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# The Journal Register

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**COMMUNITY**

## HOLIDAY Celebrations



The Girl Scouts that attend the festival every year to share reindeer food, (from left) Emily Provost, Stacie Chichakly, Stephanie Chichakly, Jacki Provost, Maya Rodriguez, Shiloh Kibbe.

### Palmer Lights Up with weekend holiday festivities

By Marcelo Gusmão  
 Staff Writer  
 mgusmao@turley.com

PALMER – This weekend was the annual celebration of Light Up Palmer, complete with live music, train rides, food, ice-sculpting, and more.

On Saturday, Nov. 30, residents gathered in Depot Village Park for this year's celebration, put on by the Light Up Palmer Committee. The committee is made up of volunteers that collaborate through Palmer Business

Partnership Inc., a non-profit entity that accepts charitable donations to decorate Main Street for the holidays.

Noah Lis performed music, and was followed by a reading of *The Polar Express* by Chris Van Allsburg. Throughout the event, themed characters from roamed around to take pictures with children and families. Michael Rondeau carved an ice sculpture for a captive audience, and the tree was officially lit up just after sunset.

Attendees also had the option to take a ride on the

Roaming Railroad, and to ride the trolley from Steaming Tender.

The festival dates back to 2019, and along with the Christmas decorating contest, it has become a staple of the town's holiday season ever since the

Please see **LIGHT UP**, page 6

Lydia, age 2, took a picture with the Bumble from Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer on Walnut Street.

**COMMUNITY**

## Forever in a Moment to hold third annual toy drive

By Marcelo Gusmão  
 Staff Writer  
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PALMER – Samantha Jaremczuk and her nine-year-old son, Zeke, have been collecting toys to donate to Baystate Children's Hospital since Zeke was diagnosed with leukemia.

"He was diagnosed with cancer at age six in 2022," Jaremczuk said. "We spent just over 100 days at Baystate Children's Hospital because his type was so high-risk and we had to be in-patient for a lot of it."

Zeke has finished active treatment as of April, though he still has monthly visits to the oncology clinic. Jaremczuk said that according to blood work taken as recently as this week, "all of his counts look great, and he's doing well."

"After treatment finishes, you still have five years of checking back," Jaremczuk said. "You continue the relationship with them for, at minimum, five years, and we're eight months into the after-treatment."

Jaremczuk said her son was inspired to hold a toy drive to benefit the children on the floor. She said that he was inspired by the Child Life team that would interact with him while he was in treatment.

"When you're in the hospital with a child, they have a team called Child Life to play games and interact with them," Jaremczuk said. "We became really close with the team and wanted to donate toys to the floor for other children who will be there, and to help out Child Life."

Jaremczuk said that this will be the third year that she and her



Zeke Jaremczuk was inspired to donate to the Baystate Children's Hospital after his experience battling leukemia.

son collect toys for the hospital. As of January of this year, she regis-

tered their nonprofit as Forever In A Moment, Inc.

"It makes it much easier to get donations and show that we're legit," Jaremczuk said. "We didn't want people to think we're scammers."

Through a personal connection at Walgreens, Jaremczuk has been able to use the Walgreens stores in Palmer, Monson, and Ware as its drop-off locations for the past three years. Now, with the non-profit certification, they have expanded to include locations at Monson Savings Bank, Shaker Bowl Bowling Alley and Red 5 Toys and Collectibles in East Longmeadow, Yard Tavern and McCray's Farm in South Hadley, and the Deep Roots Distillery on the border of Fiskdale and Sturbridge.

Please see **TOY DRIVE**, page 8

**MONSON**

## Parking bans, bylaws discussed by Select Board

By Marcelo Gusmão  
 Staff Writer  
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MONSON – At last week's Select Board meeting, the town discussed upcoming parking bans, the review of the town's General Bylaws, and remembered the service of a former town employee.

The Nov. 26 meeting began with a moment of silence for Nancy Morrell. Select Board Member Pat Oney read a statement about Morrell's involvement in the town.

"Nancy Morrell was first elected to the position of Town Clerk on March 12, 1990, having received 1,163 votes and no opposition," Oney said. "Nancy retired on Oct. 31, 2013, having served 23 years and seven terms as our Town Clerk."

Oney listed Morrell's accomplishments, including being appointed to the Board of Registrars, Traffic Fines Clerk, Disposition of Main Street and State Street Schools, Gulf War Memorial Committee, Teen Center Study Committee, Cable Advisory Committee, Burial Agent, Private Roads Committee, Tourism Committee, Memorial Hall Capital Planning Committee, General Bylaw Committee, Tax

Assistance for Seniors Committee, and Council on Aging.

"We thank her very much for her service, for her kindness, and working hard in the face of all the adversity that she faced during her term as Town Clerk," Oney concluded.

During Public Comments, Valerie Bogas Bodwin spoke on behalf of the General Bylaw Committee.

"The committee has completed step one of its review," Bodwin said. "I look forward to having the Select Board review what we have come up with, in addition to having the Town Counsel take a look at it."

Bodwin said that there has been nothing added to the document, and most of the changes have been to format the general bylaws into chapters, similar to the zoning bylaws.

"This is a lot of work from not only our committee, but the department heads and the different board and committee chairs that have all taken part in redoing the bylaws," Bodwin said.

Bodwin said that after getting feedback from the Select Board and the town's attorney, the committee

Please see **MONSON**, page 5

**HOLIDAYS**

## Troop 7 selling evergreen decorations to benefit BSA

By Marcelo Gusmão  
 Staff Writer  
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BRIMFIELD – If you're in the market for a wreath, tree, or other festive evergreen decor, you can purchase them from the Boy Scouts of America to help support future scouting endeavors.

Tara Gilman Sheffield is the Scoutmaster for Troop 7, and shared how the fundraiser has been going this year.

"We do it as a fundraiser," said Tara Gilman Sheffield, the troop's Scoutmaster. "It's one of our big fundraisers to help raise funds for the Scouts to help cover the cost of their trips throughout the year, as well as to take care of gear."

The scouts are selling the traditional wreaths and trees, as well as cemetery boxes and kissing balls.

Sheffield said that the trees come from a farm in Canada through a vendor in Charlton, and the wreaths are made by a vendor in Ludlow, while the kissing balls are made by the Scouts and the cemetery boxes come from another regional vendor.

"Cemetery boxes are cedar log boxes," Sheffield explained. "They're just small boxes, about a foot long, that have decorations and greenery in them, as well as other decorations that people purchase. They often put them on gravesites for their loved ones for the holiday season."

Sheffield said that "kissing balls" are ball-shaped decorations made of greenery cut off from trees, made in much the same way that wreaths are made. "You'll see them often hanging on people's porches,"

Please see **BSA**, page 8



Working the Monson Big Mac Craft Fair, (from left) Mason, Paige, and Parker Sheffield.

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# Pet of the Week



**COOTER**

This is Cooter from Wales, who recently turned three years old. Emily Bamberger rescued him from a non-profit in Manchester, CT. We feature your pets here. Is your fur friend a dog, cat, chicken, lizard, horse, bird, mouse... you get the point. Is there a pet you're fostering and trying to re-home? All pets are welcome! Email a high-resolution jpg of your pet with a little information to [journalregister@turley.com](mailto:journalregister@turley.com).

## MassDot public meeting about Palmer station

PALMER— MassDOT invites the public to a public information meeting on the Palmer station planning and design project on Monday, Dec. 16, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Palmer Public Library, Community Room.

The project team will provide an overview of the study's background, the station site alternatives and evaluation, and design considerations for a potential future rail station in Palmer. Attendees will be asked to provide feedback on the site alternatives and design considerations. All comments will be taken into consideration as MassDOT and the Steering Committee move forward in the site selection process. For individuals who are unable to attend, comments and questions may be submitted electronically to [andrew.m.kozioi@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:andrew.m.kozioi@dot.state.ma.us). About the project As part of MassDOT's Compass Rail program to expand intercity passenger rail in Massachusetts, MassDOT is conducting a study to identify a new passenger rail station along the proposed Compass Rail corridor serving the Town of Palmer and surrounding communities. The proposed new passenger rail station will enhance mobility and connectivity, support local planning goals, and drive economic development.

## Holiday Craft and Vendor Fair

PALMER – St. Thomas the Apostle Parish will host a Holiday Craft and Vendor Fair from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Dec. 7 at the St. Thomas Parish Center. The St. Thomas Parish Center is located at 1076 Thorndike St. Craft and vendor spots are still available for \$35 per table with two chairs. Proceeds from table rentals will benefit

the Parish's charitable programs. There is no charge for admission, and ample free parking is available. The hall is wheelchair-accessible. For more information, contact Melissa Boyer at 413-355-6355. "Make us one of your stops on the Dec. 7 Craft Crawl!"

## Craft fair in Palmer on Dec. 7

PALMER—Winter craft fair to be held on Saturday, Dec. 7 at Palmer High School, 4105 Main St., Palmer. Where creativity and holiday spirit merge. Wonderful unique and handmade treasures for a truly magical season. For more information contact [nlachance5282009@gmail.com](mailto:nlachance5282009@gmail.com).

derful unique and handmade treasures for a truly magical season. For more information contact [nlachance5282009@gmail.com](mailto:nlachance5282009@gmail.com).

## Light Up Palmer Christmas decorating contest

PALMER—Do you love the holiday season? Do you enjoy seeing the smiles on peoples faces when they see your holiday light display? Sign up for the Light Up Palmer Christmas decorating contest applications open Nov. 25 through Dec. 15. Voting and a map will be available starting Dec. 17. The winners will be announced on Dec. 24, 2024.

a ticket to incredible experiences in the area.

### Best Blow Ups Winner

\$100 Visa Gift Card: Enjoy the freedom to spend as you wish! Treat yourself, buy gifts, or dine out—it's all up to you!

### Business Winner

Company Outing on the 1909 Parlor Car at the Steaming Tender Restaurant: Unforgettable dining for up to 10 employees in a unique setting. Perfect for team bonding away from the office.

### Griswold Christmas Winner

\$100 Gift Certificate to Filgio's Restaurant: Ideal for a romantic dinner or family night out. Indulge in delicious food and a welcoming atmosphere!

### Through a Child's Eyes Winner

Overnight in the 1946 Bangor Aroostock Caboose: Experience the thrill of sleeping in a historic train caboose! Perfect for families seeking adventure and lasting memories.

### Traditional/Classic Winner

\$200 Gift Certificate from Bygone Excursions: Embark on a scenic journey filled with history. This gift certificate is

## Baystate Wing Auxiliary selling Lotto calendars

PALMER—The Baystate Wing Hospital Auxiliary is currently selling their January 2025 Lotto Calendars. The one-month calendar, which costs \$5 each or 3 for \$10. Drawings will begin on Feb. 3.

raised by the annual Lotto Calendars support the Auxiliary's scholarship program and their philanthropic efforts that benefit Baystate Wing Hospital.

For over 65 years the Baystate Wing Hospital Auxiliary has been actively supporting local healthcare through its sponsorship of special events and sales from the Baystate Wing Hospital Gift Shop located on the first floor of the hospital.

Whether looking for something special for a patient, a gift for a special occasion, or an item for the home, the Baystate Wing Hospital Gift Shop offers many unique, hand-selected items. For more information about the Lotto Calendar visit the gift shop located on the first floor of the hospital or call 413-370-8169.

The calendars are on sale at the Baystate Wing Hospital gift shop. Funds



## Keep Homestead to present Santa history

MONSON— Ever wondered how Santa came to America? Plan to visit the Keep Homestead Museum, 35 Ely Road, when Lorraine German presents her program "How Santa Claus Came to Town" on Sunday, Dec. 8, at 1:30 p.m.

German is the owner of Mad River Antiques in North Granby, CT and she will share information about New Amsterdam's St. Nicholas, the marketing strategy used by members of the New York Historical Society, and finally

the jolly old elf we grew up with. She will also bring Santa related antiques.

Visitors are welcome to tour the museum from 1 to 3:30 p.m. to view new Christmas button displays courtesy of the Monson Button Club and to enjoy light refreshments. Visit the gift shop where handmade note cards featuring buttons are for sale.

Join outside for hot roasted chestnuts compliments of Replanting Monson Tree Committee and students from the Tantasqua Chestnut Club.

## PHCC Tree and Wreath festival

PALMER— The Palmer Historical and Cultural Center is holding its 12th Annual Tree and Wreath Festival starting on Friday evening, Dec. 6, starting at 4 p.m. The festival continues on Saturday, Dec. 7 and Sunday, Dec. 8 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. PHCC is located at 2072 Main St., Three Rivers. Harmony Hall is fully decked out with over 35 trees and wreaths that are being raffled off. Admission is free. Live music performers are scheduled for entertainment and kids activities offered in the lower level Villages Room. A Loved Ones tree is displayed where guests can purchase an ornament and

write the name of a loved one they wish to remember. The Loved Ones tree is set up with each year with all ornaments purchased over the years are also displayed. Raffle tickets can be purchased at the door for \$1 each or 10 tickets for \$5. If you bring an unwrapped toy for the Palmer Lions Club you will receive a free ticket for each toy you donate.

For more information and images please visit the PHCC website [www.palmerhcc.org](http://www.palmerhcc.org).



## Millennium Magic to perform Winter Wonderland Concert

MONSON – On Sunday, Dec. 8 at 2 p.m. the Millennium Magic Chorus, a Sweet Adelines group, will perform their Winter Wonderland Concert in the sanctuary of First Church Monson, 5 High St. A cookies and punch reception will follow the concert in Fellowship Hall. The cost is a \$5 donation at the door.

Millennium Magic is a vibrant Sweet Adelines Barbershop and A cappella Chorus, composed of women from seven states and spanning four generations. This dynamic group performs a diverse repertoire and will present festive holiday and seasonal music at the First Church concert.

With an impressive track record, Millennium Magic has qualified for the Sweet Adelines International competition eight times, proudly bringing home silver medals twice and gold medals

three times. They are the undefeated champions of Region 1, Division A.

Most recently, they won the divisional international championship in 2019, placed 16th in the world in 2023 and in 2024, they secured their division title and a second place finish regionally, qualifying for the 2025 international contest.

Millennium Magic is not just a chorus; it's a dynamic community of women who thrive on connections and camaraderie. Together, they embrace growth and learning, fostering a supportive environment where everyone feels at home.

