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# The Journal Register

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**WEATHER**

## First storms brush through towns

*Officials say no major problems result*

By Wyatt Aloisio  
 Staff Writer

REGION — Just a week before Christmas and New England has brought its first gift to residents in the region in the form of the first real snowfall of the season.

Over the weekend and throughout the day on Saturday, Dec. 9 near-

ly six inches of snowfall descended upon area towns with further light snowfall and rain ensuing just days later on Tuesday morning.

Monson Highway Superintendent John Morrell said while historically the first snowfalls of the season have often been difficult, this time the department was well prepared for the two storms and had little difficulty clearing away the snow from the roadways.

“We were lucky,” said Morrell. “We usually have a piece of equip-

ment break down during the first storm but we had no break downs this time.”

Apart from spot sanding and clearing away snow from the sidewalks come Monday Morrell said that the winter weather was a tame encounter for the town. He said the department was continuing to prepare itself for other storms later in the season.

Palmer Department of Public Works Director Gerry Skowronek reported similar circumstances and

said while warm conditions made for wet and sticky snow that was difficult to remove from the roadways, once the department had time to treat the roadways they were clear and ready for travel.

“Once we had time to get the salt down on the roads we had a much easier time getting things cleaned up,” said Skowronek.

Skowronek added that the storms provided learning opportuni-

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A series of winter storms brought snow to the region over the past several days but presented only minor challenges for municipalities in the local area.

Turley Publications staff photo by Wyatt Aloisio

**PLANNING BOARD**

## Palmer pit rejection appealed

*Developer: Board exceeded authority*

By Douglas Farmer  
 Staff Writer

PALMER — A developer hoping to conduct an earth removal operation off Robinson Road in Palmer has appealed the Palmer Planning Board’s denial of a special permit for the project to Hampden County Superior Court.

The developer, RB Enterprises, owned by Ray Breton and his family, submitted plans earlier this year encompassing 184 acres, including about 72 acres that would be disturbed for the excavation of earth materials. The project was expected to extract about 125,000 cubic yards of material annually.

But Planning Board members and neighbors balked after an access road was initially proposed to Robinson Road, a windy, scenic road, and then to Route 67, where the project did not have required frontage, according to regulations.

The board voted 4-0 last month (with member Thomas Skowyra recusing himself after missing multiple hearings) to deny a special permit for either the access road or the operation itself.

But in a civil complaint delivered to Palmer Town Clerk Susan Coache on Wednesday, Dec. 6, attorney Mark A. Tanner, of the firm Bacon Wilson P.C. in Northampton, said the board failed to consider information filed by his client and made decisions based on considerations beyond its normal purview. Palmer Town Planner Linda Leduc said the matter has been referred to the board’s counsel at the firm Mirick O’Connell.

“If the court remands this decision back to the town, we could just be back where we were, but that remains to be seen,” Leduc said.

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**HOLIDAY TIME**

# Pancakes and Santa...



Molly Walker, 5, of Three Rivers, chats with Santa as Mrs. Claus listens at the Three Rivers Fire Station on Sunday.

Turley Publications staff photos by Douglas Farmer

THREE RIVERS — The annual Breakfast with Santa was deemed a holiday success by the Three Rivers Firefighter’s Association Ladies Auxiliary on Sunday, Dec. 10, as locals streamed in all morning.

The Auxiliary collected money for raffle tickets and prepared pancakes and sausage for those seated in the fire station. And the youngsters got a chance to meet with Santa and Mrs. Claus as well.

The annual event serves as a fundraiser for the Auxiliary, which supports the Three Rivers Fire Department and conducts its own charitable work in the town. The Auxiliary was assisted in the event by the firefighters themselves as well as the Boy Scouts.

It was estimated that nearly 100 local residents attended the breakfast.

“We think that people had just gotten through shoveling snow and didn’t feel like cooking so they came here,” said Auxiliary member Patti Matthieu. “It really worked out for us.”



Bonnie Lafayette takes care of the grill as residents arrive at the fire station on Dec. 10.



Three Rivers Firefighter’s Association Ladies Auxiliary member Sharon Lemieux gets in the holiday spirit as she serves up food during the Breakfast with Santa.

