

The Journal Register

SERVING PALMER, MONSON, BRIMFIELD, HOLLAND & WALES

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MONSON

First Church of Monson celebrates installation of senior pastor

By Abigail McCoy
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MONSON – The First Church of Monson, Congregational, United Church of Christ, marked a momentous occasion this past Sunday, Mar. 1, with the installation of The Reverend Dr. Holly Norwick as Senior Pastor. The celebration recognized not only the union between Pastor Norwick and the congregation but also a full year of ministry, fellowship, and shared vision for the future.

The afternoon began with a welcoming Q&A session with Pastor Norwick at 2:15 p.m., allowing congregants to engage directly with their pastor. Attendees had the opportunity to hear her reflections on the first year of her ministry and her hopes for the church community. “An installation is a celebration and official recognition of a union between a pastor and a congregation,” Pastor Norwick explained. “Today is a celebration of the fact that we found each other.”

Following the Q&A, the Treble Makers, a youth choral ensemble under the direction of Kyle Langlois, performed for the gathered congregation. The group, composed of students in grades 6-12 (including Blake, Bobby, Jolie, Josiah,



Turley photos by Abigail McCoy
Rev. Holly Norwick leads the way down the aisle as the senior choir sings the introduction.

Lili, and Nora) brought vibrant energy and musicality to the afternoon’s proceedings.

The formal worship service commenced, led by Pastor Norwick alongside church leaders and visiting clergy. Among the distin-

guished guests were Rev. Carol Steinbrecher, Area Conference Minister for the North Central Region; Rev. Paul Nesbit, Moderator of the Hampden Association and pastor of the First Congregational Church of Westfield and Southwick Congregational Church; Rev. Gary Grimes, Chair of the Association’s Committee on Ministry and pastor of First Congregational Church of Chicopee; and Rev. Janet Decker Brown, Registrar of the Hampden Association and pastor of Feeding Hills Congregational Church.

The ceremony featured a blessing tree, where congregants were invited to write personal messages to Pastor Norwick on colorful leaves. These leaves were then placed on the tree at the front of the sanctuary as a symbolic gesture of love, support, and communal blessing.

Music played a central role throughout the celebration. Kiel Krommer, Director of Music Ministries, led the Senior Choir of the First Church of Monson, whose

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The Treble Makers, a youth music group that comes from the church, sang after the Q&A with Rev. Norwick.

PALMER

PFD delivers first baby

By Abigail McCoy
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PALMER – In the early morning hours of Feb. 24, a routine emergency call turned into a milestone moment for the Palmer Fire Department, as on-duty EMTs and paramedics assisted in delivering a healthy baby boy inside a Palmer home.

According to Deputy Chief John Fitzgerald, crews were dispatched to a residence at 4:59 a.m. for a report of a woman in active labor. Four personnel, three paramedics and one EMT, were on duty at the station at the time and responded immediately.

From the moment of dispatch, the response was swift. Fitzgerald said the crew arrived on scene within six minutes.

“Paramedics and EMTs responded, assessed mom and delivered a healthy baby boy shortly after arrival,” Fitzgerald said.

Upon entering the home, the crew quickly established priorities, assessing the mother’s condition and obtaining vital signs. It soon became clear that the baby’s arrival was imminent.

“They determined that the safest action would be delivery inside the house,” Fitzgerald explained, noting that attempting to move or

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MONSON



Turley photos by Abigail McCoy
Volunteer head chefs Lucy Sousa and Adrian Keefe.

Bread and Belonging: St. Paul’s revives community meal

By Abigail McCoy
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PALMER – After an eight-year hiatus, St. Paul’s Church has brought back a tradition of hospitality and fellowship with its monthly “Bread and Belonging” community meal, offering residents not just a hot din-

ner but a welcoming place to gather.

Held Feb. 28, the complimentary dinner marked the church’s second monthly meal since the program was revived in January. According to the Rev. Steven Sousa, the renewed effort reflects both a return to roots and a renewed commitment to serving the broader Palmer community.

MONSON

Boards unite to discuss budget

By Abigail McCoy
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MONSON – In a wide-ranging and at times sobering discussion, town and school leaders gathered Mar. 2 for a joint Tri-Board Meeting to confront what many described as a structural financial crisis years in the making.

Led by Town Administrator Jennifer Wolowicz and Superintendent Paul Foster, the meeting centered on a projected \$1.58 million shortfall for fiscal year 2027; a figure that represents the cost of maintaining current services, not expanding them.

Officials repeatedly stressed that the gap is not the result of new programs or spending initiatives, but the cumulative impact of rising fixed costs, mandated obligations, and limited revenue growth.

“This is a mathematical problem”

Wolowicz framed the challenge as a convergence of forces affecting communities across Massachusetts, echoing recent reports from the Massachusetts Municipal Association describing a

PALMER

St. Stan’s annual spaghetti dinner raises money for scholarships

By Abigail McCoy
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PALMER – Community members gathered Mar. 1 at St. Stan’s Polish Club for the organization’s annual Spaghetti Dinner, an event that once again brought residents together in support of the Richard Frydryk Scholarship Fund.

Tickets were sold for \$10 at the bar prior to and on the day of the event. Guests were treated to a hearty meal of pasta topped with meatballs and sauce, salad, garlic bread and a wide selection of

homemade desserts donated by club members. Volunteers worked throughout the day preparing large pans of food, while the dessert table (filled with member-contributed sweets) quickly became a popular stop for attendees.

Melissa Burns, a member of the scholarship committee who has been involved for five or six years, said the dinner is one of the organization’s signature community events.

“This is another one of the wonderful community events that we do,” Burns said during the evening. “It

helps support scholarships for high schoolers here in town...both at Palmer High School and Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School.”

The Richard Frydryk Scholarship Fund assists graduating seniors from Palmer and Pathfinder as they pursue continuing education, whether at a four-year college, community college, trade school or other post-secondary program. Burns said the committee remains deeply committed to

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Turley photo by Abigail McCoy
The masterminds in the kitchen: Stan Fitz, Melissa Burns, and Kaleigh Ferrindino.



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Public invited to Opacum Land Trust's Annual Meeting

PALMER – Do you enjoy hiking, mountain biking, hunting, fishing, or other outdoor recreation? Are you interested in protecting local land, water, and wildlife? Are you curious about Opacum Land Trust, land conservation, or how you could get involved? Join Opacum Land Trust for their Annual Meeting Breakfast. All are welcome to this free event. This

free breakfast will be held on Saturday, March 21 at Pathfinder High School, Panek St, Palmer, MA from 10 a.m. to noon.

In addition to local conservation updates, attendees will hear from guest speaker and Director of Rural Affairs of Massachusetts, Anne Gobi. Director Gobi will speak about her involvement with the MILUS (Massachusetts

Integrated Land Use Strategy) Project and PILOT (Payments in Lieu of Taxes) commission and how they relate to conservation in the state.

REMEMBER TO RSVP – Please RSVP by March 6. You can RSVP on our website at <https://www.opacumlt.org/> events, through the Facebook event, or call the Opacum Land Trust office at (508) 347-9144.

Salli Greene herbalist comes to Brimfield Senior Center

BRIMFIELD – Join us Monday, March 16 at 10:30 a.m. for an engaging presentation at the Brimfield Senior Center, “The Wonder & Magic of Tea” with herbalist Salli Greene from Alternatives for Health in Sturbridge. Salli began her work with herbs in 1977 at Quincy Marketplace in Boston, where she sold live plants and handmade products. Over the years, her inter-

est in culinary and aromatic herbs grew into a lifelong passion.

After returning to Sturbridge in 2001, Salli expanded her gardens and deepened her studies. In 2004, she completed a 10month herbal program that introduced her to medicinal herbs—a transformative experience that led her to further study in Belize with Rosita Arvigo and with renowned

herbalist Rosemary Gladstar. She now teaches Rosemary Gladstar's 10month Herbal Apprenticeship.

During this program, Salli will demonstrate how to blend teas to support overall health. Join us for an informative session, along with tea and light refreshments. Please call 413-245-7253 to reserve your seat; space is limited.



Palmer Senior Center

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

March 6, “The Juror”
Annie Laird (Demi Moore) is a sculptor who lives in New York with her son Oliver. Annie works as a data entry clerk. Annie is selected to be a juror in the trial of mob boss Louie Boffano, who is accused of ordering the murder of federal informant Salvatore Riggio and his entire family including his son Tommy and wife. What she does to protect herself and son is unbelievable.

March 13, “Fools Gold”
Fool's Gold is a 2008

American romantic action comedy film from Warner Bros. Pictures about a recently divorced couple who rekindle their romantic life while searching for a lost treasure.

March 20 “People We Met on Vacation”
A 2026 American romantic comedy film directed by Haley Polar opposites, Poppy wants to explore the world while Alex would prefer to stay home with a good book, but surprisingly they become best friends after sharing a car to their small Ohio hometown from Boston. They live far apart, but for a decade they have shared one week of summer vacation together, which finally leads to a deep-

er connection.

March 27 “Ford VS Ferrari”
Academy Award-winners Matt Damon and Christian Bale star in FORD v FERRARI, based on the remarkable true story of the visionary American car designer Carroll Shelby (Damon) and the fearless British-born driver Ken Miles (Bale), who together battled corporate interference, the laws of physics, and their own personal demons to build a revolutionary race car for Ford Motor Company and take on the dominating race cars of Enzo Ferrari at the 24 Hours of Le Mans in France in 1966.

Monday Evening Programs 4:30
March 2, Easter Wreath

with Kim Keaton, \$10 Paid in Advance

March 4, 12:30 Easter Tree with Kim Keaton \$15 due at sign up

March 9, Bake Potato Bar with all the Fixings followed by Trivia

March 16, Brian from BCBS “Presentation on Medicaid” with Light Snacks to Follow

March 18, at 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. St Patrick's Party with Memory Lane

March 23, Spaghetti and Meatballs Dinner/Pictionary to follow

Join the center for a 4-part series “Introduction to the Quabbin” on Monday, March 30, April 27, May 25 and June 29.

Monson nomination papers available

MONSON – The Monson Town Clerk's Office announces that nomination papers are now available for the Annual Town Election to be held on June 9, 2026.

The following slate of offices are available:

Select Board, 1 Seat,
term 3 years

Town Clerk, 1 Seat,
term 3 years

Board of Assessors, 1 Seat,
term 3 years

School Committee, 2 Seats,
one term 2 years
one term 3 years

Water/Sewer Commission,
1 Seat,term 3 years

Cemetery Commission,
1 Seat,term 3 years

Parks and Recreation Commission, 1 Seat,
term 3 years

Housing Authority, 1 Seat,
term 5 years

The deadline to obtain nomination papers is Thursday April 16.

For inquiries contact the Monson Town Clerk's office at 413-267-4115 or email: townclerk@monson-ma.gov.

Spring Gardening Workshops March 28

By Kristin Rivers
krivers@turley.com

WESTFIELD – The Western Massachusetts Master Gardener Association will be holding the 27th Annual “Let's Get Growing!” Spring Gardening Workshops on March 28 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Westfield Middle School - South.

The festivities will include a marketplace fair, raffles, an Ask a Master Gardener table, refreshments, soil testing and 10 classes to help educate and empower them in gardening this spring.

This year's topics are “Using Trees and Shrubs for Year-long Interest,” “Berry Delicious Gardens,” “Practical Tips: Growing for a Changing Climate,” “Gardening in Small Places,” “From One Comes Many: Propagation Workshop (Hands-on),” “Invasive Species 101: Identification & Management,” “Vegetables vs. Pests: How to Win!” “Design Your Own Water Feature,” “Let's Go Native: A Sustainable, Attainable Approach,” and Get your Hands Dirty: Creating a Succulent Garden (Hands-on).”

The hands-on workshops, it should be noted, are already filled.

The speakers include Dan Ziomek, owner of Sugarloaf Gardens, Berry Specialist Laura Griffin McDermott, Plant Magic Garden



Submitted photo Rosey Bonne

Hands on workshop making succulent container gardens

Owner and Gardening for Hot People Podcast Co-Host Cheryl Rafuse, Master Gardener Chris Ferrero, Wistariahurst Gardens Master Gardener Toi Graham, Environmental Biologist at the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources

Jennifer Forman, Master Gardener Ed Sourdiffe, Full Circle Garden Master Gardeners Margery Gerard and JoAnne Palmer and Kessa McEwen, horticulturist and landscape designer at Berkshire Botanical Garden.

Anyone interested is en-

couraged to register quickly, as classes fill up fast. Mail-in registrations have to be post-marked and sent in by March 16 at \$35, online registration is through March 26 for \$35 and walk-ins are the day of at \$40 cash only.

Rosey Bonner, a member of the WMMGA and part of the Planning Committee for the event, expressed excitement for this year's workshops and said attendees have an opportunity to take two of them during the day.

“The sessions are an hour and 15 minutes long. The speaker usually speaks for an hour and then gives them a good 15 minutes because they usually have lots of questions that may not have come up in what we were talking about,” Bonner said.

On the topics, Bonner explained, “our whole mission is sustainability and good practices” and community feedback also guides this, with evaluations at the end of the workshops. A couple of this year's workshops, for example, came to be through those evaluations.

“We didn't have anything on trees and shrubs last year, so a lot of people said, ‘Can you bring back something else in trees and shrubs?’ So, the person we have doing it this year is Dan Ziomek and he's been

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Brimfield to mark 250th Anniversary of Independence

BRIMFIELD – Save the date! On Saturday, June 13, 2026, a community-wide celebration marking the 250th anniversary of our nation's freedom will take place in Brimfield. In recognition of this year's historic milestone, a full day of remembrance and celebration is planned. All are welcome to attend the day's events, which include the following: Revolutionary War themed cemetery tours, a ceremony at the town common gazebo, a parade, and fun-filled festivities at the Brimfield Winery. The evening will close out with a spectacular fireworks display.