Their passion for music shines through in every performance, creating unforgettable experiences that resonate deeply with their audience. It is all about joy, friendship and the magic that happens when they come together to celebrate their love for music.

This program is supported in part by a grant from the Monson Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the MA Cultural Council, a state agency.

### Corrections

The Journal Register will gladly correct factual errors that appear in this paper. Corrections or clarifications will always appear on Page 2 or 3. To request a correction, send information to [Editor@journalregister@turley.com](mailto:Editor@journalregister@turley.com), or call 283-8393, extension 236. Corrections may also be requested in writing at: Journal Register, Attn: Editor 24 Water St., Palmer, MA, 01069.

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



Submitted Photo

**Country Bank is accepting new, unwrapped gifts at its banking centers until Dec. 14 to benefit the Wonderfund of Massachusetts.**

## Country Bank partners with Wonderfund of Massachusetts

PALMER—Country Bank, a full-service financial institution serving central and western Massachusetts, partnered with the Wonderfund of Massachusetts, with a \$10,000 donation.

This collaboration will make a difference in the lives of kids and teens served by the Department of Children and Families, allowing them to experience the magic of childhood during the holiday season. The Wonderfund, an extraordinary group of people on a mission, is dedicated to bringing the joy and meaning of childhood to children who have been impacted by trauma, abuse, and neglect.

You, too, can be a part of this magical initiative. Join the Wonderfund and Country Bank in making this holiday season special for kids in foster care by donating a new, unwrapped gift at any of its banking centers until Dec. 14. Your contribution, no matter how small, will make a difference. Country Bank's team will shop for gifts to join in the efforts, and donations will be delivered to DCF Offices in Springfield and Worcester to be distributed throughout western and central Massachusetts.

"We are excited to partner with the Wonderfund again this year and the opportunity for our team and the communities we serve help us make a difference for children by putting a smile on so many faces this holiday season," said Shelley Regin, Chief Marketing and Community Relations Officer at Country Bank. "Last year, we had such overwhelming support and collectively, we donated over a thousand toys to local DCF offices who shared with us, without your donations most children would have only received one toy."

If you're ready to help make some magic this holiday season, please visit <https://wonderfundma.org>. Your support is invaluable and will bring joy to children in foster care.

### About Country Bank

Established in 1850, Country Bank has a rich history of supporting personal and business banking customers through financial solutions with FDIC and DIF insurance for added security. Country Bank is a full-service \$1.8B mutual community bank serving central and western Massachusetts with 16 offices in Ware, Palmer, West Brookfield, Brimfield, Belchertown, Wilbraham, Ludlow, Leicester, Paxton, Charlton, Springfield, (Opening soon) Uxbridge, and Worcester.

With a commitment to personalized service and community involvement, Country Bank offers individuals, businesses, and municipalities a comprehensive range of banking products and services. Country Bank is a member of FDIC, DIF, and the SUM network. Country Bank can be reached at 800-322-8233 or online at [countrybank.com](http://countrybank.com).

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# Emergency Department recognizes students for mural

PALMER— There is a new mural greeting pediatric patients and their families in the Emergency Department at Baystate Wing Hospital. It is a creation and gift from eight art students from Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School. The mural, which took the students three days to complete in the ED, was developed in phases over the past few months while working under the creative leadership of Darlene Henshaw, the studio art teacher at Pathfinder Tech.

"The request from the pediatric care team in the ED first came to us in 2023 when our Pathfinder Tech Art Department was asked to create and paint murals on the walls of the treatment room dedicated to the care of pediatric patients," said Henshaw. "The planning and painting of the mural was finally completed this October, following a lengthy pandemic-related delay."

"Our students heard directly from the people working in the Emergency Department, which was very valuable for this learning experience," said Henshaw. "Following my meeting with the ED team, our students came together after school every Tuesday and Thursday to develop the concept, 'Landscape with Hidden Creatures,'



Submitted Photo

**From the left to right: Ryleigh LaRocque, Mya Welch, Kayla Bingle, Trish Murdock, Mason Cardin, Evelyn Shilosky, Jameson Sterner, Darlene Henshaw, Art Teacher, Not pictured: Blair Shown.**

sketch the images, then paint canvas panel prototypes to ensure that their visions would work on a much larger scale on the four walls of the room. I wanted their vision to come through, and I had faith in all of them. These eight students took the ball and ran with it."

"Visiting the Emergency Department can be scary for children and parents alike," said Dr. James Munger, associate chief of emergency medicine and pediatric emergency care coordinator. "Families bringing a child to the Emergency

Department often face a mix of emotions including anxiety, and uncertainty, coupled with the stress of navigating an unfamiliar environment. The bright colors and friendly animal characters help to lift the mood of children and parents in a tough situation. We are grateful to the Pathfinder Tech students and teachers for sharing their talents with us."

In addition to helping with supplies to paint the mural, a generous gift from the Baystate Health Foundation has also allowed the ED team to purchase

items for a treasure box for children, so as they leave the ED, they can take home a prize from the BWH care team. The funds have also helped to purchase toys and games for children to use if they must wait for a procedure or test result.

"Life experiences are the best teachers - those three days painting the mural in the Emergency Department and the creative work, collaboration, and student friendships developed that led up to completing this community project will be a memory cemented in the minds

and hearts of these students forever," said Henshaw.

"We are so incredibly honored and thankful to these special Pathfinder Tech student artists for sharing their talents, imagination, and most importantly for bringing comfort to our smallest patients and their families," said Karli Barrett, president, and chief operating officer for Baystate Wing Hospital. "This healing environment will greatly enhance the care our ED team provides."

## Blood Donation Team is coming to Baystate Wing

PALMER— The community is invited to begin the holiday season by giving the gift of life by donating blood at the Baystate Health blood drive held on Wednesday, Dec. 11, at Baystate Wing Hospital from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Additionally, Blood Drives will be held every other month on Wednesdays throughout the year in 2025, held on February 12, April 16, June 11, August 13, October 15, and December 17.

There continues to be an urgent need for blood, when you donate blood to Baystate Health, your precious gift remains in our local communities," said Nicole VanZandt, MLT III, supervisor, BRL Blood Donor Services. "Please help us to ensure a safe and adequate blood supply is available by donating blood with the Baystate Health Blood Donor Program."

"There is no substitute for human blood," said VanZandt. "Blood donations take approximately one hour to complete, including the interview, donation, and refreshments. To donate blood, you must be at least 17 years old; weigh at least 110 pounds have a photo ID; be in good health (no colds, or sore throat); and have not donated blood within the past eight weeks."

Blood drives will be held at Baystate Wing Hospital, 40 Wright Street, Palmer, in Snow Conference Room C. In appreciation, all eligible donors will receive a \$10 Gift card. For more information or to book an appointment to donate blood please call the Blood Donor Center at 413-794-4600. Please be sure to note the Baystate Health hospital location where you would like to make your donation when you make your appointment.



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# Christmas on the Common

**Sunday, Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> 2-6pm**

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*Free Crafts For Kids, Warming Stations & Entertainment*

**Santa & Mrs. Claus Arrive By Firetruck & All Children Receive A Special Treat!**

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**Free Hot Chocolate & Meme Rondeau's Donuts**

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## First Church opens Christmas Shop for two weeks

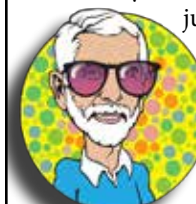
LUDLOW—The first church in Ludlow, located at 859 Center Street, will be opening their Christmas shop on Friday, Dec. 6 and Saturday, Dec. 7, and Friday, Dec. 13 and Saturday, Dec. 14 from 9 a.m. until 12 p.m. There will be assorted Christmas items along with knitted, crochet, quilted items, and several home-made crafts.

The Humming bird shop will be open with an assorted fabrics and yarns for at reduced prices and the book store will also be open that is filled with some of your favorite authors along with a selection of children books at fabulous prices.

Stop by and see what we have to offer.

## COLORBLINDGUY APPLAUDS Cupcakes & Confections by Jana

Jana Hayden showed remarkable courage by leaving her cooking job to start her own bakery, Cupcakes & Confections. Her determination and passion have paid off, as her business flourishes with devoted customers. Jana makes an assortment of cakes, cupcakes, and other baked goods that have become community favorites. Her success reflects not just her culinary talent but also her commitment to pursuing her dreams in



**Ware the colorblind capital of the world!**



**Turley Publications, Inc.**

**Scarlett Legasey**  
January 25, 2023  
Parents: Thomas & Jessica Legasey, Rutland  
Grandparents: Donald & MaryAnn Dunbar, Ware  
Thomas & Sharon Legasey, Spencer

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Attn: Jamie Joslyn  
Include a self addressed/stamped envelope if you would like the picture returned or email photo to: [jamie@turley.com](mailto:jamie@turley.com) with subject line: **BABY'S FIRST**.  
This offer is available to all babies born in 2024. Pictures will be published the week of December 23-27, 2024.

Baby's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parents' Names: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parents' Town of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_  
Grandparents' Names & Town of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_

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*Please check the newspaper you would like your announcement to appear.*

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**Deadline for photos and forms is Monday, December 16, 2024**

## Viewpoints

## SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor

## Am I entitled to more Social Security from my ex-husbands?

## Dear Rusty:

I am 76 years old and a retired high school counselor/teacher. I was married to my first husband from 1968 until 1981. He is still living and he remarried two more times and, I believe, he is currently divorced. He is 77 years old. His income was always much higher than mine. I was married to my second husband from May 1989 until we divorced in April 2017. My second husband died in June 2023. What I wonder is if I am entitled to receive Social Security benefits based upon the income of either of my ex-husbands?

Signed: Twice Divorced Spouse

## Dear Twice Divorced:

Divorced spouses are entitled to the same benefits as a current spouse if their marriage lasted at least 10 years which, in both cases, yours did. The other caveat is whether your own SS retirement benefit is less than you are entitled to from either of your ex-husbands. If your own SS retirement benefit is less, then you will get an incremental amount on top of your own SS retirement to bring your total monthly benefit up to your spousal or surviving spouse) entitlement.

Since your first husband is still living, it is likely that your best financial option is to claim a surviving ex-spouse benefit from your deceased second husband. The reason is that survivor benefits from husband # 2 are based on his actual benefit at his death, whereas benefits from a living ex-spouse, husband #1, are based upon his full retirement amount. In other words, it is likely that 100% of deceased husband #2's benefit at his death is more than 50% of living husband #1's current benefit at his Full Retirement Age.

It is, of course, possible that 50% of your first husband's FRA entitlement is more than 100% of your second husband's benefit at death, in which case your ex-spouse benefit from your first husband could be more. The only way to sort this out is to contact Social Security at -800-772-1213 to make an appointment to apply for surviving ex-spouse benefits from your deceased second husband. Explain that your first ex-husband is still living and that you are unsure of what your benefits are as your first husband's ex-spouse.

Social Security will be able to determine from their records, which one provides you with a higher benefit amount, provide each husband's Social Security number when you call. As I said, your best financial option will likely be to take your survivor benefit from your deceased second ex-husband note, however, if your first ex-husband also dies before you, you can subsequently file for a survivor benefit from him, if that is more than you are getting from your second husband's record.

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](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at [ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org). Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.



## Live tabletop Christmas trees become year-round houseplants

Norfolk Island pines are nearly as popular as poinsettias this time of year, gracing chain store and supermarket shelves just after the Thanksgiving holiday, or perhaps soon after Halloween, these days!

Not sure exactly what they look like? Think mini Christmas tree.

These cute conifers come table top ready, predecorated with tiny little ornaments and a festive foil sleeve. Most stand less than a foot tall, yet the amount of holiday cheer they bring to someone who otherwise wouldn't have a Christmas tree is immeasurable.

Unlike cut Christmas trees, potted Norfolk Island Pines need not be discarded once the holidays have passed. Simply take their decorations off and they become an easy to maintain houseplant.

Although they look as if they would be hardy to our area, they are not, so don't plan on giving them a spot outdoors come springtime, or you'll lose them with the first hard frost of fall. Norfolk Island, from which the plant hails, is situated in the southern Pacific Ocean, northeast of Sydney, Australia – a much warmer climate indeed!

The only locations within the United States that the Norfolk Island pine is hardy are Hawaii, and parts of Florida and California. Southern Florida is home to many commercial growers of the plant.

It is interesting to note that the Norfolk Island pine isn't a true pine at all. Rather it is an evergreen plant with needle-like leaves.

Side branches rise from the main stem at wide angles, giving it a symmetrical, triangular outline, especially when young. In the wild, heights can top off around 200 feet, with diameters between 9 and 10 feet. As a houseplant, it is very slow growing.

To keep your Norfolk Island pine looking its best for seasons to come, provide it with good quality light – a few feet from a south or west facing window is ideal. Give it a quarter turn at each watering and you will be rewarded with a nice straight stem.

If window space is out of the question, it will do okay in a well-lit room as well, providing the lights are on for most of the day. Temperatures should range between 60-70 degrees during the day; slightly cooler at night.

It is important that the Norfolk Island pine be kept from temps below 50 degrees for any length of time or injury may occur. Therefore, be sure it is in a bag or protective sleeve when you bring it home from the store in chilly winter weather.

Keep its soil moist but not soaking wet.

Sometimes lower limbs may brown and then drop. Age, as well as erratic watering can cause this problem. Repot and check watering practices.

Fertilize in the spring, once active growth resumes.

Perhaps the most cherished of all tender herbs is Rosemary (*Rosemarinus officinalis*), the herb of remembrance. Its needle like leaves and fragrant foliage make it a wonderful candidate for use as a table top Christmas tree!

One of the more common questions when people toured Old Sturbridge Village's greenhouse in the off-season, was "How do you manage to overwinter your rosemaries? They are some of the biggest I've ever seen!"

In a controlled setting such as a greenhouse, it's really not that difficult. Tender plants can be given as much sun as Mother Nature provides, but with the use of thermostats and vents, temperatures can be kept to a minimum.

We set the thermostat at 55 degree night temperatures, and vents opened when daytime heat reaches seventy. Low temperatures like these won't push the plants into growth when winter day length and daylight can't support it. Because of this the plants are stocky, not lanky.

