

The Journal Register

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PALMER

Awards given to students

By Abigail McCoy
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PALMER – The Palmer School Committee moved through an extensive agenda on Nov. 19 that celebrated student accomplishments, reviewed more than \$1 million in federal grant funding, and addressed significant findings uncovered during an internal audit of student activity accounts.

Student Representative Reports

Old Mill Pond School Assistant Principal Kerry Lynch introduced the newly selected 2025-2026 Student Council representatives, describing a detailed and equitable selection process that requires multi-question applications and two adult references. Lynch explained that all applications are redacted prior to review “and chosen by what we feel would be the best fit in the OMP initiatives.” Representatives in grades five and six were welcomed by the committee and applauded by families in attendance.

OMP student representatives Jace Barnes and Adriana Broder offered a lively update on school happenings. They described the school’s newly adopted Vermont calf named

AWARDS | page 12

MONSON



By Abigail McCoy
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MONSON – Local and regional officials gathered Friday afternoon as Senator Jake Oliveira presented the Mill Towns Regional Animal Control (MTRAC) with a ceremonial \$75,000 check to celebrate the completion and launch of the department’s new animal control vehicle; one made possible through an earmark secured

by Oliveira in the FY25 state budget.

The presentation took place outside the Mill Towns Regional Animal Control Facility at 125 Palmer Road, where staff, legislators, and community stakeholders toured the building, viewed the upgraded equipment, and spoke about the importance of regional partnerships in animal welfare. MTRAC serves the towns of Palmer, Ware, Monson, and

Turley photos by Abigail McCoy
Above, the team presented and collected the check for the Mill Town Animal Control facility. Left, Senator Jake Oliveira puts himself voluntarily into a dog cage, other Reps. jokingly asked to lock him in.

Funds presented to animal control for new vehicle

Brimfield.

Public Health Director and Regional Animal Control Supervisor Nicole Gauthier opened the ceremony by thanking those who helped make the new vehicle possible.

“I can’t say it’s been easy, but I can say it has been an absolute honor to support the facility, our team, and all the towns in our region,” Gauthier said. “This beautiful vehicle is going to go

a long way to making sure that we can arrive safely, compassionately, and efficiently when we respond in our communities.”

The new vehicle is already fully equipped and in service. It contains two large rear-access cages designed primarily for large-breed dogs, with additional space for traps or cat crates as needed.

FUNDS | page 13

MONSON

Craft fair celebrates more than 50 years

By Abigail McCoy
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MONSON – The halls of St. Christopher’s Parish were bustling on Saturday as the annual Christmas Craft Fair returned for its more than 50th year, bringing with it an unbroken legacy of handmade goods, hometown cooking, and a deep sense of community connection.

The all-day fair, held Nov. 22 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., is one of the parish’s most significant fundraisers, organized each year by the St. Christopher’s Women’s Club. Club

CRAFT | page 7



Turley photos by Abigail McCoy
Artist Susan Leelos, of Rhode Island, displays her handmade sea glass creations.

MONSON

Monson Select Board keeps single tax rate for Fiscal Year 2026

By Abigail McCoy
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MONSON – The Monson Select Board met Monday, Nov. 17, for a wide-ranging session that highlighted escalating food insecurity in town, the future of Memorial Hall’s rental policies, critical vacancies on the Zoning Board of Appeals, and a detailed Fiscal Year 2026 tax

classification hearing. The meeting also included updates on long-running community projects, contract approvals, and upcoming holiday events.

Public comment opened with a sobering report on food insecurity from resident and moderator Peter Matrow, who said the need for assistance has grown sharply across Monson. “It’s been

reported that 22% of the people in Monson are in need of food, sustenance...SNAP and whatnot,” he told the Board. “Since October we have served over 94 families and there’s a lot more families to go.” Matrow thanked residents for their donations to both the Monson Open Pantry at First Church and the Monson Community Cupboard at 24 Green Street.

The Cupboard is open Tuesdays from 3 to 7 p.m., Fridays from 12 noon to 4 p.m., and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., with a 24/7 outdoor drop-off box for non-perishables.

Matrow also reminded residents of the annual chime and handbell concert scheduled for Dec. 7 at 3 p.m. at St. Patrick’s. “It’ll be at St. Patrick’s at 3 p.m. The bell choir

has told me that we have 24 ringers,” he said of the free community performance.

Resident Roxanne Gunther used public comment to address what she described as false accusations that she had illegally recorded a previous meeting. “The witch hunt is getting really ridiculous,” she said, emphasizing that a private citizen cannot violate the Open Meeting

Law and that she would have notified the chair if she had been recording.

The Board also heard an update from Valerie Bogaz Bowdoin on the Replanting Monson Tree Committee’s ongoing American chestnut restoration project at Flint Park. Volunteers from Liberty Mutual assisted this year

BOARD | page 6

MONSON

Library marks anniversary by opening new wing



By Abigail McCoy
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MONSON – The Monson Free Library opened its doors wide this week for a lively celebration honoring the 35th anniversary of its “new” wing; a milestone that brought together longtime patrons, supporters, volunteers, and staff to reflect on the history, growth, and enduring impact of the institution.

The event, held as an open-house style celebration, featured historic displays, multigenerational activities, and the kind of community warmth that has long defined the library at 2 High Street.

Library Director Hope Bodwell said the goal was simply to bring people to-

LIBRARY | page 6

Turley photo by Abigail McCoy
Liam Kelley, age 4, signing the giant card for the wing’s 35th ‘birthday’.

MONSON

Soup cook-off helps out charities

By Abigail McCoy
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MONSON – The aroma of simmering chowders, bisques, and homemade broths filled TJ’s Tavern on Sunday afternoon as the local pub hosted its fifth annual Soup Cook-Off; an increasingly beloved Monson tradition that mixes friendly culinary competition with a full slate of charitable causes.

The event, organized by tavern owner Deborah Lawrence and her family, drew a steady crowd of residents eager to taste a wide variety of homemade soups, enjoy raffles and baked goods, and support several community initiatives during what Lawrence described as “a multi-tiered charity day.”

Though the cook-off typically occurs on a Saturday, organizers shifted this year’s event to Sunday; a change that gave families a chance to sample soups while



Turley photo by Abigail McCoy
Deborah Lawrence serves herself some corn chowder.

watching football on the tavern’s screens. “Now the guys can watch the game and still come out,” Lawrence joked.

While the cook-off itself serves as the centerpiece, the day features far more than simmering stockpots.

Participants filled a Toys for Tots donation box, which is normally collected

in person by visiting Marines. “They couldn’t make it this year, but the box still gets filled,” Lawrence said.

SOUP | page 11



OLT invites community to celebrate 'National Hiking Day'

By Abigail McCoy
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BRIMFIELD – Area residents marked National Hiking Day on Nov 17 with a guided trek through one of Opacum Land Trust's most historically rich and scenic properties. Led by TerraCorps service member Emma Comeau, the 1.5-mile hike at the Clayton and Margaret Thomas Nature Preserve, Dingley Dell, introduced participants to the landscape's industrial past, geological features, and the growing opportunities available through Opacum's conservation work.

The event, designed to encourage outdoor recreation and community connection, brought hikers along moderate terrain, weaving through uneven ground, short uphill sections, and leaf-covered trails. The group followed the Fosket Mill stream, a reminder of the area's early mill history, before reaching a dramatic glacial erratic; a massive boulder deposited more

than 12,000 years ago as the last ice age retreated.

Along the route, Comeau shared the origins of National Hiking Day, an annual celebration created to promote the physical and mental health benefits of walking in nature. She also highlighted several Opacum properties that offer accessible public trails, inviting participants to continue exploring local conservation lands throughout the region.

For Comeau, who joined Opacum earlier this year as a TerraCorps community engagement coordinator, the outing marked a personal milestone.

"This is the first hike I've actually led," she said. "I'm with Opacum through an AmeriCorps-affiliated program, and I'll be here for a year. My goal is to help strengthen community connections, increase programs and educational events, and make sure people know these lands are here and accessible."

Her role also includes ef-



The group that joined Comeau for the hike at Dingley Dell for National Hiking Day on November 17.

Turley photos by Abigail McCoy

orts to improve signage, enhance visitor awareness, and encourage more local residents to take advantage of the trails, forests, and open spaces Opacum manages across south-central Massachusetts.

Comeau said she has enjoyed her experience so far. "They're a great organization and a great resource if you're wondering how to conserve your land," she added.

While no additional hikes are scheduled for the winter, Opacum's programming continues. In January, the land trust will host a macro-photography presentation by a Framingham State University professor at Rapsallion Brewery in East Sturbridge. Looking ahead to warmer months, Opacum plans to introduce a new series of Woodland Ambassador Walks, fea-

turing landowners who will guide visitors through their privately conserved properties.

For those who missed the National Hiking Day event, Comeau emphasized the importance of being prepared when venturing onto the trail. She recommended sturdy shoes, ample water, tick protection, and, during hunting season, wearing blaze orange

for safety.

The Clayton and Margaret Thomas Nature Preserve is accessible via a gravel parking area on Monson Road, just off Route 20 in Brimfield. Visitors should look for Opacum's event signage.

More information on upcoming events and property access is available through Opacum Land Trust's website and social media channels.

Scam prevention experts warn seniors

By Abigail McCoy
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MONSON – Residents gathered at the Monson Senior Center on Wednesday, Nov. 12, for a critical presentation on scam prevention and senior exploitation, led by Hampden County Assistant District Attorney Nina Vizio and Monson Lieutenant Nick Gasparini. The session offered a candid, in-depth look at how financial scammers operate, why older adults are frequently targeted, and what steps residents can take to protect themselves.

Vizio opened with a clear warning about the emotional tactics criminals rely on. "Most people are targeted in a way that causes fear, panic, and urgency," she said. "The baseline disruption of your sense of calm and sense of well-being tries to get you to do things that you wouldn't normally do." Scammers aim to create chaos, she explained, because people in a panic are easier to manipulate.

The speakers noted that while anyone can become a victim, older adults are increasingly singled out. According to Vizio, "What scammers know is they're more likely to get more money as people age." Factors such as financial stability, social isolation, and generational trust make seniors appealing targets.

Scammers also count on embarrassment to keep

victims silent. Many older adults, Vizio said, hesitate to report incidents because they fear appearing naive, or worse, losing their independence. Criminals take advantage of this vulnerability. "It is a personal opportunity for them to get into your pocket or your purse or your life or your experience at any moment of the day," she added.

The presentation walked participants through a wide range of common and emerging schemes.

Grandparent and emergency scams use heightened fear to demand immediate payments for bail or medical emergencies.

Gift card scams, now a top complaint nationwide, appear legitimate on the surface, but Gasparini emphasized that no reputable agency, "police, courts, or lawyers," will ever demand payment this way.

