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The REGISTER

LOCAL NEWS | LOCAL STORIES | LOCAL ADVERTISERS

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Ludlow Cares Coalition in 2025 posing with their finished Valentine's Day gift bags. Submitted photo

Ludlow Cares delivers more than just a bag for Valentine's Day

By Amanda Munson
 Staff Writer
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LUDLOW – “The goal is to deliver over 300 bags!” Assembling the Valentine's Day gift bags on Feb. 11 and delivering them to senior citizens in the surrounding area, locations like Keystone Commons assisted living

facility and home deliveries for homebound citizens in Town, the Ludlow Cares Coalition strives to deliver compassion, strength, and companionship with a couple of local treats to spark joy and smiles. Speaking with President Peter Leonczyk of Cares, who has recently taken over Past President Laura Rooney, Leonczyk shares the

background of the annual tradition and highlights several community partners and organizations who showed up for members in the community who deserve to be recognized. Leonczyk began, “This isn't the first time there will be an article in The Register which is great because I believe it resonates that this is a

project we continue to sponsor and advocate for. It sort of grew out of the pandemic when we understood what it was like in isolation, but we felt like senior citizens in our community were impacted a little bit more with that

Please see **LUDLOW CARES**, Page 3

New patrolman Desiree Rivera welcomed to LPD

By Amanda Munson
 Staff Writer
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LUDLOW – Beginning the job only a couple of weeks ago, the Ludlow Police Department welcomed Patrolman Desiree Rivera who shared why she chose to come to Town and her background with college basketball, her love of service within the community, and what she's excited to accomplish during her time in the department. Being a police officer for two years, Rivera transferred to Ludlow and became interested in police work predominantly due to her basketball coach.



Patrolman Desiree Rivera

I grew up in a very tough neighborhood, very tough city, so he was my mentor to tell me what to do, follow the steps, and say I can be like him. I want to be that person for children in tough areas and tell them that just because you're in this tough environment doesn't mean that you need to be a product of it, and motivate them just like he motivated me,” explained Rivera. Attending Nichols College and playing college basketball until graduating in 2020 with her criminal justice degree, Rivera stated that her degree was one of the only things that sparked an interest in her. Beginning her career in Foxborough and then transferring over to Pelham, with prior experience working as a dispatcher for over five years, Rivera commented she needed a change of atmosphere and wanted a chance to help

Please see **RIVERA**, Page 5

Board discuss FY27 budget, changes to health costs

By Amanda Munson
 Staff Writer
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LUDLOW – On Feb. 3, the Select Board and Town Administrator Marc Strange discussed the FY27 budget and updates that occurred right before the meeting held that evening. Strange began with a hopeful update that the Town is in a manageable spot. “We previously had budgeted for an 18% increase in our health insurance premiums for FY27 and that was on the recommendation of

our representative who had the latest information. And what happened was that it was based upon a trust average of 16% and our loss runs were a little bit higher than everybody else who's in that trust, and what happened was instead of a 16% trust average increase for all the municipalities, there was actually an 8.3% reduction was due to Blue Cross Blue Shield; they will no longer be covering GLP-1 medications after July 1, 2026. They also renegotiated some pre-phar-

macy and prescription reimbursements with their providers; the trust average was 8.3 and our increase is 7.5%. This 7.5 is below the trust average,” said Strange. The Town's health insurance increase will be 7.5%, and Strange explained that it changes the game of the budget dramatically. Strange also updated that the Town received the governor's proposal where she issued her budget proposal the last week of Jan.

Please see **FY27 BUDGET**, Page 8

SEPAC visits East St. literacy night, educates families

By Amanda Munson
 Staff Writer
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LUDLOW – During the last week of January, the Special Education Par-

ent Advisory Council, also known as SEPAC, visited the East St. School literacy night on Jan. 28 and spoke with families about their ongoing support and advocacy for all children with special

needs in the community. The council helps to establish a network of parents and guardians of children with special education needs and creates a safe space to share information and experiences. SEPAC meetings provide informational workshops and rely on the active participation of parents and guardians to effectively represent the needs of their community and to make informed changes for the betterment of their community; based on the LPS website. Whilst walking through the elementary school, The Register spoke with Council Chair Jennifer Duncan, a dedicated mother and advocate, to learn more about the importance of supporting families and fostering growth with inclusivity and acceptance. Duncan had been chair for one year, secretary for three years, and said her eighth grader had been



Members of the Special Education Parent Advisory Council with Council Chair Jennifer Duncan who shared information for families at East St. Turley photo by Amanda Munson

Please see **SEPAC**, Page 6



Patrolman Quashawn Branch's family from left to right: Daughters Aniyah and Asani Branch, Father-in-Law Peter Whyte, Mother-in-Law Marilyn Whyte, and Wife Priscilla Branch with Patrolman Branch. Submitted photos

LPD promotes Quashawn Branch as patrolman

By Amanda Munson
 Staff Writer
 amunson@turley.com

LUDLOW – “I did it for my family.” Beginning his time at the Ludlow Police Department as a special police officer in Aug. of 2023 and recently being promoted to full-time on Dec. 29 of 2025, Patrolman Quashawn Branch shared before coming to the Town of Ludlow, he was working at Baystate Health for over 10 and a half years. Soon after transitioning into a part-time role at the LPD, Branch explained he wanted more out of the job and is happy to be now full-time and shared he's doing it all in support of his family. Branch began, “I wanted more and being a special police officer at the LPD was an amazing opportunity and to be able to come to the department and be a part of it. I got to learn more and

when I saw the opportunity arise, I jumped on it with everything. Coming to Ludlow, it was an opportunity to expand my career. Police Chief Brennan at the time was the lieutenant, and Retired Chief Valadas was chief, and they both welcomed me with open arms. I am a little older compared to the department and got into policing when I was 31 years old, so for me it was a difficult transition, but Brennan and Valadas helped me through it. Especially Valadas at the time, I went to him and told him what my interests were and expressed that I wanted to become full-time with the department, so he helped me pursue that. The command staff were receptive, and they followed suit as well. They helped me

along the way and encouraged me; that was very big for me. The culture of the department was very inviting, not just the department, but the Town itself. Every time I've been there for FESTA or stopped at a store to get a drink, everybody has been very respectful to the department and they're proud of the police officers, and I felt immediately that I needed this,” said Branch. Prior to the LPD, Branch worked the night shift at the medical center and worked as a special police officer and a supervisor, with some similarities to both work environments but felt he needed a change. “I worked at the hospital for so long



Patrolman Quashawn Branch

Please see **BRANCH**, Page 5



Turley photos by Amanda Munson

Members discovering the various card designs and craft options at 'The Art of Card Making'.

Card making at the Senior Center

LUDLOW—On Jan. 29, the Ludlow Senior Center offered 'The Art of Card Making' with Card Maker Irene Robinson, who brought three pre-designed handmade card kits and instructions so everyone could do it and share with their friends and family. Many members were expressing their gratitude for Robinson and her creativity, saying that they would've never thought of using the materials and designs she created.



Card Maker Irene Robinson returned to the Senior Center to teach how to create handmade cards, just in time for Valentine's Day!



With three card options for members, everyone walked away from art class with unique cards to give to a loved one.

Strange updates Select Board with noise bylaw

By Amanda Munson
Staff Writer
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LUDLOW – On Feb. 3, Town Administrator Marc Strange shared the TA report with the Select Board and began by stating the Special Town Meeting bylaws were approved by the

Attorney General's Office. "Essentially in any Town where a meeting approves a new bylaw or bylaw amendment, those changes have to be reviewed by the Attorney General's office and have 90 days to review, and they typically approve them. Then there's a public posting period which I believe is 30

days, and once that public posting period and review period is over, the bylaws are actually enforceable. The time period ends on Feb. 4 and the notable bylaw changes that were approved by Town Meeting in Oct. was the newly created 'Unreasonable Noise' bylaw," said Strange.

Corned beef and cabbage dinner at First Church

LUDLOW—St. Patrick's Day is fast approaching. You can begin the month by celebrating with a delicious Corned Beef and Cabbage meal to-go on March 7, 2026. The meal includes corned

beef, cabbage, potatoes, carrots, Irish soda bread, and dessert. All for only \$18.

Call now to make your reservations 413-547-8720.

Drive by First Church in Ludlow, 859 Center Street,

Ludlow between 4:30 and 5:30 p.m. and we will deliver your meal right to your car.

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



LUDLOW SENIOR CENTER (413) 583-3564
228 State Street, Ludlow MA 01056

Welcome to the Ludlow Senior Center

Don't let winter keep you away from the Ludlow Senior Center! Gather with friends in the Center's beautiful dining room and enjoy a delicious lunch complete with coffee, tea, and dessert. To join us, just call 413-583-3564 a day in advance to reserve your \$2 lunch (Call Friday for Monday lunch).

February is Heart Health month, and we have scheduled several events and programs to help you. Pick up our monthly Newsletter at the Center or share your email with us to have it delivered straight to your inbox. You can also explore programs, find important forms, and learn more about what a Senior Center has to offer at ludlow.ma.us/coa/. For the latest news and photos, be sure to "like" the Ludlow Senior Center on Facebook!