Additional details and updates will be available through the Friends of Historic Brimfield event website: www.fohbrimfield.org.

Tax-deductible donations can also be made in support of this celebration through this website, and in gratitude, do-

nors will be recognized in the event program. Donations can also be mailed to: Friends of Historic Brimfield, P.O. Box 52, Brimfield, MA 01010 with “Spirit of Brimfield” in the memo.

This event is currently being sponsored by the Massachusetts Army National Guard and Classic Hits 97.7 fm. If you or your company are interested in any level of corporate or business sponsorship, please visit the event website at www.fohbrimfield.org. Additional volunteers are needed for both planning and to help with activities during the event, or if you are interested in putting a float in the parade, contact Friends of Historic Brimfield at (413) 239-0288 for more information.

Be sure to save the date for this celebration of the founding of our country. More information will follow.

MAC hosts watercolor workshop March 7

MONSON – Watercolor workshop to be held by the Monson Arts Council on March 7, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the House of Art located at 200 Main St. in Monson.

Participants should be familiar with watercolor paint-

ing and are required to bring supplies of their own, including paints, pallet, brushes and paper.

Cost is \$20 for members and \$25 for nonmembers.

To register go to Monson Arts Council website.

Snow Be Gone Challenge ends March 20

MONSON – On Saturday, February 28, the Monson Arts Council kicked off a fundraiser/membership drive titled the “Snow Be Gone Challenge”.

Everyone is invited to guess the day that the snowbank at the Monson post office

will disappear and become a puddle. It is \$20 to place your guess, which gives you an automatic membership to the arts council.

The winner will receive a \$200.00 prize. The challenge ends March 20, sign up at www.monsonartsCouncil.org.

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Business

Off With Their Threads celebrates grand opening

By Abigail McCoy
amccoy@turley.com

PALMER – Shoppers filled the racks and lined the front counter Sunday at 1108 Park Street as Off With Their Threads, Palmer's newest consignment boutique, celebrated its grand opening on March 1 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The new shop, owned by Jody Hastings, offers a curated selection of second-hand clothing and accessories, blending high-end consignments with everyday fashion finds. From the moment the doors opened, customers streamed in to browse, chat and welcome the business to the community.

For Hastings, the boutique represents the realization of a longtime dream that came together in just a matter of months.

"I've always loved clothes and fashion," she said. "I like dressing people. I like dressing myself. I just love making people feel good."

Hastings previously worked at another consignment shop, where she handled decorating, mannequin styling and overall store design. Encouragement from customers planted the seed that she could create a shop of her own. About two months ago, with the support of her husband, that idea became reality.

"My husband said, 'Would you like to do that? Let's look for places,'" she said. "And we threw it all together really fast."

The boutique's whimsical name is inspired by Hastings' longtime love of Alice in Wonderland. With help from her husband and a friend, she landed on "Off With Their Threads," a playful nod to the Queen of Hearts' famous line.

Her daughter, Gabriela Gonzalez, said fashion has always been part of her mother's life.

"She loves thrifting, she loves fashion... this has always been her thing," Gonzalez said. "Her mom used to hand sew her clothes for her when she was younger, so I think that's where a lot of her inspiration comes from."

Off With Their Threads operates as a traditional consignment shop, allowing customers to bring in cloth-



Turley photos by Abigail McCoy
Jody Hastings, owner of Off With Their Threads. All of the items available were carefully curated and put on display.

ing and accessories to sell. Hastings reviews each item and selects pieces that fit the store's style and standards. Consignors receive a percentage of the sale once their items sell during a 60-day consignment period.

The shop's pricing structure is designed to benefit both the store and consignors. For items priced under \$35, the store retains 60% of the sale and the consignor receives 40%. For items priced above \$35, the split favors the consignor at 60%, with 40% going to the store. For higher-end pieces priced above \$150, Hastings offers a 70-30 split in favor of the consignor.

"A lot of places don't do that," she said. "But people pay a lot of money for their things, and I'm trying to make them the most."

Consignors can either collect their earnings at the end of the 60-day period or keep the balance as store credit; something Hastings jokingly refers to as "girl money."

"It's store credit," she said with a laugh. "But we call it girl money."

The shop features a range of styles, including higher-end brands alongside everyday wear, reflecting Hastings' goal of making fashion accessible while still offering unique finds.

Opening day energy



was high, with Hastings busy at the front counter as customers checked out armfuls of items. Gonzalez said the response from the community has been overwhelming.

"It's been incredibly busy," she said during the grand opening. "It's really exciting to see."

Off With Their Threads is open Wednesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 7



Every inch of space was carefully put together for opening day.



A large line was made through the shop as people circled through the rooms and eventually lined up to purchase their chosen goods.



Racks lined the walls and the center of the room, there was even a small changing area in the rear.

p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The boutique also maintains a Facebook page where customers can find updates, contact information and additional details about consigning.

With racks full and steady foot traffic throughout the day, Hastings said she hopes the shop becomes more than just a place to buy clothes.

"I just want people to come in, say hi, and leave with something they love," she said.

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Happy Birthday VAL!

Viewpoints

SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor

I lost money as a widow and ex-spouse by not knowing the rules

Dear Rusty:

I just found out, as someone who was collecting widow's benefits on my second husband, a very small amount, for some time, that I was, all along, entitled to divorce benefits from my first husband, which are much more. I thought I had to wait until my first husband passed before I could collect anything from him. Now I learned I have the right to collect as a divorcee. All of these years I have been missing out on a bigger benefit because I didn't know this. Please make this clear and stress it for others in my position.

Signed: Lost Benefits

Dear Lost Benefits:

I am truly saddened that you lost out on benefits from your first husband for such a long time. Although you could not collect an ex-spouse benefit from Husband #1 while you were married to Husband #2, as soon as your current husband died you again became eligible for ex-spouse benefits from Husband #1.

Basically, the rules say you cannot collect benefits from an ex-spouse if you have remarried and remain married. In other words, you cannot be "currently married" to collect benefits from an ex-spouse. But the death of Husband #2 meant that you were now eligible to collect ex-spouse benefits from your first husband - husband #1. I hope when you later filed for your ex-spouse benefits you asked for six months of retroactive benefits.

In your situation, when your Husband #2 died, you actually had a choice - either collect your surviving spouse benefit from your recently deceased husband #2, or to collect a regular ex-spouse benefit from your first husband if that is more than your benefit as your second husband's widow. Regular ex-spouse benefits are available even though he is still living (and, indeed, even if he remarried) because you are no longer married to husband #2.

This, however, is not always the way things work out for someone who has had multiple marriages. It all depends on the SS benefit each former spouse was entitled to. That's because

your survivor benefit as your 2nd husband's widow is based on the full (100%) amount he was receiving from Social Security when he died.

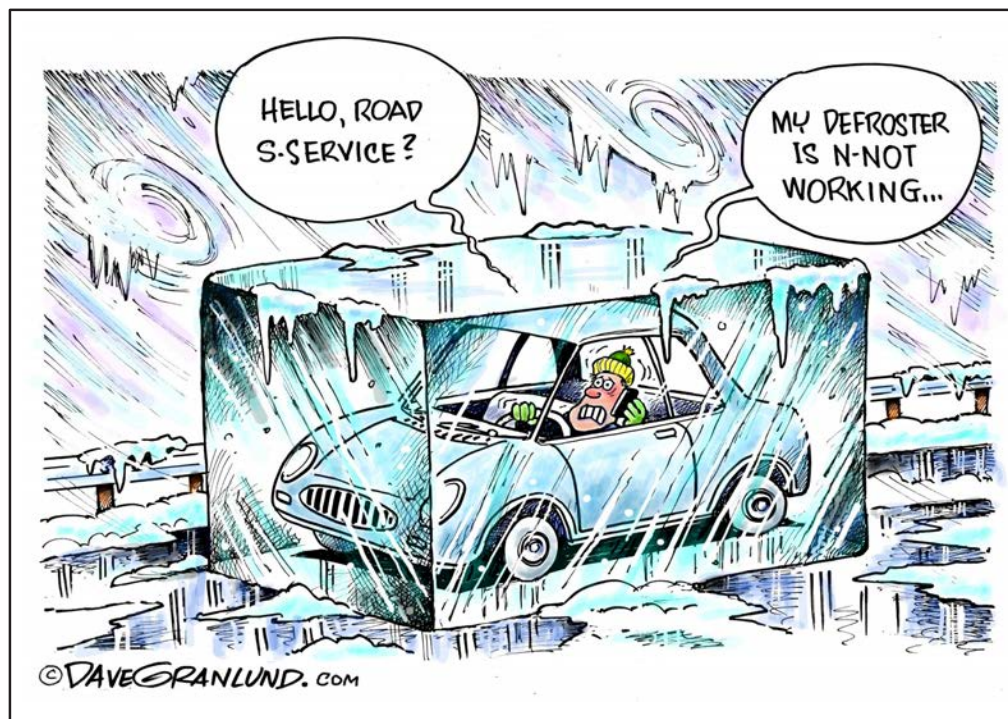
In contrast, your benefit as your first husband's ex-spouse while he is still living will be based upon half (50%) of his full retirement age SS entitlement. And often, 100% of a deceased person's SS benefit is more than 50% of another living person's amount. But not always.

It's important to also know that if you claim any SS benefit before reaching your personal Rull Retirement Age, the monthly amount will be reduced. Benefits as a spouse (or a surviving spouse) do not reach maximum until the spouse reaches FRA, which is somewhere between age 66 and 67 depending on the spouse's year of birth.

It's also important to know that if a surviving spouse is working, any SS benefit received will be subject to Social Security's Annual Earnings Test, which limits how much can be earned before SS benefits are affected. For 2026, the earnings limit for those collecting early SS benefits is \$24,480 and, if that limit is exceeded, Social Security will take away some of your benefits. Note that the death of Husband #2 meant that you were now eligible to collect ex-spouse benefits from your first husband - husband #1. I hope when you later filed for your ex-spouse benefits you asked for six months of retroactive benefits.

Finally, be aware that if your first husband also predeceases you, you will then become eligible for a surviving ex-spouse benefit from him, even if he has remarried.

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



Garden related chores to ease the season

Last week I'm writing about a blizzard, while this week it looks as if the mercury is going to climb! How about our crazy New England weather?

If the skyrocketing temps have you feeling the urge to get a jump on the gardening season, you are not alone! Here are a few tasks, straight from the archives that will get you outside, and a few more to get you back indoors, because inevitably, winter is here for awhile longer. I think.

Perform appropriate garden chores

I am usually negligent in cutting down asparagus foliage in the fall. Weather permitting, in other words, if the snow melts enough over the course of the next two weeks, I will get out there and cut it back to its base soon, then haul off the branches to prevent any bugs that overwintered there from infesting this year's spears.

It is also time to prune blueberries, apples, raspberries and grapes.

Pruning can vary depending on the age and health of your specimens. If you are not experienced at it, consult any number of good books on the subject before you head outdoors with your pruning shears and loppers.

Assess your tools

Was the rototiller running rough last fall? Perform or schedule a tune up for later this month and beat the rush. Same goes for the weed whacker and lawn mower.

Hoe and spade blades can be washed of dirt and debris then sharpened with a metal file. Medium grit sandpaper works wonders to smooth out the wooden handles of these and other garden tools.

After which, boiled linseed or tung oil can be applied to both the handle and the metal blade. It helps the

wood resist moisture which leads to cracking and prevents rust on the blades.

I love my Dad's old spade. It has a great, hand-made wooden handle that is about to crack through; sure wish I had oiled it 20 years ago!

Take inventory

Many of us have our seed orders in by now. If you don't, or if you plan to buy your seeds locally, it is a great idea to go through your leftovers.

Before you decide whether or not they are keepers, consider their age and how they were stored. My rule of thumb is that if any seed is over three years old it isn't worth the risk. Some seeds, such as those for parsley, hybrid onion, carrot and parsnip expire even sooner. These are discarded after only one year.

If seeds were stored in a moist or overly hot location, their viability can be cut short sooner than normal. If you have concerns that they might not germinate, sow a few seeds indoors in pots in a warm location and see what kind of results you get.

Nothing is more upsetting than planting seeds in the garden and having few or no seedlings come up. Time is wasted and the harvest is delayed by unknowingly utilizing dead seeds.

We can also take inventory of the various supplies we use during the growing season. How are you set on lime, grass seed, and fertilizers?

Plan to take advantage of pre-season sales by knowing what you need ahead of

time. Do you have enough containers, trays and labels?

If you find yourself short, you need not buy them. You can

start seeds in repurposed fruit and vegetable boxes, the kind that mushrooms, strawberries and lettuce mixes come in. They work great as long as you make a few drainage holes in the bottom.

Pint sized ice cream containers are perfect for a second transplanting of tomato or pepper plants. Seeds of squash or annual flowers can be sown in single serving ice cream cups. As a kid I always saved our Popsicle sticks for labeling seedlings or garden rows.

When I run out of labels, all it takes is a trip to the recycle bin to make some more.

Last year I cut them out of quart-sized yogurt containers; they were the perfect length.

Practice good garden hygiene

Disinfect any containers, labels, stakes etc. that you wish to reuse this gardening season by washing them in hot soapy water then a quick rinse of one part bleach to nine parts water. This mixture will kill any pathogens left behind from previous gardening endeavors.

Out with the old, and in with the new - all in due time.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 34 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.

In the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



The Journal Register

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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.

Nurse, board-certified patient advocate explains "lifestyle medicine"

We've known for decades that the foods we choose to eat and the habits (good and bad) we develop have a profound impact on our quality of life and health. At your regular appointments with your primary care provider, you are probably quizzed about your diet, alcohol consumption, drug use and level of activity.