Tech support and refund scams use impersonation, often claiming to be Microsoft, Geek Squad or bank staff, to convince victims to allow remote access to their computers. "Don't give anyone remote access to your computer unless you trust them with all of the money you have in the bank and all of your personal information," Gasparini stressed.

Romance scams, also called "pig butchering," have surged with the help of AI-generated photos and fabricated identities. These

scammers work slowly, developing emotional bonds before requesting money for emergencies, travel, or fake investments. Vizio cautioned, "Never send money to somebody you haven't met personally."

Home repair fraud, fake lotteries, jury duty impersonations, and Bitcoin payment schemes were also highlighted. Vizio noted that the public should be especially cautious of unsolicited contact, saying the warning signs are usually unmistakable: "Unexpected contact, heightened emotions and a sense of urgency... those things, if you notice them, red flags should go off."

Both presenters emphasized that modern technology has expanded scammers' reach. Phone numbers can be spoofed to look like banks or local police departments. AI voice changers can mimic the voice of a loved one. Remote access tools allow criminals to control computers from thousands of miles away. And abundant personal information online makes it even easier for criminals to appear legitimate.

Even property and deed scams, once extremely rare, are becoming more sophisticated; though the speakers reminded the audience that deeds cannot be transferred without the true owner's signature.

Gasparini stressed that residents must feel empow-



Monson Lieutenant Nick Gasparini and Assistant District Attorney Nina Vizio talking through the various scams that seniors can fall prey to.

Turley photos by Abigail McCoy

ered to be firm. "You do not have to be polite. You don't have to sit there and listen to the speech," he said, reminding seniors that hanging up on suspicious callers is not rude, it's smart.

Both he and Vizio encouraged independent verification: hang up, look up the organization's official phone number, and call directly. They also strongly recommended avoiding any form of payment like cash, gift cards, wire transfers, or Bitcoin, until the situation is confirmed legitimate.

For those who feel pressured or panicked in the moment, Vizio offered simple advice: Stop, take a breath, and involve someone you trust. And if money has already been sent, immediate reporting can make all the difference. Gasparini un-

derscored the importance of acting fast: "The sooner you notify police, the sooner you notify your family, people that you trust, the sooner that the wheels can start moving." In one recent case, he added, fast reporting even allowed Monson Police to recover stolen cryptocurrency before it disappeared.

The presentation ended with a call for vigilance, not only for oneself, but for friends, neighbors, and loved ones who may be at risk. With scams evolving rapidly, both speakers stressed that ongoing education is essential.

And above all, they reminded the community that no one should feel ashamed if they are targeted. Scammers rely on isolation and silence, but awareness, communication, and quick reporting can stop exploitation in its tracks.

Holiday Craft Fair to be held Nov. 29 - 30

MONSON – The Monson Arts Council 46th Annual Holiday Craft Fair is a major fundraiser for the Monson Arts Council as well as several other non-profit groups. The Fair opens on Saturday, Nov. 29 at 9 a.m. and closes at 4 p.m. and then reopens on Sunday, Nov. 30 at 11:30 a.m. and closes at 4 p.m.

The fair features 65+ crafters located in four buildings all within a short walking distance. The buildings are Memorial Hall, the United Methodist Church, the Universalist Church, and the House of Art. Luncheon is served in the Methodist Church.

Starting at 4 p.m. on Saturday a Holiday Carol Sing will begin in front of Memorial Hall. The singing will precede Santa's arrival on a fire truck at about 4:30 p.m. and the town holiday lights will be turned on. All are welcome.

For information or directions please contact Wendy Murakami at 413-896-8666 or email info@monsonartscouncil.org.

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Senior Center features special historical presentation

By Abigail McCoy
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MONSON – The Monson Senior Center welcomed a full and lively dining room on Nov. 20 for its annual Thanksgiving Dinner luncheon, followed by an engrossing historical presentation by local historian Patrick Duquette. After plates of turkey and stuffing were cleared and the last cups of coffee poured, Duquette guided the audience through centuries of Native American history, archaeology, and early colonial conflict in Western Massachusetts.

What began as a warm holiday gathering quickly became a vivid lesson in New England's buried past; one filled with groundbreaking scientific discoveries, mysterious skeletons, and dramatic frontier warfare.

Duquette opened by highlighting the origins of American archaeology, referencing an unnamed archaeologist who, despite being ridiculed in 1784 for publishing methods deemed eccentric for the time, is now considered the "father of modern archaeology." His early use of stakes for measurement laid the foundation for systematic excavation practices.

That scientific approach eventually made its way to Massachusetts in the late 19th century, most notably during the three excavations of an "Indian fort" in Springfield led by John Prtola, Harry Andrew Wright, and William Young. Wright, Duquette explained, introduced Thomas Jefferson's scientific mapping system to the state in 1895, a shift away from the haphazard digging methods that once dominated the field.

The digs unearthed striking discoveries, including 13 human skulls found on a bluff 136 feet above the river. Three of the skulls contained rare "epactal bones," creating intense interest among evolutionists of the day. Wright's findings were later featured in Scientific American in March 1897. Archaeologists determined the bluff to be the second-oldest Native American site in Massachusetts, occupied 9,500 years ago by an



Patrick Duquette holding up photos of the plaster likenesses of the individuals' facial structure Dr. Harris Hawthorne Wilder of Smith College made.

Agawam tribe.

Though the nearby graveyard yielded no remains, moisture had long since consumed anything buried there, the bluff discoveries provided a rare opportunity for forensic reconstruction. Dr. Harris Hawthorne Wilder of Smith College created plaster likenesses of the individuals' facial structures, giving researchers their first visual interpretations of these early inhabitants.

Not all bones unearthed belonged to Native Americans. Duquette described two puzzling skeletons found with fractured skulls, bullet wounds, and deep cuts; all buried in coffins with wrought iron nails, which were not used in Native American burial practices. When Dr. Thomas Dwight of Harvard Medical School confirmed they were not Indigenous, the mystery deepened.

The answer arrived through local oral history. A resident recalled his Tory grandfather, Roderick Lombard, secretly burying two wounded Hessian soldiers from the Battle of Bennington in his wheat field. That same wheat field later became part of the archaeological dig. What was long presumed an Indigenous burial was, in fact, a Revolutionary War-era secret.

One of the most memorable details from the Springfield digs came from archaeologist Franklin Hamilton Cushing. He located an an-



The Monson Senior Center is packed for the Thanksgiving Dinner and the presentation of Native American History.

cient Native American trail simply by noticing subtle color changes in grass at sunset; a method that astonished Duquette's audience.

Only half of the original stockade could be excavated, however. A farmer had leveled the other half with wagons generations earlier. Even so, researchers successfully mapped 10 family homes and two larger gathering structures.

Duquette then turned to Walnut Island on the Chicopee River; a site dating back 9,500 years and considered the second-oldest Indigenous settlement in the Commonwealth after Bullbrook in Ipswich. Tucked out of sight, its location spared it from early Dutch exploration.

The island gained renewed attention during the planning of the I-391 extension, when federal law required a full archaeological

survey. UMass, Harvard, and several other institutions participated in a multiyear investigation from 1965 to 1979, including one season with 104 consecutive digging days by college students.

Their efforts uncovered about 75,000 artifacts, including knives and tools from the transitional period when Indigenous people shifted from a purely hunting-fishing-gathering lifestyle to horticulture. Soil, rock, and plant studies helped round out a clearer picture of ancient life along the Chicopee.

The presentation shifted from archaeology to colonial accounts, beginning with the reconstruction of the Springfield tribe's stockade around 1650 under William Pynchon. Duquette noted that this fort, later excavated, was built in an Indigenous style and meant to restore peace between settlers and Native Americans

after conflicts over livestock damage.

He also dispelled a long-lasting myth: despite widespread local belief, there was never a proven fort in Longmeadow; a claim he called "hokey pokey."

Duquette recounted Springfield's 1650s attack with vivid detail. A Native servant named Toto learned of a planned assault after several Native children escaped confinement in Hartford. He warned the colonists, but the English militia of 190 men was misled by a decoy tactic; "25 fires in the woods," meant to mimic a large encampment. While the militia marched toward Hadley, attackers struck

rum shipped north to places like Springfield. His path took a dramatic turn during a period when Dutch, French, and other pirate groups plagued fur ships leaving Boston for Europe.

Moseley outfitted a schooner with guns and two sets of six attack dogs, "six-packs" Duquette explained, and personally hunted down 115 pirates, returning with all of them shackled and imprisoned.

When conflicts with Native Americans intensified, Moseley sought a military commission. He offered the governor an unconventional deal: the condemned pirates could either hang or serve under him. He demanded ownership of any captured Indigenous homes or land; a demand the governor shockingly approved.

Moseley's battlefield behavior soon became notorious. Duquette described him as brilliant but "crazy," known for ignoring orders and charging headlong into danger. In one attack on a wintering Indigenous village, he bypassed an uncrossable river by climbing a fence and initiating his own assault, resulting in casualties on both sides.

When a wounded English soldier pleaded to save vital winter food stores in a barn, and even after a superior officer issued a direct order, Moseley insisted on burning the entire village. The superior ultimately backed down, fearing what Moseley might do if challenged further.

The program concluded to enthusiastic applause, with residents noting how the presentation blended scientific discovery, local storytelling, and gripping frontier history.

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 information to Editor at journalregister@turley.com, or call 283-8393, extension 236. Corrections may also be requested in writing at: Journal Register, Attn: Editor 24 Water St., Palmer, MA, 01069.

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Viewpoints

If we both collect Social Security, will our benefits be affected?

Dear Rusty:

I reached full retirement age back in June, but I have not yet filed to collect Social Security. My husband currently collects SS funds, and he waited until he had reached full retirement age a few years ago. I am considering signing up now to receive my funds, but I am a little confused about whether I will receive my full benefit or if there is some kind of adjustment made based on both of us collecting?

We are a simple case. We have been married for 46 years, so there are no other exes involved in this equation. He did everything online when he was ready to start receiving his funds, but we didn't consult with any advisor when my husband claimed. Now I think that adding me as a spouse might trigger some other things I should consider. Thank you for your advice.

Signed: Concerned Wife



Dear Concerned:

Since you and your husband have both reached your respective SS Full Retirement Age, you are both entitled to receive your full benefits without any reduction. And since you haven't yet filed, you are now accumulating Delayed Retirement Credits at the rate of .667% additional benefit for each month you continue to delay. You will get your full SS retirement benefit plus any earned DRCs when you claim. The only question you need to consider is whether either you or your husband will be entitled to a "spousal boost," an increase when you claim.

