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First Responders Appreciation Dinner at Lucitano Club



Turley Publications photos by Marcelo Gusmão

Organizers of the dinner gathered at the front of the room in the Lucitano Club. See more photos on page 9.

By Marcelo Gusmão
 Staff Writer
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LUDLOW – Last Thursday, the Gremio Lusitano Club hosted the First Responders Appreciation Dinner, sponsored by Pioneer Valley Financial.

The dinner was held on Thursday, Jan. 11, from 5-7 p.m. to honor first responders and their families that live or work in Ludlow, Wilbraham, Hampden.

In addition to free food and drink, the dinner also offered raf-

fles and toys for kids.

There was a game where members of each of the participating departments competed to earn \$1,000 for their respective department.

“This event is to thank them for all of their service,” said Director of Marketing and Community Outreach Linda Martins.

The dinner was free to attend, thanks to sponsorships from local businesses and the local Veterans Services. The main sponsor is PV Financial.



Passing out information for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, (from left) Teresa and Cindy Askew and Cindy Machado-Saleh.



Submitted photo

The Thunderbirds' mascot, Boomer, made an appearance to support First Responders.

Changes coming to school transportation

By Marcelo Gusmão
 Staff Writer
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LUDLOW – At last week’s School Committee meeting, the committee discussed issues with transportation, voted on school choice slots, appointed a business manager and approved the superintendent’s plan for the next year.

The committee appointed Michael Buhl to the position of business manager after a vetting process overseen by Superintendent Dr. Frank Tiano. He will be taking over for Kathy Demetrius as she retires from the position in July.

The committee voted unanimously to appoint Buhl to the position.

Transportation

Alvin Morton, the executive director of Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative, thanked the committee for the opportunity to speak about his organization.

Morton described the collaborative, located on Brush Hill in West Springfield, as providing services to seven member districts, including Agawam, East Longmeadow, Hampden, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Southwick, Tolland, Wilbraham and West Springfield.

“We’re trying to expand to help people to understand who we are, what we are and what we do,” Morton said. “We provide quality programs and services in a cost-effective manner for all seven members, pooled together for those member districts.”

Morton listed off some of the programs that the collaborative offers, including career and technical programs, special education programs, Medicaid reimbursement, energy management and professional development, as well as a transportation program.

Members of the committee mentioned that parents have complained about their children not getting to school on time and indicated that this was in part due to a shortage of drivers causing schedules to slip.

“I’m hoping at some point in town, we can get to full capacity for all our member districts and therefore we won’t have this particular lateness,” Morton said.

“I know some of the obstacles of finding drivers,” said Committee Chair Jeffrey Laing. “Is it the salary, or is it more the seasonal work? How could we

Ludlow teacher’s firing results in \$10M lawsuit

Teacher sues administrators, School Committee and town

By Jim Russell
 Correspondent

LUDLOW – The School Committee, school administrators and the town became defendants in a \$10 million employee rights violation and discrimination lawsuit against them in November, after a former principal, with a former superintendent’s blessing, fired a veteran middle school teacher. Bonnie Manchester, 49, who taught for more than two decades at Ludlow public schools, told the father of an 11-year-old girl that the child wished to be referred to as a male. The lawsuit alleges the child requested that Manchester inform the father of the gender preference. According to the lawsuit, Manchester, the “plaintiff informed the father (the ‘Father’) of an eleven (11) year-old female student of plaintiff that his

daughter (the ‘Female Child’) had transmitted an email to a dozen of her teachers announcing that she, the eleven (11) year-old Female Child, was ‘genderqueer’ and specifying her so-called ‘preferred pronouns.’” This matter mainly transpired in winter 2020/2021, when public K-12 districts across the state operated via remote learning and hybrid models, to try and teach, during the World Health Organization-declared COVID-19 pandemic. Paul R. Baird Middle School principal at the time, Stacy Monette, accused Manchester of “conduct unbecoming of a teacher,” according to a copy of Monette’s May 19, 2021 termination letter, telling Manchester: “you took it upon yourself to inform the parent.” Then Superintendent Todd H. Gazda approved this. Gazda and Monette are named defendants, as are former guidance counselor Marie-Claire Foley and former Baird librarian Jordan Funke. Current superintendent Frank Tiano, who was hired in 2022 is a defendant.

In her letter, Monette went on to claim that Manchester allegedly “violated state law and regulations regard student records/privacy as well as the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act by releasing student information. . . . Since your school account was immediately shut off when you were placed on paid administrative leave, it is also clear that you removed the email from the workplace prior to being placed on leave. Doing so is also a violation of state law and regulations.” Ludlow Public Schools began fall 2020 in a hybrid model with two days per week of in-person instruction and three days of remote access from home. After Thanksgiving break it was only remote-access, until returning to hybrid March 1, 2021. The teachers union advocated for remote-access only to begin that school year. At the time, the district said it was up to the parents whether they wanted their children in a fully remote-access model. Prior to her firing Manchester

was suspended March 19, 2021, by Monette, “effective immediately for conduct unbecoming a teacher related to your inappropriate communications with the parents of a student.” Attorneys Frank McNamara, of Bolton, and Ryan McLane, of Agawam, filed Manchester’s 65-page civil rights and wrongful termination complaint in U.S. District Court in Springfield. In it, the attorneys alleged that “there was no articulated school rule, policy, or guideline, written or oral, prohibiting the kind of teacher-parent communication and association in which Manchester engaged, and that was seized upon as grounds for her termination.” “Still worse, the fact that the subject matter conveyed to the Father in this case (i) was made at the specific request of the Female Child herself, (ii) has never been objected to by the parents of the Female Child, and (iii) might have been a vital step in the parents seeking and obtaining valuable and perhaps

Please see **LAWSUIT**, Page 9

Please see **SCHOOL COMMITTEE**, Page 9

LUDLOW

Knights of Columbus meatloaf dinner Jan. 20

LUDLOW -- Knights of Columbus Chapter 3535 annual meatloaf dinner will take place on Saturday, Jan. 20 at the St. Elizabeth Pastoral Center.

Dine-in meals start at 5:30 p.m.; take-out meals may be picked up at the Center from 4:30-5:15 p.m.

This delicious meatloaf dinner will consist of meatloaf, mashed potatoes, veggie melody, rolls and dessert, coffee, tea, or lemonade.

Tickets are \$20 per adults and chil-

dren under 13 are \$15 each. This dinner will benefit the Survival Center.

There will also be a 50/50 raffle and a Giant raffle with approximately 15 items.

Tickets will be sold after all masses the weekends of Jan. 6 and Jan. 13.

You may contact Jim at 547-8822, Gerry at 543-5939, Tony at 364-6518, or Jonathan at 834-2341 to purchase dinner tickets.



PET OF THE WEEK TIGGER

This is Jill Krystofik's baby boy Tigger. He is her best bud. He loves food, loves to sit in the sun, and loves to sit in the window and keep an eye on the neighborhood. He knows how to use his handsome face to weasel snacks out of unsuspecting visitors.



Our First Big Event of 2024!

Visit us at Ludlowma250.org

Feb. 24 is our First Night Event celebrating Ludlow's Incorporation in 1774. On February 28, 2024, a mere 250 years later, we will be celebrating the anniversary of our incorporation at Ludlow High School in the auditorium.

First Night

Saturday, February 24, 2024

(SNOW DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 2024)

Ludlow High School, 500 Chapin St.

The Kick-Off Celebration of Ludlow's 250th Year!

Beginning at 11 a.m. A full day of fun & festivities.

- Historical Presentations
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- Lots of Craft Vendors!
 - Kids Craft Corner
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And so much more! Something for all ages!



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Fire Department shares permitting info and safety tips for Open Burning Season

LUDLOW — Chief Ryan Pease and the Fire Department would like to share the following permitting information and safety tips with residents ahead of open burning season.

Open burning season begins Jan. 15. Residents must obtain a permit to open burn in compliance with state law.

Residents can apply for an open burning permit online at hcburnpermits.com. Burning permits may be obtained between 8:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. on the day that residents would like to burn. Residents may access permits online only; permits are no longer available on a "walk-in" basis.

Residents who don't have access to the internet, can call the fire station at 413-583-8332, extension 2310, to speak with department personnel. Permits will only be accessible when the weather conditions are favorable.

Open burning guidelines

Residents are reminded of the following Massachusetts open burning guidelines.

Burning must be done:

Between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., from Jan. 15 to May 1

At least 75 feet from all dwellings

As close as possible to the source of material being burned

Residents are allowed to burn:

Brush, cane, driftwood, and forestry debris (but not from commercial or industrial land clearing).

Agricultural materials including fruit tree and bush pruning, raspberry stalks, and infected bee hives for disease control.

Trees and brush from agricultural land clearing.

Fungus-infected elm wood if no other acceptable means of disposal is available.

Residents may not burn:

Leaves

Brush, trees, cane, or driftwood from commercial or industrial land clearing

Grass, hay, leaves, stumps, or tires

Construction materials or demolition debris

Household trash

Burning Safety

Keep children and pets a safe distance away from the fire. An adult should be present and actively tending to the fire until it is completely extinguished.

Never use gasoline, kerosene or other flammable liquid as a fire starter.

Burn one small pile of material at a time and slowly add to it to ensure the fire does not get out of control.

Put the fire out if winds pick up or the weather changes. Most fires get out of control during sudden wind changes.

Keep fire extinguishing materials handy. Materials should include a water supply, shovels and rakes.

If the fire gets out of control, call 911 right away.

Best times for open burning

You can help prevent wildland fires by burning early in the season. Wet and snowy winter conditions help hinder the rapid spread of fire on or under the ground.

Changing weather conditions and increased fire danger in spring can lead to many days when open burning is not allowed.

April is usually the worst month for brush fires. When snow recedes, but before new growth emerges, last year's dead grass, leaves and wood are dangerous tinder. Winds also tend to be strong and unpredictable in April.

For more information about open burning, go to mass.gov/info-details/open-burning-safety.

Police share information on 2024 Civil Service Exam

LUDLOW — Chief Daniel Valadas and the Police Department would like to announce that applications for the 2024 Civil Service police exam are being accepted, and encourage residents to apply.

The Civil Service exam is held annually to establish a list of eligible candidates for entry-level police officer vacancies in municipal departments, State Police, and MBTA Transit Police.

The Police Department is a Civil Service department and interested candidates must take the exam to be considered for hire.

The application deadline for the Civil Service exam is Tuesday, Jan. 16. Written exams are scheduled to begin Saturday, March 16.

Exams will be held at physical locations around the state. Applicants will receive an email two weeks before their exam, informing them of the date, time and location of their test.

Interested candidates can sign-up for the 2024 Civil Service exam at governmentjobs.com.

General information, including practice exams and preparation guides, can be found at mass.gov.

Local author offers 'Heartfelt Healing in Troubled Times'

By Marcelo Gusmão
Staff Writer
mgusmao@turley.com

LUDLOW – A local author with a penchant for spiritual healing has been distributing books to help people overcome their struggles.

"Heartfelt Healing in Troubled Times" is Engel's fifth book. She has previously released "Angels Abound", "A Spiritual Journey of Hope and Healing", and two poetry books, titled "Speak to Me of Serenity" and "Whispered on the Wind".

Engel said that when she released her first book, "Angels Abound", it raised a few eyebrows because of the spiritual subject matter. She described meeting a woman several years back who told her that she was "spiritually intuitive."

"She was a Christian and had formerly been a nun in her early years," Engel said. "I'm Christian, but non-denominational. I always felt a strong connection to the archangel Raphael, and his name means God's Healer. I think I kind of tapped into him."

The woman told Engel that she had a gift for healing, and that this would be her calling in life. Later, Engel was encouraged by another woman to go into writing.

Though Engel admitted she was skeptical at the time, she eventually found that she had a knack for exactly that. For 30 years, Engel worked in the medical field and also earned a master's degree in counseling psychology.

"You don't make bargains with a spiritual gift, you get what you're meant to have," Engel said.

While her sister was in a long-term care facility, Engel would see other residents with neurological



Submitted photo

Jacqueline Engel displays her book, "Heartfelt Healing in Troubled Times".

disorders and would pray for them.

"I would sometimes feel like I got a message from someone," Engel said. "And I would get the feeling that I'm supposed to pass this message along to someone; it's supposed to be helpful in some way."

"I would only do that if someone wanted to know what it was," Engel added. "Otherwise I felt it was intrusive."

When it came to writing the book, Engel said that she would often just sit down and start typing. She found that the words came easily to her.

Rather than writing in her own voice, like her poetry work, En-

gel felt that she was channeling her message onto the page.

Engel's husband, Michael, has collaborated with her on three of her books. Because of his graphic design background, Michael did illustrations to go with his wife's writing.

"Right now, Michael's printing them as needed, and I'm distributing them," Engel said. "We make them up as needed, we made a bunch to give to our family for the holidays, which let me off the hook for Christmas shopping."

Engel said that the response to the book has been overwhelmingly positive and that she often will have people ask to send it to family members in other states who are struggling.

"I chose the theme of healing, particularly spiritual healing, because I believe it is something we collectively need in these turbulent, chaotic and confusing times," Engel said. "I believe it's our responsibility as members of the universal family to contribute to the healing of a broken world by each of us bringing an element of peace to the planet."

Engel said that she doesn't write for wealth or fame. Instead, she hopes that the book will reach anyone who needs it.

"The \$7.95 that the book goes for pretty much just covers the expenses," Engel said.

Engel said that her gift is something she has little control of, but when she sees people in dire straits, rather than getting involved, she tries to offer spiritual help however she can.

"There are many gifts of the spirit," Engel said. "This happens to be mine, and I respect it and I use it for good."

Nomination papers for the March 25, 2024 Annual Town Election

LUDLOW – Nomination papers for the March 25, 2024, Annual Town Election are available in the Town Clerk's office.

For a list of available openings please contact the Town Clerk's office (413) 583-5600

ext. 1230 or visit the town's website under Town Clerk/Election Information.

Nomination papers for all offices must be filed with the Town Clerk's office by 5 p.m. on February 2, 2024.

Saint Cecilia Women's Club February meeting

WILBRAHAM – The St. Cecilia Women's Club February meeting takes place on Tuesday, Feb.

