

The Journal Register

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MONSON SELECT BOARD

Echo Hill's liquor license evaluated

By Abigail McCoy
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MONSON – The Monson Select Board opened a lengthy public hearing on Dec. 3 to determine whether Echo Hill Orchards & Winery LLC's restaurant all-alcohol license should be modified, suspended, or revoked due to long-standing state building code violations tied to fire safety requirements.

The hearing centered on whether Echo Hill's continued failure to install a fire suppression system, (despite years of notices, appeals, and negotiated timelines), constituted grounds for action under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 138 governing alcohol licenses.

Town counsel framed the issue as one of public safety rather than punishment.

"We are here tonight to determine whether action on Echo Hill's alcohol licenses is warranted given their years-long failure to comply with critical life safety requirements of the building code," Town Counsel said in opening remarks, emphasizing that the requirements in question are set at the state

level and cannot be waived by local officials.

Change of use and code triggers

Fire Chief Brian Harris and Building Commissioner Justin Larivee presented a detailed timeline dating back to 2018, when Echo Hill applied to expand from a tasting license to a "farm pour" license allowing full glasses of wine to be served on site.

According to Harris, inspections conducted prior to 2018 found the areas in question used for retail sales. That changed after renovations added a bar, seating, and finished interior space.

"When we inspected in April of 2018, those two rooms no longer contained retail items," Harris testified. "A bar was constructed, seating was added, and the space had clearly changed to an assembly use."

Larivee explained that this shift, from mercantile use to A2 assembly use, triggered a full building code review and life safety upgrades, including fire alarms and a fire suppression system.

"This was a change of

LICENSE | page 6

WALES



Baby Maverick Almodovar with jolly old Saint Nicholas.

Turley photo by Abigail McCoy

Author embraces Christmas spirit

By Abigail McCoy
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WALES – The Wales Public Library welcomed a special holiday visitor recently as author Bill Barnsley arrived dressed as Santa Claus to read his children's book *If Mice Pulled the Sleigh* to an

enthusiastic crowd of young listeners this past Dec 13. The event marked Barnsley's first appearance at the library and served as a fundraiser organized by the Friends of the Wales Public Library, a volunteer group that has rapidly grown alongside the library's expanding programming.

Library Director Kara Jund said Barnsley, who is based in the Sturbridge area, was discovered by the Friends group while they were searching for engaging local authors and performers. When an opening in his schedule aligned, the group moved quickly to bring him to Wales.

"This was his first time here, and the Friends of the Wales Public Library brought him in and used it as a fundraiser," Jund said. "They discovered him, facilitated everything, and made it happen."

Barnsley's visit com-

AUTHOR | page 6

PALMER TOWN COUNCIL

Residents raise concerns about blight

By Abigail McCoy
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PALMER – The Palmer Town Council's Dec. 8 meeting spanned ceremonial milestones, infrastructure challenges, and long-running policy debates, as councilors welcomed new police officers, approved financial reallocations to support residents and capital projects, and voiced renewed frustra-

tion over stalled fire district consolidation efforts.

From public safety staffing and sewer system repairs to fuel assistance funding and economic development planning, the meeting reflected both immediate operational needs and broader, long-term concerns about fairness, efficiency, and municipal growth.

Police Department promotions

The meeting opened with

the swearing-in of six new officers to the Palmer Police Department, marking a significant step toward restoring full staffing levels and reinforcing public safety capacity across town.

Police Chief Christopher Burns explained that two of the officers, Philip Hale and Hannah Callowette, are already POST-certified and

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MONSON

Arts council holds radio play

By Abigail McCoy
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MONSON – The Monson Arts Council returned to live theatrical production this December with *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*, presented at Granite Valley Middle School in partnership with the school community and local radio station 97.7 WARE. The production, staged Friday and Saturday evenings, offered audiences a nostalgic yet inventive reimaging of the beloved holiday classic through the lens of radio's golden age.

Adapted by Joe Landry, the live radio play format places performers at microphones on stage, recreating the sound-driven storytelling that once filled living rooms across the country. Actors voice multiple characters while Foley artists produce sound effects in real time, allowing audiences to watch not only the narrative unfold, but also the creative process behind the scenes. Doors creak, footsteps echo, and winter winds swirl through carefully chosen props and techniques, all visible to the audience.

Sarah Thomas, a member of the Monson Arts Council Theater Committee, said presenting the story in this format allows the familiar tale of *George Bailey* to feel fresh while honoring a tradition that still resonates today. The production taps into the same fascination with audio storytelling that drives modern podcast cul-



Dara Battige performing *Violet Bick*.

Submitted photo

ture, while offering the added charm of seeing sound effects created live and by hand.

The show marked the Monson Arts Council's first return to Granite Valley Middle School for a theatrical production in many years. With Memorial Hall currently serving as a temporary home for the Monson Fire Department, the middle school's auditorium provided a high-quality performance space and a renewed opportunity for collaboration between the arts council and the Monson school community. Organizers expressed hope that the

production signals the beginning of an ongoing partnership involving students, educators, and community performers.

Opening night was met with a warm response from the audience, setting a positive tone for the second performance. Before the show began, attendees were welcomed with remarks that placed the evening in historical context, recalling how radio dramas were once

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PALMER

Pathfinder Robotics craft fair raises funds for program

By Abigail McCoy
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PALMER – The halls, cafeteria, and gymnasium of Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School were filled with energy, creativity, and community spirit on December 6 as the school hosted its inaugural Pathfinder Robotics Craft Fair, a large-scale fundraising event that brought together dozens of local artisans, student programs, and community organizations under one roof.

The event, which featured approximately 38 vendors, marked the first time the Pathfinder robotics team organized a craft fair as a fundraiser. According to robotics in-

FAIR | page 14



Scout, the Pathfinder student therapy dog, sets up in the school restaurant for patrons to stop by for photos or to give him pets.

Turley photos by Abigail McCoy



School Committee interim vacancy filled by Peterson

By Abigail McCoy
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MONSON – The Monson Select Board met on Dec. 9, beginning with a joint session alongside the Monson School Committee, before moving into a full Select Board agenda that stretched late into the evening. The meeting addressed a wide range of town business, including committee appointments, funding for community programs, and student civic engagement presentations.

Joint Meeting: School Committee vacancy filled

During the joint meeting, the Select Board and School Committee unanimously appointed Katherine Peterson to fill an interim vacancy on the Monson School Committee, effective immediately through June 8, 2026.

School Committee Chair Alison Morgan strongly endorsed Peterson, highlighting her previous three-year term and her dual perspective as both an educator and a parent.

“Kate brings a rare and invaluable dual perspective,” Morgan said. “She understands both the day-to-day re-

alities of teaching and learning in our classrooms and the broader impact of policy decisions on students, staff, and families.”

Morgan praised Peterson’s commitment to evidence-based decision-making, noting that she routinely brought research, data, and best practices into committee discussions. Several board members emphasized that Peterson’s experience would be particularly valuable heading into budget season, allowing her to “hit the ground running.”

The appointment was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Town Administrator updates and community recognition

In her report, Town Administrator Jennifer Wolowicz announced an upcoming West Mass Area Development community meeting scheduled for Thursday at Granite Valley, where the organization will discuss its newly acquired property and next steps.

Wolowicz also conveyed thanks from Peter Matrow and his wife Ellie for the Se-

lect Board’s support of the recent Chime In Handbell Concert, which drew more than 200 attendees and was recorded by MPact.

A proclamation honoring longtime town employee Lori Stacy, who recently retired, was postponed due to her absence, though board members expressed appreciation for her service and extended well wishes.

Gifts to the Town: Toy drive and youth sports supported

The board approved a \$2,000 donation from the Gifts to the Town fund to support Monson Together’s annual toy drive, following a request from Karen Davis. Davis reported that 125 children are currently registered, 40 more than last year, and emphasized a growing need for gift cards for teenagers.

Later, the board approved a \$4,000 donation to the Palmer Youth Cowboys Football and Cheer program, which serves children from both Palmer and Monson. Approximately 20-25 percent of participants are Monson residents.

Program representative

Brian Taggart described aging equipment and safety concerns, noting that many helmets date back to 2016 and cheer uniforms were purchased in 2014.

“Obviously the number one thing is keeping the kids safe,” Taggart said, explaining that helmets alone have a 10-year lifespan and cost roughly \$200 each to replace.

Board members acknowledged both the safety needs and the extensive fundraising efforts already undertaken by parents and volunteers.

Board, committee appointments

The Select Board conducted interviews and made multiple appointments to town boards.

Dominique Batiste was appointed to both the Conservation Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). Batiste said he was drawn to Monson because of its character and expressed a desire to balance individual property rights with community preservation.

“There’s something special about Monson,” Batiste said. “I think there are ways

to ensure zoning laws are applied fairly while protecting the town’s character.”

Batiste welcomed training and guidance from town counsel, an approach the board emphasized for all new ZBA members.

David Beaudoin, a longtime ZBA member and former chair with more than 30 years of experience, was appointed to a term ending June 30, 2029. Beaudoin spoke about preparing the town for evolving state regulations, particularly regarding battery energy storage systems.

