers this season.



Pearse O'Brien advances the ball.

er in the season opener is a very special thing to me. We played hard for the whole 90 minutes of tonight’s game. When we come together as a cohesive team, we can look forward to another strong season. Anything less than making the playoffs seems like a failure.”

Wadas was a starter in ten of the 15 games that he played in for the Minutemen as a freshman last fall. He finished the 2025 season with two goals and three assists.

“It was a big adjustment going from the high school level to the collegiate level,” Wadas said. “All of the players are bigger and stronger in college. The game is also a lot more physical. I’m just glad that I was able to contribute as a freshman. Playing for the Pioneers is only going to help me prepare for my sophomore season at UMass.”

A first-year player member of the Pioneers is Michael Gouvin, who’s from Monson. His older sister, Laura, played for the New England Mutiny several years ago.

Gouvin, who comes from a soccer family, attended Avon Old Farms before playing two seasons for the men’s soccer team at the University of New Hampshire. He decided to transfer to Bentley University before the start of last season.

“I used to play youth soccer games on this field. It feels awesome to be back here playing again,” said Gouvin, who’s a starting defender. “I’ve never played a game in this type of environment before. Winning our first game of the season feels incredible.”

The Pioneers have won every match that they’ve played against the Rush since 2022. They outscored them, 11-0, in both matches

last season.

Prior to the start of the match, third grader Brooke Lamothe did an outstanding job of performing the National Anthem.

The Rush ended their scoreless spell against the Pioneers when Lucas Horja fired a shot into the back of the net past Western Mass. goalie Ben Alexander during the 11th minute of the opening half.

The Pioneers quickly took over the momentum.

The home side had five corner kicks before scoring

the equalizer in the 37th minute.

An Albany player fouled Wadas, which gave the Pioneers a free kick. Pearse O’Brien booted the ball into the box and Matiws Rumley managed to score the tying goal.

Two minutes later, an Albany player fouled O’Brien inside the box resulting in a penalty kick.

O’Brien, who’s from West Hartford Conn., stepped up to the spot and lined a shot into the back of the net giving the Pioneers the lead for the first time.

Horja scored the tying goal nine minutes into the second half.

Five minutes later, Gouvin sent a pass into the box from the right wing where Felipe De Andrade, who had just entered the match as a sub, headed the ball into the net.

“I saw that Felipe was open and I just sent him the ball,” Gouvin said. “It was a perfect play. My main goal in every game is to make an impact.”

The duo of Alfred Baafi and Martin Echarren, who also came off the bench, hooked up on the Pioneers final goal during the 82nd minute. Echarren flicked a shot into the net for his first goal as a Pioneers player.

The Pioneers are scheduled to play a road game against the Seacoast United Phantoms on Wednesday night before returning home to face NEFC at 7:30 on Saturday night.

“It’s really nice to see your players playing soccer at a high level. That’s our main goal every year.”

– Pioneers head coach Federico Molinari

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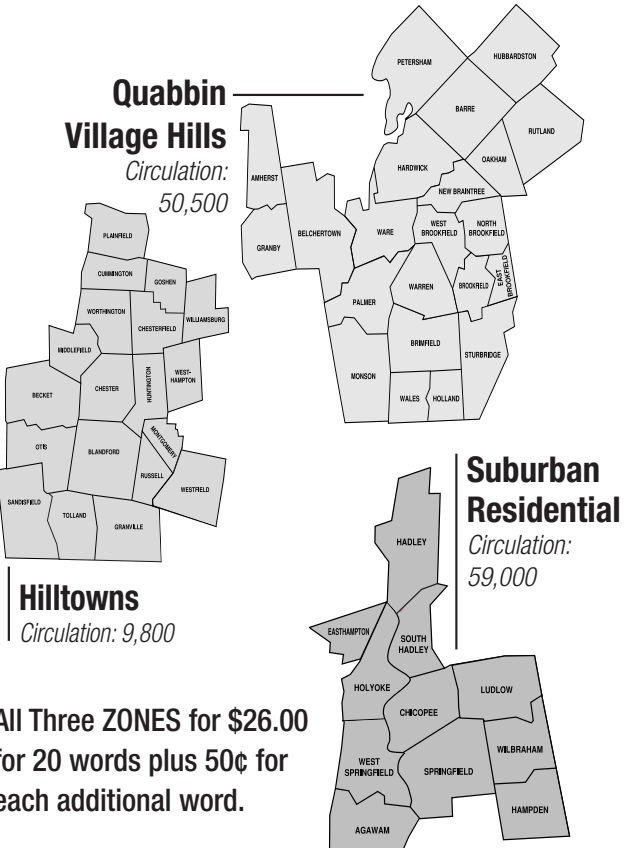
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Obituaries

Jessica "Jessie" Braun

Jessica "Jessie" Braun, 91, of Monson, MA, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, May 12, 2026. Born in Millville, New Brunswick, Canada, she was the daughter of the late Roland and Clara (Zinet) Rockwell.



las, Wayne, and Laura; her great-grandchildren, Skylar, Callan, Emma, and Mya; her brothers, Alfred and Kenneth Rockwell; her sister, Charlotte Demerchant; and many nieces and nephews.

