

The Journal Register

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PALMER



Turley photo by Abigail McCoy
Kyle and Olivia Smith along
with baby Grace pose with
the Easter Bunny.

EGG HUNT draws big crowd

By Abigail McCoy
amccoy@turley.com

PALMER – What began as a small, community-focused effort during the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic has blossomed into one of Palmer’s most anticipated springtime traditions.

Now in its sixth or seventh year, organizer Lori Chiachia’s annual Easter egg hunt at Pulaski Park drew approximately 192 families this

year, marking a significant increase from previous years and underscoring the event’s growing popularity.

“I started it during COVID because nobody was doing things,” Chiachia said. “It’s just a free event for the town. People sign up, and we make it happen through donations.”

The event featured four separate egg hunts divided by age group, ensuring that children of all ages could par-

ticipate safely and enjoyably. Younger children ages 0 to 5 and older participants ages 6 to 10 each had designated hunt times, with roughly 50 children per session. Each child had the opportunity to collect 22 eggs, including special golden eggs that added an extra layer of excitement to the experience.

But the festivities extended far beyond the hunt

HUNT | page 11



Children were collecting as many eggs as they could carry.

MONSON

FinCom reviews draft budgets

By Abigail McCoy
amccoy@turley.com

MONSON – The Monson Finance Committee convened this week, March 30, to review draft budgets for Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27), engaging in a rigorous discussion about the town’s financial sustainability, departmental funding, and the long-term fiscal outlook. The meeting highlighted growing tension between maintaining equitable funding across town departments and addressing the needs of the school system, all within a framework of limited revenue.

Reviewing the Record and Opening Business

The meeting opened with a review of minutes from March 16, with minimal changes made. A brief discussion followed regarding the Board of Health stipend. Committee members were reminded that the stipend originated in 2023 after a worker was bitten by a dog during a farm inspection, prompting the town to hire an external inspector. “The board of Health stipend line came about in 2023 when a board of health worker was doing farm inspection. She was bit by a dog,” a committee member explained. With the new inspector, not employed by the town, requesting more per inspection, the stipend was formalized at \$7,500 in FY25.

The Building and Facilities budget review was tabled due to the department head’s absence. “Did anyone have any comments about that budget? Well, that would be... to table that for the next meeting,” a member stated.

Budget Projections: Four Scenarios

Finance Director Sherri Roberson presented four financial projections for FY27 to guide discussions ahead of the Annual Town Meeting.

1. Level Funding (excluding fixed costs): This scenario showed a signif-

FINCOM | page 16

MONSON

Board reviews meeting requests

By Abigail McCoy
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MONSON – The Monson Select Board’s March 24 meeting covered a wide-ranging agenda, from public concerns and municipal appointments to major funding decisions and a sobering look at the town’s financial outlook. Throughout the evening, themes of transparency, fiscal strain and long-term planning dominated discussion.

Public comment raises concerns

The meeting opened with a mix of community updates and pointed criticism from residents.

Peter Matrow reminded residents that nominations for Monson’s Citizen of the Year remain open through March 31.

More contentious was a statement from resident Roxanne Gunther, who raised allegations regarding Town Administrator Jennifer Wolowicz’s handling of a 2022 conflict involving a former elected official. Gunther questioned the legitimacy of a past investigation and alleged improper conduct, including the use of

SELECT | page 15

BRIMFIELD

Scouts host annual Easter Egg Hunt



Turley photos by Abigail McCoy
Inside, the area for the younger kids, one year old Ezra picks up his eggs very carefully.

By Abigail McCoy
amccoy@turley.com

BRIMFIELD – Laughter, bright spring colors, and the promise of hidden treasures filled the lawn at the First Congregational Church of Brimfield this past weekend, as local scouts carried on a cherished community tradition: the annual Easter egg hunt.

Organized and run by members of Troop 7 Brimfield, the free event welcomed families from across the area for a morning of games, crafts, and festive fun ahead of the Easter holiday.

Tara Gilman-Sheffield,

scoutmaster of Troop 7, said the event has become a staple in the community calendar.

“We’ve been hosting an Easter egg hunt here annually,” she explained. “It’s a free activity for the community, and the scouts really take the lead in making it all happen.”

According to Gilman-Sheffield, the troop is involved in every stage of preparation. Scouts spend time assembling and filling dozens of colorful eggs, organizing activities, and setting up the event space before families arrive. On the day of the hunt, they help run games, guide younger participants, and ensure everything runs smoothly.

SCOUTS | page 8

PALMER

Electronics recycling at St. Thomas helps community, environment

By Abigail McCoy
amccoy@turley.com

PALMER – Residents dropped off unwanted electronics Saturday morning at St. Thomas Church, as Green Day Recycling returned for another community collection event that blends environmental responsibility with local fundraising.

Brian Wood, operations director of Green Day Recycling, said the family-run business has built its model around partnering with churches, nonprofits and municipal organizations across

Massachusetts to host weekly recycling events.

“We’re a small family-run business,” Wood explained. “We work with churches and government entities and nonprofit organizations throughout the state to do electronics recycling events.”

From March through early December, the company travels to a different host site nearly every Saturday, offering residents a convenient way to safely dispose of electronic waste. The St. Thomas

RECYCLE | page 13



Jim Wood, owner of Green Day Recycling, and son, Brian Wood. Turley photos by Abigail McCoy



'Spay-ghetti' dinner supports local animal rescue

By Abigail McCoy
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PALMER – Local residents gathered for an evening of food, fun and feline-focused fundraising at the annual “Spay-ghetti Dinner,” hosted by Here Today Adopted Tomorrow at St. Thomas church in Palmer. The event, a longtime community tradition, brought together supporters from across the region to raise money for the shelter’s ongoing rescue and outreach efforts.

“It’s just a great fundraiser that we have to help raise money for our shelter,” said Rachel Max of Here Today Adopted Tomorrow. “People love it. They come out, they eat a bunch of food, and we raise a lot of money for cats and people in our community.”

The dinner featured a welcoming, family-friendly atmosphere, with guests enjoying a hearty pasta-based menu that included vegetarian and vegan options. The meal was complemented by garlic bread donated by European Bakery, along with desserts contributed by The Sugar Chalet and Publick House Historic Inn. A local chef, Lenny Hart, volunteered his time to prepare and coordinate the meal with additional help from community volunteers.

Beyond the food, attendees had the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities designed to engage guests of all ages. Raffle tables filled with donated items lined the

event space, while games such as a “cutest cat” contest, a candy jar guessing game, kitten-naming activities, and cat trivia added to the evening’s entertainment.

“All of the raffles are donated by members of the community,” Max explained. “It’s really about bringing people together and making it a good time while supporting a good cause.”

Funds raised during the event directly benefit the organization’s many programs, which extend far beyond adoption services. Here Today Adopted Tomorrow offers low-cost spay and neuter services for residents in Monson and surrounding communities, including Palmer, Brimfield, Wales and Holland. The organization also provides behavioral support for pet owners and operates a pet food pantry supplying both dog and cat food to families in need.

In addition to its ongoing services, the rescue is currently facing an influx of kittens and is seeking foster volunteers to help care for them until they are ready for adoption.

“We just took in multiple litters unexpectedly,” Max said. “So if anyone is interested in fostering, we’re definitely looking for help right now.”

As the evening wrapped up, the sense of community support was clear, with attendees not only enjoying a shared meal but also contributing to a mission that impacts both animals and their owners across the region.



The Cutest Cat Contest: people submitted their cats and upon entry to the dinner you got a ticket to vote for the cutest cat.



There was also a mini free raffle for whoever guessed the amount of jolly ranchers in this jar.

Turley photos by Abigail McCoy



A honey apiary box was one of the raffle items.



Raffle tables filled with donated items draw interest from attendees supporting HTAT's local animal rescue efforts.



Another raffle item was a large basket of cat toys and treats.



Volunteers from HTAT and local residents, including chef Lenny Hart, fill the kitchen to make the spaghetti dinner.

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Good Friday - April 3 at 4 p.m.
Easter Vigil - April 4 at 4 p.m.



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stbarnabasbelchertown.org

~ All Are Welcome ~

Monson Garden Club offers xeriscaping

MONSON – Monson Garden Club is sponsoring its guest night program xeriscaping with Master Gardener Kathi Garipey on Monday, April 6 at 7 p.m. in First Church of Monson on High St. in Monson.

Xeriscaping is the art of landscaping with plants that require little water for upkeep. This process helps with water conservation while beautifying an area.

Kathi contributes to community enrichment and education as a lead teacher for Massachusetts Horticultural Society and education coordinator for Mass Audubon. She is actively involved in the Attleboro Garden Club and Massachusetts Master Gardener Association. As a master gardener she shares research-based horticultural knowledge and experience with the public.

This program is open to the public with light refreshments to be served. A suggested donation of \$5 will include a chance to win plants for sustainable gardening.

It is funded in part by a grant from the Monson Cultural Council, a local agency of the Mass. Cultural Council.

\$15,000 grant awarded to Monson Fire Department

BOSTON – State Representative Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr. is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety & Security and the Department of Fire Services has awarded the Town of Monson's Fire Department a \$15,419.00 grant for the purchase of firefighter safety equipment. The grant will allow the department to obtain necessary personal protective and safety equipment that will make impactful improvements to the safety and long-term health of their personnel.

"I am pleased to support this funding which will help the Monson Fire Department keep our dedicated firefighters safer," stated Puppolo.

The grant program, now in its 6th year, reimburses Massachusetts fire departments for a wide variety of equipment to protect firefighter safety/health and bring fire departments into compliance with national standards as defined by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Local Veteran to share submarine tales of the 60s

BRIMFIELD – Hitchcock's Brown Bag Speaker Series continues April 15 with local veteran Richard "Denny" Denniston who will share personal stories of his service on the USS George Washington. The talk will begin at 12:30 p.m., following an optional lunch at noon. Reservations are required for the talk (\$10) as well as the lunch (an additional \$10 if ordering through Hitchcock; bagged lunches may also be brought in). The talk will run approximately one hour, with additional time reserved for questions and discussion.

The USS George Washington (SSBN-598), the third United States Navy ship to bear that name in honor of

Founding Father George Washington, was the first to be purpose-built as a deterrent force. Starting with his path to enlisting, Denniston will share stories that touch on training, camaraderie, and Navy life above and below the surface, discussing how his service impacted his life and influenced his unwavering patriotism.

Originally from Michigan, Denniston joined the Navy at 19 and subsequently served on three submarines, including three 67-day patrols on the USS George Washington. He went on to earn a degree in education, serving as a grammar school principal for the majority of his 37 year career in Western MA, ultimate-

ly settling with his wife and children in Brimfield in 1976. Denny served as a Veterans Grave Officer for Brimfield Cemetery for twelve years, and enjoys weekly gatherings at the Apple Barn as a member of The Old Car Guys. He credits growing up near the Motor City as key to instilling his early love of cars.

The Brown Bag Speaker Series is presented with support from the Shirley Frye Memorial Fund.

For more information, visit www.hitchcockacademy.org. Hitchcock Academy is a community center located at 2 Brookfield Road in Brimfield serving the community with educational, recreational, and cultural programming.

Retraction:

Breton Estates Certificate of Compliance Coverage

PALMER – In a previous report, it was stated that the Palmer Conservation Commission discussed the "complicated history" of the Breton Estates subdivision and that unresolved violations across the broader development were central to the issuance of a Certificate of Compliance (CoC) for DEP file #256-1691 at Pioneer

Drive. It was also suggested that ongoing conditions were being kept in place across the entire subdivision.

This account was inaccurate.

In fact, the commission's discussion focused specifically on a single lot at 1 Pioneer Drive, which is currently being sold. The original Order of Conditions for

the subdivision, issued in 2009, applied to the entire development, but the commission issued a partial Certificate of Compliance for this individual lot, while ongoing conditions remain in effect only for the remaining lots not yet certified.

The motion for the partial certificate was approved unanimously, 6-0.

Artisan Emporium to be held May 3

PALMER – The Artisan Emporium is holding its fourth annual fair, the first Sunday in May. Although craft fairs are quite common, this one is complementary to guests and helps the promotion of small businesses.

Explore one-of-a-kind finds from local independent creators with hands on activities, food and more.

The Artisan Emporium event will be on Sunday, May 3 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. fea-

turing jewelry artists, steampunk designs, blankets, natural soaps, metal fabrications, clay works, artists, candles, and so much more.

Approximately forty vendors will be at Olmsted Park, adjacent to the Steaming Tender in Palmer, Mass.

All vendor fees go to the restoration and preservation of the historic Olmsted Park.