If the SS retirement benefit you were entitled to at your FRA is less than 50% the amount your husband was entitled to at his FRA, then you will get a "spousal boost" on top of your own SS retirement amount (the "boost" amount would be the difference between your FRA amount and half of his FRA amount). But if your SS amount at your FRA is more than 50% of your husband's FRA entitlement, then you will only get your own SS retirement benefit based on your own lifetime earnings record. Spouse benefits are always determined from each partner's FRA entitlement and if one part-

ner's FRA amount is less than 50% of the other partner's FRA amount, then a spousal boost will be given. And that also works if your FRA entitlement is higher than your husband's, if your FRA amount is more than twice your husband's FRA amount, then he will get a spousal boost from you. Otherwise, each of you will get only your personally earned SS retirement amount and both of you collecting SS will not negatively affect each other's individual SS benefit.

FYI, the spousal boost amount stops growing at full retirement age, so if you are eligible for a spousal boost from your husband then you should claim your SS benefits now and ask for benefits retroactive to June (your FRA month). However, if you will not get a spousal boost from your husband, you have the option of delaying even further and earning more DRCs

(thus a higher monthly benefit). You can earn DRCs up to age 70, at which time you will get the maximum possible Social Security benefit about 127% of your personal FRA amount if you delay that long.

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.

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POETRY CORNER

Thanksgiving Day Wedding

A fasting hour by the open-doored day;
To where? – runs a rushing rill...
A reminder suddenly – of larger things;
Of a wedding down the hill.

And a mile or so away, where they are:
At the mid-region of a glen;
And, if to leave right away –
They might be waiting then.

For sixteen years I've known the bride;
Nearly as long – the groom:
Ten thousand years each has known,
The other, when the ice made room.

Rains that we have had, and now;
Warm sun, reduce further the snow;
With all amelt everywhere
Friends of the party will go.

A vermilion-red cape is drawn around,
In fullness for safety as for ceremony;
And follow tracks through green-shadowed woods,
But no others have arrived I see...

Except the bride, over rocks and stone;
And a swollen, hurtling, headlong groom;
They both had taken separate ways;
From different parts of town.

Another I wish could be in their presence;
And this place where a bridge had spanned,
The quiet waters where they meet –
And notice in their midst some rounded band.

The bridge itself in a springtime bloom –
From courtship, to marriage, was crossed years ago;
Until lately when one of them crossing went lightly
Where the other shall have occasion to go.

When ashes breathe upon the ashes;
As every moving line will end,
Except perhaps for those who live
Like these in the deepened glen.

Some can recall the wooden structure,
That went out nails and all in the flood;
But those below who raised it up,
Will last for its in their blood.

Just, as it seemed that someone,
Would be celebrating at this hour;
Another Thanksgiving on this shore,
And in this hemlock bower...

Vintage snow can make a bitter cup,
But what better have I here,
When far away is Windham Village,
For ale, or cider or beer?

Besides, store and post office, and the church
Have ceased, – and few pastures open for wool;
And if no longer joy takes place, who
Will have the beauty of the bridal pool? –

Before turning, a fare-thee-well and fortune –
In lifted hopes to the couple I say;
Perhaps a time I'll come back,
With a bride some summer day.

The pointed trees are completed by the stars;
And a long uphill hunger it has seemed;
And dinner – before off to bed
To live again where I walked and dreamed.

– Charles Barnes

THANKS for GIVING



Thanksgiving nostalgia and planning ahead

The arrival of Thanksgiving always gets me a little nostalgic.

One are the days of sneaking into the kitchen with my sister for a little bit of the crispy dressing from the stuffed turkey still in our parent's oven. Or how about awakening to the wonderful scents the morning of, knowing mom had been up at 4 a.m. getting the bird prepared.

It was always so much fun to butter the brown and serve rolls and then transfer them from the oven to the pre-heated trivet in their little wooden basket. I can smell the smells if I think about it long enough, and surely I can see my dad at the counter with the carving knife in hand.

Another big tradition was the nut bowl and the nut cracker and tools. We only ate nuts at Thanksgiving, and at Christmas to a lesser extent. I remember the Brazil nuts and walnuts being especially hard to crack with my little hands, but the challenge was half the fun.

These memories from my childhood are replaced with new traditions that my kids will call their own memories when they are my age. I guess the important thing is that we are thankful on this day whether it is for the memories, the people or the food or all of it. Gratitude goes a long way.

This Thanksgiving I am especially thankful for the bountiful harvest from this year's vegetable garden. The old motto goes something like: "you get out what you put in."

This year I sure put in a lot of effort in hopes of that harvest. When rain stopped I

watered and watered and watered some more. I made an investment in organic fertilizers and mulched the rows as best as I could. I lugged free compost home by the bucket. I harvested even when I was tired of it and preserved it all even after I grew weary.

Does all this make me a saint or a perfect gardener? By all means, no. I still planted too close and didn't weed as much as I should. I got my flowers in too late and didn't stake a single one.

Oh well, no one and nothing is perfect, but I guess my attention was directed towards the harvest and I am happy to have succeeded at that to a pretty good degree.

I ordered my first seed catalog for the 2026 growing season this past week, and I can't wait until it arrives. I can picture how much fun I'll have going through last year's seeds and notes while I plan my garden.

When you undertake this process, keep in mind what you want your attention directed towards. Do you want to streamline, experiment or perfect?

I learned this year that I don't need eight varieties of tomatoes to make a really good sauce. What I do need is a really good paste tomato variety, and maybe a two or three cherry types for salads, and one slicing variety to top an occasional burger.

That is just an example, but you get the idea. Streamlining is practical.

If you want to try growing new things, maybe Brussels sprouts like I wrote about last week, or sweet potatoes, like I experimented with this past summer, take some time over the offseason to look up the particulars so that you will be successful.

I did a show and tell with some students recently and it was a lot of fun to show them some out of the ordinary things that can be grown at home, like popcorn and luffa sponges for example. Get creative.

Maybe what will inspire you is getting something right, doing a better job growing a certain crop.

Did your zucchini look like baseball bats? Don't worry, next year you'll harvest sooner and more often. Same thing goes for those blimpy cukes. And what about those carrots? Next year you'll loosen up your soil and remove some rocks from the carrot patch so that they won't all fork. Straight, long roots here we come.

Wishing you all a Happy Thanksgiving! Have fun when the planning stage begins for next year's garden. It is, after all, just about six months away from our frost-free date.

Now that is something to be thankful for!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 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 "Garden- ing Question" in the subject line.

Letters to the editor policy

Letters to the editor should be 250 words or less in length, and guest columns between 500-800 words. No unsigned or anonymous opinions will be published. We require that the person submitting the opinion also include his or her town of residence and home telephone number. We must confirm authorship prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions deemed to be libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks, or defamation of character.

Please send opinions to:

The Journal Register
Letter to the Editor
24 Water St., Palmer MA 01069,
or by e-mail to:

journalregister@turley.com

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.

Business

MSB Community Giving Initiative currently underway

MONSON – There's still time to make your voice heard! Monson Savings Bank's 2026 Community Giving Initiative is in full swing, and they are inviting YOU to help decide which local non-profit organizations will receive donations in the coming year.

Voting is open now and runs through Dec. 31, 2025 at 3 p.m. Every vote counts, so don't miss your chance to support the organizations that matter most to you and your community.

Visit www.monsonsavings.bank/CGI and submit the name of one non-profit organization you'd like Monson Savings Bank to support in 2026. Organizations must be non-profit and serve within

the Bank's geographic area. Each person may vote once.

The top ten organizations with the most votes will receive donations from Monson Savings Bank. Winners will be announced in mid-January 2026.

"By participating in our Community Giving Initiative, you help ensure that the charitable organizations most important to our community receive support," said Dan Moriarty, President and CEO of Monson Savings Bank. "We are grateful for your involvement and look forward to continuing this tradition together."

Voting Ends Dec. 31, 2025 – Don't Wait! Cast your vote today at www.monson-savings.bank/CGI.

Better Bean ribbon cutting



A ribbon cutting ceremony was held to welcome the expansion of The Better Bean, located on Main Street in Monson. Pictured were front row, Amber Messier, Monson Savings Bank, Amanada Roy, owner of the Better Bean, Bill Lemon, Dustin Pennington, Ware Business & Civic Association and Beyond, middle row Liam Lemon, Jack Szado, Arthur Arnet, back row, Charlie Roy, Alivia Skowyra, Debbie Roy.

Country Bank donates \$160K to support seniors and food insecurity

REGION – In response to the increasing needs of local families and seniors affected by the recent government shutdown, Country Bank announced donations of \$160,000 to support food insecurity programs across Central and Western Massachusetts.

As the bank kicks off its annual "Season of Difference" campaign, it is donating an additional \$25,000 to both the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts and the Worcester County Food Bank. Earlier this year, each of these food banks received \$100,000 as part of a 1 million-dollar pledge. Ad-

ditionally, another \$55,000 is being donated to local food pantries and \$55,000 to senior centers throughout the region.

"With so many in our communities facing uncertainty and hardship, it's more important than ever that we stand together," said Mary McGovern, President and CEO of

Country Bank. "These donations are one way we can help ensure that our neighbors have access to nutritious meals and the support they need during this challenging time."

The "Season of Difference Campaign" highlights Country Bank's long-standing dedication to strengthening

local communities through financial support, volunteer efforts, and compassionate leadership. Each year, the Bank donates over \$800,000 to non-profits that focus on food insecurity, education, housing, and community well-being.

"As a community bank, giving back is at the heart of

who we are," said Shelley Regin, Chief Marketing and Community Relations Officer. "This season, we are focused on making a meaningful difference for our neighbors and ensuring that those most affected by current economic challenges receive the help they need."

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MUSIC BINGO

LIBRARY | from page 1

gether to celebrate a space that has become essential to the town's daily life.

"The 'New' Wing in Monson is 35 years old, and we wanted to celebrate it," Bodwell said. "The last time we celebrated was its 25th anniversary...a rededication. This time, it's just a party, an open house."

Tables were lined with photo albums documenting the evolution from the library's original one-room building to the construction of the wing in the late 1980s. Visitors flipped through decades of images, some seeing the construction photos for the first time. A button-making station buzzed with activity as families designed custom keepsakes, while a scavenger hunt sent guests exploring the space and learning bits of the library's history along the way. Story time unfolded in the Children's Room, reinforcing the sense that the celebration was designed for all ages.

"And of course," Bodwell added with a smile, "the Friends of the Library provided all these delicious snacks."

Among the supporters greeting guests was Donna Alberici O'Connor, presi-



Turley photo by Abigail McCoy

Children's librarian Denise Newland reads a story to the kids during the first part of the party.

dent of the library's Board of Directors and a longtime member of the Monson Free Library Corporation; the nonprofit that has owned and operated the library since its founding.

"The thing I love about our library is that we serve as a reading room and a free library, which was incorporated," O'Connor explained. "The town does not own the building, the corporation does, and we're not-for-profit. It's used for the town, and that's what I think is so amazing, because normally towns own their libraries."

