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THE LION KING, JR. *the musical*

By Amanda Munson
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LUDLOW – Last weekend on Mar. 14 and 15, the Harris Brook Elementary School Drama Club performed *The Lion King, Jr.* musical at the Ludlow High School and had an ensemble of over 110 students from grades two through five. After a long hiatus from the club's performance of *Finding Nemo, Jr.*, which sold out the LHS auditorium last year, the drama students were excited to show their families and friends what they've been working so hard on.

From memorizing lines, learning new songs, and perfecting choreography for the play, *The Register* was invited to attend one of the rehearsals before showtime and learn what they've been working on, beginning by interviewing the students who made the show possible. Below are interviews with the main cast and their thoughts a few days before the show, what they were most excited about, and why drama club and performative arts are crucial to their school experience.

Beginning with the role of Simba, the main protagonist in the musical, Fifth-graders Mia who played the role of young Simba and Bailee who played the role of adult Simba, shared their initial thoughts on receiving the



From giraffes to elephants, every animal was on the stage for *The Lion King, Jr. Musical*.

Submitted photo

role. "I was really excited, I was jumping up and down, going really crazy! Trying new things and I like singing a lot, it's one of my favorite things to do. I'm excited to perform 'I Just Can't Wait to be King' because it's creative, fun, and crazy," said Mia.

"My heart dropped, I was really excited because it was a main role and that's what I

wanted to be. This is our last year in the drama club. I love singing, acting, dancing, I sing in class all the time...it's really nice to make friends and just be with your friends all the time," said Bailee.

Next was the role of Nala, Simba's lifelong friend in the musical, who was played by Fifth-graders Violet as adult Nala, and Ava as young Nala.

"I just love singing, dancing, and connecting with

other people on stage. Nala has a solo song I like called 'Shadowland', that's the part I liked the most about the role. My family hasn't seen anything from the play yet so I hope they're surprised to see all the parts I have," said Violet.

"I love being in drama club and singing, acting, and dancing. It makes me express my feelings like being sassy or dramatic. Young Nala is

very sassy and smart, she's loud but has a lot of emotions. She's very calm too, there's a lot there. For the show, there's funny parts in the musical and it's very funny to see my friends do the part," said Ava.

Following was the role of Rafiki, a wise mandrill, played by Fifth-grader El-

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Behind the scenes

By Amanda Munson
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LUDLOW – After the success of the weekend on Mar. 14 and 15, presenting the musical of *The Lion King, Jr.*, Harris Brook Elementary School Principal Nikki Reed with Co-Directors Amy Anderson and Christine Fernandes shared what it was like taking on a school play with over 100 students and emphasized the importance of arts in the school system.

Beginning with Reed, "The *Lion King, Jr.* was truly magical and showcased not only the incredible talent of our students and directors, but also the strong sense of family within the Town of Ludlow and the HBES community. The amount of support and love felt throughout the production was amazing and made me proud to be the principal of such an amazing school!"

Following Co-Directors Anderson and Fernandes, who answered questions revolving around the musical, shared how the per-

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Elks receives Freedom Grant

By Amanda Munson
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LUDLOW – In March, the Ludlow Elks announced they received a \$1,000 grant from the Elks National Foundation that will continue to support veterans in Town. Freedom Grant projects must serve veterans and/or military members in need of support or services.

Susan Petzold from the Ludlow Elks shared they aim to make five different food and supply drops to the Ludlow Veterans Services within the year. "This is our second year receiving this grant and with it supporting our local veterans."

Sourced from the Elks website, the grant funds are

aimed specifically to serve our nation's veterans and/or active-duty military members in need, with projects focusing on employment, homelessness and housing, current military members and families, health, and educational support.

Upcoming is the annual Veterans Appreciation Dinner happening Apr. 11 at 5 p.m., inviting veterans to eat for free and guests of veterans for a \$10 admission. Honoring all who served with a meatloaf dinner, these events help continue to honor veterans throughout the year. For the Veterans Services, the Sgt. Joshua D. Desforges Scholarship Fund Run Walk Challenge will occur on Saturday, May 9, at 9 a.m., with an option for a kids race at 8:30 a.m.

Mary Stone turns 100

By Amanda Munson
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LUDLOW – Officially on Mar. 22, Mary Stone turned 100 years young and was honored at the Ludlow Senior Center with appearances from State Senator Jacob Oliveira and Select Board Member Anthony Alves, accompanied by family and friends. Honored at the monthly luncheons that highlight the month's birthdays, Stone donned a birthday sash and was accompanied by family like her son Carl and shared a few words to *The Register* before the lunch began.