“I’d like the town to be ahead of the curve versus behind it,” Beaudoin said, stressing the importance of coordination between boards and legal guidance.

Sean Crookes, who has lived in Monson for four years, was appointed to the ZBA with a term ending June 30, 2027. Though new to zoning, Crookes detailed his efforts to study local bylaws and Mass. General Laws.

Even with these appointments, the board noted that one full ZBA seat and two associate positions remain vacant.

Student civic engagement presentations

Students from Monson High School’s Mass Media and Speech class delivered civic engagement presentations as part of a public speaking and community outreach assignment.

Emma McGrath spoke about modernizing the town’s communication strategies, proposing improvements to the town website and expanded use of social media beyond Facebook.

“As the world keeps upgrading, it seems our town continues to be stuck in the past,” McGrath said, arguing that better digital engagement could attract newcomers and younger residents.

Brianna Richter focused on population growth and retention, suggesting ideas such as taxpayer-funded or lottery-based pre-kindergarten, expanded public transportation connections, improved parks, and increased funding for young adult library resources.

Board members praised both students for their preparation and encouraged continued civic involvement.

PLAY | from page 1

broadcast before live studio audiences. The introduction also emphasized the enduring message of *It’s a Wonderful Life*; a story that speaks to perseverance, community, and mutual care, particularly during challenging times.

The production featured a large ensemble cast portraying the residents of Bedford Falls, with performers frequently taking on multiple roles. The cast included John Cabela as George Bailey; Jo Cobleigh as Mary Hatch and Rose Bailey; Tony Esposito as Clarence the Angel and others; Michael “Buster” McMahon as Freddie Filmore and Joseph the Angel; Dara Battige as Violet Bick and additional roles; Matt Jones as Harry Bailey and others; Andy Price as Mr. Potter and additional characters; Kevin Benoit as Ernie the Cab Driver; Freya Sprouse as Mrs. Hatch and others; and a group of young performers portraying the Bailey children.

Behind the scenes, the production was supported by a dedicated crew and Foley artists who brought the world of Bedford Falls to life through sound. Direction and production were handled by a team that included Amos Lake, Tony Esposito, and Cleo Esposito, with additional crew members contributing to the smooth execution



The theater troupe took a bow after their show had been completed.

Submitted photo



Cleo Esposito, Sarah Thomas, and Anne Macon, run the ticket table as well as concessions and the raffle.

of the live performance. In addition to the performance itself, the evening included a 50/50 raffle, with tickets available in the lobby and the drawing held during intermission. A small snack

table offered refreshments such as water, chips, cupcakes, cookies, and other sweet treats, creating a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere for audience members.

Tickets were priced at \$20, making the production accessible while supporting the continued work of the Monson Arts Council. Organizers also highlighted the importance of community support for the arts, noting that productions like this are made possible through local partnerships, volunteer efforts, and enthusiastic audiences.

By blending a timeless holiday story with a format rooted in theatrical history, *It’s a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play* offered Monson residents an evening that was both entertaining and reflective. The production celebrated not only the message of the story itself, but also the enduring power of live performance and the role of the arts in bringing communities together during the holiday season.

Community Center holding Christmas party

HOLLAND – On Friday, Dec. 19, the Holland Community Center is holding a Christmas party from 5:30 to 8 p.m. People of all ages are welcome to attend, and there will be story time for children, Christmas carols, and photos with Santa. The Holland Community Center is located at 40 Brimfield Rd., Holland.

Mah Jongg Club available to all levels

PALMER – Have you ever wanted to learn Mah Jongg? Haven’t played in years and would like to? Drop in and join us at the Palmer Public Library for this newly formed, weekly club! Beginners will get help from Joyce, a local Mah Jongg enthusiast and teacher.

The club will primarily meet in the Community Room on Mondays from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. If the Community Room has another event, the club will relocate for that day to another area of the library. This club will play the American version of Mah Jongg and follow the National Mah Jongg League (NMJL) rules.

Mah Jongg is a 4-person game of strategy and skill that originated in China. There are many versions of this game, with the American version enjoying popularity in the U.S. today. Learning to play involves getting familiar with the tiles, learning the specifics of dealing & play, and especially learning to decipher and become familiar with the official card of playable hands released annually by the NMJL.

Please bring your own Mah Jongg set and current NMJL card if you have them. The library is located at 1455 North Main Street. Questions? Call Amy at 413-283-3330, ext. 121.

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Please contact **Pat James 413-726-8661.**

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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EARLY DEADLINES FOR ADS & LEGAL NOTICES

New Year’s will bring early deadlines for all ads & legal notices to run in TURLEY PUBLICATIONS the week of Dec. 29, 2025 - Jan. 2, 2026:

Friday, December 26 at 2 PM for January 1 issue

- Country Journal • The Register • Wilbraham-Hampden Times • Agawam Advertiser News

Monday, December 29 at 2 PM for January 1 issue

- Sentinel • The Journal Register • Ware River News • Barre Gazette

Tuesday, December 30 at 2 PM for January 2 issue

- Quaboag Current • Town Reminder • The Holyoke Sun • Chicopee Register

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West Mass Brass Band concert at St. Thomas Parish

By Abigail McCoy
amccoy@turley.com

PALMER – Saint Thomas Parish in Palmer welcomed the sounds of the season with a free Christmas concert featuring the West Mass Brass Band at the church's Thorn-dike Street location, inviting families and community members to gather for an evening of festive music and fellowship.

The volunteer ensemble, which has been together for more than 10 years, performed its first concert at Saint Thomas Parish under the direction of Ken Mc-

Cance, who has been with the band since its founding. The program showcased the group's mission to share the distinctive British-style brass band sound through a mix of traditional and upbeat seasonal selections, performed by the full band along with featured soloists and a double trio.

Selections included "A Christmas Intrada" by David Rosewell, "A Christmas Adventure" by Darrol Barry, and a lyrical arrangement of "Oh Holy Night" by Stephen Bulla, highlighted by a tuba solo by Dan Kerstetter. Audience favorites such as "Feliz



Ken McCance conducts the band.

Navidad," arranged by Dorothy Gates, and "Jingle Bells," arranged by Alan Fernie and featuring euphonium soloist Chris Kempf, added a spirited and celebratory tone to



People fill the pews to hear this free brass concert on their Saturday morning.

the evening. The concert concluded with "On Christmas Night" by Paul Sharman and "A Christmas Finale" by Paul Loveatt-Cooper.

The Palmer performance

was part of the band's seasonal concert series, which also included recent appearances at Christ Church Cathedral in Springfield and an upcoming final Christmas concert at the Springfield Armory. A free

will offering was collected to support the ensemble, and following the performance, audience members were invited to the parish center for refreshments and an opportunity to meet the musicians.



Turley photos by Abigail McCoy

The West Mass Brass Band plays holiday songs inside of the St. Thomas Parish.

Christmas Eve by Candlelight church service

PALMER – St. Paul's Church of Palmer warmly invites the community to its annual Christmas Eve by Candlelight Service on Wednesday, Dec. 24, at 5:30 p.m. This cherished holiday tradition will bring together music, scripture, and the gentle glow of candlelight in a service that celebrates the timeless story of hope and love at the heart of Christ-

mas. The evening will feature beautiful carols, readings, prayers, and candle lighting, creating a space for both joy and quiet reflection. Guests will hear the story of Jesus' birth retold through word and song, along with a reading of The Night Before Christmas and other inspirational selections for the season. The service concludes with the beloved singing of "Silent Night" as the sanctu-

ary fills with candlelight — a moment of peace and unity shared by all who gather.

Reverend Steven Sousa, minister of St. Paul's, shares: "Christmas Eve invites us to pause in the midst of the season's busyness, to let the light of faith and love rekindle something gentle within us. Whether this is your first time visiting St. Paul's or a return to a familiar place, you are welcome here — just as you are. We look forward to celebrating the wonder of Christmas together."

The Christmas Eve by Candlelight Service will be held in the Fellowship Hall

of St. Paul's Church, located at 1060 Central Street in Palmer.

Since 1937, St. Paul's has been a spiritual home for the greater Palmer community, offering outreach, worship, and connection rooted in grace, acceptance, and love. Regular worship services are held each Sunday at 10 a.m., with special programs and community events throughout the year.

For more information, please contact St. Paul's Church of Palmer at 413-283-8185 or email StPaulSUChurch@gmail.com.

Community Cupboard open

MONSON – Monson Community Cupboard abounds in holiday spirit. The cupboard has been open since Sept. 1 and has been frequented by more than 80 families. Our goal is to help alleviate cases of food insecurity throughout our town.

The Monson Community Cupboard, located at 24 Green St. is currently open on Tuesdays from 3 to 7 p.m., Fridays from noon - 4 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon, and can be opened by appointment if you can't make those times.

"We are grateful for the citizens who have made both

food and monetary donations because they want to help members of our community in need." stated director, Karen Davis.

One customer declared that she "went to the food pantry on Green Street and the ladies in there are so sweet, kind helpful. We are blessed to have them. Karen and team - thank you so much for what you do. It was amazing."

Donations of food may be dropped off at 24 Green St. when open. Monetary donations may be dropped off or mailed to Monson Community Cupboard 24 Green St. Monson, MA 01057.