As the days grow colder, we look forward to sharing warm meals, great programs, and good company with you. Please note that if the Ludlow schools are closed or have a delay due to inclement weather, the Center will be closed or have a delayed opening. Be sure to check News 22 or 40 for delays or closings

Activities Calendar:
Please register in advance for items with*

Thursday, February 12

9 a.m. Tai Chi
9:30 a.m. Dominos
10:15 a.m. Mindful Meditation
10:30 a.m. Sen. Oliveira Office Hour
10:30 a.m. Friends of the Center Mtg.
12:45 pm. Mahjong
1 p.m. Noodle Hockey
2:30 p.m. Active Yoga

Friday, February 13

8:45 a.m. Boomer Bootcamp*
9 a.m. Reiki by Appointment*
9 a.m. Ice Sculpturer on the patio
10 a.m. Boomer Bootcamp*
10 a.m. Blood Pressure Checks
10:30 a.m. Trivia
1 p.m. Ceramics
1 p.m. Health Bones & Balance*

Monday, February 16

Closed Presidents Day

Tuesday, February 17

9 a.m. Quilting
9 a.m. Line Dancing
10 a.m. Cribbage
10:30 a.m. Gentle Yoga
1 p.m. Western Dance Class

1 p.m. Brown Bag Pick Up*

1:30 p.m. Bingo
4:30 p.m. Power Pump
4:30 p.m. Souper Supper
4-6 p.m. Tech Help by Appointment*
5 p.m. Movie: Train Dreams (2025)

Wednesday, February 18

8:45 a.m. Zumba Gold
9 a.m. Ceramics
10 a.m. Opera
10:30 a.m. Healthy Bones & Balance*
1 p.m. Dominos
1 p.m. Movie: Train Dreams (2025)
1 p.m. Healthy Bones & Balance*
1:30 p.m. Heart Health with CareOne
4:30 p.m. COA Board Meeting

Thursday, February 19

9 a.m. Tai Chi
9:30 a.m. Dominos
10:15 a.m. Mindful Meditation.
12:45 pm. Mahjong
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, February 12: Vegetarian Chili/Corn Bread
Friday, February 13: Valentine's Lunch! Ranch Chicken/Au Gratin Pot/Peas
Monday, February 16: Center Closed Presidents Day
Tuesday, February 17: Cajun Crab Cake/Wild Rice/Glazed Carrots
Wednesday, February 18: Potato Crunch Fish/Scalloped Pot/Green Beans
Thursday, February 19: Birthday Lunch! Salisbury Steak/Mashed Pot/Veggies
Reserve a delicious \$2 lunch by calling a day ahead. all on Friday to reserve lunch on Monday.
For allergy concerns, call the Senior Center to inquire about ingredients at 413-583-3564.

National Cribbage Day celebrated on Tuesdays

LUDLOW—Cribbage is one of the oldest regularly played card games. Created by Sir John Suckling in the early 17th century, the game evolved from the old English game "nobby". Although the exact date cribbage was invented is unknown, National Cribbage Day is celebrated yearly on Suckling's birthday, February 10.

Millions of Americans of all ages enjoy cribbage at home with family, at bars, senior centers and social clubs. The most com-

mon version is played with two players using a cribbage board with pegs and 121 holes. The American Cribbage Congress (ACC) is the governing body of cribbage in the United States, hosting tournaments and maintaining a national ranking system. The ACC includes more than 5,000 players of all ages and over 500 grassroots cribbage clubs. In addition, the ACC has an internet cribbage program giving members an opportunity to play in online tournaments.

Locally, the "Pegging Fools" (Club #72) Cribbage Club meets every Tuesday evening at 6:30 p.m. at St. Gregory Armenian Church, 135 Goodwin St., Indian Orchard.

For more information about local cribbage activities or National Cribbage Day events, contact Peter Setian, 413-552-6336.

The ACC continues to promote and grow the game of cribbage nationwide and on the internet. More information is available at www.cribbage.org.



Team Mass Boys & Girls AAU Basketball Tryouts

Serving Central & Western MA for over 25 years!

Cost: \$30 Covers both tryouts (players get t-shirt)
AAU membership needed \$28
(purchase on our website, we'll pull them)

Tryout # 1: Saturday, February 21, 2026

Location: Tantasqua Jr High School
(320 Brookfield Rd., Fiskdale, MA)

- Boys Grades 4th-6th 8:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.
- Boys Grades 7th & 8th 9:45 a.m. - 11 a.m.
- Boys Grades 9th-12th 11 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
- Varsity players sign up if still playing with school**

- Girls Grades 4th-6th 12:15 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
- Girls Grades 7th-8th 1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.
- Girls Grades 9th-12th 2:45 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Tryout # 2: Sunday March 1, 2026

Location: Oxford High School
(100 Carbuncle Dr., Oxford, MA)

- Boys Grades 4th-6th 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Girls Grades 4th-6th 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
- Boys & Girls Grades 7th & 8th 5:45- 7 p.m.
- Boys and Girls Grades 9th-12th 7:15 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
- Varsity players sign up if still playing with school**

Pre Register/pay on website: teammassbasketball.com
Questions Email: teammassbasketball@gmail.com or call 413-539-1548
AAU affiliated club for over 25 years!

NEW PROGRAMS
Spring 2026



Select Teams
Boys & Girls
8th-Varsity
(12th)



Little Ballers
Grades K-3
Please email
signups after
AAU tryouts

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Masonry by Acacio
Chimneys, Walls and
Other Masonry Specialties
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Home: (413) 543-6773

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Call: 413-222-6841
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The Register

Welcome Dr. Meunier

We are excited to introduce the newest addition to Ludlow Family Dentistry, Dr. Zachary D. Meunier. Dr. Meunier is returning to Western Massachusetts and is a general dentist who has earned his D.M.D. degree from Midwestern University in Illinois.

During dental school Dr. Meunier presented research nationally at the American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research (AADOCR) conference in Portland, Oregon through the Academic Dental Career Fellowship Program (ADCFP). He also lectured and taught dental students reflecting his dedication to both excellent patient care and continued dental education.

Dr. Meunier has shadowed and trained alongside specialists across every dental discipline and completed one-on-one implant training through the Implant Pathway program. As a general dentist, he provides endodontics, implant dentistry, and oral surgery while referring highly complex cases to specialists to ensure the best outcomes for his patients.

He believes in listening carefully to his patients to fully understand their needs and concerns, allowing him to provide personalized, high-quality care for every individual.

Outside the office, Dr. Meunier and his wife, Joyce, share their home with their three loving cats. He enjoys cooking, mountain climbing, hiking and camping.

Dr. Meunier looks forward to partnering with you in achieving a lifetime of excellent oral health.



Ludlow Family Dentistry, PC
FRANK J. MITERA, DMD • TIMOTHY J. YOUNG, DMD
257 Kendall Street, Ludlow, MA 01056 • (413) 583-6574



Sen. Jake Oliveira given Legislator of the Year Award

By Emily-Rose Pappas
Staff Writer
epappas@turley.com

REGION – The Massachusetts Municipal Association hosted its annual conference, this year called Connect 351, in Boston, in order to award two State Senators and two State Representatives with the Municipal Advocate Award, recognizing them for their service to the communities they represent and serve.

The Massachusetts Municipal Association, or MMA, works to connect and support municipal leaders by creating a nonpartisan space for shared learning, ideas, and a voice to bring to Beacon Hill in order to make the 351 towns and cities of Massachusetts more connected and unified.

“The more state support that municipalities can get, the better. Making sure that we have reliable state support for our 351 towns and cities is a lot more equitable. I believe that we are in a Commonwealth, and we should work together to benefit our towns,” said Senator Jake Oliveira.

Oliveira worked hard to file legislation for towns to have the option to make hybrid meetings permanent, offering a way for meetings to become more accessible to the public, amongst many other benefits.

“It’s worked so well,



Recipients of awards at Connect 351: Representative Jim Arciero, Representative Danielle Gregoire, Senator Brendan Crighton, and Senator Jake Oliveira.

even at the state house, and it makes it easier for people to participate in their government. It definitely improves services, and it was a great help in the long run to allow for more flexibility and an easier time to share information,” said Oliveira.

Oliveira partnered with the MMA to obtain funding for essential services at the local level, including Chapter 70 funds, school transportation, and much more. He also helped work to change

the Chapter 90 funding formula in order to help Western MA communities have better roadways that are more cost-effective.

“It was a good conference, and it was very meaningful for me to receive the award,” said Oliveira. “It was great to go to the MMA conference, because you got to see town managers, city councilors, and more, some of whom I worked with while I was part of the school committee.”

To further honor Oliveira’s dedication and service to the communities, the Selectboard from the town of Longmeadow also presented him with an award.

“As someone who came from municipal government, it was very meaningful to receive this award. We really work and fight hard to get these resources for our towns and cities, and working with that is something that I take a lot of pride in.”

Great Decisions returns to the Wilbraham Library

WILBRAHAM - Registration has begun for the 2026 Great Decisions Discussion Group at the Wilbraham Public Library. Starting Feb. 4, the group will meet weekly on Wednesdays from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. through March 25.

Each year, Foreign Policy Association selects eight critical issues facing the country to be the subjects of conversation.

The topics for 2026

include America and the World: Trump 2.0 Foreign Policy, Trump Tariffs and the Future of the World Economy, U.S.-China Relations, Ruptured Alliances and the Risk of Nuclear Proliferation, Ukraine and the Future of European Security, Multilateral Institutions in a Changing World Order, U.S. Engagement of Africa, and The Future of Human Rights and International Law.

Participants are encouraged to order a briefing book to read in advance so they can be informed and ready to engage.

Briefing books are available on the association’s website, fpa.org. One copy of the briefing book will be available at the Service Desk for in-library reading.

To register and learn more, visit wilbrahamlibrary.org, or call the library at 413-596-6141.

Armchair Travel Series: Poland

WILBRAHAM – There’s more than one way to travel. Join your fellow travelers for a virtual adventure fueled by authentic Polish cuisine, music and fun.

The event will take place on Thursday, Feb. 26 from noon to 2 p.m. at your leisure. Call 596-8379 to register, walk-ins also welcome. Sponsored by the Friends of the Wilbraham Senior Center.