13 at 6 p.m. at 42 Main St. Join us for a fun filled night of games, prized and delicious treats. Kim Lawler will provide her excellent party skills to make this a memorable "Fat Tuesday"!

Please bring a nutritious snack to this meeting for adults and children in need. Thank you!

Spiritual Healing to return to Federated Community Church

HAMPDEN – The Federated Community Church of Hampden, located on Main Street, will be of-

fering Spiritual Healing on the first Sunday of each month at 11:30 a.m.

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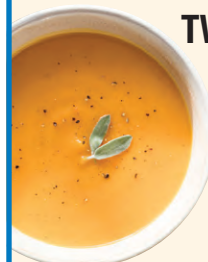
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What's Happening at Hubbard Memorial Library?

To register for programs or find out more information, visit hubbardlibrary.org, or call (413) 583-3408. Weather-related announcements for outdoor events will be made on the library's Facebook page the morning of the program.

Library Hours: M, W, F 9-5, TU, TH, 9-8, S 9-1. Closed Sundays and holidays.

FOR ALL AGES

Calling artists and more! The Hubbard Memorial Library in Ludlow is seeking local artists, craftspeople and collectors who would like to display their wares in the library's display case. Exhibits remain in place for one month. The display case measures 70 inches long by 42 inches high by 11 inches deep, and has shelves which can be adjusted or removed to fit different sized items. For more information, or to arrange a showing, please contact the library at 583-3408 Ext. 114 during normal library hours.

Free Tech Help Call us at 413-583-3408x114 to book an hour long appointment. We can help you with your laptop, smartphone, or tablet. By appointment only, please no drop-ins.

Free Streaming Services Available! Use your Hubbard Memorial Library library card to access our streaming services, Hoopla & Kanopy. They're compatible with Android, Apple, Roku, AppleTV, Chromecast, and more. If you are a Ludlow resident with a Hubbard Memorial Library library card and the Libby app, you've already got access to Kanopy in the app! Hoopla provides movies, TV shows, music, eAudiobooks & eBooks, while Kanopy focuses on films, TV shows, and documentaries. Both have a version for kids. Why pay for a streaming service when you can get two for free with your library card?

FOR ADULTS

Mass Center for the Book Monthly Reading Challenge. Each month, you'll be challenged to read a book based on a chosen theme. January's challenge is a book you read years ago that you may feel differently about now. Those who participate will be entered to win a free book! For more information and to sign up, please visit massbook.org/readingchallenge.

Chair Volleyball for Seniors, every Thursday starting January 18 until March 28, 1:30 p.m. Have some fun this winter by joining us for chair volleyball! No running or jumping required. There will be no chair volleyball on February 22. Please sign up on our website or by calling the circulation desk at 413-583-3408. Walk-ins are welcome.

Digitizing Our Past, Thursday, January 25, 6:30-7:30 p.m. In 2022, the Hubbard Memorial Library and the Ludlow Historical Commission worked with the developers of the Ludlow Mills, Westmass, to secure hundreds of glass plate negatives. This presentation will feature the history of glass plate negatives, details about the negatives found in the Mills, as well as a demonstration of how we digitize them. Please sign up on our website or by calling the circulation desk at 413-583-3408.

A Tree of Life: The Pittsburgh Synagogue

Shooting, Tuesday, January 30, 6:00-7:30 p.m. A Tree of Life is "the first film to document the survivor's stories and the only documentary with this level of personal access to the survivors and families of the victims, viewers will experience firsthand how the lives of those directly affected have profoundly changed and how the Pittsburgh community and the congregations set out on a path towards healing." Please sign up on our website or by calling the circulation desk at 413-583-3408.

Happy Hour Book Club, last Thursday of the month (1/25), 6:30-7:45 p.m.

This month's book is "A Fall of Marigolds" by Susan Meissner. This engaging historical fiction novel explores a connection between two women, one from 1911 and the other from 2001. Pick up a copy of the book at the Circulation Desk. New members are welcome!

History Talk: The Amistad Trials, Tuesday, February 6, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Honorable Dennis J. Curran, retired Justice of the Massachusetts Superior Court, will be discussing the first civil rights trial in American history that occurred more than two decades before the Civil War. Please sign up on our website or by calling the circulation desk at 413-583-3408.

FOR TEENS

Nintendo Switch Night, every other Tuesday (1/23/24 & 2/6/24) 6:00-7:45 p.m.

Play Mario Kart, Smash Bros, or other Nintendo Switch games. For 6th-12th graders, space is limited to 16 people, please register.

The 'Fellowship of the Pages' Tween Graphic Novel Book Discussion Group, Every Thursday, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Meet each week to discuss graphic novels, eat snacks, play games, and make friends. This month the group is reading "Awkward" by Svetlana Chmukva, copies of which are available in the Youth Room. Please register.

Water Bottle Stickers For Teens, Thursday, January 25, 3:30-4:30 p.m. learn how to use the library's Cricut machine to design and make water bottle stickers. Please bring your own bottle. Drop in.

Dungeons & Dragons High School Adventure Ensemble, Fridays 2:30-4:30 p.m. This group is for experienced high school players and currently has room for 2 more players. Please register.

"Read Between the Lines" High School Book Group, Last Friday of the month, 3:00-4:00 p.m. Book chat and snacks for ages 14 & up. January's book is "This Time Next Year" by Sophie Cousens; copies of the book are available in the Youth Room. Registration preferred.

FOR CHILDREN & TEENS

Pokemon Club, Mondays 3:30-5:00 p.m. For 8 & up. Trading, dueling, & gaming on handhelds, phones, or Nintendo Switch. Please have your name on everything you bring to the club. Please register.

Minecraft Club, Wednesdays, 3:00-4:45 p.m. Minecraft players of all skill levels can bring their own devices, or may use one of the library's eight computers to build, play & create. For upper elementary & up. Drop-in.

Massachusetts Children's Book Award Book Group for 4th-6th Grade, Thursday January 11th & February 8th, 6:00pm - 6:45pm. 4th-6th graders across the state are the ones to decide who wins this award after reading at least 5 of the nominated books. Meet with Youth Services Librarian July each month for 45 fun minutes to discuss, decide, play games, and share snacks. Everyone who has read at least 5 of the books by April 15th will cast their vote, celebrate with an ice cream party, and be featured in an article in the Register! Please register.

Roblox Club, Fridays 3:30-4:45 p.m. Meet new friends or play with old ones while playing Roblox. For ages 8+.

Winnie The Pooh Scavenger Hunt, Thursday, January 18, 9:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. All ages. Celebrate the birthday of A.A. Milne, the author of Winnie The Pooh, by searching the Youth Room for pictures of classic moments from stories, and win a prize! Drop in.

Sharpie Tie-Dye Wrist Warmer, Thursday, January 18, 5:30 p.m. Ages 8 & up. Make your own unique wrist warmers with fabulous tie-dye like designs. No sewing needed. Please register.

Creative Collaging, Friday, January 26, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. All ages. Lots of fun paper and picture book dust jackets will be out all day, along with scissors and glue with which to cut up and create. Drop in.

FOR CHILDREN

Daily Drop-In Crafts, All ages. DIY crafts available in the Youth Room Daily. New craft each week.

Winter Storytime Session: Going Places, Mondays 10:00 a.m. (starting 1/08/24) Ages 3-5. Stories, songs and games featuring far away places with a craft and snack at the end. Please register.

Sing With Me, Tuesdays 10:30-11:00 a.m. For ages 0-5. Join Youth Services Librarian July for 30 minutes of favorite children's songs & movement. Drop-in.

Winter Storytime Session: Going Places, Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m. (Starting 1/10/24) Ages 2-3. Stories, songs and games featuring far away places with a craft and snack at the end. Please register.

Lego Build Challenge, Wednesdays 12:00-5:00 p.m. Pull a Lego Build Challenge Card and try to build it with the library's Legos, or free build just for fun. All creations will be put on display in the Youth Room for the week. Drop-in.

Grow, Play and Learn, Thursdays, 10:00-11:00 a.m. For ages 0-5. Come join us for stories, songs and skill building, led by Kelly Castor, Early Childhood Developmental specialist, who will guide caregivers in strengthening interactions with their children. Sponsored by Pathways for Parents. Please register.

Paw Patrol: The Mighty Movie (& Craft), Saturday, January 20, 10:00 a.m. Watch the latest Paw Patrol movie and then make masks and badges of the characters after the showing. Drop in.

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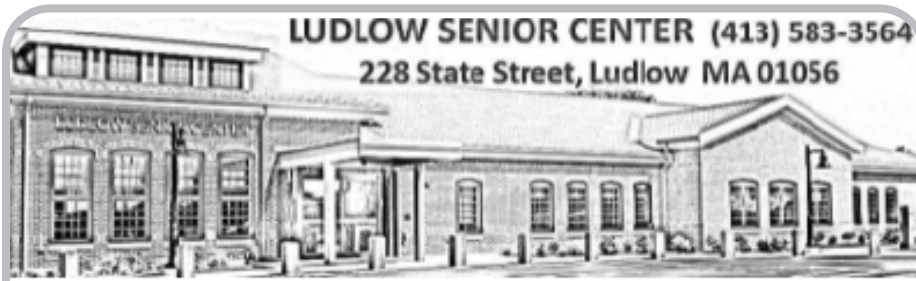
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Have Something to Share? Send your stories and photos to Marcelo Gusmão



Welcome to the Ludlow Senior Center

LUDLOW— The calendar is packed with many fitness programs, entertainment, education sessions, and more. Reserve a lunch in the Center's beautiful dining room complete with coffee, tea, and dessert by calling a day in advance at 413-583-3564 (call Friday for lunch on Monday).

For full program and activity descriptions and general information about what a senior center is and does go to: Ludlow.ma.us. Seniors can also "like" the Ludlow Senior Center on Facebook. A paper copy of the Senior Scene newsletter is available at the Center.

Activities Calendar:

Please register in advance for items with*

Thursday, Jan. 18
 8:30 a.m. Foot Care*
 9 a.m. Tai Chi
 9:30 a.m. Dominos
 10:30 p.m. Charter Commission Info
 1 p.m. Mahjong
 2:30 p.m. Active Yoga

Friday, Jan. 19
 8:45 a.m. Boomer Bootcamp*
 9 a.m. Reiki*
 10 a.m. Boomer Bootcamp*
 10 a.m. Blood Pressure Checks
 1 p.m. Guidance by Li*
 1 p.m. Ceramics
 1 p.m. Health Bones & Balance Class*
 1 p.m. Magic Class

Monday, Jan. 22
 9 a.m. Knitting
 10 a.m. Boomer Bootcamp*
 1 p.m. Scrabble
 1:15 p.m. Pitch
 1:30 p.m. Watercolor Pencil Class*
 2:30 p.m. Zumba Gold

Tuesday, Jan. 23
 9 a.m. Quilting
 9 a.m. Line Dancing
 10 a.m. Cribbage
 10:30 a.m. Gentle Yoga
 12:30 p.m. Blood Pressure Checks
 1 p.m. Western Dance Lessons
 1:30 p.m. Bingo
 4:30 p.m. Souper Supper
 4:30 p.m. Creative Corner- Make a Wreath*

4:45 p.m. Movie: Emily (2022)
 5:30 p.m. Power Pump Class
 5:30 p.m. Volleyball at East Street School

Wednesday, Jan. 24
 8 a.m. Facials*
 9 a.m. Ceramics
 9 a.m. Zumba Gold
 10 a.m. Opera Appreciation
 10:30 a.m. Healthy Bones & Balance Class*
 12:45 p.m. Movie: Emily (2022)
 1 p.m. Healthy Bones & Balance Class*
 1:30 p.m. Author Dee DiFratta

Thursday, Jan. 25
 8:30 a.m. Foot Care*
 9 a.m. Tai Chi
 9:30 a.m. Dominos
 10 a.m. Sunshine Painting Class*
 11 a.m. 250th Parade Meeting
 1 p.m. Mahjong
 2 p.m. Book Club- The Thursday Murder Club
 2 p.m. Writers Block*
 2:30 p.m. Active Yoga

*PLEASE register for Boomer Boot Camp, Healthy Bones & Balance, Foot Care, and other programs as noted by calling 583-3564

Daily Events:
 Café: Monday – Friday 8-11 a.m.
 Exercise Room: Monday - Friday 8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Open until 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday
 Walking Club: Monday – Friday 7 a.m. and 8 a.m., leaving from the parking lot.

Menu:
 Thursday, Jan. 18: Birthday Lunch, Chicken Marsala/Rice/Carrots
 Friday, Jan. 19: Meat Lasagna/ Small Salad
 Monday, Jan. 22: Fish & Chips/ Cucumber Salad
 Tuesday, Jan. 23: Stuffed Peppers/ Buttered Egg Noodles
 Wednesday, Jan. 24: Cobb Salad
 Thursday, Jan. 25: Brisket/Cole Slaw/Cornbread

Reserve a delicious \$2 lunch by calling a day ahead. Call Friday to reserve lunch on Monday.

For allergy concerns, call the Senior Center to ask about ingredients at 413-583-3564.

Country Bank announces promotions

WESTERN MA— Country Bank announces recent promotions of several key team members who have demonstrated exceptional dedication and expertise in their respective roles. These promotions reflect the bank's commitment to recognizing and developing talent within the organization.

Shane Elder has been promoted to First Vice President, Business Banking Team Lead. With over 11 years of experience in commercial lending and eight years in commercial lending management, Elder has proven himself as a valuable asset to the Business Banking Department. In addition to his role as Team Leader, he also oversees the Cash Management Sales Department.

Brett LoCicero has been promoted to First Vice President, Facilities and Security. With seven years of service to the bank, LoCicero expertise in managing facilities and security operations. He holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Nichols College and is pursuing his PMP certification.

Justin Calheno has been promoted to Vice President, Retail Lending Business Development Officer. With an impressive 20 years of lending experience, including the last seven years with Country Bank, Calheno brings a wealth of knowledge to his role. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management from Westfield State University and is currently attending the American Banker Association, Stonier Graduate School of Banking.

Antonio Palano has been promoted to Vice President, Retail Lending. Palano's

15-year tenure at Country Bank showcases his commitment and dedication to the organization. Having progressed through various roles, he currently manages the Retail Lending Servicing and Operations Departments. He holds an Associate's Degree in Business Administration from Springfield Technical Community College and is a 2023 graduate from the New England School of Financial Studies.