Interested vendors can email scarletlamoth@gmail.com



Keep Homestead to open

MONSON – The Keep Homestead Museum on 35 Ely Road in Monson, will open for the season on April 12 with the program Indian Baskets of the Northeastern Woodlands with Lorraine German.

Lorraine, owner of Mad River Antiques in North Granby, Conn. will discuss the development of basket making among Native Americans in New England and

New York including their stylistic differences.

This program starts at 1:30 p.m. in the barn and is open to the public free of charge through donations are welcome. The museum will be open for viewing of new displays and for light refreshments from 1 to 3:30 p.m.

The Friends of Keep Homestead Museum meeting will take place after the Open House at 3:30 p.m.



Palmer Senior Center

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

April 10: "Jackie" – Celebrated actress Natalie Portman leads an acclaimed cast in this powerfully stirring drama as First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy, as she grapples with unimaginable grief and trauma following President JFK's assassination. "Jackie's" faith and strength lead her to a new life with her children. While she honors her husband's remarkable legacy, she also leaves her own indelible mark.

April 17: "Killers of the Flower Moon" – Based on a true story, Mollie Burkhardt, a member of the Osage Nation, fight to survive and

save her community from a spree of greed-fueled murders committed against them in 1920's Oklahoma after oil was discovered on their land.

April 24: "Forrest Gump" – Tom Hanks gives an astonishing performance as Forrest, an everyman whose simple innocence comes to embody a generation. Alongside his mamma, his best friend Bubba, and his favorite girl Jenny, Forrest has a ringside seat for the most memorable events of the second half of the 20th Century.

Monday Evening Programs
4:30 p.m.

April 6: Scrapbooking with Kim Keaton \$10 Paid in Advance

April 13: "Quabbin Clearing of the Valley"

April 27: "Construction of the Windsor Dam"

Activities

April 2 at 12:30 p.m., Clay craft

April 7 and 21 at 12:30 p.m., Let Us learn together - Watercolor painting.

April 8, 15, 22 and 29 Fruit and Veggie Stand

April 8 at 11:30 a.m. Information Table "Free Notification System" with Diane Vadnais

April 9 at 1 p.m., Sunshine Village Craft

April 9 4:30-7:30 OPEN HOUSE - see the changes here at the center, check out our program-ming and enjoy complimentary charcuterie platters and refreshments.

April 14 at 12 p.m. - "Russo's Lakeside" in Palmer, this is a self-drive, self-pay event.

April 15 at 11:30 a.m. - Lunch & Learn w/ Pat Prew - Low sodium.

April 16 at 9:30 a.m. - Kim with Power Back Rehab Informational

April 16 at 12:30 p.m. - Fairy Lantern w/ Kim Keaton

April 22 at 12 p.m. - Staying Connected to Nature - In recognition of Earth Day, we will explore the many physical and emotional benefits of spending time in nature, along with simple ways to bring more of the outdoors into everyday life. Participants will plant herb seeds to take home with them.

April 23 at 1 p.m. - Sunshine Village Painting

Quabbin Series
Monday, April 13, April 27, May 11, and May 18

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Sat., April 11th ~ 9am-noon
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West Hartford, CT

Sat., April 18th & 25th ~ 9am-1pm
WORK DAYS

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Viewpoints

SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor

I'll be 70 on New Year's Day. When should I apply for Social Security?

Dear Rusty:

I was born on Jan. 1, 1958, so I believe Social Security considers me to be 70 as of December 2027. I'm planning on filing when I turn 70 to maximize the payment. I'm not sure if I should start in December, with the first payment in January 2028. Or should I start in January with the first payment in February 2028? I know I can start anytime, however I don't want to file before the maximum payment, even by one month.

Signed: Wanting Maximum Benefit

Dear Wanting:

You are correct that if your birth date is Jan. 1, 1958, you are entitled to your full age 70 benefit in December 2027. So, if you claim your SS benefit to start in December 2027 you will get your maximum benefit amount and you will receive that payment in January 2028 (on the second Wednesday). Basically, anyone born on the first of any month is considered to have been born in the previous month for SS benefit purposes.

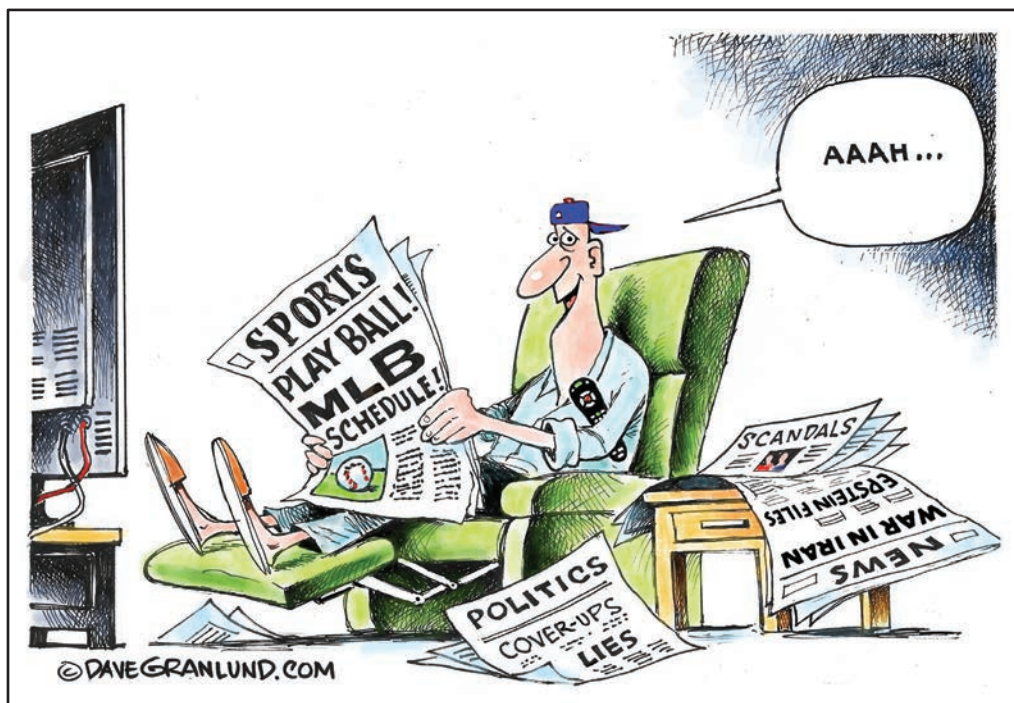
You can apply for your benefits up to four months prior to your birthday month and SS usually suggests applying about three months in advance to give them time to process your application. When you complete the application, you will specify the month you wish your benefits to start, so applying early does not present a problem. You can either call SSA at 1-800-772-1213 to make an appointment to apply

over the phone or you can apply online at www.ssa.gov/apply.

The one thing you might want to do is put the following in the "Remarks" section of your application for SS benefits: "I do not wish to receive any retroactive Social Security benefits. I want my benefits to become effective with the first month of my age 70 eligibility (December 2027 because I was born on the first of January)."

Including that remark will ensure that your benefit will be the full maximum amount you are entitled to at 70 years of age, without any reduction. And I congratulate you on choosing a strategy which maximizes your monthly benefit and will likely provide you with the most in cumulative lifetime Social Security benefits.

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



Pruning your hydrangeas

It was encouraging to see so many gardeners out in force this past weekend, regardless of the fact that it remained a little chilly.

I got outside too, mainly to clean up some leaves and debris from a bed near the front door. While I was there, I began pruning my pink flowered Hydrangea (H. paniculata), mainly by removing last year's blooms.

I often get questions about blue hydrangeas and how to prune and what to do to coax it into bloom. So, before you get the pruners out and have at it, read on.

Most established hydrangea bushes, the "Mop-head" types (Hydrangea macrophylla) say those older than 15 years or so, flower on "old" wood, in other words, from buds made on the previous season's stems. That is why they are not pruned in the fall or in the spring for that matter, unless the stem is dead or partially dead.

An early autumn frost, a hard winter, or a late spring frost can kill buds or even entire stems. If the stem does not leaf out at all the further we get into spring, it is likely dead, and you should cut it down to the ground.

Usually the plant's roots are not harmed, and new growth will emerge from the base of the plant.

However, with these older cultivars, you will be

Sometimes people complain that they still don't get flowers and this is very perplexing. I've been to forums where everything from proper siting (morning sun, dappled shade) to fertilization is discussed (not too high in nitrogen, please).

One complaint was that our growing season is just borderline long enough for flowers to appear on new growth and reportedly some of these early repeat bloomers are being phased out because of it. If that's the case, I am sure they are breeding more dependable cultivars as we speak.

I had always wanted a hydrangea and finally bought one as a Mother's Day gift to self maybe four years ago. It is a newer generation and so far I have been very happy. It's filled out nicely and had well over two dozen flowers last year.

Hopefully the harsh winter will not effect my hopes for a repeat performance this summer. I wish you much success and many blooms on your hydrangeas!

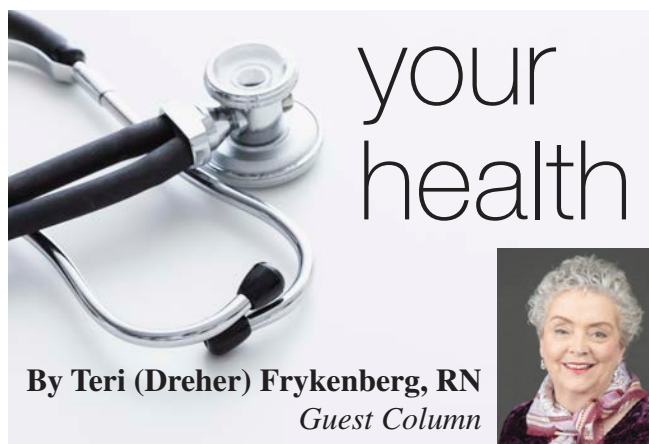
Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 34 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

in the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



Simon says, "Stand on one leg"

By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

Imagine you're 6 years old again and playing Simon Says.

"Simon says, 'Stand on one leg.' Now, stand on the other one."

Oops, you're "out," because there wasn't a "Simon says." But you can be "in" better health

if you can train yourself to stand on one leg for a few seconds or as long as a minute.

A recent article posted by the BBC detailed the positive health effects of being able to balance on one leg. It can improve and maintain balance, mobility

and even memory. The thing is, our ability to do it peaks at around age 10 and then slowly declines with age.

"If you find that it's not easy, it's time to start training your balance," Tracy Espiritu McKay of the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, told the BBC.

Quite a lot of research has backed this up. For example, it's been found that for older adults, including those with dementia, regular single-leg training significantly reduces the risk of falls and helps maintain muscle strength, balance and

the ability to perform those all-important activities of daily living (ADLs). These are the things that, if you can do them on your own, keep you out of assisted living and nursing homes.

Balancing on one leg also significantly increases muscle activity in the legs and ankles compared to standing on both feet. This includes the hamstrings, which is beneficial for stabilizing our knees.

It seems counterintuitive, but standing on one leg even challenges the brain, improving its alertness and motor control, improving posture and maintaining stability.

In addition, when performed with specific instructions (such as focusing on an external object), the exercise significantly activates core muscles, including the abdominals and back muscles, which is vital for preventing and rehabilitating lower back injuries. It's also a key tool for recovering from ankle and knee injuries.

The Journal Register

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

Please send opinions to:

The Journal Register

Letter to the Editor

24 Water St., Palmer MA 01069,

or by e-mail to:

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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.

POETRY CORNER

The Easter Hunt

The brown rough-slabbed rocks used
For little these days were further evidence
Of the layerings, above the rapids when crossing
Back to Fredericksburg, to the battlefield.
Where only

A week ago we were. Converging, making
For a birthday; and to meet among the Easter eggs grown
Bright and brittle as modern worlds
That we hid in the green holdings of grass.

The field was then our nest,
Where no voice of protest was. Only
The growing plans of Spring at first,
Over a sense of spirits on the Sunken Road;
And the daffodils in groups
Here and there, like on a playground keeping
To themselves, nodding, glancing downward one
To another, along the plains of linked fences
In the warm sun.

And our two small girls -
Trailing yellow hair, all eagerness
And eyes of morning blue, in matching
Pastel sundresses. Wishing them search
Hard and well. Providing a few clues,
And where the eggs weren't -
But they were mostly given to their own guesses.
Looking under each part of everywhere
By the ash trees, holly and flowering shrubs.

And among the dozen that were there - one remained
Unfound. Is that why I went back
That no amount of looking could uncover?
For a second look at the earthborne angels
Bend forward there in the tufts and twining
Grass where they were part of the dream
That rises in the resting egg. To see the sight
Twice, might be to get nearer the promise
Given beyond the veil of so
Many years when it was taken down,
And seemed punctured to a vacant shell.