O'Connor has been involved for roughly 20 years, first as a corporation member,

then as a board member, and now its president. She and her family were also donors during the construction of the wing, making this anniversary personally meaningful. She recalled attending the original dedication on Oct. 14, a date she remembers easily.

"That was my birthday," she said, laughing. "A little birthday present... you get a whole wing to yourself."

O'Connor also noted a detail that remains a point of pride: when the new wing was built, the original quarry was reopened so the granite would perfectly match the historic structure.

The Monson Free Library traces its origins back

nearly 150 years, to 1877, when the Monson Free Library and Reading Room Association was organized as a corporation. A year later, it received its state charter to operate as a free public library, one of the first 135 in Massachusetts.

The library's name is historical: in an era when many libraries required paid memberships, Monson was "free to all," a principle it continues to uphold.

Early philanthropists played a decisive role in shaping the library's future. Carrie Lyon Dale, daughter of manufacturer Horatio Lyon, donated \$25,000 to build the library's original building in

memory of her father, whose woolen mill operated on Cushman Street. Her mother, Nancy Lyon, endowed the library with an additional \$20,000 to support its long-term sustainability.

The wing celebrated this week began construction on April 19, 1988. It was dedicated on October 14, 1990, and library services officially opened in the new space on October 22. By 1997, the library entered the digital age with its first computers.

The large room of the original building was later transformed into the DeSantis Community Room, named for longtime Library Director Sylvia DeSantis, who served an extraordinary 48 years, from 1949 to 1997.

The library's continued success is supported by the Friends of the Monson Free Library, established in 1972. The Friends group has sponsored author visits, helped update collections, supported special projects, and raised funds through annual book and bake sales; filling gaps not covered by the regular operating budget.

"Every library needs a little help from their Friends," one display reminded visitors.

The library's story also includes charming footnotes; such as Buster, the resident

library cat who once wandered the wing and even met Anthony Bourdain. And the building houses a small gallery of works by internationally renowned children's book illustrator Ruth Sander-son, who grew up in Monson and remains closely connected to the library. Her mural, painted in 2011 around the entrance to what was then the children's room, remains a beloved feature.

As guests browsed displays, completed scavenger hunts, and shared memories over cookies and cider, the anniversary event underscored what the Monson Free Library has always represented: community, history, and an enduring belief in the value of public access to knowledge.

"In this day and age, some people ask why we still need libraries," O'Connor said. "But here, we have programs for everyone...the variety is wonderful."

For 35 years, the wing has served as a cornerstone for learning, creativity, and connection. On this anniversary, Monson residents celebrated not only a building, but a legacy of openness, resilience, and community support; a legacy that continues to grow with every visitor who walks through its doors.

BOARD | from page 1

with uncaging and preparing trees for winter, while National Grid provided row markers that allow the committee to track the lineage of the plantings. A double-sided kiosk, an Eagle Scout project by Noah Clark, was installed at Chestnut Avenue to highlight the project and provide trail information to Mount Ella and the Keep Homestead Museum. Artist Jared Green completed a locally painted storyboard depicting the history of the American chestnut, which will be displayed either at the kiosk or stored at the Keep Homestead Museum for winter. Bowdoin noted that the tallest trees from the first wave of plantings now reach about 20 feet, with more than 500 trees individually catalogued to monitor blight resistance. "The kiosk will be used to provide information on our Citizen Scientist American Chestnut Replanting project," she said.

FY26 Tax Classification hearing

Principal Assessor Drew Pehoviak led the annual tax

classification hearing, explaining the town's obligation to determine how the FY26 tax burden will be distributed across property classes. "What we are doing tonight is determining how the tax burden should be shared," Pehoviak told the Board. "Whether the town keeps a single tax rate where all classes pay equally or move to a split tax rate where the commercial, industrial and personal property owners would pay a higher portion."

Monson's total assessed valuation increased by an average of 6% for FY26, rising to \$1.25 billion, based on the previous year's real estate sales. With a municipal budget exceeding \$36 million and estimated receipts factored in, the amount to be raised through taxation is \$17,929,791.75. The proposed FY26 tax rate is \$14.30 per \$1,000 valuation of real property.

The town's maximum allowable levy, including new growth and debt exclusions for Town Hall/Police and the Quarry Hill roof project, is \$18.17 million. Because the

town chose not to levy to the maximum, Monson retains more than \$237,000 in excess levy capacity.

Pehoviak reviewed the annual discussion on whether Monson should adopt a split tax rate but emphasized that the town's commercial and industrial sectors, representing only 8% of the tax base, could not absorb a substantial shift. Even the maximum shift allowed by law would reduce the average residential bill by just \$0.64 while raising the average commercial bill by \$7.15.

The Board unanimously voted to maintain a single tax rate and declined to adopt either the residential exemption or the small commercial exemption, consistent with long-standing practice.

Review of Open Meeting Law complaints

The Board next addressed four Open Meeting Law (OML) complaints filed in September and October. According to the Town Counsel's written opinion, none of the complaints constituted a violation. Counsel found that agenda items, in-

cluding "Code of Conduct," "Approved Special Town Meeting Warrant," and "Select Board Comments", were sufficiently specific, and that allegations of outside deliberation were "baseless and speculative." Select Board member remarks underscored the conclusion. "According to Town Counsel, their opinion, there's no violation of the open meeting laws here, from what I read," one said.

In the interest of transparency, the Board announced that all OML complaints, Town Counsel opinions, and eventual Attorney General decisions will be posted in a dedicated section on the town website, organized by calendar year.

Town Administrator updates and board member concerns

Discussion during member comments touched on ongoing Xfinity service interruptions. "Ask her too about why the TVs are freezing up a lot," one member remarked regarding outreach to the company.

Serious concern was expressed about vacancies

on the Zoning Board of Appeals, a body vital for various land-use decisions. "We're in a real quagmire here," a member warned. "We've got to have a zoning board of appeals... and fill those positions," adding that experienced resident David Bolden should be considered at an upcoming meeting.

The Board also noted pending grant applications for up to \$200,000 to fund a comprehensive update of the town's zoning bylaws and aging master plan. "It would be extremely helpful to get those done," one member said.

A Board member also raised concerns over proposed state legislation allowing "instant permitting" for residential solar and backup batteries. "I think this is a terrible idea," the member commented, citing risks related to inspection and safety.

Town Administrator Jennifer Wolowicz highlighted several community announcements, including Saturday's Thanksgiving food drive at Adams from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., held in partnership with Monson Togeth-

er. "The Thanksgiving food drive that Chief Gasparini spoke about is in conjunction with Munson Together's Community Cupboard," she said. Residents in need may request a turkey by emailing admin@monsontgether.com by Friday.

Wolowicz also thanked the town's finance team, including Pehoviak, Kate Baker, and Sherry, for their work preparing the annual tax documents. "I just wanted to thank all of them for that," she said.

Six Town Administrator "Meet and Greet" sessions have been held so far this year, with the next scheduled for Dec. 4 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Polish Club, featuring Water and Sewer Superintendent Craig Jalbert. Library Director Hope Bodwell will participate in January, with the goal of including every department head by May. A public engagement session by West Mass Area Development is scheduled for Dec. 11 at 6 p.m. at Granite Valley to present redevelopment ideas for the former MDC property.

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CRAFT | from page 1

president Cindy Skowyra, who has been part of the organization for close to 20 years, said the event is a cornerstone of both community life and parish support.

"This is one of our main fundraisers," Skowyra said. "Our mission is faith, charity, and service, and we fundraise for the needs of the church." This year's proceeds will go toward necessary parking lot repairs. In past years, funds have supported stained glass window restorations and other parish improvements.

The Christmas fair, she noted, is likely one of the longest-running in the region. "It started more than 50 years ago as the Women's Club Bazaar, back when more people were home and ladies did crafts," she said. "They all brought in what they made. There was a pie sale, a bake sale—it was a real community event."

The fair has since grown into a multi-building celebration, filling both the parish center and the church basement with more than 35 vendors. "We don't have the space for any more," Skowyra laughed, noting that many longtime vendors return year after year. "It's small and intimate. It's that small-town vibe. People make food you know, and so many of the vendors have become part of the community."

Throughout the day, visitors enjoyed a kitchen staffed by parish cooks serving homemade meals and the popular cookie walk, a longstanding favorite where guests fill a box with hand-baked cookies from an expansive assortment. Raffle baskets lined several tables, packed with donations from local businesses including restaurants, farm stands, wineries, and shops from across the region. Dozens of gift cards and theme baskets ranging from: a fireplace and s'mores set to Bright Nights passes, wine tastings, local dining certificates, and more were available for one-dollar raffle tickets.

While the fair is a fundraiser, Skowyra emphasized its deeper purpose. "It's a great community-building event," she said. "You see people who come every year, people you might only run into once or twice annually. It brings everyone together."

Skowyra also noted that the Women's Club hosts its own "ladies' night" each year as a way to honor the women of the parish. Later this month, members will gather at her home to make winter baskets and swags for an additional holiday fundraiser.

Around three dozen artisans filled the parish center and church basement, offering a diverse range of handcrafted goods, from traditional needlework and pottery to sea glass art, honey products, and holistic beauty items.

Divine Designs, the creative venture of Iliana Galban, offered an eclectic mix of items inspired purely, she said, by "whatever my little heart feels like creating that day." Galban began with cake decorating and expanded into resin work, wood cutting, foils, edible crafts, and more. Though she has been crafting for a decade, the past three years have been her most serious, and this year marked her long-awaited first appearance at the St. Christopher's fair.

Artist Marilyn Messier returned for her second year, sharing rows of holiday crafts she's been quietly making for many seasons. Still working full-time, she participates in only one craft fair each year.

Woodworker Kevin Kpacz, who has been creating shelves, candle holders, and wooden décor since the 1980s, brought a range of handmade pieces, while stained-glass artist Pierrette Choiniere displayed work crafted over 30 years in the medium. Both have become familiar faces at the fair.

Jackson's Creative, operated by the team of Cindy Fuller and Holly Santos, showcased resin and multimedia art. The pair have been working together for a decade and participating in the fair for four years.

Potter and jewelry artist Trisha O'Brien, a pottery instructor with more than 25 years of experience, made her first appearance at the event with an impressive range of handmade platters, mugs, bowls, wire-wrapped jewelry, silver rings, and enameled pieces.

Crochet artisan Donna Elio, who began crocheting 30 years ago after quitting smoking, returned after several years away with baskets, wreaths, and her popular but-



Artist Ronnie Dion displays his original watercolor Christmas cards at his fourth St. Christopher's Parish Craft Fair.

ton-fastened towels. She said sales were strong and she plans to return again next year.

Longtime full-time artist Roxanne Jackson, also of Jackson's Creative, displayed paintings, wood burnings, lace embroidery, and sublimation art. After 11 years in business, she continues to diversify her offerings "to try new things and see what sells."