Typically, doctors don't have the time during the 7½ minutes they spend with you to connect the dots and help you make meaningful changes in those aspects of your life. It's not their fault; most of them are at the mercy of insurers and corporate overlords.

So, it's usually up to us to change our lifestyle.

A branch of medicine emerged about 30 years ago



your health



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

- lifestyle medicine - in which an integrated group of practitioners, from internists to gastroenterologists to psychologists to nutritionists to pharmacists, supports people on this journey.

Lifestyle medicine gained momentum in the 2010s because of the ex-

plosion of chronic diseases, rising health-care costs, stronger long-term data linking lifestyle to health, and dissatisfaction with medication-only approaches.

By the 2020s, many major health systems began integrating lifestyle medicine clinics.

There are several lifestyle medicine practices in Massachusetts, including at Massachusetts General.

In 2004, the American College of Lifestyle Medicine (ACLM) was founded, and earlier this year it launched a certification program for health-care professionals who want to bring the practice to their patients.

Lifestyle medicine focuses on what it calls six "pillars" to address the root causes, not just the symptoms, of chronic illness. Those pillars are

- Optimal nutrition: A whole-food, plant-predominant eating pattern.
- Physical activity: Regular, consistent movement.
- Restorative sleep: Prioritizing quality sleep for recovery.
- Stress management: Techniques to manage and reduce stress levels.

• Avoidance of risky substances: Quitting tobacco, limiting alcohol, and avoiding harmful substances.

• Connectedness: Maintaining positive, supportive social relationships.

Their goal is to treat, reverse and even prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease using evidence-based methods that may be used in conjunction with medication.

As long as you have a diagnosis of a chronic disease and are treated by a licensed health-care professional, it's likely your insurance company will cover care from a lifestyle medicine practice. Services like "wellness coaches" or "lifestyle programs" may

Trauma, ACES, mental health and addictions

Interconnection of substance use and eating disorders

By Suzanne Yerdon Lewandowski, M.Ed.

Guest Columnist,
32 1/2 years sober,
30 year tobacco free,
26 years eating disorder free

Up to 50% of individuals with eating disorders misuse alcohol or illicit drugs, a rate five times higher than the general population. (1)

Up to 70% of adults with bulimia nervosa and up to 18% with anorexia nervosa have a coexisting substance use disorder. Conversely, up to 35% of those with substance use disorders have a co-occurring eating disorder, a rate roughly 11 times higher than in the general population, confirming a strong, dangerous link.

These intertwined, often hidden, conditions share common risk factors like anxiety, depression, and trauma. (2)

Scientifically defined, "Addiction is a complex, chronic brain disease driven by a combination of biological, environmental, and developmental factors, rather than a mere failure of willpower or moral weakness."

Addiction is also a developmental disorder, usually beginning in adolescence as a result of what is identified as ACES. Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences are the strongest predictors of addiction.

Trauma may be caused by a single stressful or dangerous event, or repeated and prolonged exposure to highly stressful events such as child abuse, bullying, or domestic violence.

Individuals with an ACE score of four or higher face significantly elevated risks for substance use disorders: they are seven to 10 times more likely to report illicit drug addiction, and seven times more likely to be alcoholics.

Research considers trauma as the "gateway drug." Trauma survivors struggle with anxiety, depression, PTSD, emotional dysregulation, shame and low self-worth. Many individuals use substances to escape, "not feel," or self-medicate for emotional, physical, or sexual abuse.

Because the brain does not fully mature until age 25, young people are more vulnerable to addiction; PTSD and trauma can have varying degrees of severity and long-term effects

SAMHSA 2024 data reveals that 16.8% of the U.S. population aged 12 or older (about 48.4 million individuals) met the criteria for a substance use disorder (SUD) and that 10.1% of youths aged 12-17 reported significant suicidal thoughts. 2.7% attempted suicide.

Prevention and intervention by friends, families, teachers, and professionals, at any stage of development, can reduce the risk of an individual turning down the very dangerous path of addiction.

Awareness and education are the best places to begin and why public and mental health agencies and advocacy groups designate certain months to encourage people to recognize the signs of trauma and associated mental health concerns.

January brings us National Mental Wellness Month as well as Substance Use Disorder Treatment Month. Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month and National Eating Disorders Awareness Month follows in February. All mental health conditions are interwoven!

Eating disorders, again scientifically defined, can be understood as a maladaptive coping mechanism. This means that they serve a function for people; an eating disorder may help someone feel safe or in control during challenging times.

Eating disorders in teens often emerge as a coping mechanism for control, trauma, or emotional pain stemming from unhealthy relationships. Eating disorders are serious mental illnesses, where one's relationship with food and eating is disturbed. This can also extend to preoccupation with movement and body size/weight/shape.

Early signs of an eating disorder include body dissatisfaction and feelings of unhappiness, rapid weight loss or weight gain, changes in body shape and size, or particular body parts/areas, an intense fear of gaining weight, fear, avoidance or lack of interest in food and certain types of foods, denial of being hungry, deceptive behavior around food (hid-

ing or tossing out food), avoiding food and eating in social situations, excessive or compulsive physical activity, cutting out particular food groups, developing food rituals – such as always using the same bowl, cutting food up into tiny pieces or eating very slowly.

These in turn can bring on behavioral changes such as social withdrawal, or not engaging in activities once enjoyed, sleep difficulties, low self-esteem, moodiness, and/or irritability.

Binge Eating Disorder (BED) is defined by recurring episodes of eating large quantities of food, often quickly and to the point of discomfort, accompanied by a feeling of a loss of control and shame.

Bulimia Nervosa is characterized by frequent episodes of binge eating followed by vomiting, using laxatives, or exercising to excess to avoid gaining weight. Your hungry body responds to its need for food with powerful cravings and another binge ensues. To feel (short-lived) relief and regain control, you purge, but purging only reinforces binge eating and a vicious cycle of bulimia begins.

Anorexia Nervosa is a restrictive eating disorder, characterized most notably by weight loss and nutrient deficiency. Those with anorexia have difficulty maintaining an appropriate weight for their size and shape. In addition to restricting calories, compulsive exercise, use of laxatives, and/or purging is used to keep their weight low.

There are other specified feeding disorders (OSFED) that are subcategories of eating disorders that do not fit into the diagnostic criteria. A few include:

- Atypical Anorexia is a disorder that despite food restriction, the person's weight is average or above for their height, not under
- Rumination disorder (habitual regurgitation of food after eating, which may then be re-chewed, re-swallowed, or spit out) avoidant or restrictive food intake
- Pica (the persistent eating of non-food substances with no nutritional value, such as dirt, hair, paint chips, or soap)
- Orthorexia (an obsession with healthy eating with associated restrictive behaviors)
- Drunkorexia (skipping

meals or excessive exercise along with heavy alcohol consumption.)

• Diabulimia is a life-threatening eating disorder specifically affecting individuals with Type 1 diabetes, characterized by the intentional restriction or omission of insulin to induce weight loss.

• Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID) is similar to picky eating in children or restricted intake in adults, this involves limiting food intake based on a lack of interest in food, avoidance of sensory characteristics (texture, smell), or fear of negative consequences (choking, vomiting).

In addition to affecting mental health, addictions can seriously damage the physical health systems: gastrointestinal, endocrine, nervous, cardiovascular, immune, respiratory problems, as well as liver damage and kidney disease.

It doesn't take long for tolerance to increase with substance use; more of the drug/alcohol is required to have the same effect. Dependence follows, and the body needs the substance to function normally.

Addiction takes time to develop but soon the cravings and compulsions are stronger than the consequences that follow. If you try to quit, the negative physical and mental health symptoms of withdrawal take over.

Recovery from substance use disorders and eating disorders have many similarities but also a big difference. Abstinence is the goal for many recovering from SUD, but for anyone with an eating disorder, abstinence becomes an eating disorder.

Never in your right mind would you even think about telling an alcoholic to have a beer for breakfast, wine for lunch, cocktails for dinner and a few shots for snacks. One sip, one drug, or one cigarette and the body and mind crave the substance – substance reuse ensues!

For an eating disorder, food is both the enemy (drug) AND the cure. The body and mind crave food in the same way as a SUD, but eating is essential for recovery.

One must eat to regain both mental and physical health, yet EVERY SINGLE BITE triggers intense emotions, anxieties and potential knee-jerk bingeing/restriction

reactions. One must sit with those overwhelming negative feelings day in and day out.

You can only imagine what it is like for those 35%-50% with dual diagnosis to abstain from substance use while relearning what is the right amount of food to provide the best nutrition for healing. What is good for the body will not feel good to the mind and the person resists!

The interplay between physical health and mental health is intense.

With food disorders, there is an interplay of the endocrine and nervous system constantly trying to keep the body at equilibrium whether a person is suffering from bingeing, purging or starvation caused by anorexia nervosa.

Once you're in recovery, it can take three months or more to heal metabolism after an eating disorder. This includes unwanted weight gain, digestive issues, thyroid and hormone problems, and fatigue.

Like alcoholism, anorexia can have fatal consequences without medical intervention. Typical eating disorder recovery takes three-six years.

Marilyn Barrett, author of "Creating Eden: The Garden as a Healing Place" encapsulated my recovery when she wrote:

"Come into the garden with me. Don't worry about not knowing your way: Your heart remembers, even if your head has forgotten. When you were small and first had time to create your dreams, you were at one with the earth you played in and with each leaf, bird, and cloud you saw. This is the garden to which I invite you to return."

Imagine a place to which you can bring stress, sorrow, loneliness, and confusion and from which you can leave with a sense of resolution, understanding, and calm. Imagine a place where you can express your own unique nature, create beauty, grow pure food, and gain control over your life. In my life, the garden has been such a place."

Marilyn so aptly penned that the garden is a place for clearing away anger, confusion, and pain, the trash of the past. She added this clearing is a prerequisite to achieving inner peace, balance and harmony and people must sort through the emotional rubble of the past they have inherited,

and they must get to the roots of attitudes and behavior patterns that have stunted their growth.

Getting to the roots of attitudes and behavior patterns that have stunted growth doesn't have to be in the garden. Return to what you loved as a child – sports, art, music, writing, hiking. Find a safe place to face the past.

If you are able, volunteering can be crucial in recovery addiction because it provides structure, fosters a renewed sense of purpose, provides new skillsets, builds a supportive sober community, and improves mental health by reducing depression and anxiety.

It helps individuals replace the self-centered nature of addiction with empathy and structure, ultimately reducing relapse risk by providing meaningful, productive activity.

Additionally, employers value volunteers because they demonstrate key, transferable skills like initiative, teamwork, and leadership, while also signaling a strong work ethic and passion. On a resume, it fills gaps, shows practical experience, and indicates a proactive, community-minded employee.

For every addicted individual, the descent into dependency is uniquely complex as is the journey of recovery. Professional treatment makes for a more successful outcome, so please insist that all your symptoms and conditions are addressed.

Be honest so that you can understand your past and how it affects today's choices.

Joy and well-being will return with each little success.

National Eating Disorders Association: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/>

Multiservice eating Disorders Association: <https://www.medainc.org/>

Online Eating Disorder Treatment: Equip <https://equip.health/>

Quaboag Hill Substance Use Alliance: <https://qhsua.org/>

Recovery Center of Hope: <https://www.facebook.com/RecoveryCenterofHOPEware/52MainStreet,Ware,RCHisrunbypeopleinrecoveryandhelpsthosereachgoalsthroughastrengths-basedandcommunity-basedapproach>

(1 National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA), 2 National Institute of Health)

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The Next Watershed Moments...

By Keith Davies
*Coordinator, Chicopee
 4Rivers Watershed Council
 Guest Contributor*

*Editor's Note:
 This is the third and final
 part in a multi-part series
 about the Chicopee
 4Rivers Watershed Council.*

So, what's next for these four rivers: Swift, Ware, Quaboag, and Chicopee? C4R has got the ball rolling, but it won't keep rolling if there is no push behind it.

Who pushes? Leaders and volunteers, communities.

During 2026, C4R will hold a series of community information sessions to highlight our potential and vision. The first will be a spring kick-off event at the Palmer Historical Cultural Center, 2072 Main St., in Three Rivers on Sunday, March 22 at 2 p.m.

Throughout the year, C4R will have fun paddles, nature paddles, clean ups (suggested sites?), water quality monitoring, and more.

We hope to post on our website our events schedule by March 22. These events and the meetings will be a good opportunity to see our rivers, meet others and hear how we can together Care 4 rivers-C4R.

Our needs: we need to strengthen our leadership team, add qualified and committed people to help with organizational, communication, database and financial management. People with water resource and aquatic biological savvy can also help. We have reached a point where we can do more as a community group to Care 4 rivers.

Our vision is to promote stewardship, conservation, enjoyment, and restoration of the rivers, ecosystems and wildlife habitats of the Chicopee-4 Rivers basin, while balancing and fostering river friendly city and town economies and community life.

We have planted the seed for this with our basic monitoring and paddling trails. But sprouts need more to grow.

We could go to the next level by adding broader water quality monitoring (adopt a stream, macroinvertebrates), trail teams, storm water education and action efforts, wildlife monitoring, annual rivers report card, restoration efforts, and perhaps a rivers celebration event!

We could be the source for Caring for our local 4 Rivers. Now we're talking!

Sounds inviting? Something inside you saying: "yes, I feel I want to help and make a difference!" Our local rivers are beautiful and magical places, places to discover – but also to care for.

Rivers have been the lifeblood of New England for centuries, likely thousands of years. They still are and can continue to sustain us and wildlife as we live in balance with them.

C4R is a means to gather us together to do that, albeit in a humble way. We invite you to join in the vision.

For more information about C4R and to get involved, people may visit www.c4rivers.org, email chicopeewatershed@gmail.com, or mail C4RWC, P.O. Box 126, Three Rivers, MA 01080.