- Charles Barnes



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

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

UPCOMING

VENDORS FOR THE BAYSTATE WING HOSPITAL GIFT SHOPPE

April Vendors

- April 1 - Cork Elegance
- April 2 - Generations of Cookies
- April 8 - How Charming
- April 16 - Weleful Weavers
- April 21 - Wicked Good Treats
- April 23 - Hobbit Hollow Herbs
- April 30 - Jewelry for Diane

April 14

Financial Fitness: The Power of Budgeting - Palmer Public Library Community Room at 6:30 p.m. Could Budgeting Be Your Superpower? Join Edward Jones Financial Advisor Lucille Germain for an exploration of the power of budgeting. We will examine your wants and needs and talk about personal spending and savings goals. Many think budgeting equals constraints, but a budget can help put you in control. Are you ready to give budgeting a try? This program is free and registration is not required.

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 Beau-lieu at 267-4044 or Merry Mombourquette at 283-7577. Follow them on Facebook for more.

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

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

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

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



By Julie Midura
Guest Columnist

Nature is our Cathedral

walls or ceiling. At least not in the manmade sense.

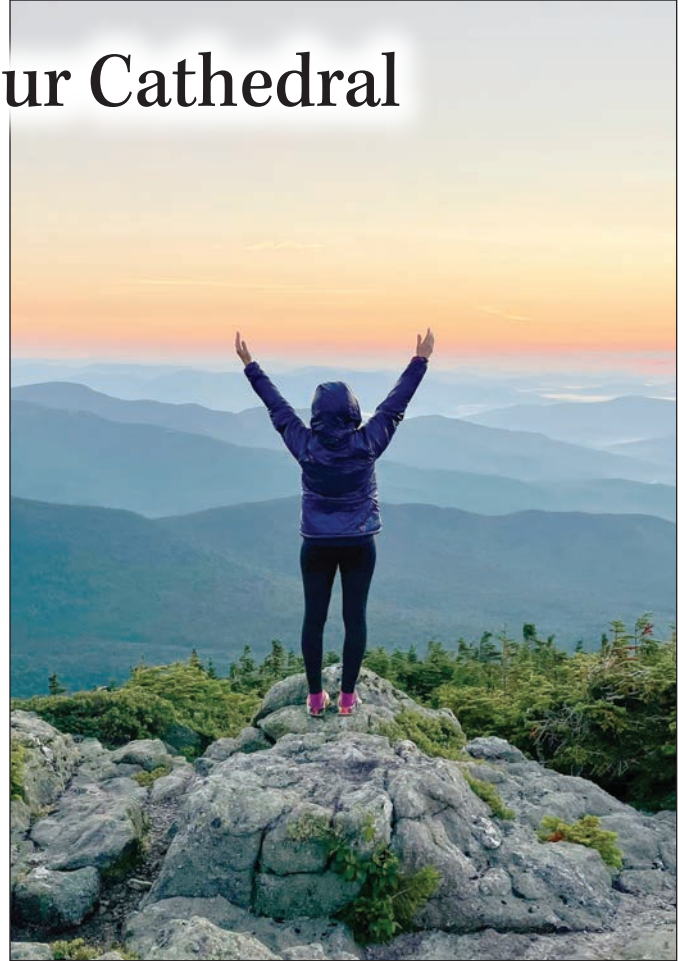
Gravel, granite and earth are the floor. The vast canvas of blue sky is the ceiling. The sentinel of trees lining the path form the walls. The foundation is made from mountains rather than poured cement, but they hold me up and give me far more strength than concrete ever could.

In my church, I listen to our pastor preach words of truth, faith and hope. Inspiring me. Redirecting me. Providing spiritual nourishment. Leading me along the path to a life of purpose.

In my cathedral, I listen to nature preach a homily in a language all its own. No words are needed, but it speaks to me nonetheless. Giving my life meaning and purpose. Deepening my faith. Restoring my soul.

The melody here is different. The music does not reach my ears from a speaker in the corner of the room, but through a tapestry woven from rustling leaves, cascading streams and roaring waterfalls. The sounds blend together, proclaiming God's glory not through spoken words, but through something equally powerful.

This place is no less sacred than the church where I



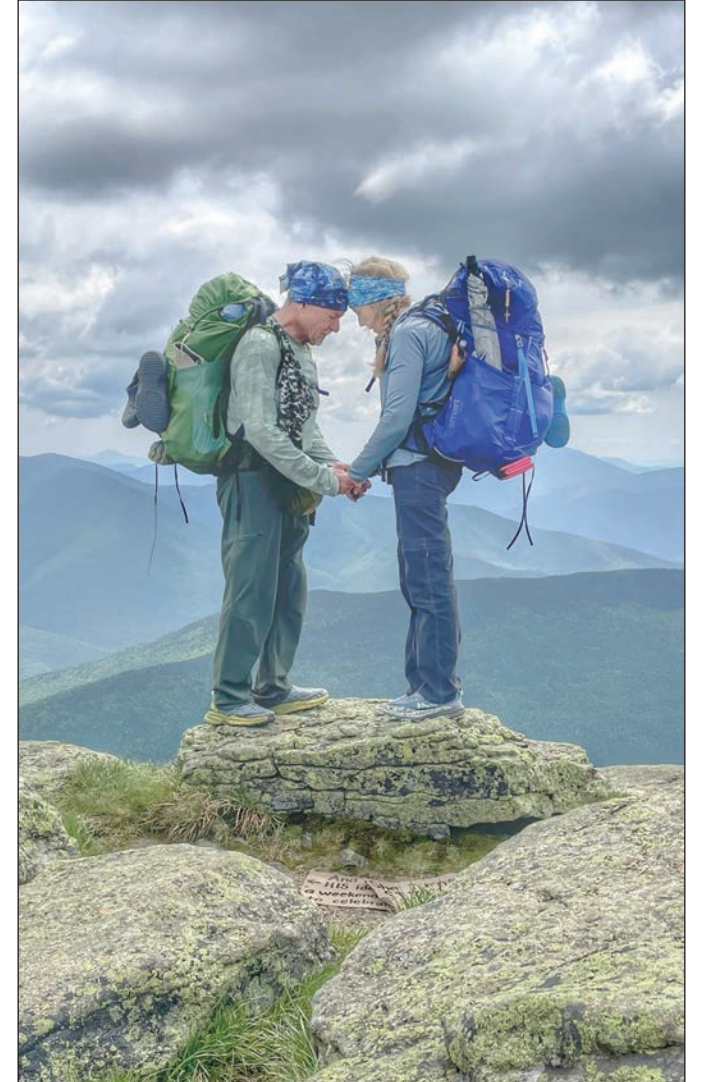
Submitted photos

worship every Sunday. It is a sanctuary created by the hands of God himself. Built out of unending love. When I am standing in the quiet stillness and immense grandeur of Creation, I bear witness to God's profound greatness.

There is a sacredness in this cathedral of earth and trees and sky which tran-

scends human understanding. A peace which contradicts life circumstance. A gratefulness in spite of the many trials and challenges.

Out here, I experience deeply personal moments of connection. As though there is a thread joining heaven to earth. A yarn woven of reverent awe and immeasurable



joy linking my human heart to the Divine.

My worship is not restricted to the confines of a building. It flows from me in equal measure out here in the wild places... where the wind dances and the water

flows and the heavens themselves declare glory.

My soul is fed at both my church and my cathedral. But some days, I can hear God speaking to me louder in the church that was not built by human hands.

HEALTH | from page 4

It's even good for your heart and overall cardiovascular fitness. Balancing on one leg is more physically demanding than standing on two, increasing oxygen demand and metabolic rate.

Doctors can use the ability – or inability – to stand on one leg as a reliable indicator of future fall risks and cognitive decline. "In Alzheimer's patients, researchers are actually finding that if they're unable to stand on one leg for five seconds, it usually

predicts a faster cognitive decline," Espiritu McKay told the BBC.

So let's get going – I mean standing. And we need to start slowly and safely.

If you can't hold a one-leg stance for more than a second or two, hold on to the back of a chair. Stand upright with a slight bend in your knees and lift one foot off the ground. Lift your hands off the chair briefly, then repeat on the other side. Keep practicing several times a week until you can maintain a one-leg stance for 10 seconds without hold-

ing on and without too much wobble.

Then you can move on to other variations. Wear different kinds of shoes, have socks on or go barefoot. Stand on different types of surfaces: carpet, wood, tile, sidewalks. Focus on an object in front of you, like a clock so you can time yourself. One minute is longer than you think.

Or try it with your eyes closed, which is especially challenging!

The nice thing about this exercise is that you can build it into your everyday routines,

such as waiting for the coffee to perk or brushing your teeth before you go to bed.

What else can you do to improve your ability to stand on one leg?

- Lift your knees as high as you can, one after the other, balancing for a few seconds between lifts. Incorporating hand weights makes it more challenging – as well as helping you work on your upper body.

- Sit and stand without using your arms for 30 or so seconds. A dining chair or other straight-backed chair is

good for this exercise. (Also works the upper legs and glutes.)

Older adults who work on maintaining strength, balance and mobility have a better chance of remaining independent, being able to drive and aging in place. In addition, research is finding that older brains that are able to keep generating neurons are less subject to cognitive decline.

Do your body and brain a favor by playing a little "Simon Says" every day.

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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Knox Trail event April 18

PALMER — Knox Trail 250 Event will be held Saturday, April 18 at the Palmer Public Library.

1976 Quilt on Display - 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Students from Palmer High School Class of 1978, as well as other Massachusetts towns along the Henry Knox Trail, submitted embroidered squares to become part of this commemorative quilt project. This venture was organized by Palmer's Bicentennial Committee. The quilt will remain on

display until library closing at 2 p.m.

Dennis Picard Knox Trail Presentation - 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Local Historian, Dennis Picard will share details of the 1775/1776 Henry Knox wintry expedition as it passed from the Massachusetts town of North Egremont through Springfield, Palmer, and on to Boston. Though a piece of our local lore, some parts of this saga are still debated and remain controversial. Dennis has

a personal connection with this event in our history, as he participated in one portion of the recreation of this trek during the bicentennial of 1976. Please join us for this special presentation and learn more about this daring mission.

These programs are free to the public, but space is limited and registration is requested.

Register by visiting: www.palmerlibrary.org/events

Drop-ins welcome if space allows. We hope to see you there.

WWC Fashion Show to be held April 23

WILBRAHAM — The Wilbraham Women's Club is sponsoring a Fashion Show Luncheon on Thursday, April 23, at the St. Cecilia Parish Center, 42 Main St., Wilbraham.

Clothing from Chico's in the Longmeadow Shops will be featured. The catered luncheon choices are Salmon with dill sauce or Chicken Francaise.

There will also be a raffle for many prizes and gift certificates. Join us at 11:30 for a social time with hors d'oeuvres

followed by lunch at Noon. The donation is \$42 and is a fundraiser for the club's scholarships and charitable donations to needy organizations in the area.

For reservations, please make checks payable to Wilbraham Women's Club and mail to Sue Agnew, 7 Aspen Dr., Wilbraham 01095. For questions, call Sue at 596-9480. Be sure to include meal choice in memo of check. Also, include with whom you wish to sit.

Lions Club to hold pancake breakfast

LUDLOW — The Ludlow Lions Club will hold their annual Free Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, April 12, from 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Polish American Citizens Club, 355 East Street in Ludlow. There will be free Child Vision Screening, a free Coloring Station and free Pictures with Bluey! 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., you must use your own camera. Many raffle prizes will be available. Open to everyone.

Arbors offers free Alzheimer conversation

REGION — Join us for an inspiring talk at the Arbors of Chicopee on April 28 at 6 p.m. with Sean Terwilliger. This event is free and open to the public. Sean Terwilliger, a former technology leader and teacher, will share his own inspiring story about how being diagnosed with Alzheimer's led to writing, advocacy and a sense of purpose. Learn about how his experiences

with clinical trials, newly approved medications and lifestyle change led to his belief that he could outpace the progression of the disease, and how he is now an advocate through foundations like the Walk to End Alzheimer's.

This event is free and open to the public, but space is limited. Please register by calling or texting 413-530-5916 to reserve your spot.

Town of Brimfield to mark America's 250th Anniversary of Independence

BRIMFIELD — 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: Revo-

lutionary 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, donors 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.

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, or if you are interested in putting a float in the parade, contact Friends of Historic Brimfield at (413) 239-0288 for more information.

Suicide awareness walk returns

WARE — During Mental Health Awareness Month, community members and students from Ware Public Schools, will gather at Grenville Park for the third annual Out of the Darkness Campus Walk to benefit the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

The 5K walk will be held at Grenville Park, 73 Church St., on Saturday,

May 2, with check-in starting at 9 a.m. and the walk at 10 a.m. People can register at afsp.org/ware or scan the QR code.

