

The Journal Register

SERVING PALMER, MONSON, BRIMFIELD, HOLLAND & WALES

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THREE RIVERS

Christmas on the Common carries decades of tradition

By Abigail McCoy
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THREE RIVERS – The annual Christmas on the Common celebration returned to Hryniewicz Park on December 7, continuing a holiday tradition that local residents say stretches back to the 1940s. Organized by

the Three Rivers Chamber of Commerce, the event brought families, volunteers, first responders, and local organizations together for an evening of festivities that blended community spirit with deep historical roots.

Chamber President Matt COMMON | page 13



Turley photo by Abigail McCoy

Mrs. Claus (Mary Ann Duguay) and Mr. Claus (Roger Duguay) poses with Three Rivers Chamber of Commerce President, Matt Lemieux.

SCHOOLS



Sarah Gill and her dog Bluebell pose for a photo with the Grinch.

Turley photo by Abigail McCoy

Grinch steals Christmas & dogs

By Abigail McCoy
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PALMER – The Seven Railroads Brewery in Palmer opened its doors to both two- and four-legged guests on Sunday, Dec. 7, hosting a festive fundraiser to benefit Happy Life Beagle Rescue. The event invited community members to bring their dogs to the brewery, make a donation to the rescue organization, and have their pets' photos taken with the Grinch, adding a playful hol-

iday twist to a charitable afternoon.

The fundraiser was promoted through a social media announcement that encouraged dog owners to "bring your pup, make a donation to HLBR and get their picture taken with The Grinch," an idea that drew steady participation throughout the day. Dogs of all sizes and personalities filtered through the brewery alongside their owners, creating a lively and family-friendly atmosphere

centered on supporting animal rescue.

Rachel Rosenbloom, one of the owners of Seven Railroads Brewery, said the event reflects the brewery's broader commitment to hosting community-oriented and creative programming. In addition to regular live music and record sales, the brewery offers a wide range of wellness and novelty events designed to appeal to diverse interests. Monthly vinyasa flow yoga classes are held

on site, along with occasional specialty sessions such as goat yoga. Looking ahead, Rosenbloom shared that the brewery plans to host puppy yoga in January featuring a litter of puppies born just days ago, followed by Pilates with pigs in February.

"These kinds of events are a fun way to bring people together while supporting good causes," Rosenbloom said, noting that the brew-

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MONSON

Former Monson hospital's future outlined at informational session

By Abigail McCoy
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MONSON – Monson residents packed into Granite Valley Middle School on Thursday, Dec. 11, for a recent community meeting hosted by West Mass to hear preliminary plans for the future of the former Monson Development Center, a long-vacant state hospital property that has loomed over the town for more than a decade. The central message of the evening was clear: the site's future hinges on local zoning decisions, and community support will determine whether Monson retains control over what ultimately replaces the deteriorating campus.

West Mass, a not-for-profit economic development organization operating exclusively in Western Massachusetts since 1960, acquired 108 acres of the former state hospital campus earlier this year. The property includes the valley portion of the site where most of the large brick insti-

tutional buildings are located. The organization emphasized that it is still in the earliest stages of due diligence, with no finalized site plan, housing counts, or development timeline in place.

"We're not here to provide answers to everything tonight," a West Mass representative told attendees. "We're here to talk about what's possible, what the hurdles are, and why zoning is the critical next step."

A Challenging and Complicated Site

The Monson Development Center has a long and complex history. Originally opened in 1854 as a regional almshouse, it later evolved into a state school and hospital for epileptics. By the mid-20th century, the campus had expanded to more than 70 buildings across over 600 acres, housing as many as 1,700 residents at its peak in 1968. The facility officially closed in 2012, after which utilities were shut off and buildings were left vacant.

Today, many of those structures are severely deteriorated. West Mass officials described widespread asbestos contamination in bricks, slate roofing, and underground steam tunnels, making reuse or salvage difficult. Numerous buildings are marked with large red "X" symbols used by fire departments to indicate that, in the event of a fire, the structures should be allowed to burn due to safety concerns.

"If the state had invested even a small amount to keep the buildings heated and maintained back in 2012, we'd be having a very different conversation today," one speaker said. "But that didn't happen."

While the state is currently demolishing the former children's campus across Upper Palmer Road, land that will be transferred to the Department of Fish and Game for passive recreation, West Mass's focus is on the 108-

FUTURE | page 13

PLANNING BOARD

From Sweetmeats to Bubble Lights



Turley photos by Abigail McCoy

Lorraine German stands with her fully decorated mini Christmas tree that is filled with decorations and ornaments that were popular over the centuries.

Dressing the Christmas Tree through the centuries

By Abigail McCoy
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MONSON – The Christmas tree, now a centerpiece of holiday celebrations around the world, began as a modest regional custom in Germany and evolved over centuries into a richly decorated symbol shaped by faith, industry, war, and family memory. That journey was the focus of the Sunday, Dec. 7, presentation at the Keep Homestead Museum in Monson, where visitors gathered in the museum's barn at 1:30 p.m. for an illustrated talk on the history of Christmas trees and their decorations.

LIGHTS | page 12



From our family to yours.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year
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Baby's First Christmas 2025



Arthur Senecal

May 26, 2025

Parents: Sarah and Scott Senecal, Bondsville
Grandparents: Mario and Julie Nicolliello, Ware
 Bruce and Tina Aldrich, Ware
 Doug and Maria Senecal, Oak Hill, FL
Great Grandmother: Charlotte Iadisernia, Palmer



Emerson Correa

July 19, 2025

Parents: Corin Przybycien and Luca Correa, Three Rivers
Grandparents: Edward and Lorrie Przybycien, Three Rivers
 Jana and Ivan Correa, Northampton / Florence



Jaxson Alan Cole

June 25, 2025

Parents: Adam and Taylor Cole, Palmer
Grandparents: Alan and Laurie Cole, Palmer
 Dee-Dee Chrusciel, Holiday, FL
 Matt Chrusciel, Reading, PA
Great Grandmother: Theresa Prosperi, Brimfield



Liam Kosnicki

September 3, 2025

Parents: Marcie and Jonathan Kosnicki, Monson
Grandparents: Marc Davignon and Lisa Dube, Chicopee
 John and Pamela Kosnicki, Palmer



Rosemary Eve Simard

April 4, 2025

Parents: Kyle and Julivette Simard, Three Rivers
Grandparents: Ted and Marybeth Simard, Thorndike
 Carmen Ivette Navarro, Indian Orchard



Veterans, volunteers come together to lay wreaths

AGAWAM – On Saturday, Dec. 13, Wreaths Across America Day was celebrated at Agawam Veterans Memorial Cemetery. Agawam is the region's only veterans cemetery.

Volunteers and Veterans organizations from all over Western Massachusetts spent the morning laying wreaths on all the graves at the massive cemetery.

The main sponsors of the event were King Gray

Coach Lines and Six Flags New England, which is up the street from the cemetery.

The event featured ceremonial wreath laying for the six branches of the military as well as the Merchant Marines, Prisoners of War, and the Gold Star Families.

Volunteers are invited to assist with Wreaths Out Day on Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2026 at 8:30 a.m. to collect the wreaths.



Sgt. Mauricio Garcia-Garzon lays a wreath at the Veterans Memorial Cemetery.



The Army wreath is laid.



Kaci Mack prepares to lay a wreath during the opening ceremony.



The cold weather did not dampen the many volunteers who came out help lay wreaths.

Christmas at Hitchcock brings holiday cheer

By Abigail McCoy
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BRIMFIELD – The Hitchcock Free Academy welcomed the holiday season with its fifth annual Christmas at Hitchcock celebration on Saturday, Dec. 13, transforming the historic Main Street building and its grounds into a festive hub of free activities, music, and community giving from 1 to 5 p.m.

The annual event, which is open to the public at no cost, was created as a way to thank the community for its year-round support while offering families a welcoming place to celebrate the season together. This year's festivities expanded on that tradition with the addition of a local toy drive partnership and a full slate of indoor and outdoor activities for all ages.

"This day was really created as a community celebration," said Cindy Skowyra, director of the Hitchcock Free Academy. "It's our way to give back, say thank you, and bring the community together during the holidays."