LUDLOW CARES from Page 1

so this was a way to combat some of the isolation and recognize they’re a remembered part of our community. That’s how we at Cares created this gift bag idea where we were delivering bags to homebounds,” explained Leonczyk.

As a coalition, Leonczyk stated that they’re not just youth and family focused; its community focused and saying that a strong community has everyone’s involvement in it and fostering those relationships and connections continues to be important. “This is a soft side of this service, delivering a handmade bag and there’s a lot of love and spirit that goes into making those, with a lot of other organizations,” said Leonczyk.

Beginning with the Ludlow Cares Coalition volunteers, the Ludlow Fire Department will provide information on fire safety at home, the Ludlow Health Department will offer resources and a small gift, members of Ludlow Highschool Cares who will participate on Feb. 11 to build the bags, along with support from sponsors and donors to make this heartwarming event possible. In the gift bags there will be word puzzles and brain teasers, homemade cookies donated by Second Time’s A Charm, homemade cards created by East St. School, Harris Brook Elementary, and the Ludlow Boys and Girls Club/Community Center youth, and this



For this year, East St. and Harris Brook Elementary School kids created heartwarming cards to be delivered within the bags.



Valentine’s Day gift bags are decorated with hearts, handmade cards and come with a sweet treat.

edition of The Register!

The gift bags will be distributed to a few places like to homebound seniors in Town and Keystone Commons, with Leonczyk also noting Cares is partnering with Our Lady of Fatima ‘take and eat’ program that delivers meals monthly and will deliver gift bags to participants of that program too.

“We visit the residents of Keystone and visit them at their lunch. All the volunteers enjoy that time and connection because you see the look on their faces, and they all light up. Especially when you are in the memory care unit. It’s a change in their routine and it’s a small gesture but has a big impact on them on that day as they look through the bag. It’s a very uplifting

experience and Cares will be putting in a flyer that details what our organization has done over the last year, what our mission is and ongoing projects. This will gain awareness of the different things going on in Town as well,” said Leonczyk.

Leonczyk shared the overall mission behind the Valentine’s Day gift bags and continued, “A lot of the times Valentine’s Day is about dinner dates or chocolates, but for a homebound senior it might be a quiet reminder of isolation, and we want to change that. As they enjoy our gift, we want them to know they are remembered and appreciated, and this small gift brings a smile to their face and reminds them they’re still loved and a cherished mem-

ber of our community,” said Leonczyk.

Cares Member Maxine Mazur added, “For Cares, this is a small way to bring a smile to their face. You never can do that too often and part of Cares is continuing to show appreciation to the entire community.” Leonczyk remembers from previous years that the delivery of the bags is one of the volunteer’s favorite parts of this project. Cares Member Joel Frietas ended by saying, “There’s a unique kind of magic that happens at the door step, when you see a senior’s face light up, you realize you’re not just delivering a bag but delivering a moment of connection that stays with them for a long time after they leave.”

SO GOOD TOGETHER ROSES, DINNER & WINE

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With Cabernet Wine Sauce

Crab Stuffed Lobster Tails ~

with Butter & Lemon

Choice of Appetizer & Dessert

Dinners Include Roasted Baby Potatoes,

Baby Vegetables & Mini Ciabatta Bread

Please Order By February 12th

Randall’s Hand Dipped
Chocolate Covered
Strawberries



Sweetheart Wines Of The Month

Valentine Angels & Devils

Angelic Electra Moscato Rosé

\$10.99 750ml

The Velvet Devil Merlot

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631 CENTER ST., Route 21, Mass Tpke Exit 54

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OPINION

GUEST COLUMN



Male gadwall

On Dec. 20, compilers at the Athol Christmas Bird Count recorded a total of 58 species including a Gadwall, a first time for this species during a Christmas count.

Male Gadwall have grayish-brown heads, sometimes showing cinnamon on the forehead and faint purplish iridescence on the crown. Females resemble female mallards, but they have a thinner, darker bill.

Gadwall nest in tall vegetation near water and show a preference for nesting on islands. Their choice of nesting location gives them some protection from predators. Female Gadwall produce an egg a day and lay a clutch of seven to 12 eggs. To meet their demand for protein during this stressful time, female Gadwall eat more invertebrates than males during this period in addition to using reserves of nutrients they've stored in their bodies during the winter.

Their winter habitat is fresh and brackish wetlands with abundant aquatic vegetation on which they primarily forage. Gadwall often snatch food from diving ducks as they surface. Gadwall number have increased in North America since the 1980s. This is partly because of conservation of their habitat, wetlands and adjacent uplands.

The oldest known Gadwall was a male, and at least 19 years, 6 months old. He was banded in Saskatchewan in 1962 and shot during hunting season in Louisiana in 1981.

Christmas Bird Count
The National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts take place within a 22-day period, there are many state count circles and volunteers must be available. Despite snowy weather, compiler Jon Skinner said of the Groton-Ayer count on Dec. 14, "I was surprised that we were able to scratch our way to 81 species in such snowy conditions. It has to be a testament to the relentless nature of both our team and the birds." Two new species were added 13 black vultures soaring over Lancaster and a killdeer at Devens. Some of the other highlights were evening grosbeak in both Harvard and Groton, red crossbills in Townsend, Lapland longspur at Fitchburg Airport and in Ayer, chestnut-collared longspur at Fitchburg Airport, American kestrel in Groton, two Baltimore orioles in Groton, eastern Phoebe in Shirley, redpoll in Lancaster and a long-eared owl in Devens. Species seen three days before or after the actual count date and noted as such were chipping sparrow, brown-headed cowbird, Peregrine falcon and sandhill crane.

Bluebird
I received an email on Jan. 26 from Jeffrey Landry. He had a visit from a bluebird on Friday, Jan. 23. He thought it was either the male parent or one of its offspring from a previous summer. He said, "For several years I have called him, 'Sunshine' and he arrived at my feeder on a bright beautiful winter's afternoon and this uncalled for visit was icing on my day's cake."

He offered to share this bluebird story. He said, "I was sitting on my meditation cushion yesterday watching my breath emerge from a deep silence and then gently return back into it. There was no counting, no manipulation, only watching, only flow. After some time had passed, I opened my eyes because I felt I was being closely watched."

"I have a bird feeder right outside of my window and sure enough a male bluebird or one of his offspring from a previous summer, was perched and staring directly at me. Two summers ago I named the parent bluebird, 'Sunshine' and last May he returned to the same nesting box in my front yard. Quizzically, Sunshine leaned slightly forward. He was amazingly close."

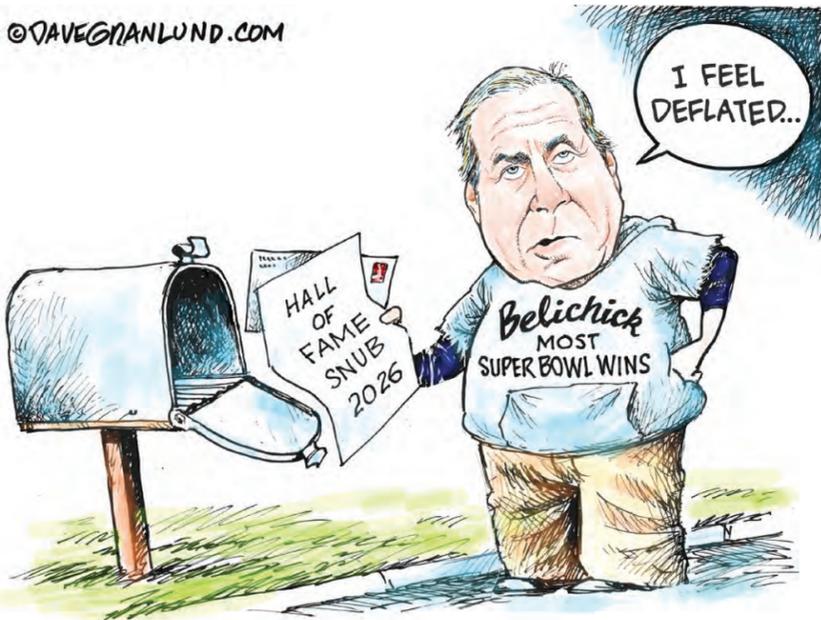
"It was beautiful, glorious to see his blue rust colored body outlined by a background of white snow still clinging to frozen lilacs and tall trees. The sight of this sent ripples of love, that became currents of joy, to course through me."

"I felt a smile stretch a mile wide across my whole being. It was like being visited by a long absent friend. Within minutes this made me get up and fill another feeder with dried mealworms because bluebirds aren't seed eaters like many of the other birds that seek nourishment here. Like my breath, the mealworms disappeared into a well of silence. A contented peaceful silence that then took flight."

Evening grosbeaks
A Cummington resident sent a photo of evening grosbeaks at her feeder. She said they are part of a flock that come to visit the feeders often.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005. The Palmer office has a new phone system and I will be getting an extension where messages may be left. I will publish the number as soon as it is set up.

©JAVEGRANLUND.COM



GUEST COLUMN

Online seed houses offer endless choices

It's been a fun couple of weeks in the realm of gardening! While I haven't yet gotten my hands into the soil yet, I have been on the hunt for all kinds of seeds for the Old Sturbridge Village gardens: those for obscure medicinal plants, unique heirlooms, and rare native plants.

That process has led me to some interesting mail order companies that I'd like to share with you.

My mail order "go to" for herb seeds has always been Richter's (www.richters.com) but when I couldn't locate a few of the items on my list there, a simple internet search lead me to Thyme Garden (www.thymegarden.com).