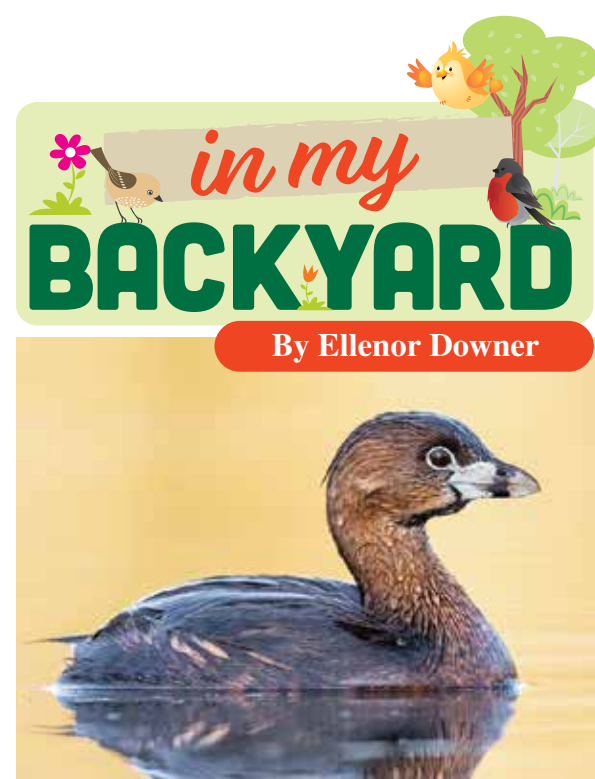
We watered when the soil is dry to the touch – sometimes this might be as infrequently as twice a week during an overcast stretch, or as often as every day if the sun is out. For home culture, a sunny but cool locale is best.

For me, it's my "mudroom!" One treat that many gardeners don't get to appreciate is the beautiful blue flowers that are borne on the plant in the short days of winter. Legend ties the plant to the Virgin Mary, saying that flowers that were originally white were turned to blue when she spread her cloak on its branches.

Yet another reason that makes it a great choice for a mini Christmas tree!

With any luck, a Norfolk Island pine and Rosemary can go from being great Christmas decorations to wonderful year round houseplants.

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



## Pied-bill grebe

A Brimfield resident, who frequently emails about bird sighting saw a pied bill grebe in Warren on Nov. 6. The pied-bill grebe is about 12 inches long. It is stocky and brown with a short stout bill. During the summer months, the grebe has a black ring around a white bill with a black chin. In winter the bill either shows a faint ring or no ring at all and the chin is light.

This grebe feeds by diving underwater and catching fish, aquatic insects, frogs and crayfish. The pied-bill grebe is one of the earliest migrant grebes to return and often arrives on ponds before the ice is all melted. They summer on lakes and ponds and winter in sheltered saltwater bays.

The female lays six to seven bluish green eggs in a platform nest of decaying vegetation, attached to growing vegetation in shallow water. In territorial skirmishes, males come together and tilt their heads up while calling. Parents may do a distraction display of flapping their wings between dives when their young are in danger. Their white rear feathers may be flashed when alarmed.

During breeding, calls are a "cow cow cow cow," a loud "keck keck" in alarm and a softer "cuk cuk cuk." The grebe generally remains quiet in winter.

## Wild turkeys

I continue to see either one to three Tom turkeys or larger flocks of hens in my travels around Central Massachusetts. Although wild turkeys are now a common site, I never tire of spotting them.

## Low flying geese

A few days a low flying flock of geese flew over my yard just above tree top level. They honked as they went. I assume they landed in one of the beaver ponds near my home.

## Birds at feeders

I put out shelled peanuts and sunflower mix seeds in the morning in my tray feeders. I have black-capped chickadees, tufted titmice, white breasted nuthatches, an occasional downy woodpecker, mourning doves and squawking blue jays.

I have not put out suet cakes yet as I want to be sure the black bears are hibernating. Last year, I bought a new suet holder for this winter. I don't want to put it out to early in case a bear shows up and walks off with it. Somewhere in the woods around my home, there must be a large pile of suet feeders taken by bears. If I was lucky enough to find them, I think most would be smashed and unusable.

## Common raven

I continue to hear the common raven and sometimes see them flying overhead. They are much larger than the crow and make a low gronking sound.

## Mass Audubon bird sightings

Cape Cod weekly wildlife sightings are sponsored by the Bird Watchers General Store in Orleans and Mass Audubon's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary. The following sightings were reported between Nov. 13 and Nov. 19. Cape Cod's second-ever record of a spotted towhee was found at the Provincetown Airport on Nov. 16. A very rare pine grosbeak, two white-winged crossbills and a late prairie warbler were also seen there. A snowy owl was seen in Provincetown. Along Race Point Road a western tanager and two evening grosbeaks were seen.

Birds from Race Point in Provincetown this week included a pacific loon, 400 long-tailed ducks, 1,300 white-winged scoters, 1,500 red-breasted mergansers, 500 sanderlings, 400 dunlin, five Pomarine jaegers, 1,080 razorbills, a common murre, two dovekeys, 85 black-legged kittiwakes, 70 Cory's shearwater, 215 great shearwaters, four sooty shearwaters, two Manx shearwaters, 3,200 northern gannets, two Lapland longspurs and 24 snow buntings.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing [mybackyard88@aol.com](mailto:mybackyard88@aol.com) or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.



## THIS WEEK IN History

REGION – A look back through history at the momentous anniversaries this week.

On Dec. 4, in 1533, the three-year-old who would become Ivan the Terrible was proclaimed Grand Prince of Moscow after the death of his father, Grand Prince Vasily III, with his mother ruling in Ivan's name until her death five years later.

On Dec. 5, in 1484, Pope Innocent VIII condemned witchcraft, subsequently dispatching inquisitors to try witches and persecuted a chief exponent of Renaissance Platonism, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola.

On Dec. 6, in 1921, Arthur Griffith, Michael Collins, and others signed the Anglo-Irish Treaty, establishing the Irish Free

State as an independent member of the British Commonwealth.

On Dec. 7, in 1941, Japanese bombers launched a surprise aerial attack on the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor on the island of Oahu, Hawaii, precipitating the entry of the United States into World War II.

On Dec. 8, in 1980, British musician John Lennon was fatally shot by Mark David Chapman in New York City, causing a global outpouring of grief.

On Dec. 9, in 1824, under the leadership of Venezuelan Antonio José de Sucre, revolutionary forces defeated the Spanish



## DECEMBER 7

A USS battleship burned after the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

Royal Army at the Battle of Ayacucho.

Finally, on Dec. 10, in 1768, the first part of the first edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, the oldest continuously published and revised work in the English language, was published and advertised for sale in Edinburgh.

## Tell Us What You Think

Share your thoughts and suggestions with our staff and your fellow readers. Participate in our opinion pages, or contact us anytime with your feedback!

## The Journal Register

Your Community Newspaper



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

Please send opinions to:  
The Journal Register  
Letter to the Editor  
24 Water St.,  
Palmer MA 01069,  
or by e-mail to:  
[journalregister@turley.com](mailto:journalregister@turley.com)

The submission deadline for consideration is Monday at noon.

## Election letters to the editor welcome

The Journal Register welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to The Journal Register, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to [journalregister@turley.com](mailto: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.

## Annual Tree of Love at Palmer Baystate Wing

PALMER— As the holiday season approaches, the Baystate Wing Auxiliary has set up the annual Tree of Love. This special tree has been created to honor and remember loved ones and features ornaments that can be purchased and personalized with names in memory of family and friends to be placed on the tree.

"The Tree of Love gives our community members a chance to join us in remembering loved ones during the holiday season," said Evelyn Glabicky, president of the Auxiliary at Baystate Wing Hospital. "We understand how difficult the holiday season can be for those who have lost loved ones. For some families placing the name of a family member on an ornament and being a part of the Tree of Love can bring them comfort."

The ornaments may be purchased for \$5 for a single name and \$10 for a

family. The Tree of Love will be displayed in the lobby located on the first floor of the hospital by the gift shop.

All proceeds benefit the Baystate Wing Auxiliary, which in turn donates needed equipment and other items to the hospital for the benefit of patients. For over 70 years, the Auxiliary has supported Baystate Wing Hospital through its sponsorship of special events and gift shop sales. This diverse group of women and men includes teachers, nurses, business owners, and retirees, who live in many different communities and are united by a shared commitment to support the mission of the hospital.

To purchase an ornament, visit the gift shop located on the first floor open Monday through Thursday 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Friday from 9:30 to 1 p.m.



## Palmer Senior Center

PALMER— The Palmer Senior Center, 1029 Central St., has many activities for seniors Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information or to reserve a meal please call 413-283-2670.

December events always on Mondays-Zumba at 8:30 a.m., Chair Yoga at 10 a.m., Lunch 11:30 and Pool table at 12:15 p.m. Always on Tuesdays- Knit/crochet group at 9 a.m., walking group at 9 a.m., Breakfast at 9:30 a.m. Arthritis/ROM at 10 a.m. and painting group at 1 p.m. Always on Wednesdays-Strength training at 10 a.m., Reiki by appt. is canceled and 11:30 a.m. Lunch. Always on Thursdays- Walking group at 9 a.m., breakfast at 9:30 a.m., Tai Chi at 10 a.m., pool table at 12:15 p.m. and Big Y at 1 p.m. Always on Fridays - Gentle stretch at 10 a.m., Dancing mind body and soul at 10 a.m. and Lunch at 11:30 a.m.

### Special events December:

**Wednesday, Dec. 4 - 1 p.m.** Wii Bowling  
**Thursday, Dec. 5 - 1 p.m.** Sunshine Village craft

**Friday, Dec. 6 - 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.** Christmas Party Ludlow Elks. The center is closed  
**Monday, Dec. 9 - 1 p.m.** Christmas tree craft

**Tuesday, Dec. 10 - Trip** to McKinstry Market Garden, they accept SNAP  
**Thursday, Dec. 12 - 10 a.m.** Tai Chi, Center is closing at noon for volunteer Christmas party.

**Friday, Dec. 13 - 1 p.m.** cookies, cocoa and carols and 1 to 3 p.m. Brown Bag pick-up

**Monday, Dec. 16 - 10:30 a.m.** Marathon Bingo, 5:30 p.m. Dot painting coasters

**Wednesday, Dec. 18 - 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.** Holiday party

**Thursday, Dec. 19 - 10 a.m.** Tai Chi, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. memory café

**Friday, Dec. 20 - 12:30 p.m.** showing movie "Christmas Vacation"

**Tuesday, Dec. 24 - closing** at noon  
**Wednesday, Dec. 25 - closed** for Christmas

**Thursday, Dec. 26 - 10 a.m.** Tai Chi, 1 p.m. Sunshine Village paint.

**Wednesday, Jan. 1 - closed** for New Year's eve.

### Menus

Breakfast is served every Tuesday and Thursday at 9:15 a.m. and is \$3. Lunch is served every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 11 a.m. to noon and a suggested donation is \$2. Please call before 10 a.m. the day before to reserve a meal at 413-283-2670. Individuals must sign up for breakfast, otherwise a meal will not be ordered for them.

**Friday, Dec. 6 - Eggplant** parmesan, tossed salad with Italian, penne with sauce, garlic bread and fresh fruit.

**Monday, Dec. 9 - Turkey** and provolone cheese, potato salad, butternut squash soup, club roll and chilled applesauce.

**Tuesday, Dec. 10 - Egg, bacon, cheese** croissant.

**Wednesday, Dec. 11 - Turkey** taco plate,

tossed salad with ranch, yellow rice, sour cream, tortilla chips and birthday cake.

**Thursday, Dec. 12 - Sausage** egg and cheese biscuit.

**Friday, Dec. 13 - Butter** crumb fish, parsleyed carrots, roasted red potatoes, WW bread and fresh fruit.

**Monday, Dec. 16 - Ravioli** with meat sauce, collard greens, Italian bread and mandarin oranges.

**Tuesday, Dec. 17 - Ham** and cheese roll.

**Wednesday, Dec. 18 - Ham** with pineapple, herbed green beans, au gratin potatoes, dinner roll and apple pie.

**Thursday, Dec. 19 - Waffle** and sausage.

**Friday, Dec. 20 - Pierogis,** sauteed cabbage parsleyed carrots, 12 Grain bread and chilled applesauce.

**Monday, Dec. 23 - Turkey** with Dijon sauce, steamed peas, rice pilaf, WW bread and fresh fruit.

**Tuesday, Dec. 24 - Chef's** choice  
**Wednesday, Dec. 25 - closed** for Christmas.

**Thursday, Dec. 26 - Chef's** choice

**Friday, Dec. 27 - Turkey** Chili, sour cream, teamed broccoli, white rice, Italian bread and chilled applesauce.

**Monday, Dec. 30 - Creamy** roasted red pepper pasta, with chicken,

**Tuesday, Dec. 31 - Chef's** choice.

## Wing Memorial Hospital Auxiliary Shop December vendors

Shop for the holidays or just shop for fun!

### December 6

Therafeet - great shoes, sneakers and more

### December 9

Generations of Cookies - homemade treats

### December 10

Generations of Cookies - yum

### December 11

Crystal Clear Emotions - great +nice price jewelry

### December 12

Jewelry by Diane -

some high end jewelry too

### December 17

Nails on You -

holiday designs are special

### December 19

Sweets and Treats - some freeze dried - homemade

### December 23

Wicked Good Treats - the best yummy selection desserts

*Don't forget staff appreciation days, storewide 25% off on december 18, 19, and 20.*

## Belchertown Winter Market dates

BELCHERTOWN— The Belchertown Farmers and Artisans Market have put together two upcoming winter markets this year. The second market will be Sunday Dec. 15, stop by Jabish Brook Middle School, 62 N. Washington St., and shop for local produce, one of a kind gifts, snacks and more. Market hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

While the Winter Markets will have many of the summertime vendors, organizers also bring in some new artisans for those one of a kind gifts. Also, 2025

Market Gift Cards will be on sale at the Market Manager's table. Shop local and help our community grow and connect. For more information, follow the Market's social media channels on Facebook and Instagram. Email at belchertownfarmersmarket@gmail.com and website address is: www.belchertownfarmersmarket.weebly.com.



## MONSON | from page 1

intends to hold public meetings so that members of the voting public can take a look at the proposition and address questions and concerns prior to voting on the by-laws at the annual Town Meeting.

Highway Surveyor Ben Murphy approached the board to announce the details of the parking ban that will come into effect for snow storms during the winter season.

