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PALMER

PHS reflects on a year of growth and resilience

By Abigail McCoy
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PALMER – As the 2025-2026 school year continues, Palmer High School Principal Susan North says the year has been defined by resilience, renewed focus, and a strong sense of community, following a difficult start and a series of meaningful academic and cultural accomplishments.

The school year began under challenging circumstances with the loss of a beloved faculty member, Paul Holloway, an event that deeply affected both students and staff.

“The start of the year was pretty rough for us,” North said. “We had the loss of one of our beloved faculty members... that was

really hard for students and faculty.”

Despite the difficult beginning, North said the school community came together and began to move forward. As the fall progressed, Palmer High School saw a return to positive momentum, highlighted by events that reinforced school spirit, student engagement, and academic success.

One such event was the school’s Veterans Day ceremony, which North described as “wonderful,” noting it as a meaningful opportunity for students to honor service members while fostering reflection and respect.

This year, the district introduced five core values:

PHS | page 8



Turley photo by Abigail McCoy

Some of the beanies students can pick from if they win the perfect attendance drawing.

MONSON

Rotary to revive citizen award

By Abigail McCoy
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MONSON – The Monson Select Board met Tuesday, Jan. 13, to address a wide-ranging agenda that included the revival of a long-dormant community award, several board and committee appointments, continued debate over Memorial Hall rental fees, and responses to Open Meeting Law complaints.

Citizen of the Year award to be revived

During public comment, longtime resident and former honoree Peter Matrow of 15 Green Street announced that a group of seven past recipients is working to revive the Monson Citizen of the Year award, which had been presented by the Rotary Club from 1985 until the club dissolved in 2019.

“We all know that there are several people in this town, citizens who’ve been around for quite a while, who have done some fantastic things,” Matrow told the board. “They should be recognized for doing so.”

Matrow explained that the group has established formal criteria and a nomination process and has begun reaching out to local nonprofit organizations. Nominations may be submitted by email at monsoncitizen@icloud.com or by mail to Monson Citizen of the Year, 15 Green Street, Monson, MA. The annual

AWARD | page 7

MONSON



Turley photo by Abigail McCoy

Assistant District Attorney Elizabeth Simonian (left), Deputy Director of the Hampden District Attorney’s Community Safety and Outreach Unit Gina Anselmo (center), and Director of the Community Safety and Outreach Unit Tony Simmons (right).

DA’s Office brings Bill of Rights lesson to MHS eighth graders

By Abigail McCoy
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MONSON – Eighth grade students at Monson High School received a hands-on civics lesson Thursday morning as part of the Hampden County District Attorney’s Office Adopt-a-Class program, a yearlong initiative designed to connect students with the criminal justice system and deepen their understanding of constitutional rights.

Monson High School is one of three schools selected this year to participate in the program, alongside Minnechaug Regional High School, Legacy Academy, and Birchland Park Middle School. The Jan. 15 visit

marked the second of four planned interactions between the district attorney’s office and Monson’s eighth grade class.

During the visit, an assistant district attorney led a classroom presentation focused on the Bill of Rights, tying the first 10 amendments of the U.S. Constitution directly to the work of prosecutors and the justice system. The lesson aligned with the students’ current social studies curriculum and emphasized amendments frequently encountered in court, including freedom of speech, protections against illegal search and seizure, the right against self-incrimination, and safeguards related to excessive bail.

“This is the second visit in the Adopt-a-Class program, where we bring an assistant district attorney to talk about civics, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights...how it plays a part in our community and especially in the court system and the criminal justice system,” said Gina Anselmo, Deputy Director of the Hampden District Attorney’s Community Safety and Outreach Unit. “They get to see how these rights are practiced every day in the courthouse.”

Anselmo explained that the Adopt-a-Class program spans nearly the entire school year and is designed to build understanding step

LESSON | page 14

PALMER

Ben & Ed bring music, laughter to Memory Café

By Abigail McCoy
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PALMER – The Jan. 16 Memory Café at the Palmer Senior Center welcomed the return of the Ben & Ed Show, a musical duo known for blending classic songs, light-hearted humor and heartfelt connection into a lively variety performance that resonated deeply with the audience.

Ed Roseman, who plays guitar and clarinet, and Ben Monkaba, the group’s lead vocalist and percussionist, have been performing together for approximately seven and a half years. Both musicians live in Western Massachusetts, Roseman in Hadley and Monkaba in South Hadley, and what began as local performances has gradually expanded into a wider regional presence. Today, the duo performs throughout Western Massachusetts and occasionally into the Hartford area, though Roseman notes they prefer to stay closer to home when possible.

“We call it a musical variety show,” Roseman said, explaining that their performances are carefully tailored to their audiences. “Our bread and butter is playing for seniors, so we tend to do music that appeals to seniors. We



Turley photo by Abigail McCoy

Zack Danziger (left), owner of Empathy Music Productions, joins Ben Monkaba (center) and Ed Roseman (right) as backing instrumentals on his guitar.

don’t do anything after the early ’70s. We do a lot from the 1940s on, but we also go back farther into American history and do some very old songs.”

The Palmer Senior Center is a familiar venue for the duo, who have performed there several times in the past. Their repertoire reflects decades of American music, with an emphasis on sing-alongs, well-known classics and humorous moments that invite participation and spark

memories.

In addition to senior centers, Ben & Ed regularly perform at special needs day centers, a part of their work that Roseman described as especially meaningful. The duo currently plays at six or seven such centers, creating opportunities for shared joy and connection.

“It’s very special because Ben gets to perform for his peers, and they get to see Ben shining,” Roseman said. “That’s very inspiring for

them... and for us.”

Monkaba, who describes himself as the heart of the group, said his favorite part of performing is watching audiences respond to the music.

“I love performing with Ed, and I love having fun,” Monkaba said. “My favorite part is performing songs and watching people’s faces light up with happiness, joy and everything. That’s what I enjoy the most.”

MUSIC | page 13

MONSON

Watercolor workshop at Monson Arts Council

By Abigail McCoy
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MONSON – A watercolor workshop hosted on Saturday, Jan 10, by the Monson Arts Council recently brought artists of all experience levels together for a hands-on afternoon of learning, experimentation, and creative encouragement, led by longtime watercolor artist and instructor Cathy Guidetti.

Guidetti was introduced to participants as both an accomplished artist and an enthusiastic teacher with a deep appreciation for the creative process. A native of Huntington, Massachusetts, Guidetti has worked in a wide range of artistic mediums over the years, including oil, acrylic, scratchboard, pen and ink, and watercolor. Although watercolor is now her primary medium, she told participants that her relationship with it did not begin easily.

Guidetti shared that she initially disliked watercolor, finding it frustrating and unpredictable. Early attempts left her discouraged, and at one point she

admitted to abandoning the medium altogether. It was only after receiving proper instruction, and investing in quality materials, that her perspective changed. With guidance from experienced artists and exposure to professional-grade paper, brushes, and paints, watercolor transformed from a source of frustration into her preferred medium. She has now been working with watercolor for approximately 25 years.

Her work has been accepted into regional juried shows, and she has studied with both local and nationally recognized watercolor artists. Over time, she developed a particular passion for transparent watercolor, a technique that relies on careful layering and an understanding of how pigment and water interact on paper.

The workshop at the Monson Arts Council marked Guidetti’s first large-scale watercolor card

WORKSHOP | page 14



Snowball Painting Night brings hands-on winter art

By Abigail McCoy
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PALMER – The Palmer Public Library transformed into a mini art studio on Thursday, Jan. 15, as children and families gathered for a creative and sensory-friendly “Snowball Painting Night,” an afternoon program designed to be accessible to participants of all ages and abilities.

The event, held at 4 p.m., invited children to paint using unconventional tools; not traditional brushes, but “snowballs” made from cotton balls, pom-poms, and similar soft materials. According to Angela Sanchez, the Youth Services Librarian who created and led the activity, the goal was to encourage creativity while also supporting fine motor skill development.

“It’s just a fancy name for an art activity,” Sanchez said with a smile. “Kiddos, of all ages and abilities, can use different snowballs...cotton balls, pom-poms, things of that nature... to use as their brush on the painting surface.”

Participants were able to choose from a variety of sizes and textures, allowing them to experiment with different effects and techniques. Sanchez explained that the flexibility of materials gives children more control over how they engage with the activity.

“Depending on what they want, they can use larger ones or smaller ones,” she said. “It’s kind of up to them. It gives them the ability to



Turley photos by Abigail McCoy
Above, the materials provided, washable and toxin free paint along with clothespins and small cotton like “snowballs.” Right, Families joined together to play and paint with “snowballs”.



Tables were filled and families laughed and interacted with each other while painting.



This is an activity meant for any and all developmental stages.

use a different material to do a common task.”

Beyond creativity, the activity was intentionally designed with developmental benefits in mind. Using smaller and more delicate tools helps strengthen fine motor control, an important skill for young children.

“Different textures are used for the things that are done, and it helps with fine

motor control,” Sanchez noted. “Using smaller, different-sized ones, and because it’s delicate, it does little things that really help.”

The library also made accommodations for children who prefer not to touch paint directly. Clothespins were provided so participants could grip the “snowballs” without getting paint on their fingers, ensuring that children

with sensory sensitivities or limited dexterity could still fully participate.

“For friends who don’t like to get their fingers messy, we’ve offered clothespins as a mechanism to grab,” Sanchez said. “That’s an option as well.”

All materials used during the program were non-toxic and washable, allowing families to relax and focus on cre-

ativity without worry.

Looking ahead, Sanchez shared that the library has another winter-themed children’s program planned for the following week. The upcoming event, Beaded Sparkle Snowflakes, will give children the chance to create their own snowflake decorations using beads and pipe cleaners.

“It’s another in-person

event where the kiddos are going to use beads and pipe cleaners to make their own snowflakes,” she said.

Programs like Snowball Painting Night are part of the Palmer Public Library’s ongoing efforts to provide inclusive, hands-on activities that encourage learning, creativity, and community engagement during the winter months.

St. Paul’s Church launches “Bread & Belonging” monthly community supper in Palmer

PALMER – St. Paul’s Church of Palmer is launching a new monthly community supper ministry, “Bread & Belonging” at St. Paul’s of Palmer, offering a free, home-style meal to anyone in the greater Palmer area who would welcome some good food and friendly company.

The first Bread & Belonging community supper will be held on Saturday, Jan. 24, from 4:30 to 6 p.m. in the parish hall at St. Paul’s Church in Palmer. The meal is free of charge and open to everyone. A donation jar will be available for those who wish to give, but donations are welcome and never expected.

The meal costs are being sponsored by Gem Exhibits Co. of Palmer and its proprietor, Scott Wharton, whose support is helping St. Paul’s launch this new ministry on a firm foundation.

The opening menu will feature a classic pasta dinner with spaghetti and meat sauce, salad, bread, dessert,

and beverages. Going forward, the ministry plans a simple rotating menu that may include a pasta night, a Polish-style dinner (such as golabki and pierogi), and other home-style supper offerings. The focus will be on meals that are nutritious, basic, cost-conscious, and easy to scale as the number of guests grows.

“Bread & Belonging is meant for anyone who could use a hot meal, anyone who feels a bit isolated or lonely, and anyone who simply wants more connection with neighbors,” said Rev. Steven Sousa, minister at St. Paul’s. “Our hope is that people will feel they’re coming not to a program but to a shared table where everyone belongs.”

For more information about Bread & Belonging, to volunteer, to attend, or to discuss donations, please contact St. Paul’s Church of Palmer at 413-283-8185 or email: StPaulsUChurch@gmail.com.



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

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

Palmer Senior Center

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. 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: Introduction to Quabbin.