"My best advice for the younger generation is don't drink and don't smoke, it's the only excuse I have! Go to church, keep track of

your family, keep in touch with your family, treat your friends nicely because that's what's important... family and friends," said Stone.

Born and married in Westfield to husband Harley, who has since passed in 2018, moved to a variety of places like Quincy, Weymouth Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Florida, New York, Virginia, and then back to Massachusetts to see her children more.

"We were 80 years old, my husband and I when we moved from Virginia back up north, I called it! We have a son in New Hampshire, a son in Massachusetts, and at the time, our

Please see **MARY STONE**, Page 5



Turley photos by Amanda Munson

State Senator Jacob Oliveira with Mary Stone and the citation from the MA Senate on behalf of himself and State Representative Aaron Saunders.

Ludlow Public Schools Food Services invites all to help stock shelves

By Amanda Munson
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LUDLOW – Occurring this week, Mar. 24-28, the Ludlow Public Schools Food Services program invites families and friends to help stock the shelves for the Community Survival Center and the Ludlow Veterans Services, titling the event as Shamrock Share.

The first annual drive will benefit surrounding communities like Wilbraham, Hamp-

den, Indian Orchard, Sixteen Acres, and Pine Point neighborhoods in Springfield.

Items needed are non-perishable food items, unopened personal care items, and paper products. Please note, non-perishable items will be collected at afternoon pick up before the dismissal time at East Street Elementary, Harris Brook, and Paul R. Baird Middle School. For personal care items: shampoo, toothpaste, deodorant, liquid and bar soap, first aid items, feminine hygiene products,

personal cleaning wipes, diapers and wipes for babies and toddlers. For paper products: paper towels, tissues, toilet paper, paper napkins, aluminum foil, plastic wrap, food storage bags.

Occurring until Friday, Mar. 28, collection boxes can be found at all Ludlow Public Schools and Ludlow Fire and Police Departments. The grand finale collection will occur at the front parking lot

Please see **FOOD SERVICES**, Page 8

TA shares report, upcoming Town Meeting dates, details

By Amanda Munson
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LUDLOW – At the Mar. 17 Select Board meeting, Town Administrator Marc Strange shared a report that reviewed the following items. After a reminder of the Annual Town Election on Mar. 23, "We are going to be hosting a pre-town meeting like we did last year on Monday evening, Apr. 27 starting at 6 p.m. at the Ludlow High School au-

ditorium.

The meeting is primarily for Town Meeting members, but the public is certainly welcome and encouraged to attend. We'll be previewing the Town Meeting warrant articles and answering any attendees' questions on each individual article.

Town Meeting as a reminder is Monday, May 11, starting at 7:30 p.m. and the public is welcome to attend and participate at the discretion of the Town Moderator. Only the Town Meet-

ing members will be voting.

We'll be starting the first iteration of the new town administrator evaluation process soon, I should be able to send you all the information soon and that process should begin in earnest early Apr. and there will be a public presentation of the findings at the end of June.

Last but certainly not least, we have a new trea-

Please see **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR**, Page 9

LUDLOW

'Cabaret Jazz' concert to be presented at Ludlow Community Center

LUDLOW—Mary Jo Maichack, professional vocalist, and pianist Stephen Page will present an hour's program of songs from the Great American Songbook, "Cabaret Jazz—The Songbook Voice and Piano" for adults (free and open to the public) at Ludlow Community Center on Thursday, April 16 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. The concert is free and open to the public.

This program is supported in part by the Ludlow Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

Ms. Maichack has spent decades as a full-time singer and storyteller. She is known for her beautiful vocals and as a storyteller, attention to the nuances of lyrics.

"I longed to sing these tunes that I grew up hearing and meant so much to

my family, as they did to others. To interpret the standards—songs loved by Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Barbara Streisand and their peers—is a moving experience. The composers of the day from Gershwin to Rodgers and Hart were superb, creating sublime music and lyrics. Many of the greats were immigrants to America, for whom English was a second language, making their accomplishments even more staggering."

Mr. Page of Amherst offers decades of experience as a jazz pianist. An exciting improviser, he has performed and taught in countless venues, accompanying legendary Sheila Jordan at the Iron Horse, playing with bass player Avery Sharpe and others, and in solo concerts. He teaches piano performance at Amherst College, Deerfield Academy and in his private studio.