"The reason I'm here is for that awful four-letter word 'snow' that we're going to have in our forecast at some point in the near future, and our parking ban that's going to be coming up," Murphy said. "What it is is no parking on the roads or on public property off the edge of the roads. Basically, it's throughout the whole, but we don't have so much of a problem on the outskirts as we do in the downtown area, simply because houses are more congested and they don't have parking spots."

Murphy said the department works with people during early storms to accommodate those who were unaware of the parking ban, but after repeat offenses, cars will be towed.

"Please, be thoughtful to us when we've got to plow and do our treatments or whatever, please move your cars off the road," Murphy said. "I see a few basketball hoops in the streets around; please remove them, anything that's going to be in our way of plowing."

Murphy said that the Police Department will issue a statement ahead of major storms, and urged residents to keep an eye on news outlets for the announcement.

Karen Davis announced that the town reached its quota for Wreaths Across America. The annual ceremony will be held on Dec. 14, starting at 9 a.m. at Hillcrest Cemetery.

"Thanks to the generosity of the Select Board, with the gifts of the town, we ended up with 30 over, which will go towards next year," Davis said.

Davis added that the Tree of Remembrance for the Lions Club will be held at the gazebo in Dave Grieve Park on Dec. 15 at 4:30 p.m.

Mikki Lesard approached the board to announce the opening of her store, Little Shop of Oho, on Main Street.

"I'm very excited to say that it's going exceptionally well down there," Lesard said. "I've always dreamed of having a store on Main Street in Monson. I've lived here for 36 years and this is my dream come true."

### Clean Out Solutions

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## Consider tax-smart charitable gifts

As we enter the annual season of giving, you might be thinking of charities you wish to support. But you also might be wondering how to gain some tax benefits from your gifts.

It used to be pretty straightforward: You wrote a check to a charity and then deducted the amount of the gift, within limits, from your taxes. But a few years ago, as part of tax law changes, the standard deduction was raised significantly, so fewer people were able to itemize deductions. Consequently, there was less financial incentive to make charitable gifts.

Of course, this didn't entirely stop people from making them. And it's still possible to gain some tax advantages, too.

Here are a few tax-smart charitable giving strategies:

- Bunch your charitable gifts into one year. If you combine a few years' worth of charitable gifts in a single year, you could surpass the standard deduction amount and then itemize deductions for that year. In the years following, you could revert to taking the standard deduction.
- Make qualified charitable distributions. Once you turn 73 (or 75 if you were born in 1960 or later), you must start taking withdrawals from your traditional or inherited IRA. These withdrawals — technically called required minimum distributions, or RMDs — are taxable at your personal income tax rate, so, if the amounts are large enough, they could push you into a higher tax bracket or cause you to pay larger Medicare premiums.
- But if you donate these RMDs directly to a qualified charity, you can avoid the taxes. And because these donations, known as qualified charitable distributions (QCDs), will reduce the balance on your IRA, you may have lower RMDs in the future.
- Of course, if you need some or all your RMDs to help sustain yourself in retirement, the use of QCDs may not be of interest to you. Keep in mind, though, that you can start making QCDs at 70½, even before you must start taking RMDs. QCDs up to \$105,000 can be taken in 2024.
- Consider a donor-advised fund. If you're interested in a long-term charitable giving arrangement, you might want to consider establishing a donor-advised fund. You can put many types of assets into this fund, and then direct it to make grants periodically to the charities you've chosen. You get an immediate tax deduction for your contribution, and, if you donate appreciated assets, such as stocks, you'll avoid the capital gains taxes you would have incurred if you simply sold the stocks and then gave the money to the charities. One note of caution, though — your contributions to a donor-advised fund are irrevocable, and once the assets are in the fund, you can't use them for anything except charitable giving.
- These strategies — QCDs and donor-advised funds in particular — can be complex and involve several issues of which you should be aware. So, you should consult your tax advisor before taking action. But if any of these techniques are appropriate for your situation, give them some thought — because helping a charitable group and getting tax benefits for doing so is a "win" for everyone.

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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones, Member SIPC

## HARDWICK CROSSING

EST. 2022

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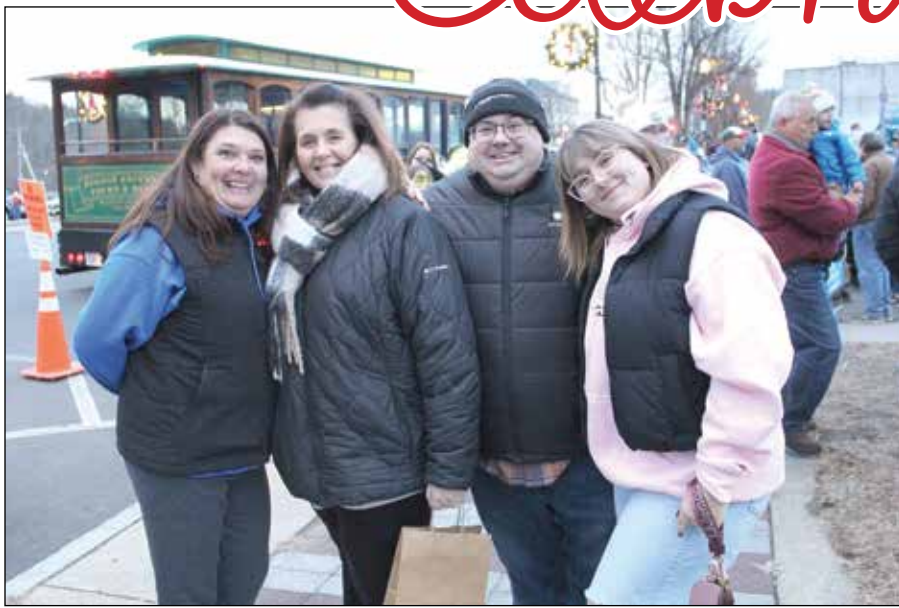
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# HOLIDAY Celebrations



Attending the celebration at Depot Village Park, (from left) Danielle Haley, and Sharon, Matthew, and Madison Lemieux.



Helping people get on the trolley from Bygone Excursions, (from left) Janelle Tarantino and Bernie Fontaine.



Betsy Vadnais and Emily Wojcik worked a table with information from Country Bank.



Kids danced in front of the Depot Village Station as Noah Ris performed classic songs.



Madeline, age 11, and Stacie, age 13, showed off their painted faces.



Bernice Begley attended with her grandchildren, Emerson, age 4, and Arthur, age 1, all dressed in festive clothes.



Caylin, age 9, Viviana, age 11, and Rosalie, age 6, took a picture with a Minion in front of the fire station.



The train from Roaming Railroad rolled past the Walnut Street Café.



Thomas and Dianna Rizzo sold snacks and food from Maddie's Hot Dogs.



Vanessa Jaskula and Deb Maloney had pamphlets from Trainmaster's Inn. (Not pictured: Joy Trombley)

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# HOLIDAY Celebrations



Patience Hartley, Chair of the Historical Commission, had a lot of praise for Light Up Palmer's event.



Ricky Knorring, Lieutenant John Fitzgerald, and Sergeant Jeremy Haley tended to the bonfire.



The Lloyd Family stood in line to get pictures with Santa in the fire station.



A long line of residents waited to get one of Holly the Elf's balloon animals.



Laura Girard and Bryson, age 4, sat in the park to watch the ice-sculpting by Michael Rondeau.



Colleen Flynn and Jen Banas handed out donuts and coffee from Dunkin' Donuts.



Robert Pallister, Jameson, age 4, and Grayson, age 6, attended their first Light Up Palmer this year after moving from Oregon.



A live reading of The Polar Express was performed as part of the event.



Kelina and Dylan Hall brought Ayla, age one-and-a-half to the fire station to take a picture with Santa Claus.

## LIGHT UP | from page 1

COVID-19 pandemic. "This was something that was really important during COVID, because people couldn't get out," said Chris Smith. "As people were starting to get back out, the number of entries dropped a little, so we're hoping that people enter regardless of whether they won or lost in the past."

There was luminary-making, balloon-making by Holly the Elf, reindeer food from the Girl Scouts, free coffee and hot chocolate, food trucks, and tables with information from local organizations.

Participating businesses included Just A Little Craft Store, Tranquility Salon, Destined to Dance, Gingerbread Cookie Decorating and Crafters, Figlio's, Tailgate Tavern, Steaming Tender Restaurant, and Train Master's Inn and Caboose.

The committee will continue to receive applications for the sixth annual Christmas decorating contest until Dec. 15, with winners expected to be announced on Dec. 24.



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Depot Village Park was packed with residents attending this year's Light Up Palmer event on Saturday.

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**TOY DRIVE** | from page 1

"To Zeke's actual clinic at Baystate we donated 20 Bright Nights passes," Jaremczuk added. "The Baystate team has always been super supportive in helping us along the way when we've been there. Being isolated is hard, but they always made sure he had something to do. They kept us involved and not just being stuck in our room. We're happy to be able to continue to do this for them."

In their first year, Zeke and Samantha collected close to 500 toys to donate, and collected as many as 900 last year. Jaremczuk said they plan to drop the donations off at Baystate Children's Hospital on Dec. 15.

In addition to the toy drives during the holiday season, Jaremczuk said that she and Zeke have used the non-profit to send 50 toys to children battling cancer all over the country. She said that the care packages often include wood engravings and crocheted animals, and have been sent to states such as California, Texas, and Wisconsin.

On top of that, the non-profit has hosted family activities for families battling childhood cancer, such as apple-picking in September, or a trip to a Trampoline Park.

"After a child has a procedure, they give them a prize, like stuffed animals or remote-control cars," Jaremczuk said. "A child

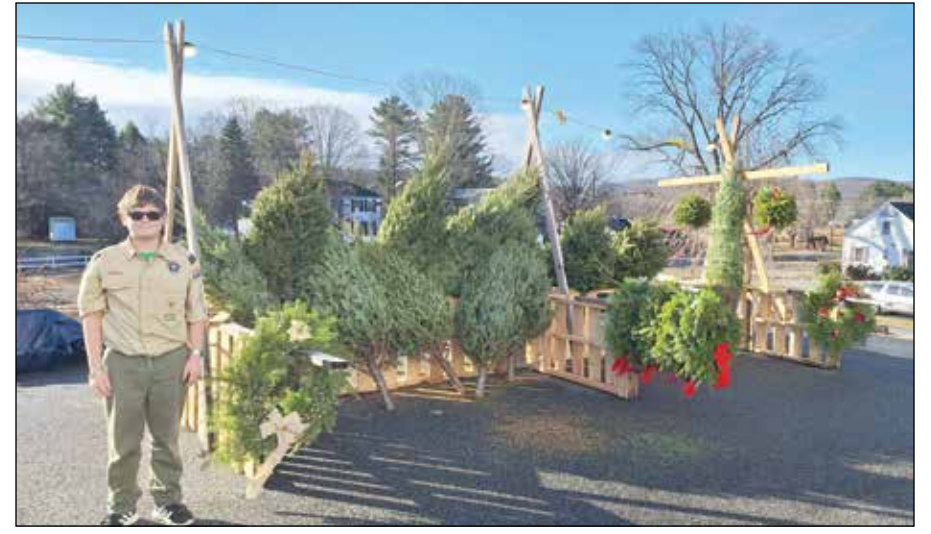
receiving something after something traumatic like surgery puts a smile on their face. A lot of these also make it to the Playdeck, where kids who can go in and play can use them. I think they'll be able to reach a lot of families regardless of going to them individ-

ually or being used in the Playdeck."

If you'd like to participate in the Forever In A Moment Toy Drive, you can donate new, unused items at any of the drop-off locations listed above.



Zeke and his three brothers ran the toy drive last year, along with Samantha Jaremczuk's father, dressed as the Grinch.



Submitted photos  
Parker Sheffield stands with the Boy Scouts' tree stand.



Cemetery boxes were assembled by the Boy Scouts to be sold to residents.



# PET PAGE

## 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](mailto:jwalker@turley.com). Please include your name and your pet's name.



**BSA** | from page 1

Sheffield said.

The fundraiser has been going very well, Sheffield said, and cemetery boxes have been almost entirely cleaned out. Sheffield said that her husband and one of her sons had a booth on the lawn by the gazebo in Monson, where they sold everything but trees.

"The kids did a great job doing preorders, collecting orders from their friends, family, and neighbors, so now we're full steam ahead for the tree stand," Sheffield said. "We had a great start to the holiday weekend, had great sales all three days, so we're hoping that continues."

The tree stand will be hosted at the First Congregational Church Monday through Friday from 4-6 p.m. On Saturday and Sunday, the stand will be open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

"Typically, if the lights are on at the stand, then we're open," Sheffield said.

Sheffield expects that the fundraiser will start to close out around Dec. 15, but said that as long as the scouts have materials to sell, they will keep going until the holiday.

"We appreciate all the support from everyone that comes to our stand every year," Sheffield said. "We look forward to seeing everybody."

## PET OF THE MONTH Meet Elza!

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My husband and I have our beloved dog Samson. When we travel we try to bring him with us whenever possible. We seek out dog friendly rentals, hotels, restaurants, beaches etc. However, the truth is it's just not possible for him to join us on every trip or outing we go on. This is why having a go-to "doggy hotel," close friend, or trusted dog sitter is SO valuable. But here's the thing, communicating every detail of your dog's health needs, meals, and routine can be downright stressful. Which is why I am sharing a handy printable emergency information sheet created by Integrative Veterinarian, Dr. Marty Goldstein!

This sheet is the ultimate one-page guide to all things about YOUR pet! So, the next time you go out of town, just fill out this sheet to communicate ALL your pet's essential information with your sitter. That way, they feel right at home — even when you're away. Use this QR Code to access your free Dr. Marty's Pet Emergency Information Sheet.



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## NEWS & FEATURES

As a paper of record, we attempt to cover all general news, personality profiles, and community features that we know about. This includes all selectmen and school committee meetings as well as spot planning board, board of health, finance, and other town meetings determined by the issue's relevance to our readers. There are the annual major community event features that we should always cover, but we are more than open to suggestions of other features to celebrate the fabric of our communities and their many interesting occupants. Our loyal advertisers provide funding for this paid staff coverage.

For more information on news or community features for The Journal Register, please email [journalregister@turley.com](mailto:journalregister@turley.com).