Second Chance launches emergency fundraiser

EAST BROOKFIELD – Second Chance Animal Services has launched an urgent fundraising campaign to replace the heating system at its Adoption Center after the existing system failed and was deemed unsalvageable despite extensive repair efforts.

“The Adoption Center is home to vulnerable animals every single day, including puppies, kittens, seniors, and pets recovering from illness or surgery, all of whom rely on a warm, stable environment to stay healthy and com-

fortable,” said Lindsay Doray, Chief Development Officer at Second Chance. “The failure of our heating system during a period of extended cold weather makes this replacement especially urgent. We brought in professionals who explored every possible option to repair the system, but unfortunately there is no way to save it. Heat is not optional for the animals in our care, and while replacing the system is a major, unexpected expense, delaying is simply not an option.”

Charlton Oil, a longtime supporter of Second Chance, helped set up temporary heat to keep the building open and staff are monitoring the temperature around the clock until the new system can be installed.

In addition to serving as an Adoption Center, the building functions as an emergency placement facility for pets displaced during natural disasters and other emergencies. Without a functioning heating system, the organization’s ability to respond in

similar situations is at risk.

Second Chance is working to raise \$14,000 to cover the cost of replacing the commercial heating system as quickly as possible. Funds raised will go directly toward installation so the organization can continue providing lifesaving care and remain prepared for emergencies.

Community members are encouraged to support the fundraiser or help spread the word. For more information or to donate, visit givebutter.com/shelterheat.



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

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

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Tai Chi brings movement and mindfulness

By Abigail McCoy
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MONSON – A quiet room at the Monson Senior Center filled with slow, deliberate movements Wednesday afternoon as longtime Tai Chi instructor David Porter led a demonstration designed to introduce seniors to the ancient practice and its wide-ranging physical and mental health benefits.



David Porter starts his demonstration by talking about the history of Tai Chi and why he got into it.

Porter, who has been teaching Tai Chi for years and currently offers regular classes at the Monson Senior Center, said the Jan. 14 demonstration was intended as outreach to residents who may be unfamiliar with the practice or hesitant to try it for the first time.

“I’ve been teaching Tai Chi here for a while, but this is outreach to those who might not have been exposed to it yet,” Porter said during an interview at the center.

Porter’s own journey with Tai Chi began nearly three decades ago. He first started learning the discipline in 1996 while living in Saratoga Springs, New York. Like many people, however, he found that work and daily responsibilities eventually took precedence.

“My work life got in the way,” he said. “Then I retired and suddenly discovered I needed the benefits of Tai Chi.”

Those benefits, Porter explained, go far beyond simple exercise. Tai Chi is often described as a moving medi-

tation; a series of slow, flowing postures linked together into a continuous sequence. While the movements appear gentle and dance-like, Porter emphasized that the practice engages the entire body and mind.

“You’re moving, which is good for your joints, good for your body, for your circulation,” he said. “But it’s also a moving meditation.”

According to Porter, Tai Chi cultivates deep body awareness by encouraging practitioners to become conscious of where their bodies are in space; not just in one dimension, but three-dimensionally and beyond. The movements are performed with relaxed muscles, deep, slow breathing, and a focus on releasing unnecessary tension.

“Because of the way we do Tai Chi, you relax all un-



Porter gets everyone to stand up as he lectures to practice a grounding breathing exercise.

necessary tension,” he said. “You’re doing deep, slow breathing. So you lower stress, lower your cortisol level, lower your blood pressure. It’s important for health reasons and also mental reasons. It helps both aspects.”

Porter noted that Tai Chi is particularly beneficial for joint health and balance. Movements are grounded through the feet, with constant attention paid to posture and center of gravity.

“All movements are grounded in the feet,” he said. “We sink our weight. We’re conscious of where our feet are at all times, making sure your center of gravity is stable. That lowers anxiety right away.”

This grounding, he explained, helps people move safely and confidently, teaching them where their bodies can move without strain or in-

jury. The practice strengthens the legs, feet, and toes: areas Porter described as “crucial” for maintaining balance and preventing falls.

While Tai Chi is often practiced today for wellness, Porter reminded participants that it has deep roots as a martial art. The slow, relaxed movements are designed to build correct body structure and alignment.

“If you’re relaxed, you can move faster when you have to,” he said. “You can understand where the other person is. It looks like a very graceful, simple dance, but it’s actually training for a martial art tradition.”

Porter brings a strong lineage and formal training to his instruction. After moving to the area during the COVID-19 pandemic, he struggled to find a Tai Chi instructor and decided to pur-

sue certification himself. He trained under an instructor in Saratoga Springs and is certified through the William C.C. Chen School in New York City.

“William C.C. Chen, along with his master, were among the first people to bring Tai Chi to the United States,” Porter said. “My lineage is short. I learned close to the source.”

Today, Porter teaches Tai Chi at multiple senior centers throughout the region. In addition to Monson, he leads classes in Brimfield, Sturbridge, Palmer, and participates in advanced practice sessions at the Holland Community Center. His instruction covers a range of forms, from simplified routines designed for accessibility to more advanced traditional sequences.

“The original long form is 132 moves,” he said. “It was

shortened down to 37 postures...what we call 60 moves in my school. The most popular form in the United States is the Beijing simplified form, which is 24 postures.”

For Porter, the benefits of Tai Chi are deeply personal. He credits the practice with restoring his flexibility, strengthening his lower body, and providing a reliable way to manage stress.

“I can do two minutes of Tai Chi and lower my stress level,” he said. “It’s just learning how to breathe and relax. If I’m tight somewhere, I can usually let that go.”

Classes at the Monson Senior Center are held Tuesdays at 10:15 a.m., and Porter hopes more residents will consider giving Tai Chi a try.

“It’s gentle, it’s accessible, and it meets people where they are,” he said. “You can spend a lifetime refining it.”

Turley photos by Abigail McCoy

Central Mass. Lions District 33A help to combat food insecurity

PALMER – The Lions of Central Massachusetts, representing 45 Lions Clubs across the region, came together to fight hunger during Lions Club International’s Global Week of Service to Combat Food Insecurity, demonstrating the power of community collaboration and service.

As part of this District-Wide Service Project

for Lions Club International District 33A, more than 150 volunteers, including Lions members, local high school Leo Club members, and community volunteers—worked side-by-side to package 13,002 nutritious meals for individuals and families facing food insecurity throughout Worcester County & parts of Hampden &

Hampshire Counties.

This meal packing event was hosted at the Boys & Girls Club of Worcester, with meals prepared through a partnership with End Hunger New England, part of The Outreach Program. These meals will be distributed to local food pantries and community organizations throughout Worcester

County, helping ensure access to nutritious food for those most in need.

“We are seeing pandemic-level need among our families, and we anticipate that it will continue to grow,” said Boys & Girls Club of Worcester CEO Liz Hamilton. “The only way to truly make a difference is by coming together as a community;

sharing resources, collaborating with new partners, and collectively planning. We will do whatever it takes to alleviate as much of the burden as possible that unfairly falls on our youth and families. We are grateful for the Lions partnership in helping us address food inequity.”

“This project reflects the heart of what Lions do—bringing people together to serve our communities in meaningful ways,” said Andrew Keane, District Governor. “By working collectively across Central Massachusetts, we are making a real, measurable impact in combating food insecurities in local communities.”

Community Impact at a Glance
• 13,002 meals packaged

• Over 150 volunteers including Lions, Leo Club members, and community volunteers

• 45 Lions Clubs participating across Central Massachusetts

• District-Wide Service Project – Lions District 33A

• Meals distributed throughout Worcester County (including Parts of Hampden & Hampshire Counties)

The project was made possible through generous support from our corporate sponsor, bankHometown, along with additional financial support from local Lions Clubs. The initial effort was enabled by a \$3,000 grant from Lions Club International Foundation (LCIF), bringing total funding support to \$5,200.



Submitted photos

Suggested caption: Volunteers from the Palmer Lions Club and the Lions of Central Massachusetts package thousands of meals during Lions Club International’s Global Week of Service to Fight Food Insecurity at the Boys & Girls Club of Worcester. 2nd image (Lion Tami & her daughter Tabitha at the event)

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Viewpoints

SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor

I'm divorced; can I get benefits from my ex-husband?

Dear Rusty:

After 16 years of marriage, we were divorced. I have never remarried, but he has. When he starts collecting Social Security (he is 64 now and still working), is it true that I can claim ex-spousal benefits or does that go to the current wife? How would I find this info?

Signed:

A Divorced Spouse

Dear Divorced Spouse:

The fact that your ex-husband has remarried has no influence on your ability to collect benefits based on his record. If you are eligible for ex-spouse benefits (because you did not remarry), you can get those benefits regardless of whether his current wife collects benefits on his record. In other words, both you and his current wife can both collect spousal benefits from your ex-husband's earnings record.

Your eligibility for an ex-spouse benefit is determined by comparing your own SS retirement benefit amount at full retirement age (FRA) to his – if your own SS benefit at your FRA is less than 50% of your ex's FRA benefit entitlement, and you were married to your ex for more than 10 years, are not currently married and are at least 62 years old, then you can get a "spousal boost" (an amount added to your own Social Security retirement amount). In fact, if you have been divorced for over two years, you can get an ex-spouse benefit even though he is not yet receiving his own SS retirement benefit.

Be aware, however, if you claim any Social Security benefit (both your own SS retirement amount and your ex-spouse "spousal boost") before you reach your full retirement age, the monthly amount you get will be reduced according to how much before your full retirement age you claim. Spouse and ex-spouse benefits reach

maximum at your full retirement age but are reduced if claimed earlier than your full retirement age. Claiming your benefits as an ex-spouse will also result in you receiving your own SS retirement benefit (reduced if you haven't yet reached FRA).

I suggest you contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 to make a telephone appointment to evaluate whether you are entitled to benefits as an ex-spouse. If your own SS retirement benefit at your FRA is less than half of your ex's FRA entitlement, you will be. To apply for those benefits you will need a copy of your divorce decree (and perhaps your marriage certificate), and your ex-husband's Social Security number (if you do not have his SSN, you can provide his date and place of birth and his parents' names, and SSA will likely be able to locate your ex's SS record).

SSA will be able to tell you what your total monthly benefit as an ex-spouse will be when you meet with them, at which point you can decide whether to claim your benefits early or wait until your FRA to achieve your maximum amount as an ex-spouse.

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



Winter sowing is a fun experiment

“Winter sowing” always comes up as a hot topic on social media this time of year.

The basic premise of winter sowing is to plant your seeds in mini greenhouses (gallon jugs), place the jugs outside and simply let nature take over. The advantage being that no heat mats or lights are needed. No window sills full of seedlings, either.

While I don't think it is as simple as it sounds, I do think trying it would be a fun experiment.

Read on this week and next to consider some of the pros and possible cons of this seed starting technique.

Years ago I read a blog where a master gardener was encouraging folks to start native perennials in milk jugs outside. The seeds of many of these plants require a period of cold and moist stratification to break seed dormancy.

In simple terms, they need to go through winter in order to sprout. Think of it as nature's safety mechanism; seeds germinate at the right time to survive and thrive!

You may ask, then, why not just sow the seeds outdoors in the garden? In theory it sounds good, but in reality “the wild” is not the best seed bed.

From hungry birds and rodents, to wind and drenching rains, success is hit or miss. Safely inside the milk jug, but at the same time outside in the elements to freeze and thaw, freeze and thaw, tricky seeds are coaxed into germinating. Success at your fingertips!

Here are the nuts and bolts! Start with clean gallon containers, the see-through kind that water or milk come in. About four inches up, just below the handle, safely cut around the jug, leaving an inch or so on either side of the

seal it with duct tape. Be sure to label the jug with the plant name via a paint pen, really the only writing utensil that won't smear, fade or wash away when exposed to the elements.