Lotto calendars available

PALMER – Baystate Wing Gift Shop Annual January Lotto Calendars are now available through Jan. 30, 2026. The drawing will be held Feb. 3, 2026.

The price is \$5 for one calendar with 31 chances to win and \$10 for three calendars with 93 chance to win. The winner need not be present.

Funds are used for scholarship awards for seven local high school graduates and towards the gift shop's pledge of \$200,000 (in installments) to Baystate Wing to a specific department.

These make great stocking stuffers/gifts or recognition of someone in your daily life.

Tree of Love fundraiser

PALMER – The Tree of Love annual fundraiser honors a loved one with a wooden ornament to be put on our tree near the Baystate Wing Gift Shop from November thru December.

A single name ornament is \$5 and a family name is \$10.

More information and forms are available in the Gift Shop or by our tree on the first floor.



Palmer Senior Center

Friday, Movie Matinee
12:30 p.m.

with drinks and popcorn

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. When he returns to Elk Ridge unexpectedly, his friends notice he has changed. 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. Orphaned at a

young age, Estella befriends two street urchins, Jasper and Horace, and together they navigate life as petty thieves while honing her fashion skills. 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 Events
Evening Programs 4:30-7:30
Dec. 29 - Colby Acad-

emy 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 at the center.

NOTICE

ERRORS: Each advertiser is requested to check their advertisement the first time it appears. This paper will not be responsible for more than one corrected insertion, nor will be liable for any error in an advertisement to a greater extent than the cost of the space occupied by the item in the advertisement.

DEADLINE

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

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Viewpoints

SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor

Question about remarrying, benefits from an ex-spouse

Dear Rusty:

I am almost 57, divorced after a 14-year marriage. My former spouse is 15 years older than I and made significantly more money than me. I am required to retire from my job at age 60 but expect to keep working in some capacity.

I have a girlfriend of a similar age to me. She did not earn as much as her former husband as she mainly raised their children. She is also divorced from an older spouse who made more money than she did. I am trying to figure out if we will be penalized if we marry or if it matters if we wait until after we reach 60 years of age. Can I claim my own benefits when I become eligible at 62, then claim survivor benefits later, whenever my former spouse passes? Is that affected if, or when, I remarry? I do not want to give up my potential survivor benefits from my ex-spouse. Are those affected if I remarry?

If I understand correctly, if I remarry even after 60, we would both forfeit divorced spousal benefits, is that right? Given that my girlfriend's former spouse probably made more money than I, would she be forfeiting her former spousal benefits if we were to marry, even after age 60?

Lastly, I am considering retiring abroad as an expat. Any suggestions about how that would affect our Social Security benefits?

Signed: Starting Over

Dear Starting Over:

With certain exceptions, benefits from a living ex-spouse cannot be collected if you remarry (regardless of your age when you remarry). So, from what you've shared, whenever you remarry both you and your new wife will forfeit eligibility for benefits from your respective ex-spouses while they are living (FYI, there are exceptions for those who are disabled).

However, the rules are different for a surviving ex-spouse: if you remarry before age 60, you will forfeit your surviving ex-spouse benefit. But if you remarry after age 60, you retain eligibility to collect survivor benefits from a deceased former spouse. So, if you and your girlfriend remarry after you are both age 60, you will both still be able to claim survivor benefits based on your former

spouses' records.

And, yes, it is possible for you to initially claim your own SS retirement benefit at 62 and claim your surviving ex-spouse benefit later after your former spouse dies. Provided you remarry after age 60 you do not lose that option, but if you were to claim a surviving ex-spouse benefit before reaching your Full Retirement Age, the monthly payment amount would be reduced, all SS benefits taken before FRA are reduced.

Note too, that if you plan to continue working after you are first eligible for SS benefits, Social Security has an "earnings test" which limits how much you can earn from working while collecting early benefits. The limit changes yearly for 2025 it is \$23,400 and if exceeded, SS will take back \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the limit. And, as you likely know, claiming at age 62 will also mean a benefit payment of about 30% less than available at your FRA of 67. So, if you plan to work after age 62 and plan to claim early SS, you should take the "earnings test" into consideration. FYI, the earning test no longer applies after you reach your Full Retirement Age.

Now, regarding retiring overseas, be aware that Social Security has limits on where you can collect U.S. Social Security benefits. I suggest you use Social Security's Payments Abroad Screening Tool to find out if benefits are payable wherever you plan to retire abroad. That SSA tool can be found here:

https://www.ssa.gov/international/payments_outsideUS.html

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 ssadvisory@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.



Two holiday plants suited for gift giving

Are you in need of a plant for a hostess gift this holiday season but poinsettias aren't your cup of tea? Look no further! I will give you my top two non-poinsettia picks, and share my experiences growing these plants.

Hopefully you will find the perfect gift for someone on your list.

Florist Cyclamen (*Cyclamen persicum*) is a delightful indoor plant that flowers during the winter months and is available at local nurseries and box stores. Its quarter-sized blooms in red, pink and white are unique in that the petals are bent back and held above pretty, heart-shaped, silver-margined leaves.

There are varying types available with fancy flowers and intricately patterned foliage.

The cyclamen plant is tuberous and unfortunately is best propagated by seed or by division of its fibrous roots. Usually this task is left to the experts who are best able to deal with erratic germination and roots that are susceptible to rot.

A few years back I became the owner of my very first cyclamen (thanks, Mom!). I had a little trouble after awhile.

During the spring its leaves yellowed and fell off so I threw it out. Little did I know that leaf loss was supposed to happen! It was going dormant.

With the cyclamen's bloom time during the winter, it has a period of dormancy mid spring through the end of summer when its leaves will yellow and shed and it will demand next to no water. This time frame is opposite of what we are used to with our perennial flowers that bloom during the summer and go dormant during the winter.

In late August, we can begin watering again and leaves will sprout anew before the blooming cycle begins during the fall.

Another favorite holiday plant by the name of Paperwhites start out as a bulb. The bulbs are available now by mail and from local nurseries and garden centers. Sometimes you can "fill a bag" with the exact number you want, which is really neat. Upon inspection of the bulb and the picture on the label, you'll note that Paperwhites look very much like our outdoor daffodils.

Paperwhites are cousins to these spring harbingers and bloom easily inside with little more than light, something to anchor the developing roots (soil or rocks) and water to get them growing. They don't need to go through a period of cold in order to bloom like outdoor narcissus do.

In just about four weeks after planting you'll be delighted with flowers galore! Decide for yourself if you like the fragrance or you find it a little overpowering. Prevent leaves and stems from stretching by placing your container in a cool spot in your home during the night and enjoy the flowers in your living spaces during the day.

After flowering is done, throw the bulbs out free of guilt; they won't bloom again consistently. One year you may remember that I did try to regrow the bulbs by allowing them to dry out within the container I had first grown them in. Of the four bulbs, two had life left in them a year later.

I watered and waited and leaves did grow, but no flowers ever came. I ended up chalking it up to an experience and starting over with new bulbs the following winter. Have fun experimenting with these plants or any number of beauties worthy of a good home for the holidays.



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 "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

POETRY CORNER

The Bridal Pool

A child a father has she been,
And angled well in waters about;
But not yet has she held or seen,
The lively measure of a trout.

As most valuables – they are to be sought;
Therein will a value lay;
And should it be they are not caught,
Then losses linger when they get away.

Next year's a time, When she might fool,
A speckled wonder of the brook;
Where two waters meet, in the bridal pool,
And search the twain with a feathered hook.

Then, ten years will see – ten thousand;
Which is the wish I have for you;
But what the numbers writ by the shore;
The world will chase a loveliness true.

A fawn child - in a sunlit grove;
Where long ago a bridge went out;
Leaving a span of open sky above,
And room enough to cast for trout.

And abutments, to edge the running stream;
And a holding - should it happen:
Treasure at both ends of a dream;
For the line that determines when.

Then to wet the hands - and hold it fast,
But lightly, a moment where it lay;
And bring it home for the rose-colored flesh;
Or give it back for another day.

And in the gladed look I'll recall,
Long after - your joyous, spotless form nearby;
When we together went to a bridal pool
In the stream by the open sky.

Charles Barnes

The Journal Register

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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.

An Oakham resident saw a purple finch in her yard recently.

The purple finch is about six inches long. It has a sturdy body, short tail and a conical bill designed to crack seed. The male has raspberry red covering its head, chest and back. The color fades into a lighter pink tone on the belly. The wings and tail are brown with red highlights. The female has no red coloring and is brown and white with heavy streaking. It has a white eyebrow stripe.

The purple finch and house finch are often confused. The purple finch as a more uniform raspberry color and the house finch is more



By Ellenor Downer

orange red color. The house finches color is limited to the head and upper chest. The purple finch also has notch at the base of its tail and is larger.

Purple finches breed primarily in Canada and the northeastern United States including New England and

the Great Lakes region. The purple finch is the state bird of New Hampshire.