**SCULPTURE**

## Frozen in gratitude

*Rondeau carves yearly project*

By Douglas Farmer  
 Staff Writer

PALMER — Michael Rondeau, of Palmer, has learned to express the warmest feelings he has in a very cold medium: ice.



This frozen message produced by Palmer ice sculptor Michael Rondeau expressed his appreciation for the treatment he received at the Sister Caritas Cancer Center.

Turley Publications file photo

Rondeau, an accomplished ice sculptor for many years, annually uses the front lawn of his family’s property at 1071 Central St. in Palmer to create a wintry image for pass-

ersby and visitors to enjoy both in the creation and its final crystallized glory. This he will do again in the af-

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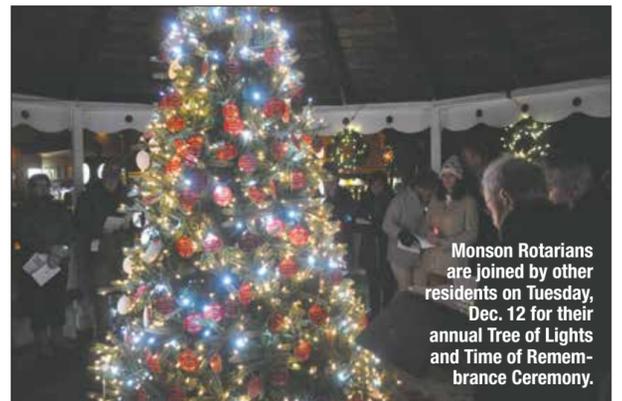
**HOLIDAY TIME**

## Rotarians, singers light up night

By Wyatt Aloisio  
 Staff Writer

MONSON — Braving rainy and cold weather on Tuesday, Dec. 12 a group of dedicated Rotarians and their fellow residents came together to pay their respects to those no longer able to enjoy the holidays with their friends and family in Monson.

Convening at the Dave Grieve Park gazebo in downtown Monson, members of the Monson Rotary Club hosted their annual Tree of Lights and Time of Remembrance Ceremony.



Monson Rotarians are joined by other residents on Tuesday, Dec. 12 for their annual Tree of Lights and Time of Remembrance Ceremony.

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**MONSON**

## Solar construction temporarily halted

*Building officials cite development concerns*

By Wyatt Aloisio  
 Staff Writer

MONSON — Several days after beginning their renovation of a property at 53 Wilbraham Road to construct an 11.5-acre commercial solar array, solar Development companies ZPT Energy Solutions and Pro-Tech Energy Solutions have been ordered to halt their project.

The move to halt the project’s construction, less than a month after the developers entered into agreement with the town and the Monson Board of Selectmen, comes following an investigation conducted by Monson Building Commissioner John JJ Moran Sr. He ordered ZPT and Pro-Tech to temporarily cease all operations, citing concerns including site preparation and erosion control; equipment staging; and the logging occurring on the property.

In a letter dated Friday, Dec. 8 sent to Kenneth LaCourse of Pro-Tech Energy Solutions, Moran wrote that following daily inspections he conducted as well as complaints from neighbors, the project appears to no longer be in compliance with the schedule of work in the project application.

Though a building permit for the project has yet to be issued, preliminary logging and site clearing was allowed by the town and state as a pre-requisite to make room for the solar arrays to be placed there.

“It appears as though your activities may have exceeded the scope of the logging activities in such a manner that would require the issuance of a Building Permit, as the scope of the activities appear to be contained in Phase 1 of the General Sequence of Events dated October 11, 2016 that was submitted with the

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# SPORTS

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**GIRLS BASKETBALL**

## Lady Indians roll past Pathfinder

By Dave Forbes  
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WARE – Through the first couple weeks of practice, new Ware girls varsity head coach Dan Orszulak has been stressing the importance of hard work and effort.

Both of those things were on display in the Lady Indians season-opening contest against Pathfinder at home on Friday night.

“I have been telling the girls that I just want them to work hard and give as much effort as they can when they are out on the floor,” Orszulak said. “If they do that, then I will be very proud of them. I liked our effort and compete level tonight.”

One player that stood out in the opener for the Lady Indians was junior forward Shelby Tweedie. She finished with a career night on offense as she tied for the team-high with 17 points, including nine of them coming on plays where she scored the basket and converted the



Staff photos by Dave Forbes  
Pathfinder guard Jocelyn Wells (2) eyes the basket before taking her shot.