Cub Scouts are shown cutting the ribbon to officially open the Lower Ware River Blue Trail. Both of these Cub Scouts volunteered with C4R to establish the Robbins Road launch site and test the water quality.



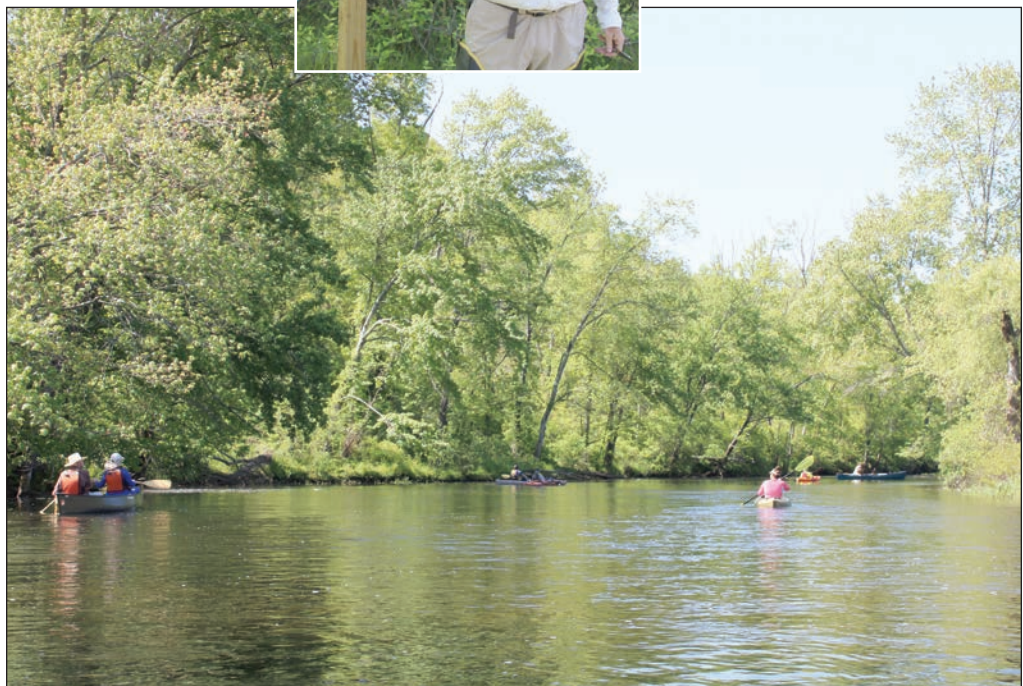
Cub Scouts worked to remove a tire from the riverbank.



ter and scrap metal at Ware River Park in Gilbertville, near the Blue Trail launch site. Left, Chicopee 4Rivers Watershed Council Coordinator Keith Davies prepared paddlers for the inaugural launch on the Lower Ware River Blue Trail in spring 2023.



Volunteers have helped to clean up the rivers in the Chicopee 4Rivers Watershed.



Paddlers explored the Ware River from the Robbins Road launch site in Ware to Bennett Street in Palmer.

Turley File Photos

International Women's Day: Thriving after gray divorce

March 8 is International Women's Day, a time to celebrate everything women have achieved and to honor their strength and resilience. It's also a chance to have honest conversations about real-life challenges many women face.

One of these is the growing trend of divorce among those ages 50 and older, often called "gray divorce." While finding yourself in this situation can feel overwhelming, it also can be an opportunity to reclaim your independence and create a life that reflects your dreams and values.

Today, one-third (36%) of divorcing adults are 50 or older (The Journals of Gerontology, 2022) and 77% of women who experienced gray divorce remain single 10 years after divorce ("Repartnering following gray divorce," 2019). While that might sound surprising, many women view this as a time to focus on goals, dreams and well-being without compromise.

Of course, there are financial realities to consider. Women older than 50 often experience a 45% drop in their standard of living after divorce (compared to 21% for men), and household income can fall by 23% to 40% in the first year ("The Economic Consequences of Gray Divorce for Women and Men," 2020). So, building financial confidence isn't just important; it's empowering.

If you are 50 or older and recently divorced, take the following steps with your financial advisor. You don't have to do it all at once; small steps can help lead to greater financial security over time.

1. Find a financial advisor who truly listens. If you've ever felt unheard or dismissed, don't settle. Your future deserves someone who respects your voice.
2. Get clear on your finances. List your assets, debts, income and expenses to understand your financial situation — the first step toward taking control.
3. Create a flexible plan. Include your current needs, short-term goals and retirement aspirations. Instead of feeling intimidated, you can let a financial advisor help make this simple and manageable.
4. Learn about money. Read, attend workshops and join online communities focused on women and finance. Every bit of knowledge adds confidence.

5. Build an emergency fund. Work toward having three to six months of living expenses in a low-risk, liquid account. This may take gradual, consistent contributions, but ultimately, this cushion can help provide a sense of security as you navigate your new circumstances.

6. Review insurance and your employer benefits. Make sure your medical insurance coverage is adequate. Consider long-term care insurance to help preserve your retirement assets.

7. Estate planning. Work with an attorney to review beneficiary designations on bank and brokerage accounts while updating your will, powers of attorney and, as needed, a revocable living trust.

8. Social Security. If you were married 10 years or longer, understand your rights to Social Security benefits from your ex-spouse.

Rather than being the end, gray divorce can represent a new chapter. This International Women's Day, celebrate your resilience and your potential. The future is yours to shape, and it can be as bold, bright and fulfilling as you want it to be.

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MEAL | from page 1

“This is a complimentary community dinner,” Sousa said. “People are welcome to stop by once a month. We started in January, and this is our second meal.”

Like many local churches, St. Paul’s previously hosted regular community dinners. However, the program ended about eight years ago due to updated health regulations and the enforcement of ServSafe food safety certification requirements.

“With the enforcement of the ServeSafe health regulations, which, of course, should be enforced, a lot of churches stopped,” Sousa explained. “St. Paul’s stopped some eight years ago.”

The meal program was able to resume this year after a member of the congregation became ServSafe manager certified, allowing the church to once again meet health and safety standards required for public food service.

The revival of the meal also complements the work of nearby community organizations, including the Palmer Food Share, a vital food bank resource in the area that was originally started by the church before spinning off into an independent nonprofit. The church also shares close proximity with the Quaboag Children’s Center.

Sousa said the goal of Bread and Belonging goes

beyond food insecurity.

“Like a lot of churches in the area, we’re just trying to provide something for people,” he said. “Whether it’s a matter of food insecurity, or folks who are kind of lonely, or people who just want to get out and about.”

While some attendees quietly contribute donations, there is no expectation or pressure to give.

“There are folks who will donate, but we don’t even talk about it,” Sousa said. “There’s no pressure. People can just come and enjoy the meal.”

The church has established a rotating monthly menu. January featured a spaghetti dinner, while February highlighted a Polish-themed feast. March will bring shepherd’s pie before the rotation begins again.

For the February dinner, guests were treated to a variety of Eastern European dishes, including golumpki (stuffed cabbage rolls), pierogies, a Moldovan variation of stuffed cabbage known as coltunasi, and borscht. The meal was accompanied by rye bread and an expansive dessert buffet.

The kitchen was led by volunteer head chef Adrian Keefe, who described her background as rooted primarily in volunteering at previous community meal programs before they were discontinued due to health regulations. “We were talking about

what we could do as part of the community to help,” Keefe said. “A full tummy is one of the best ways.”

Keefe was assisted by Sousa’s wife, Ludmilla “Lucy” Sousa, who is originally from Moldova and brings extensive knowledge of Eastern European cuisine to the kitchen.

The dessert table featured mini cupcakes, pecan crumble bars, cinnamon cookies, brownies, brownie bites, brownies topped with granola, and a variety of additional cookies, offering something sweet for every guest.

The rebirth of the program has also been bolstered by support from a local business. GEM Entertainment, owned by Scott Wharton, is sponsoring much of the food cost each month.

Sousa explained that Wharton was looking for a Palmer-based nonprofit to support.

“GEM Entertainment is actually footing most of the bill for the food each month,” Sousa said. “That was very interesting and generous.”

Unlike many community meals that operate buffet-style, Bread and Belonging offers table service, an intentional choice designed to create a more dignified and welcoming experience.

Rather than lining up for food, guests are seated and served by volunteers. For the February dinner, servers



Rye bread with butter was also consistently handed out by kitchen volunteers.

included Sousa’s daughters, Faith and Madalina.

“One thing that’s kind of unique about our meal is that rather than having people come up and grab their food like a buffet, we have servers,” Sousa said. “It’s kind of a nice touch, we think”

While the church typically aims to host the dinner on the fourth Saturday of each month, the March meal will be held on the third Saturday to accommodate a previously scheduled Seder supper at the church.

The next Bread and Belonging dinner is planned for Mar. 21.

For Sousa and the volunteers at St. Paul’s, the program represents more than a



Rev. Sousa takes the time to talk to each table to see if everyone is enjoying their meals.

meal, it is now an opportunity to foster connection in an increasingly disconnected world.

“As well as the food,” Sousa said, “we’re just hoping people enjoy themselves.”

With warm dishes, homemade desserts and friendly table service, Bread and Belonging is once again offering Palmer residents a seat at the table and a sense of community to go with it.

GARDEN | from page 2

in the industry for 20 plus years. He’s currently the manager of the Sugarloaf Gardens in Sunderland,” Bonner said. “He has a wealth of information. He will bring his truck loaded with shrubs and trees and his focus this year is make sure if you’re going to use trees and shrubs, it’s just like flowers. You just don’t have them look good one season, you have them look good four seasons. So, he’s really going to talk about what trees or shrubs might be featured for your garden or landscape over the year long. So, it’s just good biodiversity, but it also makes pretty art too.”

Another topic Bonner highlighted was “Vegetables versus Pests: How to Win!” as attendees always seek a topic on vegetables.

“They talk about some common vegetables that you grow and pests or diseases that take them over. Number one, how to prevent it and number two, how to manage insects and diseases if you get them. It’s practical, useful ideas that really work,” Bonner said. “I say they really work because the two presenters, Margery Gerard and JoAnne Palmer, are both master gardeners, but more important than that, their expertise in this area comes from the fact that they are two of the people that oversee the South Hadley garden called Full Circle Garden. It’s

a vegetable garden and they raise way over 2,000 pounds of food in the summer for the food pantry there, so not only are they master gardeners, they have such practical, hands-on experience.”

Bonner said another concern gardeners have is invasive species in “how to identify it and what to do about it,” with the focus on spotted lanternflies, jumping worms, Japanese Knotweed and more.

“The person doing it is very careful to say manage,



Vendors offer a variety of produce.

not completely eradicate, because sometimes, once you get these invasives in here, you can’t get rid of them, but you could at least manage them. Others you catch them early enough because you’ve identified them early enough you can really get rid of,” Bonner said. “She is the point person for Massachusetts that watches over what plants or

insects that go on the invasive list, so she’s really got her hands into this part.”

After Bonner expressed gratitude to the Western Mass community for supporting the event year after year and, also, for this year’s raffle, as many community members donated items too, she added that she hopes attendees take away inspiration and ideas to

help better understand biodiversity.

“They’re an important part in saving our world and making a difference, and it’s not mammoth things they have to do. It’s small, little changes that they can do. Whether it’s adding a little water feature or adding a native or addressing that invasive or adding a bush with berries for the birds, there’s something that they’re going to walk away with that they truly will make a difference in helping to save our world,” Bonner said. “They’re taking care of our environment and that’s really what we need is everybody doing a little piece.”

Bonner’s message was this.

“If you’re looking to get energized, inspired, get out of this humdrum of winter, come to our workshops. We guarantee you’ll walk away with a smile and feeling spring is here!” Bonner said.

To learn more and to register, visit wmmga.org.



Master Gardener Debby Lapointe created a floral arrangement for the Symposium in 2025.

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In the classroom

HCC hosting health careers open house March 26

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College will host an open house at its Center for Health Education & Simulation on Thursday, March 26, for anyone interested in exploring educational programs and careers in healthcare, human services, and veterinary and animal science.

Visitors to the Health Careers Open House are welcome to tour HCC's state-of-the-art health education facility from 4 to 6 p.m. and talk to representatives from the college's programs in nursing (RN and LPN), radiologic technology, vet-

erinary and animal science, medical assisting, Foundations of Health (public health), CNA (certified nursing assistant), medical billing and coding, and human services.

The event is free and open to the public.

The building, located at 404 Jarvis Ave., just off the main HCC campus, is home to the college's nursing and radiologic technology programs, and medical simulation labs.

There will also be representatives attending from the offices of financial aid, admissions, advising, and

workforce development to talk to prospective students about their educational options and career pathways.

"This is a fantastic chance to dive into all of our health majors in one exciting event," said nursing resource coordinator Dee Wescott. "We welcome everyone to

explore our cutting-edge simulation labs, connect with our dedicated faculty and staff, and discover the exceptional student support services that set us apart."

If you can't make it in person, please contact Dee Wescott at dwestcott@hcc.edu for more information.

COLLEGE NOTES

Local Emmanuel College student named to Dean's List

BOSTON – Jenna Ghrear, of Palmer has been named to the Fall 2025 Emmanuel College Dean's List. Ghrear is majoring in Global and Public Health.

To earn a spot on the Dean's List, Emmanuel students must achieve a grade point average of 3.5 or higher for a 16-credit semester.

Corned beef and cabbage dinner at First Church March 7

LUDLOW – St. Patrick's Day is fast approaching. You can begin the month by celebrating with a delicious Corned Beef and Cabbage meal to-go

on March 7. The meal includes corned beef, cabbage, potatoes, carrots, Irish soda bread, and dessert. All for only \$18.

Call now to make your

reservations 413-547-8720.