Ludlow Public Schools hold 'Shamrock Share'

LUDLOW—Ludlow Public Schools Food Service Program is hosting its first ever "Shamrock Share" canned food and fiscal donation event to benefit The Community Survival Center of Indian Orchard, and the Ludlow Veteran's Services.

Tuesday, March 24 through Saturday, March 28. The grand Finale will be held in the front parking lot of the Ludlow High School on Saturday, March 28 from 12 to 2 p.m.

The drive aims to support local families in need within the Ludlow, Wilbraham, Hampden, and the Indian Orchard, Six-

teen Acres, and Pine Point neighborhoods of Springfield. We will be collecting donations throughout the week at the school locations and local area businesses.

We are excited to feature a special event at the Student Prince & Fort Restaurant in Springfield, Mass.

Celebrity Bartending Event on Wednesday, March 25 from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Student Prince and Fort located at 8 Fort Street in Springfield, Mass.

A highlight will be radio personality Rock102, Steve Nagle with music provided by Kitchen Jam Trio.

DA's Office encourages parents to attend Stop the Swerve event with driving-age teens

SPRINGFIELD - Hampden District Attorney Anthony D. Gulluni is encouraging parents and guardians across Hampden County to attend the upcoming Stop the Swerve prevention event alongside their high school, driving-age students.

The free event will take place on Thursday, April 2, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. at the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield. Stop the Swerve is focused on addressing the dangers of drunk, drugged, and distracted driving for our community's teenagers. The initiative brings together students, families, law enforcement, and community partners with one shared goal: preventing tragedies on our roadways before they happen.

A central component of the evening will be a new, locally produced documentary that examines the devastating impact of a real crash in our community.

The documentary centers on the tragic death of Jemyliana Vargas, a young Springfield woman who lost her life following a crash on Interstate 91 in Longmeadow in 2023. The incident underscores how quickly a routine drive can turn fatal and the devastating ripple effects these crashes have on families, friends, and the broader community. By sharing her story, with the support of her loved ones, the program aims to put a human face to the consequences of impaired and distracted driving and re-



Submitted photos

inforce the importance of making safe decisions behind the wheel.

Following the documentary, an Assistant District Attorney who specializes in motor vehicle homicide cases will speak about the legal consequences of impaired and distracted driving, as well as the long-term impact these incidents have on victims, families, and entire communities.

"This event is not just for students, it's for families," said District Attorney Gulluni. "Parents play a critical role in shaping safe driving behaviors. Stop the Swerve is an opportunity to come together, learn from real life events, and have conversations that can ultimately save lives."

In addition to the presen-



tation, students will have the opportunity to participate in interactive safety activities, including driving simulators, impairment-goggle exercises, and a pedal cart challenge designed to demonstrate the effects of impairment and distraction behind the wheel.

While students engage in these activities, parents will have the opportunity to attend a presentation by an assistant district attorney about the risks and liabilities associated with underage drinking and hosting teen gatherings.

The evening will also include the announcement of winners from the 2026 Stop

the Swerve Public Service Announcement (PSA) and Billboard Challenge, recognizing local students who have created impactful messages promoting safe driving.

All attendees of driving age can enter a raffle for free driving school tuition through AAA.

The Stop the Swerve event is free and open to all Hampden County parents and high school students. No registration is required.

More information can be found at <https://hampdenda.com/> or on the Facebook event page: <https://www.facebook.com/share/1L-2NxFqEPV/>

Wilbraham Women's Club to hold Fashion Show

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Women's Club is sponsoring a Fashion Show Luncheon on Thursday, April 23, at the St. Cecilia Parish Center, 42 Main St., Wilbraham. Clothing from Chico's in the Longmeadow Shops will be featured. The catered

luncheon choices are Salmon with dill sauce or Chicken Francaise.

There will also be a raffle for many prizes and gift certificates. Join us at 11:30 for a social time with hors d'oeuvres followed by lunch at Noon. The donation is \$42

and is a fundraiser for the club's scholarships and charitable donations to needy organizations in the area.

For reservations, please make checks payable to Wilbraham Women's Club and mail to Sue Agnew, 7 Aspen Dr., Wilbraham 01095. For questions, call Sue at 596-9480.

Be sure to include meal choice in memo of check. Also, include with whom you wish to sit. Thank you for your support.