Cuc Nguyen has been promoted to Retail Banking Officer of the Paxton Banking Center. With over 16 years of banking experience, Nguyen brings a wealth of knowledge to her new role. Her previous experience at Commerce Bank, Berkshire Bank, and DCU has equipped her with a deep understanding of frontline management and customer satisfaction. Nguyen holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and Finance from Southern New Hampshire University.

"We are excited to announce the promotions of Shane, Brett, Tony, Justin, and Cuc," said Miriam Siegel, First Senior Vice President, Chief Culture and Development Officer of Country Bank. "We are thrilled to be able to recognize their hard work, dedication and contribution to the Bank's success. We are proud to support the commitment of all of our team members to their ongoing professional and personal growth leading them down all of the many career paths in community banking today."

Country Bank congratulates these individuals on their well-deserved promotions and looks forward to their continued success in their new roles.

Big Art Show of Small Works

A Scantic River Artisans exhibit Feb. 10, 11 at Hampden Senior Center

HAMPDEN – Join the Scantic River Artisans for a celebration of creativity with paintings, jewelry, pottery, metalwork and a local author book signing. Uncover unique treasures and purchase the craftsmanship of talented artisans.

The two-day event will occur Feb. 10 from noon to 5 p.m. and Feb. 11 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The reception will be held on Feb. 11 from noon to 2 p.m.

All will occur in the Community Room at the Hampden Senior Center, located at 104 Allen St. in Hampden.

Visit the Scantic River Artisans at: www.scanticriverartisans.com. For additional information about the Artisans and exhibiting opportunities, please email: info@scanticriverartisans.com.

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Purse Bingo is back!

Purses for a Purpose!

Friday, February 2
 5:00pm
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Tickets: \$50

Ticket includes dinner, dessert, and entry to 10 games, each with a designer handbag prize.

Arrive at 5pm to eat, drink, and pick your seat. Games start at 6pm. Full Tables can be reserved by purchasing 8 tickets. Cash bar, raffles, and extra games available!

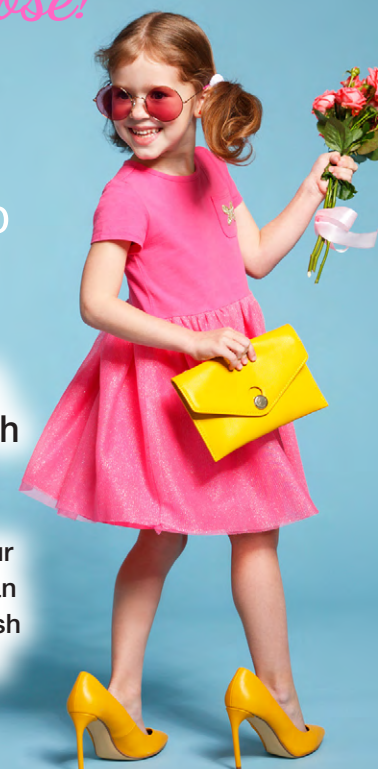
Scan the square with your smartphone camera to buy tickets.



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OPINION

GUEST COLUMN



Can someone work while collecting Social Security Disability?

Dear Rusty

If a person is collecting Social Security disability benefits, can they, at any point, work at all? If they can, what is the maximum they can earn and still keep the disability benefit? I am asking because my husband is still young, but his injuries will not allow him to go back to the job he had prior to his injuries and surgeries. He does not just want to sit at home doing nothing.

Signed: Concerned Wife

Dear Concerned:

Actually, the Social Security Administration encourages those collecting Social Security Disability Insurance benefits to attempt to go back to work and they provide considerable leeway for them to do so. The monthly earnings limit for those collecting SSDI benefits in 2024 is \$1,550 and as long as your husband earns less than the limit while working, his SSDI benefits will not be in jeopardy. Your husband should contact Social Security's Ticket to Work program directly to protect his disability status and discuss returning to work while collecting SSDI benefits.

The Ticket to Work program assists those now receiving SSDI benefits who wish to test their ability to return to work without putting their SSDI benefits at risk. The program provides considerable assistance, including new career training opportunities and connection to potential employers and it is voluntary and costs nothing. Here is a link to Social Security's information on the Ticket to Work program: <https://choosework.ssa.gov/>

It's not mandatory for your husband to enroll in the Ticket to Work program but, in addition to other available assistance, he can request a Trial Work Period, which would allow for nine months, over a rolling five year period, during which he can earn any amount even over the normal monthly limit mentioned above without risking his SSDI benefits.

Within the Trial Work Period, only those months he earns over the normal monthly SSDI limit would count as a Trial Work Month. So, for example, your husband could work part time regularly earning under the normal monthly limit and if, in some months (up to nine), he earned more it wouldn't affect his SSDI benefits.

So, your younger disabled husband can, indeed, work while on Social Security disability, for as long as he wishes while earning under the monthly SSDI limit, the SSDI earnings limit changes yearly. He may also wish to enroll in Social Security's Ticket to Work program for assistance with developing a new career. Plus, he can take advantage of using trial work months in the event his work earnings will, at times, exceed the monthly SSDI limit.

If your husband earns over the SSDI limit for more than the nine trial work months and his benefits are consequently stopped, he can within the five-year Trial Work Period have his benefits reinstated (without again going through the full application process) if his disability, once more, renders him unable to work full time.

For starters, I suggest your husband contact Social Security's Ticket to Work program directly at 1.833-889-0108 to discuss returning to work part time. Social Security will guide him through the entire process.

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

How the Iowa caucus works...



GUEST COLUMN



Dreaming of roses, blueberries bushes and more? Get those orders in!

For me at least, a much needed break from the garden has given way to the return of other hobbies this winter.

Quilting for one. I've enjoyed working on a Christmas tree quilt and have plans to start a pumpkin quilt.

I guess when I can't garden, I take horticulture any way I can get it – even in cloth! Quilting is fun in that you can exercise your love of color by playing with different combinations.

I like to see what looks good together and stand back and admire. It seems very similar to the admiration of a thoughtfully planned out flower garden. Well, you didn't start reading to learn about my sewing fancy, so let's get to some garden talk.

Do you dream of expanding your mini orchard or berry patch? Maybe you have a particular rose you are interested in.

If you desire to shop by mail, place your orders early (yes, now) for home delivery in April and early May.

I will start my dreaming with the Nourse Farms catalog (www.noursefarms.com or 413-665-2658). Located not far away in South Deerfield, this company specializes in producing high quality berry plants (and asparagus roots plus).

It would be great to extend my blueberry picking season over a month or more, just like my parents did with their patch. I will plan to order early, mid at late season varieties to accomplish this.

Last year, Nourse switched from selling bareroot blueberry plants to selling them in one liter pots. According to the listing, plants are cut back to just over a foot. They will increase in top growth the first year.

They have found that selling potted plants eases transplant shock and reduces

the chance of the roots drying out in shipment. Sounds great to me!

Take care to amend the soil to the proper pH and site the plants accordingly and you could enjoy blueberries for decades. My parents' bushes are still bearing some 70 years later.

Maybe you are in the market for apple trees this year. For well-rooted, hardy Maine grown plants, shop the Fedco Trees Catalog (www.fedcoseeds.com). Fedco Trees offers a great selection of heirloom apple trees, scionwood and rootstocks for home grafting, pears, plums and grapes among other types of nursery stock and ornamentals.

For heirloom apple enthusiasts or those interested in planting a cider orchard, this is an amazing resource. The final order deadline for trees is March 1.

The catalog changes a bit every year, so be sure to check back or reach out to them if you are looking for a specific variety and you don't see it listed in print.

It's been a few years since I've found a reputable mail-order nursery for heirloom roses. Recently, I stumbled upon High Country Roses (www.highcountryroses.com), and I'm impressed with the variety of roses they carry, many of which I am familiar with from working at Old Sturbridge Village: Rosa gallica officinalis and versicolor, Harison's Yellow, Rosa eglanteria and more.

If heirlooms aren't your thing, check out the number of ARS (American Rose Selections) winners for proven success. All of the roses they sell are grown on their own roots by vegetative propagation and are not grafted.

Some arguments in favor of own root roses include better hardiness, increased blooms, vigor and longevity. With over 600 varieties to choose from there is something for new and seasoned rose enthusiasts alike, and a lot of useful information for growers on their website.

Yes, it is the middle of winter and all should be quiet on the gardening front, but it is also a great time to get your orders in to your favorite mail order catalogs. Shop early for the best selection!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 31 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

es and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association To

submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

The REGISTER

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Letters to the editor should be 250 words or less in length. No unsigned or anonymous opinions will be published. We require letter writers to include his or her town of residence and home telephone number. We must authenticate authorship prior to publication.

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All unknown or alleged facts and quotations offered by the author need to cite credible, unbiased sources.

Send letters to: The Register, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069 or email mharrison@turley.com. The deadline for submissions is Friday at noon.

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Readers, local merchants, institutions, municipalities, non-profit groups, and civic organizations are strongly encouraged to send The Register your hometown news and photos. News items and press releases should be sent via email to mharrison@turley.com as an attachment AND pasted directly into the email message screen.

Please send photo captions identifying all subjects in your image(s) from left to right.

We need first and last name, hometown, title if applicable, and a brief description of what subjects are doing in the photo. Email uncorrected, raw, RGB color digital photos at highest resolution directly off your camera to mharrison@turley.com.

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RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

The Christmas Angel

Though the names in this article are fictional because of some circumstances regarding the child, the collaborations and experiences are real. I'll be referring to the Christmas Angel as Angel, the aunt as Mary and the child as Grace.

A chance meeting can often change someone's life for better or worse, but this was certainly for the better! Just think back to the chance meeting when you met your now best friend or perhaps when you met your spouse? But imagine if your chance meeting was a Christmas Angel!

While Angel was having her hair done she noticed a young girl named Grace, who was patiently waiting for who Angel thought was her mother to finish. Angel was so impressed with Grace's polite calm behavior she felt drawn to commend her for her good manners and compliment the mother as well. Hence the dialogue between Angel and Mary began.

During their conversation Mary revealed that Grace was her niece rather than her daughter but currently lived with her instead of her biological parents. Though Mary didn't reveal many details she did tell Angel that Grace had previously been in a group home where her belongings were stolen, so when she came to Mary's she had nothing but the clothes on her back. Mary explained what an amazing young girl Grace was and how her temperament was always like that, just sweetness. She also described how Grace was always ready with a helping hand no matter the task and did things with no prompting. Mary also shared that no matter what she did for Grace she was so appreciative that it was fun doing things for her.

Angel is definitely her mother's daughter, like her mother she has a huge heart and is always wanting to help anyone in need. Angel's life has had its challenges, yet her positive attitude and willingness to help others has never wavered.

After having an insightful conversation with Mary, Angel decided she wanted Grace to know just how special she was and engaged Mary in the plan. Angel told me that when she left the salon she actually went to her car and sobbed thinking about Grace's past. That's when Angel truly became Grace's Christmas Angel. Unbeknownst to Mary or Grace did they realize what this chance meeting would result in. Though it truly doesn't matter, I just think it shows what true Random Acts of Kindness are about as all three, Angel, Mary and Grace are of different cultures.

Angel knew that her plan would also help Mary who so unselfishly was help-

ing during this difficult situation so she began contacting family and friends asking for their support to create a memorable Christmas for Grace. They knowing her, jumped right in to help as elves to create Angel's vision. Angel was overwhelmed when she received well over twenty responses offering their help valuing hundreds of dollars in gifts and cash donations. Mary was also astonished when Angel showed up bearing all kinds of gifts. Angel included a card with the names of all the donors who had made this Christmas vision become a true miracle. Angel has been in contact with Mary since Christmas and she explained how much she and Grace have enjoyed playing the board games included. How wonderful that they weren't just put on a shelf, but that the true meaning of sharing is that Grace and her aunt share quality time together. Grace made a beautiful thank you card for Angel thanking her and everyone for the incredible Christmas they'd created for her!

Have you ever gone to a place where they display wish lists of children on a Christmas tree and decided to help make a child's wishes become reality? What a feeling it is, just the thought you've done that puts a smile on your own face and melts your heart with the vision it creates. Imagine being able to know the child you're helping and incorporating others to complete this Random Act of Kindness! Mary had no idea that Angel's plan would include a special gift for her as well, a prepaid hair appointment!

Though I'm not able to reveal real names, I thought this was such a heart-warming story I wanted to share it. Many think about generosity during the holidays season yet Random Acts of Kindness happen all during the year. I hope 2024 is a spectacular year for you and I can't wait to hear about your Random Acts of Kindness stories. There are so many truly incredible people amongst us, it's time to hear and recognize the good things happening around us. Be someone who makes a difference by spreading positivity whether it be for someone you know or a stranger, kindness is always welcome! Happy New Year!

If you would like to tell me a story about a Random Act of Kindness please contact me at bdt514@aol.com or 413-788-7514. Who knows, you might see your story in this column, 'Just 'Cause' you witnessed, did or received something nice being done.

See you next month with another Random Act of Kindness! ~ Barb

Cosmic Bracelet Class: Unveil the power of your zodiac gemstone

Feb. 22 from 6 – 8 p.m. at
the Hampden Senior Center

HAMPDEN – Embark on a celestial journey with our exclusive workshop designed to deepen your connection with the universe and express your unique essence through a personalized gemstone bracelet.

In this enchanting class, you'll explore the profound meanings behind the gemstone associated with your zodiac sign unlocking the hidden energies and traits that make you truly one-

of-a-kind.

Our experienced instructors will guide you through the art of bracelet-making, providing tips and tricks to ensure your creation is not only visually stunning, but also aligned with your zodiac's distinctive energy.

The event will occur on Thursday, Feb. 22 from 6 – 8 p.m. in the Community Room of the Hampden Senior Center, located at 104 Allen St.

The cost to sign up is \$20 and includes wine and one bracelet. To sign up, contact Sue Superson at sjsrighter@aol.com.

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Please contact Pat James 413-726-8661.