Place the jugs in full exposure outdoors and with the cap off, so that heat can escape and small amounts of moisture can penetrate. When the temperature outdoors heats up past 60 degrees, be sure to take the duct tape off and vent your seedlings. Check often and water as needed.

The pros recommend to cover with a blanket if frost threatens or even move heat lovers inside on cold nights so that the seedlings won't freeze. To prevent tip-over by four-legged friends or playful kids, pros also suggest putting the jugs in trays or bins.

As you can see, this method is not maintenance-free, but certainly worthy of a try especially for gardeners who are short on indoor space or in the mood to get their hands dirty earlier in the season than normal!

January and February is the perfect time to start seeds that need a cold treatment. Look for key terms on the seed packet, such as “stratification needed,” “sow in the fall,” etc. You can also use this technique to sow cold hardy annuals in March—think chard, spinach, kale, snapdragons, bachelor button and the like.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with “Gardening Question” in the subject line.

How many seeds to sow is a tricky question. If you want to keep the plants in the jug until they go in the garden, then hope for four plants, maybe six per jug at the most, figuring how big they will be at transplant stage.

For tricky germinators, perhaps double or triple the amount of seed you sow versus how many you desire. If germination is great, you can always transplant some out. Close the container and

In the Garden
by Roberta McQuaid



The Journal Register

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

Please send opinions to:

The Journal Register
Letter to the Editor

24 Water St., Palmer MA 01069,
or by e-mail to:

journalregister@turley.com

The submission deadline for consideration is Monday at noon.

Election letters to the editor welcome

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

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

Campaign news

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

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

Protein: The big food craze of 2026

First it was low-calorie. Then it was fat-free. Then high fiber and low carb. Then gluten-free and zero sugar.

And now, it's protein. Walk down the aisle of your favorite store and you'll see shelves packed with protein powders, shakes, chips, bars, coffee, cereal, even protein soft drinks, alcoholic drinks and ice cream.

Food giants such as PepsiCo, Kellogg and Pop-Tarts maker Kellanova have rolled out protein-booster versions of their products. Starbucks and Kroger are offering protein-fortified coffees and French toast sticks. The global market for protein-fortified foods is projected to hit \$100 billion by 2030, according to Grand View Research.

What's going on? These companies hope to profit off a key concern of consumers: Getting more protein in their diets. According to a 2025 survey from the International Food Information Council, 70 percent of

Americans said they're trying to eat more protein, up from 59% just three years ago.

We've always known that our bodies need protein to build and maintain lean muscle, hair, bones, connective tissues and general health. But what's driving the current fad, and how much protein do we need anyway?

The protein push seems to be partly the result of the boom in semaglutide (GLP-1) medications, such as Ozempic, Wegovy, Mounjaro and the like. They are helping people lose weight and maintain it, but users are also losing muscle because “every pound is water, fat and muscle,” registered dietician Kim Shapira said in an interview.

“This has just boomed an entire industry of protein,” she said.

The problem is that a good deal of these protein-packed foods may not be good for us. A 2024 survey by Spanish researchers, posted on the National Institutes of Health website, that found

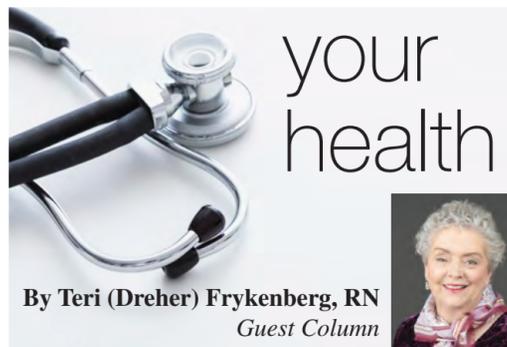
91% of foods with “protein” marketing claims (PCs) were less healthy overall because they are ultra-processed and often have added sugar, fat and sodium.

“The perception that foods with PCs are healthy is incorrect, and consuming them may pose an additional health risk,” the researchers wrote.

The protein we need everyday varies with age, weight, level of activity and other factors. To estimate your minimum recommended daily allowance (RDA), multiply your weight in pounds by 0.36 grams. For a 140-pound sedentary woman, that comes to about 50 grams a day.

Pregnant women and active adults benefit from more protein, but researchers really don't know how much is too much. (The USDA has a nutrition calculator on its website at myplate.gov.)

They do recommend Cottage cheese: 14 grams in 1/4 cup



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

Other good sources are beans, nuts, low-fat dairy and eggs.

Don't translate “eat more protein” as “eat more beef and cheese.” The saturated fats in these foods are not good for cardiovascular health.

To avoid weight gain, cut back on other foods. If you're consuming more calories as protein, reduce the calories you get from breads, sweets and alcohol. Rather, up your intake of fruits, veggies and legumes.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, R.N., a registered nurse

your health

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.

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
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January Vendors

Jan. 29 - Hollow Hobbit Herbs

February Vendors

Feb. 4 - How Charming
Feb. 5 - Jewelry For Diane
Feb. 9 - Generations of Cookies
Feb. 10 - Hollow Hobbit Herbs
Feb. 11 - Wicked Good Treats
Feb. 12 - Weleful Weavers
Feb. 13 - Cork Elegance
Feb. 26 - Weleful Weavers

ONGOING

2025-2026 Drama & Dance Program 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 khh@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 accomplish-

ments, from novice to Big E "Best In Show" winners. Dues are \$55 a year. For more information, contact Barbara Beau- lieu at 267-4044 or Merry Mombourquette at 283-7577. Follow them on Facebook for more.

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

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

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

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

Annual Ice Fishing Derby is Jan. 31

BROOKFIELD – The Brookfields Lions Club will host its 37th Annual Ice Fishing Derby on Saturday, Jan. 31, at Quaboag Pond in Brookfield.

The event remains the largest single-day ice fishing derby in Massachusetts, attracting anglers and families from across the region.

A \$20 entry ticket qualifies participants for more than \$15,000 in cash prizes, including the \$5,000 Grand Prize, \$5,640 in "every five minutes" cash drawings, and \$4,375 in fish categories. Ev-

ery ticket holder is automatically entered into the major cash drawings whether they choose to fish or not.

Derby headquarters will be located at the Quaboag Pond boat ramp in Brookfield. Weigh-ins will take place from 7 a.m. until the derby closes at 3:30 p.m., with the children's division ending at 2 p.m. and youth prizes awarded at 2:30 p.m. The \$5,000 cash drawing for all ticket holders will take place at 4 p.m., and a complete announcement of all derby winners will air on The Valley's Classic Hits 97.7 FM

and 1250 AM (WARE Radio) at 5 p.m.

In the event that no safe ice exists by Thursday, Jan. 29, the derby itself will be cancelled, and all drawings will be held at the North Brookfield Legion Post 41, located below Subway in North Brookfield. No fish prizes will be awarded, but all tickets will still be valid for the five-minute cash drawings and the \$5,000 Grand Prize drawing.

As is customary for this derby, there is a "one fish per

DERBY | page 8

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Business

A look inside the magical Black Fang Museum

By Kristin Rivers
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - If you've driven down Route 20 heading to Wilbraham or Monson and Palmer, you might have noticed a building with four Italian statues and other pieces of artwork.

That is the Black Fang Museum, overseen by Jeffrey Allard, which is open whenever he's around. Just look for the white SUV in the parking lot and the 'Open' sign.

Inside is a variety of artwork from Morocco, Egypt, Thailand and South Asia, famed artists such as Pablo Picasso, Keith Haring, Antonio Medici and Marc Chagall, Italian furniture pieces, Allard's own artwork, animal statues and many more.

Allard, who worked as a radiologist before retirement and now works as a consultant, explained he's been collecting art over the years and traveling, needing a place to put them. He thought some of the space would be used as offices, but after people visited and told him, "This is a museum, not an office," he went forward with the vision.

"I thought it'd be a good thing for the community and a good thing for me because I like to talk about it, talk about art, talk about anything with anyone who wants to take a look," Allard said.

As Allard got more into art, he met with an art dealer in San Francisco.

"He had this furniture. This was in a warehouse from his great-grandfather, apparently, all from Italy and he was finally trying to sell it and so we worked a good deal for both of us. He wanted to get rid of it and I wanted it, and I had a place to put it," Allard said. "So, the furniture was a big part of it and then the art pieces are easy enough to get. Then I could throw in a few pieces of my own in between."

On the other art pieces, Allard's inspiration came from looking for pieces "that caught my eye."

"Usually from local artists, if possible, or shops on the side streets. Just a different cultural type of whatever

artists in other countries are doing. It all ends up being art, but it's a little different. Each country has their own little slant on things," Allard said.

Allard especially enjoys Chagall's art pieces too.

"Picasso, you can still kind of tell what he's depicting, and Chagall just takes it to another level. You don't even know what he's depicting half the time, the messaging and what-not, and his complexity and use of colors is more complicated than Picasso," Allard said.

On a favorite piece of art, Allard said it's a table from Morocco.

"There's mountains in Morocco which are very high, actually, called the Atlas Mountains and because of the change in geography over the millennia, the seabed is part of those Atlas Mountains, and so a lot of the mountains are these limestone deposits from long, long ago and within those limestone deposits are ancient creatures called ammonites. That they know went extinct 250 million years ago," Allard said. "That table has ammonites in it, so we know that it is 250 million years old, at least. To carve through the limestone and expose the squid and ammonites, to expose them without ruining the shell takes a lot of patience."

Besides his leopard statues—which he rubs their heads every day for good luck—he also enjoys being in a place "where's this all historical, beautiful art."

"It's like if I was younger, I'd want to have a beautiful girlfriend or whatever. So, here, I'm too old for a beautiful girlfriend and so I have beautiful art," Allard said.

The history is also important.

"The regional different areas of the world, what they conceive of as art is different and different types of art, how it's changed. Obviously, my collection is geared towards what's abstract stuff, but everything, I think, that is art is



A painting by the famed Pablo Picasso.



Jeffrey Allard poses with his giraffe sculptures.

Turley photos by Kristin Rivers



The Egypt room showcases varying art pieces from Egypt. Right, Jeffrey Allard also has his own paintings, including this brain. He shared he also hangs art by other people when asked.

a story of something historical and something cultural and it's always something that is part in your imagination too. What exactly was someone trying to show," Allard said. "You can look at pieces and just kind of get a whole different story or feeling out of it. Whether it's intended or not doesn't make any difference."

Besides the art, Allard hopes to offer community lectures on the last Friday of every month. On Jan. 30 at 5 p.m., he will give a pre-

sentation on "Latest research on longevity and healthy aging."

"People are getting too caught up in the Internet with all sorts of craziness. Once they get too far into these weird things, they lose sight of what is actually true. COVID screwed everyone's

idea of science, and there is actually science. It's not absolute, but there's 'evidence,'" Allard said. "The longevity talk I want to give is based on science. Actual studies where they have compared results with different drugs or supplements and it's not like a TV advertisement where they're

toting something that's totally unproven and saying how wonderful it is."

Allard encourages the community to stop by, also noting that contrary to claims about the museum name, it is not a Satanic cult.

"As long as there's a car here, that means someone's here and you're welcome to stop by, have a chat, have a look and open for business," Allard said.

To learn more, visit manomednet.com/art.html.

North Brookfield Savings Bank announces retirement of board member Donna Boulanger

REGION — North Brookfield Savings Bank (NBSB) announces the retirement of Donna Boulanger from the Bank's Board of Directors effective Jan. 12, 2026. Ms. Boulanger's retirement marks the end of an extraordinary era of leadership, growth, and community impact that has defined her remarkable career.