Their catalog boasts over 400 varieties of herb seeds and more. The text doubles as an herbal encyclopedia of sorts, providing the reader with cultural information in addition to loads of herbal lore.

A paper copy will set you back \$2.50, but you can get a digital download for free. It's noteworthy to mention that many of the seeds are harvested on the farm in Oregon. The company has been in business since 1989, and clearly knows their stuff.

I purchased both Jimsonweed and Cotton for the Paul Roger's Herb Garden from this company.

Prairie Moon Nursery (www.prairiemoon.com) is an excellent source for native plant material and seeds. This statement from their website gave me something to think about: "Native plants co-evolved with native insects and wildlife; they are deeply dependent on one another. These plants provide food and shelter to insects, birds, and other small animals, which in turn support larger predators. Native plants are the fundamental stepping stones of a healthy ecosystem."



While many of us already enjoy growing native plants, the impact of doing so goes far beyond our ornamental gardens.

Prairie Moon offers seeds, blended seed mixes, plants and more, and their catalog is free for the asking. You can also download a catalog and cultural guide.

Growing native plants from seed often requires specialized treatments such as chilling or nicking and soaking, so I'd definitely recommend brushing up. I found Toothwort (at last!) and Late Horse Gentian, both for the herb garden.

Sometimes the tricky part about searching out heirloom seeds in the issue of cultivars. For example, I need a black flowered Hollyhock known scientifically as *Alcea rosea nigra*, yet what I discover are cultivars called "Jet Black" or "Black Watchman." I want the original.

Here is where seed sales at Monticello (www.monticelloshop.org) come in handy. Thomas Jefferson was an avid gardener, and the display gardens around his estate highlight many of his favorite plants.

I was also able to secure seeds for unimproved versions of Rusty Foxglove and Black Eyed Susan Vine. Because of this good fortune, you will see authentic 1830s gardens when you visit the Village.

There is no printed catalog to my knowledge, but the shop has its seed sales organized in a friendly manner online. Some seeds are even harvested on site.

Speaking of authenticity, it's also important that we utilize heirloom vegeta-

ble varieties within our gardens, so that you, the visitor, see the real deal, 1830s style. I've often ordered heirloom vegetable and flower seeds from Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Company (www.rareseeds.com) and this year is no exception.

Their big, beautiful Rare Seed and Whole Seed Catalogs are free for the asking and seed shipping is free, also. Search over 1,300 seeds.

If you can't find what you are looking for there, hop on over to Victory Seeds (www.victoryseeds.com) and there will be more heirloom, open pollinated, non-GMO varieties to choose from. I love the concept of Victory Gardens, and the company does a great job of explaining and promoting it.

Victory Seeds offers free shipping on all orders over \$30 and their website provides "quick links" to each main category for easy online shopping. They also encourage seed saving practices, which is neat.

This summer, look for China Rose Radish, Tall Telephone Peas, Boston Marrow Squash and Long Green Cucumber growing in our gardens and used in our households. These were all purchased from Victory Seeds.

If you are bored one afternoon, why not take a look at what these or any number of reputable seed houses have to offer. You will no doubt expand your plant knowledge while you expand your garden!

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

The REGISTER

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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.

We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions deemed to be libelous or contain unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks, defamation of character and offensive language.

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 theregister@turley.com. The deadline for submissions is Friday at noon.

SUBMISSIONS POLICY

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.

Publicity chairpersons are encouraged to send in news about upcoming fundraising or other calendar events at least three weeks before the event.

If you are having difficulty with a press release or need help, please call (413) 283-8393.

To send submissions by regular post, mail to: The Register, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

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ELECTION LETTERS POLICY

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

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

Campaign news

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

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

Why is my Social Security Retirement benefit so small?

Dear Rusty:
Can you help me understand?

I have paid into Social Security since I started working in 1978. I did have a lot of tax deductions, but I don't understand why I only receive \$350 a month from Social Security.

Signed: Befuddled Senior

Dear Befuddled Senior:
Your Social Security benefit is based upon your average monthly earnings for the 35 years over your lifetime that you earned the most while contributing to the Social Security program; however, your benefit



ment age. Your personal Full Retirement Age depends on the year you were born which, if you were born in 1960 or later, is age 67. However, if you claim Social Security before reaching your FRA, you will get only a percentage of your PIA, reduced from what you would get if you claimed at your FRA.

For example, if you claimed at age 62, you would only get 70% of the amount you would have gotten had you waited until age 67, or if you claimed at age 63 you would get 75%

Please see **SOCIAL SECURITY**, Page 1

NOTICE

ERRORS: Each advertiser is requested to check their advertisement the first time it appears. This paper will not be responsible for more than one corrected insertion, nor will be liable for any error in an advertisement to a greater extent than the cost of the space occupied by the item in the advertisement.

What's Happening at Hubbard Memorial Library

To register for programs or find out more information, visit ludlow.cwmars.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 10-2. Closed Saturdays during the summer, Sundays and holidays.

Friends of the Hubbard Memorial Library, third Thursday of the month, 6:00 p.m. Get involved! Join the Friends of the Library for their monthly meeting and learn how you can help support the library.

FOR ADULTS

Sound Energy Healing Series One Saturday per month 10:30 AM. Sound healing brings individuals into a state of relaxation and rest. Enjoy an hour of peace and calm while sitting or laying on a yoga mat, absorbing the healing vibrations from instruments such as the quartz

crystal bowls lead by Julia Nadolny. Bring a yoga mat or towel, something to lay on during the program and a blanket to cover yourself up in. **Dates: 2/28, 3/28, 4/25, 5/23, 6/13.** Please register on our website or by calling the circulation desk. Sign-ups are for the individual session, not the entire series.

Mass Center for the Book Monthly Reading Challenge Each month, you'll be challenged to read a book based on a chosen theme. Those who participate will be entered to win a free tote bag full of books! For more information and to sign up, please visit <https://www.massbook.org/readingchallenge-2>

Chair Volleyball for Seniors, every Thursday, 1:30 p.m. Have some fun and join us for chair volleyball! No running or jumping required. Please sign up on our website or by calling the circulation desk at 413-583-3408. Walk-ins are welcome.

Who picked this book? Book Club Meeting, first Thursday of the month,

3:30 p.m. Join us for this month's Who picked this book? Book Club meeting! You can pick up a copy of the book at the circulation desk.

Happy Hour Book Club Meeting, last Thursday of the month, 6:30 p.m. Join us for this month's Happy Hour Book Club meeting! You can pick up a copy of the book at the circulation desk.

FOR YOUTH

Blind Date with a Book, through February 14. For tweens and teens. Let us set you up with a great book! Drop-in.

Valentine Card Making, through February 14. For all ages of youth. Drop-in and make a unique Valentine card.

True Tales Storytime for Homeschooled 5-8 year olds, Wednesday, February 11, 1:00 pm. Please register.

Lego Build Challenge, every Wednesday, February 11, 18, 25, 12:00

to 5:00 pm. All creations will be put on display in the Youth Room for the week. Drop-in.

Grow, Play & Learn Playgroup for 0-2 year olds, Thursdays, February 12, 26 (not February 19) 9:45 - 10:30 am. Sponsored by Pathways for Parents CFCE. Please register.

Grow, Play & Learn Playgroup for 2-5 year olds, Thursdays, February 12, 26, (not February 19) 10:45 - 11:30 am. Sponsored by Pathways for Parents CFCE. Please register.

Online Gaming Club for YAs, Thursdays, February 12, 19, 26, 3:30 - 5:00 pm. For ages 10-15. We have Minecraft! Please register.

Massachusetts Children's Book Award Book Group (MCBA), monthly, Thursday, February 12, 6:00 - 6:45 pm.

Please see **HUBBARD**, Page 9

RIVERA from Page 1

people who are going through the rut.

"Being able to make more of an impact and Ludlow was the right fit for me diversity wise. The department's great and it's a very tight knit community; they support police, which is even better, and it felt right. I wasn't always a cop and as a dispatcher, I know what goes on behind the phone and translate it to in-person now which made it way easier. For the community, I look forward to building that relationship and am excited to interact with more residents," said Rivera.

The aspect that Rivera is looking forward to is the advancement within the department, stating how many opportunities there are for growth in Ludlow and that her focus currently is to work with the K-9 specialty.

"I love dogs and that's what got me into it. I had an Australian Shephard, super smart and I used to train him all the time. I spent so much time training him and I felt like this was what I wanted to do. Hopefully in the near future," expressed Rivera.

To those who may be interested in joining police work, Rivera shared advice.



Turley photo by Amanda Munson

Patrolman Desiree Rivera with Police Chief Mike Brennan who both began their new positions around the same time.

"Keep your feet clean, keep your hands clean, and do the right things when nobody's looking. You are who you are when nobody's looking and even though you think there's not, somebody's always looking. Just always do the right thing, stay fit and work out, and find a hobby outside of the job. Making time for your family, mental health is important and spending time with

mine is what I like to do to decompress. Don't forget where you came from, remember your roots," said Rivera.

Rivera added that she's looking forward to youth community events, especially activities involving competitive sports to engage in and is excited to meet more of the residents and neighbors she will be now serving.

BRANCH from Page 1

that I was comfortable and very accustomed to that life. Anybody in that position having to leave a job for a decade, it's going to be rough, but I knew what I wanted.

Taking the chance to go to the LPD full-time was going to help me advance in my career and achieve my goals. I have two children, 16 and a 12-year-old and it's tough, I've always prided myself in making my kids proud.

My wife is a nurse at the hospital, so a lot of factors were played into it. I didn't do it just for myself; I did it for them. I wanted them to be proud of what I was doing," said Branch.