Pathfinder's Trista Daley (55) spots up for a 3-pointer.

added free throw on each occasion. “She played a great game,” Orszulak said. “If we can get scoring like that from players like her and others throughout the season, then that will be a big help on the offensive end.”

The starting five from the Lady Indians scored 52 of the team's 61 points. Besides the 17 from Tweedie, senior guard Jordan Halgas also finished with a game-high 17 points with that coming in the first half. Freshman guard Aidyn Welsh, who is her first full season with the varsity program, knocked down three 3-pointers as she finished in double figures with 12 points. Shannon Demers, who had four points, had some other big contributions as she made some nice interior passes to teammates to help set them up for good looks at the basket. Point guard Natasha Sawabi had two points. The Lady Indians also got some

**CLASSIC**

## Mustangs ready to battle for tourney spot

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent



Ben Malo (1) goes to the basket for a layup.

MONSON - Despite losing several players to graduation, including a 1,000-point scorer, the outlook for the 2017-2018 Monson boys varsity basketball team looks very promising.

The Mustangs, who posted a 13-11 overall record a year ago, lost to Hopkins Academy in the Western Mass Division 4 finals at the historic Curry Hicks Cage for the second time in the past three years.

“We’re looking for the returning players to make their own mark,” said fourth-year Monson head coach Joe Trivisonno. “Everyone has been working very hard so far and we’re hoping to qualify for the postseason tournament again.”

The five former Mustangs players, who received their high school diplomas last June, are Cameron Johnson, Antonio Orciari, Mike Tringhese, Branden Mead, and Bahu Wadud, who finished his outstanding varsity basketball career with 1,019 points.

“Bahu was a huge contributor for us offensively and losing him is a very big loss,” Trivisonno said. “However, I think we’ll be a more balanced team offensively this year. We’ll be able to do multiple things on offense.”

In the history of the Monson boys varsity basketball team, Wadud, Johnson, and Tringhese are the only players to play in two Western Mass. championship games.

Senior guard Peter Miller, senior forward Dylan Gunther, senior forward Alex Merrigan, junior forward Jadon Messina, junior guard Chris Sisco, and sophomore guard Logan Gerry are hoping to accomplish the same feat this season.

The only other senior listed the Mustangs varsity basketball roster is guard Ben Malo, who's a first-year member of the varsity team.

“We’re looking for leadership from all four of our seniors,” Trivisonno said. “All of them are very important players for us.”

Rounding out the varsity basketball roster are: junior forward Cam Kratovil, junior forward Ryan Nodell, junior forward Bobby McCray, and sophomore guard Max Valencourt.

The Mustangs, who'll be playing a very challenging non-league slate in December, began the regular season with a 65-56 home victory over the Lee Wildcats, last Friday night.

Sisco, who was the Mustangs second-leading scorer a year ago, netted a career-high 28 points in the season opening victory versus

the Wildcats. His previous career-high was 23 points in a road win at Ware last February. Sisco also made a pair of 3-pointers against Lee giving him a total of 75 for his varsity career.

“Everyone knows that Chris can shoot the ball from the outside very well,” Trivisonno said. “He has expanded his game during the offseason and he's not just a three-point shooter.”

Gunther also scored a career-high 14 points, while Gerry made a total of nine free throws and a field goal giving him 11 points.

Gerry is replacing Wadud as the Mustangs point guard.

“Logan is only a sophomore, but he'll be the captain of our ship this year,” Trivisonno said. “He was a member of the jayvee team as an eighth-grader and this will be his second year on the varsity team. He definitely has big shoes to fill.”

Kratovil, who was a key member of the Mustangs golf team, which captured the Western Mass. Division 2 title in October, scored seven points in the season opener.

Both Sisco and Gerry will have the opportunity to join the elite 1,000-point club before their varsity careers come to an end.

Monson is scheduled to wrap-up the 2017 portion of the schedule by playing four out of five non-league games on the road. The Mustangs only home game during that stretch is against Hopkins on Dec. 22.

“We haven't faced Hopkins during the regular season since I've been coaching here,” Trivisonno said. “We're really looking forward to that one. It should be a very good basketball game.”