This event was established in 2024 by School Resource Officer Jeannine Bonnayer and Ware Public Schools Food Service Manager Kristen Murphy, to help to bring awareness to and start a conversation

about suicide. In March of 2023, Murphy's son Ethan Donnelly died by suicide at the age of 24.

Murphy died in February of 2025, after a brief but fierce battle with a rare and aggressive cancer.

This walk fundraiser was a cause very close to her heart, and a way she could honor her son's memory.

Wine festival to be held in June

BRIMFIELD — Brimfield Auction Acres, Birthplace of the world-famous Brimfield Antique Shows will host the 6th annual Pioneer Valley wine festival on Saturday, June 6 and Sunday, June 7 from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.

2026 Marks the 7th year of the Pioneer Valley Wine and Food festival. This exciting event brings together New England Wineries, Cideries, Distilleries, and Meaderies from

across the Pioneer Valley and Farmers of many sorts selling their wares.

The event started in 2018 by the collaboration with farm wineries throughout New England and local farmers to create a festival to highlight the magnificent products Massachusetts provides all in unison and support of Massachusetts Agricultural Department.

The festival will feature local vintners and craft

brewers ready to spill their secrets, Live Art demonstrations, sizzling chef panel starring culinary celebs - to be announced soon. Last year celebrity guests include Brynn Gibson, the youngest Black Jacket finalist from Fox's Hell's Kitchen with Gordon Ramsay. We also have Jared Forman, the culinary mastermind behind Deadhorse Hill, who brought the heat on Food Network's Beat Bobby Flay.

Helping local businesses grow, thrive, and succeed.



Many small businesses struggle to grow and secure funding. QVDC, with support from USDA and MassDevelopment, guides entrepreneurs in the Quaboag Valley with practical tools to strengthen operations, plan for growth, and prepare for financing so their business can thrive.

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Loan applications and funding

Ready to launch or expand your business? QVDC can guide you through the lending process with support for business plan development, cash-flow projections, and loan readiness. We'll help you prepare a strong application and position your business for long-term success.



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Palmer Library art show begins

PALMER – April’s art show at Palmer Library will feature works by the Abstract Art Squad – four artists who met at an abstract art class seven years ago and continue to meet weekly to support and inspire one another.

Abstract art is a genre encompassing many styles and movements. It uses a visual language of shape, form, color and line to create a composition which may or may not have references to the real world. Each artist in this show has their own style ranging from simple geometrics to complex intuitive compositions. Approximately thirty-two paintings will be on display, ranging in size from 8” x 12” to 20” x 30”.

Here is what these artists have to say about their work.

Maggi
“I create for the purpose of getting lost and letting my mind relax. There is no destination or final product in mind... just color explorations, lines, and forms that I find pleasing in the moment”.

Nadine
“I studied Art History at Smith College and worked in museums until a diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis early in my career shifted my interest to creating art. I work most with acrylics, colored

pencil, pencil and mixed media”.

Roger
“After many years of artistic realism, I love the freedom of painting abstracts in acrylic. With a blank canvas and free mind there are so many possibilities. I love contrasts in tone and color. Always exploring”.

Jean-Marie
“As a math and science person, I tend to prefer doing realistic, representational paintings because I can tell when I am ‘getting it right’. Abstract art pushes me out of this comfort zone and allows me to simply enjoy the experience of playing with paint”.

The April show will be from April 2 to April 30 in the Community Room. The library is open Monday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday thru Thursday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Access to the Community Room may be limited if it is in use. You can check with the library at 413-283-3330. There will be a reception with the artists from 6 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, April 16. The library is located at 1455 N Main St, Palmer, MA.

For more information about the Abstract Art Squad visit their website at <https://www.abstractartsquad.com/> or their Facebook page.

Mass Button Show April 11

THREE RIVERS – Massachusetts State Button Society’s spring meeting will be hosted by the Metropolitan and Monson Button Clubs on Saturday, April 11 at the Amvets Post 74 on Main St. in Three Rivers from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The public is invited to attend the day’s activities and to purchase buttons and button related items

from 9 am to noon and from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. There will be no button sales during the break from noon to 1:30 p.m. as lunch, a business meeting, and auction will take place.

Morning visitors will be treated to coffee and refreshments provided by the hosting club; bring your own brown bag lunch, and dessert will be provided. There is no admission fee, and all are welcome.



Town of Palmer announces nomination papers available

PALMER – The Town Clerk of Palmer will have nomination papers available the week of March 9.

The available seats on the June 9, 2026 town election are as follows:

- Councilor at Large 1 seat**
3-year term
- Councilor at Large 1 seat**
1-year term
- District Councilor PCT#1**

- 1 seat**
3-year term
- Planning Board**
2 seats
- 3-year term
- School Committee**
2 seats
- 3-year term

Last day to obtain Nomination papers is April 16, 2026. Nomination papers must be filed with the Registrar, no later than April 21,

2026. Fifty valid signatures are required. The fifty signatures must be registered voters in the Town of Palmer; the District Councilor Precinct # 1 seat requires fifty signatures of registered voters from Precinct #1.

If you have any questions regarding filing requirements on above seats, please reach out to the Palmer Town Clerk’s office.

Monson nomination papers available for town election

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.

St. Paul’s to host “Dance Night”

PALMER – St. Paul’s Church will host “Dance Night! with DJ Seagull” for students in grades 6 through 9 on Friday, April 17 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The event is designed to offer a safe, welcoming, and engaging space for middle school youth to gather, socialize, and enjoy an evening of music and fun.

The dance will feature music by DJ Seagull of Berkshire Hills Music Academy, along with refreshments and a relaxed, well-supervised environment. Organizers hope the evening will provide an opportunity for young people in the greater Palmer area to connect with friends, meet new peers, and simply enjoy being together in a positive setting.

The event is sponsored

by All Young Voices: Circle of Friends, a new twice-monthly teen gathering being developed at St. Paul’s. The initiative is focused on creating a safe and welcoming space for connection, belonging, and personal growth. Open to all youth, All Young Voices will include elements of mindfulness, creative expression—including music—and thoughtful exploration of life’s deeper questions in an inclusive, interfaith spirit. The group especially hopes to support youth who may feel marginalized or lonely, while remaining open and engaging for all. As part of its growing outreach, All Young Voices plans to offer youth dance nights and similar events multiple times throughout the year.

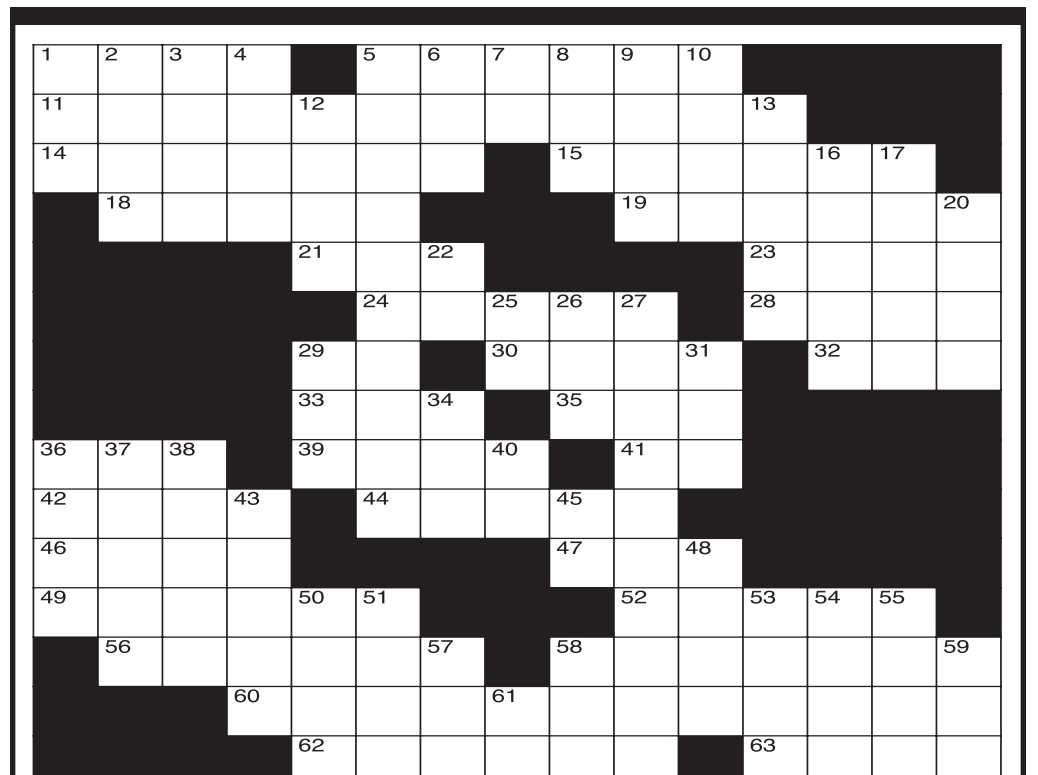
“All young people need

spaces where they can feel comfortable, included, and free to have fun,” said organizers of All Young Voices “This is about creating that kind of environment—something that’s both enjoyable for youth and reassuring for families.”

Admission is \$5 at the door. For the safety of all participants, students must be signed in and signed out by a parent or guardian. Participants will remain on site for the duration of the event and will not be permitted to leave and re-enter.

The dance is open to all students in grades 6–9 from Palmer and surrounding communities.

For more information, visit www.StPaulsPalmer.org or call 413-283-8185.



- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|
| CLUES ACROSS | 35. Electronic data processing | CLUES DOWN | 29. Woman (French) |
| 1. Absence of difficulty | 36. Drivers’ licenses and passports are two | 1. Body part | 31. Sunscreen rating |
| 5. Preserve a dead body | 39. Snake-like fishes | 2. Mimics | 34. Brew |
| 11. Gratitude | 41. Air Force | 3. Expel or eject (variant sp.) | 36. Leader |
| 14. The act of coming together again | 42. Popular personal computers | 4. Sea eagle | 37. Indigo bush genus |
| 15. More cushy | 44. Stages in ecological succession | 5. Taxonomic category | 38. Burn with a hot liquid |
| 18. Visionaries | 46. Wings | 6. Chinese languages | 40. Junior’s father |
| 19. Large fish-eating bird | 47. In the center | 7. Mr. T’s “A-Team” character | 43. Mackerel genus |
| 21. Indicates near | 49. Pleasantly smooth | 8. Consumed | 45. Morning |
| 23. Former CIA and CIA critic | 52. Jeweled headdress | 9. Chinese dynasty | 48. Straight line from side to side (abbr.) |
| 24. Icelandic poems | 56. In slow tempo | 10. NFL legend Randy | 50. Type of molding |
| 28. Pop | 58. ___ Falls | 12. Ireland | 51. Small, thin or twisted bunch |
| 29. Hammer is one | 60. Reiterations | 13. Palm trees with creeping roots | 53. Worn by exposure to the weather |
| 30. Selves | 62. Eras | 16. Fungal disease | 54. Mars crater |
| 32. Thyroid-stimulating hormone | 63. Hyphen | 17. Tall, slender-leaved plants | 55. Humanities |
| 33. Nowhere to be found | | 20. Affirmative! (slang) | 57. Relating to the ears |
| | | 22. It says who you are | 58. “To the ___ degree” |
| | | 25. Atlantic coast state | 59. Residue when something is burned |
| | | 26. Grow older | 61. It cools a home |
| | | 27. Associations | |

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2x3 Black & White Grad Ad

Congratulations Karly Smith! We are so very proud of you and your accomplishments. Good luck at Springfield College!

Love, Mom & Dad



A group photo of all the egg hunt participants, including one adorable runaway.

Turley photos by Abigail McCoy

SCOUTS | from page 1

The event is typically held the week before Easter, giving children an early opportunity to celebrate. In addition to the egg hunt itself, families were treated to a variety of activities, including crafts, light refreshments, and a special visit from the Easter Bunny.

“The Easter Bunny always stops by so the kids can see him before Easter,” Gilman-Sheffield said. “We have snacks and lots of fun things for them to do, and then we hold the egg hunt where kids can go out with their baskets and collect eggs.”

Among the many brightly colored eggs hidden across the church grounds, two coveted golden eggs added an extra layer of excitement. Children who discovered them were awarded special prizes, a highlight that kept participants eagerly searching.

While the event has been a Troop 7 tradition for at least seven years, spanning Gilman-Sheffield’s six-year tenure as scoutmaster and likely longer, it continues to grow as a welcoming, family-friendly gathering that emphasizes community connection.