Saunders votes to prevent online abuse and exploitation, enhance protections for survivors

Legislation addresses teen
sexting and image-based
sexual assault, coercive
control, and extends the
statute of limitations for certain
domestic violence offenses

BOSTON - On Wednesday, Jan. 10, the House of Representatives passed legislation that combines several separate legislative initiatives into one bill that will help to prevent abuse and exploitation, while also enhancing protections for survivors.

"An Act to prevent abuse and exploitation" (H.4241) addresses teen sexting and image-based sexual assault, commonly referred to as "revenge porn," expands the definition of abuse to include coercive control for the purposes of obtaining a restraining order, and extends the statute of limitations for certain domestic violence offenses from six years to 15 years.

Currently, minors who possess, purchase, or share explicit photos of themselves or other minors are charged with violating the state's child pornography laws and are required to register as sex offenders.

The legislation passed instead authorizes commitment to the Department of Youth Services, but also allows minors to be diverted to an educational program in lieu of criminal punishment. A district attorney, however, is allowed to petition the court to bring criminal charges in extreme cases.

"This important legislation provides recourse to victims of coercive control and online exploitation while also establishing strong deterrents for those who would think to harm others in this way," said State Representative Aaron Saunders.

The educational diversion program, to be created by the Attorney General in consultation with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, DYS, and the District Attorneys Association, would provide teenagers with information about the legal and nonlegal consequences of sexting, which would be made available to school districts. DESE will also encourage districts to implement media literacy programs in their schools as a prevention measure.

In addition to teen sexting, the bill addresses the non-consensual distribution of explicit images by adults by establishing a penalty in the existing criminal harassment statute, including up to two and a half years of prison time and/or a monetary fine of up to \$10,000. The bill increases the upper limit of the fine for criminal harassment from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

Under this bill, a victim may also petition the court for a harassment prevention order against a person who has violated this statute.

The bill passed also adds coercive control to the definition of abuse. Coercive

control is a nonphysical form of abuse that includes a pattern of behavior, or a single act intended to threaten, intimidate, harass, isolate, control, coerce or compel compliance of a family or household member that causes the family or household member to fear physical harm or to have a reduced sense of physical safety or autonomy.

Examples of coercive control include threatening to share explicit images, regulating or monitoring a family or household member's communications and access to services, and isolating a family or household member from friends or relatives.

Individuals who abuse their intimate partners often misuse court proceedings in order to control, harass, intimidate, coerce, and/or impoverish the abused partner. Court proceedings can provide a means for an abuser to exert and reestablish power and control over a domestic violence survivor long after a relationship has ended.

This legislation provides the courts with an additional tool to curb controlling and abusive litigation and to mitigate the harms that this litigation perpetuates.

Hampshire Register of Deeds Mary Olberding said, "I have been a leader on women's issues throughout my public life and dedicated myself to helping survivors work with legislators to pass H4241. Passage of this bill will help some of our most vulnerable citizens to seek the justice they deserve. Improving the experience with the Trial Courts during the worst part of their lives will help victims become survivors."

"This legislation modernizes our criminal laws by ensuring that those who share explicit images of others without their consent face punishment, while also educating minors on the dangers of sharing explicit images of themselves rather than imposing some of the criminal justice system's most severe consequences," said House Speaker Ronald Mariano. "I'm also incredibly proud of this legislation's bolstered protections for survivors, including the added consideration of nonphysical forms of abuse for those seeking restraining orders from their abusers. I want to thank Chairman Day and the Judiciary Committee, along with each bill sponsor and all my colleagues in the House for prioritizing this vital legislation."

"The House has heard the urgent call of survivors to enhance protections and ensure that our laws keep up with technology. But the House doesn't just listen, we act," said Representative Michael Day, House Chair of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary. "It's critical that these reforms pass into law quickly so that victims of coercive control, adolescent sexting and revenge porn aren't left without relief."

"An Act to prevent abuse and exploitation" (H.4241) passed the House of Representatives 151-0. It now goes to the Senate for their consideration.

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Photo exhibit shines light on opioid crisis

By Nick Boonstra
Staff Writer
nboonstra@turley.com

BOSTON – State officials and community members gathered in the State House on Tuesday to debut a photography exhibit focused on amplifying the lived experiences of those who have been affected by the ongoing statewide and nationwide opioid crisis.

The exhibit, entitled “Voices of Resilience,” remained on display on the fourth floor of the capitol building through Jan. 12, where it was visible to legislators and visitors alike, and included Ware as one of the Massachusetts communities on which the project focused.

The exhibit marked the culmination of work done through the National Institutes of Health HEALing Communities Study, part of the larger NIH HEAL Initiative, commissioned in 2019. According to the HEALing Communities website, Massachusetts ranked among the top 10 states with the highest rates of opioid overdose deaths in a 2017 National Institute on Drug Abuse report.

Researchers with the study went into communities in four states to connect individuals with helpful resources and with each other, and to learn from participants what additional resources were still needed locally to aid those seeking recovery.

Alyssa Curran, a clinician with the Hampshire County Sheriff’s Office and the study’s Community Coordinator for Ware and Belchertown, explained that the images used for the exhibit were chosen and presented through a method known as photovoice, in which study participants share reflections about meaningful photographs. Some of these reflections were printed anonymously on the displayed photographs, adding context and poignancy to them.

One evidence-based practice encouraged at the event was that of carrying Narcan, also known by its generic name naloxone. Narcan is a life-saving medication that can reverse an opioid overdose and can be purchased at many pharmacies without a prescription.

Representative William “Smitty” Pignatelli, of the 3rd Berkshire District, emphasized the importance of carrying Narcan in remarks he gave at the event.

He related the tragic story of a young man who passed away as a result of an opioid overdose while his family and a



Ware resident Randy Gratton spoke at the State House during the “Voices of Resilience” exhibition.



Community Coordinator Alyssa Curran spoke about the photovoice project held in Massachusetts’ communities.



State Representative Smitty Pignatelli spoke in support of a bill that would require all first responders in Massachusetts to carry Narcan.



From left are Department of Public Health Commissioner Robert Goldstein, state Rep. Smitty Pignatelli, Dr. Jeffrey Samet, Randy Gratton and Alyssa Curran.

police officer were present as they waited for an ambulance to arrive with Narcan.

Because of this and similar stories, Pignatelli said that he was supporting a bill that would require all first responders in Massachusetts to carry Narcan. The bill, H. 2008, most recently had a joint hearing in October, according to the Massachusetts General Court’s website.

“You never know who’s going to show up at your front door,” Pignatelli said, emphasizing that this was especially true in

rural communities, and demonstrating that EMTs should not be expected to be the only ones with Narcan available.

Department of Public Health Commissioner Robert Goldstein also spoke at the event, sharing the startling news that the 2,359 overdose deaths recorded in 2022 were a record for the Commonwealth.

In addition to further stressing the importance of carrying Narcan, Goldstein laid out the evolution of the opioid crisis in Massachusetts, starting with prescription drugs around 2005, and escalating with the influx of fentanyl, a synthetic opiate, over the last decade.

“The drug supply is poisoned,” he said, referring to the fact that illicit street drugs are now frequently contaminated with substances like fentanyl and xylazine, an animal tranquilizer, unbeknownst to the user.

Dr. Jeffrey Samet, Boston Medical Center physician and Principal Investigator for the HEALing Communities Study in Massachusetts, said that the Commonwealth had taken on a leadership role in addressing the national opioid crisis, but that there was still a long way to go.

“The essence of the HEALing Communities Study was to see if we can en-

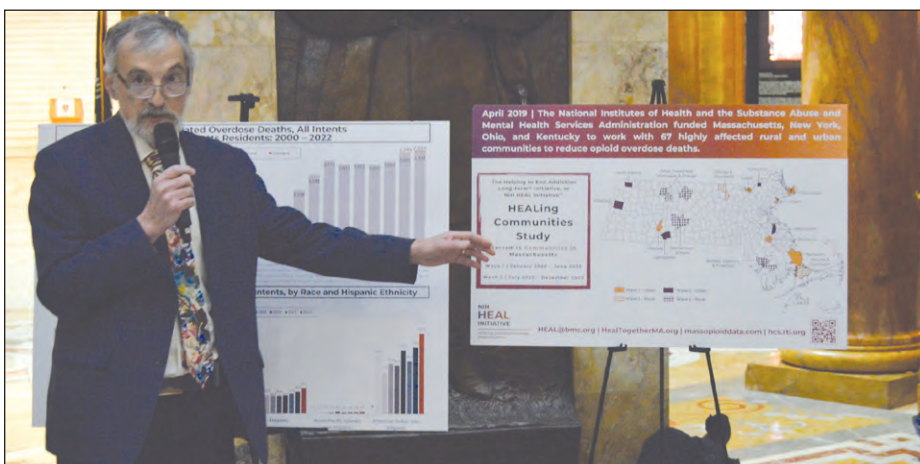
gage community members to come together in coalition within their communities,” Samet said. Specifically, Samet highlighted how the study empowered participants to make decisions about the most helpful ways to allocate resources within their own communities.

Randy Gratton, a fourth generation Ware resident, shared how the HEALing Communities Study had helped him in his own recovery, expressing his gratitude to the Study for “giving the little town of Ware the big help it needed.”

Gratton said that community members in recovery had been having similar ideas about what was needed, but that they “didn’t know how to put them together.” As a result of individuals coming together, Gratton said, the Recovery Center of HOPE was opened on Main Street in Ware, and a van was also commissioned that would be able to connect community members without access to transportation to recovery resources.

Gratton closed by sharing the personal story of how one of his mentors in recovery encourages him every year on the anniversary of his sobriety with the words, “Good start.” In the same way, he said that the efforts undertaken as a result of the HEALing Communities Study were good, but that they were just a start.

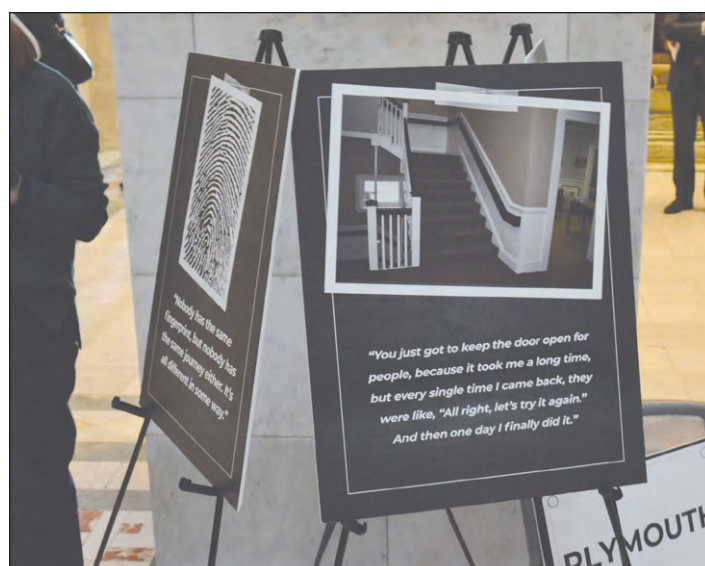
“I would encourage you all to continue to work, and more than anything to continue to care,” he said.



Dr. Jeffrey Samet shared opioid overdose statistics.



Photos in the “Voices of Resilience” exhibit shared messages from the photographer.



Narcan was available at the exhibit.

First Responders Appreciation Dinner at Lucitano Club



Chief of Police Dan Valadas and PV Financial Managing Partner Ed Sokolowski were thankful for the turnout.



Director of Veterans Affairs Eric Segundo and Chair of the 250th Committee Linda Collette greeted people at the door.



The Veterans of Foreign Wars Department had a table in the Lucitano Club.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

from Page 1

change it to make it better for them?"

"I think the biggest crutch for us is because we're considered to be an educational entity and then they have summers off," Morton said, "So, they cannot collect unemployment."

"Nobody can go six weeks or two months without pay. I can't even go two months without pay," Morton said. "We have to find a way to stretch that income over that whole time period or find some opportunities in the

summer for some of our drivers to work."

Morton said that he expects parents to be less frustrated with bus delays if they could be updated on the bus's schedule.

"We're launching Traversa," Morton said. "It is a new Tyler technology that we're putting monitors, turn by turn, in each and every bus. That will be implemented at the end of this month for regular transportation. It will be implemented in special needs transportation in the first or second week in February."

Morton added that an app will be launched in April to al-

low parents to keep up to date on when the bus will arrive and at what time it will drop off their students.

"That app will at least help them to know when their bus is going to be there and when it's going to be late," Morton said.

School choice

The committee then voted on the number of school choice slots that would be offered going into next year. Tiano explained how this program worked.

"School choice is a program developed by the state for districts to choose to receive students from other public school

districts who wish to attend," Tiano said. "Each year, the School Committee has to vote to participate and be part of that program."

The committee clarified that the number of slots would not affect the budget whatsoever, as these students would be fit into already existing classrooms, and the families are responsible for transportation.

"We're determining where these students enter the public school system where there are vacancies," Laing said. "If a fourth-grade class has 16 students in it and we have the abili-

ty to have 20, we could add four. But by not adding that four, it wouldn't mean that we could eliminate a teacher."

"It's important to note that once a student is accepted into the Ludlow Public Schools, or any public school, they become ours," Tiano said. "They're our kids, whether they live in Springfield or Chicopee. They're with us if they come in sixth grade, they're with us until graduation. We get some great kids that way."

The committee voted unanimously to approve 110 school choice slots.

LAWSUIT

from Page 1

life-saving psychological counseling for the at-risk Female Child, that too did not matter to defendants," the lawyers wrote. In a related matter, the parents of the child had already sued the district in U.S. District Court in Springfield, claiming the Ludlow school system's decision against notifying them of their child's sexual orientation issues was an abuse of power.

Judge Mark G Mastroianni dismissed the case, essentially saying the parents' claims fail to rise to the level of "shocking" the "conscious," thus there is no actionable violation of law. The parents appealed the decision. In this case, the attorney generals of 16 states and District of Columbia, filed amicus briefs last year on behalf of Ludlow school board and the other defendants, involving the parents' appeal. Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell led this effort.

Amicus briefs are written by individuals or groups who are not directly involved in a legal case, but have expertise or insight to offer a court to assist in making its decision. "Schools should be safe for all students, and policies like Ludlow's protect and support transgender students regardless of their home life. Especially as

LGBTQ+ youth face escalating attacks on their rights and safety, we have a duty to protect the privacy of transgender students when they have the courage to share their identity with a trusted adult," Campbell wrote in a June 28 press release.