A new highlight for 2025 was the collaboration with the Brimfield Police Association's toy drive. Rather than collecting toys for a national organization, the effort ensured donations would stay local and directly benefit children in the area.

"The Brimfield Police toy drive joined forces with us this year," Skowyra said. "By combining efforts, we're able to make sure the toys go to local kids, which is really important to us."

Inside the Academy, children and families moved from room to room enjoying hands-on holiday activities. A popular cookie-decorating station invited guests to choose from an array of cookies donated by local bakers and decorate them freely with icing and toppings. Nearby, craft tables offered coloring pages, decorative signs, and seasonal projects designed for a range of ages.

Upstairs, Santa Claus greeted visitors throughout the afternoon, posing for photos as children shared their Christmas wishes. Face painting added splashes of color and creativity, while downstairs game rooms buzzed with activity as kids played, colored, and explored at their own pace.

Outside, the celebration continued with festive firepits offering warmth as guests gathered to roast chestnuts and marshmallows. Pony visits added a touch of country charm, with Phoenix, a 4-H



Willow (left) and Violet (right) Wolfe pose with Santa Claus (Will Feltner).



Lilly Thang and Phoenix the 4-H pony.



Noah Lis performs piano and singing from the top balcony of the academy.

pony, delighting visitors as he met families and posed for photos while Lilly Thang, a 4-H volunteer, helped introduce kids safely to Phoenix the Pony. Penny, Phoenix's owner, also oversaw the popular "make-a-swig" activity, where guests crafted holiday greenery using live greens generously provided by Hollow Brook Farm.

Throughout the afternoon, live music drifted down from the Academy's balcony, where local musicians Noah Lis and Jim Perry performed seasonal favorites, adding to the warm and welcoming atmosphere. Complimentary hot cocoa and coffee were available to keep visitors cozy as they moved between indoor and outdoor activities.

Skowyra, who attended the event for the first time in her role as director, said she was thrilled by the turnout and the spirit of the day.

"It's just about creating a space where people can come, relax, and enjoy being together," she said. "Seeing families move through the building, kids decorating cookies, people warming up by the fire pits... that's what this day is all about."

Christmas at Hitchcock was generously sponsored by Hitchcock Pool Water, with additional support from Superior Plus Propane, Hollow Brook Farm, and Dave Loos of KW Pioneer Valley. Organizers credited the success of the event to community partners, volunteers, and local donors who helped make the celebration possible.

As families bundled up and headed home with crafts, cookies, and holiday smiles, the fifth annual Christmas at Hitchcock once again fulfilled its mission of bringing joy, gratitude, and togetherness to the Brimfield community.



Director Cindy Skowyra stands on the steps of the Hitchcock Free Academy, roaming around the celebration talking to guests.

Community Cupboard now open

MONSON — Monson Community Cupboard abounds in holiday spirit. The cupboard has been open since September 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. If there's a need we will feed," 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. Nobody makes you feel bad about needing help... We are blessed to have them. Karen and team - thank you so much for what you do. It was amazing. The shopping experience is so phenomenal."

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.



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For more information call 283-3330 ext. 100



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Viewpoints

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor

Why won't Social Security give me my benefits?

Dear Rusty:

I called the Social Security office, as well as went with my husband when he went to collect his Social Security. Because I work full-time at about \$800/week, they said I could not file for my Social Security. Yet I seem to read articles all the time about people doing so.

My husband just filed for his benefits and is now collecting them. Out of the two of us, his Social Security will be larger. Please advise me.

ment will continue to grow until you later claim (e.g., after you stop working, or only work part-time), or until you reach 70 years of age. When you later claim, your monthly benefit will be higher and, depending on your longevity, you may recover what you didn't get now because you are working. And that includes both your own SS retirement benefit and any spousal boost you may be entitled to from your husband.

So, my suggestion is this: as long as you are working full time and exceeding Social Security's annual earnings limit, continue to wait to claim your Social Security. Then, when you reach your full retirement age – again, between 66 and 67, depending on the year you were born or if you stop working before that, go ahead and apply for Social Security again.

At that time, your application will be approved, and you will be awarded your own earned SS retirement amount plus any additional amount you may be due as your husband's spouse. To be entitled to a spousal boost from your husband, your own FRA entitlement must be less than 50% of your husband's FRA entitlement. But the amount you get will be reduced if you claim before your full retirement age.

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

Signed: Wanting my Benefits

Dear Wanting my Benefits:

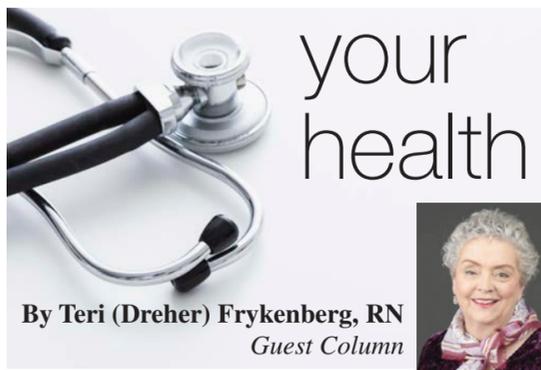
If you have not yet reached your SS Full Retirement Age and you are working full time, you are likely being affected by Social Security's Annual Earnings Test, which limits how much you can earn while collecting Social Security prior to your FRA. Your FRA is somewhere between 66 and 67, depending on when you were born. The annual earnings limit for those collecting SS benefits prior to FRA in 2025 is \$23,400 (changes yearly) and, if that is exceeded, Social Security will take away benefits equal to \$1 for every \$2 you are over the limit. If you applied for your benefits and are still working, and were denied, it's likely because Social Security determined that your current annual earnings considerably exceed the earnings limit and, thus, you cannot collect benefits. That's because the penalty for exceeding the limit would be more than your benefit amount.

FYI, the earnings limit will go away when you reach your full retirement age so, after FRA, you can claim your benefits even if you are still working. Or if you stop working before your FRA you can collect your SS benefits at that time.

None of this means you are losing money, because your monthly SS pay-



Tweaks for a happier, healthier 2026



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

A recently released poll of 2,000 American adults of various ages yielded some interesting insights. Nearly 70 percent of those responding said 2025 was a dumpster fire of one sort or another for them, labeling it okay, bad or even awful.

Yet, hope springs eternal. About a third of the women and nearly half of the men plan to set goals for 2026, such as eating healthier, exercising more and saving more money. (Boomers, by the way, were the least likely to set goals for the new year: 23 percent.)

The poll, conducted by Talker Research on behalf of Talkspace, an online therapy provider, reported that money is one of the biggest barriers to people achieving their goals, along with the state of their mental health and lack of time.

When they fall short of their goals, Gen Z most commonly responds by criticizing themselves or feeling guilty (36 percent), while millennials (42 percent), Gen X (48 percent), and baby boomers (55 percent) all accept failure as part of the process and keep moving forward.

I wish those percentages

were higher.

That said, there are some small goals that don't cost much in time or money that will help you feel and move better in the new year. Some you've heard before, and maybe some will give you food for thought.

And remember: You don't have to do all of them! Concentrate on one new one each month, or just select the ones that resonate with you the most.

Floss every day before going to bed. Our dentists sound like broken records when they remind us that flossing keeps our teeth and gums healthy, and who doesn't want to keep their teeth their whole life? If you're not going to use regular floss, water flossers are an OK substitute.

Get the vaccinations your doctor recommends. It seems like vaccine skeptics are winning over public opinion, but doctors' groups are united in saying that vaccinations save lives and hold down health-care costs.

Get up from your desk for five minutes each hour. This one is kind of easy because you can set reminders on your phone or smartwatch. Some watches even remind you to move without

you asking. While you're up, take some deep breaths and roll your shoulders. Also:

Just move more. The research is incontrovertible: People who exercise 30 minutes a day live longer. That 30 minutes can be broken into 10-minute "exercise snacks."

Forgo eating after dinner. It's estimated that we consume anywhere from 10% to 30% of our daily calories between dinner and bedtime. Over time, this can contribute to weight gain and other unhealthy outcomes. If you need to eat because you're a night owl, have an irregular schedule or are just plain hungry, try for less calorie-dense foods like popcorn, zero-sugar popsicles and fruit.