A typical clutch consists of four or five pale blue eggs with small dark speckles. The female incubates the eggs for about 12-14 days

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

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

UPCOMING

**WING MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
AUXILIARY SHOP
40 Wright St., Palmer**

DECEMBER VENDORS

Dec. 19: Shannon Bacon
Dec. 22: Generations of Cookies
Dec. 23: Geriations and Sew on
Dec. 24: Patty Cakes

December at the WALES PUBLIC LIBRARY

Dec 1-23 Gift Wrapping Station
Dec 24 & 25: Closed
Dec 29: Book Buddies 11 a.m. Holiday Party
Dec 31: Closed

Dec. 28, 6 p.m.

Santa and the Wicked Wazoo Christmas Play and Dance Showcase Let's stay in the Christmas spirit with this festive performance of Santa and the Wicked Wazoo. Some wonderful Christmas dance routines will also be showcased. Advanced tickets are \$8 for children 12 and under and \$10 for teens/adults. Door sales are \$2 more. Doors open at 5:30

p.m. Pizza & Concessions. <https://mcusercontent.com/5df5b-b0a520a73636a4b2e808/images/601f5727-4364-60f3-bfc7-4fdd9eb88b80.jpg>

ONGOING

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

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

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

KEEP HOMESTEAD MUSEUM: Located at 35 Ely Rd., Monson, nature trails are open daily until dusk for hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Trail maps can be found in the parking lot. For more information call 413-267-4137, email khm@keephomesteadmuseum.org or visit keephomesteadmuseum.org.

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

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

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

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

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

BIRDS | from page 4

while the male provides food. Once hatched, both parents feed the nestlings a mixture of regurgitated seeds and insects to ensure proper nutrition. The fledglings leave the nest roughly two weeks after hatching, though parents continue feeding and protecting

them for another week or two.

They are fond of black oil sunflower seeds, safflower seeds, and millet offered in tube or platform feeders. In summer they supplement their diet with insects and caterpillars as well as blackberries and cherries.

Birds during snow storm

A Brimfield resident

emailed, "During the recent snow storm (Tuesday, Dec. 2) there were 30 plus dark-eyed juncos in the yard and one white-throated sparrow.

Bird bath visitors

The Brimfield resident said he went looking for his bird bath heater and could not find it.

He said, "Eventually I did find it, in the bird bath. It wasn't connected and grass had grown over the cord so I couldn't see it, but dug around and eventually found the cord, got it plugged in and now the bath isn't freezing."

He has a trail camera near the bird bath. Lots of birds are using the bird bath, mostly to get a drink. Birds coming to the bird bath include blue jay, Carolina wren, cardinal, cedar waxwing (six), chickadee, goldfinch, mourning dove, robin (three), titmouse and white-throated sparrow.

He said, "Robins took a bath but when it was warmer, temperature in the upper 40s. Junco are the only cold

weather bathers." Mammals seen at the bird bath are opossum, raccoon, mouse at least two and a mole.

He thinks the tub he uses for the bird bath has a leak because the water level goes down and he has to refill it ever couple of day. He said, "The local pond are now frozen. We did a few trips around the area and never saw any migrating ducks, just mallards and Canada geese.

Helping birds

Birds are attracted to water during winter months. They do not bath when temperatures are below freezing, but they do take a drink. A source of unfrozen water will attract birds.

Providing wild birds with clean drinking water is helpful. However, providing a roomy bathing area that stays thawed even in severely-cold weather can be harmful in some cases. Before heating devices kept birdbaths ice free, birds could bathe in naturally-melted water and be

able to fly off without their feathers freezing. According to the blog Cool Green Science-Stories of The Nature Conservancy, birds bathing while air temperatures are frigid risk harm due to frozen feathers: <https://blog.nature.org/2022/01/31/should-you-provide-birds-water-in-winter/>.

The article suggests modifying heated birdbaths so that birds can safely drink, but not bathe. A metal heating element that keeps a small section of the birdbath thawed works well. People, who have bird feeders or simple feeding stations may add shallow unbreakable container around the area. Yes, it can be labor-intensive, but they can easily pour water into them (hot water when it's below freezing) and provide fresh water for at least a short period of time. As a source of drinking water, the containers can be filled with pebbles that will form small pockets of water where birds can get a



Cardinal

drink of water.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.



Purple finch

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AUTHOR | from page 1

bined storytelling with theatrical flair, as he read in full Santa attire, drawing laughter and attention from children and adults alike. His featured book, *If Mice Pulled the Sleigh*, was first personally released by Barnsley in November 2024 before receiving a nationwide release through a distributor this past October.

Barnsley said the book marked the beginning of an unexpected journey into authorship.

"I had no plans to be an author," he said. "It never occurred to me. I woke up one morning and had the text for the whole story and some of the pictures in my head. I wrote it down, read it to my wife, and she said, 'That's good. It needs to be a book.'"

His wife, a children's librarian for more than 30 years, encouraged him to pursue publication, setting Barnsley on a steep learning curve. Within six months, he had a print-ready book; far faster than the 18 months he was initially told the process would take.

A major part of the book's appeal comes from its illustrations by Mariano Eppelbaum, an artist based in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Though the two do not speak the same language fluently, they collaborate closely by email.

"He's not just an illustrator...he's a character designer," Barnsley said. "He fills the page with little Easter eggs. Every dog on the sleigh is telling a different story."

Barnsley said the detailed illustrations allow children as young as three to "read" the pictures on their own, creating stories based on what they



Using giant prints of his book Barnsley engages with the audience asking them questions.



Harper Metterville gets her picture taken with Santa Claus.

see, while older children and adults appreciate the layered humor.

The reading at the Wales Public Library was one of roughly 20 Barnsley expects to do this year, in addition to appearances as Santa Claus; a role he has embraced for the past six years after what he described as another accidental beginning.

"That just sort of happened, too," he said with a laugh. "I tried it once, grew the beard, and here we are."

Barnsley is already working on a slate of future books, including *If Sheep Pulled the Sleigh*, *If Santa Ate the Cookie*, *If Chickens Pulled the Sleigh*, and a new series centered on a young boy named Hugh, along with several board books.

While the event brought holiday cheer, it also highlighted the broader momentum underway at the Wales Public Library. Jund said the library has seen remarkable growth over the past year and a half, both in usage and in community engagement.

"In the fiscal year we're

on track to double what we did last year...and last year we doubled 2024," Jund said. "By the time you look at it over my tenure here, we've quadrupled our circulation."

She noted that when she arrived, the library had no active programming and no volunteers. Today, the newly formed Friends group has grown to about 15 members and plays a key role in planning events and fundraising.

Programming now includes museum passes, a growing "library of things," puzzle and plant seed swaps, American Sign Language classes, a recurring moms' morning, and the "1,000 Books Before Kindergarten" program, which currently includes more than 20 children. Earlier this week, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes visited the library on a field trip, the first such visit in at least a decade.

Holiday events have also been well attended, with a holiday tea party, a pajama party capped at 25 children with a waiting list, and a full December calendar of activities.



Bill Barnsley signs books as either Santa or Barnsley depending on who asks.



Turley photos by Abigail McCoy
Author Bill Barnsley dresses as Santa Claus for kids and families at a storytime at the Wales Public Library.

Looking ahead to the new year, Jund said January will be slightly quieter, but plans are already underway for wool felting workshops, cookie decorating in February, and a school vacation week program, pending grant approvals from local cultural councils.

The Friends of the Wales Public Library will also be

recognized beyond the town in January, when one volunteer receives a Game Changer Award from the Springfield Thunderbirds hockey team. The entire Friends group will be honored during the team's January 9 game, with the library featured as part of the recognition.

"That's incredibly excit-

ing," Jund said. "A year and a half ago, we had zero volunteers. Now we have this group, and it's just growing."

For Jund, events like Barnsley's visit underscore how far the library has come, and where it is headed.

"We didn't have programs before," she said. "Now we have a lot going on, and people are coming. It's been amazing to see the community respond."

LICENSE | from page 1

use," Larivee said. "Once that happened, the building code required a full review. No permits had been pulled for the interior renovations."

An architect hired by Echo Hill at the time conducted a Chapter 34 review but, according to Larivee, failed to identify key sprinkler triggers, including the building's actual square footage and the presence of assembly use beneath residential space.

Appeals, unlawful agreement

The dispute reached the Massachusetts Building Code of Appeals Board (BCAB) in July 2019, which ruled in favor of the town, affirming that the change of use required compliance with building permits and life safety requirements, including sprinklers.

"The BCAB found that the building commissioner was correct," Harris said, noting that the board accepted the fire department's conclusion that assembly use required

both fire alarms and sprinklers.

Despite that ruling, a subsequent agreement signed in late 2019 allowed Echo Hill to operate with fewer than 50 occupants while "self-policing" occupancy limits. Harris testified that he was never comfortable with the agreement and later warned town officials it could not legally override state code.

"There is no authority for town officials to enter into agreements that circumvent the building code," Larivee

said. The agreement was formally revoked by the town in 2022 after legal review.

Phased compliance and missed deadlines

In 2023, a new architect hired by Echo Hill conducted another Chapter 34 review, confirming extensive code violations and reiterating the need for a sprinkler system. Recognizing the financial burden, town officials met with Echo Hill and agreed to a phased compliance plan.