The brief "argues in support of the Ludlow school district's practice of only sharing information on a student's transgender or gender-nonconforming identity with the student's parents if the student consents." "The amicus brief was led by Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell and joined by the Attorneys General of California, Colorado, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Hawai'i, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington. Assistant Attorneys General Adam Cambier of AG Campbell's Civil Rights Division and Cassandra Thomson of AG Campbell's Chil-

dren's Justice Unit handled this matter for Massachusetts," the press release says. The Amicus brief organized by Montana includes 19 state Attorneys General, filed with the court on behalf of the parents who sued the Ludlow district as follows: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana,

Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia and West Virginia. It said they filed "this amicus brief to ensure that parents retain their fundamental right to direct the upbringing of their minor children—a right the

Supreme Court has described as 'essential and 'far more precious. . . than property rights.'" And said "Ludlow presumably does not treat a child's depression or other mental health issues without involving parents, and it has no duty or right to keep parents in the dark about gender-related distress either."

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Evan Dias circles a loose puck.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Lions falls in OT thriller

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WEST SPRINGFIELD—After closing out 2023 with a two game losing streak, the Agawam hockey team entered last Tuesday night's Fay Division match-up against rival Ludlow with a 4-4 overall record.

One thing that Agawam hockey coach Todd Rowley really didn't want to see his squad do was drop below the .500 mark.

The Brownies, who were trailing, 2-0, at the start of the third period, scored a pair of goals during the final eight minutes of regulation sending the contest into overtime. Sophomore Thomas Connerly scored the game winning goal on a breakaway shot 21 seconds into overtime, which gave the Brownies a thrilling 3-2 victory at the Olympia Ice Center in West Springfield.

"This is a huge win for us," Rowley said. "We entered to-



Luke Martin works along the boards with the puck.

night's game with a 4-4 overall record and one of our goals is to stay above the .500 for the entire season. We did dig ourselves a big hole in the first period. We played a little bit better in the second period and I thought we



Ethan Steigmeyer skates out of the crease.

outplayed them in the third period."

The Brownies also defeated the Lions, 5-1, in the season opener before losing their next

Please see **HOCKEY**, Page 11

Ludlow swimming sweeps Northampton

LUDLOW – Last Thursday afternoon, Ludlow High School swimming won its meets against visiting Northampton. The boys took their meet 69-53. Joseph Keroack had a pair of wins, taking the 100 freestyle and the 100 back-

stroke. Adam Riley won the 200 individual medley. The girls won 93-59 with Amanda Riley taking home wins in the 500 freestyle and the 50 freestyle. Abby Gonçalves-Korny won the 200 freestyle and 100 breaststroke.

Divisional win streak ends in Utica

UTICA, N.Y. -- The Springfield Thunderbirds (18-13-3-2) saw their five-game win streak against North Division opponents come to an end on Saturday in a 6-3 loss to the Utica Comets (12-13-3-3) at Adirondack Bank Center.

The T-Birds quieted the notoriously noisy "Aud" just 49 seconds into the first period. In his first shift back with the T-Birds since being returned from St. Louis, Jakub Vrana gathered in a puck near the top of the right circle and whipped a pass toward the crease. Nikita Alexandrov deflected the first attempt off the pads of Utica goalie Isaac Poulter, but Alexandrov jammed his own rebound into the twine, giving Springfield a 1-0 lead for a second straight night.

After shutting out the Comets on Nov. 24, Vadim Zherenko had tougher sledding in the first period on this night, as the Comets evened

the score, 1-1, at 9:50 on a well-placed wrister from Filip Engaras under the crossbar.

With time winding down, Comet defenseman Michael Vukojevic crept up into the high slot and was given room to slap one along the ice past Zherenko at 17:51 to give Utica a 2-1 advantage.

With less than a minute to play in the period, the Comets added insurance after a lengthy stretch of zone pressure. It culminated in a funky goal at the 19:29 mark. Ryan Schmelzer arrived for a one-timer from the high slot. The Comets captain muffed the shot, as it badly missed wide of the goal, but glanced off a defender and careened behind Zherenko to give Utica a 3-1 lead into the intermission.

Things took another turn in Utica's favor when Chase Stillman drew a penalty shot

Please see **T-BIRDS**, Page 11

Ludlow girls suffer loss to Granby



Aneysha Donais runs into pressure as she enters the arc.

LUDLOW – Last Monday night, Granby got the momentum early and kept going with it as the handily defeated Ludlow girls basketball 59-33. In the victory for Granby, Kalli White had 23 points while Aubrey Parent and Autumn Sicard had 13 points each. Ludlow did have two scorers in double-digits as Aneysha Donais and Kayliana Moret had 10 points each. Ludlow fell to 1-8 while Granby is holding steady at 5-3 on the season.



Kayliana Moret makes her way down the court.



Nora Adams attempts a layup.



Eliana Garcia holds the ball high looking to pass.



Ryleigh Remillard makes a long pass on the run.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

Railers falls at home to Admirals

WORCESTER – It wasn't that the Railers ran out gas Sunday afternoon so much as they never had any in their 3-0 loss to the Norfolk Admirals.

Both teams were on the last leg of one of those dreaded 3 in 3 weekends, but the Admirals played it smarter than Worcester. Norfolk followed the script by jumping out to an early lead and keeping things under control the rest of the way.

It helped that the Admirals got admirable goaltending from Kristian Stead. He made 25 saves to record his career ECHL shutout in his 11th ECHL game. It was Norfolk's second shutout of the season over Worcester. Thomas Milic beat the Railers, 4-0, on October 29. The game marked the third time this season Worcester has been whitewashed.

Brandon Osmundson, Denis Smirnov and Andrew McLean scored the game's goals. McLean's went into an empty net at 19:15 of the third period.

It was a very good goaltending game overall as Josh Boyko was excellent in the Railers net. He stopped 32 of 34 shots and kept it winnable.

"I thought he played really well," coach Jordan Smotherman said. "He made some great saves...I was really happy with his game."

"Playing from behind three nights in a row; you just can't do that to yourself," Smotherman said.

Although Norfolk had 34-25 edge in shots, the teams had about the same

number of great chances. Worcester had two breakaways in the first period. Railers players hit iron twice later on. John Copeland hit a post, Anthony Callin a crossbar.

The breakaways were by Worcester's two top scorers, Ashton Calder and Anthony Repaci. Both players made good moves. Stead made two good saves.

In contrast, when Norfolk scored at 4:57 of the first period to go ahead, 1-0, Osmundson's shot went post to post and in, hitting the right one first.

"Over the course of a three-game weekend," Smotherman said, "you're not always gonna get the bounces and you can't rely on them."

The Admirals finished that period with a 14-4 edge in shots on goal. For the weekend, Worcester was outshot by 38-17 in the three first periods.

Smirnov doubled his team's lead early in the second period, scoring at 2:29. Danny Katic set up his teammate with a great pass from the right boards. Smirnov was just outside left post and had an easy re-direct from there.

The Railers lineup included familiar face Blake Jenkins, back from his brief time on the Hartford roster, and unfamiliar face Ryan Dickinson. The rookie defenseman made his professional debut as Zsombor Garat got a break. He had played in 32 of the season's first 34 games.

Bonsignore to do pre-season 'test' at Daytona

WADING RIVER, N.Y. – Three-time NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour champion Justin Bonsignore will compete in the ARCA Menards Series pre-season test at Daytona International Speedway this weekend.

Bonsignore will drive a car prepared by Andy Hilenburg, the 1995 ARCA champion, who also has two Daytona ARCA wins to his credit. The cars are prepared by Fast Track High Performance Racing.

The pre-race test is in preparation for the upcoming ARCA Menards Series opener at Daytona during Speedweeks on Saturday, February 17. The weekend will also include the opener for the NASCAR Xfinity Series and the NASCAR Cup Series Daytona 500.

Seven different drivers have earned the right to take laps around Daytona via the "Road to Daytona" program. Invites include the two regional series that are part of the ARCA Menards Series platform - the three ASA-branded touring super late model series, the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour champion

and the NASCAR Advance Auto Parts Weekly Series frontrunners. Although current 2023 champion for the Whelen Modified Tour Ron Silk isn't making the trip, Bonsignore is filling the seat to take laps around one of the fastest and iconic tracks in the world.

The trip will be his first laps on the Daytona high-banks of his career.

"Taking laps at Daytona is definitely something every race car driver dreams of when you start racing," Bonsignore said. "Appreciate the opportunity given by NASCAR, ARCA, Andy and his entire team to be able to get behind the wheel. Looking forward to soaking in the experience and showcasing the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour on this stage."

For more information on the ARCA Menards Series, visit ARCARacing.com. For the latest updates surrounding Justin Bonsignore, fans are encouraged to visit JustinBonsignore.com and also follow Bonsignore's Athlete page on Facebook for updates, including from the track on race day.

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Turley Publications sports department has recently joined Instagram. You can find our account by searching "turleysports." We will regularly feature samples of photos that you will see in our publications on a weekly basis. Please follow and share with your

friends and loved ones.

We will be featuring photos from all 11 of our sports sections, but as always, you can see all the photos that appear by subscribing to your local paper or picking up a copy in your community.

HOCKEY from Page 10

two games to Amherst and Taconic. It was the only time that the Brownies had been below the .500 mark this season.

The loss snapped Ludlow's (4-4-1) four game winning streak.

Ludlow sophomore goalie Ethan Steigmeyer made 26 saves in his first career varsity start. He took over the starting duties from freshman Peter LeBorgne, who missed the game with the flu.

The Lions, who outplayed the Brownies during the first 15 minutes of the match, took a 1-0 lead at the 4:54 mark following a goal by sophomore A.J. Stupak, which was assisted by senior Ryan Kurtz.

It was Stupak's second goal of the season. His first goal came in a 6-0 shutout win against Chicopee on January 3.

A little more than seven minutes later, sophomore Tanner Severyn scored his third goal of the season, which was unassisted, giving the Lions a 2-0 advantage.

After a rocky first period, Agawam junior netminder Frankie DiSanti (21 saves) settled down and didn't allow any more goals to be scored against him.

The Lions failed to take advantage of a power-play at the end of the first period, which carried over for the first 49 seconds of the second.

In the middle of the second period, Steigmeyer made the save on a shot attempt taken by senior Drew Scherban.

Late in the middle period, Agawam sophomore Casey Thomas fired a shot from inside the right circle and Steigmeyer



Brice Pereira heads up the ice.

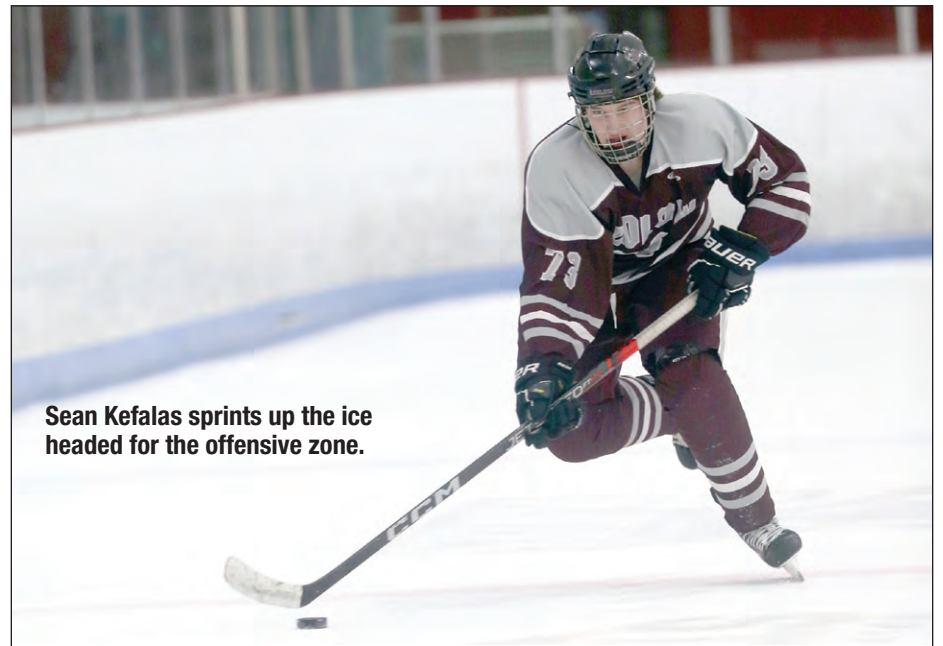
er made a glove save keeping his shutout bid intact.

That bid came to an end in the middle of the third period when junior Cole Buffum scored a power-play goal cutting the deficit in half.

"I received a good pass from one of my teammates and I just tapped it in," said Buffum, who netted his team leading fifth goal. "It just gave us the energy that we needed. Ludlow is one of our biggest rivals and this is a very big win for us."

The duo of junior Landon Ashford and senior Brett Eggleston were credited with the assists.

"We knew that once we broke the ice, we would probably keep scoring goals," Rowley said. "The Ludlow goalie did a great job in his first start. He made some key saves in the first two periods. Hats off



Sean Kefalas sprints up the ice headed for the offensive zone.

to him."

The score remained 2-1 until the final minute of regulation when Rowley pulled his goalie.

With the extra skater on the ice, Eggleston scored the game tying goal on a backhand with 47 seconds remaining on the scoreboard clock. It was Eggleston's first goal of the 2023-24 regular season.

Connery, who assisted on the game tying goal, ended the match with a breakaway goal 21 seconds into the five minute sudden victory overtime period.

"Getting the assist on the game tying goal and then scoring the game winning goal in overtime is just an unbelievable

feeling," said Connery, who netted his third goal of the season. "After falling behind in the first period, we knew that we could make a comeback."

Junior A.J. Robbins assisted on Connery's game winning goal.

"After A.J. blocked a shot, I managed to get behind their defense and he found me with a great pass," Connery added. "I was able to stay on sides and the next thing you know the puck was in the back of the net. It was very exciting."

The Brownies, who split the series with Ludlow last year, also posted a 5-1 win against the Taconic Braves the following night.