Connect with others. You could call or send an encouraging note to a friend once a week or once a month, just to say you're thinking about them. I personally have made it a goal to meet more of my neighbors, so I host an easy appetizer potluck every few months. My neighbors love it, and it builds a sense of community as well as defeating isolation.

Make sure to get your recommended health screenings. Mammograms and colonoscopies save lives, too. If you're at risk for lung cancer, get screened for that. If you're a woman over 65, Medicare pays for a bone-density scan every two years. And while you're at it, see a health-care provider at least once a year so you avoid "silent killers" like high blood pressure and diabetes.

Care for your mental and emotional health, too.

HEALTH | page 5

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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.

EDITORIAL

Yes, Virginia, There is a Santa Claus

By Francis P. Church
in 1897

Dear Editor,

I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say that there is no Santa Claus. Papa says "If you see it in the Sun, it is so." Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?

Virginia

Virginia,

Your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except what they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds.

All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is

a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to our life its highest beauty and joy.

Alas! How dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus? You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your Papa to hire men to watch all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove?

Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither chil-

dren nor men can see.

Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders that are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, or even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernatural beauty and glory beyond.

Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else as real and abiding.

No Santa Claus? Thank God he lives and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, maybe 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the hearts of children.



POETRY CORNER

Giving Us Christmas

Hark! We listen for the bells, of winter,
Not to die-out - on the sleigh;
Tho' wheels, and sheet-iron frame the creature,
However you get along your way.

For much was given us to keep going -
Some rich pagan lore out of Germany;
Mistletoe handed down from the romantic Oak,
On yonder British Isles across the sea.

And tho' hungering still along a snowy
Path - it was the Victorian victory:
To give us Christmas as we
Know it, - and the tree.

And we set it midst faiths heartfelt music
And the miracle of still being free.

Charles Barnes

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

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

UPCOMING

WING MEMORIAL HOSPITAL AUXILIARY SHOP 40 Wright St., Palmer

December at the
WALES PUBLIC LIBRARY
Dec 24 & 25: Closed
Dec 29: Book Buddies 11 a.m. Holiday Party
Dec 31: Closed

Dec. 28

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/5df5bb0a520a73636a4b2e808/image/601f5727-4364-60f3-bfc7-4fdd9eb88b80.jpg>

ONGOING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Feeling SAD? There are ways to improve your mood

By **Bonnie Lane, M.S.**
Guest Columnist

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is recognized as a recurring major depressive disorder, typically starting in the fall and winter and spontaneously improving when spring arrives. It's usually associated with less sunlight and shorter days. Some people attribute the symptoms to stress surrounding the winter holidays, but that's more of a seasonal coincidence.

It may look like it, but it's not just the blues.

Individuals with SAD may have difficulties with memory, thought processes and motor abilities. SAD can evolve into something more serious if left untreated, particularly if you already have a diagnosis of a mental health disorder. SAD may occur alongside other disorders such as bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and alcohol use disorder, but it can be a diagnosis by itself.

While anyone can develop SAD, some groups are more prone to it. Seniors with health issues or who live in social isolation are more at risk, and SAD can worsen feelings of isolation. Conversely, se-

niors who live in communities have a lower incidence of SAD because there are social activities to keep them engaged after the sun goes down.

SAD seems to be most prevalent among women, usually showing up in someone's 20s and early 30s.

It's important to understand, though, that SAD is not the same as clinical depression. If your mood was fine all summer but you're starting to feel low as winter approaches, it is likely SAD. If you feel this way all the time, you need to look into treatment for clinical depression.

SAD and depression share many of the same symptoms. Here are some of the most common:

- Changes in eating habits (eating more or not enough)
- Increased alcohol consumption
- Not being able to get out of bed
- Lack of motivation, feeling hopeless and/or helpless
- Problems focusing at work
- Loss of interest in socializing
- Household chores remaining undone (laundry, dishes, etc.)

Current research is fo-

cus on better understanding the underlying biology of SAD and improving long-term treatment strategies. Findings so far indicate that SAD may be caused by changes in brain chemistry or inflammation. Fortunately, treatments are better understood.

One of the most common front-line treatments is bright-light therapy (BLT), also known as phototherapy. It involves exposure to bright light with the use of a light box, which can be purchased at stores or even online for as low as \$150. Getting outdoors in the morning sunlight for about 20 minutes can also help.

It's not completely understood why light therapy seems effective for many people. Researchers think it boosts serotonin, sometimes called the "happy chemical" because it increases feelings of calm, contentment and happiness. Exposure to certain light also has a positive effect on melatonin, a hormone that helps regulate the sleep-wake cycle. Better sleep can ease symptoms of SAD.

Another form of treatment is cognitive-behavioral therapy, which focuses on challenging unhelpful thoughts and beliefs – "nega-

tive self-talk" – and replacing them with positive self-talk. In the case of SAD, the therapy targets "seasonal beliefs" that express negative attitudes about the seasons, light availability and weather conditions. Studies have found that this type of therapy is more effective and longer-lasting than phototherapy.

Almost everyone can feel a little down at some point or another. These feelings may evaporate within a few days. But if they persist or keep recurring, it's time to ask your primary care provider about being screened for SAD. A

physical exam should be part of a screening as well because symptoms can arise for a variety of health reasons related to hormones, medications, or a bacterial or viral infection.

SAD may bring on thoughts like "Everyone would be better off without me." Do not ignore those thoughts. If you or a loved one is in crisis, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. You can also call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988; veterans can reach specialized help at 998, press 1, or text 838255.

When we're feeling SAD

or depressed, it's easy to retreat into feelings of helplessness and hopelessness this fall and winter. Recognizing the symptoms of seasonal affective disorder, and knowing where to turn for help, are the first steps toward a more enjoyable winter season.

Bonnie Lane, M.S., is principal consultant with Family Support Services, specializing in supporting families whose loved ones suffer from severe mental illness or substance use disorder. Contact her at 847-651-1554 or bonnielane@thefamilysupportservices.com.



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Discover how your business can reach new heights at **QVDC.org** or call **413-967-3001**.

HEALTH | from page 4

Give yourself self-compassion and grace in the face of challenges. If you find yourself feeling unusually down, helpless or hopeless, ask to be screened for clinical depression, which is one of the most common mental health disorders – and often goes untreated.

Reduce your exposure to social media. Research indicates that social media use can lead to negative mental

health outcomes, such as increased feelings of anxiety and depression, particularly among those who use it excessively. Algorithms are designed to promote posts that are intended to make you angry. Use your Facebook or Instagram time for taking a walk.

I wish all of you a happy, healthy and productive 2026!

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



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In the classroom

DA's Office 'Adopts' 8th Grade Class at Monson High School

MONSON – The Hampden District Attorney's Office has proudly adopted the 8th grade class at Monson High School, continuing its commitment to civic education and youth engagement across Hampden County.

As part of this year-long partnership, Hampden District Attorney Anthony D. Gulluni visited the school on Wednesday, Dec. 3, meeting with roughly 60 students for an energetic and wide-ranging question-and-answer session. Eighth graders came prepared with thoughtful inquiries about the justice system, including how child-neglect cases are handled, the challenges of unresolved investigations, and what a career in law or public service looks like.

In one moment that drew laughter from teachers and staff, a student asked, "Do

you know anything about being a lawyer?" prompting Gulluni to smile and reply, "I am a lawyer!" The light-hearted exchange set the tone for a conversation focused on accountability, community safety, and the real-world responsibilities of prosecutors.

Throughout the visit, Gulluni emphasized the importance of education, leadership, and informed decision-making. The "Adopt a Class" partnership will include several touchpoints over the school year, introducing students to various roles within the District Attorney's Office and offering opportunities to explore career paths in law, investigations, community outreach, and public service.

"I was really impressed by the thoughtful, insightful questions these students asked," said Gulluni. "Their

genuine curiosity about how the justice system works, along with their interest in issues like child protection and public safety, shows a level of engagement and maturity that is inspiring. It's a privilege to speak with young people who are actively thinking about their futures, their communities, and the role they can play in both."