Holistic beauty was represented by Maria Pagan of Lady Wolf Skin and Cosmetics, a Springfield-based skincare formulator whose work blends traditional herbalist knowledge passed down through her family with modern formulation training. Pagan described her mission as helping customers understand "what the ingredients in the products do," emphasizing wellness, nature, and self-care.

Local beekeeper Mary Duane, who has kept bees for 26 years, offered honey, carved beeswax candles, lotions, lip balms, and a variety of gift packages. A longtime science teacher, she said beekeeping became her passion after retirement. "Bees are wonderful for our environment," she said, a sentiment echoed by many visitors admiring her table of honey and wax goods.

Pat Ballard displayed a collection of hand-crocheted crafts made by a women's co-op in Nepal. Proceeds from these items support the artisans' families abroad, while sales in the U.S. also help local hunger-relief efforts. "It's a double win," Ballard explained.

The Brimfield Historical Commission was represented by Roseann Bergdoll, who sold books by local authors,

Turley photos by Abigail McCoy



Potter and jewelry artist Trisha O'Brien displays her handmade bowls, mugs, and wire-wrapped jewelry.



Cindy Fuller and Holly Santos of Jackson's Creative share their resin and multimedia artwork created over a decade of collaboration.

historic prints developed from old glass negatives, and reproduction maps as part of ongoing fundraising for town historical projects. Among the group's current efforts is renewed attention to Steerage Rock, a locally significant historic site the commission hopes to make more accessible for public education and future trail exploration.

Artist Susan Lelos, attending her very first craft fair, traveled from Rhode Island with her collection of sea glass art, much of it themed for the holidays and crafted from glass gathered along the



Carol Watroba of Carol's Creations shows her hand-knit hats, scarves, baby blankets, and handcrafted soaps.



Maria Pagan of Lady Wolf Skin & Cosmetics showcases her holistic beauty products made from herbal traditions and clean formulations.



Iliana Galban of Divine Designs offers a colorful collection of resin work, woodcrafts, and mixed-medium pieces.



Local beekeeper Mary Duane presents her honey, carved beeswax candles, and handmade balms crafted from 26 years of beekeeping.



Stained-glass artist Pierrette Choiniere showcases pieces she has crafted over 30 years in the medium.

shoreline. Within her first few hours at the fair, she said she was already impressed by the turnout and community support.

Knitter and soap maker Carol Watroba, of Carol's Creations, shared her hand-knit hats, scarves, gloves, towels, baby blankets, and homemade soaps, the result of more than 15 years of crafting and continual expansion into new skills.

By early afternoon, the fair was still crowded with shoppers browsing vendor tables, picking up raffle tick-



Roseann Bergdoll of the Brimfield Historical Commission sells local history books, glass-negative prints, and historic maps to support town preservation projects.

ets, and lining up for homemade lunches. For Skowyra, the lasting success of the fair speaks to the parish's sense of continuity.

"There have only been three club presidents in over 40 years," she said. "This really is a lifetime commitment for many of us."

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Palmer Senior Center

Friday, Movie Matinee at 12:30 p.m.

Dec. 12 - "A Christmas Carol" - A Christmas classic by Charles Dickens.

Dec. 19 - "The Butter Cream Gang" - Scott, Pete, Eldon and Lanny share fun and friendship as the "Butter Cream Gang" in the small town of Elk Ridge. The group is temporarily separated when Pete moves to Chicago for the school year and falls under the influence of a local gang. As Pete struggles, old friendships are challenged and the boys learn the true meaning of unconditional love.

Jan. 2 - "Cruella" - Set

in 1970's London during the punk rock revolution, the film follows, Estella Miller, a creative and ambitious young woman with a unique sense of style. Estella's flair for design eventually catches the attention of the ruthless fashion icon Baroness von Hellman, leading her down a dark path of ambition and revenge.

Upcoming Evening Programs 4:30-7:30 p.m.

Dec. 1 - Dessert Contests; Please bring in your best dessert and enter to win a \$50 Gift Basket from Randall's. There will be 5 judges and start at 4:30, with judging at 5:30 then eating. Please call

the center to get on the list for either a desert or just a participant.

Dec. 8 - Cookie Exchange - What you need to bring: 3 dozen of your favorite homemade cookies. Bring a container for the cookies you are taking home, Sign up early, let us know what kind of cookies you're bringing (no duplicates, this allows for variety), bring recipe so I can make copies to share Get in the holiday spirit with an ugly sweater/most festive attire contest. Prize for the winner.

Dec. 15 - Wreath making - 4:30-7:30, come make a beautiful wreath with Kim

Keeton, supplies and instruction included. Cost is \$5 due at sign up, non-refundable.

Dec. 17 - Christmas Celebration - Neil Diamond (Charlie Lask) will be the entertainment. Call to sign up.

Dec. 29 - Colby Academy of Dance Holiday Program - Come enjoy a local dance studio perform a holiday medley

Jan. 5 - Monday evening program - Candle Holder Craft Class. Betty Koss is teaching this class, sample will be displayed at the center.

Jan. 14 - Lighted Snowman Jar - Kim Keeton instructor, sample will be displayed.

Monson Fire Logs

Here is the fire log for the Monson Fire Department for the week of Nov. 10 - Nov. 16, 2025. The department responded to 22 EMS calls and 2 Fire calls.

On Monday Nov. 10 at 9:09 p.m. the department responded to the area of 206 Brimfield Road for the tree on wires. The department returned to service at 9:30 p.m.

On Tuesday Nov. 11 at 8:57 the department responded to 161 Moulton Hill Road for the vehicle fire. The department returned to service at 11 p.m.

Here is the fire log for the Monson Fire Department for the week of Nov. 17 - Nov.

23. The department responded to 27 EMS calls and 3 Fire calls.

On Wednesday, Nov. 19 at 9:04 p.m. the department responded to 178 Town Farm Road for the rubbish fire. The department returned to service at 9:35 p.m.

On Saturday Nov. 22 at 4:09 p.m. the department responded to 294 Boston Road-West for the smoke investigation. The department returned to service at 4:29 p.m.

On Sunday Nov. 23 at 3:33 p.m. the department responded to 195 Brimfield Road for the alarm sounding. The department returned to service at 4:09 p.m.



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FOOTBALL

Pioneers beat Smith in vocational tournament

PALMER – On Friday, Nov. 14, Pathfinder football picked up a Week 10 win over Smith Vocational 42-12. Pathfinder had multiple turnovers in the first half to get up fast in the game. The matchup was the first round of the vocational school football tournament, with Pathfinder advancing to face Cape Cod Regional Tech on Friday, Nov. 21. Highlights from that matchup will be in next week's edition.



The Pioneers get a tackle of a kick returner on special teams.



Jarett Skowrya takes the snap for a point-after kick.



Stephen Curtis makes a tackle attempt.



Grayson Griswold gets ready to make a handoff.



The Pathfinder defensive line goes for the ball carrier.



Dustyn Cook kicks off for the Pioneers.

FOOTBALL

Panthers fall in Week 10

PALMER – The Palmer High School football team was defeated by SICS at American International College on Nov. 14 in a Week 10 nonplayoff matchup. The Panthers were in the game through, but SICS was just one score better late in the game. The Panthers would fall to an even 5-5 on the season with its annual Thanksgiving Day matchup with Ludlow at home left to play.



Jimmy Sem gets the tackle for the Panthers.



Dylan Doherty returns an interception for several yards.



Matthew Santos kicks off for the Panthers.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli



Dimitri Nava and Kodah Lavolette-Gonzalez combine on a block.

Palmer Unified basketball action

CHICOPEE – Last Tuesday afternoon, Palmer's Unified basketball team was one of the participating schools in the year-end jamboree event hosted by Chicopee Comprehensive High School, capping a great year of contests for the Panthers, which have had a very successful program the past few years. More coverage from the unified basketball jamboree will be in next week's edition.



Marissa Robinson receives a pass.



Patrick Flynn looks for the layup.



Makayla Carny sends a long pass across the court.



Noah Fredette takes a shot.



Alexa Gould sends a shot away.



Xavian Salsbury focuses as he readies a shot.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

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Athlete of the Week

Alexa Gould
Palmer High School

Gould was part of the Palmer Unified basketball team that had a phenomenal season capped participating in the end-of-season jamboree at Chicopee Comprehensive last week.

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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Candlepin League News

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
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Bondsville League

WARE – It is week 12 of the Wednesday Night Bondsville League at Roll-A-Way Lanes.

During week 12, Team UMass bowled against Fire Mountain on lanes three and four of Roll-A-Way Lanes. In game one, Fire Mountain defeated Team UMass with a score of 469-455. Gary Delisle of Fire Mountain bowled the highest game in game one with a 109.

In game two, Team UMass won by a score of 487-441. In game three, Fire Mountain defeated Team UMass by a score of 502-470. Delisle finished the match by bowling 111. With Fire Mountain's 32-point victory in game three, the final score ended at a tie, 1412-1412.

Zeke's Freaks bowled against Cannonballs during week twelve. In game one, Zeke's Freaks won by a score of 480-455. Micah Hinkley of Cannonballs bowled the highest game with a 129, but the team fell short against Zeke's Freaks.

In game two, Zeke's Freaks won again by a score of 470-432. The third and final game was a close one as Cannonballs won by one point, 450-449. Zeke's Freaks won total pinfall with a final

score of 1399-1337.

Spare Parts Bud bowled against Night Hawks in week twelve. In game one, Night Hawks were victorious by a score of 473-453. Lee Robinson of Night Hawks began the match with 122.

In game two, Night Hawks won again by a score of 498-459. Gavin Sinclair came out strong by bowling a 158. His father, Darryl Sinclair, had a good game as well with 131.

In game three, Night Hawks won again for a three-game sweep over Spare Parts Bud, 484-427. Sinclair finished with a 150 and bowled his best series of the season, 411 (103, 158, 150). The final score was 1455-1339 in favor of Night Hawks.

Sandri bowled against Slow Burners in week twelve. In game one, Sandri was victorious by a score of 489-472. Sue Horton of Sandri began the match by bowling a 133.

In game two, Sandri won again by a score of 515-502. Horton had another good game during Sandri's win, 130.

In game three, Sandri won to sweep the Slow Burners, 521-467. Horton finished with a 112 and a series of 375. Rich Picotte of Sandri had a strong finish with 135 and a series of 364. The final score was 1525-1441 in favor of Sandri.

P&J Meats bowled

against The Snappers in week twelve. In game one, P&J Meats won by a score of 480-447. Shaun Midura of P&J Meats began with 119. Kevin Krasnecky of Snappers bowled well in game one with 121.

In game two, Snappers were victorious by a score of 449-430. Krasnecky had the highest game on his team with 107.

In game three, Snappers won by a score of 478-455. Krasnecky finished with 124 and a series of 352. The final score was 1374-1365 in favor of Snappers.