T-BIRDS from Page 10

when he was hooked on a breakaway chance just 1:21 into the second period. The rookie winger made no mistake from there, as he bested Zherenko with a backhand-to-forehand deke, giving the Comets a 4-1 advantage.

Springfield stopped the four-goal run at 9:25 shortly after the first of three power-play chances that eluded the visitors. After winning puck control in the left corner, Alexandrov sauced a pass into the middle of the ice for Will Bitten. Bitten's backhand caromed off Poulter's chest and, in turn, found Zach Bolduc, who one-timed the rebound through the Comets goalie to cut the Utica lead down to 4-2, a score that stood to the end of the period.

Dylan Coghlan made things even more interesting when he one-timed his league-leading 11th goal from the blue line at 7:13 of the final period to cut the deficit down to 4-3. However, this time around, the T-Birds ran out of comeback magic. Graeme Clarke scored a momentum-killing goal at 10:02, using a screen to beat Zherenko over the glove from the left-wing circle.

Springfield's power play scuffled on the evening against the AHL's top PK unit, going 0-for-4 and leaving another chance on the table in the final period while trailing 5-3.

In the end, the T-Birds ran out of time in this comeback try, and Justin Dowling rounded out the scoring with a tally into an empty net in the final minute.



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Have you taken photos at a local sports event and want to see them published in this paper?

Email your image(s) with description to:

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OBITUARIES

DEATH NOTICES

Richard J. Coache
Died Jan. 5, 2024
Services
Jan. 16, 2024
Kapinos Mazur
Funeral Home

**Elvira "Vera" Luiz
Gomes, 84**
Died Jan. 11, 2024
Services private

The Ludlow Register
**OBITUARY
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Richard J. Coache, 92

LUDLOW — Richard J. Coache, 92, of Ludlow, passed away on Friday, Jan. 5, 2024. Son of the late Antonio and Florence (Tremble) Coache, he was born in Springfield on May 3, 1931. After graduating from Cathedral High School, Richard proudly served his country as a Sergeant in the Intelligence Division of the Air Force. His role included serving as a language specialist during the Occupation of Germany and later with the 7373 Air Force Distribution in the Paris/Chateauroux area of France. He graduated from Western New England College with a degree in Law Enforcement. In Richard's first years after the service, he worked for Monsanto for 20 years, as well as owning Coache Studio in Ludlow which photographed many weddings and political events in the early 60's. He continued his love for photography, taking pictures of First Communions, Graduations and then moved into videography, until well into his 80's. Richard then worked as the Postmaster in Enfield, CT and as a Deputy for the Hampden County Sheriff's Dept. He also worked in Security at WNEC. Richard was a devout communicant of St. Elizabeth's Parish in Ludlow where he served as a Eucharistic Minister, member of the Parish's Social Committee, the League of the Sacred Heart and Knights of Columbus Coun-



cil 3535. Richard is survived by his son David Coache of Enfield, CT; his daughters Elaine Baillargeon and her husband Guy and Maureen Lauzon, both of Ludlow and his sister Lorraine Cave of Alamogordo, NM. He also leaves his 9 grandchildren Meghan Matczak (Chris), Joel Baillargeon (Clare), Daniel Coache (Bella), Jared Baillargeon, Mathew Baillargeon (Shannon), Kara Hoyer (Allen), Jessica Lauzon and Yvette Lauzon as well as 8 great-grandchildren. Richard also leaves his brother-in-law Kenneth Gauthier and his sister-in-law Joyce Coache. Sadly, he was predeceased by his wife Claire Coache in 2018, his son Paul Coache in 1994, his daughter Judy Coache in 1962 and his brother Norman Coache.

Funeral services for Richard were held Tuesday, Jan. 16, at the Kapinos-Mazur Funeral Home, 64 Sewall Street., Ludlow, Mass. followed by a Liturgy of Christian Burial at St. Elizabeth's Parish. Rites of Committal with Military Honors were held in St. Aloysius Cemetery. Donations in Richard's memory may be made to St. Elizabeth's Parish, 181 Hubbard St., Ludlow, MA 01056 or the Community Survival Center, 240 Main St, Indian Orchard, MA 01151. For more information, please go to www.kapinos-mazurfh.com.

"Vera" Luiz Gomes, 84

LUDLOW - Elvira "Vera" Luiz Gomes, 84, of Ludlow passed away peacefully on Thursday, January 11, 2024 surrounded by her loving family.



Born in Volcovo, Bombaral, Portugal, she was the daughter of the late Joaquim and Maria Luciana Luiz. Vera immigrated to the United States in 1945 where she attended Ludlow schools and became a graduate of Ludlow High School in 1958. She was predeceased by her beloved husband of 50 years, Luis, in 2013. Luis and Vera founded Gomes Construction Company, Inc., in 1987 and Ginmar Enterprises soon after. Vera was a loving mother to Mark Gomes and his wife Sherri, Gina Fernandes and her husband Joe; loving grandmother to Ryan and Derek Gomes and Lucas Fernandes; and great grandmother to Sienna Gomes, all of Ludlow. She leaves her twin sister Antonia Carvalho and brother Jack Luiz and his wife Phyllis; brother-in-law Marcos Gomes, and sister-in-law Maria Jose Nicolau and her husband Silverio, both of Portugal.

She also leaves behind many cherished nieces and nephews: Pedro Miguel Nicolau and Luis

Gomes of Portugal, Elizabeth Fernandes, Joel Carvalho, Jenna Ziskin, and Christopher Luiz, along with many other family members and close friends. What Vera enjoyed most in life was the time spent with family and friends,

sharing her good wit and great culinary skills. She perfected her recipes for pudim flan and arroz doce. She was kind and caring, and warm and welcoming. She was generous to all throughout her life, including when she opened her home to her extended family and friends for wonderful and lavish Christmas Celebrations. She was happy to accept so many people into her life. She held fond memories of her many visits to Marco Island, FL, where she enjoyed the warm weather while spending time with her family and friends. Vera was active throughout life, keeping busy with family and friends and enjoying each day.

Per Vera's wishes, her Funeral service will be held privately by her family. Vera's family has requested that in lieu of flowers, please consider helping others by making a donation to St. Jude Children's Hospital or Shriners Children's Hospital.

Virtual support groups offered

WESTERN MA— During a cancer journey patients and their families often benefit from the support of others. Virtual support groups will be held in 2024 by Camille St. Onge, LICSW, and oncology social worker.

For many years, people had to travel to a predetermined location in order to attend addiction support group meetings. As a result of restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic and because of the increasing availability of digital services, these groups now meet online.

"Offering support groups virtually brings people together regardless of their location," said St. Onge. "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. 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, 1st Wednesday of each month, from 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.; Partners in Caregiving, 2nd Wednesday of each month, from 5 - 6:30 p.m.; Expressive Writing through Cancer, 3rd Wednesday of each month, from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.; Breast Cancer Support Group, 4th Wednesday of each month, from 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

All meetings are currently held virtually and 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.

Hampden Senior Trips

A bus trip to the Lancaster, PA area is scheduled for April 23-25, Tuesday - Thursday. Stay for two nights at the Eden Resort, enjoy two buffet breakfasts, two dinners (one at an Amish family home), the play "Daniel" at Sight 'n' Sound Theater, Kitchen Kettle Village and much more. \$539pp dbl; optional cancellation insurance avail. Full payment deadline March 15.

On Wednesday, July 10 we Self-Drive to the Log Cabin for a great tribute to Jimmy Buffet by "Changes in Latitude". Your choice of either Prime Rib or Twin Lobsters for lunch. Cost is only \$92pp; full payment dead-

line June 14.

The Newport Playhouse will offer "Nonsense", a side-splitting musical about misadventures at a nunnery. On Monday, Aug. 26, a great variety awaits on an all-you-can-eat buffet for lunch, the hilarious play and a cabaret, all for \$125pp. Full payment deadline Aug. 7.

The above is a partial list of '24 possible trips; a minimum of 40 travelers needed for any trip to run. Flyers available at the Hampden Senior Center.

All prices incl taxes and driver's tip; any questions call Bobbi @ 566-8271 or email bobbij2@charter.net.

Great Decisions Discussion Group returns in 2024

WILBRAHAM - Registration has begun for the 2024 Great Decisions Discussion Group, to be held at the Wilbraham Public Library beginning Feb. 7. Sessions will be held in the Brooks Room on Wednesdays from 4-5:30 p.m. on Feb. 7, 14, 21 and 28, and March 6, 13, 20 and 27. If any sessions are canceled for snow or other bad weather, April 3 and 10 will be used as make-up dates.

The topics from the upcoming series are Mideast Realignment, Climate Technology and Competition, Science Across Borders, U.S. - China Trade Rivalry, NATO's Future, Understanding Indonesia, High Seas Treaty and Pandemic Preparedness.

Great Decisions Groups meet all over the country - in private homes, libraries, and other venues to discuss selected topics in the area of current

affairs. Participants can have their opinions tallied in a National Opinion Poll, which then gets sent to the White House, members of Congress and the national media. This is a wonderful program to learn more about what is happening in the world and to have your voice heard by people who make the decisions.

The Foreign Policy Association, which selects the key issues for discussion, publishes a briefing book for participants to read in advance so they can be informed and ready to engage. Participants can order the book from the FPA website at www.fpa.org, or by calling 1-800-477-5836. A copy of the book will also be available at the library Service Desk for in-library reading.

Please register through the Events Calendar at www.wilbrahamlibrary.org or call the library at 413-596-6141.

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Margolis Orthodontics to hold January food drive

WILBRAHAM – Margolis Orthodontics, 3 Crane Park Drive, Suite 5, Wilbraham, is holding a food drive for the month of January. They are hoping to help the needy families in the area. Any non-perishable items would be appreciated. Anyone who makes a food donation will be entered into a gift card raffle.

Sourdough Workshop to be held at Wilbraham library

WILBRAHAM – Baker and food blogger Sourdough Brandon will present his Sourdough Starter Workshop at the Wilbraham Public Library on Monday, Jan. 22 from 6 – 7 p.m. Attendees will learn how to build, maintain, and store a sourdough starter and will even receive a free sample to get baking. Online registration is required, and space is limited. To register, please contact the library at 413-596-6141 or visit the Event Calendar at www.wilbrahamlibrary.org. This free program is sponsored by the Wilbraham Friends of the Library.

Teens Who Code to meet in Wilbraham Jan. 31

WILBRAHAM – Teens Who Code will have their first meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2024, from 3:30-5 p.m. at the Wilbraham Public Library. Facilitated by Mrs. Christine Goonan, this club is looking for new members. Grades 6-12 can explore project-based coding in a fun and friendly environment. Meetings are once a month in the Teen Loft at the library, and all attendees need a laptop to join in. Online registration is required at www.wilbrahamlibrary.org or call 413-596-6141. After registering, teens will receive more info by email. This is a free program hosted by the Wilbraham Public Library.

WPL to present Teen Makers: Edible Terrariums

WILBRAHAM – Teen Makers: Edible Terrariums will be held in the Brooks Room of the Wilbraham Public Library on Tuesday, Jan. 23 at 5 p.m. Teens in grades 6 - 12 will make an edible terrarium using a glass vessel, chocolate cake, pretzels, graham crackers, chocolate and more. Each teen will go home with their own edible terrarium (to eat). All supplies will be provided, and the program is free. Online registration is required at www.wilbrahamlibrary.org, Events, Teens, as space is very limited, or call 413-596-6141. This program is sponsored by the Wilbraham Friends of the Library.



PLEASE REMEMBER
TO RECYCLE THIS
NEWSPAPER

DATEBOOK

Do you have a local event or activity to publicize? Please send the information as either a Word doc or plain (no bold text or other formatting) email text (no PDFs, please and do not use all uppercase (i.e. UPPER CASE) by 5 p.m. Friday. At least two weeks prior to the event is encouraged. Send your community events to pressreleases@turley.com.

ONGOING

SENIOR BINGO: Hosted by the Indian Orchard Citizens Council 3:30-5 p.m. every Monday. Free to play with great prizes. For more information, call 413-209-8240.

THRIFT SHOP: Now open at St. Gregory Armenian Church, 135 Goodwin Street, Indian Orchard, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. every Saturday offering quality items at affordable prices. Gently-used clothing and accessories, household items, books, children's items, collectors' items and more are available. For more information, call the church office at 413-543-4763.

CHESS CLUB: Open to residents of all surrounding communities 5:30 p.m. every Tuesday at the Indian Orchard Citizens Council, 117 Main St. For more information, contact the IOCC at 413-209-8240 or indianorchardcitizenscouncil@gmail.com or stop in during operating hours. Follow the IOCC on Facebook and Instagram.

LUDLOW SENIOR CENTER 55 AND OVER CO-ED VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE: At East Street School on Tuesdays and Thursdays from

5:30-7:30 p.m. the cost to take part is \$5 per year. For more information contact Maria Ardolino, activities director at activity@ludlow.ma.us or call 413-583-3564.

AQUACISE AT THE CLUB: The Ludlow Community Center/Randall Boys & Girls Club, at 91 Claudias Way, continues to offer Aquacise throughout the week. Aquacise is a low-impact, full-body workout performed in the water to put less stress on your joints and muscles while building strength. Classes are open to all members with pool-inclusive memberships and do not require prior registration. Classes are held 8:30-9:15 a.m., Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. For questions, call 413-583-2072, ext. 124.

SUPPORT FOR FAMILY MEMBERS: The Michael J. Dias Support Group meets 6-7:15 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at Our Lady of Fatima Parish Center. Education, resources, peer support, and hope for parents and family members coping with a loved one with a substance use disorder. Anyone needing help is welcome to attend. Masks are required and we will be seated six feet apart. For more information, call Maureen at 413-563-6226.

H.O.P.E. RECOVERY GROUP: Having Our Pathways Encouraged meetings are for those who have experience with addictions, grief, anxiety and depression, (including anxiety and depression due to COVID-19) and for loved ones who might need help in their recovery. This group is also for those who can help lead others in their recovery by example. This meeting in no way replaces

professional therapies. It is a time for sharing strength, encouragement and hope. No fees. Bring your own non-alcoholic beverage. Pre-packaged snacks are available. Small group structure based on basic Christian principles, concept, purposes and confidentiality. COVID-19 guidelines are observed. Masks required. 6:30-8 p.m. every Monday at Fellowship Hall in Faith Community Chapel, 485 East Street in Ludlow. Parking lot behind Chapel. Fellowship Hall entrance at back of Chapel. Seating is limited. To reserve yours, call 413-519-4591.