This visit marks the first of four planned engagements the 8th grade class will have with the Hampden District Attorney's Office. After meeting with the District Attorney, students will next take part in an in-class civics lesson delivered by office staff. The third visit will feature a hands-on mock trial, during which students volunteer to play roles in a real case and "litigate" in a classroom setting. The partnership concludes this spring with a field

trip to the Hampden County Hall of Justice, where students will see the justice system in action and learn about a variety of potential career paths by meeting court offi-

cers, judges, probation staff, and others who work daily to support the courts and the community.

Each year, the Hampden District Attorney's Of-

fice "adopts" three 8th grade classes across the county as part of its broader civics and youth engagement initiatives. Monson is one of this year's three partner schools.



Submitted photo District Attorney Anthony D. Gulluni met with 8th grade students at Monson High School on Dec. 3 as part of the office's Adopt a Class program.



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HAPPY HOLIDAYS
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Think ice and the chips will fly

By T. Baer
Submitted article

With the recent deep freeze, we are off to a good start but we need more of it to produce 8 inches of solid ice, that's what is required to race motorcycles in the winter. That's right, motorcycle racing on "ICE", Yup, you read it right.

Each winter regional motorcycle racers set up their race bikes with ice screws and long fenders in the anticipation of quarter mile oval racing on ice. For years now these events have taken place at the Hamilton Rod & Gun Club pond located on Hamilton Rd. in Sturbridge, Mass. Racers, young and old, from all over New England and New York keep an eye on the website for 'Sturbridge Ice Races' to be aware of the "iffy" schedule. It all depends on what Mother Nature has in store for us, so any weekend

after the first week of January has the potential of racing on the Sturbridge pond. Most races are held on Sundays but

is sometimes changed to a Saturday to beat a the weather.

On race day, the Hamil-

ton Rod & Gun Club opens up their club house with an offering of a hot lunch. The bar is open, they have a good fire

going in the dining room, and restrooms are available. Dress warm and plan on spending the day, you will see racing families with all the kids well equipped on size appropriate machines, teenagers, Moms and Dads and even Grampa getting in on the action. They race mini-cycles, all sizes of dirt bikes, quads, converted street bikes and sidecar rigs.

Ice racing is an exciting sport blending speed with talent and nerve. The racers thrive on it and the spectators love the action. They race short track style with 5 lap heats and finals, classes are set by the racers age, skill and engine size. They are lined up by class, 6 wide and a couple of rows deep, engines revved and the drop of the green flag creates a cloud of ice chips and the full attention of the spectators. The racing is exciting, but relatively safe, riders are well protected and safety rules are followed. There are

many spills and rarely is an ambulance ride necessary. After 3 or 4 heats the track becomes a bowl of ice chips which need to be plowed off before more racing resumes.

The ice screws the racers use are especially made for this purpose, will take about 300 of them to set up both wheels of the motorcycle. They look like self tapping sheet metal screws but the heads are hardened and the outside of the hex head is sharp, this is what bites into the ice. With 4 or 5 screws in each knob of the tire, the traction is incredible, not only will the bike wheelie but it can lean over low enough to drag a foot peg and bring it back to upright. Like I said, "It's exciting."

So don't complain about the cold weather. Take it for what it is and get out and enjoy it, this is New England and "Tis The Season" for ice racing!"



Submitted photo

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Merry Christmas To All of Our Family, Friends & Customers!

Iconic Christmas tree benefits Habitat for Humanity

The season of giving is here and in true community spirit, many will say no one does Christmastime quite like New York City or Habitat for Humanity. Each year, a Norway Spruce is donated, decorated, and displayed outside of Rockefeller Center in Manhattan. After the tree is taken down in the New Year, the trunk is milled into lumber and donated to Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) where it will be used for a future build.

The partnership between Real Estate Company Tishman Speyer, which owns and operates Rockefeller Center, and HFHI formed in 2007. The collaboration inspired "The Carpenter's Gift," by David Rubel, a children's book that follows the journey of a young boy who wished for a decent home and how it comes true in an unexpected way. Books are available for \$10 each at Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity



(GSHFH) by calling (413) 739-5503.

"The heartwarming tale told in 'The Carpenter's Gift' brings together - through beautiful illustrations and a moving, multi-generation story - two great tradi-



tions: the Rockefeller Center tree and the neighbor-helping-neighbor program of Habitat for Humanity," said late President James "Jimmy" Carter in a previous interview. "The tree annually brightens the Christmas sea-

son for millions who see it. Habitat houses brighten the lives of families all over the world - for those who live in them and those who build them."

Since 2007, trees have been harvested from and used

in Mid-Atlantic and New England states, with the exception of the first tree. That spruce came from Connecticut, and its lumber was used in Mississippi.

This year's Norway Spruce hails from East Greenbush, a suburb of Albany, New York. It's 74 feet tall, 45 feet wide, and weighs roughly 11 tons.

The tree is topped with more than 50,000 multi-colored lights and 5 miles of wire wrapped around it. A three-dimensional star, designed by architect Daniel Libeskind in 2018, is perched on top. The star weighs approximately 900 pounds, has 70 spikes, and is covered in 3 million crystals.

"That's so cool," said Trina Winans, Greater Springfield Habitat volunteer and supporter.

GSHFH intern Nate Shlosser agreed.

"That is a very kind and generous thing," he said.

"I'm very thankful for it because it means another family will have the wood needed for a home."

The tree caught Rockefeller Center head gardener Erik Pauze's attention after a picture of the spruce reached him via a Rockefeller Center security supervisor. Erik visited the tree at Judy Russ's family property in East Greenbush.

"As soon as I saw it, I knew it was perfect," Erik said.

Erik returned to the Russ property several times to water and care for the tree.

The spruce arrived at Rockefeller Center on Nov. 8.

The 2025 Rockefeller Center Christmas tree is lit daily from 5am to midnight until mid-January 2026 when it's turned off at 10pm. There are a few exceptions. On Christmas Day, the tree is lit for 24 hours. On New Year's Eve, it is lit from 5am to 9pm.

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.

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 pres-

ent. 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.

Watercolor workshop offered on Jan. 10

MONSON - Monson Arts Council will be sponsoring a watercolor workshop on Jan. 10 from 12 to 4

p.m. in the House of Art 200 Main Street, Monson.

Local Artist Cathy Guidetti will give instruction on

watercolor techniques to create greeting cards.

The workshop is meant for all skill levels. All mate-

rials will be provided.

The cost is \$20. Go to Monson Arts Council website to register.



Friday, Movie Matinee 12:30 p.m. with drinks and popcorn

Jan. 2: Two-time Academy Award winner Meryl Streep, Steve Martin, and Alec Baldwin star in this hilarious look at marriage, divorce, and everything in between. With a thriving Santa Barbara bakeshop, a new romance heating up, and her divorce finally behind her, Jane Adler has her life all figured out - until she finds herself trapped between the perfect new beau and her philandering ex-husband who is determined to win her back. When do opposites attract all over again, will love be sweeter the second time around? It is... complicated!

Palmer Senior Center

Jan. 9: Ticket to Paradise - Academy Award® winners George Clooney and Julia Roberts team up as exes who find themselves on a shared mission: to stop their lovestruck daughter from making the same mistake they once made. Ticket to Paradise is a romantic comedy about the sweet surprise of second chances.

Jan. 23: Hope Floats - Sandra Bullock, Harry Connick, Jr. Life does not turn out quite the way a former prom queen planned, so after her marriage falls apart, she returns to her hometown for another chance at life-and love.

Jan. 30: Lilly - About a courageous factory worker who fights for justice when cheated and mistreated by her company. Based on the life of Lilly Ledbetter.

Upcoming Events (Starting Thursdays in January at 1 p.m. the pool table and cornhole boards will be available for open play. Please grab a friend and come have fun.)

Jan. 5: Candle Holder Craft, Betty Koss will lead this class. \$5 due to sign up. See samples at the center.

Jan. 12: Dinner served at 5 pm. Lasagna by Frigo's. January 14th—Lighted Snowman Jar - Kim Keeton will lead the class, see sample at the center. \$5 due to sign up.

Jan. 16: Memory Café - Ben & Ed Show - see this musical duo perform, songs and have some laughs.

Jan. 21: Lunch & Learn - 5 Wishes - The 5 Wishes is a legal advance directive document used to out-line medical, person-

al, spiritual, and emotional preferences for end-of-life care. It helps people clearly communicate their wishes to family and doctors, so loved ones do not have to guess what you would want if you became incapacitated.