The Flaming Bowling Balls bowled against Ironmen in week twelve. In game one, Ironmen won by a score of 445-434. Billy Brunk of Ironmen had the best game with 114.

In game two, Ironmen won again by a score of 504-489. Three out of four members of Ironmen scored in the 120s, with Pete Swistak having the highest game of 126.

In game three, Ironmen won by a score of 464-462. The game came down to the last ball as Ryan McCarthy of Flaming Bowling Balls was working on a spare needed a strike fill to win the game by one; he dropped seven.

Swistak finished with a 118 and a three-game series of 342. The final score was 1413-1385 in favor of Ironmen.

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SOCCER

Overtime goal lifts Monson to state finals

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WEST SPRINGFIELD – As an eighth grader, Hannah Murphy recorded a hat-trick and had an assist helping the Monson girls' soccer team post an 8-2 victory over Granby in the Western Mass. Class D semifinals.

Murphy and her Lady Mustangs teammates also swept the season series against the Lady Rams during the next three seasons.

The tide turned this fall, as Granby squeaked out a pair one-goal victories against Monson during the regular season.

The third meeting of the 2025 campaign between the Central Division rivals took place in Division 5 state semifinals.

Murphy, who broke the state record for goals during the regular season, managed

to keep her outstanding high school soccer career alive for one more match. She netted the game-winning goal with 2:32 remaining in the second overtime, giving the fourth-seeded Lady Mustangs a 2-1 victory over the top-seeded Lady Rams on a windy and cold evening at Clark Field located on the West Springfield High School campus on November 17.

"I just told Hannah that she was the best player on the field tonight," said Monson head coach Larry Pagliaro. "It was an unbelievable goal by her in overtime. We're now looking forward to playing one final game in the state finals."

Monson (12-10-1) was scheduled to face third-seeded Hull in the state finals at Curry College in Milton, last Saturday afternoon. The Lady Mustangs advanced into the state semifinals following home

victories against 29th-seeded Franklin County Tech (4-0), 13th-seeded Holbrook (7-0) and fifth-seeded Saint John Paul II (5-3).

Granby finished their outstanding season with a 15-4-4 record.

"We beat Monson twice during the regular season, but the game that really mattered was this one," said Granby head coach Bob Weaver. "It's a frustrating loss because you never know if you'll ever make it back here again. We had a great season."

The Lady Rams defeated 32nd-seeded Mahar Regional (2-0), 17th-seeded West Boylston (8-1), and the ninth-seeded Rising Tide Charter School (3-0) in the state tournament.

While Murphy is the only senior listed on the Lady Mustangs roster, the three Lady Rams seniors are Kaitlyn Curran, Mylin Laliberte, and Ava Elizabeth Loughman, who's

recovering from an ACL injury. She's hoping to play lacrosse next spring.

One of the Lady Rams younger players is junior Kalli White, who has more than 100 career points.

During the first 30 minutes of the opening half, White and freshman Marcela Tapia had a couple of shot attempts for the Lady Rams.

However, the contest remained scoreless until the 31st minute.

That's when Murphy blasted a free kick from the top of the box into the upper right corner of the net past Granby junior goalie Meredith Bartosz, who made four saves.

At the end of the regular season, Murphy was selected to the All-New England All-Star team.

The other four Western Mass. All New England players are Mila Dillard (Pope Francis), Maeve Turmel (Pope

Francis), Gracie DiStefano (Longmeadow High School), and Rhaya Manning (Longmeadow High School).

The Lady Mustangs held onto the 1-0 lead for almost the entire second half.

With a little more than six minutes remaining in regulation, Granby sophomore Kaelyn Slapski delivered a forward pass to White, who beat a couple of defenders for the ball before firing a low shot into the right corner past Monson sophomore goalie Grace Berry (11 saves).

"We never felt like we were out of the game," Weaver said. "We had a lot of chances in the first half, but we just didn't finish them. We continued putting pressure on them in the second half."

White was selected to the Class D All-State team for the second consecutive year. Bartosz was also named to the All-State team.

Neither team was able to score a goal during the final five minutes of regulation or in the first 10-minute overtime period.

Just when it looked like the outcome of the match would be decided in a penalty shootout, Murphy, who'll be playing college soccer at Sacred Heart University, became the hero late in the second OT.

Following a throw-in along the left sideline, Murphy dribbled the ball into the box before poking a shot into the back of the net for the game winning goal.

When the two rivals face each other again next fall, the Lady Rams defense won't have to worry about one of the best girls' high school soccer players in the state scoring anymore goals against them.

Full coverage from Monson's matchup with Hull in the state finals will be in next week's edition.

Springfield Thunderbirds score win over Utica Comets

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (3-10-2-1) rode a magnificent night from their goaltender to a 2-0 shutout victory over the Utica Comets (2-9-2-1) on Friday night inside a sold-out MassMutual Center.

An unlikely source got the T-Birds onto the score-sheet just 4:04 into the period, as defenseman Leo Loof

made a wise read from the defensive zone, jumping into a rush to create a 2-on-1 attack. With Jakub Stancl crashing the net from the left-wing side, Loof used the shooting lane available to him, snapping a wrist over Nico Daws' blocker, giving Springfield the one-goal edge off setups from Hugh McGing and Nikita Alexandrov.

Georgi Romanov got the nod in the T-Birds' goal crease and answered the bell in the opening 20 minutes, making eight stops while his defense in front of him limited Utica's high-danger chances.

The middle period did not produce much in the way of chances, but the Comets made a strong push in the final minutes of the frame,

and Romanov was forced to be at his best with a handful of saves off redirections. The netminder also got some fortunate luck on one occasion as a Mike Hardman deflection attempt glanced off the underside of the crossbar, but stayed out.

Springfield also killed off one Utica power play attempt in the later stages of the sec-

ond, while Utica went 2-for-2 to begin its night on the penalty kill, including 1:16 of power play time for the T-Birds at the start of the third. The Comets relentlessly pressured the Springfield net throughout the third, but Romanov had answers time and time again. Utica finished the game with 33 shots, but Romanov had stops on every one.

Calle Rosen finally put the game away with 1:11 to play, taking a pass from Romanov behind the net and lobbing a shot 200 feet down the ice and into a yawning cage to round out the scoring. The netminder's first shutout and win as a T-Bird also gave Springfield its second straight win on home ice.

MIAA makes calendar change

FRANKLIN – The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association recently approved a couple of changes in their calendar, including codifying a practice that is already in place. The biggest change will be the start of the fall season for football preseason while two other changes were denied.

The Board of Directors voted to set the official start date of all fall sports, including football at two Mondays prior to Labor Day, beginning with the 2026-2027 school year. In recent years, football

would begin the Friday prior to that Monday with the rest of the sports beginning two Mondays before Labor Day.

A proposal was denied to delay the start of winter preseason to the Tuesday following Thanksgiving. Right now, practices immediately begin on Monday after Thanksgiving. The proposal sought to give an administrative day for schools to prepare for the winter season.

Another proposal denied was for all postseason tournament brackets to be released exclusively on weekdays,

with the exception of the football brackets, which are released on the Sunday after Week 8 games conclude.

The final accepted proposal was establishing a firm date for the end of all spring athletic seasons to be no later than the third Sunday in June, to coincide with the end of the academic year. It ensures that all postseason play and championship would take place on a consistent timeline each year. This is the current practice so no noticeable change will be seen on the current MIAA calendar.

Monadnock set to hold banquet

MILFORD, N.H. – Monadnock Speedway is set to close out another thrilling racing season with a night of celebration, recognition, and community. On Saturday, Dec. 13 beginning at 5:30 p.m., the speedway will host its highly anticipated Annual Awards Banquet at the Best Western in Keene, New Hampshire.

The event will spotlight the achievements of the champions and top ten drivers in the regular weekly divisions, while also recognizing the top three in

the Six Shooter Division, Teddy Bear Pools & Spas Triple Crown Champions, and competitors in the Young Gun Division for their dedication and commitment to the sport. In addition, several specialty awards will be presented throughout the evening, honoring standout performances and contributions both on and off the track.

Fans, drivers, teams, and families are invited to join the festivities as Monadnock Speedway celebrates the close of a competitive season and the community

that makes it all possible. This annual tradition brings together the best of the racing family for an evening of camaraderie, reflection, and excitement for the upcoming season.

To purchase a ticket online go to: <https://square.link/u/jHFglOQf>

Tickets are limited! Event capacity is 200. Seating is 8 to 10 people per table. Requests to be seated with another team may be made by emailing the speedway@monadnockspeedway@gmail.com.

Musical delights of handbells Dec. 7

MONSON — Join “Chime In” for a magical experience, enveloped in the musical delights of handbells hosted by St. Patrick’s Church located at 22 Green Street, Monson at 3 p.m. on Dec. 7, 2025. This concert is FREE.

Ring, revel, and rejoice throughout this concert. Chime In! Music with a Mission is a truly magical experience for friends and family, enveloped in the musical delights of handbells. They offer a wide range of dynamic music, be it a collection of beloved carols, a singular arrangement of a traditional tune, or a riotous

cacophony of boom-whackers and organ pipes reclaimed as chimes. One hundred twenty-five handbells plus chimes and gongs are sure to warm your hearts during this joyous season.

Chime In! Music With a Mission brings joy and fun to their handbell performances. Their concerts of secular and sacred music embrace audience participation.

Where else do you get the opportunity to mingle with the performers and their instruments?

Guests will be encouraged to try their hands at playing bells, chimes, and

even some of their more unusual instruments after the concert when they might try out the handbells themselves. Children are often encouraged to try their hands on the bells.

The choirs of Chime In! have been sharing their love of music with the community for more than 20 years, at multiple venues — from New Haven’s International Festival of Arts and Ideas, to the Bethlehem Fair, UMass, Carnegie Hall, and now right here in Monson.

Light refreshments will be served after the concert at the Parish Hall (Columbia Hall) across the street.

SOUP | from page 1

Attendees also contributed monetary donations, which the Marines will retrieve alongside the toys.

A homemade bake sale brought in funds for the Monson Senior Center, helping support holiday gift bags for local seniors. Raffle proceeds will be split between the Monson Community Cupboard and a children’s Christmas party scheduled for December 14; an annual gathering that brings together 30 local kids with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

“It’s our fifth year doing this, and a lot of wonderful people pitch in,” Lawrence said. “We really try to make this a place where nobody gets turned away. If we have food, we’re going to share it.”

Deborah and her husband took over the TJ’s Tavern bar operation from the American Legion five years ago, and since then the space has grown into a true community hub. The pavilion behind the building frequently hosts Girl Scout bridging ceremonies, father-daughter dances, senior class fundraisers, pocket-book bingo events, and gatherings for local nonprofits.