That plan included deadlines for fire alarm installation, sprinkler system design and installation, bathroom upgrades, and parking improvements. While some items were completed, Johnson and Harris testified that critical life safety deadlines were not met, particularly those related to sprinkler design and installation.

"We have not received sprinkler plans," Harris said. "And without plans, installation cannot move forward."

An inspection conducted on the morning of the hearing confirmed that no fire suppression system had been installed.

"The life safety issues remain uncorrected," Larivee said. "We could not issue a certificate of inspection."

Harris stressed that the violations were not technicalities, pointing to historic fires that shaped modern

safety codes.

"There's no code that's been put in place because something good happened," Harris said, citing the Coconut Grove fire, the MGM Grand fire, and the Station nightclub fire. "These tragedies are why these protections exist...especially in assembly spaces where alcohol can slow reaction times."

Echo Hill's attorney argued that sprinkler requirements stem from a different statute and said the building should be exempt absent substantial renovation. He also suggested the issue should have gone before the Fire Sprinkler Appeals Board rather than the BCAB.

Owner Richard Krupsack told the board that the winery has spent nearly \$500,000 on other compliance measures and has always been upfront about being unable to afford a full sprinkler system, estimated at \$2.7 million.

"We've done everything else the town asked us to do," Krupsack said. "We always said we couldn't afford the sprinkler system."

Krupsack also disputed the town's interpretation of the change of use and cited historical documents showing bar and seating use prior to 2018.

Public testimony overwhelmingly supported Echo Hill, with residents describing

the winery as a cornerstone of the town's agricultural identity and economy.

"If you take this license away from them, you are going to put a nail in the coffin of their business," said one resident, urging the board to find an alternative path to compliance.

Others questioned the town's past handling of the issue, the legality of rescinding the earlier agreement, and the fairness of enforcing costly codes on a long-standing farm operation.

Before deliberation, board members acknowledged the complexity of the situation and the strong emotions in the room.

One member said they were troubled by the lack of life safety protections in an assembly space storing large quantities of alcohol, while also recognizing the financial strain on the business. Another emphasized that the BCAB's unappealed ruling left little discretion under the current A2 assembly classification.

It was clarified that any vote would apply only to Echo Hill's full-pour alcohol license, not tastings or other aspects of the business.

A motion was ultimately introduced not to revoke the license outright, but to require compliance or a written, feasible plan for compliance before the next season.

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FOOTBALL

Hurricanes suffer shutout

EASTHAMPTON – Last Saturday night, Amherst Regional ice hockey, which copes with Pathfinder Regional, opened up the regular season against Easthampton at Lesone Arena on the campus of Williston School. The Eagles scored a pair of early goals and rode that to a 2-0 win over the Hurricanes. The Hurricanes were in action against Taconic on Dec. 17 and will next face McCann Tech at home Saturday, Dec. 20 at Orr Rink in Amherst.



Lincoln Auclair heads up the ice.
Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli



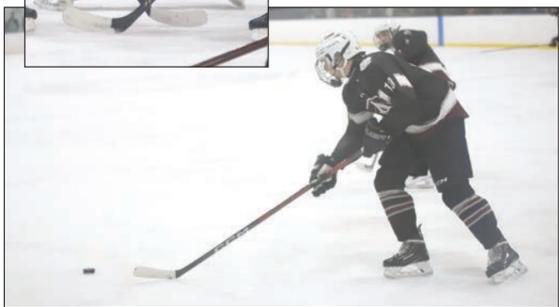
Above, Alexander Marlin keeps the puck from crossing the blue line. Left, Graham Arguin takes the faceoff.



Sawyer Ferro heads up the ice with the puck.



Joshua Feldman gets ready to shoot.



Noah Latulippe reaches out to get the loose puck.

FOOTBALL



Jared Perry is this year's Bailey Award winner.

Turley photos by David Henry

Perry receives Bailey Award

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

PALMER – Selecting only one player for the prestigious Leonard J. Bailey Award is a very difficult decision for Palmer varsity football coach Matt Marciniac and his assistant coaches to make every year.

“We have eight seniors on this year’s team who are worthy of receiving the Bailey award,” Marciniac said. “It’s a very special award and it’s always very difficult picking just one winner.”

The 57th Bailey Award winner is senior captain Jared Perry, who started at right tackle and defensive end this fall. He’s also an honor roll student in the classroom.

“Jared joined our football team as a freshman,” Mar-

ciniec added. “He has worked very hard both on the football field and in the classroom.”

Bailey was a football and baseball coach at Palmer High School for only a couple of years in the early 1960’s, but he made a lifelong impact on his players. He passed away in 1968 at the age of 39.

The Bailey Award recipients receive a personal trophy, a gift certificate, and their name is inscribed in the school’s Memorial Trophy Case.

While a senior is normally selected for the award, the Palmer coaching staff can choose any player listed on the football roster. They must possess the qualities of sportsmanship, ability, team spirit, attitude, selflessness, and academic achievement.

The members of the

Leonard J. Bailey Memorial Committee are David Russo, Ann Duke, Mrs. Rocky Blazejowski, Bob Chase, Tyler Mastalerz, Eric St. Amand, Andrea Mastalerz, and James St. Amand.

This year’s Bailey Award ceremony took place at half-time of the Panthers 21-7 victory over the Belchertown Orioles at historic Legion Field on Nov. 7.

Perry, who began his football career as a member of the Palmer Cowboys ten years ago, attends Monson High School, which co-ops with Palmer High School in football. He’s the first football player from Monson to receive the Bailey Award.

“Being the first football player from Monson High

PERRY | page 8

Offense struggles in Mustangs loss

MONSON – Last Friday night, Monson High School girls basketball fell to visiting Ware 40-11.

The Mustangs had a tough time getting points

in the board throughout the game. Cali Zielinski had just five points for the Mustangs. Ware was led by Reese McKeever with 14 points while Amelia Orszulak had

eight points. Monson is back in action on Thursday, Dec. 18 against Amherst on the road. They then face Granby at home on Tuesday, Dec. 23 at 6 p.m.

Right, Aubrey Hemm surveys the court.
Turley photos by David Henry
www.sweetdogphotos.com



Grace Berry hustles down the court.



Mia Hudak tries to navigate through traffic.



Vivienne Kowalik gets a shot off.



Mia Cancel tries to avoid having the ball stolen.



Cali Zielinski goes for the hoop.

Candlepin League News

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

Bondsville League

WARE – The Bondsville League at Roll-A-Way Lanes is 15 weeks into their season as the holidays are approaching.

Fire Mountain is in first place with a record of 65.5-39.5. Sandri is close by in second place with a record of 64-41. Night Hawks are in third place with a record of 62-43 as they try to close the gap with Fire Mountain, who have been leading almost all season.

In week 15, Zeke's Freaks bowled against Ironmen. In game one, Zeke's Freaks took the lead early and won by a score of 476-452. Zeke Sicard of Zeke's Freaks bowled over his league average with 105. Ryan Drago of Ironmen scored 128 in a losing effort in game one.

In game two, Ironmen bounced back with a win of their own, 481-433. Billy

Brunk of Ironmen bowled well with 124 and Jason Swistak bowled 112.

In game three, Ironmen and Zeke's Freaks tied, 466-466. Brunk finished strong with 140 and a three-game series of 362. Drago finished with 122 and a series of 352. As a result of the tie, each team received one point. The final score was 1399-1375 in favor of Ironmen.

Slow Burners bowled against Cannonballs during week 15. In game one, Cannonballs defeated Slow Burners by a score of 463-408.

In game two, Cannonballs won again by a score of 467-436. Suzie Czarnecki of Cannonballs bowled well with 110 during the team's second straight win over Slow Burners.

In game three, Cannonballs and Slow Burners tied, 452-452. Cannonballs won six points out of seven and total pinfall by a final score of 1382-1296.

P&J Meats bowled against #1 seed Fire Moun-

tain in week 15. In game one, P&J Meats pulled off the upset with a huge win over Fire Mountain, 526-481. Three out of four bowlers of P&J Meats scored in the 110s, 119 by Kristy Temple, 113 by Paige Stabach, and 116 by Shaun Midura.

In game two, Fire Mountain won by a score of 482-477. Midura remained consistent and scored 116 again. Rick Trott of Fire Mountain had the highest game on his team with 107.

In game three, Fire Mountain scored big and won 506-485. Gary Delisle of Fire Mountain bowled a 108 and a series of 331. Trott scored 110 and a series of 321. The final score was 1488-1469 in favor of P&J Meats.

Sandri bowled against Flaming Bowling Balls in week 15. In game one, Flaming Bowling Balls won by a score of 478-450. Steve McCarthy of Flaming Bowling Balls had the highest game on his team with 110.

In game two, Flaming Bowling Balls won again by a score of 462-458. Ryan McCarthy scored 109 during the team's victory over Sandri.

In game three, Sandri won by a score of 536-447. Every bowler of Sandri was over 100 with Ron Guoin having the highest score of 130. Don Paulus of Flaming Bowling Balls had the best game on his team with 122. The final score was 1444-1387 in favor of Sandri.



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Athlete of the Week

Jared Perry

Palmer High School

Perry was honored as this year's Bailey Award winner, which is given to a Palmer High School football player each year.