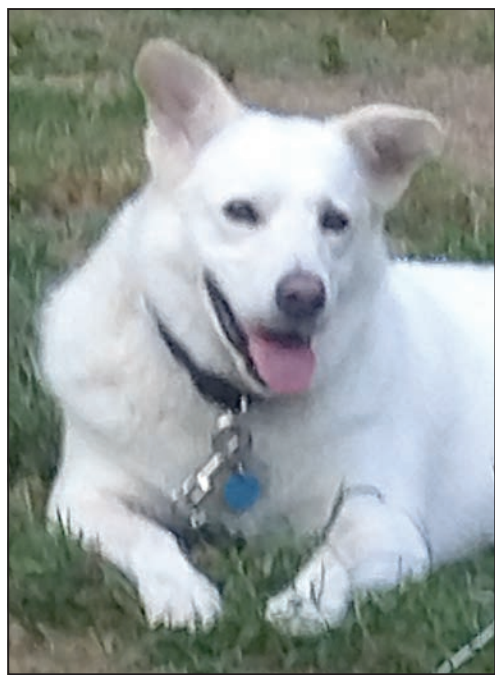
Drive by First Church in Ludlow, 859 Center Street, Ludlow between 4:30 and 5:30 p.m. and we will deliver your

meal right to your car. Thank you for being so supportive of this fundraiser that helps us continue to reach out to our community.

PET PAGE



PET OF THE MONTH Meet Barney!



He is a 6 1/2 year old Jindo – Husky mix. He loves riding in the car, playing tug of war, and fetching a ball or a Frisbie. But most of all he loves children and people. He lives with Richard Zaranek.

ATTENTION READERS!

Send in your pet picture for our "Pet of the Month" and receive a FREE weekend get-away or spa package for your pet courtesy of Porter Road Pet Care.

Email your photos to: jwalker@turley.com. Please include your name and your pet's name.

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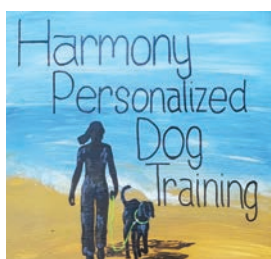


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Understanding Cat Behavior

When a Cat Turns Away

When a cat shows you her backside, with tail held high, it's not an insult. It's actually a friendly greeting. So, appreciate the cat butt!

The Purpose of Purring

Most people think a purring cat is a euphoric cat, and that certainly is true sometimes. But what is less well-known, is that purring can also mean the animal is hurt, ill or stressed.

Tummy Time

When a cat rolls onto her back and shows you their belly, it's seldom a request for a belly rub. It's just a display of trust (after all, she's exposing the most vulnerable part of her body—the soft underbelly). Take note: there are cats who love belly rubs, but most decidedly

do not. Backs, legs and tails can also be problematic. But even when you're petting the generally safe areas of the cheek, chin and head, stick to the 3-second rule, caress for 3 seconds, and then stop. If she moves in for more, go for 3 more seconds. If not, move along! Cat parents who do not take hints are usually the ones talking about how their cat is all lovey-dovey one minute, and then "out of nowhere," bites.

Nuzzling Might Be a No-No

Getting right up in a cat's face for a nuzzle is not as appealing to them all those cat food ads would make it appear. In fact, it makes many cats downright uncomfortable. Within about a foot of their faces, cats' vision is extremely poor. The best advice is to wait for them to nuzzle you.



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BASKETBALL

Panthers get win in preliminary round

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

PALMER – Experience was the difference maker in the Division 5 state boys' basketball preliminary round contest between Baystate Academy and Palmer High School.

Led by five senior starters, who combined to score 58 points, the 23rd seeded Palmer Panthers advanced into the round of 32 following a 63-54 home win over the 43rd seeded Baystate Bulls, last Wednesday night.

"The seniors played really well in our final home game of the season," said Palmer head coach Missy Rocker. "I hope it can carry over to our next game on Friday night."

Palmer (12-10) won a state tournament home game for the fourth time in the past five years.

"We beat Pathfinder in a home state tournament game two years ago. We also beat Holbrook here last year," said Palmer senior Matt Santos. "We had the experience edge in tonight's game and we're able to handle their pressure."

The Panthers also won a preliminary round home game against Hampden Charter in 2022.

Santos scored 14 of his game-high 21 points during the first half against Bay State. He was one of the three Panthers players to reach double figures in the home finale.

Senior Stephen Fredette finished the game with 13 points while senior Dylan Doherty checked in with 11 points. Senior Gavin Smola just missed becoming Palmer's fourth double digit scorer. He finished with nine points.

"I've been playing basketball games in this gym since I was in the seventh grade, so winning my final home game is very special," Fredette said. "We really wanted to win tonight's game."

The trio of Doherty, Smola, and Fredette were selected to play in the 2026 Western Massachusetts Senior High School All-Star Game, which is scheduled to be held at the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield on March 20.

The other two Panthers seniors are Chris Stapleton and Adonis Dupre, who made his second start at the varsity level.

"All six of our seniors are

PANTHERS | page 10



Gavin Smola is pressured after making a rebound.



Dylan Doherty tries to get the one-hander in the hoop.



Matt Santos sends three-point attempt away.



Adonis Dupre heads down the court.



Stephen Fredette charges toward the hoop, but looks to make a pass.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

BASKETBALL

Warriors defeated in Clark tourney

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

ASHBURNHAM – Sophie Ezzo, Steph Krog, and Jules Petersen are the only remaining members of the Tantasqua girls' varsity basketball team, which captured the 2024 Clark Tournament Large School championship title.

The Lady Warriors exited this year's Clark Tournament a little bit earlier than they did two years ago.

With 14.6 seconds remaining in regulation, sophomore Addie McGrath buried a 3-point shot from the top of the key, which helped the third-seeded Grafton Gators defeat the sixth-seeded Lady Warriors, 49-47, in a quarterfinal game held at Oakmont Regional High School on Feb. 14.

"One of our goals before the start of each season is to qualify for the Clark tournament. If you do qualify, you always want to win the championship game, which we failed to do this year," said Tantasqua head coach Andy Haley. "This is a tough loss, but we're a young basketball team, and it's going to be a very good learning experience for us. We'll start preparing for the state tournament now."

Ezzo (5 points) and Petersen are the Lady Warriors only seniors this season. Krog, who's a junior, didn't play in the quarterfinal loss.

"I'm disappointed that we lost on a last second shot, but I'm very happy that we were able to qualify for the Clark Tournament for the second time in my high school career," Ezzo said. "This loss is going to make us work a little bit harder in the state tournament."

Two years ago, the Lady Warriors celebrated a 40-29 win over Northbridge High School in the Clark Tournament Large School finals, which took place at the Kneller Athletic Center located on the Clark University campus in Worcester.

WARRIORS | page 10

HOCKEY

Amherst-Pathfinder co-op hockey falls in WMass tournament

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

AMHERST – Senior assistant captain Andrew Holton had a team-leading 13 goals and 12 assists for the Agawam hockey team this winter. Holton's final high school goal was very memorable.

The Western Mass. Class B quarterfinal match between the fifth-seeded Brownies and the fourth-seeded Amherst Hurricanes was tied 4-4 a minute into overtime. That's when Holton received a pass from junior Kaeden Clifford before firing a shot into the net past Amherst senior goalie Jason Kim (34 saves), which gave the Brownies an exciting 5-4 victory at Orr Rink located on the Amherst College campus on Presidents Day, Feb. 15.

"I've never scored a game

winning goal before and it's just an amazing feeling," said Holton after celebrating with his teammates. "We worked very hard in tonight's game."

Holton, who joined the varsity squad as a freshman, described his first career game-winning goal.

"After Kaeden passed me the puck, I cut to the middle of the slot and fired a shot. I just knew that the puck was going into the net," said Holton, who also assisted on two goals. "This was one of the best hockey games that I've ever played in. We're now hoping to win another Western Mass. title this year."

Agawam, who wrapped up the regular season with a 4-3 overtime loss against Chicopee two days earlier, posted a 6-1 victory over Taconic in last year's Class B finals.

Unfortunately, the Brownies (3-15) didn't make it back to the championship match again this year. Their season came to an end 24 hours later following a 5-2 semifinal loss to top-seeded McCann Tech at the Olympia Ice Center in West Springfield.

The other seniors listed on the Brownies hockey roster are Jackson Lariviere, Noah Beavis, Joey Wilikinson, Gavin Ogorzalek, Nick Brown, Brady Blanchette, Casey Thomas, who's an assistant captain, and team captain Anthony Barbarini.

"We have a total of nine seniors on this year's team," said Agawam head coach Todd Rowley. "We had an up and down season, but those guys never quit. They work very hard at practice and in every game. I'm very proud of them.

It took a total team effort to win tonight's game."

Blanchette, who's the Brownies starting goalie, was credited with a total of 17 saves against Amherst.

The Hurricanes finished their season with a 6-12-2 overall record. They tied Chicopee (4-4) and Taconic (2-2).

"I thought my players played very well in tonight's game, but it just came down to one shot in overtime," said Amherst head coach Michael Rousseau. "That was the difference maker."

The Hurricanes senior captain is Ethan Mooney, who's a defenseman. He was credited with three assists in the quarterfinals.

"Ethan joined our hockey team as a sophomore and it's been a pleasure watching him grow during the past couple of

years," Rousseau said. "He's the leader of our hockey team."

Mooney, who attends Pathfinder Tech, plays hockey for Amherst as part of a co-op.

The other hockey players from Pathfinder Tech listed on the Amherst hockey roster are sophomore Noah Latulippe, sophomore Landon Lukasik, sophomore Nolan MacTavish, freshman Mason Sadusky, freshman Lincoln Auclair, and freshman Landon LaCroix.

Agawam and Amherst split the regular season series for the second year in a row.

The Hurricanes took a 1-0 lead in the quarterfinal match following an unassisted goal from junior Sawyer Ferro at the 10:46 mark of the opening period.

Less than a minute later, Brown scored the equalizer for Agawam.

The Brownies took the lead for the first time four minutes into the second period when junior Braden Parrelli banged home a rebound shot.

The scoring spree continued with a goal from Grahm Arguin tying the score at 2-2 with 10:13 remaining in the second period.

The contest was also tied at 3-3, entering the final 15 minutes of regulation. Parrelli and Ferro scored their second goal of the match during the final eight minutes of the second period.

The Hurricanes retook the lead following a goal by freshman Brody Palmisano 28 seconds into the third period.

Holton scored a short-handed goal with ten minutes remaining in regulation before becoming the hero of the game a minute into overtime.

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Turleysports

Athlete of the Week

Matt Santos
Palmer High School

In Palmer boys basketball's state playoff win over Baystate Academy, Santos led the Panthers with 21 points.

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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HCC celebrates final home game

HOLYOKE – Women's basketball played their last regular season game on Friday evening, Feb. 20, hosting regional opponent Bunker Hill CC. The Lady Cougars defeated their opposition 67-56 to earn their seventh straight win. Holyoke's two second-year players, Emily McGrail (Ware, MA / Ware HS) and Erin Bullough (South Hadley, MA / South Hadley HS), were honored with a sophomore night that included a pregame ceremony recognizing the athletes and their accomplishments. Posters, photos and decorations were hung on the walls and in the stands around Golas Court.

McGrail led the Cougars in blocks during Friday's game and was second in rebounds, tallying six of each. She leads Holyoke in blocks this season with 59 and blocks per game, averaging 3.5. McGrail is sixth in NJCAA Division III in blocks and third in blocks per game. Bullough sunk the Lady Cougars first basket of the game on Friday. She leads Holyoke in three-point shooting percentage this season and is second in three-pointers made. Bullough has made 41.3% of the three-point shots she has attempted this year, ranking her fourth in NJCAA Division III. She has drained 31 total shots from long range on the year. Anastacia Dixon (Keene, NH / Keene HS) had an outstanding game in the regular season finale, leading Holyoke in points with 24 and rebounds with eight.

Women's basketball closes out the regular season with a 10-3 regional record and a 14-7 overall record. They are the second-place team in the New England (Region XXI) standings and will be the #2 seed entering the regional tournament. This will be HCC women's basketball's first postseason appearance in over 15 years. The Lady Cougars will get a bye to the tournament semifinals and will host the winner of one of the two quarterfinals.



Above, Anastacia Dixon gets the short jumper away. Right, Mileidy Rosado avoids a block and gets a shot.

Tatiyana Zuniga passes in transition.



Erin Bullough, of South Hadley, tries to overcome pressure.



Turley photos by David Henry
Johanys Andrades goes for the layup.

WARRIORS | from page 9

The boys' basketball teams have been competing at the Clark Tournament almost every February since 1939. The Clark Tournament sponsored a girl's tournament for the first time in 1973. The next time that the girl's teams competed at the Clark tournament was in 2023. Grafton High School captured the Large School championship title that season. "This is the third oldest high school basketball tournament in the country," Haley said. "Tantasqua wasn't el-

igible to play at the Clark until a couple of years ago. There is a lot of tradition in this tournament. While some high school players never get to experience playing at the Clark, we've been here twice during the past three years." The Lady Warriors (12-7) were scheduled to host Littleton in a Clark consolation game on Tuesday morning before beginning the Division 3 state tournament next week. The state tournament pairings are scheduled to be released on Saturday. The trio of freshman Teagan Baker (14 points), fresh-

man Ellie Barnes (13 points), and junior Tessa Sheldon combined to score 38 of Tantasqua's points against Grafton (8-11), who were scheduled to face second-seeded Northbridge in the semifinals on Monday. The Lady Warriors' other two freshmen players are Milayna Bousquet and Maya Lewis (4 points). In last Saturday's game, Tantasqua built a double-digit lead late in the first quarter. Barnes began the contest by hitting a jumper from the right side of the key. Sheldon then buried back-to-back

3-pointers from the opposite side of the court making the score 8-0 with 5:30 left in the opening quarter. Late in the first quarter, Ezzo made a free throw. Baker followed with an inside basket and a 3-pointer, putting the Lady Warriors ahead 17-7 going into the second quarter. The Lady Warriors were outscored, 42-30, during the final three quarters of the game. Tantasqua scored only two field goals and four free throws in the second stanza, as the Gators sliced their deficit to 25-21 at halftime.