Branch's goal as a patrolman of the LPD is to give back to the community, commenting that he enjoys helping people and making them feel safe. Born and raised in Springfield, Branch shared he has friends that are police officers and when first working at the hospital, he began as a security officer.

Going to the academy and being sworn in as police officers, it opened Branch's world to what he could accomplish.

"These were things I never saw myself doing but when I got involved in it, I became very interested. I am the first in my family to be a police officer and felt I had so much to give to a community like Ludlow, to help more people and be a

protector. Part of me being a parent instilled that in me too," said Branch.

To the community, Branch had a few words to end with, "The department has a social media account and when Desiree Rivera and I were appointed, the community was very receptive and welcoming; I wanted to say thank you for welcoming me with open arms. I will do my best at all times to protect and serve the community and if you ever see me out and about, please speak because I am definitely a people person. To my family, thank you for sticking by me with everything and I will make them proud."



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With gorgonzola chive butter
- Spinach & Strawberry Salad** ♥
Fresh spinach, strawberries, candied walnuts, red onion & goat cheese with strawberry balsamic vinaigrette

Entrées

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Herb-Crusted Rack of Lamb ♥ <i>Creamy mashed potatoes, tender asparagus Mint demi-glace</i> Zuppa di Pesce (for two) ♥ <i>A romantic seafood stew featuring jumbo shrimp, sea scallops, mussels, haddock & Lobster tail Served with garlic points</i> His & Hers Steaks ♥ <i>6oz filet & 12oz New York strip Served with fingerling potatoes & asparagus</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lobster Ravioli ♥ <i>In a rich cream sauce with Penivian drop peppers, topped with Parmesan crisps</i> Chicken Saltimbocca ♥ <i>Pan-seared chicken breast topped with prosciutto, sage & fontina Kalamata olives, capers, White wine tomato broth</i> Grilled Swordfish ♥ <i>Topped with mango salsa, Served with coconut rice & cilantro oil drizzle</i>
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IN THE CLASSROOM

Colleges announce Fall 2025 Dean's Lists

American International College Fall 2025 Dean's List

SPRINGFIELD—American International College (AIC) in Springfield, MA, is proud to announce that 489 students have earned a place on the Dean's List for the fall 2025 semester. These full-time students have attained GPAs ranging from 3.3 to 4.0. AIC applauds the dedication and achievements of these enterprising students.

INDIAN ORCHARD
Aryanna Cosme, Faydora Saint-Gilles, Brianna Evans, Alaysia Jenkins Graham

LUDLOW
Elizabeth Braz, Calleigh Foley, Ariana Kilduff, Nicole Audet, Jocelyn Figueroa and Carissa Mendes

Morelli named to Clark University's Fall 2025 Dean's List

WORCESTER—Timmy Morelli, of Ludlow, Mass., was named to first honors on the Clark University Dean's List. This selection marks outstanding academic achievement during the Fall 2025 semester.

Students must have a GPA of 3.8 or above for first honors or a GPA between 3.50 and 3.79 for second honors.

WPI Announces Fall 2025 Dean's List

WORCESTER —

Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) has announced its Dean's List for academic excellence for the Fall 2025 semester.

The criteria for the WPI Dean's List differ from that of most other universities as WPI does not compute a grade point average (GPA). Instead, WPI students are named to the Dean's List based on the amount of work completed at the A level in courses and hands-on projects.

The following students were named to the Fall 2025 Dean's List:

Jacob Moquin of Ludlow, class of 2028, majoring in Biology and Biotechnology

Jadyn Neiford of Ludlow, class of 2027, majoring in Biochemistry

William Reed of Ludlow, class of 2027, majoring in Chemical Engineering

Kyle Rodrigues of Ludlow, class of 2029, majoring in Aerospace Engineering

Matthew Santos of Ludlow, class of 2027, majoring in Civil Engineering

Varvara Sas of Ludlow, class of 2029, majoring in Chemical Engineering

Caden Vilinskis of Ludlow, class of 2028, majoring in Chemical Engineering

WNEU Fall 2025 Dean's List

SPRINGFIELD—Western New England Univer-

sity is proud to announce the outstanding academic achievements of nearly 800 students named to the Fall 2025 semester Dean's List including:

LUDLOW

John McClintock, Michael Pedro, Lance Tomlinson, Timothy Del Negro, Krystian, Hannah Perlak, Adam Krutka, Jetta Albright, Christian Roche, Stephen Goodreau, Keely Smyth, Anthony Shea, Andrew Provost, Owen McCarthy, Anabella Castro, Alexis Leab, Ryan Goodwin, Cooper Zukowski, Ava Moutinho, Sophia Scyocurka, Jaidyn Gaudreau, Isabella Murphy-Rodriguez, Christopher Calvanese, Hong Zhang, Lillian Przybyl

INDIAN ORCHARD

Blanca Amaya, Jenna Branco, Robert Beyette, Zacharia McClendon, Emily Lopez, Jamin Dong

Ciesla named to Salve Regina University's Fall 2025 Dean's List

NEWPORT, RI —Nicholas Ciesla of Ludlow was named to the Dean's List during the fall 2025 academic semester at Salve Regina University. To qualify for the Dean's List, students must earn a semester grade point average of 3.6 for full-time students completing at least 12 graded credits, or a semester grade point average of 3.8 for

part-time students completing at least six credits.

WNEU Fall 2025 Semester President's List

SPRINGFIELD—Western New England University (WNE) takes immense pride in recognizing the outstanding academic achievements of nearly 600 students who have been named to the President's List for the Fall 2025 semester. Students are named to the President's List for achieving a semester grade point average of 3.80 or higher.

Matthew Saloio of Ludlow has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Jessica Morgado of Ludlow has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Rayna Ferris of Ludlow has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Alexander Murphy of Ludlow has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Cameron Touchette of Indian Orch has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Daniel Gesualdi of Ludlow has been named to Western New England Uni-

versity's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Hallie Dones of Ludlow has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Anthony Saloio of Ludlow has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Kylie Hua of Ludlow has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Alexina Laporte of Ludlow has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Malina Dinis of Ludlow has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Sophia Dobek of Ludlow has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Emma Ellis of Ludlow has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Aiden Carmona of Ludlow has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Cole Bamford of Ludlow has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Edison Zheng of Ludlow has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Theryn Pelletier of Ludlow has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Yaxiel Lopez of Springfield has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Lucas Costa of Ludlow has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Savanna Ferrabelo of Ludlow has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Austin Assaf of Ludlow has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Lucas Franco of Ludlow has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

James Dias of Ludlow has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Fejer Hasan of Indian Orch has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Holyoke Community College scholarship season is open for 2026-2027

HOLYOKE - The Holyoke Community College Foundation is now accepting scholarship applications for the 2026-2027 academic year.

The application deadline is Friday, March 13, 2026.

Last year, the HCC Foundation awarded 410 scholarships worth about \$364,000 to 379 incoming, current, and transferring HCC students. Some students received multiple scholarship awards. The average scholarship award is typically around \$900.

Students must be currently enrolled at HCC or have been accepted for the upcoming academic year to

be eligible for scholarships.

Applicants only need to fill out a single online form to be automatically matched with the scholarships they are most qualified to receive. There are scholarships for new students, current students and students transferring to other institutions, scholarships based on financial need, scholarships for students in specific majors, scholarships for residents of certain communities, and scholarships that recognize academic achievement.

To view scholarship opportunities and begin the application process, please go to: www.hcc.edu/scholarships.

The HCC Scholarship Resource Center, on the first floor of the Donahue Building (Room 158), is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., to help current and incoming students navigate the process of applying for scholarships.

The HCC Foundation is a 501(c)(3) that works to advance the college's mission, vision, and values. Founded in 1968 as the Friends of Holyoke Community College, in response to a devastating fire that forced the college to rebuild on a new campus, the Foundation now manages assets of more than \$20 million, the largest community college foundation endowment in Massachusetts.

Questions should be directed to the HCC Foundation office at 413-552-2182, or by email to scholarships@hcc.edu.

SEPAC from Page 1

on an IEP, individualized education program, since preschool. "Ludlow helped us navigate that for us, we knew something was up and didn't really know. Ludlow pushed and pushed and they got everything for him. He actually was able to do an international trip with the travel club so from being like, 'I can't function in society' to 'Bye Mom! I'm headed over to Italy!' so Ludlow's help was huge. But what was huger was when I found out about the SEPAC and I had no clue what I was doing," explained Duncan.

From not knowing the process to moving up to council chair, Duncan shared that her first time walking into a SEPAC meeting was when she

was surprised to see the director of special education sitting in the meeting amongst the members. "It changed everything, it changed how I was able to communicate with the department of special education, how I could communicate my child's needs...it changed everything. Afterwards, it was only a couple of years that I joined the committee," said Duncan.

Referring to the literacy night at East St., Duncan and SEPAC were thrilled to get a table to present at the school since many don't know that the group exists. "It's run by parents with the help of the special education director, so we're here trying to get parents involved and commit. It's harder because you want people to understand we're here

for you and it's easier to talk to a parent than it is to talk to a professional, especially when you're frustrated and things aren't going right. SEPAC is that outlet to be like, 'Hey, my kid is going through this' and I can say, 'My kid went through that too, this is how we were able to navigate it and this is how we came to this'. We want people to know that we exist and for us to be able to be here, to be seen and people stopping and asking what we're doing is huge," said Duncan.

For families interested in learning more, Duncan explained that Director of Special Education April Rist and her are 100% available. For Rist, contact a_rist@ludlowps.org. For Duncan, contact jeduncan@baypath.edu.