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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PERRY | from page 7

School to receive the Bailey Award makes it extra special for me," Perry said. "I'm very glad that there is a co-op between the two school's or I wouldn't have been able to play football in high school. I was very surprised when they announced my name"

The football co-op between the two schools began more than ten years ago.

The other four students from Monson High School listed on the Panthers 2025 football roster are freshman Dimitri Nava, freshman Dustin Moulton, sophomore Kayden Harvey, and senior Landon Couture.

While Marciniec interacts with Perry on the practice field and during games, Monson High School Principal Chris Fontaine gets to see him during the school day.

"Jared is a terrific young man. He's going to go on and do great things in the future," Fontaine said. "He performs very well in the classroom and on the football field. He's also an outstanding mentor to the younger students at the high school."

Perry was a member of the Monson boys' lacrosse team for a couple of years, but



Jared Perry in action this season for Palmer football. Turley photos by David Henry

he has always loved football. "I've made a lot of friends playing football," Perry said. "I enjoy the physicality of the sport and the teamwork you need to be successful."

Just like any other freshman, Perry was very nervous when he first joined the Palmer football team.

"Other than the players that I knew from the Cowboys, I didn't know any other players on the team when I was a freshman," he said. "I was very nervous on the first day of practice, but I wound

up making a lot of new friends that season. I was sad when the season ended."

In the middle of the 2022 season, Perry started his first varsity game at right guard in a road game against Greenfield.

"I made my first start at Greenfield as a right guard," Perry said. "I held my own against an older player and all of my teammates congratulated me following the game."

Perry, who has been friends with senior quarterback Matt Santos since the

third grade, became a fulltime starter offensively as a sophomore, but it wasn't a very enjoyable season for him.

"We only won two games when I was a sophomore," he said. "I almost didn't return for my junior year. My teammates convinced me to come back. I'm very glad that I decided to return to the football team."

Not only did Perry return to the Panthers football team as a junior, but he also became a starter at defensive end.

"When I played for the Cowboys, I really didn't like playing defense very much," Perry said. "I became a starter on defense last year and I enjoy it a lot more now."

Perry's first sack in a varsity football game came during a 40-7 home win against cross-town rival Pathfinder Tech last year.

"I have that sack on video and I watch it a lot," Perry said. "I really enjoy the feeling of sacking the quarterback."

Perry and his Panthers teammates celebrated a 21-6 road victory against archrival Ware on November 1.

It was Palmer's first win in the rivalry series in a decade.

"The feeling that I had while holding the trophy after

we beat Ware was amazing," Perry said. "We lost to them all the other years that I've played for the football team. It's a very big rivalry game. We're also hoping to beat Ludlow at Legion Field on Thanksgiving morning."

Palmer entered the final game of the 2025 season with

a 5-5 record.

The other seniors listed on the Panthers football roster are Dylan Doherty, Hunter White, Kodah Lavolette, Kaleb Hayes, and Gavin Smola.

Perry will be returning to Legion Field next fall to present the Bailey Award to one of his former teammates.

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CONCERNS | from page 1

transferred to Palmer from other agencies. As a result, both were able to begin active service immediately. Callowette also serves as a sergeant in the U.S. Army National Guard, a point highlighted during the ceremony.

The remaining four officers: Daniel Ciejka, Matthew Clifford, Joseph Chartier, and Matthew Bedore, recently completed a demanding 22-week Municipal Police Training Council Academy and are set to graduate later this week before entering field training.

“With these officers, we’re currently at 90 percent staffing,” Chief Burns told councilors. “We have two additional officers in academies right now, and we expect to hire two more shortly, which will bring us to 100 percent.”

The council also recognized the promotion of Nathaniel Pagan to the rank of sergeant. Pagan has served with the Palmer Police Department since 2020 and previously worked as a school resource officer in Palmer Public Schools and as a field training officer.

Describing Pagan’s leadership qualities, Chief Burns said, “He has excellent communication skills, a high level of integrity, accountability, and the ability to mentor and develop subordinates. I consider him an asset to our management team.”

Councilors congratulated the officers and their families, noting the importance of community support for public safety professionals.

Residents raise concerns

During public comment, resident Steve Kosmider

raised concerns about what he described as junkyard-like conditions on residential properties in Thorndike and Three Rivers, including locations on Hill Street and Bridge Street. Kaismeter urged the town to take stronger action than sending warning letters, which he said have proven ineffective over time.

In response, council members emphasized that enforcement efforts are ongoing but often must proceed through legal channels that require time and documentation. Councilors encouraged residents to report concerns directly to the Town Manager’s office rather than waiting for council meetings.

Town Manager Brad Brothers explained that education is often the first step, particularly when residents are unaware of local ordinances.

“We’ve had good traction with residents who simply don’t know what they don’t know,” Brothers said, adding that while some cases ultimately require legal action, education can resolve many issues without escalating costs for the town.

Councilors also previewed an upcoming presentation from town legal counsel regarding adoption of a Massachusetts General Law provision that would significantly expand the town’s enforcement authority. If adopted, the measure would allow Palmer to perform necessary cleanup or remediation work and place a lien on the property to recover costs.

“That’s going to give us more teeth,” Brothers said. “It impacts the owner finan-

cially, which is something we don’t currently have the ability to do.”

Sewer System repairs advance following unexpected pipe failure

A significant portion of the meeting focused on infrastructure, as the council approved a \$30,505 transfer from the sewer surplus to cover additional work at the Three Rivers sewer junction structure.

Consulting engineer Antonio da Cruz, from Tighe & Bond, explained that during a recent inspection of siphon pipes beneath the Ware River, crews discovered severe deterioration in an 8-inch pipe, including a missing bottom section that trapped a camera during inspection.

“We had to pivot quickly,” Cruz said, explaining that flow was redirected through the 18-inch and 24-inch pipes, which required extensive cleaning but remained in serviceable condition.

“The good news is there’s nothing that needs to be done on an emergency basis,” he told councilors. “Everything is flowing and handling the current load.”

Tony said a comprehensive study is underway to evaluate long-term repair options, including rehabilitating the existing structure, building a new structure, or a combination of both. The study is expected within 30 days and will consider future capacity needs while maintaining sufficient flow velocity to prevent blockages.

Grant savings reallocated

Community Development Director John Latour provided a detailed update on grant-funded projects and

proposed reallocations of unused funds from completed infrastructure work.

Over the past three fiscal years, Palmer has been awarded \$3.15 million in grants, primarily supporting major infrastructure improvements. Savings from projects on Maple Street and Maple Terrace will now be redirected to resident-focused programs, including fuel assistance and emergency housing rehabilitation.

The proposed reallocation includes approximately \$35,000 in combined funding for heating assistance, expected to help dozens of families, as well as roughly \$87,000 for emergency housing repairs such as roof or heating system replacements.

“When people come in, they’re often completely out of money,” Latour said. “This gives them somewhere to turn, especially when temperatures drop.”

Thorndike St. designated as District Improvement Financing area

Economic development took center stage with the council’s approval of Resolution 2026-15, designating the Thorndike Street corridor as a District Improvement Financing (DIF) district.

Sean O’Donnell of West-Mass Development explained that the DIF designation allows Palmer to capture future property tax growth within the district and reinvest those funds into public infrastruc-

ture improvements over a 30-year period.

The district encompasses the highway business area along Thorndike Street and extends south to include the Converse School property, ensuring that potential redevelopment can be supported by necessary infrastructure upgrades.

Councilors described the move as proactive and forward-looking, emphasizing that any future tax revenue captured beyond infrastructure debt obligations could ultimately support the town’s general fund.

“This is about planning ahead,” one councilor said. “It’s about making sure future growth benefits the entire community.”

Fire District consolidation debate resurfaces

The most impassioned discussion of the night centered on fire district consolidation, following the council’s unsuccessful attempt to convene a joint meeting with all four of Palmer’s fire districts.

Only Palmer Fire District No. 1 initially agreed to attend, while Bondsville and Three Rivers declined, and Thorndike responded too

late to meet posting requirements.

One councilor expressed disappointment, stating, “It is not fair or sustainable for one district to shoulder the majority of the cost for a town-wide ambulance service when that service is used by all residents.”

Councilors cited long-standing concerns about duplicated equipment, administrative costs, aging fire stations, and staffing challenges, particularly during daytime hours in volunteer districts.

“This isn’t about losing identity or history,” a councilor said. “It’s about honoring that history by building a stronger, unified future.”

Although the council does not have direct authority over the districts, members emphasized their desire to act as a facilitator and partner. Ultimately, the council voted to place a non-binding referendum question on the June election ballot asking whether residents support a review of fire district consolidation.

The measure is intended to educate the public and gauge community interest rather than mandate immediate action.

Ware Library Friends host Lotto Calendar fundraiser

WARE – The Friends of the Ware Library will be selling Lotto Calendars through the end of the year.

Tickets are \$10 each and drawings will take place every day in January.

1,000 max tickets will be sold and you can win an unlimited number of times.

Visit the library at 37 Main St. or participating stores to purchase a ticket - they make great stocking stuffers.

Monson Fire Logs

The department had 25 EMS calls and 4 Fire calls during the week of Dec. 8 to 14.