The Lawrences also provide free meals to veterans on Veterans Day and regularly invite EMS crews, firefighters, and police officers to stop in for complimentary meals during various holiday events.

“We’re a charitable group here,” Lawrence said. “We don’t want to be just a tavern. We really want to give back.”

This year’s cook-off featured fewer entries than last year’s 20-plus soups, something Lawrence attributed to difficult times for many families, but the variety was impressive and entirely original.

“For the first time in five years, we didn’t have any duplicates,” she said. “Every soup was different.”

Entries included:

- Seafood chowder
- Cheddar and broccoli soup served with onion crackers
- Mexican wedding soup (albondigas)
- Ham and potato
- Homemade garden tomato soup
- Kale and orzo (with carrot and onions) soup
- Butternut crab bisque
- Beef and barley
- Corn chowder with bacon
- Loaded baked potato soup

Cornbread, oyster crackers, coffee, and tasting cups lined the tables as attendees sampled each pot and chatted with neighbors. Football played on TVs above the bar, adding to the relaxed, festive atmosphere.

Although Lawrence is a three-time winner at the Tailgate Tavern’s cook-off, thanks to a seafood soup she refuses to taste herself, she chose not

to enter this year at her own establishment. “It just doesn’t feel right to compete when you’re the owner,” she said with a laugh. “But I’ll brag that the church put my recipe in their cookbook.”

The event also highlighted the work of Monson Together, a local grassroots group focused on helping families. Led in part by Lawrence’s daughter-in-law, Karen Davis, the organization is collecting toys and assisting local families in need this holiday season. “It’s tough this year,” Lawrence said. “Parents are asking for basics... clothes, boots, shoes. A lot of people are struggling.”

She personally sponsors a family each year and encourages others to do the same or donate what they can.

Between the raffle tables, the dessert counter, and the long line of slow cookers bubbling with homemade soups, the event once again showcased TJ’s Tavern’s evolving role as a centerpiece of civic life in Monson.

“It’s nice to come together as a community and enjoy something like this,” Lawrence said. “It’s been a hard year for many, but people still show up for each other.”

As residents lingered over their samples, traded recipe ideas, and placed their votes for first, second, and third place, the spirit of generosity and the smell of good food filled the room.



Turley photos by Abigail McCoy

The overflowing donation box for Toys 4 Tots.



Kale and orzo soup, with carrots and onions.



Corn Chowder with bacon and the beef and barley soup.

MAC to present ‘It’s A Wonderful Life’ play

MONSON—The Monson Arts Council is proud to present “It’s A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play” on Friday, Dec. 5 and Saturday, Dec. 6 at Granite Valley Middle School.

“When financial ruin threatens, George Bailey is wrought for a way out. As his options close in on him, a guardian angel is sent to show him that it truly is a wonderful life,” said director Amos Lake. “We’re excited to have you join this star-studded cast of talent as they transport you via the airways of WBOR to Bedford Falls in this classic radio play.”

Performances will be held at 7 p.m. Tickets are priced at \$20, available online and at the door.

“There is always hope. You never know what people crossing your path are really angels in disguise,” said producer Tony Esposito.

This show marks the first collaboration between Granite Valley and the Monson Arts Council theater committee. It is the group’s second radio play-style performance, and the Arts Council is proud to partner with independent local radio station 97.7 FM to bring the radio-play experience to life.

“The story is one we can all relate to right now,” Lake said. “We may feel defeated, we may feel fear for the future, but this story also reminds us there is hope, and together we can overcome what seems impossible.”

A full cast list, ticket purchase link, and additional information is available at the Monson Arts Council’s website, MonsonArtsCouncil.org.

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AWARDS | from page 1

Sunflower; the implementation of a new meal ticket system; a third-grade cultural presentation on Native Peoples; a PBIS reward called "Photo with Friends"; and a popular enrichment activity that allows students to spend "Cub Cash" to interact with a visiting Polish Flip rabbit, Colin Till. They also highlighted upcoming picture retakes, Thanksgiving recess, and parent-teacher conferences.

At the high school level, senior representative Kelsey Coyle summarized a full slate of October and November events, including UMass Band Day, college readiness activities, statewide leadership conferences, the homecoming dance, and the annual Veterans Day ceremony honoring 15 local veterans. She also reviewed recent fall athletic performances, previewed the start of winter

sports on Dec. 1, and outlined a variety of student fundraisers and upcoming events such as the National Honor Society induction, the Student Council food drive, and the Santa Breakfast and Winter Craft Fair.

Superintendent's Report
A major highlight of the evening came with the presentation of the John and Abigail Adams Scholarships to 12 Palmer High School students, an honor awarded for high performance on MCAS exams that provides four years of tuition waiver at Massachusetts public colleges and universities. Principal Susan North described the achievement, noting, "This scholarship is based on a student's high academic achievement on the MCAS exams. The students have qualified to receive a four-year scholarship upon their acceptance to a participating Massachusetts public institution of higher education."

Superintendent Matthew

Francis then delivered a detailed overview of the district's FY26 federal entitlement grants under ESSA and IDEA. He emphasized the substantial workload required of the district's grants manager, saying, "Anything that's being paid out of any of these grants, that individual is responsible for doing that, reconciling, and doing the final end-of-the-year reports." The district receives more than \$1 million through these grants, much of which supports instructional staff, paraprofessionals, intervention programs, technology upgrades, SEL initiatives, and special education services. Francis also warned that potential delays or freezes in federal appropriations for FY27 could create serious challenges for the district, remarking, "It would be detrimental," given the extent to which the schools rely on these funds.

North also presented a comprehensive "State of the Schools" report for Palmer

High School. Enrollment this fall stands at 393 students, with a diverse student population and significant representation of low-income students and students with disabilities. Academic performance showed notable growth across math, ELA, and science, with math growth exceeding pre-pandemic levels and 7th grade ELA proficiency rising from 21% to 34%. The school has implemented new curricula, expanded its AP offerings, and strengthened writing and reading instruction.

The principal highlighted successful program expansions across history, world language, the arts, and student support services. She described the school's newly established "Zen Den" as a calming space to help students regulate and re-engage in learning, saying, "It's a calming space to help students regulate their behavior so that they can get back in their classrooms to learn." North also celebrated a ma-

ior achievement in special education: "Our recent DESE tiered focused monitoring review resulted in no findings of non-compliance," she said, praising her staff for their professionalism and dedication.

North added that the school's accountability rating has risen by 11 percent, earning PHS a state designation as a "School of Recognition." Attendance has steadily improved for four consecutive years, dropout rates have fallen significantly, and the school continues to grow partnerships with organizations such as MassMutual, Junior Achievement, and Birch, all of which support college and career readiness, mental health resources, and trauma-informed practices.

Finance Report

Treasurer Sarah Menard reported on district finances through Oct. 31, stating that 65.5 percent of the district's total budget has been spent or encumbered. The transportation budget is fully encumbered for the year, and other major categories including facilities, tuition, and technology are tracking as expected. Both Old Mill Pond and Palmer High School have spent just over 20 percent of their individual school budgets, in line with the calendar year. Utilities will be reviewed midyear based on usage trends, and athletic transportation will be reclass-

sified for clarity in future budgets. Menard noted that the Kids Corner revolving account remains stable.

Student Activities Report (Internal Audit)

Menard also presented an internal audit of student activity accounts for FY25, completed due to the lack of recent external audits, which are required under state law for accounts exceeding \$25,000. Her review identified several areas of concern, including outdated policies, inconsistent revenue and deposit practices, missing bank reconciliations, insufficient documentation for purchases, and the lack of advisor training. Some disbursements also lacked proper tax reporting. All student activity payments have now been shifted to the district's accounts payable system to ensure compliance.

Menard emphasized the importance of addressing these issues quickly. "The findings are significant enough for us to be concerned and that we need to fix them right away," she said. "We are not meeting all of what we're supposed to do to have student activities run correctly."

To correct the deficiencies, the district will conduct an external audit for FY26, institute mandatory annual training for advisors starting in December, update all policies and procedures, and close or repurpose inactive accounts.

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Obituaries

Lawrence "Larry" E. Befford

PALMER — Lawrence "Larry" E. Befford, 49, passed away unexpectedly at his home on Nov. 14, 2025.

Born in Springfield on Aug. 18, 1976, he was the son of the late Susan (Lavolette) Befford and Robert Befford. Larry grew up and lived all of his life in Palmer. He enjoyed stock car racing in Stafford, Riverside, Thompson and New Hampshire. Besides



his father, Bob, he is survived by his wife, Becky Befford and her children as well as one brother and two sisters.

Visitation will take place at the Beers & Story Palmer Funeral Home on Friday, Dec. 5 from 3-6 p.m. with a gathering to follow at St. Joe's Club in Thorndike.

For those wishing, donations may be made in his honor to the American Cancer Society in memory of his mom.

Stanley Peter Slowick



With great sadness we said goodbye to Stanley Peter Slowick, 94 of Palmer, Mass. on Oct. 29, 2025. Stan was a beloved husband of Theresa A. Slowick (Henault), loving father and father-in-law to Cheryl Slowick & John Coady of Medway and Denise Slowick-Moran & Jim Moran of Hardwick, and devoted grandfather to Erin and Ian Moran.

Stan was born in 1931 in Holyoke, MA to Agnes and Peter Slowick. In 1949, after graduating Holyoke High School, Stan joined the Navy, where he served in Florida, California and on several submarines off the coast of Hawaii. After service, Stan attended Bentley College, graduating in 1953 with a Bachelors in Finance, and continuing on to obtain his

CPA from Western New England College. Before starting his own tax and real estate company, P & S Associates, which he ran successfully for 25 years, Stan was an accountant at Hamilton Standard, a CPA at Hitchcock & Company and a Controller at Oxford Precision. Stan also served as a Trustee to Country Bank for many years.

Stan and Terry married in 1958 and celebrated their 67th anniversary this October. Over the years they had a wide circle of friends, and loved dancing, traveling to all 50 states, several islands and Europe, and visiting their condo in Sebastian, FL, which they enjoyed for 34 years, often with visits from family and friends. Stan was a loyal Patriots fan until the end

and always enjoyed watching games at family get togethers. In later years, he took great pride caring for his yard and Terry's flower gardens.

Stan was very close to his nieces, nephews and their spouses - Joanne & Gary Trapp, Donald & Dianne Baranowski, Gary Henault, Betty & Bill Murrah, Theresa & Kevin Lewis and John & Joy Henault. Stan also enjoyed seeing his great nieces and nephews at family gatherings and keeping up with their growing families.

Stan is predeceased by his sister and husband Josephine & Gene Baranowski, his niece, Sandy Costello, his nephews Ricky & Ronnie Henault, his sister and brother in-law Lee & Jerry Henault, and his father in-law Roderick Henault, who he also loved dearly.

The family is planning to hold a celebration of life in March.