Beyond seasonal celebrations, Troop 7 remains active year-round, both in service and fundraising efforts. Gilman-Sheffield noted that the group partners with the church during Brimfield’s well-known flea market weeks, offering parking on-site as a way to support both the troop and the church. Their largest fundraiser, however, typically comes during the holiday season through Christmas tree sales.

The troop also hopes events like the Easter egg hunt inspire interest in scout-

ing among local families.

“We’re always looking to welcome new members,” Gilman-Sheffield said. “We have programs starting as young as kindergarten all the way up through age 18, and even opportunities beyond that. We’re coed across all of our units.”

For many in attendance, the event offered more than just candy-filled eggs; it provided a chance to gather, celebrate the season, and experience the sense of community that organizations like Troop 7 strive to build.



One of the games provided was an egg balancing challenge.



Landon, age 4, plays an accuracy based game.



One of Troop 7’s members attempts one of the games.



Children Emmet and Audra play together before the easter egg hunt.



The kids run down spreading through the hill to find all the eggs they can.

Some run to the far side while some gather eggs closer to the starting point.



Tara Gilman-Sheffield, scoutmaster of Troop 7, introduces herself to the crowd and explains how the egg hunt will go.

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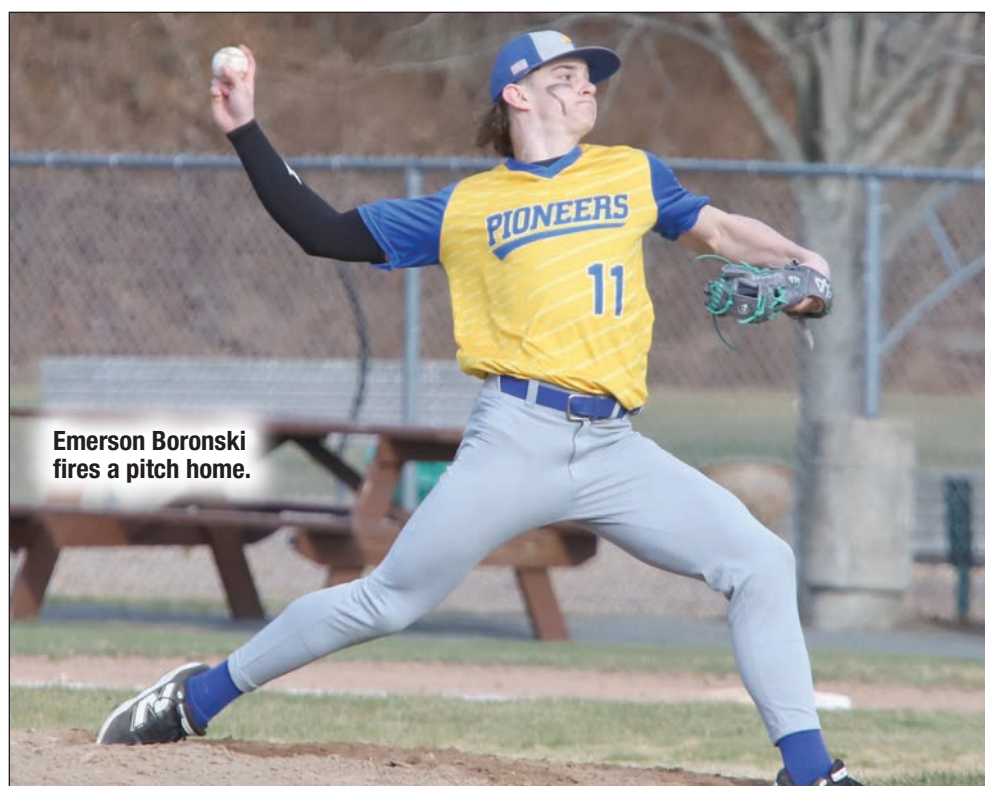
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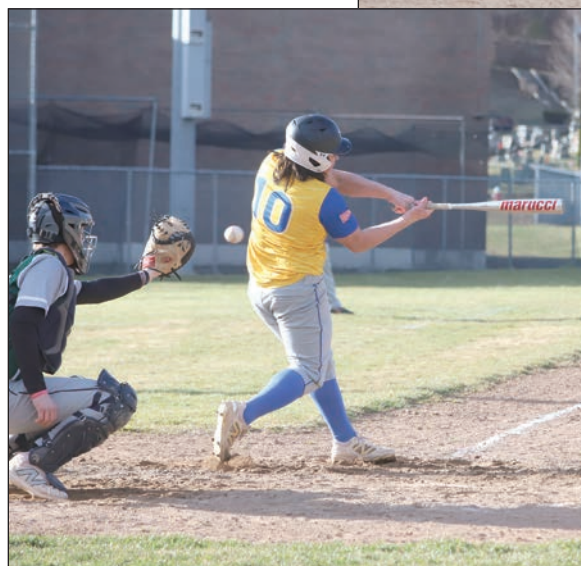
BASEBALL

Pioneers have tough opener

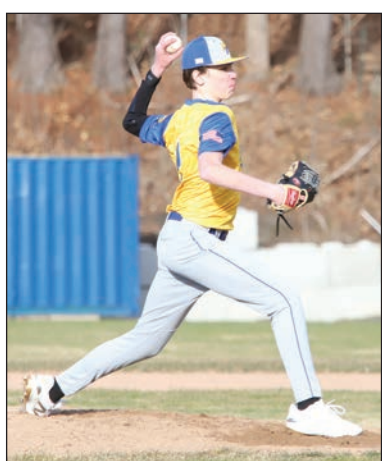
PALMER – The Pathfinder Tech baseball team got their season started very early with a cold afternoon at Legion Field in Palmer. The Pioneers were scored on early and often and lost to McCann Tech 13-2. McCann had an eight-run first inning to pace the game. Pathfinder only got two runs in the bottom of the third inning. The Pioneers are back in action on Friday, Apr. 3 against Palmer High School at 4 p.m.



Emerson Boronski fires a pitch home.



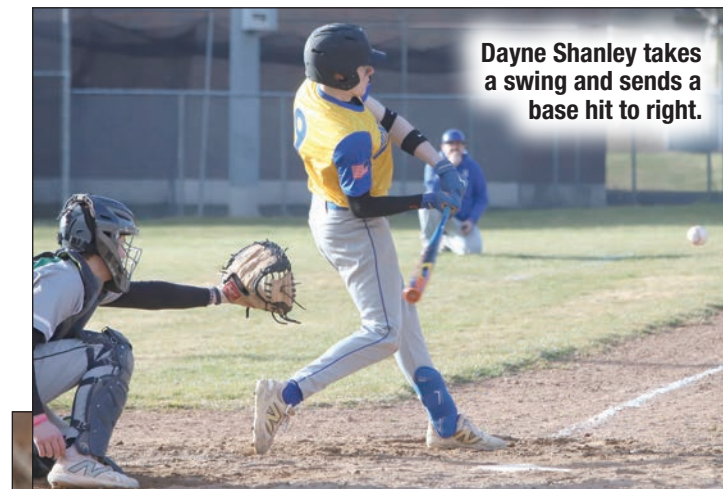
Brody Wetnicka fouls off a pitch.



Zachary Smith pitches in relief for the Pioneers.



Andrew Sullivan sends a throw back to the infield.



Dayne Shanley takes a swing and sends a base hit to right.



Anthony Elliott extends to catch an out at first.



Ian Sauri Nieves lunges for a throw down to second.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

SOFTBALL

Monson moves past Lions

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

MONSON – Monson’s junior lefthander Chelsea Hull pitched very well during the first two innings of last Friday’s season opening softball game against Ludlow.

Hull, who struck out six of the first nine Lady Lions batters that she faced, also contributed at the plate. She hit a grand slam in the second inning, which helped the Lady Mustangs build a 7-1 lead.

Ludlow, who had lost their previous two meetings on the softball diamond against Monson, battled back by scoring nine runs in the fourth inning. The Lady Lions put five more runs on the scoreboard in their final two at-bats leading to a 15-9 victory on a chilly afternoon.

“We’re a very young team this year with no seniors, but we never gave up in today’s game,” said Ludlow head coach Missy Rocker. “You hardly ever face a lefthanded pitcher in softball, but we made some adjustments after seeing her for the first time. We were a little more patient at the plate and we got some big hits in the fourth inning.”

The Bi-County League match-up was originally scheduled to be held at the Paul R. Baird Middle School softball field in Ludlow. It was moved to the Quarry Hill Community School softball field in Monson due to field conditions.

It marked the first time that the Lady Lions celebrated a season opening victory since they defeated West Springfield, 6-1, at home in 2023.

The Lady Mustangs, who also don’t have any seniors listed on their roster, hadn’t lost a season opening game since 2021.

“We’re a very inexperienced team,” said Monson head coach Matt Hull. “We only have two players who are starting at the same positions that they did last year. We took an early lead, but we just had one bad inning.”

Chelsea Hull, who’s the only junior listed on the Monson roster, has been a pitcher for the varsity team since she was in the seventh grade. She



Cali Zielenski makes a great catch on a pop-up.

Turley photo by Gregory A. Scibelli

wound up allowing nine runs on seven hits in 3 2/3 innings. She recorded seven strikeouts and issued three walks.

Monson’s other returning starter is sophomore first baseman Maddy Caron, who contributed with a sacrifice fly in the third inning.

Two other returning varsity players for the Lady Mustangs are sophomore’s Cali Zielenski and Grace Berry. Zielenski made the

switch from left field to shortstop, while Berry, who started at third base a year ago, was the

starting catcher in the season opener.

Ludlow sophomore righty Olivia Slatton, who allowed seven runs on five hits during the first three innings, escaped a bases loaded jam in the bottom of the first without allowing any runs.

That wasn’t the case in the following frame.

The Lady Mustangs second inning rally began with a walk by freshman third baseman Audrey Edmunds-Martinez. Then freshman right fielder Keeley Syzmanski was hit by a pitch and freshman left fielder Noella Parker also drew a walk loading the bases with no outs.

The home team took a 1-0 lead when freshman second baseman Mai Uliana, who had singled leading off the bottom of the first, drew a walk with the bases loaded. Then Hull stepped into the batter’s box and blasted a pitch to deep centerfielder for an inside-the-park grand slam, which gave the Lady Mustangs a 5-0 advantage.

After Hull struck out the first two batters in the top of the third, sophomore first baseman Khole Davis lined a single into right field. Junior centerfielder Caitlyn Peczka reached first base after being hit by a pitch before Slatton singled to left field scoring Ludlow’s first run.

Monson answered right back with two runs in home

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BASEBALL



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

Softball has utilized the double first base bags for safety for many years.



Now the double first base is coming to high school baseball fields.

Safety first: Extra bag coming to baseball

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

Over the past decade, safety has been a key theme for many of the rule changes that come through either the National Federation of High Schools, or the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association.

Rule changes have centered around taking care of athletes, limiting unsafe play, and especially anything that can result in concussions.

Years ago, softball implemented an orange bag, a safe-

ty bag, at first base. It’s more commonly known as a double bag since there are literally two. The orange bag is directly to the right of first base and is mostly for the runner’s use.

Any runner running out a ground ball in a way where they would run through first base, utilize the second bag, typically colored orange. The runner is required to step on the orange bag while the fielder can use the standard white bag. The purpose has been to avoid collisions between a hustling runner and the first baseman, who could get carried in

a different direction by an errant through. The second bag puts a little space between the runner and the fielder.

After seeing success with safety in softball, the double bag is coming to high school baseball. The NFHS is making the base a requirement for high schools beginning in 2027. However, several high schools, including Agawam and South Hadley, have opted to install the double bags this season and implement the new rules to help high school students get used to playing with them before the rule is fully imple-

mented.

Some schools will wait until next year depending on the time it takes to install another anchor for the double bag.

High school umpires are also being educated on the new rules concerning using the double bag in a baseball game. Andy Rogers, who is the coordinator and assignor for high school games, said it has been a part of recent meetings with umpires to prepare for this year. There are nuances to the

BAG | page 10

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Athlete of the Week

Mai Uliana
Monson High School

Mai Uliana drew a bases loaded walk to drive on Monson softball's first run last week against Ludlow.

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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double bag rule that umpires will need to enforce.

Among them, while the standard practice is that runners running through first base such as in the situation of trying to beat out a ground ball will use the orange bag and fielders trying to record a force out will utilize will use the white bag, there are couple of exceptions.

One is the dropped third strike. If there is a dropped third strike and a catcher throwing on the outside of the baseline to first base, the first baseman is allowed to utilize the orange bag to field the throw and record the out. The

runner, in this situation, can use either base.