Jan. 26: Quabbin Presentation— Eagles, Loons, and Bears - In the past 50 years our region has seen the return of many woodland animals in part because of the great habitat Quabbin Reservoir Forest creates. This presentation focuses on the history and habitats of some local wildlife. Join us for the first presentation on the Quabbin. This will be a monthly presentation about how the Quabbin was built.

Feb. 23: Intro to Quabbin

Business

Monson Savings Bank proudly donates \$7,500 to Ludlow Boys and Girls Club

MONSON—Monson Savings Bank proudly announced a generous donation of \$7,500 to the Ludlow Boys & Girls Club as part of the Club's 75th Anniversary celebration, reinforcing its commitment to supporting local youth and community programs. The Bank served as a Project Sponsor for this mile-

stone fundraiser.

Monson Savings Bank President & CEO Dan Moriarty presented the donation to Josue Irizarry, President & CEO of the Ludlow Boys & Girls Club, and Cristina Jardine, the Club's Director of Development.

"At Monson Savings Bank, we believe in investing

in the future of our communities," said Dan Moriarty, President & CEO of Monson Savings Bank. "The Ludlow Boys & Girls Club has been a pillar of support for local youth for 75 years, and we are honored to help celebrate this incredible milestone as a Project Sponsor."

Josue Irizarry, President

& CEO of the Ludlow Boys & Girls Club, expressed gratitude for the contribution, "This generous donation from Monson Savings Bank helps us continue to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and teens. Their sponsorship of our 75th Anniversary celebration demonstrates their deep commitment



Submitted photo Monson Savings Bank President & CEO Dan Moriarty presents the donation to Josue Irizarry, President & CEO of the Ludlow Boys and Girls Club, and Cristina Jardine, the Ludlow Boys and Girls Club's Director of Development.

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to the community and the young people we serve."

The Ludlow Boys & Girls Club offers programs that promote academic success, healthy lifestyles, and character development for youth in the community. Monson Savings Bank's donation will help fund these initiatives and ensure continued access to essential services.

For more information about Monson Savings Bank's community involvement, visit <https://www.monsonsavings.bank/>.

Incorporated as a mutually chartered community bank in 1872, Monson Savings Bank has one of the longest tenures of service and stability in its market. Civic leaders chartered the bank with the intent to give working men

and women the opportunity to save, which - incredibly, they could not do prior to the bank's inception. Today, Monson Savings Bank retains its legacy of empowerment through sav-

ings, but has expanded to serve its customers with a variety of innovative financial services, including digital banking, online mortgage applications and business banking, and commercial lending. The bank has expanded on its promise of "where people save, businesses prosper, and communities benefit" by opening offices in Hampden, Wilbraham, Ware, and most recently East Longmeadow, Massachusetts. The bank also opened a retail and business loan operations center in Wilbraham in 2020. Member FDIC, Member DIF, Equal Housing Lender.

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BASKETBALL

Meacham scores 31 in Mustangs win

MONSON – Last Monday night, it was a tough time for the Granby offense as the Rams fell to Monson 46-32. Monson got a huge game from Austin Meacham, who scored more than half the

points for the Mustangs with 31. Granby was led by Zaven Fernandez with 12 points. Anthony Santiago added eight points. Granby would fall to 0-2 on the season while Monson improved to 1-1.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Austin Meacham pushes a bounce pass away.



Above, Jake Beaupre surveys the offensive end. Right, Brennan Peterson avoids a block as he times a shot.



Shane Szado brings in a pass.



Niko Mathieu sends a hook shot away.

FOOTBALL

Marciniec to step down from coaching

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

PALMER – Not very many head coaches or managers ever get to leave on their own terms.

Two Massachusetts high school football coaches coached for the final time on Thanksgiving morning and weren't fired before eating their turkey dinners.

Palmer High School head coach Matt Marciniec walked off historic Legion Field for the final time on the same day following his team's 20-6 victory over rival Ludlow, but with a lot less fanfare.

Marciniec, who graduated from Palmer High School in 2006, is stepping down as the Panthers varsity football coach, but will remain as the athletic director.

Marciniec was selected as the 2024 MSSADA Theodore Damko award winner.

Prior to being named the Panthers varsity football coach in 2019, Marciniec was an assistant coach under former head coach Peter Farr for many years.

"I've been coaching football for the past twenty years and I haven't had very much free time in the fall to spend with my wife," Marciniec said. "I'm probably not done coaching football for the rest of my life, but I'm going to be taking a break from it. I'm going to go home and enjoy my turkey dinner with my family."

Marciniec informed his players of the decision at a meeting on the day before Thanksgiving.

"All of us were a little

BASKETBALL

Panthers out to 1-1 start

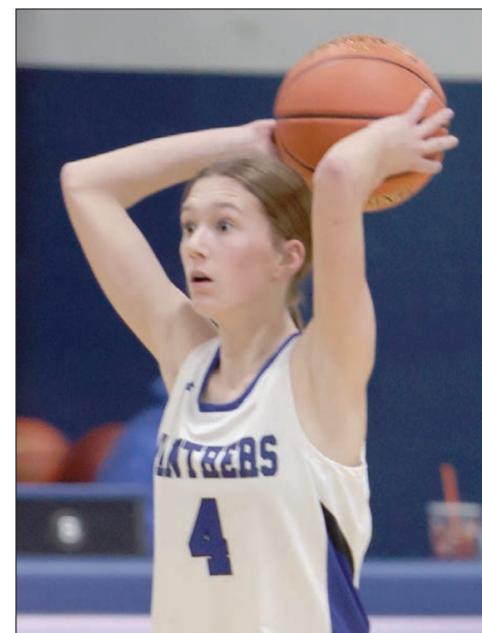
PALMER – Last Tuesday evening, Palmer High School girls basketball fell to visiting Amherst 34-19. The loss follows Palmer's first win of the season, which was a 55-37 triumph over Sci-Tech. With a 1-1 record, the Panthers are next scheduled to face Frontier Regional on Tuesday, Dec. 30 at home at 7 p.m.



Addyson Petrashewicz takes a long jumper.



Harper Brouillette attempts a layup under pressure.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Desiree Croteau winds up for a long pass.



Christiana Reed goes for the loose ball.

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Athlete of the Week



Austin Meacham
Monson High School

Meacham had a huge game for Monson with 31 points in a win over Granby last week.

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

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Rogers recognized by MIAA

FRANKLIN – The MIAA recognized 21 game officials from across the state as the 2024-2025 Game Officials of the Year during a celebratory banquet held Monday, Dec. 15 at the Doubletree Milford.

The MIAA annually recognizes the best game officials from the over 5,000 officials in Massachusetts as nominated by their peers. The following individuals were nominated and ultimately selected as the best in their craft:

Among those recognized was longtime umpire Andrew Rogers from South Hadley. Rogers is also the umpire assignor for Western Mass. high school baseball and multiple adult leagues as well as American Legion summer baseball.

COACHING | from page 9

bit shocked when coach Marciniac told us at a team meeting," said Palmer senior quarterback Matt Santos. "He just loves the game of football, and he's built a very good culture here. It's been very special playing football for him. He just wants you to try your best every day."

While there are 23 players listed on the 2025 Panthers football roster, only 15 players were in uniform for the Ludlow game.

"I'm going to do my best to keep a football team here at Palmer High School next year," Marciniac said. "If we don't have enough players to field a team of our own, I'll find the student-athletes another team to play for as part of a co-op. I just want to give the underclassmen the opportunity to continue playing football."

The Panthers will be graduating eight players from this year's squad, which finished with a 6-5 overall record. They are Dylan Doherty, Hunter White, Kodah Laviolette, Kaleb Hayes, Landon Couture, Gavin Smola, Jared Perry, and Santos.

"It was an honor to play football for coach Marciniac,"

said Doherty, who returned a kickoff 70 yards for a touchdown in his final varsity football game. "He's a very good coach and he's accomplished a lot."

The Palmer assistant coaches this fall were Jason Talbot, Jordan Talbot, Maurice Payne, and Jeff Pardo, who was Panthers starting quarterback in 2018.