The Journal Register OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice 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

Stanley Peter Slowick
Died Oct. 29, 2025
Celebration of Life in March

Lawrence "Larry" E. Befford
Died Nov. 14, 2025
Services Dec. 5

FUNDS | from page 1

Gauthier noted that while the vehicle is not meant for oversized farm animals, the need to transport them does arise in the region.

"We've had pigs twice this year...very, very large pigs," she said during a tour of the facility before the presentation. "They can be very destructive, so we don't put them in our main vehicle. We're looking at potentially getting a domestic farm animal transport trailer next year."

The new van is part of ongoing improvements to the facility, which occupies a former veterinary clinic purchased in 2021. Upgrades include new flooring installed this summer, renovated rooms for training and enrichment, and expanded capacity for both dogs and cats. Gauthier explained that the facility includes five outdoor kennels, two dog exam rooms, and a large cat room capable of housing 20-30 cats.

During the tour, Gauthier

addressed questions about animal holds, rehabilitation, and when difficult decisions must be made.

"For dogs, we're supposed to keep them for seven days, then we can start placement," she said. "But we've kept animals here for much longer than months when needed."

She described the recent success story of Trappy, a Cane Corso who was initially difficult to place due to his size and breed but eventually found a home after extensive training and evaluation.

Gauthier also acknowledged the emotional challenges when an animal cannot be saved or placed.

"It's rare, and we don't like to do it," she said. "They won't leave an animal. They will sit with the animal the entire time. The doctor comes here so they can be in a space that's familiar."

Palmer Town Administrator Brad Brothers praised the teamwork behind the regional operation.

"It takes a lot of effort to make regionals work,"



Turley photos by Abigail McCoy

Nicole Gauthier taking all the representatives and community members on a tour of the animal control facility.

Brothers said. "We're thankful we got a state earmark for \$75,000 for this vehicle. This provides the tools we need to operate a municipal regional program."

Sen. Oliveira emphasized that the funding was the result of close coordination within the legislative delegation.

"It really is a team effort," Oliveira said. "Regional animal control centers, or any type of regional initiative, are about partnerships. In these challenging fiscal times, any help that communities and regional collaboratives can get

from Sen. Peter Durant.

Rep. Brian Ashe, who joined the presentation, spoke about legislative efforts to strengthen animal protections statewide.

"You tend to gravitate toward things that are really your passion," Ashe said. "I've had the pleasure of working with Senator Oliveira before on animal bills for the betterment and care of animals. Sadly, not everybody cares for them as much as they should."

Ashe highlighted Ollie's Law, the recently passed kennel and doggy daycare regulatory bill he spearheaded with support from regional legislators. The law, named for a young labradoodle killed in an unsupervised daycare incident, establishes statewide safety standards for kennels.

"When you come to a place like this and see the work they're doing, and have so many people come out to support it, it really means a lot," he said.

Sen. Oliveira added that the governor's Christmas card last year featured himself and

Ashe holding puppies during the signing of the bill. "For all the animal lovers out there, that was a special moment," he said.

Lawmakers agreed that MTRAC serves as a strong example of how small Western Massachusetts towns can successfully collaborate.

"This facility is a model for regionalizing opportunities," said Rep. Smola. "Small towns have lots of challenges as time goes on, but your next-door neighbors are your best neighbors. The bonds you build with one another are extremely important."

Officials closed the ceremony with a group photo in front of the new transport vehicle, encouraging those in attendance to step in and participate; including local police and fire chiefs, town officials, legislative aides, and animal control staff.

The event concluded with a round of applause and expressions of gratitude from state and local leaders, marking a significant milestone for the regional facility and the communities it serves.



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This offer is available to all babies born in 2025. Pictures will be published the week of December 23-26, 2025.

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Deadline for photos and forms is Friday, December 12, 2025

Public notices

LEGAL NOTICE MONSON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Under the requirements of M.G.L. Chapter 131 § 40, the Monson Conservation Commission will hold a public meeting on **Wednesday, December 10, 2025 at 7:30 PM** in the Large Meeting Room, Town Office Building, 110 Main Street. Under consideration is a Request for Determination of Applicability to determine if the work associated with the removal of soil to improve line-of-sight on Bumstead Road for the property located at 126 Bumstead Road, identified as Assessors Map 079, Parcel 003A, is subject to the Wetlands Protection Act. The applicant is the Monson Highway Department. The property owner is Lloyd Farrin.

Monson Conservation Commission
11/27/2025

LEGAL NOTICE MONSON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Under the requirements of M.G.L. Chapter 131 § 40, the Monson Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, December 10, 2025 at 7:40 PM** in the Large Meeting Room, Town Office Building, 110 Main Street. Under consideration is a Notice of Intent for the work associated with the abatement and demolition of a building in the buffer zone of a Bordering Vegetated Wetland for the property located at 175 State Ave, identified as Assessors Map 088, Parcel 001. The applicant is the Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance. The property owner is Monson Development LLC.

Monson Conservation Commission
11/27/2025

PALMER PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 40A, Sections 9

& 11 M.G.L., the Planning Board will hold a public hearing on **Monday, December 8th, 2025, at 7:00 PM** in the Palmer Police Station Meeting Room, 4419 Main Street, Palmer, MA.

The applicant, Vasif Shah, is seeking a Special Permit as required by section 171.94(B)13 to display two signs larger than permitted by the ordinance in the Highway Business Zoning District, located on the property at 1239 Park Street, Palmer. This parcel is also known as Assessors Map 56, Lot 7.

A copy of the application may be inspected at the Planning Department office in the Town Administration Building from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Thursday.

Anyone interested in more information or wishing to be heard on the application can contact the Planning Department at 413-283-2605 or appear at the time and place designated above.

This notice shall also be posted on the Massachusetts Newspaper Publishers Association's (MNPA) website (<http://masspublicnotices.org>).

Norman Czech, Chairman
11/20, 11/27/2025

TOWN OF BRIMFIELD NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing on **Monday, December 15, 2025 beginning at 6:00 P.M.** at the **Brimfield Elementary School cafeteria, 22 Wales Road, Brimfield, MA** to hear the application filed by Deep Roots Distillery USA, LLC, located at 26 Sturbridge Road, Brimfield, MA, for a Farmer Series Pouring Permit pursuant to M.G.L. c. 138 § 19H. Persons with an interest in this application are requested to attend said hearing at the aforementioned date and time.

Martin J. Kelly, Chair
Select Board
Town of Brimfield
23 Main Street
Brimfield, MA 01010
11/27/2025

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. HD25P2342EA

Estate of:
Marlene Ann Foisy
Also known as:
Marlene A Foisy
Date of Death: 06/19/2025
**CITATION ON PETITION
FOR FORMAL
ADJUDICATION**

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **George P Foisy of Monson, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that **George P Foisy of Monson, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

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 12/05/2025**. 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. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: November 07, 2025
Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
11/27/2025

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. HD25C0340CA

In the matter of:
Miranda Nadine Hinkel
**CITATION ON PETITION
TO CHANGE NAME**

A Petition to Change Name of Adult has been filed by **Miranda Nadine Hinkel of Palmer, MA** requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to:
Miranda Nadine Davenport
IMPORTANT NOTICE

Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: **Hampden Probate and Family Court before 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 12/10/2025**.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.

WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.
Date: November 12, 2025
Rosemary A Saccomani
Register of Probate
11/27/2025

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Division Docket No. HD25P2317EA

Estate of:
Paul Eric Holloway
Date of Death: July 25, 2025
**INFORMAL PROBATE
PUBLICATION NOTICE**

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Kristina Dobiacki of Holland, MA**.

Kristina Dobiacki of Holland, MA has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond. The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.

11/27/2025

LEGAL NOTICE

Pursuant to the provisions of MA. Gen. Laws, Chap. 255, Sec. 39A, the following vehicles

will be sold at public auction for towing and storage charges due: **MERCEDES VIN:55SWF4K-BXHU20026Y** Raymond Ramotar 8744 Wellington View DR West Palm Beach, FL; **BMW VIN:5UXFE435X9L261009** Rosaridpa Fell 111 Mimosa DR Cherry Hill, NJ; **JEEP VIN:1J4GW48S62C137014** Dillon Sezerns 130 School ST Warren, MA; **HONDA VIN:2H-KRM4HSXEH716059** Julie Gromosky 2268 Palmer, RD Three Rivers, MA; **FORD VIN:1FAHP35N79W156895** Mark Bamford 2042 Main ST Apt 4 Three Rivers, MA; **BMW VIN:WBA5B3C59ED537133** Devon Hawk 17 Old Thompson ST Palmer, MA; **FORD VIN:3FA6POH79FR301257** Joushua Crenshaw 217 Pasco RD Indian Orchard, MA; **EV Bike Charlie Ricko** 401 Liberty ST Springfield, MA; **FORD VIN:3FA6POHR4DR109615** Tracey Henderson 1262 S. Main ST Palmer, MA. This auction is to take place on December 1, 2025 @ 10:00 A.M. @ LaBonte & Son, 241 Wilbraham St., Palmer, MA. 01069.
11/13, 11/20, 11/27/2025

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. HD25P2216EA

Estate of:
Gail S Luzi
Date of Death: 09/19/2025
**CITATION ON PETITION
FOR FORMAL
ADJUDICATION**

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Todd E Luzi of Wilbraham, MA** and **Dana-Lee Luzi of Wilbraham, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: **Todd E Luzi of Wilbraham, MA** and **Dana-Lee Luzi of Wilbraham, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

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 12/12/2025**. 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 affi-

duavit 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. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: November 21, 2025
Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
11/27/2025

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS THE TRIAL COURT HAMPDEN, Div. Prbate & Family Court Dept. HD25E0045PP

To Adam F Padykula of Palmer, Hampden County, and to all other persons interested.

A petition has been presented to said Court by Richard R. Padykula, Jr., of Deltona Florida, Volusia County, representing that they hold as tenants-in-common in an undivided part or share of land lying in Palmer, in the County of Hampden, setting forth that they desire that all of said land may be sold at private sale or public auction for not less than Three Hundred Thousand (\$300,000.00) Dollars, and praying that partition may be made of all the land aforesaid according to law, and to that end that a commissioner be appointed to make such partition and be ordered to make sale and conveyance of all, or any part of said land which the Court finds cannot be advantageously divided either at private sale or public auction, and be ordered to distribute the net proceeds thereof after full adjudication of the equitable claims contained in said petition and supplemental memorandum filed with the Court.

If you desire to object thereto, you or your attorney, should file a written appearance in said Court at Springfield before ten o'clock in the forenoon on the **seventh day of January 2026**, the return day of this citation.

Witness, **BARBARA M. HYLAND**, Esquire, First Justice of said Court, this 6th day of November 2025.

Rosemary A. Saccomani,
Register
11/27, 12/04, 12/11/2025

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