With 3:30 remaining in the third quarter, Grafton tied the score for the third time at 29-29 following an inside hoop from junior Brooke Burton, which were her only points of the game. Then a put-back basket from junior Abbey Lazeren (11 points) gave the Gators the lead for the first time. Grafton's led by four points (37-33) before Barnes tossed in a 3-pointer at the buzzer. Baker began the final eight minutes with an inside hoop giving the Lady Warriors the lead back at 38-37.

After Grafton took a 44-41 lead following back-to-back baskets in the middle of the final quarter, a pair of Barnes lay-ups gave Tantasqua a slim 45-44 advantage with 1:50 left. Then Lewis added an inside hoop increasing their lead to three points. Grafton answered back with a lay-up from freshman Emersynn Clark, who scored 12 of her game-high 16 points during the second half. Then McGrath made her 3-pointer with 14.6 seconds left, which turned out to be the difference maker for Grafton.

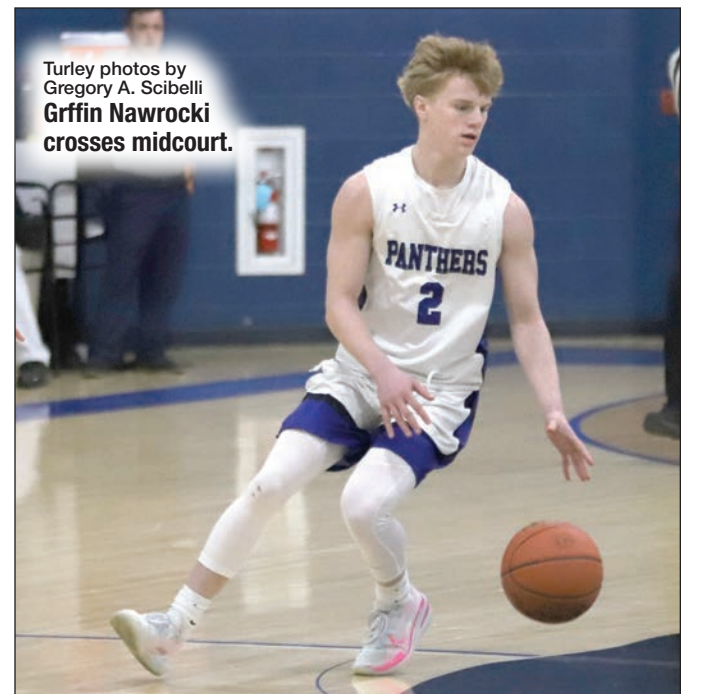
PANTHERS | from page 9

hard workers and they're dedicated," said Rocker, who'll be coaching the Ludlow varsity softball team in a couple of weeks. "I can't say enough good things about them. We're going to miss them a lot next year. It has been a pleasure to have the opportunity to coach them during the past couple of years." The Panthers season came to an end 48 hours later following a 52-48 loss to 10th-seeded Pioneer Charter School of Science, which took place at Excel Academy in East Boston. Dupre, who scored four points in the home win against Baystate Academy, replaced junior Taydem Ha-

ley in the starting line-up. Haley suffered a season-ending right hand injury in the Western Mass. Class C semifinal game, which was a 76-43 loss at Drury High School on February 14. "Not having Taydem on the court is a big loss for us," Rocker said. "I thought Adonis played well. Everyone else picked up the slack in tonight's game." Dupre, who was the Panthers sixth man during the regular season, made his first career start in a varsity game on senior night. "We were very prepared coming into tonight's game," Dupre said. "It feels great to win a game in the state tournament." The Bulls, who didn't

win any games a year ago, completed the 2025-26 season with an overall record of 13-8, despite not starting any juniors or seniors. Their leading scorer was 8th grader Quincy Cook Jr. with 16 points. Freshman Javian Hernandez added 13 points off the bench. The only senior listed on the Bulls varsity roster is Malik Foster (4 points). Baystate Academy, which is in Springfield, held an 11-9 edge with 2:40 remaining in the first quarter before the Panthers put together a 7-2 spurt. During that span, Santos hit a 3-pointer and a lay-up, while Doherty also added a lay-up. The home team entered

the second stanza holding a 16-13 lead. A 3-pointer from Andre Robinson Jr. (9 points) tied the score at 16-16. Palmer's largest lead of the first half was 36-24, which was also the halftime score. The Panthers maintained their double digit advantage throughout the third quarter, which was evenly played. The Bulls closed the gap to 60-52 following a 3-pointer from 7th grader Jace Austin (5 points) with 1:40 left in regulation. The Panthers secured their victory with two free throws from Dupre and another one by junior Griffin Nawrocki (3 points) during the final minute.



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Griffin Nawrocki crosses midcourt.

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

VENDORS FOR THE BAYSTATE WING HOSPITAL GIFT SHOPPE

March Vendors

- March 10 - Hobbit Hollow Herbs
- March 11 - Weleful Weavers
- March 12 - Jewelry for Diane
- March 18 - How Charming
- March 26 - Weleful Weavers
- March 30 - Wicked Good Treats
- March 31 - Geriations & Sew On

March 30

Public Supper to benefit the Ware Community Garden. Hosted by Ware Grange and Ware Senior Center. Enjoy a dinner of Chicken Marsala, roasted potatoes, carrots, salad, roll, drinks, and cream puffs for dessert. \$15 per person. Join us on Monday, March 30, from 6 to 7 p.m., at the Ware Senior Center, 1 Robbins Rd, Ware, MA. Please RSVP in advance to waregrange164@gmail.com or call 413-284-1135. Join us for a good meal in support of the creation of Ware's new community garden.

ONGOING

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

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

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

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

QUABOAG VALLEY QUILTERS GUILD: Members meet at 1 p.m. on the first and third Thursdays of the month

in the Amvets post at 2150 Main St., Three Rivers. The Guild is a no-pressure group with varying degrees of accomplishments, from novice to Big E "Best In Show" winners. Dues are \$55 a year. For more information, contact Barbara Beaulieu at 267-4044 or Merry Mombourquette at 283-7577. Follow them on Facebook for more.

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

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

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

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

BABY | from page 1

transport the mother at that stage would have been more difficult and potentially riskier. The delivery occurred on scene in what Fitzgerald described as a fairly quick time span after assessment.

The newborn and mother were later transported to Baystate Medical Center for further care.

While field deliveries are not unheard of in emergency medical services, Fitzgerald confirmed this was the first time the Palmer Fire Department has delivered a baby during a call.

"It is the first one," he said.

Fitzgerald credited the successful outcome to the department's recent transi-

tion to Advanced Life Support (ALS) level operations, which took effect Jan. 1. The shift means paramedics, who receive more advanced medical training than basic EMTs, are now available to provide a higher level of pre-hospital care.

"We're very fortunate that effective January 1st we went to the ALS level," Fitzgerald said. "We happened to have three medics on that day just because we had extra staff due to the snowstorm."

He added that the department is "very well educated in their clinical skills," and that many of the department's paramedics and EMTs bring prior experience to their roles in Palmer.

"We're really fortunate with the crews that we have that worked safely, profi-

ciently and professionally during the call," Fitzgerald said.

The crew members who responded were EMT Richard Knorring, Paramedic Grace Leone-Forgette, Paramedic Joshua Rutola and Paramedic Michael Frydryk.

Due to privacy considerations, the department did not release the names of the family involved. In a Feb. 24 post on the department's Facebook page, officials congratulated the parents and family on the birth.

For the Palmer Fire Department, the early morning delivery marked not only the safe arrival of a new resident, but also a powerful example of how preparation, training and rapid response can make all the difference when seconds count.

HEALTH | from page 4

not be covered.

Now, if all of this sounds a bit like Make America Healthy Again (MAHA), the signature program of our current health and human services secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., you're not wrong. Kennedy is a proponent of people exercising and eating healthier in order to take control of their own health.

So, there are areas where MAHA and lifestyle medicine overlap, but the ACLM emphasizes that it's a health-care approach, not a political movement.

Lifestyle medicine supports vaccines, research-based conventional treatments and standard medical guidelines. Practitioners would agree that improving diet, sleep and stress management is good public health policy, and those tenets exist independently of politics.

That said, the ACLM

supports coming changes in Medicare that are in alignment with its goals. The Make America Healthy Again: Enhancing Lifestyle and Evaluating Value-based Approaches Through Evidence (MAHA ELEVATE) for Original Medicare, was announced in December. Launching later this year, it will provide funding for "evidence-based, whole-person care approaches" not currently covered by Original Medicare.

I don't think there's anything about lifestyle medicine that's inherently controversial or political. Those six pillars are certainly within the realm of traditional medical practice. And you can use the pillars on your own to improve your health, whether that means eating more plant-based foods, practicing mindfulness for stress reduction, going out to lunch with friends, quitting tobacco or taking a daily walk.


But many people need the

advice and support of medical professionals to make the changes they need to become healthier and manage chronic diseases. If that sounds like something you need, you can learn more about lifestyle medicine at lifestylemedicine.org and see if it would be a good fit for your health-care journey.

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



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This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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Monson Fire Logs

The Monson Fire Department responded to 4 fire calls and 26 medical calls for the week of Monday, February 23 through Sunday, March 1.

On Thursday, Feb. 26 at 1:50 p.m., the Department responded to Lincoln Street for burnt food on the stove. The Department returned back in service at 2:08 p.m.

On Friday, Feb. 27 at 2:38 p.m., the Department responded to Lower Hampden Road for the public as-

sist. The Department returned back in service at 2:58 p.m.

On Friday, Feb. 27 at 9:31 p.m., the Department responded to Silver Street for the gas leak investigation. The Department returned back in service at 9:55 p.m.

On Sunday, March 1 at 10:30 a.m., the Department responded mutual aid to Stafford Fire Department No. 1 for station coverage during a structure fire. The Department returned back in service at 4 p.m.

Palmer Police Logs

Sunday, Feb. 22

9:00 a.m. - Burglar alarm, Thorndike St.

12:52 p.m. - Disturbance, High St.

1:25 p.m. - Accident w/ property damage, Thorndike St.

6:57 p.m. - Accident w/ property damage, Ware St.

Monday, Feb. 23

1:03 a.m. - Larceny/Summons - Kelly Jean White, 25, charged with larceny under \$1,200.

7:18 a.m. - Burglar alarm, Central St.

10:40 a.m. - Larceny/Arrest - Kelly Jean White, 25, charged with two counts of shoplifting, vandalizing property, attempting to commit a crime, and disorderly conduct.

Tuesday, Feb. 24

6:25 a.m. - Animal complaint, Ruggles Ct.

9:28 a.m. - Accident w/ property damage, Main St.

9:38 a.m. - Runaway, Bridge St.

12:01 p.m. - Accident, hit and run/Summon - Gregory W. Nichols, 55, charged with leaving the scene of a property damage incident

1:35 p.m. - Fraud, Whalen St.

2:32 p.m. - Annoying/Obscene phone calls, Foster St.

3:59 p.m. - Accident w/ property damage, Thorndike St.

5:05 p.m. - Burglar alarm, N. Main St.

5:52 p.m. - Animal complaint, Main St.

8:37 p.m. - Structure fire, Quaboag Valley Co-op

8:59 p.m. - Accident, hit and run, Front St.

Wednesday, Feb. 25

1:34 a.m. - Burglar alarm, River St.

9:05 a.m. - Accident w/ property damage, Main St.

11:18 a.m. - Animal

complaint, Palmer St.

3:39 p.m. - Accident w/ property damage, N. Main St.

4:50 p.m. - Burglar alarm, Ware St.

9:27 p.m. - Motor vehicle theft, Main St.

Thursday, Feb. 26

9:31 a.m. - Fraud, Whalen St.

1:07 p.m. - Summons - Jonathan E. Houle, 33,

charged with marked lanes violation, negligent operation of a motor vehicle, and speeding.

1:53 p.m. - Breaking and entering, Katie Ln.

2:39 p.m. - Accident w/ property damage/Arrest - Lori Dee Doig, 71, charged with operating under influence of liquor, marked lanes violation, and reckless operation of a motor vehicle.

3:27 p.m. - Water leak, Orchard St.

8:26 p.m. - Accident w/ property damage, Gate St.

Friday, Feb. 27

12:00 p.m. - Animal complaint, Boston Rd.

3:54 p.m. - Fraud, Boston Rd.

6:34 p.m. - Accident, hit and run, Park St.

7:32 p.m. - Harassment, Keys Ave.

11:37 p.m. - Disturbance, Palmer Rd.

Saturday, Feb. 28

6:03 a.m. - Accident w/ property damage/Arrest - Melissa Atkins, 42, charged with operating under the influence of liquor, negligent operation of a motor vehicle, possession of an open contain of alcohol in a motor vehicle, child endangerment while operating under the influence, children without carseat, and reckless endangerment of a child

1:52 p.m. - Burglar alarm, Park St.

3:39 p.m. - Accident w/ property damage, Park St.

BUDGET | from page 1

statewide "perfect storm" of fiscal pressure.

"All municipal services are continuing to rise in every area," Wolowicz said, citing wages, health insurance, utilities, equipment, and contractual obligations. "These are increases that are ongoing and unavoidable and we have no control over."

Towns, she noted, are legally required to meet standards for public safety, education, infrastructure, staffing, training, and facilities. These are not discretionary services that can simply be eliminated without consequence.