The following year, Marciniac posted a 4-7 record during his first season as the Panthers varsity football coach. The four victories were against Smith Vocational (47-0), Mohawk Trail (14-12), Commerce (37-6), and Pathfinder Tech (33-6).

Two years later, Palmer posted a 7-1 regular season record and qualified for the inaugural Division 8 state playoffs.

After defeating the Brighton Bengals, 45-18 in the round of 16 before a large crowd at Legion Field, the Panthers suffered a 16-13 home loss to the Oxford Pirates in the Elite 8.

The seniors on Palmer's 2021 squad were Anthony Ukrainets, Jack Letendre, Brady Goguen, Trey Yesu, Michael Ziemba II, Chance Lee, Ethan Tremblay, Xavier Nava, Trinal Cooper, Robert Burke, Richard Ingrassia, Roman

Cardenales, Logan Fontaine, and Jaden Nava.

"We had a very good football team in 2021," Marciniac said. "I've been fortunate to have coached some outstanding players during the past seven years."

Three of Palmer's victories this fall came against Pathfinder Tech, Ware, and Ludlow.

When the Panthers defeated the Indians, 21-6, on November 1, it was Marciniac's first win in the rivalry series as a varsity football coach

Palmer and Ware are scheduled to face each other for the 100th time at Legion Field next November.

There weren't very many people remaining at Legion Field following this year's Turkey Day game when Marciniac walked across the field to the parking lot for the final time. It was his second win against the Lions.

"It feels awesome to win my final football game as a head coach," Marciniac said. "This is a very special place to me."

While Marciniac will be attending the Panthers home football games at Legion Field next fall, he won't be calling the plays on the sideline.

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BASKETBALL

Offense struggles in second half for Pioneers

SPRINGFIELD – Last Tuesday evening, Pathfinder had a tough time getting on the scoreboard in the third quarter and allowed Pioneer Valley Christian Academy to pull away with a 55-41 loss for the Pioneers. Pathfinder would fall to 0-2 on the season after opening the season with a loss to Westfield Tech. Pathfinder is back in action on Monday, Dec. 29 against St. Mary's High School at 7 p.m.



Above, Dayne Showley goes after the loose ball. Right, Gabe Cardenales tries to overcome a block and shoot.



Angelo Rentas one-hands the ball into the hoop.



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

Aiden Girard makes an inbound pass.



Cassian Kowalik drives toward the hoop.



Cayden Bousquet attempts to get around an opponent.

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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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Light cavalry
- 5. Coconut palms
- 10. Rounded knob
- 14. Central Japan city
- 15. Sandwiches
- 16. Shape produced by a curve
- 17. Ancient region in modern-day Syria
- 18. French modernist painter
- 19. Grandmother
- 20. Mammary gland of cattle
- 22. Rocky peak
- 23. Secret plan
- 24. Songs to one's lover
- 27. More (Spanish)
- 30. Father
- 31. Chinese principle underlying the universe
- 32. Ballplayer's accessory
- 35. Together
- 37. A person's brother or sister

CLUES DOWN

- 38. Evil spirit
- 39. Monetary units
- 40. Partner to cheese
- 41. About Sun
- 42. Group of like-minded people
- 43. After B
- 44. Seaside room
- 45. Recipe measurement
- 46. Partly digested food
- 47. Flat-faced dog
- 48. People of southern Africa
- 49. Salts
- 52. Beard lichens
- 55. Sanders is one
- 56. Fencing sword
- 60. Ethnic group of Albania
- 61. Metric weight unit
- 63. Italian seaport
- 64. Longtime late night host
- 65. Extremely angry
- 66. Miami mascot
- 67. Mid-month day
- 68. Marked for omission
- 69. Body part

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Two-toed sloth
- 2. Fat from a pig's abdomen
- 3. Romanian city
- 4. Specifies
- 5. Rounded, glaciated valley
- 6. Spoke
- 7. Collection of sacred books
- 8. Extravagantly theatrical
- 9. Very fast airplane
- 10. Forearm bones
- 11. Ancient kingdom
- 12. Legitimate: ___ fide
- 13. Semitransparent gemstone
- 21. Counsels
- 23. Head honcho
- 25. Cool!
- 26. Touch lightly
- 27. Extract money via taxation
- 28. Dyes
- 29. Cloying sweetness
- 32. Sodas
- 33. Coastal village in Guam
- 34. Chemical ring
- 36. The bill in a restaurant
- 37. Car mechanics group
- 38. One-time presidential candidate Dole
- 40. Health care for the aged
- 41. Wise persons
- 43. Passage with access at one end
- 44. Make a wound
- 46. America's spies
- 47. Roof of the mouth
- 49. Plants of the lily family
- 50. Pinkish-red color
- 51. Vaccine developer
- 52. Mottled citrus fruit
- 53. A place to store garden tools
- 54. Rare goose native to Hawaii
- 57. Popular Hollywood pig
- 58. Musician Clapton
- 59. A move exposing one to danger
- 61. Historic Spanish soldier
- 62. CNN's founder



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LIGHTS | from page 1

The program was led by Lorraine German, an antiques dealer and Christmas historian with Mad River Antiques in Granby, Connecticut, who traced the origins of the Christmas tree from its early European roots to its rise as a commercial and sentimental centerpiece in American homes.

German, who specializes in Christmas antiques and frequently lectures on the history of ornaments and Santa Claus, returned to the Keep Homestead for the second year. She previously presented a talk on Santa Claus history at the museum, and said she enjoys sharing how everyday holiday traditions are shaped by centuries of cultural change.

The decorated Christmas tree first appeared in German-speaking regions in the early 1600s. Germann cited a 1604 account from Strasbourg describing a fir tree brought indoors and decorated with colored paper roses, apples, wafers, tinsel, and sweetmeats (candied fruits and confections that served both as decoration and dessert).

One of the most enduring legends tied to the Christmas tree involves Martin Luther. According to tradition, Luther was inspired by stars twinkling through evergreen branches on a winter night and sought to recreate the scene for his family by wiring candles to a tree indoors.

While the story cannot be confirmed, German said it captures the symbolic role the tree has played from the beginning: blending light, nature, and celebration.

The tradition spread to England in the early 1800s, helped along by royalty. Queen Charlotte, the German-born wife of King George III, introduced a decorated tree to England in 1800. A guest at the time described

a yew tree adorned with sweetmeats, almonds, raisins, toys, and illuminated by wax candles. By 1832, Princess Victoria, later Queen Victoria, recorded in her diary that her aunt displayed two decorated trees hung with sugar ornaments and surrounded by gifts.

Back in Germany, the popularity of Christmas trees grew so rapidly during the 19th century that concerns over deforestation led to the creation of artificial trees made from dyed goose or swan feathers.

In New England, the Christmas tree is often linked to German immigrants and soldiers. Tradition holds that Hendrick Roddemore, a Hessian soldier captured during the Revolutionary War, introduced the custom while living as a prisoner of war in Connecticut following the 1777 Battle of Bennington. Roddemore reportedly set up a Christmas tree each year for more than a decade in the home where he worked.

By the early 19th century, broader social changes were reshaping Christmas itself. Germann explained that the holiday shifted from a rowdy public celebration to a more family-oriented one during the 1830s and 1840s, coinciding with the rise of Santa Claus in American culture.

Early trees were decorated with toys, fruit, small cakes, and sugar figures. One 1839 newspaper article described a tree "loaded down with books, dolls, soldiers, puzzles, and sweets," reflecting the growing emphasis on children and family gatherings.

As Christmas trees became more popular, commercialization followed. In 1851, Catskills farmer Mark Carr established what is considered the first Christmas tree lot in the United States at Washington Market in New York City. Facing a difficult year financially, Carr brought trees to the city and sold out



The barn was filled with people eager to learn about the history of this Christmas tradition.

Turley photos by Abigail McCoy



While German explains the history of the Christmas Tree she adds decorations that were common during that time period to the tree.

almost immediately. By the 1870s, thousands of trees were being shipped annually from New England and upstate New York.

Decoration shifted dramatically with the rise of glass ornaments from Lauscha, Germany, a village known for glassblowing since the 16th century. Lauscha artisans began producing blown glass balls and molded shapes in the mid-1800s, and their ornaments quickly gained popularity in the United States.