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TOWN OF LUDLOW REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICE PROGRAMS

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

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

All proposals must be submitted by mail, fax or e-mail to the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 60 Congress Street – 1st Floor, Springfield, MA 01104, fax 413-732-2593, or emastroianni@pvpc.org by 2:00 p.m. Wednesday, February 25th, 2026.

SPORTS

Lions come away with win over Renaissance



LUDLOW – Last Thursday night, Ludlow High School held on to an early lead and took care of business against Renaissance High School 56-49.

The Lions had a very strong finish to the match-up with a 21-12 run to end the game. Ludlow got 16 points from Tyler Tatro and 12 points from Jackson Mateus.

The Lions are 11-7 and are next awaiting whether they make the Western Mass. tournament or play nonplayoff games. Ludlow will make the state tournament.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

Jackson Mateus tries to pass over a teammate.



Tyler Tatro looks to get around an opponent.



Spencer Huntley passes on the run.



Filipe Fernandes takes a free throw.



Kobe McKay looks for a teammate to pass to.



The Ludlow defense spreads out on a play.

Sectional hockey to have new look for tournament this year

By **Tim Peterson**
Sports Correspondent

WEST SPRINGFIELD—The 2026 Western Massachusetts high school hockey tournament is scheduled to take place from Feb. 16-19.

Six of the seven Berry Division teams will qualify for the Class A tournament.

The Berry Division teams, who are looking to qualify for the Class A tournament, are Westfield, East Longmeadow, Greenfield, Minnechaug Regional, Longmeadow, Ludlow, and West Springfield.

The Westfield Bombers are the two-time defending Class A champions. They defeated the Greenfield Green Wave, 7-3, in last year's championship match.

All six of the teams in the Fay-Wright Division will be competing in this year's Class B tournament.

Those six teams are Easthampton, McCann Tech, Amherst, Taconic, Agawam, and Chicopee High School.

Agawam defeated Taconic, 6-1, in last year's Class B championship match.

The top two teams in Class A & B will automatically advance into the semifinals.

Prior to playing the semifinal round, the top-seeded team in Class A will be facing the second-seeded team in Class B. The top-seeded team

in Class B will also play the second-seeded Class A team.

Those games will boost the team's state power rankings.

The other four teams in each of the classes will be playing in the quarterfinals on February 16.

The higher-seeded teams will be hosting the quarterfinal matches.

Any of the quarterfinal games played at the Olympia Ice Center in West Springfield will be held during the daytime. The game times on rink 1 will be 11am and 1:30pm. The games on rink 2 will be at noontime and 2:30pm.

The losers of the quarterfinals will be playing non-playoff games against each other.

The Class A semifinals are scheduled to be played at Olympia on Feb.17. The start times for those two games will be 11am and 1:30pm.

The Class B semifinals are scheduled for Olympia on Feb.18. The start times for those two games will also be 11am and 1:30pm.

Both Western Mass. finals will be played on Feb. 19 at Olympia on Feb.19.

The Class B finals will be held at 5:30 p.m. followed by the Class A final at 8 pm.

The tickets prices for the semifinals and finals are \$8. Tickets are available through GoFan Only.

There is not a different price for students or senior citizens.

Ludlow hockey falls in overtime

WEST SPRINGFIELD – Last Saturday afternoon at Olympia Ice Center, Ludlow hockey, which co-ops with Belchertown, was defeated by East Longmeadow 4-3 in overtime. Nathan Ribeiro, William Mitus, and Nick Deroin had the goals for Ludlow. Sean Kefalas had two assists. Ludlow is 6-9 heading into the final week of the regular season. The Lions are still in position to qualify for the state tournament. They were ranked No. 26 in the Division 3 power rankings as of last week.



Nick Deroin receives the puck with the backhand.



Gavin Harrington looks to center the puck.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Tannar Severyn continues up the ice.



Jackson Gagner recovers the puck and heads up the ice.

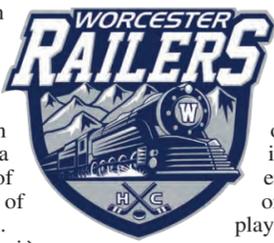
Railers fall to Lions in overtime

TROIS-RIVIÈRES, QC — The Worcester Railers HC (21-17-4-1, 47 pts) fell in overtime to the Trois-Rivières Lions (18-20-1-3, 40 pts) in front of a crowd of 2,793 on Saturday, February 7th, with a final score of 2-3 at the Colisée Vidéotron. The Railers will play Trois-Rivières next in Worcester on Friday, February 13th, with a 7:05 p.m. puck drop.

The Lions nabbed the first goal for the afternoon, as Anthony Beauregard (1-0-1) took advantage of the heavy traffic in front of the Railers net. Worcester answered Trois-Rivières' goal in the third period with two back-to-back goals from Anthony Callin (1-0-1) to tie the game and Ryan Miotto (1-0-1) to take the lead (2-1). Egor Goriunov (1-0-1) claimed the second Lions goal with a slapshot to re-tie the game. This tally pushed the game into overtime. The final goal of

the afternoon came from Lions' captain Morgan Adams-Moisan (1-0-1) for a final score of 3-2 in favor of Trois-Rivières.

Trois-Rivières secured the initial lead of the afternoon at 16:47 in the first. While Worcester saw a power play turned 5-on-3 chance in the midst of the period, the two-and-a-half-minute advantage would go unfulfilled. Worcester then went on the penalty kill and successfully barred the Lions from capitalizing. As the game neared the 17-minute mark, Trois-Rivières bested the Railers amidst ongoing traffic along Parker Gahagen's crease. While Gahagen remained tied up one side of the net, Anthony Beauregard (9th) played an opportune rebound off



of a Railers' skate to score. Shots on goal were 11-8 in favor of Trois-Rivières. The Railers went 0-for-2 on the power play, while the Lions went 0-for-1.

The Lions held on to their 1-0 lead from the first through the second twenty minutes of action. The Railers received the only power play of the period at the 19-minute mark, as Trois-Rivières' Cédric Deruisseaux headed to the box for slashing. Worcester outshot Trois-Rivières 11-10, while the Lions added another infraction to their count for a total of three.

Worcester's scoreless streak ended in the third period. Anthony Callin (15th) broke the clean slate with a breakaway goal at 4:54. Callin charged the Lions' net, where Lavallière

could not stop the momentum and pushed himself over the goal line. Just thirty-nine seconds later, Ryan Miotto (10th) capitalized on an attempted clear of the Lions' net by Charles Martin. Martin pushed the puck with a backhanded pass into the awaiting Miotto for another Railers goal. The Lions tied the match with a one-timer from Egor Goriunov (2nd) at 16:44. The tally pushed the game into overtime, the third appearance for the Railers in their past four games. Trois-Rivières ended up with the 3-2 OT win, the final goal a tip on the doorstep from captain Morgan Adams-Moisan (8th), the initial shot from Darick Louis-Jean. Final shots were 39 for Trois-Rivières and 25 for Worcester. The Railers and the Lions each earned one penalty in the third, which brought final totals up to two for Worcester and four for Trois-Rivières.

Registration underway for QVBL

SOUTH HADLEY – Registration has opened for the Quabbin Valley Baseball League, an over-28 recreational league, held its first meeting of 2026 to prepare for the upcoming season.

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

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

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

For returning players to the league, the deadline is Mar. 22 at 12 noon to be registered for the 2026 season in order to be guaranteed a roster spot. There will be open prac-

tices for all players but specifically targeted at new players scheduled for March 29 and April 4 at times and locations to be announced. The draft is currently scheduled to take place on April 4 following that practice.

The season is currently slated to start on Sunday, April 19 and following the success of the six-team fall league last year, the league will also have a fall league in September and October this season.

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

Aside from the weeknight and Mother's Day games, other games take place Sundays at 10 a.m. outside of Mother's Day, Memorial Day and July 4 weekends. Playoffs will be in August. This is the 30th season for the league and league officials are looking to celebrate the anniversary with a couple of events.

FY27 BUDGET from Page 1

and the local aid for Ludlow comparative FY26 was plus \$370,000.

"The way the state budget process works is the governor comes out with her proposal at the end of Jan., the House will now come up with their own budget and the Senate will come up with a budget, and there will be a conference committee towards the late Spring. That committee

will come up with the final budget that typically does not get finalized until May, June, July, sometimes afterwards. We typically stick with the governor's proposal as the basis for our budgeting purposes," said Strange.

Strange stated there were other standard adjustments to the budget and stated that currently the Town's excess capacity is \$222,000, meaning that the Town is not taxing its levy capacity for the year, commenting

that it's great news. Strange also mentioned putting together the level two budget presented to the Select Board, one increasing the deductibles for the employee health insurance plans, commenting that they were originally considering a jump from 500 to 1,000 for the deductibles and up to 2,000 for a single and 4,000 for a family.

"Considering these changes, I think we're back down to considering a smaller deductible increase

to 1,000 for a single person and 2,000 for a family. That would save the Town about \$400,000, and obviously those savings are not currently contemplated within that \$220,000 excess capacity. There are also new positions and re-classifications that were requested that we're looking at and suggesting that most of them get approved by the board. That would add about another \$134,000 in costs. Lastly, another suggestion considering the sit-

uation that we're in now with the budget is increasing the school budget even further up to 3%, which would cost the Town another \$190,000," said Strange.

Chairperson Manuel Silva stated that the board is early in the process of getting the budget in order. "We look at things way early, but is it beneficial or not? I think it is because we have certain numbers that we have to deal with, and later when we get closer, we might be in dire straits

where we know what we had to do if things came to fruition. As we move forward, things change and like you said Marc, we didn't have the state numbers in yet. We didn't have the actual insurance premiums that we're going to have to pay. People have to understand that we are looking at preliminary numbers and please sit tight, wait until we get closer. We're still not there," said Silva.