Ms. Boulanger has been a driving force in the Bank's success over the years, most notably during her role as President and CEO from 2008 to 2022, as the first woman to lead the bank since it was founded. Her leadership steered the Bank through a transformative pe-

riod of growth and strategic expansion. Under her guidance as President and CEO, the Bank's asset size more than doubled, significantly strengthening its financial standing and enhancing its ability to serve customers throughout the community. During her tenure, Ms. Boulanger led the acquisition of Family First Bank, a strategic move that expanded the Bank's footprint, enhanced service offerings, and strengthened its commitment to maintaining local banking relationships. Upon retirement from the Bank, Ms. Boulanger served as the Chair of the NBSB Board of Directors. She also served on the Boards of the Depositors Insurance Fund (DIF), the Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB) of Boston, and the

Federal Reserve of Boston (FRB).

"Donna brought a wealth of knowledge and information to the Bank Board," said Roland Gauthier, current Chair of the NBSB Board of Directors. "Her presence and contributions at Board meetings made all of us better Board members. Donna gained the respect of her peers and the Federal and State regulators, and the Board will miss her guidance."

As Ms. Boulanger steps down from the Board, NBSB takes this opportunity to celebrate her contributions and the foundation she established for the future generations of leadership. The Bank extends its heartfelt appreciation and warmest wishes to Donna as she enters retirement.



These pieces from South Asia are also part of the collection.

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Monson Fire Logs

Here is the fire log for the Monson Fire Department for the week of Jan. 12 - Jan. 18, 2026. The department responded to 22 EMS calls and 6 Fire calls.

On Monday, Jan. 12 at 8:37 p.m., the department responded to 18 Palmer Road for the public. The department returned to service at 8:50 p.m.

On Monday, Jan. 12 at 10:27 a.m., the department responded to the area of 108 Upper Hampden Road for the traffic hazard. The department returned to service at 11:15 a.m.

On Tuesday, Jan. 13 at 7:21 a.m., the department responded to 21 Elm Street for the smell of gas odor. The department returned to service at 7:46 a.m.

On Wednesday, Jan. 14 at 5:47 p.m., the department responded to 1331 Tinkham Road in Wilbraham. The department returned to service at 5:47 p.m.

On Friday, Jan. 16 at 4:26 p.m., the department responded to 244 Cedar Swamp Road for the pellet stove malfunction. The department returned to service at 5:18 p.m.

On Friday, Jan. 16 at 11:12 p.m., the department responded to 229 Main Street for the furnace malfunction. The department returned to service at 1:05 a.m.

Obituaries

George Francis Belisle, Jr.

BONDSVILLE – George Francis Belisle, Jr., age 86, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2026. A devoted husband, father, grandfather, and friend, George embodied the values of hard work, unwavering faith, and deep family devotion that touched everyone who knew him. Born on July 25, 1939, in Palmer, Massachusetts, to the late George F. Belisle, Sr., and Irene C. (Lusty) Belisle, George was a graduate of Palmer High School.

He honorably served in the Massachusetts Army National Guard before embarking on a distinguished career in the trades, ultimately retiring in 2001 from the Monsanto Company in Springfield as a Master Mechanic after decades of dedicated service. In 1963, George married his beloved Anna, beginning a beautiful love story that spanned 62 years. Together, they built a life centered on faith, family, and the simple joys that made each day meaningful. George was a faithful communicant of St. Mary's Church in Ware, where his deep faith provided the foundation for his generous spirit and compassionate heart.

He was known for his devotion to family, particularly his cherished grandchildren, who brought him immeasurable

joy and pride. A man of many talents and interests, George could often be found "coaching" the Boston Celtics from his favorite living room chair or tending to his meticulously maintained lawn aboard one of his treasured tractors. His hands were never idle—whether working in his sheds repairing small engines, rebuilding snow blowers, crafting beautiful woodwork, or tackling various home improvement projects with the skill and precision that marked everything he did.

One of his greatest pleasures was owning racehorses and sharing in the excitement and camaraderie that this passion brought with his friends.

George leaves behind a legacy of love in his devoted wife, Anna J. (Liro) Belisle; his loving daughters, Joanne Moynihan and her husband Kevin, and Susan Breton and her husband René; and his adored grandchildren: Molly, Kalie, Jason, and Allison. He also leaves several nieces and nephews, particularly two special nieces, Betty Pobieglo and Tracy Parker, whose closeness, compassion, and care meant so much to him, especially in his later years. Besides his parents, George was predeceased by his beloved sisters: Frances Koziol, Eileen Bengle, and Marjorie Lajzer.

Services A Visitation Period took place on Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2026, from 9 to 10:30 a.m. at Cebula Funeral Home, Ware, Massachusetts. A Funeral Mass was offered on Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2026, at 11 a.m. at St. Mary's Church, Ware. Burial followed in the Saint Pope John Paul II Section of St. Mary's Cemetery, Ware. Memorial donations may be made to St. Mary's Church, 60 South St., Ware, MA 01082. Funeral arrangements and services were under the direction of Cebula Funeral Home, Ware.

For more information and an online guestbook, please visit: www.cebulafuneralhome.com. George will be deeply missed and forever remembered for the love, laughter, and wisdom he shared with all who were blessed to know him.

DEATH NOTICES

George Francis Belisle, Jr.
Died Jan. 14, 2026
Services Jan. 20, 2026
Cebula Funeral Home

Stanley John Soltys
Died Jan. 10, 2026
Services Jan. 23, 2026
Cebula Funeral Home

Stanley John Soltys

Stanley John Soltys, age 82 passed away on the afternoon of Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026, at Saint Vincent Hospital in Worcester.

Stanley was born on Sept. 3, 1943, in Palmer, son of the late Stanley J. Soltys, Sr. and Genevieve E. (Kosmid-er) Soltys. Stanley was a 1961 graduate of Palmer High School. On Dec. 27, 1961, Stanley enlisted in the United States Navy, and proudly served his country for four years. Stanley was stationed at the former Chelsea Naval Hospital, where he served as a medical corpsman. He and his unit were put on active alert during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.

Stanley was honorably discharged on April 26, 1966, with the rank of HN (Hospital Corpsman). He enrolled in Worcester Polytechnic Institute School of Industrial Management in Worcester and received a four-year certificate in Industrial Management.

Stanley was employed for American Optical in Southbridge for 20 years and in 1987 went to work for E. Osterman Gas Service. While employed at Osterman Gas, Stanley held many titles: Plant Manager, District/Area Manager and retiring

as Key Account Manager in 1999.

In 2002, Stanley underwent a kidney and liver transplant at the Lahey Clinic.

He enjoyed cooking and was especially known for his Bread & Butter pickles and relishes.

On Nov. 12, 1966, Stanley entered into Holy Matrimony, in St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Palmer, with Beverly Ann Bradlenski, they have been married for 59 years.

Stanley was a member of the former Knights of Columbus in Warren, where he planned several fundraising dinners. For the past 21 years, he was a communicant of St. Mary's Church in Ware. He was also a past member of the Warren Capital Planning Committee.

Stanley and Beverly lived for 38 years in Sturbridge and 21 years in Warren. Stanley leaves behind his loving wife, Beverly Ann (Bradlenski) Soltys, his sisters in law; Carol Ann Soltys and Joan Carol Doleva, nephews and nieces: Debra Ablicki (Tom), Daniel Murphy (April), Mark Murphy, Lisa (Soltys) Navin (Rick), Gary Soltys (Kathleen), and Jennifer (Doleva) Bowser (Jason). He also leaves behind his great nephews and nieces: Jonathan Ablicki, Jennifer

Ablicki, Ashley (Navin) Malnati, Erin (Navin) Munro, John Soltys and Andrew Soltys, along with many cousins and friends. Stanley also leaves behind his loving miniature schnauzer, Lady.

Stanley was predeceased by his father, Stanley J. Soltys, Sr., in 1956, his mother, Genevieve E. (Kosmid-er) Soltys-Dojka in 2000, and his brother, John J. Soltys and sister Helen Murphy-Hall both on Aug. 28, 2000.

Calling Hours for Stanley will be held on Friday, Jan. 23, 2026, from 3-5 p.m. in Cebula Funeral Home, 66 South St., Ware. A Funeral Mass will be offered on Saturday, Jan. 24, 2026, at 11 a.m. in St. Mary's Church, 57 South St., Ware. Military Honors will be rendered following the funeral mass on the plaza in front of the church.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to the following: The Warren Fire Firefighters Association, P.O. Box 608, Warren, MA 01083 or to Second Chance Animal Service, P.O. Box 136, East Brookfield, MA 01515, or to a charity of your choice.

Funeral Arrangements and Services are under the direction of Cebula Funeral Home, Ware. For more information and an online guestbook, please visit: www.cebulafuneralhome.com.

AWARD | from page 1

deadline for submissions will be March 31.

The revived award is independent of town government and Summerfest, though Matrow said the committee hopes to continue the tradition of recognizing recipients during Fourth of July celebrations. "This is not associated with the town. It's not associated with any other organization in town," he said. "It's simply a Monson Citizen of the Year Committee made up of previous awardees."

To ensure long-term continuity, future recipients will be invited to join the committee. "Anyone who wins it will be asked to be part of the future committee," Matrow said. "That way we can rejuvenate ourselves."

Board members praised the initiative and expressed support for recognizing residents who make lasting contributions to the community.

Housing Authority appointment

The Select Board next interviewed and unanimously appointed David Siniscalchi to the Monson Housing Authority, filling a vacancy creat-

ed by a recent resignation. His term will run through June 9, 2026, when the seat will be placed on the ballot.

Siniscalchi brings more than 15 years of public housing experience, including ten years as director of modernization and skilled trades at the Hartford Housing Authority. He later worked for the state Department of Housing and Community Development's Regional Capital Assistance Team, assisting 17 housing authorities across Massachusetts with capital planning and project implementation.

"I believe my experience would allow me to help strengthen the programs that DHCD is offering for families and seniors and individuals that are facing housing insecurity," Siniscalchi said. "And I believe I can help Monson Housing Authority in their strategic planning and advancing their initiatives."

Board members noted

that while Housing Authority appointments are typically five-year terms, state law limits this appointment to the next election cycle. Siniscalchi indicated he would consider running for a full term.

"With your background and experience, I'm sure you'll be a good fit," one board member said before the vote.

Memorial Hall rental fees discussion continues

A significant portion of the meeting was devoted to continued discussion of Memorial Hall rental fees, following a request from the Facilities Department to reconsider the town's practice of routinely waiving them.

Board members expressed concern that frequent waivers effectively require taxpayers to subsidize private events while preventing the town from recouping basic costs associated with building use, including staff time, utili-

ties, cleaning, and supplies.

"If we waive rental fees, we're really subsidizing whatever private groups use Memorial Hall," one member said. "The taxpayer shouldn't be subsidizing other people's events."

Several past incidents were cited as examples of why a clearer policy is needed, including damage caused by tape pulling paint and plaster from walls, scratched floors from dragged equipment, broken stained-glass windows, and excessive use of paper goods. In one instance, event organizers declined janitorial services, resulting in significant cleanup costs for the town.

"I don't ever want to have that happen again," a board member said. "That part of it should not be waivable, period."

Board members discussed possible changes, including ending fee waivers

for purely private events, creating partial or tiered waivers for nonprofit or public-benefit uses, maintaining waivers for town-sponsored events, increasing security deposits, and requiring on-site supervision for certain functions to prevent damage.

Officials emphasized that the intent is not to generate profit but to ensure the town breaks even and protects recent and planned investments in the historic building. "It's a beautiful building. That's what it's for," one member said. "But we really need to protect the investment that we've made."