A turning point came in 1880 when Frank W. Woolworth agreed to sell Lauscha ornaments in one of his stores. They sold out within days, and German noted that "shopping for ornaments at Woolworth's became a Christmas tradition of its own."

Victorian-era trees reflected an abundance-driven aesthetic. "The Victorian belief was that too much is never enough," Germann said, as simple food decorations gave way to elaborate store-bought

ornaments.

Germany dominated the ornament market until World War I, when embargoes halted imports. American manufacturers stepped in, producing domestic ornaments that appealed to patriotic sentiment despite lower quality and higher prices. The pattern repeated during World War II, leading to innovations such as transparent glass ornaments and paper-and-string caps due to material shortages.

One of the most prominent American manufacturers was Shiny Brite, founded by Max Eckardt, who anticipated wartime supply disruptions and partnered with Corning Glass Works to produce ornaments domestically.

Before electricity, Christmas trees were lit with candles or oil lamps, creating obvious fire hazards. Various candle clips were developed to keep flames upright, but many homes still suffered fires.

In 1882, Edward Johnson, a friend of Thomas Edison, created the first electrically lit Christmas tree. Electric lights grew in popularity by the early 1900s, though Germann pointed out that early electric decorations were often made from flammable materials like celluloid. Artificial "fireproof" snow made from asbestos was also widely marketed in the early

20th century.

Later innovations included bubble lights, popular in the 1940s and 1950s, which heat up and cause liquid inside to bubble; decorative but dangerous by modern standards.

German closed her talk by discussing the appeal of collecting vintage ornaments. Value, she said, depends on age, condition, and desirability, with pre-World War II ornaments generally commanding the highest prices.

Still, she emphasized that perfection is not necessary for meaning. Many ornaments on her own trees are chipped, repaired, or partially melted from early light bulbs.

"I can't bring myself to throw them away," German said, explaining how she hides damaged areas or creatively repurposes broken pieces.

One sentiment, shared by a longtime friend, resonated with the audience. "Christmas ornaments are memories on a branch," German said, a phrase she credits with capturing the emotional core of holiday decorating.

From handmade paper scraps to mass-produced glass ornaments, German reminded listeners that Christmas trees are not just decorative objects, but living traditions: carrying personal histories, family stories, and centuries of craftsmanship into the present.



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COMMON | from page 1

Lemieux said the tradition has been passed down for generations. "Some of the older members told me their parents were involved back in the early years," he explained. "This has been something the Chamber has been doing for decades... decorating the gazebo, setting up the nativity scene, and spreading as much cheer as we can."

The event opened with a solemn moment earlier in the afternoon, when members of the local AMVETS chapter gathered for a Pearl Harbor remembrance ceremony, laying a wreath at the park in honor of the Hryniewicz family member who was lost aboard the USS Arizona. Though the ceremony concluded before many visitors arrived, Lemieux noted the importance of including the commemoration as part of the day's events.

As dusk approached, volunteers prepared for the evening crowd. Mr. and Mrs. Rondeau set up their station, offering free hot cocoa and their well-known homemade donuts, courtesy of the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Rondeau also planned a live ice-carving demonstration for visitors, a highlight that has become increasingly popular in recent years.

Santa and Mrs. Claus made their entrance at 4 p.m., arriving atop the Three Rivers Fire Department's truck; a moment that drew cheers from children waiting along the common. Lemieux praised the Fire Department for being "gracious and enthusiastic"

partners in making the annual celebration a success. Firefighters also tended the burn barrels stationed throughout the park to keep guests warm during the festivities.

For members of the Three Rivers Fire Department, the evening was more than an assignment, it was a chance to interact with the community they serve. Community liaison Lucas McDiarmand said events like Christmas on the Common are important opportunities for firefighters to meet residents outside of emergency situations.

"This is a great opportunity for our members to be seen, to greet people, and to support the event with our burn barrels," McDiarmand said. "We're always ready to jump on the truck if a call comes in, but we also love having people explore the station or check out the trucks, including our new brush truck."

The event capped off an

already festive week in Palmer. Lemieux noted that the town's holiday calendar has steadily expanded, beginning with the annual Light Up Palmer event held the weekend after Thanksgiving. From the Palmer High School craft fair to the Festival of Trees hosted by the Palmer Historical and Cultural Center, he said Christmas on the Common serves as the closing celebration that bridges one week of holiday activities into the next.

"I love this time of year," Lemieux said. "Light Up Palmer kicks things off, and the Three Rivers Chamber closes out the week. Then the PHCC's Festival of Trees picks up and keeps the festivities going into next weekend. It really becomes a whole holiday season here in Palmer."

As darkness settled over Hryniewicz Park and families gathered around the burn barrels with donuts and cocoa in hand, it was clear the de-

cadec-old tradition continues to bring neighbors together; honoring the past, celebrating the present, and welcoming the holiday spirit into the heart of Three Rivers.



Submitted photo
Mike Rondeau's carved ice sculpture of a decorative wreath.



Submitted photo
Mike Rondeau (left) and volunteers helping man the Rondeau donut and hot chocolate stand.



Submitted photo
Mrs. Claus (Mary Ann Duguay) and Mr. Claus (Roger Duguay) poses with the Three Rivers Fire Department.



Turley photo by Abigail McCoy
The pagoda was decorated by the Three Rivers Chamber of Commerce, an annual tradition.

FUTURE | from page 1

acre main campus. Pre-demolition and environmental assessments are underway, with demolition targeted for summer 2026 through summer 2027.

West Mass stated that its intent is to demolish nearly all existing buildings, with the possible exception of two: the Daly Center, a comparatively modern structure with an auditorium and gymnasium, and the Brookside building near Upper Palmer Road, which may be suitable for adaptive reuse.

"Our goal is not to leave a patchwork of unsafe buildings standing," a West Mass official said. "If we can't take down what needs to come down, then we can't do the project."

Infrastructure and the \$5 Million MassWorks Grant

A major component of the project involves infrastructure that has been unusable since the hospital's closure. Water, sewer, and power were capped more than a decade

ago, and rebuilding those systems will require substantial private investment.

West Mass worked with town officials to secure a \$5 million MassWorks grant for Monson to replace the State Hospital Road bridge and upgrade roadway, water, and sewer infrastructure. The grant would fund approximately 2,000 feet of water and sewer looping and improvements designed to eventually make State Hospital Road a town-accepted public way.

However, speakers cautioned that the grant is contingent on the redevelopment project moving forward.

"If this project doesn't go forward, there's a real possibility that the state could pull that funding back," a West Mass representative said. "The grant is based on the partnership between the town and a private developer."

A Proposed Mixed-Use Vision

West Mass plans to bring a proposed zoning bylaw to the Planning Board, with the goal of advancing it to Town Meeting in May. The zoning

change would reclassify the land from its current "reserve land" designation to a mixed-use district, enabling long-term redevelopment.

Under the conceptual plan outlined at the meeting, the site could include a mix of housing types: three- to four-story apartment buildings for uses such as veterans housing or assisted living; multi-family townhomes; smaller cottage-style homes intended to be more attainable for buyers; and larger estate lots on higher elevations where utility access is more costly.

"One of our goals is to help Monson residents stay in Monson," officials said, noting that smaller homes are scarce in town for seniors or empty nesters looking to downsize.

In addition to housing, West Mass confirmed plans for approximately 120,000 square feet of small-scale commercial, office, and light industrial space, primarily along Hospital Road where utilities would be most accessible. This space could accommodate local tradespeo-

ple, machine shops, and small businesses seeking modern facilities.

"There is a desperate need across Western Massachusetts for buildings under 25,000 square feet," one speaker said. "This is exactly the type of site that could support that kind of local business growth."

Civic and institutional uses are also being explored, including reuse of the Daly Center and Brookside building. Brookside, in particular, has been discussed as a potential location for veterans or senior housing with on-site support services.

Local Control vs. State Control

Perhaps the most pointed portion of the presentation centered on what could happen if the zoning change fails.

West Mass officials explained that their agreement with the state includes a reversion clause. If zoning approval, demolition funding, or a viable development path cannot be secured, West Mass could return the property to the state.

"If we don't have zoning

that allows us to move forward, we can't take on a project of this magnitude," one official said. "That's just the reality."