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HPL lists February Events

HAMPDEN – Here are some upcoming February Teen Programs at the Hampden Library.

Saturday, Feb. 14 at Noon Teen Silent Book Club

Bring your own book, audiobook, graphic novel, etc., or borrow one of ours! We will read quietly for the first 45 minutes and then talk about our books!

Saturday, Feb. 21 at Noon Teen Stitch and Sip

Do you like to crochet, knit, or embroider? Bring your project to work on while you enjoy a tasty mocktail! All skill levels welcome.

All programs are for grades 5-12. To see our upcoming programs, visit hampden-library.org/events.

HUBBARD from Page 5

Read 5 nominated books and vote! Celebration with ice cream and photos in the Register in April! Please register.

Valentine Heart Jewelry, February 12, 4:30 pm. For youth ages 9 & up. Please register.

Backyard Bird Scavenger Hunt, Friday & Saturday, February 13 & 14. For all ages. Drop-in.

Tween Chaos Boardgame Club, (bi-weekly) Fridays, February 13 & 27, 3:15 - 4:45 pm. For ages 10-14. Please register.

Valentine Heart Magnets, February 14, 10:30 to noon. For ages 5 & up. Drop-in.

Minecraft Club, Saturdays, February 14, 21, 28, noon to 1:50 pm. For ages 7-11. We have Minecraft accounts. Please register.

Paper Making, Tuesday, February 17, 1:30 - 3:00 pm. For upper elementary, tweens, and teens. Please register.

Nintendo Switch Night, (monthly) Tuesday, February 17, 6:00 - 8:00 pm. For middle and high schoolers. There's pizza! Please register.

Sing With Me, Tuesdays, February 17, 24, 10:30 to 11:00 am. For 0-5s. Drop-in.

Pokemon Club, Wednesday, (biweekly) February 18, 3:30 - 4:45 pm. For grades 3-8. Please register.

Secret Stone Painting, Wednesday, February 18, 1:30 - 2:30 pm. For upper elementary, tweens, and teens. Please register.

Bingo, Thursday, February 19, 3:00 pm. Youth ages 5 and up. Please register.

Make a Glittery Star Bookmark, Friday, February 20, 1:30 - 2:30 pm. For youth of all ages. Drop-in.

Frozen Movie Dress Up and Karaoke Sing Along, Saturday, February 21, 11:00 - 12:45 pm. For youth of all ages and families. Drop-in.

Youth Chess Club, Mondays, (biweekly) February 23, 3:30-4:30 pm. Ages 9-17. Please register.

Storytime Series for ages 3-5; There's Magic in the Library, Mondays, February 23 & March 2 (not Feb. 16) 10:00 am. Space is limited, please register.

Anime Club, (biweekly) Tuesday, February 24, 3:30-5:00 pm. For middle and high schoolers. Registration recommended.

Youth Crochet Club, Tuesdays, (biweekly) February 24, 5:30-6:30 pm. For ages 10-17. Please register.

Tween Graphic Novel Book Club, Thursday, February 26, 5:00 - 5:45 pm. For ages 9-13. Please register.

"Read Between the Lines" High School Book Group, Friday, February 27, 3:00 - 4:00 pm. Please register.

Watercolor Day, Saturday, February 28, 10:30 - 1:30 pm. For youth of all ages. Drop-in.

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

Young Adult Volunteer Program, ongoing. For 6th grade through high school. Volunteer one hour a week in the youth room. Please see our website calendar for more information and to submit an application.

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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 theregister@turley.com

Wednesday, Feb. 11

The FRIENDS of Ludlow Animal Control's first 2026 fundraiser, "Share the Love" Valentine Fundraiser is being held at The Villa Rose Restaurant, 1428 Center Street, Ludlow, on Wednesday, February 11, 2026 from 12-9pm. The Villa Rose will donate 20% of all orders (except alcohol), for dine in / take out to this nonprofit. Proceeds go to FRIENDS of Ludlow Animal Control's "Help Us, Help Them!"

ONGOING

PLAY CRIBBAGE IN INDIAN ORCHARD - Cribbage players of all ages and ability are welcome to enjoy a fun time with other local cribbage players. Join us (Sept. through May) at Club #72, "Pegging Fools", Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. at St. Gregory Armenian Church, 135 Goodwin St., Indian Orchard. For more information, contact Peter Se-tian, 413-552-6336.

VOLLEYBALL at E Street School began Sept. 16th at 5:30 p.m. They play Tuesday and Thursdays.

Call the Ludlow Senior Center for more information 413-583-3564.

FOOD DRIVE BI-MONTHLY On the first Saturday of each EVEN month (February, April, June, August, October, December) First Church in Ludlow, 859 Center St, collects non-perishable foods. From 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., drive through the back parking lot. We will take your donations out of your car & bring them to the Community Survival Center to be distributed to those in need.

FREE CLOTHING. Every Tuesday from 9 to 11 a.m., in the school building located behind Crossway Christian Church, 2230 Main St., Three Rivers. Clothing from baby through adult. Current, seasonal clothes in all sizes. Bags are provided for easy shopping. For more information call Donna, (413)478-0768.

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.

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.

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.

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.

SOCIAL SECURITY

from Page 4

of your age 67 benefit. The reduction is less as you get closer to your FRA; if you claimed at age 65, you'd get about 87% of your full retirement age amount.

You can see your lifetime Social Security earnings record at your personal "my Social Security" online account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount (you will need to first create that online account), or you can call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 to request an "Earnings Statement" be sent to you. That statement will show your lifetime earnings by year, the 35 highest of which were used to calculate your PIA (your Social Security benefit at your FRA). Generally, your Social Security FRA benefit will be about 40% or less of your average indexed monthly earnings.

So, to recap, your SS retirement benefit isn't based on your contributions to the program; it's based on your average

monthly lifetime earnings. If you had less than 35 years contributing to the program, SS would still use 35 years in the benefit formula by using zero dollars in earnings for some number of years, which would result in a smaller AIME.

Thus, if you claimed before your full retirement age of 67, your SS benefit was reduced because you claimed early. And if you had less than 35 years of SS-covered employment, your AIME was less, resulting in a smaller PIA. And that is likely why your monthly Social Security retirement benefit is low.

One other thought to consider: if you are married and your spouse's monthly SS benefit is considerably more than yours (e.g., more than twice as much as yours), you may want to explore your options for spouse benefits.

I hope this explains how your SS benefit is calculated, but if you still question your monthly SS retirement amount, I suggest you first obtain your

"Earnings Statement" to review the lifetime earnings SS has on file for you. If there are any discrepancies in your Social Security's earnings record, there are correction remedies available to you. If that is the case, please feel free to contact us again for more information.

The Association Mature Citizens Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. This article is intended for information purposes and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

The Ludlow Register OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

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

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph.

Death Notices & Paid Obituaries should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

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

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April Beston serving as Rotary District Governor

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - April Beston, a resident of Wilbraham, is currently serving as district governor for Rotary International District 7890, which covers Western Massachusetts and most of Connecticut.

Beston, a member of the Ludlow Rotary Club for 15 years, has served as its treasurer—which she still does today—and its president.

“Around the same time, I served as treasurer of the district. Kind of stepped up through the roles there and eventually was approached to be district governor and decided it was something I would love to do and took on that role,” Beston said. “The role is a progressive role, so you learn for about two and a half years before becoming district governor, so it’s a learning path. So, I’ve been on that learning path for about three years now and now, finally, I’m in the midst of my district governor here and doing that and loving it. So, it’s been quite the journey.”

Beston has enjoyed meeting the Rotarians.

“The people in my district are fantastic and they

do a lot of good in the communities that we serve, but I’ve also had the opportunity to meet the Rotarians around the world. There’s literally a million Rotarians all over the world, so I’ve had the opportunity to meet, probably, thousands of people now at this point and it’s been fantastic,” Beston said. “It’s really taught me that no matter where you go, people really are all the same and Rotarians, in particular, are just people who want to help. It’s just been fantastic and quite an honor.”

Beston got involved in Rotary through networking opportunities through her work as a branch manager at a local bank, with a friend of hers suggesting she check out Rotary.

“I walked in the door and found out it was a service organization and I fell in love immediately and I said, ‘This is great, I really want to do this. I really want to help out,’ and it was a great way to not only build connections throughout a town that I was newly working in, but it was more importantly a way to serve that community in a meaningful way,” Beston said.

The most fulfilling part has been the opportunity to change lives and form friend-



Photo courtesy of April Beston

April Beston in a family photo after being installed as Rotary District Governor to serve Rotary International District 7890.

ships.

“The things that you wouldn’t get to do if you weren’t involved in a global organization. The change that you get to make when you’re working together with over a million people and you get to contribute to such large projects and such meaningful work really does show you what we can do together when we come together and that’s been amazing,” Beston said. “My personal kind of passion project, Rotary International’s largest

project, is polio eradication, so it just started back in the ‘80s and went on for about 40 years now. We’re really close to eradicating polio. I have friends who have had polio and just to see that I’m part of an organization that came together and really has eradicated a disease. That’s just so cool.”

In addition to encouraging new ideas and considering new ways for outreach, marketing and bringing in members, Beston also emphasized enrollment and membership.

“That’s a huge focus. Just like other membership organizations, enrollment in North America is a challenge. The way that people volunteer has changed in North America. People tend to be sort of one-off volunteering, which is great. I think it shouldn’t be discounted that people of all ages are volunteering at a higher rate now than they have in the past, so it’s tapping into that,” Beston said.