On Thursday December 11th at 1:17pm the department responded to 92 Woodhill for the public assist. The department returned to service at 1:37pm.

On Thursday December 11th at 2:12pm the department responded to 96 Bethany Road for the fire alarm

sounding. The department returned to service at 2:32pm.

On Friday December 12th at 2:59pm the department responded to 278 Hovey Road for the appliance fire. The department returned to service at 3:24pm.

On Friday December 12th at 4:22pm the department responded to 101 Wilbraham Road for the commercial fire alarm. The department returned to service at 4:47pm.

Palmer Police Logs

Sunday, Dec. 7

- 2:13 a.m. – Suspicious Person, Elizabeth St.
- 3:50 a.m. – Larceny, West St.
- 4:05 a.m. – Disturbance (loud noise), Palmer Rd.
- 6:50 a.m. – Burglar alarm, Green Gold Group, Thorndike St.
- 7:07 a.m. – Burglar alarm, CVS Pharmacy, Thorndike St.
- 12:11 p.m. – Fraud, High St.

Monday, Dec. 8

- 8:24 a.m. – Check Well-being, Thorndike and Park St.
- 9:50 a.m. – Investigation, Trackside Motors II, Park St.
- 3:55 p.m. – Burglar alarm, Quabbin Valley Eye Care, N. Main St.
- 4:20 p.m. – Illegal dumping, St. John St.
- 7:20 p.m. – Threat report – Palmer Police Dept., Main St.

Tuesday, Dec. 9

- 12:25 a.m. – Fire (report of smoke), W. Ware St.
- 6:38 a.m. – Burglar alarm, Rocky’s Ace Hardware, N. Main St.
- 9:29 a.m. – Disturbance, Wendy’s, Thorndike St.
- 1:11 p.m. – Animal complaint, Fenton Rd.
- 2:13 p.m. – Fire, Hazmat, Barker St.
- 2:18 p.m. – Suspicious person, High St.
- 3:38 p.m. – Missing person, Baptist Hill St.
- 6:09 p.m. – Animal complaint, Beacon Dr.
- 8:16 p.m. – Hazmat spill/leak, Pride Plaza, Thorndike St.

Wednesday, Dec. 10

- 1:19 a.m. – Animal complaint, Sykes and Bourne St.
- 7:50 a.m. – Burglar alarm, Speedway, N. Main St.
- 11:05 a.m. – Investigation, Pathfinder Tech, Sykes St.
- 11:14 a.m. – Fire (Hazmat), N. Main St. and Randall St.
- 12:31 p.m. – Animal complaint, Ware St.
- 1:01 p.m. – Vandalism, Central St.
- 1:33 p.m. – Threat report, S. Main St.
- 2:29 p.m. – Accident with property damage, Stimson St.
- 2:42 p.m. – Accident with property damage, Thorndike St.
- 10:26 p.m. – Motor vehicle theft, Quincy St.

Thursday, Dec. 11

- 1:43 p.m. – Animal complaint, Dunhamtown-Palmer
- 4:27 p.m. – Soliciting, Old Farm Rd.

Friday, Dec. 12

- 4:42 a.m. – Burglar alarm, St. Mary’s Club, High St.
- 10:46 a.m. – Fraud, Pleasant St.

11:26 a.m. – Fire, Burleigh Park, Old Warren Rd.

12:12 p.m. – Fraud, Main St.

12:47 p.m. – Disturbance, Old Mill Pond, Main St.

1:42 p.m. – Threat report, Old Mill Pond, Main St.

1:55 p.m. – Fraud, Prospect St.

2:12 p.m. – Soliciting, Jim Ash St.

3:50 p.m. – Runaway, Crawford St.

4:38 p.m. – Accident with property damage, Big Y Supermarket, Thorndike St.

7:58 p.m. – Robbery, Harvard St.

Saturday, Dec. 13

5:06 a.m. – Motor vehicle fire, Mass Turnpike

8:44 a.m. – Accident with property damage, Stimson St.

10:55 a.m. – Larceny, Flynt St.

2:39 p.m. – Fraud, Thompson St.

4:14 p.m. – Larceny, Pleasant St.

11:36 p.m. – Accident with property damage, Hospital Rd. and Palmer Rd.

Three Rivers Fire & Water District

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Obituary

Theodore "Teddy" Wachta, 90

PALMER – Theodore "Teddy" Wachta, 90, passed away Dec. 6, 2025. He was born on April 30, 1935 in Palmer to the late Arthur and Mary (Rzathasz) Wachta. Teddy proudly served in the U.S. Navy and was a Korean War Veteran. Following his time in the service, he worked as an electrician in the Electrical Union for many years.

Guided in life by his faith, Teddy was a devout Catholic and former parishioner of Divine Mercy Parish.

Teddy loved to travel and had a great appreciation for the outdoors. He enjoyed hunting and all activities involving the snow. Teddy always liked to stay busy and loved tinkering on new projects. He also loved visiting with his dear friends

and going out to breakfast of ten.

Besides his parents, Teddy was preceded in death by his siblings, Adele Gaudette, Julia Hayes, Anne Nocrasz, Caroline Skawski, Lena Socha, Stasia Hall, Anthony Wachta, Stanley Wachta, Helen Pisarczyk, and Walter Wachta. He leaves behind nieces and nephews, and his dear friend Phil.

Visitation will be held on Monday, Dec. 22, 2025 from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. at the Beers & Story Palmer Funeral Home followed by a Funeral Mass at 10 a.m. at Divine Mercy Parish. Teddy's burial will be held later in the afternoon at 2 p.m. at the MA Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in Agawam. Please meet directly at the cemetery for the committal service. In

lieu of flowers, donations in Teddy's memory can be made to the Wounded Warrior Project by visiting support.woundedwarriorproject.org.

DEATH NOTICES

Theodore "Teddy" Wachta

Died Dec. 6, 2025
Services Dec. 22, 8:30 am.
Beers & Story Funeral Home
Funeral Mass 10 a.m.
Divine Mercy Parish
Burial 2 p.m.
MA Veterans' Memorial
Cemetery Agawam

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(SEAL)
THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS LAND COURT DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT
Docket Number: 25 SM 003823
ORDER OF NOTICE
 To: **Noah Paul Genereux**
 and to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, 50 U.S.C. c. 50 §3901 (et seq):
Aurora Financial Group Inc.

claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in Three Rivers (Palmer), numbered 2029 Quaboag Street, given by Noah Paul Genereux to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Norwich Commercial Group, Inc. D/B/A Norcom Mortgage, dated September 25, 2019, and recorded in the Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book 22870, Page 230, and now held by the Plaintiff by assignment, has/have filed with this court a complaint for determination of Defendant's/Defendants' Servicemembers status.

If you now are, or recently have been, in the active military service of the United States of America, then you may be entitled to the benefits of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If you object to a foreclosure of the above-mentioned property on that basis, then you or your attorney must file a writ-

ten appearance and answer in this court at **Three Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108** on or before **January 26, 2026**, or you may lose the opportunity to challenge the foreclosure on the ground of noncompliance with the Act.

Witness, Gordon H. Piper, Chief Justice of this Court on December 5, 2025.

Attest:
Deborah J. Patterson
 Recorder
 28031
 12/18/2025

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. HD25P2315PO
Estate of: Roger Lutinski
Petition to Ratify and Confirm a Doubtful Act CITATION ON GENERAL PROBATE PETITION

To all interested persons:
 A Petition has been filed by: **Lorraine M Farrell of North Myrtle Beach, SC** requesting the Court to Ratify and Confirm a Doubtful Act of Conservators **Lorraine M. Farrell and Leonard Lutinski**, Duly Appointed by the Court of Probate, District of Fairfield, Connecticut. Conservators Executed a Quit Claim

Deed, Recorded in the Hampden County Registry of Deeds Book 14706 Page 268 without obtaining a License to Sell in Massachusetts, all as more fully set forth in said Petition.

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 January 28, 2026.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an Affidavit of Objections within thirty (30) days of the return date, action may be taken without further notice to you.

WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: November 26, 2025
Rosemary A Saccomani,
 Register of Probate
 12/18/2025

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. HD24P1921EA

Estate of: Christine M Skowrya
Date of Death: 07/29/2024
CITATION ON PETITION FOR ORDER OF COMPLETE SETTLEMENT

A Petition for **Order of Complete Settlement** has been filed by **Leslie M Skowrya of Brimfield, MA** requesting that the court enter a formal Decree of Complete Settlement including a determination of testacy and heirs at law and other such relief as may be requested in the Petition.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 01/13/2026.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M. Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: December 10, 2025
Rosemary A. Saccomani
 Register of Probate
 12/18/2025

2025 Commonwealth Of Massachusetts Town of Palmer Special District Meeting Three Rivers Fire District

Submitted to the voters of the Three Rivers Fire District at the Meeting to be held in the Fire Station on **December 30, 2025 at 7:00 P.M.**

To the voters of the Three Rivers Fire District of the Town of Palmer Your Prudential Committee respectfully submits the following articles as recommended by the Finance Committee for your approval
 Chairman Ex Officio

Article 1. To choose a moderator to preside at said meeting.