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## FOOTBALL

# Turkey Day defeat



Dylan Doherty tries to run through traffic.

Turley photos by Sofia DiGrande

## Panthers score first, Ludlow scores late to win

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

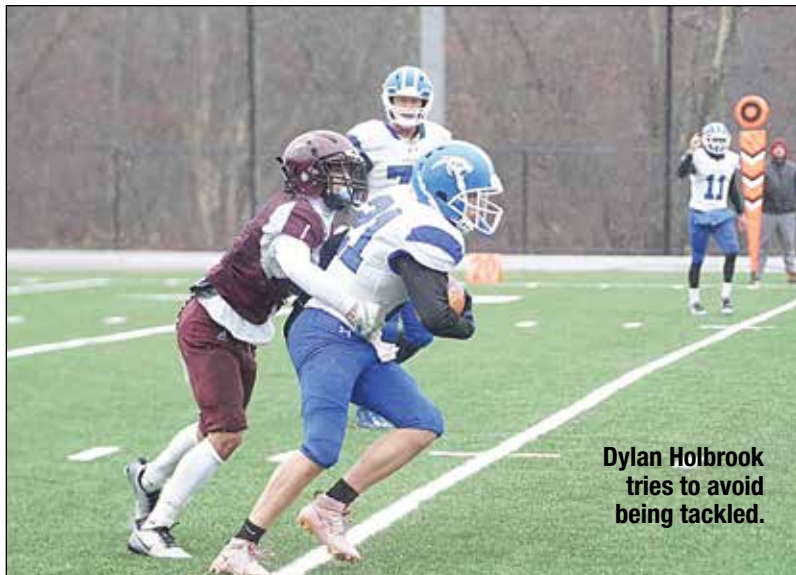
LUDLOW—Just like during the past couple of years, the members of Ludlow football team enjoyed their turkey dinners after defeating Palmer on Thanksgiving morning.

Following a scoreless first half, the Panthers took a 6-0 lead at the beginning of the second half.

The Lions responded with two touchdown receptions from senior Ashton Leary leading to a 12-6 victory on a damp day at the Ludlow Sports Complex, last Thursday morning.

The 77<sup>th</sup> meeting between the two archrivals took place on Ludlow High School's turf field, which opened in October.

"Being able to win my final high school football game with these guys is very special," said



Dylan Holbrook tries to avoid being tackled.

Leary, who has been a member of the Lions football team since he was a freshman. "We lost to Palmer when I was a freshman, but we've

now won the last three games against them. We look forward to playing them on Thanksgiving morning every year."

Ludlow, who finished the 2024 campaign with a 4-7 overall record, now has a 43-31-3 overall lead in the series against Palmer, which began in 1947. The Lions have won 11 of the past 13 meetings since Palmer won four in a row between 2008-2011

"You always want to send your seniors off with a victory. We've been able to do that during the past couple of years," said Ludlow head coach Ray Saloio. "I think our record this season really doesn't indicate what type of a team that we had."

The seniors listed on the Lions football roster are Brady Trahan, Davian Rodriguez, Michael Rubin, Kyle Rodriguez, Dominic Fialho, Anthony Grimm, Tristin Stephens, Liam DiVenuto, Dominic Gendreau, Colin Belanger, Adrian Mar-

PALMER | page 10

## BASKETBALL

# Jamboree completes Unified season

CHICOPEE – Unified basketball came to a close for Western Mass. teams as they competed in their end of season jamboree events. Monson and Chicopee were among several teams that came to Chicopee Comprehensive on Nov. 15 to celebrate another successful season. Unified basketball has increased in popularity with more teams coming into the league this year.



Jakob Vanicsek gets ready to shoot.



Kaden Gainy goes up for a shot.



Diana Gagne makes her way down the court.



The Monson Unified basketball team makes its entrance to the season-ending jamboree held at Chicopee Comprehensive High School.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

## FOOTBALL



Nicholas Pfister looks to avoid tacklers as he makes a run for the sideline.

# Late touchdown lifts Pioneers

PALMER – Last Thursday morning, Pathfinder and Belchertown were knotted 14-14. But a touchdown in the second half sealed the win for Pathfinder, giving the Pioneers its 10th win in the all-time series against the Orioles. The two teams were able to play the game on Palmer High's Legion field with the Panthers on the road at Ludlow. Pathfinder's win on Thanksgiving was its third for 2024.



Anthony Arventos sends a kick away.



Quarterback Anthony Arventos sends a throw up the middle.



The Pioneers huddle up before a play.



Jake Mastej looks to make a tackle.

Turley photos by Sofia DiGrande



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com  
Justin Davis and Evan Costa represented Pathfinder in this year's boys all-star game.



Evan Costa represents Pathfinder in the Class C and D game.



Justin Davis moves up the field.

## All-Star soccer action

SPRINGFIELD – Last Monday night on the turf of Pope Francis High School, high school soccer held all-star games. Class C and D played in one match while A and B clashed in another. Lucas Alvan and Thomas Wadas were among the all-stars, representing Ludlow High School in the match.

## Hall of Fame hosting pair of college matchups

SPRINGFIELD – The MGM Springfield Basketball Hall of Fame Classic, presented by the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, takes place on “World Basketball Day,” Saturday, Dec. 21, at the MassMutual Center and will be televised nationally on CBS Sports Network.

“We are proud to work with local stakeholders to bring local businesses in as sponsors of the Basketball Hall of Fame Classic,” said John L. Doleva, President and CEO of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame. “Thank you to MGM Springfield and the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism for supporting the Hall of Fame Classic and helping us fulfill our mission of celebrating and promoting basketball’s history and bringing four great teams to the ‘Birthplace of Basketball.’”

“This iconic event in the birthplace of basketball is a hoop dream realized for many of the sports’ up and coming stars,” said Louis Therors,

MGM Springfield President and COO. “MGM Springfield is incredibly proud to support and celebrate the Classic, honoring basketball’s rich legacy, inspiring future generations, bringing visitors to downtown, and shining a light on the City of Firsts.”

“The Basketball Hall of Fame Classic is a slam dunk for Massachusetts tourism,” said Kate Fox, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism. “By celebrating World Basketball Day in the sport’s birthplace, we’re inviting visitors from across the country to experience the excitement of the game and explore our state’s diverse offerings.”

Tickets for the 2024 Basketball Hall of Fame Classic are on sale now via massmutualcenter.com and the MassMutual Center Box Office. For more information, please visit hoopball.com. Group ticket pricing and hospitality opportunities are also available.

## T-Birds climb back above .500 with win over Bruins

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — The Springfield Thunderbirds (10-9-1-0) got off to a quick start en route to a 3-2 win over the Providence Bruins (8-10-2-0) on Sunday afternoon at Amica Mutual Pavilion on a day when the two teams sported throwback jerseys. Springfield donned the Indians jerseys circa 1979, while the Bruins wore their late 1990s gold “Pooh Bear” logo jerseys.

The T-Birds jumped ahead on the scoreboard for a sixth consecutive game, this time just 3:51 into the contest. Scott Harrington settled a puck at the right point and fired it toward the net mouth with two teammates setting up screens. Aleksanteri Kaskimäki showed terrific hand-eye coordination, successfully spiking it down to the ice between the legs of Bruins goalie Michael DiPietro, giving the T-Birds a 1-0 lead. Harrington picked up his first point as a T-Bird, and Dalibor Dvorsky earned the secondary assist to extend his point streak to five games.

Colten Ellis drew the net for a second consecutive start, looking to extend a five-game streak without a regulation loss, making nine stops in the opening period. The Bruins’ first and only power play of the period, though, got the game evened when Patrick Brown cleaned up his own rebound following a splendid Ellis save at 13:49, evening the slate, 1-1.

Springfield failed to connect on its first power play, but the T-Birds took advantage with 1:56 of man-up time to begin the second. Samuel Jo-

hannesson got the play started from the right point, whipping a pass in the left circle to Marcus Sylvegard. The winger uncorked a shot that DiPietro deflected but could not cover. The rebound sat in the blue paint, where Matt Luff swooped in to backhand the puck across the goal line to give the T-Birds the 2-1 lead just 38 seconds into the middle period.

The Bruins attack could not get anything going in the T-Birds end, registering just four shots on Ellis for the duration of the second. Springfield’s offense remained opportunistic and extended the lead at 13:04 when Dylan Peterson flipped a puck toward the net, allowing Reece Newkirk to slip it into the blue paint and Drew Callin to bury the loose change to make it a 3-1 score.

Providence did not go down easily as defenseman Mason Millman connected for his first goal as a Bruin with a slap shot just 1:36 into the final period to make it a 3-2 game. The Bruins had the bulk of the offensive chances in the final period, but Ellis and the Springfield defense did enough to prevent the home side from finding an equalizer. Ellis, who is now 5-0-1 in his last six starts, had 25 saves in the victory.

The T-Birds, who now sit above the .500 plateau for the first time since they won their season opener, rest up before welcoming the Bridgeport Islanders on Friday night at the MassMutual Center, with puck drop set for 7:05 p.m.



Hunter Baird goes for the tackle.



The Panthers huddle before their next offensive play.



Matthew Santos hands off the ball to Dylan Doherty.



Matthew Santos passes on the run.

### PALMER | from page 9

tins, Victor Segarra, and Leary.

“Winning their last high school football game is something that these seniors will always remember,” Saloio added. “It’s a very special game for them.”

The Panthers, who ended their season with a four game losing streak, finished with a 5-6 overall record.

“The weather isn’t very good, but I thought both teams played very well in today’s game,” said Palmer head coach Matt Marciniac. “This is also a very nice new complex, and my shoes aren’t covered in mud.”

The last time that the Panthers defeated the Lions on Thanksgiving morning was a 34-0 victory at historic Legion Field in Palmer in 2021.

The seniors listed on this year’s Panthers football roster are Guillermo Rodriguez Rivera, Julien Valentin, and Luis Rivera Alicea.

“I can’t thank our three seniors enough and I’m sad to see them leave,” Marciniac said. “I’m really hopeful that we can continue to build with the returning juniors next year.”

The winner of the prestigious

Leonard J. Bailey Award, which is given to a Palmer player, had always been announced at half-time of Thanksgiving Day game. Rivera received this year’s award at halftime against archrival Ware at Legion Field in Palmer on November 2.

Despite another setback against the Lions, it was a memorable game for Palmer junior Dylan Doherty, who rushed for a total of 128 yards on 21 carries. He became the first Panthers player to reach 1,000 rushing yards in a season since Tyler Placanico accomplished the feat five years ago.

“Dylan deserves a ton of credit because he played today’s game with a broken bone in his left wrist,” Marciniac said. “He’s a very tough kid and he does a lot for our football team. I’m looking forward to having him return next year.”

Doherty, who’s a third-year member of the Panthers football team, suffered the injury during the non-playoff home game against South Hadley. He sat out another non-playoff home game versus Chicopee the following week. Doherty gave his thoughts about reaching the elite milestone.

“I really wanted to reach this

milestone before the start of the season,” he said. “It’s something that I’ll always remember, but we really wanted to win today’s game.”

With the help of four interceptions by the Panthers defense, last Thursday’s contest was still scoreless at halftime.

On the game’s opening possession, sophomore Taydem Haley intercepted a tipped pass at the Panthers 45 yard line.

At the end of the first quarter, Alicea deflected another pass thrown by Ludlow junior QB Mason Morace and it was picked off by sophomore Dylan Holbrook.

With 3:07 remaining in the second quarter, Haley intercepted another deflected pass ending the Lions ten play drive, which lasted more than eight minutes.

The Panthers’ final interception of the first half was by Doherty.

On the final play of the opening half, Rodriguez stripped the ball away from Palmer junior QB Matt Santos and Gendreau recovered the fumble.

All three touchdowns were scored during the third quarter.

A 15-yard TD run up the middle by Doherty on the opening series of the third quarter capped off a six play scoring

drive for the visitors. A pass attempt on the two-point conversion play was incomplete in the end zone.

Less than four minutes later, Ludlow junior QB Mason Morace rolled out to his right before throwing a short pass to Leary, who rumbled into the endzone completing the 24-yard touchdown.

Junior Jared Perry tackled Grimm on the conversion play before he reached the endzone making the score 6-6.

With 18 seconds remaining in the third quarter, Leary caught a 37-yard TD pass from Morace giving the home team the lead for the first time.

“Mason threw a couple of nice passes to me in the third quarter,” Leary said. “Davian Rodriguez also made an outstanding block which helped me score my second touchdown. It’s very difficult catching the ball in the rain.”

The Panthers entered the fourth quarter trailing, 12-6, following an incomplete pass on the conversion play.

Both teams exchanged turnovers during the final twelve minutes, but the Lions managed to hold onto the lead and celebrated another victory in the rivalry series.

# Turleysports

NAME: Anthony Arventos  
SCHOOL: Pathfinder  
Arventos has been the starting quarterback all season for Pathfinder, and led the Pioneers to a win over Belchertown on Thanksgiving morning.

## Athlete of the Week



To nominate someone for Athlete of the Week, contact Managing Sports Editor Gregory A. Scibelli at 413-283-8393 ext. 258 or send an e-mail to gscibelli@turley.com.

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**DEATH NOTICES**

**Dr. Rae Banigan-Cole**  
Died Nov. 24, 2024  
Services Dec. 7, 2024

**Walter Davis**  
Died Nov. 12, 2024  
Services Dec. 10, 2024

**Barbara A. Lebida**  
Died on Nov. 21, 2024  
Services Nov. 29, 2024  
Beers & Story Funeral Home

**Theodore F. McClosky, 104**  
Died Nov. 28, 2024  
Services Dec. 6, 2024  
Motyka Funeral Home

**Roslyn A. (Mega) (Pisarski) Styspeck**  
Died Dec. 2, 2024  
Services Dec. 9, 2024  
Lombard Funeral Home

*The Journal Register*  
**OBITUARY POLICY**

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

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The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$225, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: [obits@turley.com](mailto:obits@turley.com).

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

**O B I T U A R I E S**

*Dr. Rae Banigan-Cole, 1949 - 2024*

Rae Banigan, beloved mother of Todd Cole, 44, of Lunenburg MA and her loving husband of 44 years Bill Cole, 80, of Palmer MA, passed away comfortably in her home after a two year battle with Frontotemporal Dementia on Nov. 24, 2024.