She pushed back forcefully against any suggestion of financial mismanagement.

"The perception is that the rising taxes are the result of waste or mismanagement," Wolowicz said. "And I cannot say more emphatically how untrue that is."

Annual independent audits are conducted for both the town and school departments, she added, and budgets are already operating with lean staffing levels.

"This is not a political issue," she said. "It's a mathematical one."

Level service not growth

Finance Director Sherri Roberson clarified that department heads were instructed to submit "level service" budgets: requests limited strictly to what is necessary to maintain existing services.

The projected \$1.58 million gap reflects the increase in those level service requests over last year's approved budget. Overall, the draft budget reflects a 7 percent increase.

Reserves, officials agreed, are not a viable solution.

Using stabilization funds or free cash to cover recurring operating costs would amount to a temporary fix and could jeopardize the town's financial standing, particularly as it prepares to bond for the new fire station. Lower reserves could negatively impact borrowing rates.

"We cannot use reserves to fund our operating costs," Roberson emphasized. "It's really a band-aid."

School budget under the microscope

A significant portion of the increase, \$811,000, is tied to the school department's level service request.

Foster acknowledged the size of the increase but said it is largely driven by special education mandates, not expansion of staffing.

Special education costs are dictated by federally required Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), which legally bind the district to provide specific services and staffing supports.

"We have more students ... in raw numbers, not percentages ... with disabilities now than we had 10 years ago when we had 400 more students," Foster said.

The district has reduced its teaching staff by roughly 22 percent over the past decade and its central business office staffing by about 33 percent, he said. The one area that has grown is special education, reflecting increased student needs.

Foster also presented comparative data showing that Monson spends significantly less above the state's minimum required net school spending than surrounding communities.

"We are 1.8 million short of what our surrounding communities are funded," he said.

Some Finance Committee members questioned administrative salaries and whether the district appeared "top heavy." Foster defended the structure, outlining what he described as a lean administrative team.

The district has three central office administrators: the superintendent; a director of business and operations, who oversees finance, transportation, food services, technology and human resources, and a director of pupil services, who oversees special education; which accounts for roughly half of district staffing.

At the building level, each of the three schools has a principal, with assistant principals at Granite Valley and the high school.

"You'd be hard pressed to find a high school anywhere in the Commonwealth that doesn't have an assistant principal," Foster said.

Responding to criticism directly, he added: "If we're top heavy ... somebody tell me which thing I should get rid of."

Salary adjustments draw scrutiny

Particular attention was paid to salary increases for certain non-bargaining positions, including adjustments in the range of \$8,000 to \$10,000.

Foster described the changes as one-time market corrections to bring compensation closer to regional norms and to reflect expanded job responsibilities.

"These are not intended to be annual adjustments," he said. "People would get a normal cost-of-living ad-

justment going forward."

Wolowicz echoed that perspective, noting that in small municipal environments, it is often more efficient to have fewer employees taking on broader responsibilities.

"We would rather have less employees doing more work and being paid for it than having five employees doing mediocre work and spreading out thin," she said.

State aid and structural constraints

Officials expressed frustration that state aid has not kept pace with rising costs. Proposed increases in local aid from the governor amount to roughly \$40,000 more than last year; far short of what is needed to offset escalating expenses.

Advocacy efforts have focused on revising state funding formulas for Chapter 70 education aid, special education reimbursement, and Chapter 90 road funding.

"The state aid formulas continue to be outdated," Wolowicz said. "They do not reflect the true cost of running a town today."

Compounding the issue is Monson's limited commercial and industrial tax base. Residential property taxes remain the primary revenue source, and the town cannot create new taxes.

Fee reviews are underway across departments to determine whether service charges more accurately reflect costs, but officials acknowledged such changes would generate incremental, not transformative, revenue.

The override question

With reserves insufficient and revenue options limited, discussion turned to the possibility of a Proposition 2½ override.

Under state law, an override would require approval at Town Meeting followed by a successful ballot vote. The Select Board holds the authority to place the question on the ballot, but leaders expressed a preference for a unified recommendation from the Select Board, Finance Committee, and School Committee.

Wolowicz outlined the procedural complexities: two budgets would need to be presented at Town Meeting; one assuming passage of the override and one without it. Even if Town Meeting approved the override budget, it could still fail at the ballot box.

"That makes me nervous," she said, noting the significant work required to prepare dual budgets only to face uncertainty in June. Officials acknowledged

the fear among residents that approving one override could lead to future requests. But several members argued the town may already be at a tipping point after years of absorbing increases through staff reductions and reserve usage.

"We have cut and we have cut and we have cut on both sides, schools and town," said one Select Board member. "I think we just have reached a point where we've cut as far as we can cut and it's going to be up to the residents to decide."

Additional Pressures: Fire Station, WestComm, snow and ice

Beyond operating costs, officials discussed additional financial pressures:

- The new fire station project, supported in part by a \$1 million federal grant, will require long-term borrowing, with short-term interest already factored into the draft budget.

- The town's WestComm regional dispatch assessment stands at \$191,000, though it could decrease if additional agencies join the regional system.

- A snow and ice deficit of approximately \$250,000 will require coverage from free cash, reducing available reserves to roughly \$350,000 if no additional storms occur this season.

Each factor narrows the town's financial margin.

A community-wide decision

Throughout the evening, leaders emphasized that the ultimate decision will rest with voters; and that residents must understand the stakes.

"If we do level services, it's still going to cost us another million and a half dollars," Wolowicz said. "Let's acknowledge that our taxes are going up unless we cut services."

The choice facing Monson, officials made clear, is not between higher taxes and the status quo, but between higher taxes and reduced services.

As the meeting closed, no final decision had been made on pursuing an override. But leaders agreed that time is short, the numbers are real, and the conversation must now extend beyond Town Hall.

"We are there," Wolowicz said of the long-anticipated fiscal crossroads. "We're at that point."

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DINNER | from page 1

ensuring local students have access to opportunities beyond high school.

"It's something that we are really passionate about... making sure that kids in our community have all of the opportunities to do exactly what they want to do with their lives," she said.

The annual dinner has been held in honor of Richard Frydryk, remembered by members as a valued part of the St. Stan's community who cared deeply about supporting local youth. According to Burns, the event has been a longstanding tradition and continues to grow in attendance and support each year.

"It just gets bigger and better every year," she said.

Beyond the scholarship fundraiser, Burns noted that St. Stan's remains active with programming and community partnerships throughout the

year. The club has hosted line dancing classes every other Thursday, an offering that has steadily gained popularity. Weekly taco nights have also become a regular draw, and seasonal favorites such as chicken night are expected to return in the fall during football season.

The organization has also partnered with the local domestic violence task force on events such as bingo and seasonal clothing swaps. Pulaski Park, another hub of activity associated with the club, is slated to reopen as warmer weather arrives.

For organizers and attendees alike, the Mar. 1 dinner served as both a social gathering and a meaningful investment in Palmer's graduating seniors; combining comfort food, community spirit and a shared commitment to helping local students move forward with their educational goals.

DEADLINE

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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Public notices

Town of Monson Planning Board LEGAL NOTICE

In accordance with Chapter 40A M.G.L. §.11, the Monson Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing **Thursday, March 17th, 2026 at 7:00 P.M.** at the Monson Town Hall 110 Main St. Monson, Ma 01057 on the application of Jeffrey & Melissa Maurice for a Site Plan approval as provided by §6.7 of the Monson Zoning Bylaws. The applicant seeks to construct an 800 sq ft accessory dwelling unit above the existing garage on property located at 257 Stafford Road, Map 082 and Parcel 001, zoned Rural Residential. A copy of the application is on file with the Planning Board office.

Craig Sweitzer, Chairman
02/26, 03/05/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 Docket No. HD25P1815GD In the interests of Ella Mae Beauregard of Thorndike, MA Minor NOTICE AND ORDER: Petition for Appointment of Guardian of a Minor NOTICE TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

1. Hearing Date/Time: A hearing on a Petition for Appointment of Guardian of a Minor filed on **08/29/2025** by **David Beauregard** of Thorndike, MA will be held **05/19/2026 08:30 AM Review Hearing**. Located: **Hampden Probate and Family Court, 50 State Street, Springfield, MA 01102-0559.**

2. Response to Petition: You may respond by filing a written response to the Petition or by appearing in person at the hearing. If you choose to file a written response, you need to:

File the original with the Court; and

Mail a copy to all interested parties at least five (5) business days before the hearing.

3. Counsel for the Minor: The minor (or an adult on behalf of the minor) has the right to request that counsel be appointed for the minor.

4. Counsel for Parents: If you are a parent of the minor child who is the subject of this proceeding you have a right to be represented by an attorney. If you want an attorney and cannot afford to pay for one and if you give proof that you are indigent, an attorney will be assigned to you. Your request for an attorney should be made immediately by filling out the Application of Appointment of Counsel form. Submit the application form in person or by mail at the court location where your case is going to be heard.

5. Presence of the Minor at Hearing: A minor over age 14 has the right to be present at any hearing, unless the Court finds that it is not in the minor's best interests.

Date: March 3, 2026

Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
03/05/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Division Docket No. HD26P0374EA Estate of: Francis William Cerpovicz Also Known As: Francis J Cerpovicz, Frank Cerpovicz Date of Death: January 18, 2026 INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Paul F Cerpovicz of Statesboro, GA**

a Will has been admitted to informal probate.

Paul F Cerpovicz of Statesboro, GA has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but inter-

ested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.
03/05/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Division Docket No. HD26P0359EA Estate of: Stephen J. Denham Date of Death: December 20, 2025 INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Bruce J. Lovely, Jr of West Boylston, MA.**

Bruce J. Lovely, Jr of West Boylston, MA has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.
03/05/2026

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. HD26P0407EA Estate of: Rosemarie Ann Dubuque Also known as: Rosemarie A Dubuque Date of Death: 10/12/2025 CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons: A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Edward W Benoit of Victoria, TX** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that **Edward W Benoit of Victoria, TX** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 03/27/2026.** This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE ACT
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts

with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. **Claudine T. Stoudemire**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: February 26, 2026

Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
03/05/2026

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. HD26P0385EA Estate of: Judith Ann Gingras Date of Death: 09/15/2025 CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons: A Petition for **Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Fair Havens, Inc. d/b/a Quaboag of West Brookfield, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that **Laura McDonnell of West Brookfield, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **With Corporate Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 03/25/2026.** This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE ACT

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. **Claudine T. Stoudemire**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: February 25, 2026

Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
03/05/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 Docket No. HD26P0432PM In the matter of: Anita M Helliwell Of: Palmer, MA RESPONDENT (Person to be Protected/ Minor)

CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF CONSERVATOR OR OTHER PROTECTIVE ORDER PURSUANT TO G.L. c. 190B, §5-304 & §5-405

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by **Denise A Lutkus of Monson, MA** in the above captioned matter alleging that **Anita M Helliwell** is in need of a

Conservator or other protective order and requesting that **David C Sanford, Jr. of Palmer, MA** (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Conservator to serve **Without Surety** on the bond.

The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is disabled, that a protective order or appointment of a Conservator is necessary, and that the proposed conservator is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court.

You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before **10:00 a.m. on the return date of 03/30/2026.** This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.

Witness, Hon. **Claudine T. Stoudemire**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: March 02, 2026

Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
03/05/2026

LEGAL NOTICE Town of Holland Public Hearing – Tuesday, March 17, 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 hearing on **Tuesday, March 17, 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 for up to \$950,000 in available Community Development Block Grant funds. The Projects under consideration include:

- Infrastructure Improvement Project: Maybrook Rd.

- Social Services

- Additional projects may be discussed and may be included in the grant application.

If awarded, the Town of Holland will be responsible for administration of the grant program, with assistance from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

All community members and stakeholders are invited to share thoughts on potential Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) eligible activities to be included.

All persons with questions or comments regarding the grant application will have an opportunity to be heard. Individuals who require accommodation for the Public 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. 02/26, 03/05/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 Docket No. HD26P0112GD In the matter of:

Tanya Krutka Of: Monson, MA RESPONDENT Alleged Incapacitated Person CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN FOR INCAPACITATED PERSON PURSUANT TO G.L. c. 190B, §5-304

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by Dept. of **Developmental Services of Springfield, MA** in the above captioned matter alleging that **Tanya Krutka** is in need of a Guardian and requesting that **Tara Boucher of Amherst, MA** (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Guardian to serve **Without Surety** on the bond.

The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is incapacitated, that the appointment of a Guardian is necessary, and that the proposed Guardian is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court and may contain a request for certain specific authority.

You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before **10:00 a.m. on the return date of 03/19/2026.** This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.

WITNESS, Hon. **Claudine T. Stoudemire**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: February 20, 2026

Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
03/05/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Division Docket No. HD26P0371EA Estate of: Deborah A. Metzger Date of Death: 12/04/2025 INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **James D. Metzger of Monson, MA** a Will has been admitted to informal probate.

James D. Metzger of Monson, MA has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.
03/05/2026

TOWN OF BRIMFIELD PUBLIC HEARING

The Brimfield Select Board will hold a public hearing on the following pole and wire locations petition filed by National Grid on **Monday, March 23, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.** for the following:

Massachusetts Electric Company d/b/a National Grid requests permission to locate poles, wires, and fixtures, including the necessary sustaining and protecting fixtures, along and across the following public way:

Shaw Road
Reason: Shaw Road – Massachusetts Electric Company d/b/a National Grid to install 1 SO Pole on Shaw Rd beginning at a point approximately 896 ft southwest of the centerline of the intersection of Little Alum Rd.

Persons with an interest in this public hearing are asked to appear at the Brimfield Elementary School, 22 Wales Road, Brimfield, MA on the date and time affixed to this notice.