QUABBIN VALLEY TWIRLERS If you missed the first lessons in the fall, now is the time to give yourself a gift of dancing enjoyment for the coming holiday time. Do you want some exercise, mental acuity, and lots of fun with great people? Try our national folk dance, square dancing with the Quabbin Valley Twirlers. They dance in Belchertown and Ludlow with Sunday and Wednesday evenings available. For more information, call Gloria or Fran at 413-467-3352.

BIBLE STUDY: A weekly Bible study led by Ludlow resident Hank Bastos takes place at 7 p.m. on Wednesdays at 485 East St., Ludlow. Call 413-348-6487 for more information.

SHARE YOUR SIGHT: Volunteer to read, shop or walk with a blind or vision impaired person in your community. Call the Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired at 1-888-613-2777 for details.

Church DIRECTORY

FAITH COMMUNITY CHAPEL
A Church of the Nazarene
485 East St. Ludlow, MA 01056 413-583-7875
Email: faithcommunitychapel8@gmail.com
faith-communitychapel.org
Lead Pastor: Reverend Lisa Morrison
Associate Pastor: Gary Coombs
Sunday Services:
Discipline Groups 9:45 a.m. WorshipService11 a.m.
and Facebook Live Stream
OTHER PROGRAMS
MONDAYS at 6:30 p.m. H.O.P.E. Meeting Recovery meetings for those with addictions, anxiety, and grief
SMC. Call 413-519-4591
TUESDAYS at 7 p.m. ZOOM Bible Study WEDNESDAYS at 7 p.m. Ludlow Christian Fellowship Meeting
Hank Bastos, Leader, 413-348-6487
SMC and Facebook Live Stream ludlowfellowship.org
FRIDAYS Children's After School Club (pre K through teens) 5-6:30 p.m.
Church Fellowship Hall
SATURDAYS at 10 a.m. Ecumenical Prayer Meeting

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS
584 West St., Ludlow
413-583-8454
S Sunday services
Sacrament Meeting 10-11 A.M.
Sunday school for adults, Young single adults (18-30) and teens (11-18) - 1st & 3rd Sunday of the month from 11-12 noon
Adult Religious/Marriage and Parenting for Women- 2nd & 4th Sunday of the month from 11-12 noon
Adult Religious/Marriage and Parenting for Men- 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month from 11-12 noon
Classes for Single Adults(18-30)- 2nd & 4th Sunday of the month -11- 12 noon
Classes for Young Men(11-18)- 2nd & 4th Sunday of the month 11-12 noon
Classes for Young Women (11-18)- 2nd & 4th Sunday of the month - 11-12 noon
Children's classes: Sunday school & singing time every Sunday(3-10) 11- 12 noon
Nursery providedfor ages 18 month- 3 yr

CHRIST THE KING CHURCH
41 Warsaw Ave., Ludlow
413-583-2630
Pastor Rev. Raymond A. Soltys
Saturday Vigil Masses – 5 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.
Sunday Masses – 7:30 a.m.; 8:45 a.m. (Polish); 10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.
Sunday Evening Mass – 5:30 p.m.

ST. ELIZABETH PARISH
191 Hubbard St., Ludlow
413-583-3467
Pastor – Rev. Msgr. Homer P. Gosselin
In Residence – Rev. Norman Bolton
Deacons: Normand Grondin, Thomas Rickson, Keith Davies
Office Hours: Monday – Friday 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
stelizabethludlow.org
Like us on Facebook Follow us on Instagram
Check out our Parish App
Wednesday, Jan. 17, - Daily Mass - 7:30 a.m. (C), Youth Group - 3:30 p.m. (JR), Holy Mother Choir - 5:15 p.m. (C), Confirmation Class – 5:30 (JR), Scouts - 6 p.m. (FLBH), Scouts - 7 p.m. (JR)
Thursday, Jan. 18, - Daily Mass - 7:30 a.m. (C)
Friday, Jan.19, - Daily Mass - 7:30 a.m. (C)
Saturday, Jan. 20, - Confessions - 2:30 p.m. (C), Mass - 4 p.m. (C), Knights of Columbus Meatloaf Dinner to Benefit the Survival Center - 5:30 p.m. (FLBH & K)
Sunday, Jan. 21, - Mass - 7:30 a.m. (C), Mass - 9:15 a.m. (C), Mass - 11 a.m. (C), Mass - 5 p.m. (C), Take & Eat - 8 a.m. (FLBH & K), Confirmation Class - 8 a.m. (JR), Faith Formation - 10:15 a.m. (All Rooms)
Monday, Jan. 22, - Daily Mass - 9:15 a.m. (C), Faith Formation - 6 p.m. (JR/ER), Bible Study - 6 p.m. (ZR)
Tuesday, Jan. 23, - Daily Mass - 7:30 a.m. (C), St. Rita Choir - 6:30 p.m. (C), Bereavement Support Group - 6:30 p.m. (ZR)

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH
25 Parker St, Indian Orchard,
413-543-3627
Very Rev. Piotr Calik
Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 9 a.m. —1 p.m.
CLOSED FRIDAY
MASS SCHEDULE
Saturday Vigil Mass: 4:15 p.m.
Sunday Mass: 8:45 a.m. (English), 10 a.m. (Polish)
Weekday Mass: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday – 7:45 a.m. (English)
First Friday Mass: 5:30 p.m. (Polish/English)
First Saturday Mass: 9 a.m. (Polish/English)
Confessions: Saturday - 3:15-4 p.m.

STS. PETER AND PAUL UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
45 Newbury St.
Ludlow, MA 01056
Phone: 413-583-2140
Pastor: Father Andriy Krip
Liturgy schedule:
Wednesday 9 a.m., Friday 9 a.m.
Rosary for Peace in Ukraine on Wednesday at 6 p.m.
OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH
438 Winsor St., Ludlow
413-583-2312
Father Pedro DeOlivera
Office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., closed 1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.
Sunday Masses – 9 a.m. (Portuguese); 11 a.m. (English)
Monday and Wednesday Morning Masses – 8:30 a.m. (Portuguese)
Tuesday and Friday Masses – 5:30 p.m. (Portuguese)
Saturday Vigil Mass – 4 p.m. (English)
First Saturday of the Month – 8:30 a.m.
For more information, visit ourladyoffatimaparish.org.

FIRST CHURCH IN LUDLOW
859 Center St., Ludlow
413-583-3339
Reverend Dorothy Borden, Pastor
Office hours Monday & Wednesday 9 am -3 pm
Sunday worship service 10 am
website: www.ludlowfirst.com or
Facebook: www.facebook.com/firstchurchludlow/
for complete schedule and events

ORCHARD COVENANT CHURCH
95 Berkshire Street
Indian Orchard, MA 01151
413-543-4204
Revs. Karen and Nick Munn, pastors
Sunday School for all ages, 9:45 a.m.
Worship in person, 11 a.m.
Or watch our livestream.
See our website for more information: orchardcovenant.org.

PUBLIC NOTICES

LUDLOW PLANNING BOARD LEGAL NOTICE SPECIAL PERMIT ESTATE LOT

The Ludlow Planning Board will hold a public hearing in Ludlow Town Hall, Selectmen's Conference Room on **Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.** on the application of Craig Authier for the property located at **0 Kendall Street** Ludlow, MA (Assessors' Map 11B, Parcel 100) for: estate lot.

If for any reason this hearing is cancelled, it will be rescheduled to Thursday, February 8, 2024.

Raymond Phoenix
Chairman
01/10, 01/17/2024

LUDLOW PLANNING BOARD LEGAL NOTICE SPECIAL PERMIT HOME OCCUPATION

The Ludlow Planning Board will hold a public hearing in Ludlow Town Hall, Selectmen's Conference Room on **Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 7:10 p.m.** on the application of Mehmet Siperoglu of **140 Paulding Road** Ludlow, MA (Assessors' Map 17D, Parcel 93) for: **home office for limo/transportation business.**

If for any reason this hearing is cancelled, it will be rescheduled to Thursday, February 8, 2024.

Raymond Phoenix
Chairman
01/10, 01/17/2024

LUDLOW PLANNING BOARD LEGAL NOTICE SITE PLAN

The Ludlow Planning Board will hold a public hearing in Ludlow Town Hall, Selectmen's Conference Room on **Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 7:50 p.m.** on the application of Boomerang Realty, LLC c/o Mr. Scott George for the property located at **190 Moody Street, Ludlow, MA (Assessors' Map 3, Parcel 98)** for the purpose of: **reuse existing building for moving busi-**

ness and warehousing with associated site improvements to include striping and handicap improvements to the western parking lot.

If for any reason this hearing is cancelled, it will be rescheduled to Thursday, February 8, 2024.

Raymond Phoenix
Chairman
01/10, 01/17/2024

TOWN OF LUDLOW Zoning Board Of Appeals LEGAL NOTICE

The Ludlow Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing in the Ludlow Town Hall, 488 Chapin Street, Selectmen's Conference Room on **Thursday, February 1, 2024 at 6:00pm** on the application of **Guy Mitchell & Dale Shelton** for the property located at **696 Center Street, Ludlow, MA (Assessors' Map 17D, Parcel 33, Zoning: Agriculture)** The subject of the hearing is for a special permit for construction of a concrete or asphalt pad and installing a 12' X 20' metal one car port with a location of 2.2 feet from the side property line, which does not meet the required 5 foot setback from the property line. The proposed car port along with the other structures on the property will exceed the maximum percentage of square footage allowed for accessory structures. The applicant is seeking relief from the Town of Ludlow Zoning Bylaw under Sections 3.3.1.

Manny Lopes, Chairman
01/17, 01/24/2024

Notice

The Massachusetts State Lottery Commission (MSLC) has received a KENO License application from:

Chapin East Variety
830 East St
Ludlow, MA

Estimated weekly traffic: (number of people):500.

Current No. of Cashier positions selling Lottery products: 0

Percentage of floor space currently devoted to Lottery sales: 0%

Percentage of floor space for KENO sales: 5%

Estimated annual gross revenues of current Lottery products: \$0.

Estimated percentage of gross revenues from sales of Lottery products: 7%

Estimated net income to be derived from sales of KENO products at this location: \$6,000.

If you object to these agent(s) receiving a monitor, you must do so, in writing, within twenty-one (21) days of receipt of this letter. If applicable, please address your written objection to the Massachusetts State Lottery Commission, Legal Department, 150 Mount Vernon Street, Dorchester, MA 02125 and send via email to Leslie Zella at lzella@masslottery.com or by mail. Should you have any questions regarding this program or any other issues relative to the Lottery, please call the Lottery's General Counsel, Greg Polin, at 781-917-6057 or via email at gpolin@masslottery.com. We look forward to working with you as the Lottery continues its efforts to support the 351 cities and towns of the Commonwealth.
01/17/2024

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD24P0054EA
Estate of:
Monica J Donegan
Date of Death: 12/08/2023

CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Diane S Rock of Wolfeboro, NH and Monica E Panek of Belchertown, MA** requesting that the Court

enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: **Diane S Rock of Wolfeboro, NH and Monica E Panek of Belchertown, MA**

be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration.**

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 02/07/2024.

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

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

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

WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.
Date: January 09, 2024

Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
01/17/2024

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD20P1128EA
Estate of:
Carolyn Chmura Stanko
Also known as:
Carolyn Stanko
Date of Death: 11/08/2018

CITATION ON PETITION FOR ORDER OF COMPLETE SETTLEMENT

A Petition for **Order of Complete Settlement** has been filed by **San Mateo County Public Administrator** of San Mateo, CA requesting that the court enter a formal Decree of Complete Settlement including the allowance of a final account and other such relief as may be requested in the Petition.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 02/12/2024.

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

WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M. Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.
Date: January 08, 2024

Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
01/18/2024

Town of Ludlow
LEGAL NOTICE
You are hereby notified that a **PUBLIC HEARING**

will be held at the Town Hall, Selectmen's Conference Room, 488 Chapin Street, Ludlow, MA 01056 on **Tuesday, February 6, 2024, at 5:35 p.m.**

Upon petition of: **VERIZON NEW ENGLAND, INC. and NSTAR ELECTRIC COMPANY dba EVERSOURCE ENERGY** requests permission to locate poles, wires, cables and fixtures, including the necessary anchors, guys and other such sustaining and protecting fixtures to be owned and used in common by your petitioners, along and across the following public way or ways:

Fuller Street: Place one (1) jointly owned pole numbered T.33 1/2/E.82-29.5 on the east side of Fuller Street at a point approximately two hundred ninety-eight (298) feet northerly from the centerline of Chapin Street. The new pole will also be located seventy-six (76) feet northerly from existing Pole T.33/E82-29 and sixty-six (66) feet southerly of existing Pole T.34/E82-30.
01/17/2024

Ludlow Special Town Meeting of October 2, 2023
Case #11172

Warrant Articles 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21 and 22 were approved by the Attorney General's office accordingly.

**see full context of text in Town Clerk's office.

Posted in all 6 polling locations and at the Ludlow Town Hall.

Precinct 1: Harris Brook Elementary School

Precinct 2: Paul R. Baird Middle School

Precinct 3: Ludlow High School

Precinct 4: East Street School

Precinct 5: First Church in Ludlow

Precinct 6: Paul R. Baird Middle School

01/10, 01/17, 01/24/2024

Representative Smola supports bill to criminalize revenge porn and educate minor offenders through diversion

BOSTON – State Representative Todd Smola is backing efforts to crack down on “revenge porn” by supporting legislation that imposes strong penalties for sharing sexually explicit images or videos without the consent of the individual being photographed or recorded.

House Bill 4241, “An Act to prevent abuse and exploitation,” would also allow for the commitment of minor offenders to the Department of Youth Services while establishing an alternative comprehensive educational diversion program to help adolescents understand the legal and non-legal consequences of possessing or disseminating explicit visual material. The bill was engrossed by the House of Representatives on a vote of 151-0 on Jan. 10.

Representative Smola stated, “This legislation sends a clear message that the violation of consent will not be tolerated. I am dedicated to protecting individuals from the circulation of harm-

ful material and fostering a safer digital landscape for all.”