Rae was born in Manhattan, NY in 1949 to Raymond and Ethel Banigan. Rae attended high school in the Bronx. She worked her way up earning multiple degrees at several colleges on her way to receiving her Ph.D in Speech/Language Pathology. She went on to have a remarkable forty year career pioneering prevention of language disorders in children, a family-centered service with superior knowledge, clinical expertise, and patient success in private practice. She provided assessment, consultation, and direct service to children in 35 school districts in MA and CT. She is the internationally acclaimed author of "A Family-Centered Approach to Developing Communication:

Prevention, Screening and Facilitation" and the video-program "Talking is Sharing". Her passion and dedication to help children will be remembered most by thousands of parents.

Rae was a devoted mother to Todd, her pride and joy. She spent countless hours to educate, support and love him. As Todd grew older, they traveled the world together and she never missed a single game that he played. She was the most caring and supportive mother he could have ever asked for. Rae had a passion for performing, dancing, and singing. This passion was shared with her mom and sister and passed down to her grandkids Ryan and Avery. Her carefree, outgoing, and spontaneous personality was loved by everyone that she encountered.

Rae was preceded in death by her parents Raymond and Eth-



el, and is survived by her husband Bill Cole, her son Todd Cole and Ashley Brawn, grandchildren Ryan and Avery Cole, her sister and husband Buddy and Bonnie Desfosse, her two nieces Colette Ferris and Christine Marciano, grand-nieces, Caitlin and Skylar Marciano, and grand-nephews, Ryan and Ian Ferris who will never forget the love she brought to their lives.

There is a Celebration of Life Service on Dec. 7, 2024 starting at 11:30 a.m. at the Second Congregational Church, 1080 Pleasant St, Palmer, MA. There will be lunch following the service at the Steaming Tender Restaurant 28 Depot St, Palmer, MA. In lieu of flowers donations can be made to The Association for Frontotemporal Degeneration at [theaftd.org](http://theaftd.org) in her name.

*Walter Davis, 1931 - 2024*

PORT ST. LUCIE, FL—Walter E. Davis, age 93, passed away Nov. 12, 2024.

Walter was born in Providence, RI, on June 23, 1931. After graduating he enlisted in the U.S. Army. He served his country during the Korean Conflict as a Corporal 1st class. He resided in Palmer.

Soon after he met the love of his life, Doris Jalbert. They were married on May 8, 1954. Together they were blessed with five children, Mark (deceased) and wife Laurie, Linda Spelko (husband John), Bruce Davis, Glen (deceased) and wife Jane, Wendy Davis and honorary daughter, M.J. Despres.

He was predeceased by his parents Edwin and Ethel Davis of Putnam, Ct., brothers Joseph, Robert, and Ted Davis.

Walter worked at Massa-

chusetts Electric Co. as an Appliance Service Technician until he retired. The whole Davis clan spent summers on Cape Cod and have great memories of sailing, swimming and being great beach bums. After retirement Walter and Doris moved to Port Saint Lucie, Florida. Walter became an avid golfer, he even accomplished the coveted hole in one.

At home he was a prolific reader, devouring books by the thousands. He loved watching Jeopardy and answered almost any question that came up. Walt was known for his easy going personality and his great sense of humor. Many times one of his grandchildren will comment or make a joke and we laugh and



say "that's just like what grandpa would say".

Walt loved his wife Doris with an unending love for more than 70 years. He took great pride in his five children, eight grandchildren; Maya Andrews, Erica Sirmister, Jennifer Bolduc, Tiffany Spelko, Meghan Davis, Jeremy, Ryan, and Tyler Davis, and six great grandchildren; Aiden and Finley, Ethan, Caleb, Issac, and Eliza.

Walter's funeral will be held at Saint Thomas Church in Palmer, MA on Dec. 10, 10 a.m.

In lieu of flowers please donate to St.Jude's Children Hospital at <https://www.stjude.org/donate/donate-to-st-jude-today.html>

**O B I T U A R I E S**

*Barbara A. Lebida*

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Barbara A. Lebida, a valued member of the community whose life was characterized by passion, adventure, and an unwavering dedication to education. Barbara passed away on Nov. 21, 2024, in Boston, MA, at the age of 57.

Born on Dec. 14, 1966, in Palmer, MA, Barbara was the cherished daughter of the late Genevieve J. (Sawicki) and Albert F. Lebida. She was preceded in death by her sisters, Marie and Margo. Barbara is survived by her sisters Jeanne Lebida, Carol Beaudoin, and Susan Lebida, as well as her nephews Ted Mackenzie, Mike and Eric Fauteaux, her niece Amanda Mancuso, and her extended family of dear friends, travel companions, and teaching colleagues.

Barbara's academic journey began in Belchertown Schools, culminating in a Master's Degree in Education, specializing in Special Education-Moderate Disabilities, from American International College in May 2005. Her career as an educator

was marked by a commitment to fostering an inclusive learning environment for all students. From September 2007 to June 2022, she served as a life skills and special education teacher at Springfield Central High School, where her influence shaped the lives of many students. From September 2004 until June 2007, she was a student support teacher at Chestnut Accelerated Middle School.

Her life was not only defined by her professional dedication but by her passions as well. Barbara was an avid traveler, having explored 49 countries across all 7 continents, a testament to her love for cultural immersion and adventure. Her journeys were a source of joy and inspiration, and she was particularly fond of hiking in the beautiful landscapes of Utah. Her love for animals was evident in her devotion to her pet bunnies, especially Muffin.

Barbara's adventurous spirit extended to her family, as



she lovingly took her mother on cross-country and European trips, creating priceless memories and fostering familial bonds that transcended time.

The family held services on Friday, Nov. 29, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Beers & Story Palmer Funeral Home, with a memorial service to commence at noon. Following the service, Barbara was laid to rest at Sts. Peter & Paul Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests that donations be made in Barbara's memory to the House Rabbit Network or the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, where she received exceptional care over the past five years.

Barbara Lebida was a beacon of kindness and an embodiment of the zest for life. Her contributions as a teacher and her zeal for exploration and animal welfare have left an indelible mark. She will be missed profoundly by all who were fortunate enough to know her.

*Theodore F. McClosky, 104*

PALMER—Theodore (Ted) F. McClosky, 104, of Thorndike, passed away on Thanksgiving, Nov. 28, 2024 at Baystate Wing Hospital. He was born on Oct. 27, 1920 in Monson, MA to Alexander and Katrzyna (Fila) Miecnikoski.

As a young man he worked at Ellis Mills, not far from his home. He worked at Diamond National in Thorndike and retired in 1986. He also worked as a painter for Walt's Painting in Palmer.

Ted was a communicant of Divine Mercy Parish and a founding member of the Sts. Peter and Paul Men's Guild, and was an active member of the church for many years. He was also a member of American Legion Post #130, Palmer Senior Center, and did volunteer work for Palmer Food Share.

Ted served in the Navy on

the USS Anne Arundel during World War II, serving in both the Atlantic and Pacific Theaters. He received the Philippine Liberation Ribbon American Theater, African, and Asian-Pacific Ribbons, and was awarded five Bronze Stars.

He leaves many nieces and nephews, including his "angels" Sandy and Jim Hobbs, Dan and Nancy Slowick, and Marge Ziencina, with whom he spent many hours discussing the Red Sox, Patriots, UCONN Girls' Basketball, and politics. He enjoyed talking about his childhood in Monson, fondly remembering sledding down Hampden Road, skating



at Ellis Pond, and candlepin bowling.

He was predeceased by his "sweetheart" Adella (Szado), sisters Helen Wielkiewicz, Margaret (Szado), and brothers Peter, Joseph, and Edwin (McClosky).

Calling hours will be at Motyka Funeral Home in Three Rivers, MA on Dec. 6 from 8:30-9:30 a.m., followed by a Liturgy of Christian Burial in Divine Mercy Parish at 10 a.m., with burial at Sts. Peter and Paul Cemetery.

Contributions may be made to Divine Mercy Parish, Wounded Warrior Project, or a charity of your choice.

*Roslyn A. Styspeck, 1938 - 2024*

PALMER/ELKRIDGE,MD — Roslyn A. (Mega)(Pisarski) Styspeck, entered into eternal rest on Dec. 2, 2024 at the age of 86.

The daughter of Stanley J. And Mary R.(Soltys) Mega, Roslyn lived for many years in the Thorndike section of Palmer with John J. Pisarski, who predeceased her in 1973. She married John Styspeck in 1988 and they made their home in Monson. John predeceased her in 2009, after which she resided in Elkridge MD with her daughter, Christine and her husband, Kenneth Roberge. Her son, Stanley

J. Pisarski, predeceased her in 2018.

She is survived by her son Paul and his wife Kathleen, daughter Christine and her husband Kenneth, daughter-in-law Eileen (Tremble) Pisarski. Grandchildren include Erin Sherbo and her husband Andrew, Brendan Pisarski, Caitlyn (Pisarski) Vautrin and her husband Robert, and Amanda (Roberge) Roberge-Iversen and her husband Lorenz. Her great grandchildren are Michael and Nora Sherbo.

At the request of Roslyn, friends are invited to attend a

Mass of Christian Burial at the Divine Mercy Parish 2267 Main Street, Three Rivers, Dec. 9 at 10 a.m. Burial will follow at St. Peter and St. Paul Cemetery.

The family asks, in lieu of flowers, to remember Roslyn, please consider donations to a favorite charity or to the Maritime Aquarium in Norwalk CT ([www.maritimeaquarium.org](http://www.maritimeaquarium.org)).

Lombard Funeral Home of Monson has been entrusted to assist Roslyn's family. For online condolences please visit [www.lombardfuneralhome.com](http://www.lombardfuneralhome.com)

**Virtual support groups for those with cancer**

PALMER— During a cancer journey patients and their families often benefit from the support of others. Virtual support groups are being held now and through 2025, by Camille St.Onge, LICSW and oncology social worker.

For many years, people had to travel to a predetermined location to attend cancer support group meetings. As a result of restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic virtual support groups began meeting entirely online, with participants joining through video conferencing platforms like Zoom. Today, many people prefer this method because it offers flexibility, and convenience, and allows them to access support from where they are without needing to physically travel to a meeting

location.

"Sharing concerns with a support group can be a beneficial way for people facing cancer to get the help they need to cope with the physical and emotional concerns that arise during and after a cancer diagnosis," said St. Onge. "While support and self-help groups can vary greatly, groups share one thing in common, they are a place where people can share personal stories, express emotions, and be heard in an atmosphere of acceptance, understanding, and encouragement."

The support groups are designed to help patients, their families and caregivers cope

with the challenges of a cancer diagnosis.

Virtual Support Group offered include: General Cancer Support Group: first Wednesday of each month, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; Partners in Caregiving: second Wednesday of each month, 5 to 6:30 p.m.; Expressive Writing through Cancer, third Wednesday of each month, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Breast Cancer Support Group, fourth Wednesday of each month, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

All meetings are currently held virtually and are made possible by

funds raised by the Walk of Champions. For more information contact Camille St.Onge, LICSW, Oncology Social Worker by calling 413-239-7239 or by email at [cstomagin@gmail.com](mailto:cstomagin@gmail.com).

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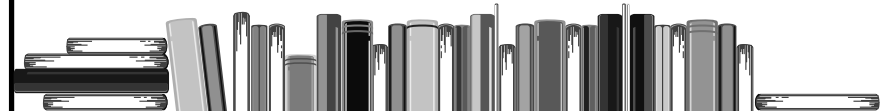
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# Economic Development Bill Passes Massachusetts Legislature

*Life sciences and climatetech among \$4 billion in authorizations; support for small businesses, easing the nursing shortage, Everett stadium zoning, and ticket pricing transparency among policies*

BOSTON—State Senator Adam Gomez (D-Springfield), State Senator Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow) and the Massachusetts Senate unanimously passed a comprehensive economic development bill on Thursday that makes bold investments in life sciences, climate tech, and small businesses, building on Massachusetts' national leadership and creating an environment where businesses and workers thrive. The \$3.96 billion in bonds authorized in an Act Relative to strengthening Massachusetts' economic leadership will stimulate new and proven industries, support workforce development and talent retention, and modernize economic growth strategies. This includes nearly \$10 million in bonding for projects in Springfield and \$1.5 million in Chicopee, as well as nearly \$40,000,000 for a new quantum innovation hub in the Pioneer Valley if authorized, working on topics including information sciences, therapeutic biomanufacturing, and creating alternative proteins.

"This bond bill and the funding path laid out for the coming years reflects our state's commitment to reinvesting in items that will benefit people and businesses in a way that is sustainable and on the forefront of science, technology, and health," commented Senator Gomez. "I am proud to see the goals to create new innovation hubs, including one in the Pioneer Valley, which promise to bring high-paying jobs to our region, and I am grateful for the ways that our body prioritized regional equity in our approach today. I look forward to fighting for this bond funding to be released, and seeing these ideas come to fruition."

"Today, we take a significant step forward in ensuring that the benefits of economic growth reach every corner of our Commonwealth, especially Western Massachusetts. This economic development package reflects our commitment to regional equity, fostering

job creation, supporting local businesses, and investing in the strengths of our unique communities," said Senator Oliveira. "I'm proud to have worked with my colleagues in the Western Mass delegation and the Legislature to prioritize innovation, workforce development, and sustainable practices. Together, we are laying the groundwork for a more inclusive and balanced economy that uplifts all regions and ensures prosperity for generations to come."

#### Highlights from the bill include:

**Educator diversity.** Allows the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to develop an alternative certification process for teachers who may face challenges passing the educator certification exam but can otherwise demonstrate their competence as teachers. The change will help Massachusetts diversify the K-12 educator workforce.

**Climatetech investments.** Provides \$400 million in capital resources to the MassCEC (Massachusetts Clean Energy Center) to utilize over the next ten years, with \$200 million authorized to support innovation and deployment of climatetech technologies and \$200 million to support the offshore wind industry.

It also establishes a new tax credit to invest in climatetech companies. A new program housed at MassCEC will develop and expand employment opportunities in climatetech and promote climatetech-related economic development by supporting and stimulating research, development, innovation, manufacturing, deployment and commercialization in the climatetech sector. The credit will be subject to a \$30 million annual cap.

**Life sciences.** Authorizes \$500 million over ten years for the Life Sciences Breakthrough Fund to reauthorize the Commonwealth's life sciences initiative.