The board also discussed shifting responsibility for applications and scheduling directly to the Facilities Department to streamline the process and improve oversight. A board member volunteered to work with staff to draft a formal rental and fee waiver policy for future review.

The Journal Register OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

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

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PHS | from page 1

respect, safety, responsibility, community, and kindness; which North said have played a central role in shaping the culture of Palmer High School.

"These are something that the students and the faculty have been focused on," she said. "I think it really has made a difference with our culture within our building."

North said the emphasis on these values has helped strengthen relationships among students and staff and contributed to a more welcoming and supportive environment throughout the school.

That positive atmosphere was on full display during Spirit Week, an annual tradition that brings together students and faculty through themed dress days and creative participation.

"It's really great to see the creativity in which the students and faculty come up with for each one of the themes," North said. "They love it."

Academically, Palmer High School reached a major milestone this year, earning recognition for its MCAS performance. A banner now displayed at the front of the school celebrates the achievement.

"We are a school of recognition based on our MCAS scores," North said. "We've worked really hard to improve in that area, and we have been successful this year."

North and Superintendent Francis are scheduled to travel to Boston on Jan. 20 to receive the official recognition, an accomplishment North described as "very exciting" and a testament to the hard work of students and staff.

In addition to academic performance, the school has placed a strong emphasis on attendance, tying it directly

to student engagement and accountability. To encourage students to be present and engaged, the school introduced incentives for perfect attendance.

"When students are here, then they can learn," North said.

Students with perfect attendance are entered into drawings to win Palmer High School-branded hats or T-shirts, with many students opting for winter hats during the colder months.

"Our attendance counts toward our accountability," North explained. "So that's an incentive that we're doing with our students."

Looking ahead to the spring semester, North highlighted a new collaboration with Steampunk, a creative and engineering space located across the street from the school. Engineering students taught by Casey Dunphy will participate in a three-day workshop experience, spending mornings immersed in hands-on learning and project development.

"They'll have a final project that they'll be able to create," North said. "I can't wait to see what it is that they produce."

North emphasized the importance of partnerships like this one, noting that community connections help students explore real-world applications of their learning.

The school's school-to-career program also continues to offer students opportunities to gain experience in a variety of settings, including libraries, town offices, and hospitals.

"It gives them the opportunity to explore," North said. "They might decide this is something they want to do, or they might decide it's something they don't want to continue in after graduation... and that's valuable, too."

Another major event on the horizon is Palmer High



Turley photos by Abigail McCoy

Palmer High School at 4105 Main Street in Palmer.

School's second annual Night of Belonging, scheduled for March 19 at 6 p.m. The schoolwide event invites students and families to showcase their cultures through displays, artifacts, and food representing traditions passed down through generations.

"Students are showcasing their cultures," North said. "Families are invited to participate as well. People get to go through and see everyone's culture, which is a wonderful thing."

Last year's event received overwhelmingly positive feedback, and North said the school hopes to expand participation this year.

In addition, the school is preparing for several upcoming student-centered events, including a middle school dance themed "A Night in the City" on Jan. 23 from 6 to 8 p.m., the junior-senior prom at the Log Cabin on the first Friday in May, and graduation and senior activities later in the spring.

Reflecting on her role as principal, North spoke



Principal North was given a special slate coaster detailed with the Five Core values Palmer High follows.

School is an amazing school," she said. "Our faculty work really, really hard to make sure every single student is successful and feels included in our school community."

North credited the school's smaller size as a strength, allowing for individualized attention while still offering a wide range of programs and activities.

"Our numbers are smaller, but it benefits us," she said. "We're able to work individ-

ually with students to meet their needs, but we're not so small that we can't have great programs and current events."

As the year continues, North said the focus remains on creating a welcoming environment where students feel known, supported, and inspired to do their best.

"When students feel that sense of belonging," she said, "they want to come to school, and they strive to be the best person they possibly can be."

In the classroom

Brimfield student named to James Madison University Fall 2025 Dean's List

HARRISONBURG, VA – Brimfield resident, Grace Timmins, has been named to the Dean's List at James Madison University for the fall 2025 semester. Students who earn Dean's List honors must carry at least 12 graded credit hours and earn a GPA of between 3.5 and 3.899. Timmins is majoring in Health Sciences - BS.

Springfield College announces Dean's List

SPRINGFIELD – Springfield College Recognizes Dean's List Students for the 2025 Fall Semester.

Springfield College has named Maegan Boucher from Monson, MA to the dean's list for academic excellence for the 2025 fall semester. Boucher has a primary major of English.

Springfield College has named Logan Fontaine from Palmer, MA to the dean's list for academic excellence for the 2025 fall semester. Fontaine has a primary major of History.

Springfield College has named Hanna Hurtado from Three Rivers, MA to the dean's list for academic excellence for the 2025 fall semester. Hurtado has a primary major of Social Work.

Springfield College has named Amelia Murray from Palmer, MA to the dean's list for academic excellence for the 2025 fall semester. Murray has a primary major of Pre-Prof Athletic Training.

Springfield College has named Kami Wlodyka from Three Rivers, MA to the dean's list for academic excellence for the 2025 fall semester. Wlodyka has a primary major of Public Health.

The criteria for selection to the Dean's List are as follows: The student must have completed a minimum of 12 credit hours of graded coursework for the term, exclusive of "P" grades. The student must not have any incompletes or missing grades in the designated term. The student must have a minimum semester grade average of 3.500 for the term. Student must not have been barred from Dean's List due to disciplinary action.

Assumption students named to Dean's List

WORCESTER – Assumption University has announced those who have been named to the University's Dean's List for the fall 2025 semester. Students named to the Dean's List must achieve a grade point average of 3.5 for a five-class, 15-credit semester to be included on this prestigious list, which is announced at the completion of the fall and spring semesters.

Mason Dumas, Emily Lebel of Monson; Ethan Beauchemin of Palmer; Lilina Shiers of Wales; Norah Stewart of Brimfield.

Local students earn President's List honors at Nichols College for fall 2025

DUDLEY – Nichols College is proud to recognize the academic accomplishments of students on the fall 2025 President's List.

President's List recognizes those students who achieve high grades during a single semester. Students whose semester grade point average is 3.85 or higher for at least 12 undergraduate credit-hours and no grades below B- will receive President's List honors.

The following local students have achieved President's List honors: Lydia Julian of Holland, MA and Alexander Sao of Monson, MA.

Polish Junior League of Massachusetts launches Annual Scholarship

REGION – The Polish Junior League of Massachusetts has announced its annual scholarship program for students of Polish heritage.

The League will be awarding scholarships to undergraduate students, and one scholarship will be granted to a graduate or returning student. In addition to the Undergraduate Scholarship program, there are two memorial scholarships, the Helen Weber Scholarship and the Josephine Karwoski Memorial Scholarship, each offering a focus on specific areas of study.

The scholarships and services provided by the Polish Junior League would not be possible without funds raised

through the League's Annual Fashion Show and public donations. By contributing, individuals, businesses and corporations are helping to expand the level of awards and positively affect students.

Sheryl Mardeusz, president of the Polish Junior League says, "we are proud to continue helping graduate and undergraduate students throughout New England and are extremely pleased to be able to help even more individuals pursue their educational goals."

To be eligible, applicants, in addition to being part of the Polish community, must have a permanent address in the Western Massachusetts

counties of Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden or Hampshire. Applications can be received after Jan. 2, 2026 with an application deadline of May 1, 2026 and scholarship criteria can be found on the League's website polishjuniorleague-ma.org.

For 87 years, the Polish Junior League of Massachusetts, a nonprofit organization of women developed as civic leaders, has made a demonstrable impact on their community. True to its mission, the League has worked diligently to help students obtain the best education, so they may contribute to enhance the social, cultural and political fabric of civil society.

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DERBY | from page 5

category per ticket" rule that helps ensure broader distribution of prizes and encourages a fair, community-minded competition. All qualifying fish must be caught within the Central Wildlife District.

Children up to age 12 compete separately using state minimum lengths, while young anglers who meet the adult minimum lengths may also qualify for the main leaderboard.

Tickets for the derby are available from any Brookfields Lions Club member, and at many longtime partner locations including: K&S Bait Shop (Barre), Central Package (Brookfield), R&R Sport Shop (Belchertown), 308 Lakeside Restaurant (East Brookfield), Fred's Variety & Package Store (Fiskdale), Granby Bait Shop (Granby), Ben's Bait (Leicester), Red Ridge Bait & Tackle (Ludlow), Still Hart's (North Brookfield), Nick's Sport

Shop (Palmer), Glenda's and River Town Bait Shop (Warren), Mathieson Bait Shop (West Brookfield).

Following the derby, all winners will be posted at www.brookfieldslionsclub.org, and at all ticket vendor locations.

For additional information, please contact the Brookfields Lions Club at brookfieldslionsclub@gmail.com, or visit the Club's Facebook page at facebook.com/BrookfieldsLionsClub.

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BASKETBALL

Meacham reaches 1,000 points in win

MONSON – Last Wednesday evening, not only did Austin Meacham lead all scorers with 27 points, his 24th point in the matchup was the 1,000th of his high school career. Meacham achieved the feat in Monson's 57-45 win over Hampden Charter. Shane Szado contributed 14 points for the Mustangs in the win. Look for more on Meacham's achievement in next week's edition.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Jake Beaupre flies for two points.



Shane Szado gets an open layup.



Niko Mathieu gets a backwards layup.



Austin Meacham shoots for the Mustangs.



Brady Ronaldson sends a free throw away.

BASKETBALL

Palmer mounts comeback to beat Indians

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

NORTH BROOKFIELD – The North Brookfield girls' basketball team held a six-point halftime lead in their first ever meeting with Palmer High School.

The Palmer Lady Panthers, who spent the entire 10-minute halftime break in their locker room, outscored the Lady Indians, 19-5, during the second half enroute to a 31-23 non-league victory at Julianne Caron Memorial Gymnasium, last Wednesday night.

"We made a couple of defensive adjustments in the locker room at halftime. We were able to put a lot more pressure on them and we forced a lot of turnovers in the second half," said

Palmer co-head coach Denise Levasseur, who shares the coaching duties with Amanda Theriault. "We've never faced North Brookfield before, and we really didn't know very much about them."

The Lady Panthers, who made the trip back home to Western Mass. with a 4-5 overall record, didn't have any double digit scorers in the road game. Eight players scored at least two points led by eighth grader Harper Brouillette with eight points. She scored four points in each half. Her classmate, Aria Nompoggi netted five of her seven points before halftime.

Junior Addyson Petrasiewicz, who's the oldest player listed on the Lady Panthers roster, chipped in



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Addyson Petrasiewicz sends a free throw away.



CC Reed is pressured near the hoop.

with five points.

While the Lady Panthers were ranked 24th in the MIAA Division 5 power rankings on January 13, the Lady Indians (3-3) were ranked 23rd, but three of their games were not submitted.

Junior Olivia Holmes scored all 10 of her game-high points during the first 16 minutes of the contest.

Junior Ayala Milcalia added seven points for the home team.

"I've been coaching both Olivia and Ayala on the varsity basketball team since they were in the seventh grade," said Lady Indians head coach Caitlyn Malone, who graduated from North Brookfield High School twenty years ago. "We rely on them a lot. They're also our leaders."

PALMER | page 10

BASKETBALL

Panthers bust losing streak

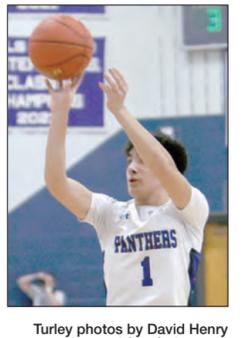
PALMER – Last Friday evening, Palmer High School hosted rival and neighbor Monson, with the Panthers able to overcome what has been a good Mustangs offense with a 43-35 win. Leading the way was Taydem Haley with 15 points while Matt Santos contributed nine points for the Panthers, who are now 5-4 on the regular season.