After a runner has run through first base, typically after beating out a ground ball, that runner must come back and touch the white bag. If the runner comes back and touches the orange bag, that runners is in play once they touch the orange bag and can be tagged out.

On situations like a clean base hit, a batter/runner who heads for first and rounds the bag, will utilize the white bag. But a runner running out a ground ball who touches the white bag instead of the orange bag could be called out on appeal because it can be treated like missing a base.

While the normal white base is the border of fair territory, the orange bag is in foul territory. If a batted ball hits the orange bag, the ball will be called foul. A ball that hits the white bag or rolls over it is still fair.

The second bag at first base is orange in most cases, but can be another color.

For 2026, players playing on fields that have the double first base bag will use them with the rules that come with them. Adult leagues in the region have pledged to observe the rules of the double bag if they play on fields that have them. Most adult leagues go by MLB rules, which do not require a double bag at first base.



Noella Parker sends a throw back to the infield.

SOFTBALL | from page 9

half of the frame and it was beginning to look like they wouldn't have very much trouble winning another season opening game.

However, when the Lady Mustangs came to bat in the following inning, they were trailing by three runs.

The Lady Lions exploded for nine runs on four hits in the top of the fourth.

With one-out, freshman right fielder Abby Monette walked before stealing second and third. She crossed the plate following a throwing error by the catcher.

Ludlow's final eight runs of that frame were scored with two outs.

Davis knocked home two more runs with a hard shot off the second baseman's glove for a base hit. Slatton also helped herself with a two-run triple down right field line. Sophomore catcher Maddy

Goncalves-Korny drove home the tying run with a single to left. Another triple by freshman Madison Goncalves,

who started the game at third base before replacing Slatton in the pitcher's circle, gave the Lady Lions the lead for the first time at 8-7.

After Hull allowed an unearned run, she switched places with Uliana, who's a righty.

Ludlow sophomore second baseman Marlie Fuentes capped off the fourth inning rally with an RBI single.

Monson scored single runs in their final two at-bats.

Goncalves, who was the winning pitcher, allowed two runs on four hits over the final four innings.

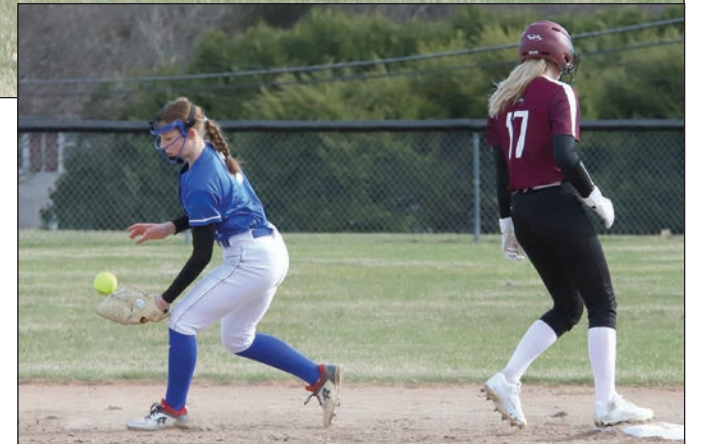
"This was Madison's first appearance in a varsity game, and I thought she pitched very well," Rocker said. "She did exactly what I was hoping she would do. It's nice to have two very good pitcher's."

Ludlow plated a run in the sixth inning before scoring four insurance runs in the top of the seventh.

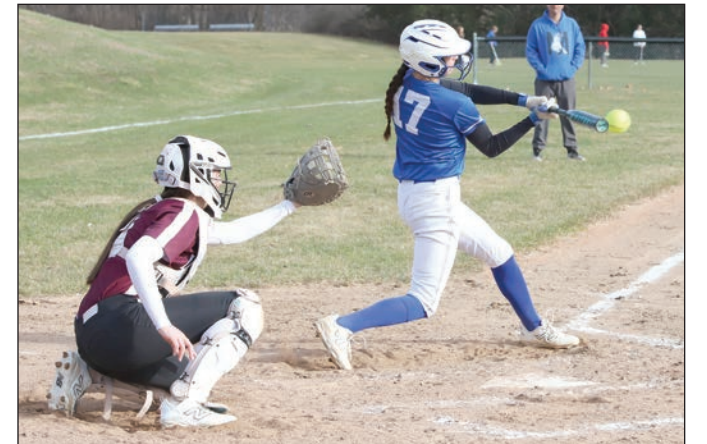
The second meeting of the regular season between the two Bi-County League teams is scheduled to take place in Ludlow on May 8.



Chelsea Hull fires to the plate for Monson softball.



Mai Uliana tries to corral a throw into the infield.



Cali Zielenski makes contact on a base hit.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

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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

HUNT | from page 1

itself. Families arriving at the park were greeted with a lively atmosphere that included crafts, games, and a special visit from the Easter Bunny, creating a full morning of entertainment and community connection.

"It's a great time, basically," Chiachia said, noting that the event has steadily expanded year after year.

This year's turnout reflected that growth. Compared to last year's event, which was notably smaller, the nearly 200 participating families demonstrated how deeply the egg hunt has resonated with local residents.

The success of the event is also tied to strong community partnerships. Volunteers from the Palmer Lions Club played a key role in supporting the day's activities, alongside local Boy Scouts and other community members. The Lions Club also hosted a fundraiser during the event, offering raffle tickets for a lottery-themed gift basket and selling small items such as bracelets, with proceeds benefiting the club's scholarship fund.

Chiachia emphasized that while community groups provide valuable support, the event remains a grassroots effort driven by donations and volunteer energy.

From children racing across the grass in search of brightly colored eggs to families gathering for crafts and refreshments, the atmosphere at Pulaski Park reflected the kind of community spirit that has defined the event since its inception.

As the crowd continues to grow each year, Chiachia's Easter egg hunt has become more than just a seasonal celebration; it's a testament to how a simple idea, sparked during a challenging time, can evolve into a cherished local tradition.



Kids ran around looking for eggs.



While the younger kids searched for eggs in a flatter area.



The Egg Hunt Crew posed for a photo with Lori Chiachia.



The older kids lined up behind the pavilion to find eggs in more challenging spots.



Many searched for the golden eggs.



For kids who found a golden egg in their hunt they could exchange it for one of the many toys at the prize table.



Turley photos by Abigail McCoy
Lion's Club volunteer, Tabitha Genholt, runs the table for raffle tickets.



Families fill the pavilion, lining up to meet the Easter Bunny or exchange their golden eggs at the prize table.



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Valley Press Club Scholarships available for journalism students

REGION – The Valley Press Club, based in Springfield, Mass., will award \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors in Western Massachusetts and Northern Connecticut who are interested in pursuing a career in journalism.

- The Valley Press Club Scholarships, funded by contributions and dues to the Press Club, are for students planning careers in print, online or broadcast journalism.
- The Republican Scholarship, funded by The Republican, is for students living within the newspaper's circulation area who are planning careers in print journalism.
- The 22News Scholarship, funded by WWLP-22News is for students planning careers in broadcast journalism.
- The MassLive Scholarship is for a Massachusetts high school senior planning to pursue a career

in print, online or broadcast journalism/communication. This scholarship is available to a student who is underrepresented in the field of journalism and is planning to attend an institution of higher education in the field.

- The Edward J. Malley Jr. Memorial Scholarship, established in memory of a chief photographer for the Springfield Newspapers, is for students planning careers in photojournalism.
 - The Rhonda Swan Memorial Scholarship, established in memory of the award-winning journalist, editor and author, honors her legacy by supporting students from the Greater Springfield area who aspire to careers in journalism and bring voices and perspectives that have been historically underrepresented in the field.
- Primary emphasis is placed on career goals, writing ability, scholastic

apptitude and overall achievement as measured by an applicant's high school transcript, class rank, academic awards, SAT scores and extracurricular activities. The deadline for submissions is April 10, 2026.

Scholarship applications are available at www.ValleyPressClub.com or high school guidance offices. Applications may be sent by mail to Noreen Tassinari, Scholarship Chair, Valley Press Club, P.O. Box 5475, Springfield, Mass. 01102 or electronically to NTassinari77@gmail.com

Over the course of six decades, The Valley Press Club has presented over \$140,000 in scholarships to eligible students. The Valley Press Club consists of active and retired journalists and public relations professionals from corporate and nonprofit organizations.

Amherst Community Band seeks guest conductors

REGION – Big changes are in the offing for the 2026 summer season of the Amherst Community Band. With a new board of directors and a generous contribution from the Amherst and Massachusetts Cultural Councils, the hundred-member band is seeking qualified guest conductors for the upcoming season. "With the award from the cultural council, we're able to offer a small stipend to guest conductors," said John Decker, president of the newly formed Board of Directors.

Concerts at Sweetser Park in Amherst Center are scheduled for 6 p.m. on June 27, July 25th, and August 15, and promoted by the Business Improvement District (BID) of Amherst. Additional appearances include a performance at the annual Fourth of July fireworks display on July 3, and a "Best of Season" finale concert on August 18 at the South Amherst Common. "Because we're in the middle of five colleges, all with extensive

music programs, we know there are many potential conductors in the area," Decker said. "Our goal is to eventually select a permanent conductor for the 2027 season," he continued.

The band, which rehearses on Mondays from 6-8pm in the George N. Parks Band Building on the UMass campus, features musicians of all abilities and ages from enthusiastic amateurs to professionals, music teachers, middle and high school students, college students, and retirees. Membership is open to all who are interested and no audition is required. The band is grateful to the university for the use of its facilities and equipment, including sound equipment, chairs, music stands, percussion instruments, and use of their music library.

Those seeking to learn more about the band, to join the roster, or to apply to be a guest conductor are encouraged to visit amherstband.org or to contact John Decker at 603-770-5340.

Garden Club hosts Gardening Series

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Garden Club will host a series of programs for anyone interested in gardens and gardening or just escaping the winter for an hour.

The programs will be held at The Monkey House in Forest Park at 10 a.m. Admission is free to all with paid park admission. More information can be found on the club's website www.springfield-gardenclubma.org or on Facebook.

Saturday, April 11, 2026 – 10 a.m. "Planning and Growing a Bountiful Flower Garden" presented by Becky Sadlowski.



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Four stages of raising confident, money-smart kids

Good financial habits are a little like brushing your teeth. When you learn them early, they become second nature, and you carry them with you for life. And while money can feel complicated, especially today, the foundation starts simply.

Parents can begin the conversation with very young children, and young adults can build on those basics as they take on more responsibility. Step by step, these habits create confidence that helps build longterm financial security and a more fulfilling life.

The following are the four key stages of financial growth.

Stage 1: For very young children, the goal is to make money feel simple and manageable. A great place to start is with three jars labeled "Spend," "Save" and "Share." When kids can actually see their money grow or shrink, the idea starts to make sense. Saving also introduces them to goalsetting, and working toward paying for a small toy or outing teaches patience. Most important, you're helping your children see money as a tool they can understand easily and use with confidence.

Stage 2: If you have tweens (children roughly 9 to 12 years old), they're usually ready for slightly bigger financial ideas. This is a great time for them to earn money through chores or small jobs, helping them see the connection between effort and reward and building a sense of ownership. Conversations about needs versus wants also become more meaningful, because kids are now making real choices with money they earned themselves. Your tween may be ready for a simple savings account to watch their savings grow, or a reloadable cash card for spending.

Stage 3: By the time teens reach high school or young adulthood, budgeting becomes essential. This doesn't need to be overly strict or complicated. A simple system that helps them track deposits and withdrawals can make all the difference. Whether they use an app, a paper notebook or a spreadsheet, the real goal is awareness. Teenagers also benefit from learning how credit works. Understanding how to build a healthy credit score and how to use credit wisely protects them from costly mistakes in later life.

Stage 4: Then come the early working years, when habits shift from learning to building. One of the smartest steps at this stage is paying yourself first. Automatic transfers to savings or retirement accounts help establish stability without extra effort. Even small retirement contributions matter more than most people realize, because time allows compounding to do the heavy lifting. This is also when young adults can start organizing their money into different buckets for rent, automobile payments, emergencies, retirement and everyday spending. These habits help lay the groundwork for financial freedom down the road.

Throughout every stage, the theme is confidence. Each small success creates a sense of control and each good habit makes the next one easier. Over time, these habits turn into a lifetime of financial security and fulfillment. When you start strong and stay consistent, money becomes a tool that helps your children support the lives they want.



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Obituaries

Mark William Gallagher

PALMER— Mark William Gallagher, 57, passed away on February 25, 2026, unexpectedly in his home.

Mark was born January 15, 1969, in Ware, MA, son of William Gallagher and Jean (Primavera). Mark grew up in Palmer, MA, and graduated from Palmer High School in 1987. During his time at Palmer High, he was a stellar athlete and named All Western Mass in basketball and football, along with playing on the baseball team. In his high school football career, he was a quarterback and later named in the hall of fame and awarded the Angelo Bertelli Award.