Known as Life Sciences 3.0, the reauthorization adds health equity, biosecurity, digital health, and artificial intelligence to the mission of the Life Sciences Center. The bill increases the annual tax credit authorization for the life sciences industry from \$30 million to \$40 million.

**Support for small businesses.** Restructures two quasi-state agencies that are designed to be the gateway for access to state resources, the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation (MGCC) and Massachusetts Development Finance Agency (MassDevelopment).

The legislation also authorizes a five-year pilot program for the Commonwealth to assist small businesses in acquiring surety bonds. Large capital projects, whether public or private, often require retention of a surety bond by the contractor as financial security. Historically, economically and socially disadvantaged businesses often cannot acquire these bonds because of a lack of credit history or collateral. This program creates a self-sustaining state assistance program to open doors for more of these businesses.

**Live theater tax credit.** Launches a new tax credit of up to \$7 million annually to support local live theater productions. The credit will help Massachusetts artists working towards Broadway or off-Broadway launch a national tour.

**Craft beer at farmers markets.** Updates the law to allow for locally produced craft beer to be sold at farmers markets, like wine and cider currently.

**Ticketing transparency.** Requires ticket sellers to clearly disclose the actual ticket price when listing tickets online and bans automated ticket purchasing software, otherwise known as bots. Bots drive up prices in the secondary market by creating artificial scarcity when fans try to purchase tickets from the artist or venue.

**Professional soccer stadium and environmental cleanup in Everett.** Allows for the construction of a professional soccer stadium and waterfront park on a parcel of land in Everett by removing the parcel's classification as a designated port area. The change is expected to have positive environmental and economic impacts in surrounding communities as well as improve public transit connectivity.

**Public funding for the construction of the stadium** is not allowed, and funding for public infrastructure improvements associated with the stadium would require matching private funds. The language also requires community mitigation agreements with the cities of Everett and Boston.

**Strengthening local and regional public health systems.** Overhauls the state's fragmented public health system to ensure strong public health protections for all residents regardless of race, income, or zip code.

**Pathway for foreign-trained physicians.** Creates a pathway in Massachusetts for physicians previously authorized to practice medicine outside the United States

to practice in an underserved region of the Commonwealth.

**Nurse licensure compact.** Includes a provision to admit Massachusetts in the national nurse licensure compact, which will help alleviate the critical workforce challenges facing the health care sector.

**Civil service reforms.** Modernizes Massachusetts civil service laws to give communities more options in filling vacancies while giving qualified job seekers more opportunities to find a match.

**Data centers tax credit.** Creates a new tax credit to attract investment in qualified data centers.

**Childcare as campaign expense.** Removes current limitations on political candidates using campaign funds for childcare services that occur because of campaign activities.

**FAFSA.** Requires each school district to notify students prior to graduating from high school of the availability of FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and to provide students with information on financial aid options.

**Liquor license equity.** Removes archaic requirement that a restaurant liquor license holder be a United States citizen, thereby creating a pathway for other qualified immigrants.

**Project labor agreements.** Authorizes public agencies and municipalities to enter into project labor agreements for public works contracts when such an agreement is in the best interest of the public agency or municipality.

**Sustainability for farmers.** Allows farmers to diversify how they use their farms, including using land for agritourism and selling goods made from produce they have grown themselves.

**Regional Equity.** The legislation reflects the different needs of different communities and ensures none of the Commonwealth's 351 cities and towns are left behind.

This will partly be accomplished through statewide targeted infrastructure improvements, with the bill authorizing \$400 million for MassWorks public infrastructure projects that spur economic development and help support job creation, \$100 million for the Rural Development Fund to provide financial assistance for infrastructure and community planning efforts in rural communities, \$100 million for local economic development grants for economic development in cities and towns, \$90 million to support the redevelopment of underutilized, blighted, or abandoned buildings, and \$10 million for the Broadband Incentive Fund for the capital maintenance of the MassBroadband 123 middle mile network.

In addition to infrastructure, the legislation recognizes the importance of local cultural and economic sites, providing \$150 million for capital grants for public libraries, \$50 million for the Cultural Facilities Fund, \$40 million for Destination Development grants to support capital improvements of tourism assets, \$15 million for a capital grant program to support the Commonwealth's agriculture, commercial fishing, and cranberry growing industries, and \$8 million for historical preservation grants through the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

#### Capital Authorizations

The legislation includes a total of \$3.96 billion in capital authorizations for leading Massachusetts industries like life sciences and climate tech.

Additional authorizations include:

- \$400 million for the MassWorks Infrastructure Program to support public infrastructure projects and create jobs
- \$150 million for library construction projects
- \$103 million for artificial intelligence in systems across the state
- \$100 million for infrastructure improvements in rural communities
- \$21 million for resilience in agriculture and fishing
- \$40 million for food science innovations, including \$10 million to support the state's nascent alternative protein industry

For more information, please contact Senator Gomez's office at [Adam.Gomez@masenate.gov](mailto:Adam.Gomez@masenate.gov).

## Art Assoc. is hosting new artists, new perspectives exhibit

NORTHAMPTON—The Quabbin Art Association is hosting its first ever New Artists, New Perspectives exhibit at the Northampton Center for the Arts, featuring nineteen emerging artists from nine Pioneer-Valley Universities, Colleges, and Community Colleges. The exhibit runs Dec. 4, through Jan. 3, 2025, at NOHO Arts, 33 Hawley St.

Northampton Center for the Arts and the Quabbin Art Association will also host a Meet the Artists Reception at the exhibit on Dec. 13, from 5 to 8 p.m. This new initiative is funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council Festivals and Projects grant and awards a \$250 cash stipend and 2-year QAA membership to each participating artist. Projects like this one reflect the Quabbin Art Association's mission to support the arts in Pioneer Valley. Congratulations to all of the new student artists that will be featured in the up-coming exhibit: Rhaymi Porter—American International College; Caly Van Leeuwen and Eads Fouche—Amherst College; Elms College—Sarah Paradee and Catalyna Alexopoulos; Valentina Cacaj, Mari Champagne and Erin Shabunin—Greenfield Community College; Emma Aiken and Malyna Dansereau—Holyoke Community College; Lize Brown, Sophia Jakobson and AJ Treat—Mount Holyoke College; Christopher Sanabria and Nhu Truong—Springfield College; Jenezy Ortiz and Heeju Yoon—The University of Massachusetts; Ariana Masterjohn—Western NewEngland University; and Maddison Deboise Wetherell—Montserrat College



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# Baystate Wing Audiologist recognized with the Service and Innovation Award

PALMER – Kirsten Petrarca, AuD, CCC-A, an audiologist at Baystate Rehabilitation Care, located at Baystate Wing Hospital, originally chose audiology as a profession when she was in high school after learning American Sign Language to work with the Deaf Community.



**Kirsten Petrarca, AuD, CCC-A**

As she learned more about the field and became more involved in community service projects in college, Petrarca decided that it was the right fit for her, because she loved being in a position to work with patients to improve their access to communication.

“My favorite part of audiology is working with patients to find solutions for their communication difficulties, be it helping with good communication strategies and self-advocacy skills or providing hearing technology,” said Petrarca.

Recently Petrarca and her co-chairs from Rush University received the “Service and Innovation Award” from Rush Global Health, a department within Rush University in Chicago, Illinois, and Community Empowerment, a service organization based in Chicago and Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; <https://community-empowerment.org/>. The award’s purpose is to recognize and thank the team for their efforts over the past two years in developing hearing screening and hearing aid programs based out of Santo Domingo.

“In addition to the audiology care I provide at Baystate Wing, I work with a group of two other audiologists to coordinate and provide no-cost audiology services to patients in the communities of Peralta, Azua, Villa Verde, and Santo Domingo. We are all graduates of the Rush University Doctor of Audiology program. We inherited this program from our professor at Rush University, who first began providing audiology services through Community Empowerment by working closely with an otolaryngology (ENT) team. My team sends small groups of volunteers (audiologists and Rush AuD students) to the Dominican Republic twice a year for a week at a time. Each trip is comprised of five and a half clinic days where we see patients of all ages for



Submitted Photos

**Kirsten Petrarca conducts hearing tests in the Dominican Republic.**

hearing screenings, hearing tests, hearing aid fittings, and appropriate follow-up services.”

“Over the past two years, we have screened more than 500 patients and provided hearing aids, all donated, to more than 50,” said Petrarca. “The Community Empowerment team that we work with is so welcoming, they have become like family to us and our volunteers.”

Hearing loss is one of the most common conditions affecting older adults. The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders states that approximately 28.8 million Americans could benefit from using hearing aids. While age is often cited as a factor, there are growing numbers of younger people reporting hearing difficulties.

“Hearing is one of the most important aspects of our health, when left untreated it is often associated with other health issues,” said Petrarca. “I feel very fortunate

to work with the Baystate Audiology team. “They work tirelessly to create a positive, supportive work environment that benefits both myself, as an employee, and my patients.”

Providing care for patients of all ages, Baystate Wing Hospital’s Audiology and Hearing Services and team is located in the Griswold Center, 42 Wright St. in Palmer, and offers routine hearing tests, specialized audiological testing, and a comprehensive hearing-aid program providing hearing-aid evaluations, purchases, fittings, adjustments, and cleanings.

To bring awareness to the importance of hearing and address the needs of the community, the Baystate Wing Hospital Audiology team will offer free hearing screenings to community members throughout 2025.

For more information or to book an appointment call Baystate Rehabilitation Care at Baystate Wing Hospital at 413-370-5254.

## Police/Fire

### Police Logs

#### Palmer

The Palmer Police Department reported 427 incidents on its logs from Nov. 19 through Nov. 25.

#### Nov. 19

At 8:44 a.m. police gave summons to Hannah E. Roberts, 24, of 3159 High St., Bondsville, for operating a motor vehicle with revoked registration and uninsured motor vehicle.

At 2:54 p.m. police gave summons to Keith Anthony Adams, 62, of 3 Peterson Road, Palmer, for possession of a class A substance and OUI drugs.

At 4:24 p.m. police received sex offender registration.

At 6:11 p.m. police responded to an accident with property damage on Thorndike Street.

#### Nov. 20

At 6:27 a.m. police responded to an accident with property damage on the corner of S. Main Street and Shearer Street.

At 1:26 p.m. police responded to an accident with property dam-

age on the corner of Main Street and Thorndike Street.

At 9:06 p.m. police arrested Timothy M. Lynch, 32, 1077 Pine St., Palmer for four counts of vandalism and one count of disorderly conduct.

#### Nov. 21

At 2:17 a.m. police gave summons to Carlos Javier Fontanez Rodriguez, 42, of 69 Maynard St., Springfield for unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle, unregistered motor vehicle and uninsured motor vehicle.

At 8:59 a.m. police responded to an accident with property damage on Ware Street.

At 11:22 a.m. police responded to an accident with property damage on Shearer’s Corner.

At 4:26 p.m. police received sex offender registration.

At 4:32 p.m. police received sex offender registration.

#### Nov. 22

At 10:13 a.m. police responded to a hit and run accident on Thorndike Street and gave summons to William J. Murray, 68, 12 Rice

Ave., Northborough, for leaving the scene of property damage.

At 1:32 p.m. police responded to an accident with property damage on State Street.

#### Nov. 23

At 2:41 p.m. police responded to an accident with property damage on Reservoir Street.

#### Nov. 24

At 9:37 a.m. police responded to a hit and run accident on Ware Street.

At 10:59 a.m. police responded to an accident with property damage on the corner of Main Street and Depot Street.

At 2:16 p.m. police responded to an accident on the corner of Main Street and Thorndike Street.

At 1:51 p.m. police received sex offender registration.

#### Nov. 25

At 9:36 a.m. police responded to an accident with personal injury on Palmer Road.

At 4:01 p.m. police responded to an accident with property damage on Third Street.

### Fire Logs

#### MONSON

The Monson Fire Department responded to two fire calls and 18 emergency medical calls for the week of Nov. 25-Dec. 1.

On Tuesday, Nov. 26 at 8:33 a.m., the department responded to Main Street for a commercial fire

alarm activation, and returned to service at 8:41 a.m.

On Thursday, Nov. 28 at 12:46 p.m., the department responded to Maxwell Road for a cooking fire, and returned to service at 1:04 p.m.

#### THREE RIVERS

The Three Rivers Fire Department responded to one call for the week of Nov. 17-23.

On Monday, Nov. 18, the department responded to Juniper Drive in Three Rivers for a medical assist, to assist EMS crew.

## Tips for a health holiday

SPRINGFIELD— At a time when doctors’ offices typically get flooded with patients, Dr. Andrew Koslow, associate medical director of American Family Care for Massachusetts, is offering tips to make sure people are spreading holiday cheer instead of viruses and illnesses. The advice is simple: Wash hands more frequently; Get plenty of rest; Stay hydrated; Eat well-balanced nutritious meals; Get flu, COVID, pneumonia and RSV

vaccinations as recommended; and avoid anyone who is sick.

“People tend to run themselves down in the weeks and days leading up to holidays. It’s easy to get caught up in the frenetic pace of parties, shopping and burning the candle at both ends,” said Koslow. “Even if you’re young and healthy, when visiting relatives who may be at risk, you could make them sick.”

Koslow said it’s also important for families to be aware of a recent

spike in mycoplasma pneumonia infections across the country, also known as walking pneumonia. Symptoms can vary, ranging from cough to fever, shortness of breath, chest pain and nausea.