Taydem Haley tries to get a shot off over an opponent.



Gavin Smola shoots for the Panthers.



Matt Santos sends a long three-point attempt away.



Stephen Fredette extends for a shot past an opponent.



Griffin Nawrocki is pressured near the top of the arc.



Adonis Dupre makes a free throw.

BASKETBALL

Early defense keys win for Pathfinder

PALMER – Last Thursday night, Pathfinder Tech defeated Smith Vocational 47-37 thanks to some good early defense and a great night from

Megan Clark. Pathfinder limited the visitors to just eight points in the first half and Clark scored 23 points to lead all scorers. Taylor Allen added 13 points. The Pioneers are now 4-3 and next play on Thursday, Jan. 22 against Bay State Academy Charter at 6 p.m.



Taylor Allen makes her way down the court.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Below, Megan Clark changes sides of the court.



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Athlete of the Week

Taydem Haley
Palmer High School

Haley helped lead Palmer boys basketball to a win last Friday night with 15 points, leading all scorers in the matchup against Monson.

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

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Candlepin League News

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

Bondsville League

WARE – It is week 18 of the Wednesday night Bondsville League at Roll-A-Way Lanes in Ware, Ma.

After 18 weeks, Fire Mountain holds on to a slim lead in first place with a record of 79.5-46.5. Sandri is in second place with a record of 76-50.

Night Hawks are in third place with a record of 73-53. Ironmen are in fourth place with a record of 71-55. Cannonballs are in fifth place at 64-62 and Spare Parts Bud have a record of 63-63. These are the teams currently with a winning percentage of 50% or higher.

In week 18, Flaming Bowling Balls bowled against Zeke's Freaks. In game one, Flaming Bowling Balls won by a score of 473-439. Zeke Sicard, a veteran candlepin bowler of the Bondsville League, bowled well with a 104 in game one.

In game two, Zeke's Freaks got the win by two points, 455-453. Sicard stayed consistent and scored 104 again.

In game three, Flaming Bowling Balls won the last game, 436-428. The team wins total pinfall by a final score of 1362-1322.

The Snappers bowled against Fire Mountain in week 18. In game one, Fire Mountain struck first and won 470-440.

In game two, Fire Mountain stayed hot and won again, 510-447. Rick Trott of Fire Mountain had the highest game on his team, 119, and his teammate Scott Brewster bowled with 114.

In game three, Snappers snapped out of their slump by winning game three, 445-429. Kevin Krasnecky of Snappers bowled a 117 and a three-game series of 325. The final score was 1409-1332 in favor of Fire Mountain.

The Night Hawks bowled against Slow Burners during week 18. In game one, Night Hawks defeated Slow Burners by a score of 484-466. Darryl Sinclair of Night Hawks started off the match with 127. Scott Radisic of Slow Burners began with 113.

In game two, Slow Burners beat the Night Hawks, 463-428. Sinclair bowled a 122 game in a losing effort. Radisic followed up with 112

during his team's win.

In game three, Slow Burners won 520-448 thanks to Nate Orszulak's 143 game. Sinclair finished with 106 and a series of 355. Radisic finished with 110 and a series of 335. The final score was 1449-1360 in favor of Slow Burners.

Sandri bowled against Spare Parts Bud in week 18. In game one, Sandri won by a score of 480-465. Brandon Lane of Sandri had the highest game of 119.

In game two, Spare Parts Bud won by just one point, 457-456. John Jebb of Spare Parts Bud was working on a spare in the tenth frame and got a three count to help his team win by one.

In game three, Sandri won by a score of 474-469. Sue Horton of Sandri finished with 119 and Jebb finished with 108. The final score was 1410-1391 in favor of Sandri.



How to contact the Sports Editor

Have the scoop on a local sports story? Want to submit a team photo, pass along a potential story idea, or just find out how to get a copy of that great photo of your young athlete? Please send all sports-related press releases and information to Sports Editor Greg Scibelli at: sports@turley.com or call, 1-413-283-8393.

Worcester Railers pick up overtime win over Portland Pirates

PORTLAND, ME — The Worcester Railers HC (16-15-2-1) fell to the Portland Pirates (15-10-5-2) in overtime on Saturday, January 17th, in front of a crowd of 6,076 with a final score of 3-2 at the Cross Insurance Arena. The Railers will take on the Pirates next on home ice on Sunday, January 18th at 3:05 p.m.

Portland nabbed the first goal of the night just 2:08 into the first off a goal from defenseman Andrew Nielsen (1-0-1). Nielsen's goal was the only one in the first period. Worcester answered the

1-0 lead from Portland with a goal from Jesse Pulkkinen (1-0-1) at 0:33 into the second to tie the game. Portland took back the one-goal lead halfway through the second, this time from Mitch Deelstra (1-0-1). Worcester once again evened the score with a goal from Drew Callin (1-0-1). A final goal from Max Andreev (1-0-1), at 3:27 in overtime secured the Pirates' 3-2 victory.

Worcester kicked off the night shorthanded just 16 seconds after puck drop. An early penalty against Lincoln Hatten for high-sticking

put Portland on its first power play of the game, which forced Worcester to fight the first two minutes of play for the night down a man. With just eight seconds remaining on Hatten's call, Portland defenseman Andrew Nielsen (5th) grabbed the only goal of the period for either team, which gave the Pirates a 1-0 lead to close the first twenty. Shots for the period with 11-4 in favor of Portland.

Worcester didn't wait long to tie the game in the second. Jesse Pulkkinen (3rd) picked up his 5th point of the season with a goal at

0:33. Portland went back on the power play soon after the score on a hooking call on Anthony Callin. Worcester had their first chance at the man-advantage about five minutes into the period, as Anthony Callin was tripped up by Max Andreev. Portland re-gained their one-goal lead once more around the halfway mark of the period, scored by Mitch Deelstra (2nd) at 9:35. Neither the Railers nor the Pirates could break past the blue line for the remainder of the second, which left the Railers down by one for a second time in the evening. Portland

outshot Worcester nine to seven. Penalties for the period were one for Worcester and two for Portland.

The Railers came out fighting in the third and tallied their highest shot total for any period of the night. A roughing call on Loke Johansson put Worcester on their third power play just over seven and a half minutes into play for the third. Unable to capitalize on their previous two power play chances, Drew Callin (10th) drove the puck home at 8:28 to even the score once more for the Railers. A late-game goal from Anthony

Callin had Worcester celebrating an early win; however, the goal was waved off for goaltender interference as Callin fell into the net of Brad Arvanitis. The game once again was 2-2 and went into overtime for the second consecutive night. In the end, the Pirates would take the win in overtime with a final score of 3-2, the last lamp lit by Max Andreev (7th) on a shot from atop the circles to beat Gahagen in net for Worcester. Final shots were 27-25 in favor of Portland. Final penalties were five for Portland and four for Worcester.

Registration set to open Feb. 1 for Quabbin Valley League

SOUTH HADLEY – On Sunday, Jan. 11, the Quabbin Valley Baseball League, an over-28 recreational league, held its first meeting of 2026 to prepare for the upcoming season.

At the meeting it was determined registration for players will open up on Sunday, Feb. 1.

For the 2026 season, the cost will be \$215 and will include a 16th game added to the regular season schedule.

During the 2025 season, the league experimented with playing on Mother's Day Saturday as well as a weeknight game to allow players an opportunity to play under the lights. While the night games were very successful, the Mother's Day Saturday games

were rained out.

Those elements will return along with a 16th game with an opponent to be determined as the league's board explores possibilities for inter-league matchups with another league in the region.

For returning players to the league, the deadline is Mar. 22 at 12 noon to be registered for the 2026 season in order to be guaranteed a roster spot. There will be open practices for all players but specifically targeted at new players scheduled for March 29 and April 4 at times and locations to be announced. The draft is currently scheduled to take place on April 4 following that practice.

The season is currently slated to start on Sunday, April 19 and following the success

of the six-team fall league last year, the league will also have a fall league in September and October this season.

The registration link will be live on Feb. 1 at www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org. Players must register and then pay the league dues via Venmo or contact the league leadership if an alternate form of payment is needed.

Aside from the weeknight and Mother's Day games, other games take place Sundays at 10 a.m. outside of Mother's Day, Memorial Day and July 4 weekends. Playoffs will be in August.

This is the 30th season for the league and league officials are looking to celebrate the anniversary with a couple of events.

Thunderbirds offense dries up in loss to Bridgeport Islanders

BRIDGEPORT, Conn. - The Springfield Thunderbirds (13-18-4-2) continued to have a tough time location offense, falling 4-1 to the Bridgeport Islanders (16-17-2-1) on Saturday night inside Total Mortgage Arena.

A bad break for T-Birds netminder Vadim Zherenko resulted in Bridgeport's game-opening tally at 6:37 of the opening period, as Zherenko lost his balance and fell in his blue paint, allowing Daylan Kuefler to carry the puck around the net and wrap it past the fallen goaltender to make it 1-0 Bridgeport.

Aside from that unfortunate break, the T-Birds and Islanders played a

mostly defensive-minded first period, as Zherenko's nine saves and Henrik Tikkanen's eight stops in the Bridgeport crease accounted for much of the action on the scoresheet.

Matthew Peca quickly got his troops back on track, as the T-Birds captain slipped a wrist through Tikkanen just 49 seconds into period two, tying the score, 1-1, and extending his point streak to five consecutive games. Matt Luff also extended his season-long point streak to seven games with the primary assist on Springfield's first marker of the evening.

However, that potential momentum-changer

was quickly washed out when Cam Berg connected on a wrist from the left circle just 2:08 later, restoring a one-goal Bridgeport lead, 2-1.

Shots and chances continued to come at a premium for both teams, as the clubs combined for only 43 shots all evening, including just 25 in the final 40 minutes of play.

The T-Birds never did receive a power play in this one, and the club's last-minute efforts with Zherenko on the bench proved fruitless, as Adam Beckman and Eetu Liukas each connected on empty-netters to give Bridgeport the final goals of the night.

PALMER | from page 9

The trio of senior Sophie Dufresne, senior Sarah Mohsin, and junior Kalyn Roy each scored two points.

A Nompoggi 3-pointer from the right corner and a Petraszewicz made free throw gave Palmer a 4-2 lead three minutes into the first quarter.

Then Holmes, who was the tallest player on the court, took over the spotlight for the home team. She made two put-back hoops and another inside basket giving the Lady Indians an 8-4 lead in the middle of the

opening quarter.

A minute later, a Holmes coast-to-coast fastbreak lay-up capped off North Brookfield's 8-0 run.

The Lady Panthers entered the second quarter, trailing by only two points (10-8) following field goals by Brouillette and Nompoggi.

A Milcalia inside hoop gave the Lady Indians an 18-8 lead with 4:40 remaining in the second quarter. It was their largest lead of the first half.

The home team was then held scoreless until the fourth quarter.

The Lady Panthers, who

trailed 18-12, at halftime, entered the fourth quarter with a 22-18 lead.

Petraszewicz scored four of the Palmer third quarter points, while Nompoggi, eighth grader Lainey Haley (2 points), and Brouillette combined to score the other six points.

A Milcalia jumper in the lane snapped North Brookfield's scoreless drought and cut their deficit to 22-20 with six minutes remaining in regulation.

"Their press defense really bothered us in the second half," Malone said. "We didn't

score any points in the third quarter, which was the difference maker.

Palmer pulled away at that point with a Brouillette baseline jumper, a 3-pointer from freshman Anabelle Ladue (3 points), and a lay-up from freshman Evelyn Ladue (2 points). The Ladue's are twins.