Article 2. To see whether the District will vote to Transfer from Free Cash for the increased cost from Hampden Country Retirement or take any other action relative thereto.

The finance committee recommends favorable action on this article.

Article 3. To see whether the District will vote to transfer from Water Surplus for the increased cost from Hampden Country Retirement. The Finance Committee recommends favorable action on this article.

Article 4. To see whether the District will vote to transfer from Free Cash for the accounting services of Aponte & Aponte beginning December 1, 2025 Thru June 30, 2026

The Finance Committee recommends favorable action on this article.

Article 5. To see whether the District will vote to transfer from Water Surplus for the accounting services of Aponte & Aponte beginning December 1, 2025 Thru June 30, 2026

The finance committee recommends favorable action on this article.

Article 6. To see if the District will vote to dissolve Article 11 in the Amount of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000.00) Voted and approve at the Districts Annual Meeting Dated May 6, 2025

The Finance Committee Recommends favorable action on this article.

Article 7. To see whether the District will vote to transfer from free cash for the renovations of the meeting room and kitchen areas in the Fire Department Headquarters

The Finance Committee Recommends favorable action on this article.

Article 8. To see if the District will vote to transfer from Free Cash for the purchase, upgrades and installation of new radio equipment, communication tower and all related equipment.

The Finance Committee Recommends favorable action on this article.

With no further business, do I hear a motion to dissolve this warrant?

And you are directed to serve this warrant by posting up attested copies in said District, Fourteen (14) days at least before the holding of said meeting, and publishing one not less than Seven (7) Days preceding the date of the meeting in a newspaper published in Palmer.

Hereof fail not, and make due return of this warrant, with your doings thereon, to the Prudential Committee of the District at or before the holding of said meeting.

Given under this hand and seal December 2025

Prudential Committee
 Andera Sullivan, Chairman
 Norman Czech, Vice Chairman
 Mark Bogacz, Clerk

True Copy Attest by:
 Guy Bellefleur, Clerk
 Date: 12/15/2025
 12/18/2025

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Applications are available on-line on the Town of Sturbridge website under job opportunities.

https://www.sturbridge.gov/your-government/pages/job-opportunities

The position is non-union and reports to the Town Administrator. The Town is an Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE).

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Find archives of this local newspaper at www.newspapers.turley.com

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In observance of **NEW YEAR'S** for Dec. 29-Jan. 2 newspapers there will be an **EARLY CLASSIFIEDS DEADLINE!** Place your advertisement no later than **Thurs., Dec. 26 at 3 p.m.**
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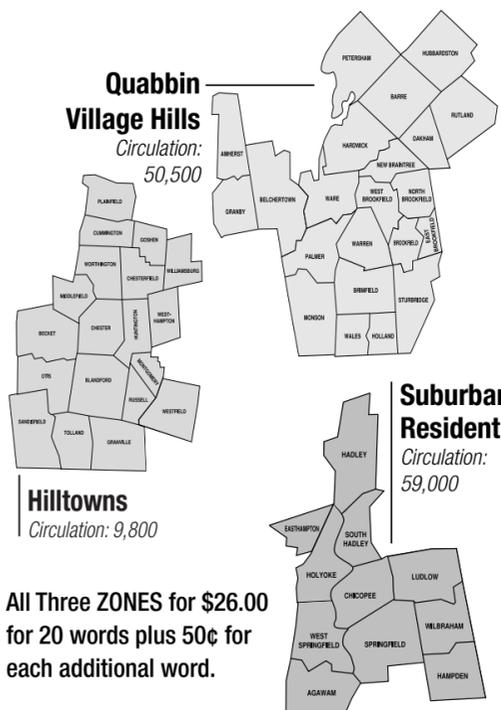
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FAIR | from page 1

structor Justin Bren, the idea originated with a parent volunteer and quickly proved to be the most successful fundraiser the team has ever held.

"The robotics team is really expensive to run," Bren said. "We've been very fortunate to have a lot of local businesses support us over the last 10 to 20 years, but it's important to find new and creative ways to fund the team, especially in this economy. On paper, this idea looked great...and in reality, it's been even better."

Bren said the craft fair has already generated more revenue than any previous fundraiser for the robotics program. While organizers initially planned for up to 52 vendors, last-minute weather- and illness-related cancellations reduced that number to about 38. Despite that, the event ran smoothly, drawing steady foot traffic throughout the day.

Student involvement played a key role in the fair's success. Robotics students assisted with vendor relations, checking in regularly with exhibitors and even delivering food directly to vendor tables so sellers would not have to leave their booths unattended.

"A lot of the vendors have told us they're really pleased with how everything is being run," Bren said. "The kids have been incredibly helpful."

The fundraiser supports Pathfinder's competitive robotics season, which begins in January when the annual game challenge is released. Students will have six weeks to design and build a full-sized competition robot before heading into regional events at Western New England University and Revere High School. The team hopes to qualify again for the New England Championship at the Big E Coliseum and, if suc-

cessful, advance to the World Championship in Texas.

Beyond robotics, the craft fair highlighted the breadth of creativity within the Pathfinder community and beyond. Vendors filled multiple areas of the school with handmade goods, baked treats, jewelry, fiber arts, woodwork, and specialty crafts.

Among the artisans was Shelly Bourbeau, owner of Ginger Girl Handmade, who creates uniquely themed bags and accessories featuring pop culture, fantasy, and gaming-inspired designs. Nearby, Maria Marshall of Maria's Sweet Treats offered a wide selection of cookies, including ginger spice, peppermint hot chocolate, cinnamon bun, Reese's-stuffed peanut butter, salted caramel chocolate chip, and Nutella-stuffed browned butter varieties.

Independent Scentsy consultant Holly Cote showcased seasonal candles, wax melts, car bars, and holiday-themed warmers, while Beth's Beaded Bracelets and Necklaces featured handmade jewelry. Youth entrepreneurship was also on display, including Julia's Heartmade Creations, run by 15-year-old Addison Julia, who crafts chunky yarn items such as seasonal décor, pet beds, snowmen, pumpkins, and Christmas trees.

"I love that she's able to make things that match the season," said her mother, Deidre Cadieux. "This is a new endeavor for her, and she's really excited about it."

The fair also featured Dance Magic Crafts, owned by Chantelle Gauthier, whose work blends custom fabrics, nostalgic 1980s and 1990s themes, and costume-inspired materials into colorful bags and accessories. Graverend Creations, operated by Bethany Larzazas, drew attention with handmade "hair loopies": decorative hair accessories designed to add flair with-



Dance Magic Crafts owner Chantelle Gauthier displays handmade bags and accessories made with custom fabrics inspired by retro, fantasy, and pop culture themes.



Rose Dupre of the Paper City Sisters displays handcrafted holiday decorations and paper crafts created by her and her sister.



Mike Luckett of ML Glassworks displays handmade glass art after recently launching his business.

cessful, advance to the World Championship in Texas.

Other vendors included The Thrifted Goth, offering alternative jewelry and spiritual items; Autumn's Treasures, which specializes in crystals and minerals mined from Maine to South Carolina; DuckTales Craft by Jesselyn Allen, featuring cro-



Rick Toelken of Crafting Coins by Rick displays handcrafted jewelry and accessories made from repurposed coins, including rings, pendants, and keychains.



Gwen Kearney and Chris Martin of The Thrifted Goth offer alternative jewelry, spiritual items, and 3D-printed accessories, including witches' bells and altar decor.

cheted goods and accessories; and ML Glassworks, a new glass art business launched by Palmer resident Mike Luckett.

Pathfinder student programs were also represented throughout the building. Students sold CNC-machined Santa Scout ornaments as part of the Advanced Manufacturing program, while the Pathfinder Education Association hosted a gift-wrapping fundraiser. Inside the school's restaurant and shop areas, visitors could purchase wreaths, swags, holiday décor, birdhouses, stools, bookcases, and Adirondack chairs crafted



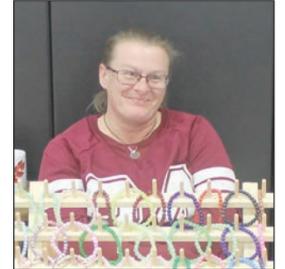
Tree to Table carpenter Roland Lapointe shows off his handmade wooden bowls and plates.



Graverend Creations Bethany Larzazas of Graverend Creations displays their handmade "hair loopies," decorative hair accessories.



Code Ninja, a new coding academy for children and young adults that will be opening in Springfield soon, has their own table represented by Center Director Vassu Kamisetty.



Jesselyn Allen of DuckTales Craft presents crocheted items, bracelets, mugs, and stickers at her vendor table.

photos with anyone stopping by.

Community organizations and educational programs rounded out the event, including Gotta Dance, which promoted new classes beginning in January and shared details about upcoming performances and holiday events, and Code Ninjas, which highlighted its coding programs for children and teens.

As the day wrapped up, the fair stood as more than just a fundraiser. It was a showcase of student achievement, local entrepreneurship, and the strong community partnerships that support Pathfinder's hands-on educational mission.

"This has been an incredible experience for the kids and the community," Bren said. "We're excited about what this means for the future of our robotics program."

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