Another strategy is utilizing tools for bringing people in communities into the fold of the “greater Rotary Family.”

“Hopefully by doing that, we gain some members along the way. But even if we’re not gaining members, we’re gaining service throughout our communities no matter what we do,” Beston said. “The whole point is to help our communities and whether it’d be through membership or just through outreach, I think both are valuable. Ultimately, we just want to serve our communities in whichever way is most impactful.”

For anyone who wants to join Rotary, Beston had this advice.

“They can go to their website at rotarydistrict7890.org and we have a ‘Join Us’ button and we’ll connect them

with their local club. But, it can be as easy as popping into a local meeting as well. Every single club out there is thrilled to have anyone just stop by for a local meeting. Or call the local president and say, ‘Hey, I’m interested in doing something,’” Beston said. “So, whichever way you can connect with a local Rotary Club, they’d be thrilled to have you come in. I always say as long as you have a heart for service, you’re welcome to Rotary.”

On upcoming projects, Beston noted training Rotary Presidents for next year, a Thunderbirds game in April to raise money for polio, visiting other Rotary Clubs and a conference for the Interactors, the high school version of Rotary Clubs. She encouraged aspiring members to visit the district website for other projects at local clubs.

Beston said Rotary is here to serve.

“I’m very excited and honored that I get to serve in this role and represent the communities of Hampden, Wilbraham and Ludlow as district governor. I love these towns and it’s humbling. It’s humbling to be able to serve in this role and serve these communities,” Beston said.

A 30-year tradition at risk: Minnechaug’s ultimate party needs the community-now

WILBRAHAM/HAMPDEN - For more than 30 years, Minnechaug parents have come together with one shared goal: to keep our graduates safe on one of the most important-and risky-nights of their young lives.

That tradition is now in serious danger.

Since 1992, the Chaug Ultimate Party has provided Minnechaug Regional High School graduates with a fully supervised, all-night, alcohol- and drug-free cele-

bration on graduation night. The event-planned entirely by parents-offers students a safe place to be together, have fun, and celebrate without the pressures of drinking, impaired driving, vandalism, or other high-risk activities that too often accompany graduation night.

For decades, this event has worked. And now, it may end.

Due to declining community support, a shrinking

volunteer base, and critical budget shortfalls, the Ultimate Party is at risk of not continuing beyond this year’s senior class. If action is not taken soon, there will be no Ultimate Party for the current juniors or underclassmen-ending a tradition that has protected generations of Minnechaug students.

This is not a school-sponsored event. The Ultimate Party is privately funded and relies entirely on fundraising, donations, and volunteers. Every dollar raised helps cover transportation, venue costs, food, entertainment, and

supervision to ensure graduates have a safe and memorable night.

The reality is stark: Without renewed support over the next few years, this program will disappear.

And once it’s gone, it will be incredibly difficult to bring back.

This Is Bigger Than One Class

Fundraising for the Ultimate Party is not just about the current senior class—it’s about sustaining a tradition for future graduates. Every donation and every volunteer hour helps ensure that Minnechaug students continue to have a safe alterna-

tion on graduation night.

How the Community Can Help-Right Now

Donate: Cash contributions, merchandise, or gift certificates from individuals or local businesses are urgently needed.

Volunteer: Volunteers are the backbone of this event. Parents, guardians, and community members are needed to help plan, fundraise, and work the night of the party.

Spread the Word: Community awareness is critical. Please share this message.

Photos of recent graduates enjoying the Ultimate

Party can be found on Facebook at Chaug Ultimate Party—a reminder of what this community has built together.

Volunteers and Support Needed

Anyone interested in learning more, donating, or volunteering is encouraged to contact committee member Jen Pelletier at jpelletier18@gmail.com.

This is a call to action. If the Ultimate Party matters to you—if student safety matters to you—now is the time to step forward.

Because graduation night should end with memories, not regrets.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD26P0252EA
Estate of:
Cathie T Berman
Date of Death: 06/29/2022
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Late and Limited Formal Testacy and/or Appointment** has been filed by **Tarra Devine of Ludlow, 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 **Tarra Devine of Ludlow, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unimportant administration.**

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection

at this Court before: **10:00 a.m.** on the return day of **03/06/2026.** This is **NOT** a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

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

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

Date: February 05, 2026
Rosemary A Saccomani, Register of Probate
02/11/2026

Church DIRECTORY

<p>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 provided for ages 18 month- 3 yr</p>	<p>ST. ELIZABETH PARISH 191 Hubbard St., Ludlow 413-583-3467 Pastor – Rev. Msgr. Homer P. Gosselin In Residence – Rev. Norman Bolton Deacons: Normand Grondin, Keith Davies Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Visit our website at www.stelizabethludlow.org Like us on Facebook Check out our Parish App</p> <p>Wednesday, Feb. 11 – Daily Mass – 7:30 AM (C), Adoration – 8 AM (C), Holy Mother Choir – 4:30 (C), Scouts – 6 PM (ER), Cub Scouts – 6 PM (FLBH), Bible Study – 6:30 PM (JR)</p> <p>Thursday, Feb. 12 – Daily Mass – 7:30 AM (C) Friday, Feb. 13 – Daily Mass – 7:30 AM (C) Saturday, Feb. 14 –Dust & Pray Brigade – 10 AM (C), Confessions – 2:30 PM (C), Saturday Vigil Mass – 4 PM (C) Sunday, Feb. 15 – Daily Masses at 7:30 AM, 9:15 AM, 11 AM and 5 PM (C), Take & Eat – 8 AM (FLBH/K), Lifeteen – 6 PM (JR) Monday, Feb. 16 - Daily Mass – 7:30 AM (C) Tuesday, Feb. 17 – Daily Mass – 7:30 AM (C), Middle School Youth Ministry – 3 PM (JR), St. Rita Choir – 4 PM (C), Pasta Committee Meeting– 6 PM (ZR), Bereavement Support Group – 6:30 PM (ER)</p>	<p>OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH 438 Winsor St., Ludlow 413-583-2312 Father Pedro DeOliveira 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.</p> <p>FAITH COMMUNITY CHAPEL A Church of the Nazarene 485 East Street, Ludlow (413) 583-7875 Email: FCCPastorLisa@gmail.com Lead Pastor: Rev. Lisa Morrison Associate Pastor: Gary Coombs Sunday Morning Discipleship Groups meet at 9:45am Worship service meets at 11am OTHER MEETINGS Tuesdays: Zoom Bible Study 7pm Fridays: After School Club for Children 5pm AA Group 7pm</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>FIRST CHURCH IN LUDLOW 859 Center St. Ludlow 413-583-3339 Reverend Darcy Borden, Pastor Office hours Monday & Wednesday 10 am to 2 pm Available by appointment at other times Sunday worship at 10 am alternating weekly with Grace Union Church, Wilbraham Call or check Facebook or the website for the schedule of worship and events Service live-streamed at 10 am on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/firstchurchludlow Website: www.ludlowfirst.com</p>	<p>STS. PETER AND PAUL UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH 45 Newbury St. Ludlow, MA 01056 Phone: 413-583-2140 Pastor: Father Andriy Krup Liturgy schedule: Wednesday 9 a.m., Friday 9 a.m. Rosary for Peace in Ukraine on Wednesday at 6 p.m.</p>
<p>IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH 25 Parker St, Indian Orchard, 413-543-3627 Very Rev. Piotr Calik Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. CLOSED FRIDAY MASS SCHEDULE Monday 8:00am Tuesday 8:00am Wednesday No Mass Thursday 6:00pm Friday 6:00pm Saturday 4:00pm Sunday 8:30am (English) 10:15am (Polish) Confessions: Saturday - 3:15–4 p.m.</p>	<p>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.</p>	

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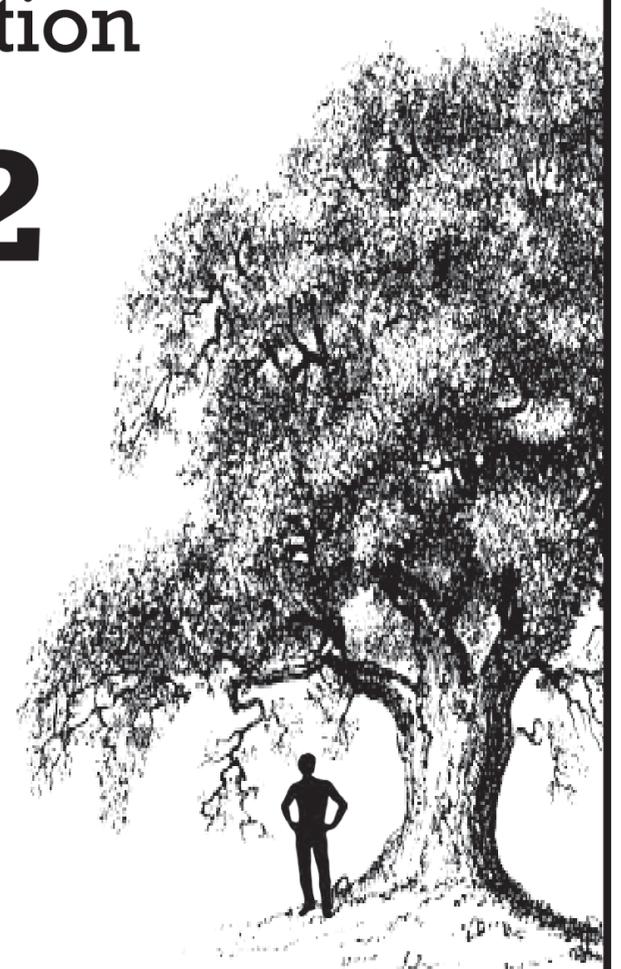
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