It was the Lady Panthers second road win of the regular season.

The two squads are scheduled to meet for the second time this season at Palmer High School at 7 p.m. on Feb. 2.

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HOCKEY

Amherst falls in second matchup with Agawam

AGAWAM – On Saturday, Jan. 10, Agawam ice hockey had its rematch with Amherst Regional, which co-ops with Pathfinder Tech.

The Brownies were able to pick up a 3-1 win, their first of the season. Anthony Barbarini, Casey Thomas, and Braden Parrilli scored the goals for Agawam with Nick Brown coming up with two assists.

Amherst's lone goal came from Sawyer Ferro. Agawam is 1-9 this year with Amherst now 5-6-1.



Silas Balboni runs into an opponent.



Pathfinder's Ethan Mooney flips a puck into the offensive zone.



Noah Latulippe sends a quick pass away.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com Sawyer Ferro fires a shot at the goal.



Joshua Feldman tries to steal the puck.



Brody Palmisano sends the puck away from the side of the ice.



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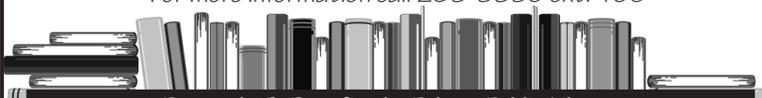
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Public notices

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, February 9th, 2026, at 7:10 PM** in the Police Department Meeting Room, 4419 Main Street, Palmer, MA.

The applicant, Shauna Ziembka, is seeking a Special Permit as required by §171.94(B)13 to display one additional main frontage sign in the Village Center 1 Zoning District, located on the property at 1018 Central Street, Palmer. This parcel is also known as Assessors Map 58, Lot 91.

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
01/22, 01/29/2026

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, February 9th, 2026, at 7:00 PM** in the Police Department Meeting Room, 4419 Main Street, Palmer, MA.

The applicant, Frank Dagostino, is seeking a Special Permit as required by §171.94(B)13 to display one additional frontage wall sign in the Village Center 1 Zoning District, located on the property at 1364 Main Street, Palmer. This parcel is also known as Assessors Map 58, Lot 5.

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
01/22, 01/29/2026

Town of Holland Public Forum

Tuesday, February 3, 2026 6:00 PM
in the Holland Town Hall
27 Sturbridge Road
Holland, MA 01521
FY26 Community Development Block Grant Application
Proposed FY26 CDBG Application

The Holland Select Board will conduct a public forum on **Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.** at the **Holland Town Hall** located at 27 Sturbridge Road, Holland, MA regarding its proposed FY26 application by the Town of Holland to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities Community Development Block Grant Program.

This hearing will serve as the first public forum to solicit community input on activities to be included in a potential Holland FY26 Community Development Block Grant application. All community members and stakeholders are invited to share thoughts on potential Commu-

nity Development Block Grant (CDBG) eligible activities to be included. Eligible projects typically include Infrastructure, Housing Rehabilitation, ADA Planning and Improvements, and Social Services.

All persons with questions or comments regarding the grant application will have an opportunity to be heard. Persons who require accommodation for the hearing should contact the town several days prior to the hearing date at (413)-245-7108 ext. 101. Those unable to attend can send written comments to the Holland Town Administrator, 27 Sturbridge Road, Holland, MA 01521, Attn: Stacy Stout. For further information contact Sarah Maroney at PVPC at (413) 781-6045 or smaroney@pvpc.org. 01/22, 01/29/2026

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Teresa Wieslawa Hrynkiw to H&R Block Mortgage Corporation, dated September 21, 2005 and recorded in the Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book 15355, Page 570, of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder, by assignment from: H&R Block Mortgage Corporation to Option One Mortgage Corporation, recorded on December 21, 2005, in Book No. 15587, at Page 81 Sand Canyon Corporation f/k/a Option One Mortgage Corporation to Deutsche Bank National Trust Company, as Trustee for Soundview Home Loan Trust 2005-OPT4, Asset-Backed Certificates, Series 2005-OPT4, recorded on January 30, 2013, in Book No. 19661, at Page 194 for breach of the conditions of said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing, the same will be sold at Public Auction at **10:00 AM on February 9, 2026**, on the mortgaged premises located at 114 Peck Brothers Road, Monson, Hampden County, Massachusetts, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage.

TO WIT: Lot 4 A certain parcel of land on the southeasterly side of Peck Bros. Road, Monson, Hampden County, Massachusetts, known and designated as Lot 4 on a plan entitled "Plan of Lots in Monson, Mass., Surveyed for Lawrence D. Tassinari, Scale 1" = 100', Jan. 11, 1982, Kenneth C. Sherman, Engineer-Surveyor, Palmer, Mass.," which plan is recorded in Hampden County Registry of Deeds, Book of Plans 203, Page 121, more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at an iron pin in the southeasterly line of Peck Bros. Road at the westerly corner of land now or formerly of Cynthia A. Lloyd (see Book of Plans 177, Page 116);

thence S. 51° 41' 30" E. along a stone wall, twenty-eight and 69/100 (28.69) feet to a point; thence S. 62° 27' 30" E. continuing along said stone wall, ninety-nine and 28/100 (99.28) feet to a point;

thence S. 75° 21' 30" E. continuing along said stone wall, one hundred two and 84/100 (102.84) feet to a point;

thence S. 66° 39' 15" E. two hundred seventy-one and 56/100 (271.56) feet to a point in a stone wall, the last four courses being along land now or formerly of said Lloyd;

thence S. 29° 54' 15" W. along land now or formerly of Lawrence D. Tassinari, one hundred thirteen and 00/100 (113.00) feet to an iron pin at the easterly corner of Lot 3;

thence N. 75° 56' W. along Lot 3, five hundred seventy-six and 09/100 (576.09) feet to an iron pin in the southeasterly line of said road; thence N. 45° 6' E.

along said road, two hundred nineteen and 94/100 (219.94) feet to the point beginning, all as shown on said plan. Containing 1.847 acres.

Lot 4A A certain parcel of land on the Southeasterly side of Peck Bros. Road, Monson, Mass., known and designated as Lot 4A on a plan entitled, "Plan of Lots in Monson, Mass., surveyed for Lawrence D. Tassinari dated January 11, 1982, Revised June 10, 1983, Kenneth C. Sherman, Engineer-Surveyor", which plan is recorded in Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book of Plans 210, Page 58, more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at an iron pin in the southeasterly line of said road at the southwest corner of land now or formerly of Thomas J. Barry, Jr., and Annette B. Barry, being Lot 4 on a plan in Book of Plans 203, Page 121;

thence S. 75° 56' E. one hundred ninety and 00/100 (190.00) feet along last named land to a point;

thence S. 70° 24' 45" W. one hundred four and 16/100 (104.16) feet along remaining land of Gene W. Burbee et ux to iron pin;

thence N. 28° 41' 45" W. seventy-two and 26/100 (72.26) feet along last named land to a point;

thence N. 71° 1' W. fifty-four and 43/100 (54.43) feet along last named land to the iron pin at the point of beginning, as shown on said plan. Containing 4,150 square feet of land.

Together with the right to maintain the existing leach field on remaining land of Gene W. Burbee and Louann M. Burbee.

For mortgagor's(s)' title see deed recorded with Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book 9247, Page 25. These premises will be sold and conveyed subject to and with the benefit of all rights, rights of way, restrictions, easements, covenants, liens or claims in the nature of liens, improvements, public assessments, any and all unpaid taxes, tax liens, water and sewer liens and any other municipal assessments or liens or existing encumbrances of record which are in force and are applicable, having priority over said mortgage, whether or not reference to such restrictions, easements, improvements, liens or encumbrances is made in the deed.

TERMS OF SALE: A deposit of Ten Thousand (\$10,000.00) Dollars by certified or bank check will be required to be paid by the purchaser at the time and place of sale. The balance is to be paid by certified or bank check at Harmon Law Offices, P.C., 150 California St., Newton, Massachusetts 02458, or by mail to P.O. Box 610389, Newton Highlands, Massachusetts 02461-0389, within thirty (30) days from the date of sale. Deed will be provided to purchaser for recording upon receipt in full of the purchase price. The description of the premises contained in said mortgage shall control in the event of an error in this publication.

Other terms, if any, to be announced at the sale.

DEUTSCHE BANK NATIONAL TRUST COMPANY,

AS TRUSTEE FOR SOUNDVIEW HOME LOAN TRUST 2005-OPT4, ASSET-BACKED CERTIFICATES, SERIES 2005-OPT4

Present holder of said mortgage By its Attorneys,

HARMON LAW OFFICES, P.C.

150 California St. Newton, MA 02458 (617)558-0500 28623

01/15, 01/22, 01/29/2026

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

Premises: 11 Christine Street, Palmer, MA 01069

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Randall E Paxton to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as Mortgagee, as nominee for First Federal Savings Bank of Boston, and now held by U.S. Bank National Association, said mortgage dated September 12, 2014 and recorded in the Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book 20424, Page 171, as affected by a Loan Modification dated June 7, 2016 and recorded in the Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book 21287, Page 50; as affected by an Affidavit dated March 2, 2023 and recorded in the Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book 24927, Page 586; said mortgage was assigned from Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as Nominee for First Federal Savings Bank of Boston to U.S. Bank National Association by assignment dated September 18, 2015 and recorded with said Registry of Deeds in Book 20876, Page 399; for breach of the conditions in said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at **Public Auction on February 19, 2026 at 01:00 PM** Local Time upon the premises, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit:

The following real property situate on the Southerly side of proposed street, known as "Christine Street" Town of Palmer, Hampden County, Massachusetts, bounded and described as follows:

Beginning at an iron pipe which is located S. 78 degrees 06 minutes E. a distance of four hundred thirty-six (436) feet from an iron pin in the Easterly line of Flynt Road and at the Northwest-erly corner of land formerly of Albert L'Heureux, now believed to be of Stephen Stoneberger, all as shown on "Plan of Land in Palmer, Mass. owned by Charles T. Carter, dated August, 1957, Theodore P. Drazek, R.L.S." recorded with the Hampden County Registry of Deeds, Book of Plans 70, Page 28; thence running

S. 78 degrees 06 minutes E. a distance of one hundred fifty (150) feet to an iron pin; thence turning and running

N. 18 degrees 54 minutes E one hundred fifty and no/100 (150) feet to an iron pin in the Southerly terminus of a proposed street known as "Christine Street" thence turning and running

N. 78 degrees 06 minutes W along the line of said proposed street one hundred fifty and no/100 (150.00) feet to an iron pin; thence turning and running

S. 18 degrees 54 minutes W. along land of Charles Carter et al one hundred fifty and no/100 (150) feet, more or less to the place of beginning.

Together with the right in common with the Grantors and other, to use the proposed street, as shown on said plan for all purposes of travel.

Being the same premises conveyed to the mortgagor by deed recorded in the Hampden County Registry of Deeds simultaneously herewith.

The description of the property contained in the mortgage shall control in the event of a typographical error in this publication.

For Mortgagor's Title see deed dated September 12, 2014 and recorded in the Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book 20424, Page 168.

TERMS OF SALE: Said premises will be sold and conveyed subject to all liens, encumbrances, unpaid taxes, tax titles, municipal liens and assessments, if any, which take precedence over the said mortgage above described.

FIVE THOUSAND (\$5,000.00) Dollars of the purchase price must be paid in cash, certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check at the time and place of the sale by the purchaser. The balance of the purchase price shall be paid in cash, certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check within thirty (30) days after the date of sale.

Other terms to be announced at the sale.