According to Representative Smola, the educational diversion program will be developed and implemented by the Attorney General in consultation with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Department of Youth Services, and the Massachusetts District Attorneys Association, and will be reviewed annually and updated as needed.

The House bill also encourages school districts to implement media literacy skills instruction at all grade levels, and to incorporate aspects of the educational diversion program as a learning tool for students.

Massachusetts is one of only two states without a law banning revenge porn, the other being South Carolina. House Bill 4241 would change that by imposing a punishment of up to 2 ½ years in a House of Correction, a \$10,000 fine, or both a fine and impris-

onment for individuals found guilty of disseminating explicit visual materials of another person without their consent.

House Bill 4241 also increases the existing fine for criminal harassment from \$1,000 to \$5,000 and amends the definition of abuse to include coercive control. Under the bill, coercive control is defined as an act or pattern of behavior committed with the intent to substantially restrict an individual's safety or autonomy through threat, intimidation, harassment, isolation, control, coercion, or compelled compliance.

Representative Smola supported a similar bill filed by former Governor Charlie Baker during the 2021-2022 legislative session, which was engrossed by the House of Representatives on May 26, 2022. Despite unanimous support in the House, the Senate took no action on the bill until the final day of session on Jan. 3, 2023, engrossing an amended version of the bill that could not be rec-

onciled with the House bill before time ran out.

During floor debate, Representative Smola supported an amendment to the bill that addresses non-consensual “deepfake pornography” involving the use of digitization, which is defined as “creat(ing) or alter(ing) visual material, including, but not limited to, through the use of computer-generated images, in a manner that would falsely appear to a reasonable person to be an authentic representation of the person depicted.” The amendment stipulates that the dissemination of deepfake pornography will be punishable by up to 2 ½ years in a House of Correction, a \$10,000 fine, or both.

House Bill 4241, as amended, now moves to the Senate for its consideration.

For additional information, please contact Representative Smola at Todd.Smola@mahouse.gov or 617-722-2100.

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- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts' public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

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CLASSIFIED DEADLINES
QUABBIN & SUBURBAN FRIDAY AT NOON
HILLTOWNS MONDAY AT NOON

JUNK REMOVAL

A Call We Haul FAST REMOVAL
Junk, Appliance, Cleanouts.
We load it & take it.
413-531-1936
CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

SERVICES

A DUMP TRUCK
Cleaning out attics, cellars, garages, estate cleanouts, scrap metal removal. **413-569-1611 or 413-374-5377.**

DRYWALL AND CEILINGS, plaster repair. Drywall hanging. Taping & complete finishing. All ceiling textures. Fully insured. Jason at Great Walls. **(413)563-0487**

SERVICES

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MEDIATION **UNRESOLVED DISPUTE?** Try no-risk ZOOM resolution. Pay only if satisfied. Certified mediator Jeffrey Allard MD, JD. Email: **manomed@live.com** or text **413-544-8998.**

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HOME IMPROVEMENTS. REMODELING Kitchens, baths. Ceramic tile, windows, painting, wallpapering, siding, decks. Insurance work. Fully insured. Free estimates. **(413)246-2783 Ron.**

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Storm Clean-up
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Insured
Josh Rozell 413-636-5957

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A&M TUNE-UPS
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2024 TAX TIME



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228 West St., Ware, MA 01082
413-967-8364

The IRS does not endorse any particular individual tax return preparer. For more information on tax preparers go to irs.gov.



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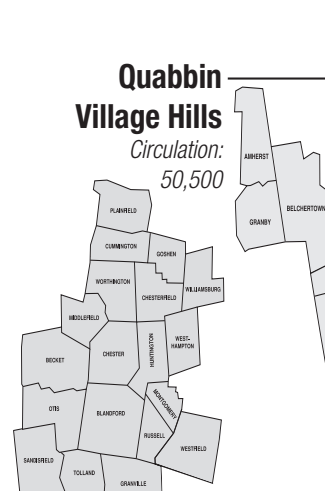
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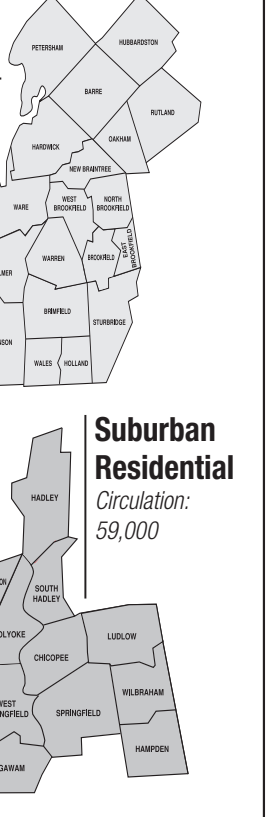
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Health tips and more for 2024

Baystate Health caregivers weigh in on what's good for your health and soul

SPRINGFIELD – Did you include better health in your New Year's resolutions?

Health experts at Baystate Health suggest setting realistic goals and prioritizing what is most important to you, taking small steps, and remembering not to beat yourself up if you encounter a setback in your health goals for 2024.

Some goals for your health and soul to consider as you continue on your journey include:

Improving your blood sugars

There are three important approaches to improve your blood sugar numbers as we start the new year. First, moderate your carbohydrate intake. No dramatic approach needed. If before you would take two scoops of potatoes, now consistently take one and fill the empty space with non-starchy vegetables. Second, increase your physical activity. Using our muscles will push sugar into our cells and out of our bloodstream. The more we move and be physically active, the better our numbers will look. Third, modest weight loss. Losing between 5-10% of our body weight will have a dramatic impact on how we metabolize sugar. Speak with your healthcare provider to personalize this approach for you. We have specialists for lifestyle approaches to improved metabolic health at Baystate called diabetes educators who can provide you with additional personalized information.

Don't allow sleep problems to affect your health

Stress levels are higher today in the world we live in. While stress can make sleeping well more challenging, it is important to prioritize sleep, which is necessary for health and well-being. Most adults function best with seven to eight hours of sleep and teenagers need around nine hours. Good quality sleep is important for preventing infections and keeping your immune system working well. Studies have shown that sleep-deprived people don't mount the same immune response after vaccinations as good sleepers, so it is important to make sure you get a good night's sleep prior to getting a flu or COVID vaccine, for example. Keeping a regular sleep schedule will allow your body's

internal clock to help you get the best night's sleep. If you are having difficulty sleeping or signs of poor-quality sleep with loud snoring, difficulty staying asleep, urinating frequently at night or daytime sleepiness or tiredness, you may benefit from a sleep medicine evaluation at Baystate. Sleep studies are available by referral from your doctor, or for more information call 413-794-5600.

-Dr. Karin Johnson, medical director, Baystate Health Regional Sleep Program and Baystate Medical Center Sleep Laboratory, Baystate Health

Staying safe from COVID-19 and seasonal respiratory infections

Staying up to date with vaccinations against COVID-19, flu, and RSV is important if you want to remain healthy in 2024. It is not too late to get these shots, particularly if you are 60 years old or older, have a weak immune system or have medical conditions that put you at risk of having severe respiratory infection. Talk with your healthcare provider if you have questions. It is prudent to wear your mask if you are in an indoor public setting or in any crowded area with poor ventilation.

-Dr. Armando Paez, chief, Infectious Disease Division, Baystate Health

Keeping kids healthy

As we settle into the "new normal" of a post-pandemic world, our children have navigated many challenges that have impacted their well-being. Mental health struggles, including increased rates of depression, anxiety, and self-harm, highlight the importance of making sure that children have strong relationships with caring adults and peers. Let's focus on guiding our children towards continued healing and growth. In addition to daily expressions of love and assurance, encourage your children to explore creative outlets that bring joy and foster resilience. Real-world connections and mindful screen time are key to balancing the digital landscape. As families, we can prioritize age-appropriate approaches to wellness, whether through regular movement or fostering healthy eating habits. Adapting our approach ensures children are not just equipped to handle challenges they encounter but are empowered to thrive in an ever-evolving world.

-Dr. Amy J. Starmer, MPH, chief, Division of General

Pediatrics and Family Health

Addressing your mental health

As we come off the season of giving, the past months have been a time when it is customary for people to make an effort to be generous and compassionate to others. My tip for the new year is for people to save a measure of generosity and compassion for themselves. An example of being self-compassionate includes being patient and gentle with yourself when you make a mistake or when you're unable to achieve a goal. If you notice being angry, even hateful, towards yourself, or feeling ashamed about a shortcoming, ask yourself if you would have that same attitude towards a dear friend, or even a beloved child when they fail to live up to some ideal. If not, consider whether you deserve to treat yourself just as well. Compassion defies the laws of physics: when you save compassion for yourself, it doesn't reduce the amount of compassion left for other people-it actually increases it.

-Dr. Barry Sarvet, Harold Grinspoon Endowed Chair of Psychiatry, Baystate Health

Women's Health

Women's health is about more than Pap smears and mammograms. It is good to see your women's health provider on a regular (every one to two years) basis to talk about family planning, cancer screening, sexual wellness, and your menstrual cycle. It is normal for your menstrual cycle to change a little bit over time, and it is important to understand the difference between an expected, physiologic change and an atypical change. Your provider can help with menstrual suppression, heavy periods and pre-menstrual symptoms. The transition to menopause may be barely noticeable or may impact your sleeping and moods, but fortunately there are treatments available to help with these symptoms. Any bleeding after a year of no periods in menopause should be brought to the attention of your provider right away. If you are planning a pregnancy, it can be helpful to discuss screening tests and healthy lifestyle changes in advance, such as a reduction in nicotine and alcohol intake, exercise, and healthy eating habits. Taking folic acid every day while trying to conceive may prevent certain kinds of birth defects. If you do not want to get pregnant and want contraception there are

many options, with new methods becoming available every year. See your women's health provider if you notice any changes that concern you, such as abnormal vaginal bleeding, pain with intercourse or vaginal discharge. Your body may be telling you that something is wrong and your provider can help.

-Dr. Heather Z. Sankey, Burkman Endowed Chair of Obstetrics & Gynecology, Baystate Health

Controlling Your Weight

Is your New Year's resolution to eat healthier, exercise more, or achieve another health-related goal? The new year brings with it the opportunity to start on a path toward wellness or if you've already done so, to maintain healthy habits. However, it can be difficult to make these goals stick with all the challenges the year throws our way. What is the best way to be successful in achieving your health resolutions? Consider the following.

Be specific with your goals. Instead of "I will eat healthier," consider something like "I will replace 4 sodas per week with water." Setting a more specific goal can help you actually "check off" whether you have completed the goal each day and thus, be successful long term.

Make sure your goals are measurable. If your goal is weight loss, for example, set a measurable amount with a time frame to reach your goal by. For example, "I want to lose 10 pounds by April 2024" and "exercise for 30 minutes, three times per week" are more measurable goals than "lose weight this year."

Make your goals realistic for you. For example, if you travel daily for work, "no longer eat on the go" as a resolution may be unrealistic for your lifestyle. You may find yourself giving up by February if you have purchased any meals out. This hinders any progress you could have made in a longer period. Instead, try a more realistic and flexible goal such as "pack a healthy lunch to keep in a cooler four times per week."

Set yourself up for success this year by making resolutions that will work for you, that are specific and measurable. Otherwise, you may find yourself quickly frustrated by your inability to stick to and achieve your goals.

-Eliana Terry, MS RD CSG LDN, Registered Dietitian, Baystate Noble Hospital

Be healthy in so many ways

RSV and flu are rampant in our community-sometimes families at the same time. Be vigilant. Wash your hands, cover your coughs, consider wearing a mask, especially if traveling in crowded spaces or visiting a doctor's office. Prevention is key and it is still not too late to get vaccinated. Think of it as getting the next update on your favorite smart device. We need to keep our immune systems as strong and up-to-date as possible. Everyone 6 months and older should get an updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine and

a 2023-2024 influenza vaccine. Those pregnant are included and should consider getting the RSV vaccine as well as for those over 60. There's also a new pneumonia vaccine, so for anyone who has received a pneumonia shot greater than 5 years ago, consider getting an update. If you do get sick, remember to get plenty of rest, fluff those pillows to prevent post-nasal drip, and stay hydrated. If it's a virus, antibiotics do not help and will only disrupt your GI system and cause resistance to serious infections in our community. For coughs and sore throats, honey is the #1 recommended treatment - just remember that you cannot give honey to children less than 1 year old and to always review over-the-counter medicines with your primary care provider. Most importantly, remember to be kind to yourself. If you need help, reach out. I always recommend families use 13cares.org.

-Dr. Nathan Macedo, Family Practice Physician, Baystate Family Medicine, Greenfield

Where to seek care

If you are not feeling well and can't wait for a regular primary care appointment with your Baystate Primary Care Provider, Convenient Care offers same-day, walk-in care with extended hours to fit your schedule. Baystate Convenient Care provides high-quality, convenient, and affordable care for non-life-threatening injuries and illnesses that require timely medical attention. In contrast, Emergency Departments (ED) offer 24/7 care for acute conditions or severe medical emergencies with expert care. Convenient Care complements our primary care and multi-specialty services at our Baystate Health & Wellness Centers. As part of Baystate Health, our Convenient Care locations use the same electronic records database, coordinating care with your Baystate Health primary care provider. When deciding whether or not to head to Convenient Care, consider whether the illness or injury is life-threatening and requires comprehensive medical treatment. If so, the ED should be your first destination. However, some common symptoms and conditions do not require a trip to the Emergency Department. Convenient Care offers same-day, walk-in treatment for current patients, new patients, and community members seeking care for common medical conditions including:

Sports injuries, sprains, and strains

Minor cuts or burns
Cold, cough, flu, fever, and sore throat

Earaches
Rash, skin, and eye infections
Stomach pain, nausea, diarrhea, and vomiting

Urinary tract infections and much more.

Locations include Convenient Care at Baystate Wing Hospital, Baystate Convenient Care Longmeadow, Baystate Convenient Care Northampton, Baystate Convenient Care Springfield, and Baystate Convenient Care Westfield. For more information visit Baystate Convenient Care.

-Dr. Agnieszka Nicora, medical director, Baystate Convenient Care

For more information on Baystate Health, visit baystate-health.org.

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