Martin J. Kelly
Select Board, Chairperson
Town of Brimfield
03/05, 03/12/2026

HOLLAND REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICE PROGRAMS

The Town of Holland for its FY 2026 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application, is seeking proposals from qualified social service organizations and agencies to include in the application. Activities eligible for funding include a range of social services that meet the needs of low and moderate-income residents in the Town of Holland. Agencies providing the following services are encouraged to submit proposals; adult education/GED preparation, literacy programs, job training, domestic violence prevention, services for seniors, emergency food, family/youth activities and other social service programs.

The Town of Holland may choose to fund all, any or none of the proposals submitted. Agencies or organizations identified for inclusion in the Town's grant proposal will be required to submit additional information as part of the full CDBG application to be submitted to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC). Programs funded by EOHLC will begin in the Fall of 2026. The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) is assisting the Towns in the coordination and administration of its community development programs. Please contact Sarah Maroney to receive a request form or with any questions regarding this program at (413) 781-6045 or smaroney@pvpc.org.

All proposals must be submitted by mail, fax or e-mail to the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 60 Congress Street – 1st Floor, Springfield, MA 01104, fax 413-732-2593, or smaroney@pvpc.org by 2:00 p.m. Friday, March 13, 2026.
02/26, 03/05/2026

Town of Monson Planning Board LEGAL NOTICE

In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 40A, §5, the Monson Planning Board will hold a public hearing on **March 17th, 2026 at 7:05 PM** in the Monson Town Offices, 110 Main Street, Select Board Meeting Room to consider an amendment to the Town of Monson Zoning Bylaws, Section 2.2.1 Map, to reflect a new Zoning Map dated 2026. A copy of the zoning bylaw amendment, along with the zoning map, is available for public review at the Monson Planning Board Office during regular business hours and on the Town's website <https://www.monson-ma.gov>

Craig Sweitzer, Chairman
02/26, 03/05/2026

Please check the accuracy of your legal notice prior to submission (i.e., date, time, spelling). Also, be sure the requested publication date coincides with the purpose of the notice, or as the law demands. Thank you.

Public notices

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Division
Docket No.
HD26P0302EA
Estate of:
Donna Marie Sears
Also Known As:
Donna Sears
Date of Death: Dec. 28, 2025
INFORMAL PROBATE
PUBLICATION NOTICE**

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Jason R Sears of Palmer, MA.**

Jason R Sears of Palmer, MA has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.

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

03/05/2026

**TOWN OF WALES
Public Hearing
Monday, March 23, 2026
6:00 PM
Town Hall
3 Hollow Road,
Wales, MA 01081
Proposed Joint FY26 CDBG
Application with Holland**
The Town of Wales, in association with the Pioneer Valley

Planning Commission, acting as lead community on behalf of itself as well as the Town of Holland, will conduct a public hearing regarding the FY26 Community Development Block Grant Program. The hearing will take place at **6:00 PM on Monday, March 23rd, 2026, in person at the Town Hall, 3 Hollow Road, Wales, MA 01081.** If the meeting is cancelled due to inclement weather, the hearing will take place during the rescheduled Board of Selectmen meeting.

The public is encouraged to attend this hearing to discuss the town's joint FY26 application to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities for up to \$1,150,000 in available Community Development Block Grant Funds. All persons with questions or comments regarding the grant application will have an opportunity to be heard. Those unable to attend can send written comments to the Wales Board of Selectmen, 3 Hollow Road, PO Box 834, Wales, MA 01081, Attn: Pamela LeDuc

The Town is encouraging input on community needs and projects which would benefit from grant funding. Projects currently being considered include a joint housing rehabilitation program, public social services and street-specific infrastructure engineering designs in Wales. Additional projects may be discussed and may be included in the grant application.

Persons who require special accommodation for the hearing should contact the town at least one week prior to the hearing date at (413) 245-7571. For further information contact Joe Hagopian at PVPC at (413) 781-6045 or jhagopian@pvpc.org. 03/05/2026

**TOWN OF WALES
REQUEST FOR
PROPOSALS
PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICE
PROGRAMS**
The Town of Holland, as lead

community for the FY2026 Wales & Holland Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application, is seeking proposals from qualified social service organizations and agencies to include in the application. Activities eligible for funding include a range of social services that meet the needs of low and moderate-income residents in the Towns of Wales and Holland. Agencies providing the following services are encouraged to submit proposals; adult education/GED preparation, literacy programs, job training, domestic violence prevention, services for seniors, emergency food, family/youth activities and other social service programs.

The Town of Wales may choose to fund all, any or none of the proposals submitted. Agencies or organizations identified for inclusion in the Town's grant proposal will be required to submit additional information as part of the full CDBG application to be submitted to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC). Programs funded by EOHLC will begin in the Summer of 2026. The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) is assisting the Town in the coordination and administration of its community development programs. Please contact Joe Hagopian to receive a request form or with any questions regarding this program at (413) 781-6045 or jhagopian@pvpc.org.

All proposals must be submitted by mail, fax or e-mail to the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 60 Congress Street - 1st Floor, Springfield, MA 01104, fax 413-732-2593, or jhagopian@pvpc.org by 2:00 p.m. Friday March 20, 2026 . 03/05/2026

Obituary

William T. Brown Jr.

1950-2026

PALMER/ORO VALLEY, AZ - William (Bill) Thomas Brown Jr., born April 24, 1950, in Palmer, Massachusetts, passed away peacefully on Feb. 12, 2026, in Tucson, Arizona.



those around him.

In his later years, Bill made his home in Tucson, Arizona, where he embraced the warm desert climate and natural beauty of the Southwest. He found peace and inspiration in Arizona's landscapes, and it was there that he spent the last several years of his life enjoying the sunshine and the scenery he loved so much.

Bill dedicated many years of his professional life to Collins Electric Company, where he worked as a Purchasing Agent. He was known for his strong work ethic, integrity, and the lasting relationships he built with colleagues and friends throughout his career.

Bill is survived by his loving daughter, Sarah Presho, and her husband, Robert, of Palmer, Massachusetts. He is also survived by his devoted older sister, Marjorie Mancuso of Charlotte, North Carolina, and his younger brother, Richard Brown and his sister in law Barbara of Bondsville, Massachusetts. He leaves behind his cherished grandchild-

dren, Riley, Ruby, Ryder, and Ryan, who brought him immense pride and joy and held a special place in his heart.

He is also survived by several beloved nieces and nephews: Carolyn Kokoski, Jack Drawec, Shawn Drawec, Heidi Drawec, Marc Mancuso, Paul Mancuso, Jane Dobruck, Ann Bigda, Steve Brodrick, Maurice Forcer, Corinne Gawlik and Ricky Brown.

Bill was preceded in death by his sisters, Carol Drawec and Jean Brodrick, and his parents, William and Marie Brown.

A private service will be held to honor and celebrate Bill's life. His photographs and memories will be treasured always.

Lombard Funeral Home has been entrusted with the arrangements, for online condolences please visit www.lombardfuneralhome.com

DEATH NOTICE

William T. Brown Jr.,
Died Feb. 12, 2026
Services are private
Lombard Funeral Home

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Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place. The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

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PASTOR | from page 1

harmonies highlighted the joy and solemnity of the installation. The congregation itself participated actively, reinforcing the sense of shared community that has marked Pastor Norwick's first year in Monson.

The church's Search Committee, which guided the process that led to Pastor Norwick's appointment, was also recognized during the service. Members include Keith Obert, David Wallace, Laurie Clarke, Deb Shepard, Elaine Carlin, Christian Young, Roy Miller, Lisa Borlen, and Judy White.

Immediately following the worship service, the congregation gathered in the fellowship hall for a reception and dinner, offering attendees a chance to break bread, share stories, and personally

congratulate Pastor Norwick. Gluten-free options were made available, ensuring all members could participate in the communal meal.

The day's flowers were given to the glory of God by the Dorcas Flower Fund in memory of H. Lenora Stiles Thomas, adding a colorful tribute to the sanctuary.

Moderator Cindy Desellier and church members emphasized the significance of the day not only as a milestone in Pastor Norwick's ministry but also as a celebration of the congregation's shared journey. The First Church of Monson continues to honor its commitment as an Open and Affirming Church, fostering inclusivity, faith, and community engagement.

Reflecting on the occasion, Pastor Norwick expressed gratitude and excitement for the future: "We are

here today because of the path that brought us together. I am thrilled to serve this con-

gregation, and I look forward to all that God has in store for us in the years ahead."



Above, community members came in droves to celebrate with the First Church of Monson. Inset, Gathered front and center with the visiting reverends, the installation begins. Turley photos by Abigail McCoy

SUMMER CAMP

Check Out These Great Camps!

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Holyoke Community College Summer Youth Programs for Ages 8-16

Save your spot and register today for summer fun!

- July 27-31**, Minecraft Designers (ages 8-10, 11-14)
- August 3-7**, Python Programmers (ages 8-10, 11-14)
- July 20-24**, Make Your First Video Game (ages 8-10, 11-14)
- July 13-17**, ROBLOX Coders (ages 8-10, 11-14)
- July 6-10 and 13-17**, Fun Bites with Chef Swanigan (ages 9-16)
- July 20-24 and 27-31**, Around the world with Chef Swanigan (ages 9-16)
- July 6-10 and 13-17**, Cooking without Borders with Chez Vargas-Gonzalez (ages 9-16)
- July 20-24 and 27-31**, Passport to Flavors with Chef Vargas-Gonzalez (ages 9-16)

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Make the most of the summer camp

Summer camp season will soon be here, and throngs of children will board buses each morning or pack their parents' cars full of essentials to survive a few weeks away from home.

Looking back, many adults who experienced summer camp have fond memories of their adventures — whether they all went according to plan or there were some hiccups along the way. Parents want their children to make their own summer camp memories. Even if the canoe capsizes or the cabin leaks during a summer thunderstorm, such experiences can build character and strengthen friendships.

According to RegPack, an online registration software company, more than six million American children participate in some form of camp each year, including sleep-away camp or day camp. The American Camp Association says that number is closer to 14 million, with the most popular camp session length around one week or less. Families getting prepared for camp can follow these guidelines to ensure the experience is one kids won't soon forget.

Search for an accredited camp

Accredited camps must meet more than 300 standards related to program quality, safety and health, according to the ACA. An accredited camp will likely give parents the most peace of mind.

Consider children's readiness

There's no magic age when a child may be ready to go to camp, but generally kids who are ages seven or eight may be fine to start a resident sleep-away camp. Day camp kids can begin as early as age three, the same age kids often begin preschool programs. Gauge whether the child has spent time away from home at friends' or family members' homes to decide if a resident camp will be the right fit or if a day camp is a better fit.

Connect with fellow campers

If possible, attend a meet-and-greet prior to the start of the season. Neighborhood day camps tend to draw kids from local communities, so there's already a chance kids will know a few fellow campers.

Get to know camp counselors early on

Campers can introduce themselves to camp counselors and other program directors and are urged to ask questions about specific programs. Counselors can direct campers toward activities they may enjoy.

Make the most of all situations

Much of summer camp will likely be smooth-sailing, but it's reasonable to expect some bumps along the way. Campers shouldn't expect perfection, but use the situations that may go awry as learning experiences on how to handle adversity — trying to find the fun in them anyway. Even a medical situation can be overcome, particularly because camps staff qualified medical personnel to ensure campers are safe and well.

Greene Acres Equestrian Center L.L.C.

2026 Summer Riding Sessions

June 29 - July 3 • July 20 - July 24
August 10 - August 14 • August 24-28

9AM - 3PM LUNCH NOT PROVIDED

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KIDZ SUMMER PROGRAM/K-6TH GRADE

Ages 5 - 12 yrs. • JUNE 22ND-AUGUST 21ST
9 Weeks • Full & Part Time Options/Single Weeks or All Summer!
Swimming • Field Trips • Close walk to Playgrounds & CHCS Pool
Daily Creative & Educational Indoor/Outdoor Activities!
**Start of camp based on Belchertown School Schedule*

BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL CARE

K-6th Grade • Full & Part-Time • Homework Support
School Bus Pick Up & Drop Off • Indoor & Outdoor Activities

PRESCHOOL

Year round program for Ages 3-5 yrs.
Full & Part Time • Choose from Full Day or 3/4 Day Options
Creative Educational Kindergarten Readiness Curriculum

TODDLER/YOUNG PRE-K

Year round program for Ages 15 mos.-3 yrs.
Choice of Full Day 7:00-5:00 or 3/4 day option 8:30-2:30
Come Grow, Learn, and Play!

4 Stadler Street • (413) 323-5439 Follow Us

belchertownkidzclub@gmail.com EEC LICENSED PROGRAM #177446

Join Our Toddler Room Waitlist

REGISTER FOR SIX WEEKS, GET THE SEVENTH FREE!

BEMENT SUMMER CAMP

FOR CHILDREN ENTERING GRADES K-9
Campers participate in a wide variety of fun activities including arts & crafts, swimming, nature programs, hiking, and 18 enrichment themes! Lunch is included and before and after care is available!

DAY CAMP
JR. DAY CAMP

ENRICHMENT
CAMPS

Weekly Tuition
**\$350-
\$500**

MOUNTAIN
BIKING &
ADVENTURE
CAMPS

WEEK 1: JUNE 15-19	Cross Country Camp	Gamer's Guild
WEEK 2: JUNE 22-26	Taylor Swift Camp	STEM Challenges!
WEEK 3: JULY 6-10	Soccer Club	Mission Monadnock
WEEK 4: JULY 13-17	D&D Camp	History Hunters
WEEK 5: JULY 20-24	Counselor in Training	Flag Football & More
WEEK 6: JULY 27-31	Soccer Camp	PE Games & Sports
WEEK 7: AUGUST 3-7	Spanish Explorers	

The Bement School
94 Old Main Street
Deerfield, MA 01342

Registration Link
bement.org/summer