If the property were returned, speakers warned that the state could redevelop the land under the Mass Affordable Homes Act using state-led processes that may bypass local zoning for housing development.

"That means the state could come in and build whatever it deems necessary, with far less local input," the presenter said. "This isn't a threat. It's a fact."

By contrast, locally adopted zoning would keep Monson "in the driver's seat," allowing the town to shape scale, density, and permitted uses through Planning Board review, special permits, and site plan approval.

Community Questions and Ongoing Dialogue

During a lengthy question-and-answer session, residents raised concerns about housing density, traffic, sewer capacity, commercial opportunities, bridge access, and

long-term infrastructure maintenance. West Mass representatives repeatedly emphasized that detailed studies, covering: traffic, public safety, schools, utilities, and environmental impacts, would be required before any construction begins.

Planning Board member Craig Sweitzer reminded attendees that zoning approval is only the first step.

"There are multiple layers of review," he said. "Nothing is automatic, and there will be opportunities for public input throughout the process."

West Mass closed the meeting by reiterating its commitment to collaboration and long-term engagement.

"We're not here to disrupt the fabric of Monson," a representative said. "If we do this project, we're here for the next 20 years as neighbors. We want the town to be proud of what happens here."

The proposed zoning bylaw is expected to be presented to the Planning Board in the coming months, with a Town Meeting vote anticipated in May.

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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 **Friday, Dec. 26 at 3 p.m.**

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Public notices

Monson Conservation Commission LEGAL NOTICE
 Under the requirements of M.G.L. Chapter 131 §40, the Monson Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, January 7, 2026 at 7:05 PM** in the Large Meeting Room, Town Office Building, 110 Main St. Under consideration is a **Request for Determination of Applicability** to determine if the work associated with the removal of 14 trees within the buffer zone of a Bordering Vegetative Wetland for the property located at 221 Munn Road, identified as Assessor's Map 175A, Parcel 009, is subject to the Wetlands Protection Act. The applicant is Nathan Paulhus.
 Monson Conservation Commission
 12/25/2025
PALMER PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 40A, sections 9 & 11 M.G.L., the Planning Board will hold a public hearing on **Monday, January 12th, 2026, at 7:00 PM** in the Police Department Meeting Room, 4419 Main Street, Palmer, MA. The applicant, Crimmins Graveline Insurance, is seeking a Special Permit as required by §171.94(B)13 to display a sign larger than permitted by the Ordinance in the Village Center 1 Zoning District, located on the property at 1010 Thorndike Street, Palmer. This parcel is also known as Assessors Map 57, Lot 70.
 A copy of the application may be inspected at the Planning Department office in the Town Administration Building from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Thursday.
 Anyone interested in more information or wishing to be heard on the application can contact the Planning Department at 413-283-2605 or appear at the time

and place designated above.
 This notice shall also be posted on the Massachusetts Newspaper Publishers Association's (MNPA) website (<http://masspublicnotices.org>).
 Norman Czech, Chairman
 12/25/2025, 01/01/2026
Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Division Docket No. HD25P1079EA Estate of: Norman Joseph Lloyd Also Known As: Norman J. Lloyd, Sr. Date of Death: 03/10/2025 INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE
 To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petitioner **Tracey Applebee-Cole of Palmer, MA** a Will has been admitted to informal probate.
Tracey Applebee-Cole of

Palmer, MA has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.
 The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.
 12/25/2025

Obituaries

Julie Ann Hayes

Julie Ann Hayes, 71, passed away Dec. 15, 2025. She was born on July 22, 1954 in Palmer, Massachusetts. Julie was predeceased by her parents, Robert and Julia (Wachta) Hayes; brothers, Patrick, Robert and Ronald Hayes; and her sister Joan Cole. She is survived by her sisters, Jean (Hayes) Barry of Southamptn, Mass and Margot Huber of Hartwell, GA.

There will not be any calling hours. A funeral mass will be held on Monday, April 13, 2026 at 10 a.m. at Divine Mercy Parish in Three Rivers, Mass. Burial will immediately follow in St. Peter and Paul Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations in Julie's memory can be made to Shriners Children's Hospital by visiting www.shrinerschildrens.org.

Thomas Edward Burzynski, Jr.

BONDVILLE – Thomas Edward Burzynski, Jr., 73, passed away December 15, 2025. He was born on August 16, 1952 in Springfield to the late Thomas Burzynski and Helen (Grabowski) Soucy. Tom attended Cathedral High School in Springfield where he was co-captain of the gymnastics team, graduating in 1970. He went on to study civil engineering at STCC.



He was preceded in death by his niece Holly Veshia Linnehan. He will be dearly missed by his sister, Marcia Ann Burzynski Lukon of South Kingstown, RI, and her son, Joshua Veshia; brother Mark Burzynski and wife Cindy of Southbury, CT, and their children, Hannah McCullar, Ian Burzynski, and Jackson Burzynski; his great-nephew and great-nieces, Phillip Linnehan, and Ava and Eliza McCullar; as well as many cousins including Edmund Grabowski and Francis Sypek with whom he held a special bond.

Tom worked as a surveyor for the town of Wilbraham for many years before his retirement and was a member of the St. Mary's Polish Club in Bondsville. Tom was a free spirit and lived life on his own terms. He loved music and enjoyed attending music festivals where he was at his happiest. He also enjoyed fishing, water skiing, and socializing with his friends.
 Besides his parents, Tom

Services are being held privately. Tom will be laid to rest in St. Mary's Cemetery in Westfield alongside his loving family who have gone before him. In lieu of flowers, donations in Tom's memory can be made to the Quaboag & Quacumquasit Lake Association by visiting QQLA.org.

BUSINESS

Turley Publications is liberal with regard to its business coverage policies, but we do have some standards folks need to understand. First, local businesses and merchants are just as much institutions in our towns as the library and schools. Without them, there are no towns.
 We will feature coverage of local businesses that are new, have a major expansion, moving, closing, under new management or ownership, celebrating a milestone anniversary, or have been thrust into the news realm. Merchants can request that coverage through the editor, or for our existing advertising clients, through their ad representatives.
 For more information on business coverage for The Journal Register, please email journalregister@turley.com.

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DEATH NOTICES

Julie Ann Hayes
 Died Dec. 15, 2025
 Service April 13, 2026
 Beers & Story Funeral Home

Thomas Edward Burzynski, Jr.
 Died Dec. 15, 2025
 Services private

Job Connection

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Please email or mail your resume and cover letter to the Town Administrator, Jim Ferrera, townadministrator@warren-ma.gov or by mail to 48 High Street, P.O. Box 609, Warren, MA 01083.

Salary range is negotiable from \$60,000 to \$64,500 and is based on relevant work experience, certifications, and educational background. Position open until filled, with a first look at resumes starting on December 22, 2025.

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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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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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GRINCH | from page 1

ery regularly hosts live music every weekend and themed events throughout the year.

The fundraiser for Happy Life Beagle Rescue also carried personal significance for Rosenbloom, who adopted her own beagle through the organization. She said partnering with the rescue was a natural fit and a meaningful way to give back while encouraging others to learn more about adoption and animal welfare.

Happy Life Beagle Rescue volunteer and foster Laurie Holland attended the event with her dog, Harry, who was also adopted through the res-

cue. Holland explained that while many of the organization's volunteers are based in the Boston area, a small group of supporters is spread throughout Central and Western Massachusetts, making events like the one in Palmer especially valuable.

"We try to do events around Massachusetts to reach more people," Holland said. "It's great that Rachel is willing to help us out and support the rescue."

Holland added that community partnerships play an important role in raising awareness for Happy Life Beagle Rescue's mission, which focuses on rescuing, rehabilitating, and rehoming beagles in need. Events host-

ed by local businesses not only help generate donations but also introduce potential adopters and volunteers to the organization.

As dogs posed patiently, or enthusiastically, with the Grinch, the afternoon blended holiday cheer with a cause close to many attendees' hearts. The Dec. 7 fundraiser highlighted how local businesses and nonprofit organizations can work together to support animal rescue while offering the community a memorable and lighthearted way to give back.

Turley photo by Abigail McCoy
Laurie Holland's beagle, Harry, sits very politely on the Grinch's lap.



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 1st floor.

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