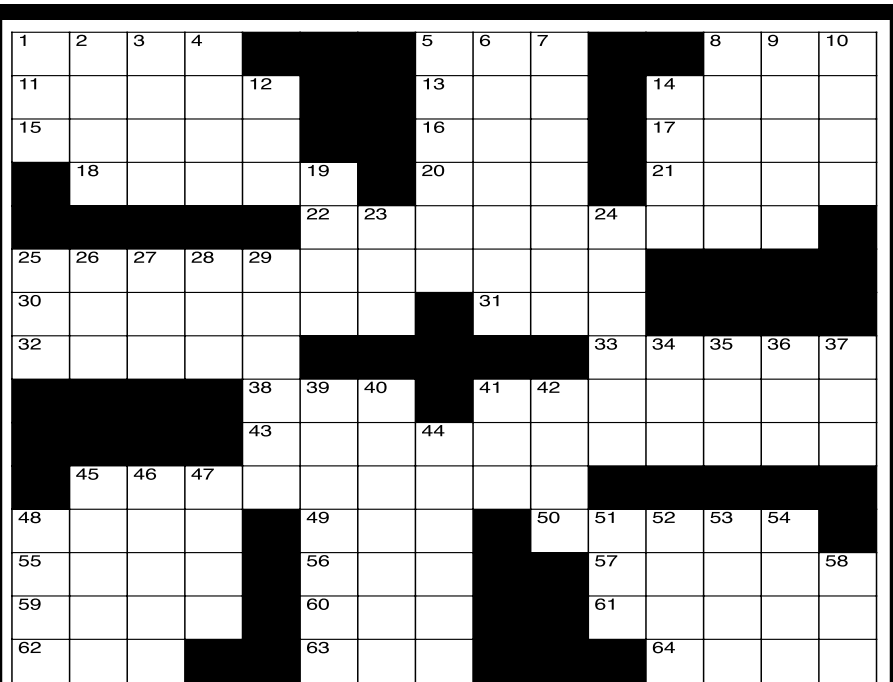
“Mycoplasma pneumonia is easily treated with antibiotics,” said Koslow. “The important thing is to get lots of rest if you experience these symptoms. See a doctor and stay home.”

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#### CLUES ACROSS

- Bar bills
- Recipe measurement (abbr.)
- Swiss river
- Czech Republic capital
- “Officially known as”
- A French abbot
- Having a strong sharp smell or taste
- Local area network
- Data transmission speed measure
- Embarrass
- When you hope to get there
- This (Spanish)
- Gives up
- Churchgoer
- Current
- Slang for gun
- Small drum
- Vanished union bigwig

- Rocker’s tool of the trade
- Dearth
- 2024 Olympics host (abbr.)
- Excess blood in the vessels
- Afrikaans
- Agreement between provider and customer
- Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
- Ancient Syrian city
- Witch
- Celebrations
- Long period of time
- A team’s best pitcher
- Current unit
- One-time aerospace company
- French/Belgian river
- Swedish rock group

#### CLUES DOWN

- Yearly tonnage (abbr.)

- Genus of clams
- Remark
- Actor LaBeouf
- Ohio town
- Olympic sport
- Cure
- Behave in a way that belittles
- Shares a boundary with
- Give advice
- Promotional materials
- Assist or encourage, usually in some wrongdoing
- “Agatha All Along” actress Kathryn
- Small piece
- King of Camelot
- Parts per thousand (abbr.)
- Small Milky Way constellation
- One who challenges authority (abbr.)
- Equal (prefix)
- Shawl
- American wood sorrel relative
- The end
- Supervises interstate commerce
- Yes vote
- Officer of high rank
- Church office
- Tire pressure measurement
- From a distance
- Industrial process
- Nobel Prize-winning physicist
- Map out
- Mammary gland part of female mammal
- Honorable title (Turkish)
- Sponglike cake leavened with yeast
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## PVPA School requests charter amendment to revise region

SOUTH HADLEY— Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School has submitted a request to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for an amendment to adjust PVPA's region in the school's charter and enrollment policy. If approved, all Massachusetts students would still be eligible to apply to PVPA, but priority would be given in the school's lottery to students residing within the updated region, and all students living within that region would be eligible for free bus transportation.

PVPA has long been aware that lack of affordable transportation is a barrier for many students considering attending the school, and a challenge for many currently enrolled families.

If DESE approves the proposed amendment, PVPA's revised region will reflect the communities where the majority (approximately 95%) of currently enrolled students reside, covering most of Hampden and Hampshire counties.

Current students and siblings of current students, would not be affected by the change in region. All Massachusetts students would still be eligible to apply, but priority would be given to students residing in the updated region.

Members of the public are encouraged to submit written comments regarding the school's amendment request to charter-schools@mass.gov. Comments can also be mailed to Massachusetts Department of Elementary

and Secondary Education, c/o Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign, 135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149.

Email is preferred. A decision from DESE is expected by Feb. 25, 2025.

If approved, the change will take place for the 2025/2026 school year.

The proposed region would include the following school districts: Agawam, Amherst-Pelham (Amherst, Leverett, Pelham and Shutesbury), Belchertown, Chicopee, East Longmeadow, Easthampton, Granby, Hadley, Hampden-Wilbraham (Hampden and Wilbraham), Hampshire (Chesterfield, Goshen, Southampton, Westhampton, Williamsburg, Worthington), Hatfield, Holyoke, Ludlow, Northampton,

South Hadley, Springfield, West Springfield, and Westfield.

PVPA is currently accepting applications for the 2025/2026 school year at [www.pvpa.org/admissions](http://www.pvpa.org/admissions). Application deadline is Feb. 23. The Enrollment lottery will take place on Feb. 26. Open House events are scheduled for December, January and February, offering prospective students and their families an overview of the school's arts-focused approach to learning for grades 7-12. Registration is online at [www.pvpa.org/admissions](http://www.pvpa.org/admissions). PVPA is a public charter school; there is no tuition or audition required to attend. Please contact PVPA at [admissions@pvpa.org](mailto:admissions@pvpa.org) with any further questions.

## Early Deadlines

for all LEGAL NOTICES...

All Papers Will Deadline Thursday, Dec. 19 at Noon for Publication Dec. 23-27

Happy Holidays!

Happy New Year!

All Papers Will Deadline Friday, Dec. 27 at Noon for Publication Dec. 30-Jan. 3

## Opacum Land Trust launches year-end campaign

STURBRIDGE— Opacum Land Trust, a leading conservation organization in South-central Massachusetts, is launching its year-end fundraising campaign with an ambitious goal of raising \$60,000 to protect critical land, water, and wildlife habitat. This campaign comes as the organization approaches its 25th anniversary in 2025, marking a quarter-century of dedicated environmental stewardship.

The organization's recent successful conservation of the 165-acre Robert F. and Jeanne R. Para Family Preserve in Southbridge exemplifies Opacum's strategic approach to land conservation. This newly protected area not only preserves critical wildlife habitat but also safeguards the eastern edge of the Cohasset Brook Reservoir, protecting the drinking water supply for Southbridge residents.

"As our communities grow and change, it is important to plan carefully to protect the important land and water that is essential for healthy communities," said Laney Wilder, Executive Director of Opacum Land Trust. "We're not just protecting land; we're ensuring the long-term health and vitality of our region."

In an exciting development, the first \$23,000 in donations will be matched, effectively doubling the impact of each contribution. First time donors who give before December 31st will also receive a special New Member Welcome Kit, adding an extra incentive to support the organization's critical work.

As Opacum Land Trust approaches its 25th anniversary in 2025, the organization reflects on the protection of over 4,000 acres of land in our communities, many of which are open to the public for hiking, biking, hunting, fishing, and more. From its founding to today, Opacum has been instrumental in preserving the natural landscapes that define Central Massachusetts.

"We've seen countless families like the Para's who want to protect their land but need support," Wilder added. "Our upcoming 25th anniversary is not just a milestone, but a recommitment to our core mission: to engage communities in the protection of land, water, and wildlife for the benefit of current and future generations."

Community members can support Opacum Land Trust's year-end campaign by: Donating online at [OpacumLT.org](http://OpacumLT.org); Mailing a contribution to P.O. Box 233, Sturbridge, MA 01566; Calling (508) 347-9144 for more information.

## W. Brookfield Annual White Christmas celebration

Sunday, Dec. 8, 2024 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

WEST BROOKFIELD—Please join us in the town of West Brookfield, MA as we kick off our 32nd Annual White Christmas celebration. There will be fun for folks of all ages going on throughout the day. We encourage everyone to come out and enjoy our town's annual kick-off of the holiday season by touring our historic town, strolling the downtown district, exploring local businesses and open houses, decorating gingerbread houses in our Great Hall, meeting Santa for a quick picture, as well as dropping off those letters headed directly to the North Pole. There will be horse drawn carriage rides throughout the day as well as shopping with dozens of vendors set up throughout town. A puppet show, an elf hunt and ice carvings are sure to keep everyone's spirits high. There will be plenty for the entire family to come and enjoy. If you are lucky, you may just see Father Christmas strolling the streets and greeting our visitors in town. Stick around to close the day with West Brookfield's annual tradition of gathering around the largest evergreen in town (located on the town common) while it illuminates for the first time this holiday season.

WEST BROOKFIELD WHITE CHRISTMAS COMMITTEE 2024 is excited to be able to share this fun-filled day with both residents and non-residents alike. This is a FREE event brought to you courtesy of our local businesses and town supporters. We encourage everyone from all walks of life to come and enjoy our town, and kick off the holiday season with lots of festive events throughout town to interest everyone. Maps of town open houses and vendors can be picked up in various local business, by accessing our Facebook page ("32nd Annual White Christmas in West Brookfield") or by emailing: [whitechristmaswb@gmail.com](mailto:whitechristmaswb@gmail.com). Parking is available free throughout town.



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# Christmas by Candlelight returns to Old Sturbridge Village

STURBRIDGE – Old Sturbridge Village is pleased to announce the return of Christmas by Candlelight, a cherished holiday celebration of New England’s festive traditions.

Tickets are now on sale to the public for select dates in November and December.

The Village will transform into a stunning winter wonderland beginning Nov. 29, featuring over 85 beautifully decorated trees on the Christmas Tree Trail, over 80 wreaths, hundreds of candles illuminating the pathways, and 5,625 feet of garland adorning historic buildings. Each evening of the program will kick off at 4:30 p.m. with a magical lighting ceremony.

Visitors can experience a variety of activities, including knitting Christmas stockings and baking traditional holiday treats. Guests can stroll through the picturesque village and cross the enchanting Christmas Wish



Photo credit: Old Sturbridge Village  
**Christmas by Candlelight: Making Woolen Ornaments.**

Bridge, a scenic path lined with trees along the Quinebaug River. Children will have the chance to meet Santa and Mrs. Claus in their new cabin, where they can share their holiday wishes.

Visitors are also encouraged

to participate in the annual Gingerbread House contest, where creative entries will be displayed for public voting.

“Christmas by Candlelight is a celebration of the cherished traditions that make the season truly special,” said Rhys Simmons, Director of Interpretation at Old Sturbridge Village in a press release. “Our goal is to transport you back in time with an experience that delights all the senses. Picture twinkling lights adorning the trees, the enticing aromas and flavors of mulled cider and freshly baked ginger-

bread, and the familiar sounds of holiday carols echoing all around.”

This year’s Christmas by Candlelight will feature an array of live entertainment, including historical performances and readings of Christmas tales for children. New this year is “Upon a Midnight Clear – An Acoustic New England Christmas,” a musical journey showcasing local artists reinterpreting classic carols.

In addition to the festivities, guests can explore the origins of classic traditions such as nut-crackers and gingerbread, along with a remarkable miniature nativity scene featuring over 600 pieces. The Richardson House

will showcase Italian Christmas customs.

There will also be plenty of opportunities for holiday shopping at the Miner Grant Store and the Ox & Yoke Mercantile.

“This event has become a tradition for so many guests year after year, and many families look forward to it as the highlight of their holiday season,” continued Simmons. “We invite everyone to experience the joy of the season, relish in classic traditions, and create new memories with loved ones this winter at Christmas by Candlelight.”

Christmas by Candlelight is made possible by our generous sponsors: Cornerstone Bank, Country Bank, G&F Precision Molding, and Southbridge Credit Union.

For more information on tickets and full event details, visit the Old Sturbridge Village website.

# Creating a safe holiday for pets in your home



EAST BROOKFIELD— As Thanksgiving and the winter holidays approach, Second Chance Animal Services is reminding pet owners to keep their pets’ safety in mind during the festive season. With holiday meals, decorations, and gatherings, this time of year can bring hidden hazards for pets. By taking a few simple precautions, pet owners can ensure a safe, joyful holiday season for their furry friends.

“Pets are part of the family, and it’s important to consider their safety during holiday celebrations,” says Lindsay Doray, chief development officer at Second Chance. “A little planning can prevent unexpected pet emergencies.”

To help pet owners keep their pets safe, Second Chance offers these holiday tips:

Holiday treats may look enticing to pets, but many common ingredients, such as chocolate, onions, garlic, and bones, can be harmful to animals. Even rich, fatty, or spicy foods can upset pets’ stomachs. Instead, give pets pet-safe treats or a small portion of their usual food so they can partake in the festivities safely.

Holiday decorations can be hazardous to pets. Items like tinsel, ribbons, and ornaments may seem like toys and can lead to serious health issues if ingested. Use pet-safe decorations and keep them out of reach of curious pets. Be mindful of candles and open flames as pets can knock them over, risking burns or fires.

Popular holiday plants, such as poinsettias, mistletoe, and holly, are toxic to pets. To prevent accidental ingestion, keep these plants out of reach or consider pet-safe alternatives. If using artificial plants or trees, be cautious, as some may contain chemicals that could be harmful if chewed.

The holiday season brings new sounds, scents, and sometimes unfamiliar guests, which can be overwhelming for pets. Create a quiet, comfortable space for them to retreat to when they need a break from the excitement. Remind guests to respect pets’ boundaries and avoid feeding them table scraps. If your pet experiences stress during gatherings, Second Chance veterinarians can offer advice on keeping them calm.

With increased activity around the holidays, pets are more likely to slip out the door and go missing. Make sure pets wear collars with up-to-date ID tags. For added security, consider microchipping your pet—a simple, effective way to increase the chances of a reunion if they wander off.

If planning to travel with a pet this holiday season, a bit of extra preparation will help ensure their safety. Ensure vaccinations are up-to-date and contact a veterinarian to schedule any needed boosters before traveling. Pack essentials like food, water, medications, and favorite toys to help reduce stress on the road. If staying in hotels or with family, confirm accommodations are pet-friendly and secure.

By taking these simple, thoughtful steps, pet owners can enjoy a safe and joyful holiday season with their furry family members. A bit of planning goes a long way in keeping pets happy, healthy, and comfortable throughout the festivities. Second Chance Community Veterinary Hospitals in North Brookfield, Southbridge, Springfield, and Worcester are currently accepting new patients and offer weekly low-cost vaccine clinics. To schedule a holiday check-up or sign up for a vaccine clinic, visit [www.secondchanceanimals.org/vetcare](http://www.secondchanceanimals.org/vetcare).



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