Brock & Scott, PLLC
23 Messenger Street
2nd Floor

Plainville, MA 02762
Attorney for U.S. Bank National Association

Present Holder of the Mortgage (401) 217-8701
01/22, 01/29, 02/05/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield MA, 01103 (413)748-7758 Docket No. HD20P0465EA In the matter of: Frederick W Shaw Also known as: Frederick Walter Shaw, Sr. Date of Death: 02/06/2020 CITATION ON PETITION FOR ALLOWANCE OF ACCOUNT

To all interested persons:

A Petition has been filed by: **Amy McClosky of Monson MA** requesting allowance of the second account(s) as Personal Representative and any other relief as requested in the Petition.

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before 10:00 a.m. on **02/17/2026**.

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

Witness, Hon. **Claudine T. Stoudemire**, First Justice of this Court.
Date: January 14, 2026

Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
01/22/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758 Docket No. HD25E0051PP CITATION

To Margery J. Wilburn, of Carroll County, Taneytown, Maryland, as herself and as Personal Representative of William Stanton; James E. Stanton, as himself and as Personal Representative of Sandra Stanton, Jacqueline A. Stanton, and Donna Stanton, all from Hampden County; Ralph I. Stanton, Jr., and Prudence Neilsen, both of Worcester County; Janet Arbio, of Hartford County, and to all other persons interested.

A petition has been presented to said Court by Charles L. Stanton, of Brimfield, representing that they hold as tenants in common in an undivided part or share of land lying in Brimfield, in the County of Hampden, setting forth that they desire that all of said land may be sold at private sale or public auction for not less than Five Thousand (\$5,000.00) Dollars, and praying

that partition may be made of all the land aforesaid according to law, and to that end that a commissioner be appointed to make such partition and be ordered to make sale and conveyance of all, or any part of said land which the Court finds cannot be advantageously divided either at private sale or public auction, and be ordered to distribute the net proceeds thereof after full adjudication of the equitable claims contained in said petition and supplemental memorandum filed with the Court.

If you desire to object thereto, you or your attorney, should file a written appearance in said Court at Springfield before ten o'clock in the forenoon on the **5th day of March 2026**, the return day of this citation.

WITNESS, BARBARA M. HYLAND, Esquire, First Justice of said Court, this 31st day of December 2025.
01/08, 01/15, 01/22/2026

TRI-TOWNS (Brimfield, Holland & Wales) Public Hearing - Wednesday, January 28, 2026, at 6:00 PM FY 2022/2023 Project Update Hearing Hearing & FY 2026 Application Forum

The Tri-Town Communities of Brimfield, Holland and Wales, in association with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, will conduct a performance hearing regarding the town's ongoing FY22/23 Community Development Block Grant Programs. The hearing will take place at **6:00 PM on Wednesday, January 28, 2026**, in person at the Wales Senior Center, 85 Main Street, Wales, MA 01081.

The hearing will review the projects funded through the town's FY22/23 Community Development Block Grant Program including the regional Housing Rehabilitation Program and funding for the Wales Community Pantry. These activities received funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, Massachusetts CDBG program.

This hearing will also serve as the first public forum to solicit community input on potential activities to be included in a potential Tri-Towns FY26 Community Development Block Grant application. All community members and stakeholders are invited to share thoughts on potential CDBG-eligible activities to be included.

All persons with questions or comments regarding the performance hearing will have an opportunity to submit comments up until and through the public hearing. Please submit comments to Joe Hagogian at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission @ jhagogian@pvpc.org or 413-781-6045. Persons who require special accommodations should contact the Town of Wales prior to the hearing date at 413-245-7571 x 100.
01/22/2026

TOWN OF PALMER TOWN COUNCIL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Palmer Town Council will hold a Public Hearing on **Monday, February 9, 2026**, at the Palmer Town Building, 4417 Main Street, Palmer, MA at **6:35 pm** on the proposed Zoning Amendment: Temporary Moratorium on Battery Energy Storage Systems of the Palmer Zoning Ordinance.

Anyone interested in being heard should appear at the time and place so designated.

Palmer Town Council
01/22/2026

MUSIC | from page 1

In addition to singing, Monkaba also performs with wooden spoons, a rhythmic element that adds another layer of entertainment and draws smiles from the crowd. Roseman noted that Monkaba's natural warmth and approachability play a major role in the duo's success.

"In some very significant ways, Ben is the heart of the

show and the ambassador," Roseman said. "There have been places where we play for the first time and people's faces are passive. As the show goes on, you see their faces start to light up. By the end, they're all feeling joy."

When asked about favorite songs, both musicians agreed it's difficult to choose. Monkaba said he particularly enjoys Motown medleys and classic, upbeat tunes. Roseman shared that for Monkaba's birthday performances,

they try to compile a set list of their "greatest hits," often finding they have far more favorites than can fit into a single show. One standout number includes a rewritten, family-friendly cover of "the Rolling Stone," customized to reflect the duo's partnership and add an extra dose of humor.

The Ben & Ed Show maintains a busy schedule, sometimes performing as many as five or six shows within a few days. While their

calendar is often packed, Roseman said the fast pace is worth it.

"I just love coming to senior centers and places and watching everybody light up," he said. "It's a great thing and really enjoyable for me."

Ben & Ed are available for private bookings and can be found on Facebook by searching for the Ben & Ed Show, where information about performances and booking inquiries is available.



Turley photos by Abigail McCoy
The Palmer Senior Center welcomed back the Ben & Ed musical comedy show on Jan. 16.

WORKSHOP | from page 1

workshop at the organization. While she has taught watercolor classes before, including at Western Mass Creative Arts in Westfield, this session was designed specifically to introduce participants to the fundamentals of watercolor while producing small, finished greeting cards. Previous workshops she has led were more theory-based, focusing on paper types, tools, and techniques rather than completed projects.

Guidetti currently teaches both beginning and intermediate watercolor classes at Western Mass Creative Arts, typically running from March through November. She does not usually teach during the winter months, making her appearance in Monson a special opportunity for local artists.

The workshop began with participants being welcomed into the space and encouraged to walk around and view artwork displayed throughout the building. The collection, curated by the Arts Council, served as both inspiration and a reminder of the organization's ongoing commitment to supporting the arts in the community.

During the session, Guidetti emphasized the importance of using proper materials. Participants worked with professional-grade



Due to space in the Monson Arts Council building the watercolor groups were split up so everyone could have enough space to paint.

watercolor paper such as Arches, made in France, and Fabriano, produced in Italy. She also discussed other paper options, including British-made papers and a newer Chinese manufacturer known for its textured surface. By introducing different materials, she helped participants understand how paper quality affects the outcome of a painting.

Guidetti led the group through warm-up exercises designed to remove pressure and encourage experimentation. One technique involved applying water to the paper and sprinkling salt onto the surface to create organic textures. She explained that the success of the technique depends on timing: too wet and

the salt dissolves, too dry and it has no effect. Participants were reassured that imperfect results were part of the learning process, and alternative techniques were demonstrated if the salt effect did not work as planned.

Throughout the workshop, Guidetti stressed that watercolor is not a race or a competition. Participants were encouraged to work at their own pace and focus on enjoyment rather than perfection. Even those who completed only one card were assured they would leave with materials to continue working at home.

Instruction also included practical advice on brush care, paint mixing, and framing considerations. Guidetti ex-

plained how creating pigment "puddles" helps artists control the balance of water and color, and she cautioned against common mistakes such as leaving brushes soaking in water or using abrasive erasers on quality watercolor paper.

As the session progressed, participants were guided through multiple card designs, including abstract washes, simple landscapes, and floral compositions. Some designs incorporated pen and ink, though drawing was kept minimal to maintain accessibility for beginners. The workshop concluded with techniques for lifting paint and adding details once the paper was fully dry.

Cindy Colburn, clerk and

secretary of the Monson Arts Council, was also present and shared information about upcoming programming. Colburn explained that the council has several additional workshops planned, including a six-hour watercolor class scheduled for March 28 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. A six-week sketching course is expected to begin in April and continue into May, and a three-session fluid acrylic instruction course is also planned. Dates and registration details will be posted on the Monson Arts Council website.

Colburn described her role as keeping the organization running smoothly behind the scenes, ensuring records are maintained and helping creative projects stay

organized. She encouraged community members to get involved with the Arts Council, noting that increased participation helps strengthen the arts in Monson.

Both Guidetti and Colburn emphasized the welcoming atmosphere of the Monson Arts Council and its importance as a creative hub for the town. Guidetti expressed appreciation for the warm reception she received and said she hopes participants found the experience both educational and enjoyable.

The workshop reflected the council's broader mission: to make art accessible, foster creativity, and provide opportunities for residents to learn, experiment, and connect through the arts.

LESSON | from page 1

by step. The program began earlier this year with a visit from Hampden County District Attorney Anthony Gulluni, who met with the eighth grade class to discuss his role and introduce students to the justice system.

Thursday's civics lesson will be followed by a mock trial later this month, during which students will reenact a case using a provided fact pattern. Students will be assigned roles as prosecutors, defense attorneys, witnesses, and jurors, allowing them to experience firsthand how a trial unfolds.

"The third visit is a trial reenactment, where we walk them through the process of a trial and what that looks like," Anselmo said. "The final part is a court tour, where we bring the students to the courthouse to sit in on an arraignment and see what's happening throughout the day."

According to Anselmo, a key goal of the program is exposing students to career pathways within the justice system beyond attorneys and judges.

"It's all about showing them job opportunities... judges, clerks, probation...so

they can see how many different roles exist in the system," she said. "It also gives them an inside look into the criminal justice system from the district attorney's office, which is really special."

The Bill of Rights presentation at Monson was led by Assistant District Attorney Elizabeth Simonian, a prosecutor in the office's appellate division. Simonian described her role as working primarily on post-conviction cases and resolving complex legal issues that arise during or after trials.

"I was invited to present specifically about civics, the way the government works, and how we, the people, fit into that," Simonian said. "I went through the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, talking about the powers the Constitution grants to the government and the individual rights it grants to us."

To engage students, Simonian incorporated real-world scenarios and interactive discussion, encouraging students to think critically about how constitutional rights apply in everyday situations.

"It's very important for students to learn about our rights," she said. "We really



The Monson High cafeteria is filled with students diligently listening to the presentation.

want these kids to understand what those rights are and why they matter."

Monson High School Principal Chris Fontaine praised the program for bringing classroom concepts to life and providing students with authentic learning experiences.

"We are extremely excited that our 8th grade students were selected by the Hampden County District Attorney's Office and District Attorney Anthony Gulluni for this meaningful learning opportunity," Fontaine said in a statement. "At Monson High

School, our goal is to provide students with authentic, real-world experiences that bring classroom learning to life."

Fontaine noted that students have already met with Gulluni and his team to learn about the justice system and the Bill of Rights, and that the upcoming mock trial on Jan. 29 will allow students to actively apply what they have learned through hands-on participation.

"This experience will culminate in a visit to the courthouse, where students will see the legal process in

action, connect their learning to real careers in law and public service, meet a sitting judge, and gain a deeper appreciation for civic responsibility," Fontaine said.

The Adopt-a-Class program is one of several outreach initiatives offered by the Hampden County District Attorney's Office. Anselmo said the Community Safety and Outreach Unit regularly works with schools and youth across the county on topics including internet safety, impaired and distracted driving, healthy relationships, and substance awareness.



Gina Anselmo, Deputy Director of the Hampden District Attorney's Community Safety and Outreach Unit, speaks to the Monson 8th grade class.

"Adopt-a-Class is just one of many programs we offer," Anselmo said. "But it's a powerful way to help students understand their rights, their government, and how the justice system works in real life."

The remaining components of the program will continue later this month and into the spring, giving Monson eighth graders a full-circle view of civics in action; from the classroom to the courtroom.

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