Mark went on to pursue higher education at the College of Holy Cross as a division I football athlete as a wide receiver, where he was named All-Patriot-League, All-

ECAC, and All-New England. Mark graduated in 1991 and was inducted into the Holy Cross Hall of Fame in 2009. After achieving his bachelor's degree, he went on to gain a master's degree at American International College.

With a passion for working with people, Mark pursued his career as a special education teacher at Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School for many years. He also continued his love for the game of football by coaching at the University of Massachusetts, Boston University, Hobart University, Minnechaug Regional High School, Ware High School, and Pathfinder.

Mark wasn't just an all-star on the field; he was also a loving father to his two children, Nina Gallagher and James Gallagher, which he raised



with his partner, Tanya Gouvin, in Wilbraham, MA. Mark was a passionate New England sports fan who was nonetheless a connoisseur of Diet Coke and Little Debbie Swiss rolls. Mark never passed an opportunity to visit the ocean with his children, which was full of wiping out to the waves, sandcastles, and endless laughter.

He additionally loved hosting summer cookouts with

family and friends while ending the night with a bonfire and s'mores. Mark also found passion and joy in writing personal poetry and studying scripture. Mark's heart and soul were full of life, energy, and most of all love that will continue to be felt by many.

He will be deeply missed by his children of Wilbraham, Nina Gallagher, and James Gallagher, along with the mother of his children, Tanya Gouvin, his mother Jean (Primavera) Andresen and her husband Bill of Thorndike, and his father William Gallagher and his wife Maureen of Palmer. Mark also leaves behind two siblings, Sharon Blazejowski, and Kathleen

Gallagher, but rejoins his heavenly brother, Kenneth Gallagher. Also leaving behind his uncle Rick Primavera and his wife Cynthia, his nieces, nephews, aunts Deborah (Gallagher) Lydon and Gail (Gallagher) Finnegan, cousins and his four step siblings, Kathy Wesniak, Heather and Kara Andresen, and Lisa Morley. Mark will also be deeply missed by his fellow colleagues, friends, coaches, players, and teammates, as his legacy and personality on and off the field will continue to be a testament to his heart and soul.

Calling hours for Mark Gallagher will be held on Saturday, April 11, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., followed by a Funeral Mass at 12 p.m. Both services will be held at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Palmer, MA.

DEATH NOTICES

Elizabeth Ellen Boudreau
Died March 24, 2026
Visitation April 6, 2026
Beers & Story
Palmer Funeral Home

Mark William Gallagher
Died Feb. 25, 2026
Services April 11, 2026
Beers & Story
Palmer Funeral Homes

The Journal Register OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place. 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.

RECYCLE | from page 1

event is one of many steps on their seasonal schedule.

Accepted items range from small household electronics to larger, more complex devices. Wood noted that pricing varies depending on the item.

"Usually, some items we take for free, some are \$5, and some of the bigger items are more expensive, like \$30 or \$40 each," he said.

Beyond providing a valuable service to residents, the events also serve as a fundraiser for host organiza-

tions. A portion of the proceeds collected during each event is returned to the partnering church or nonprofit.

"The church benefits from part of the proceeds as well," Wood said. "Depending on how the event does, we'll give the parish part of the proceeds."

Green Day Recycling has maintained a long-standing relationship with St. Thomas, returning year after year to host collection days. According to Wood, the company has been organizing events at the church for approximately 15 years.

The steady turnout at these events highlights a growing awareness of the importance of proper electronics disposal. Items such as televisions, computers and other devices often contain materials that should not be sent to landfills, making recycling programs like this a critical community resource.

Looking ahead, Green Day Recycling will continue its weekly schedule with upcoming stops in Monson at the First Church of Monson next Saturday, followed by events in Lexington and West Springfield in the following weeks.

Residents interested in future events can stay updated through the company's social media page, where upcoming locations and details are regularly posted.

As communities continue to seek sustainable ways to manage waste, events like the one at St. Thomas demonstrate how local partnerships can make environmentally responsible choices more accessible; while also giving back to the organizations that host them

Public safety

Monson Fire Logs

MONSON – Fire log for the Monson Fire Department for the week of March 23 through March 29, 2026. The department responded to 23 EMS calls and 5 Fire calls.

On Monday, March 23 at 10:21 a.m. the department responded to 54 High Street for the odor investigation. The department returned to service at 10:38 a.m.

On Monday, March 23 at 9:22 p.m. the department responded to the area of 174 Fenton Road for the motor vehicle crash. The department returned to service at 10:35 p.m.

On Thursday, March 26 at 6:24 a.m. the department responded to 102 Stafford Road for the fire alarm sounding. The department returned to service at 6:57 a.m.

On Sunday, March 29 at 1:08 a.m. the department responded to the area of 146 Lower Hampden Road for the motor vehicle crash/fire. The department returned to service at 4:50 a.m.

On Sunday, March 29 at 9:58 a.m. the department responded to 230 Wales Road for the brush fire. The department returned to service at 10:12 a.m.



Turley photos by Abigail McCoy

Only two hours into the five-hour event the metal dumpster was half-filled.



A large portion of old TVs and monitors were put to the side for extra processing at a different facility.

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<h2 style="margin: 0;">EASTER HAMS</h2>		
<p>USDA INSP. FROZEN HAM PORTIONS BUTT or SHANK..... \$1.09 lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. KAYEM BUDABALL WHOLE BONELESS PIT HAM \$3.69 lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. MCKENZIES 1/2 SPIRAL HAM W/GLAZE PAK..... \$1.39 lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. SKINLESS & SHANKLESS KAYEM OLD TIME WHOLE HAM HARDWOOD SMOKED \$1.99 lb</p>	<p>USDA INSP. FRESH AMERICAN LEG OF LAMB \$6.67 lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. CHICOPEE PROVISIONS BLUE SEAL KIELBASA FOR EASTER \$5.55 lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS HOLIDAY PORK ROAST STUFFED W/ HAM, CHEESE, PEPPERS, BACON, OLIVES \$4.49 lb</p>	<p>USDA INSP. FROZEN KING FISH STEAKS W/ HEAD OR TAIL..... \$5.99 lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. FROZEN CONCH MEAT CLEANED 5 LB BOX..... \$5.99 ea</p> <p>USDA INSP. FROZEN SKINLESS SKINLESS HADDOCK FILLETS 2 LB BOX \$9.99 ea</p> <p>USDA INSP. IQF FROZEN COOKED SHRIMP 21/25 COUNT 2 LB BAG..... \$16.99 ea</p>

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SELECT | from page 1

non-disclosure agreements.

Select Board members pushed back strongly. One member called the claims “innuendo” and said they were unsupported, while another added, “I have absolutely no idea what you were talking about.”

In contrast, Karen Davis focused on community support efforts, announcing upcoming events and emphasizing growing need at the Monson Community Cupboard Food Pantry.

“We had 77 families during the month of February with a total of 208 people served,” Davis said. “If you don’t understand food insecurity, just Google it. One in every three families...it’s affecting so many.”

Concerns were also raised about the town’s animal inspection program. Resident Shirley Lamb questioned the reappointment of the current inspector, citing residency issues, cost, and alleged lapses in required inspections.

“I don’t think you know the severity,” Lamb said, describing potential public health impacts. “Whoever you put in that position has to follow through.”

Town Administrator report highlights warrant articles, certification

The board reviewed four certified citizen petitions set to appear on the upcoming Town

Meeting warrant, including proposals to:

- Establish a five-member audit board
- Allow firearms in certain municipal buildings
- Permit electronic voting at Town Meeting
- Fund electronic voting equipment

Town Administrator Wolowicz also announced her successful recertification as a Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official, noting she scored a 94% on the required exam.

Board approves appointments, police leadership promotion

The Select Board approved several appointments, including five members to the Monson Scholarship Committee.

Despite concerns raised during public comment, the board voted to nominate Finn McCool as Inspector of Animals, along with Paul Morrissey as alternate.

In a major personnel decision, the board unanimously appointed Adam Szymanski as the town’s new police lieutenant following a competitive internal process.

Board members praised both finalists.

“I would personally be very proud to have either one of them be the lieutenant,” one member said, noting both candidates ranked at the top of an external assessment.

Grant application targets infrastructure and food insecurity

The board approved submission of a Fiscal Year 2026 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application totaling up to \$485,000.

Key components include:

- \$300,000 for design work on the Harrison Avenue infrastructure project
- \$40,000 for the Monson Community Cupboard Food Pantry

The consultant explained that the project focuses on long-term planning.

“This sets us up for future grant funding... so we can pretty much go right from the jump with construction,” he said.

Survey data guiding the application showed strong community support for social services, which emerged as the top priority among respondents.

Positive review for Town Administrator

The board conducted its performance evaluation of the Town Administrator Wolowicz, offering strong support for her leadership.

“She’s always responsive... and if she doesn’t know an answer, she finds out,” one member said.

Another highlighted the difficulty of the role amid current financial pressures:

“This is an extremely difficult period of time... and

she’s doing a good job leading us through that.”

Wolowicz, marking five years in the role, reflected on her experience.

“I endeavor every day to be a good steward of your community,” she said, emphasizing relationship-building and local engagement.

Electronic voting proposal sparks debate

The Electronic Voting System Committee recommended adopting handheld “clicker” devices for Town Meeting voting, with a proposed \$25,000 appropriation.

Committee members cited efficiency, accuracy and ease of use, noting similar systems are used in dozens of Massachusetts communities.

However, concerns were raised about cost and transparency.

One board member questioned whether the system effectively creates a secret ballot.

“In effect, every time you use the clicker... it’s a secret ballot,” he said.

Supporters argued the system remains compliant with state law and improves vote accuracy.

Ethics decision requires recusal in cell tower case

The board declined to approve a financial disclosure filed by Planning Board Chair Craig Schweitzer related to a proposed cell tower on Sportsman’s Club property, where he

serves as vice president.

As a result, Schweitzer must recuse himself from any discussion or vote on the project.

“I don’t want him to be part of that conversation... because of the perception of others,” one board member said.

Town meeting schedule remains unchanged

Despite reviewing survey results showing divided preferences, the board voted to keep the annual Town Meeting schedule unchanged: the second Monday in May at 7 p.m.

Survey results showed nearly equal support for Saturday mornings and weekday evenings, with work schedules and childcare cited as key barriers to attendance.

Budget outlook presents major challenges

The most serious discussion of the evening centered on the Fiscal Year 2027 budget.

Town officials outlined a projected \$1.6 million shortfall, driven largely by rising fixed costs, including:

- Health insurance increases
- Debt obligations
- Payroll-related expenses

These costs alone account for roughly \$800,000, consuming most of the allowable 2.5% tax levy increase.

Additional pressures include a \$500,000 snow and ice deficit and limited available free cash.

Officials warned that even a level-funded budget would require service reductions, potentially affecting:

- Library hours
- Senior center programming
- Recreational services, including the town pool

The board is expected to further discuss a potential Proposition 2½ override at its April 14 meeting.

“There was a strong call for long-term planning,” officials noted, including exploring new revenue sources and cost-saving measures.

Additional actions

Other actions taken during the meeting included:

- Approval of multiple sets of meeting minutes
- Approval of a seasonal liquor license for TJ’s Tavern LLC
- Referral of an Open Meeting Law complaint to town counsel
- Acknowledgment of resident concerns about rising cable costs

Looking ahead

As Monson approaches Town Meeting season, officials face a complex mix of financial strain, infrastructure needs and community expectations.

The coming weeks, particularly discussions around a potential override, are expected to play a critical role in shaping the town’s fiscal future.

Public notices

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE’S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

Premises: 3 Maplelawn Drive a/k/a 3 Maple Lawn Drive, Monson, MA 01057

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Paul L Bucklin and Donna J Bucklin to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as Mortgagee, as nominee for Mortgage Research Center, LLC dba Veterans United Home Loans, and now held by **The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, an officer of the United States**, said mortgage dated July 8, 2015 and recorded in the Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book 20780, Page 146, as affected by a Loan Modification dated June 16, 2016 and recorded in the Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book 21396, Page 338; said mortgage was assigned from Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Mortgage Research Center, LLC DBA Veterans United Home Loans to PennyMac Loan Services, LLC by assignment dated March 14, 2016 and recorded with said Registry of Deeds in Book 21114, Page 388; said mortgage was assigned from PennyMac Loan Services, LLC to The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, an officer of the United States by assignment dated June 25, 2025 and recorded with said Registry of Deeds in Book 26174, Page 585; for breach of the conditions in said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at **Public Auction** on April 29, 2026 at 01:00 PM Local Time upon the premises, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit:

Certain land situated in Monson, Hampden County, Massachusetts, off the Westerly side of Main Street, 1927 State Highway Layout, bounded and described as follows:

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Dickenson, et ux, to Harold C. Wood, et ux; thence South 89° 19’ West along the Northerly line of said proposed street, 150 feet an iron pin; thence North 0° 41’ West along land now or formerly of Ernest W. Bridges, 92.5 feet to an iron pin; thence North 89° 19’ East still along land now or formerly of said Bridges, 150 feet to an iron pin at land of said Woods; thence South 0° 41’ East along land of said Woods 92.5 feet to the place of beginning.