Prior to the rematch against Hopkins, the Mustangs are slated to play two road games against East Longmeadow (Dec. 13), who's a Division 1 team, and Frontier (Dec. 19), who's a Division 3 team.

They'll also be competing in a two-day tournament in New Jersey during the Christmas break.

“We do have a very challenging December schedule,” Trivisonno said. “It's certainly going to test us heading into our league schedule in January, which is a very good thing.”

The Mustangs, who have won four league titles since 1981, are now members of the Bi-County West Division, along with Ware, Renaissance, Granby, and Southwick.

Monson, who beat Granby twice during the regular season a year ago, also squeaked



Photos by David Henry sweetdogphotos.com  
Peter Miller (2) eyes the basket as he goes up for a shot.



Logan Gerry (31) shoots a long range jumper.

**BASKETBALL**

## Lady Mustangs look to return to Cage

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

MONSON - One of the goals for every high school basketball team in Western Massachusetts is to play in the District semifinals and finals, which are annually held at the historic Curry Hicks Cage located on the UMass-Amherst campus.

The Monson Lady Mustangs have played four games at the Cage since 2014. The returning varsity players are hoping to make another trip there in March.

“Playing at the Cage is the ultimate goal for every high school basketball team in Western Mass.,” said Monson girls varsity basketball coach Tim Pascale. “It's a very special place to play a basketball game because of the atmosphere. In order for us to get back there again this year, we just need to play hard in every game during the regular season.”

The Lady Mustangs, who finished the 2016-2017 regular season with a 10-10 record, lost to Lee, 51-49, in overtime in a Division 4 semifinal game at the Cage.

In 2015, the Lady Mustangs defeated Pioneer in the semifinals before losing to the Quaboag Lady Cougars in the Western Mass. Division 4 championship game. They also lost to the Lady Cougars in the 2014 semifinals.

The overtime loss to Lee last March was the final high school basketball game for Madison Gerry, Liz Tyburski, Cassidy Bailey,

Somer Bren and Bee Murphy, who graduated last June.

None of them are playing for a college basketball team this winter, but Bren was a member of the women's volleyball team at Westfield State University and Murphy was a member of the Albany University women's soccer team this past fall.

There are six returning players and six newcomers listed on this year's Lady Mustangs varsity roster.

“We do have six returning players, who already know my coaching style,” Pascale said. “We also have six first-year varsity players, who are trying to learn my system.”

The three Lady Mustangs seniors are Shannon Jalbert, Lily Fabian, and Amanda Hulbert, who are all returning varsity players.

“We'll be looking for our three seniors to provide leadership on and off the court,” Pascale added. “Shannon and Lily are both guards and they'll be running the show offensively. Amanda is both a guard and a small forward. She'll be a pretty good outside shooter for us.”

The members of junior class on the girls varsity basketball team are Katelyn Santos, Hannah Garon, Katie Burnham, Mackenzie DeVries and Katie Dold.

Rounding out the varsity team are: sophomores Mia Krupczak, Alivia Skowrya, Kelsey Duggan and freshman Sydney DeVries.



Photo by David Henry sweetdogphotos.com  
Alivia Skowrya (3) dribbles the ball up the floor.

**SWIMMING**

## Monson splits with Eagles

By Dave Forbes  
dforbes@turley.com

EASTHAMPTON - The Monson boys and girls swim teams kicked off their new season with a trip up to Williston Academy to face off with Easthampton on Friday night.

The two schools settled for a split with Monson winning the boys meet, 54-26, while Easthampton came out on top for the girls, 126-56.

For the Monson boys, Mike Plante was a double individual winner in the 200-yard freestyle (2 minutes, 15.51 seconds) and the 500-yard freestyle (6:14.81), as was Zackery Wysk in the 100-yard freestyle

(1:04.83) and the 100-yard backstroke (1:17.41).

Tyler Richardson also placed first in diving with a score of 138.7 points.

The Mustangs also took first in the 200-yard medley relay (Wysk, Nathan Bruneau, Plante and Richardson with a time of 2:23.48), and the 200-yard freestyle relay (Wysk, Bruneau, Richardson and Plante) with a time of 2:10.25.

On the girls side, Katherine Roberts had the only first-place finish for the Lady Mustangs as she did so in the 100-yard freestyle at 1:06.58.