Jessie found joy in the simple pleasures of life. She loved gardening and took great pride in her flowers. She had a special fascination with wolves and enjoyed collecting anything related to them. Jessie also loved shopping and had a deep affection for animals, especially her beloved dogs. Jessie will be remembered for her love of family, animals, and nature, as well as the warmth and kindness she shared with those around her.

She will be deeply missed by her longtime companion, David Harvey; her children, Alton Rockwell, Bernice Lynch, and Ronnie Braun; her grandchildren, Roger, Nicho-

her daughter, Avis Braun; her stepbrother, Arthur Stairs; and her stepsister, Pearl Fuller.

A calling hour will be held on Tuesday, May 19, 2026 from 10 to 11 a.m., with a funeral service to take place at 11 a.m., at Introvigne Funeral Home, Inc., 51 East Main St., Stafford Springs, CT. Burial will follow in St. Edward Cemetery, Stafford Springs, CT.

Memorial donations may be made to ASPCA, P.O. Box 96929, Washington, DC 20090. To leave a condolence online for the family, please visit: www.introvignefuneralhome.com.

Katherine "Kathy" (Tracy) Piechota

Katherine "Kathy" (Tracy) Piechota passed away peacefully on May 7, 2026 at Baystate Hospital, surrounded by her family and friends.

She was born in Biddeford, Maine, and raised in Wells, Maine. Kathy was the daughter of Arthur Tracy Jr. and Claire (Melanson) Tracy, who preceded her in death.

Kathy attended the Wells school system and graduated in 1968. She was the last class of primary students' class to attend the Wells Branch one room schoolhouse. She attended Deaconess Hospital Nursing School in Boston and graduated in 1971 as a Registered Nurse. She worked as a nurse at Wing Hospital with numerous co-workers, who became family and all very dear to her heart.

Kathy held several positions including ER Supervisor

and Quality Coordinator until she retired in 2018.

Kathy assisted in raising funds for the new ER at Wing. The fundraising team called themselves the Fun D Raisers. They collected money at the intersections in Palmer with bedpans and urinals.

Kathy was involved with Palmer Ambulance Service for nearly 40 years in various positions and roles.

Kathy had a very strong passion in providing care for the community. Kathy was a member of the Order of the Eastern Star, living a life of service.

Kathy loved cruises, Cape Cod, cooking, catching fish, and her four-legged pets. Kathy looked forward to the



winter months which meant "Deer Camp". She was always excited to greet everyone after a day of hunting, to see what was brought to the garage.

Kathy treasured her trips to Maine with her son and then later her grandson and a car full of their friends.

Kathy was first and foremost a mother, grandmother, chief cook, incredible ritualist, and a vibrant woman ahead of her times in many ways.

Kathy leaves behind her devoted son, John Piechota III, and wife Dawn (Pulchtoppek) of Ware; her cherished grandson Sean Piechota and

fiancée Samantha Squires of Ware; her sister Carrie Tracey of Kennebunk, Maine; dear friend and caregiver Louise Clark of Ware; as well as a niece and several nephews.

A celebration of Kathy's life will be held on Saturday, June 13, from 1-4 p.m. at the St. Mary's Club, 3036 High St., Bondsville. Please bring a photo to add to the picture collage and share some wonderful stories of how Kathy impacted your life.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Kathy's memory to St. Jude Children's Hospital (st.jude.org/donate) or The Shriners (donate.shrinerschildren.org).

Cebula Funeral Home of Ware was entrusted with the final arrangements. For more information and an online guest book, please visit: www.cebulafuneralhome.com.

Public notices

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
 50 State Street
 Springfield, MA 01103
 (413)748-7758
 Docket No. HD15P1086EA
 Estate of:
Jacqueline B Pyzik
 Date of Death: 03/22/2015
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
 A Petition for S/A - Late and Limited Formal Testacy and/or Appointment has been filed by Rebecca Gibbons of West Springfield, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
 You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 06/15/2026. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
 A Personal Representative

appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Claudine T. Stoudemire, First Justice of this Court.

Date: May 13, 2026
Rosemary A Saccomani,
 Register of Probate
 05/21/2026

Town of Monson Zoning Board of Appeals
LEGAL NOTICE

Pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 40A, § 11, notice is hereby given that the Monson Zoning Board of Appeals will conduct a public hearing on **Thursday, May 28, 2026, at 7:00 P.M.**, at Monson Town Hall, 110 Main Street, Monson, Massachusetts 01057, on the application of Andrea LeClair for a variance from the requirements of § 3.2, Table 2, Dimensional & Density Regulations, of the Monson Zoning Bylaws. The application seeks relief to allow construction of a 12' x 24' deck that will encroach upon the required rear setback. The property is located at 10 Pine Street, identified as Map 113, Parcel 36G, and is situated within the Rural Village zoning district. A copy of the application is available for review from the Monson Zoning Board of Appeals and Town Clerks office.

David Beaudoin, Chair
 05/14, 05/21/2026



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The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

DEATH NOTICES

Jessica "Jessie" Braun
 Died May 12, 2026
 Services May 19, 2026
 Introvigne Funeral Home

Katherine "Kathy" (Tracy) Piechota
 Died May 7, 2026
 Celebration of Life
 June 13, 2026
 Cebula Funeral Home

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