Together with the right to pass and reposs on foot or with vehicles over the aforesaid proposed street, which proposed street is now known as Maple Lawn Drive.

The premises are shown as Lot Number 6 on a “Plan of Lots in Monson, Mass., surveyed for Ernest V. Bridges, Scale 1 “ = 40’, November 22, 1954, Kenneth C. Sherman, Engineer-Surveyor, Palmer, Mass.”.

Subject to a taking for a sewer easement by the Town of Monson dated August 20, 1979 and recorded with Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book 4818, Page 254.

Being the same premises as conveyed to the mortgagors herein by a deed recorded immediately prior hereto.

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

For Mortgagor’s Title see deed dated June 2, 2015 and recorded in the Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book 20780, Page 144.

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

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

days after the date of sale.

Other terms to be announced at the sale.

Brock & Scott, PLLC
23 Messenger Street
2nd Floor
Plainville, MA 02762

Attorney for The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, an officer of the United States

Present Holder of the Mortgage
(401) 217-8701
03/26, 04/02, 04/09/2026

PUBLIC NOTICE CLEANING IFB Town of Palmer and Palmer Public Schools Cleaning Bid

The Town of Palmer and Palmer Public Schools are advertising a cleaning bid for the Town Hall, Police Department, and both Palmer Public School Buildings. The bid will include a set number of weekly cleaning days for each location, with a detailed scope of services outlined in the Invitation for Bid (IFB).

The IFB is now available (submission dates are noted in the bid package) and may be obtained by emailing Sara Menard, School Business Manager, at smenard@palmer.schools.org

The bid opening is scheduled for April 17th, 2026 at 2:00 PM at the Old Mill Pond School.

The Town reserves the right to reject any or all bids. The award will be made by the Town Manager/CPO.

Town of Palmer

04/02/2026

(SEAL) COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS LAND COURT DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT 26 SM 000397 ORDER OF NOTICE

TO: Edward W. Benoit, Individually, and as Proposed Personal Representative of the Estate of Rosemarie A. Dubuque a/k/a Rosemarie Ann Dubuque a/k/a Rosemarie Dubuque; Heirs, Devises, and Legal Representatives of the Estate of Rosemarie A. Dubuque a/k/a Rosemarie Ann Dubuque a/k/a Rosemarie Dubuque

Estate of: Joseph J. Malzenski, Jr. Date of Death: 01/27/2026 INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Philip Raymond of Three Rivers, MA.**

Philip Raymond of Three Rivers, 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.

04/02/2026

(SEAL) COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS LAND COURT DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT 26 SM 000927 ORDER OF NOTICE

TO: Robert L Meacham II and to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act: 50 U.S.C. c. 50 § 3901 (et seq):

Citizens Bank, N.A. f/k/a RBS Citizens, N.A. claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in Monson, numbered 25 State Street, given by Robert L. Meacham II to RBS Citizens, N.A., dated November 24, 2015, and recorded at Hampden County

04/02/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Division Docket No. HD26P0522EA

Registry of Deeds in Book 20967, Page 114, as affected by a Loan Modification Agreement dated April 19, 2023 and recorded at said Registry in Book 25009, Page 341 has/have filed with this court a complaint for determination of Defendant’s/Defendants’ Servicemembers status.

If you now are, or recently have been, in the active military service of the United States of America, then you may be entitled to the benefits of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If you object to a foreclosure of the above-mentioned property on that basis, then you or your attorney must file a written appearance and answer in this court at **Three Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108** on or before **May 4, 2026** or you may lose the opportunity to challenge the foreclosure on the grounds of noncompliance with the Act.

Witness, **GORDON H. PIPER**, Chief Justice of said Court on March 20, 2026.

Attest:
Deborah J. Patterson
Recorder
04/02/2026

MONSON SCHOOL COMMITTEE NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

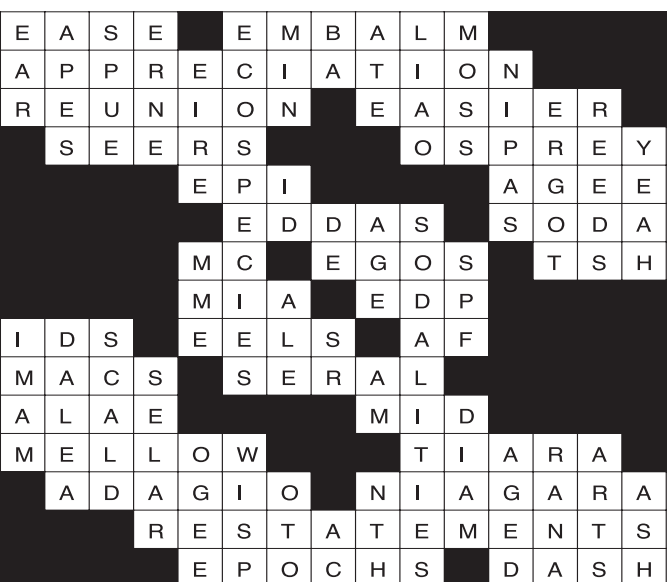
In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 38N, the Monson School Committee will hold a Public Hearing on the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Budget.

The hearing will take place on: **Wednesday, April 15, 2026 at 6:00 PM Quarry Hill Community School 43 Margaret Street, Monson, MA Room 428**

The hearing will also be accessible virtually via Google Meet.

Meetings are broadcast live and broadcast the following day on the local public access station, M-PACT (Comcast Channel 15).

All interested persons are invited to attend and will be given an opportunity to be heard.
04/02/2026



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• Salary based on a flat rate by story and photo.

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FINCOM | from page 1

icant budget surplus but was considered unrealistic because it ignored unavoidable cost increases.

2. Level Funding + Fixed Costs: Including unavoidable "unclassified" expenses, this model projected an excess capacity of \$63,179. Committee members were cautioned that departments would need to absorb any salary increases or operational cost growth within their existing budgets. "The second page is the level funding with the fixed costs, the classifieds, those items that we've already identified as non-negotiable. And that gives you an excess capacity of 63,000 and change," Roberson said.

3. Level Funding + Fixed Costs + 1% School Increase: Reflecting a gradual 1% increase for school operating and transportation costs, this scenario resulted in a \$61,000 shortfall.

4. Level Funding + Fixed Costs + 1.9% School Increase: Reflecting the school department's current request, this scenario produced a \$144,000 shortfall. "The shortfall for the 1.9% [school increase] is 144,000 and change," Finance Director Roberson noted.

Calls for transparency and detailed cuts

Committee members pressed for more granular information, asking for line-item budgets that would show precisely where departments would make cuts under a level-funded model. "We want to know what the result would be... we want to know where those cuts are," one member emphasized. Another added, "The role of the finance committee is to go through the budget and then make comments concerning at the line-item level."

Town officials acknowledged the difficulty of providing such specifics. Departments feared creating

anxiety among employees about job security and preferred to determine cuts internally once a final budget was set. Technical challenges, such as internet connectivity, also contributed to delays in sharing comprehensive budget documents. "Departments are fully comfortable putting out in the public to say because one, it affects their department staff, it affects their department in a way that is where people are genuinely worried about their jobs," explained Roberson.

School budget debate intensifies

Tension mounted over the school department's budget request. Initially seeking a 5.9% increase, the school reduced its request to 1.9%, but the committee stressed that even this level exceeds what the town can sustainably support. "They were at a 5.9% increase. Ask. And now they're at 1.9. So it was

a 4% reduction on the school budget," one member noted. Historical context was also cited: last year, the school received \$300,000 beyond the committee's recommendation, leading to staff additions. "One department got \$507,000 more last year than the year before. And 300,000 was over our recommendation," the member added.

Ideas to improve efficiency included consolidating elementary schools into Quarry Hill, potentially saving \$150,000 in administrative costs. Finance Director Roberson also reminded the committee that Monson overspends its Net School Spending due to declining enrollment, limiting state aid and placing additional pressure on the town budget. "Last year, from the documents I have found it appears that it was agreed upon that the goal was to give the school 1% annually," Roberson noted.

Equity concerns across town departments

The committee repeatedly stressed the need for fairness in budget decisions. "We're making other departments cut and you're saying we should add to theirs... I don't think that's fair," a member said. Concerns were raised about core services such as public safety and highway maintenance, noting that cuts could affect essential services and quality of life. Fixed personnel costs, including union contracts and elected officials' salaries, further constrained flexibility, meaning reductions would fall on other areas or non-contracted staff.

Some members emphasized the importance of a collaborative, town-wide approach. "I think the best way for all of these committees to work together is to come up with a plan together so everyone can be behind that plan," one member said.

Long-term challenges and strategic planning

Finance officials warned that even level funding represents only a temporary solution. Rising fixed costs and limited revenue growth make long-term sustainability challenging. The Finance Director highlighted the need for proactive strategic planning. "The reality is we need to do strategic planning to figure out how we are going to bring in more revenue," he said.

Regionalization of services, including police, fire, and schools, was raised as a potential long-term solution, though committee members acknowledged it is not a quick fix. "If wages are unsustainable... I don't know what else you can do besides regionalize. Cut positions, that's all you can do," one official remarked. Town Administrator Wolowicz proposed forming a stakeholder group of residents to discuss Monson's long-term priorities.

PET PAGE



PET OF THE MONTH
Meet Enzo!

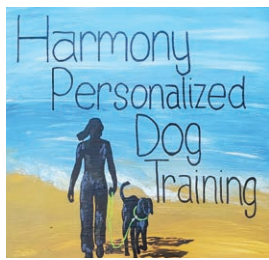


He is an eight year-old rescue from the Houston floods in Texas who is now happy to call Wilbraham home with the Mannion family. Enzo's hobbies include long leisurely walks to the Fern Valley Farm stand (where he expects a treat for his efforts) and to shamelessly beg for pup cups at Rice's Fruit Farm. While we aren't sure what breed he is (likely a Pyrenees lab mix) he's 100% a good boy in our books.

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.



PACK WALKS

- Every Saturday in Post Office Park Wilbraham at Noon.
- Every Sunday in Belchertown behind the Police Dept. at 10 a.m.
All Ages And Breeds Welcome
\$20 Each - Weather Permitting

NEW CLASSES!

- Starting April 6th: Basics in Obedience & Socialization Group Class at Belchertown Rec Dept. 5:30 p.m.*
- Starting April 15th: Obedience & Confidence Building Group Class (Noncommittal) at the common area in front of the Belchertown Day School & Christopher Heights at 5:30 p.m.
- Starting June 1st: Life Skills at the Belchertown Rec. Dept.*
*Sign Up Online for these classes at the Belchertown Rec Dept.

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East Longmeadow Dog Obedience Training Club
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Classes held every Monday-Thursday evenings



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Speaking Your Cat's Language

Scientists agree that meowing is a form of cat language. Cats in feral colonies rarely, if ever, meow at each other. So, if a pet cat is meowing away, you can be reasonably sure it's directed toward her humans. Understanding the meaning behind your cat's meows allows you to respond appropriately, which can strengthen the bond you share.

Meows

Understanding the meaning behind different types

of meows is important. Conversational meows tend to be at a regular volume and vary in pattern and pitch. Demand meows are louder and more repetitive. Distress meows are not only loud, but longer, often with a drawn out 'owwwwwwww' at the end.

Body Language

Interpreting cat body language involves understanding the various positions of their ears, eyes, nose, mouth and

whiskers and other body parts. The carriage and movement of a cat's tail says a lot. Cats will loosely wave their tail if they are relaxed but will more quickly or sternly flick their tail if irritated. A fearful cat will crouch while lowering her tail, while a focused cat will flick just the tip of his tail. Also consider their posture. Cats that are standing comfortably are likely content. Crouching with a flat body and feet underneath means your

cat is ready to pounce, while lying on her side could indicate she's ready to scratch with all four feet! These postures mean the cat is frightened or agitated, and you should give the cat her space. A feline who looks like a super relaxed kitty! When a cat rubs her nose or body on you, she is often marking you with her scent, but the action could be a sign of affection or anxiety, depending on the circumstances.