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Submitted photos
The cast at the show posed together with friends and family before hitting the stage.

LEFT: The HBES staff behind the scenes that made this musical possible.

LION KING JR. from Page 1

liana, and the role of Zazu, red-billed hornbill bird, was played by Fifth-grader Cooper.

"My introduction to drama club was last year in fourth grade when Harris Brook Elementary did the *Finding Nemo Jr.* play and I played two roles. For this musical, I open the play with my song and have my own number with my friends, but I think they'll be proud of how much dedication I put in," said Elliana.

"I started this year doing *The Lion King* and I knew some of my friends were doing it and I decided to join. My favorite part is the song, *I Just Can't Wait to be King*, and my family is going to be proud to see the show," said Cooper.

Rose, who played Sarabi the Queen and Payton who played Sarafina as the mom, continued.

"I did it last year, it was a small role then and I liked it, so I went for a bigger role this year. For my family, I think there's some really funny lines everyone's going to like. My favorite part about the musical is that all the practices are really fun, it inspired me to do other stuff like dancing again. It inspired me to do it again," said Rose.

"I also did it last year and was one of the sharks, and it inspired me to do it this year. There's this one song called *Shadowland* that I hope my family gets emotional for. My favorite part is making new friends!" said Payton.

Landon, who played Mufasa, Simba's father, and Gia who played Scar, the main antagonist, shared their thoughts before the musical.

"It was exciting to see



Submitted photos
These zebras escaped and were smiling from ear to ear.

that I got the part, my family was too. I started doing musicals with *Finding Nemo* last year and I was a seagull in that one, and after that I wanted to get a main role. For my family, I think they would like my singing," Landon said.

"It's very exciting to see my name picked for the part; to play the villain...I went home and told my parents and my mom screamed! To start off, I always like music, dancing, and singing; I was in the play last year too. I took that experience to this play and put my all into my audition," Gia said.

Fourth-graders Olivia and Violet, who played Pumbaa's best friend Timon and Pumbaa, continued.



Submitted photos
These elephants donned pink bowties, dressed to impress at the musical.

"Mrs. Fernandes told me I got the role, and the whole school could hear me screaming! It was really hard to keep that secret, but I told my teachers. My friend Gia is playing Scar and her accent for the character is so good! Any scene she's in I get so excited about. My favorite part about drama club is it's an opportunity to meet new people, I made three new friends and it's fun," Violet said.

"I was happy I got it. I like the song *Hakuna Matata* the most because we have to make a transition from young Simba to older Simba, and I just think it's cool. I like drama club because there's a lot of people in our grade who're making new friends too. We get to practice a lot at home," Olivia said.

Lastly, Fifth-grader Adam played the role of Banzai, the male hyena, Ruby played the role of Shenzi, female hyena, and Olivia played the role of Ed the hyena.

"I was so surprised when I heard the news that I got the part because this is my first year doing drama club and I've never been in a

play before. I like drama club because of the scenes and going to Ludlow High School because I like getting to be a main character and I like speaking. I know a lot of people in drama and my friend helped me get a lot of time on the stage," said Adam.

"I've been in a little munchkin play, but this is a main role and I'm lucky to be in a main role because you get more parts! Meeting new friends is my favorite part of the drama club and I want people to enjoy it. I am sad that drama club is ending," said Ruby.

"I wanted this role so bad because I could do this really good laugh and it was really fun and nice to hear I got the part, I'm so excited. My favorite part about drama club is that people are laughing at my laugh! I can't wait to hear the parents laugh to hear it at first," said Olivia.

If you are interested in watching the musical, visit the LudlowTV website for a recording. Special thanks to the HBES Drama Club for coordinating these interviews.



The roles of young and adult Simba, Fifth-graders Mia and Bailee.

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OPINION

GUEST COLUMN



Social Security reduced my monthly payment

Dear Rusty:
My last Social Security payment decreased by about \$400, so I went to my online SS account and found a November 2025 letter explaining that my 2024 tax return showed a greatly enlarged Adjusted Gross Income.

Thus, SSA decided to withdraw monies, as of January 2026, from my bank account because I'd owed far more monies to them. The letter itemized my greatly diminished 2026 SSA monthly payment, explaining should my next tax return show a regular AGI, then SSA would return my SS income to regular amounts and return every prior month's deficits? Said letter also mentioned an optional recourse, that of compiling an "Appeal" to regain my ongoing decreased income. The extra amounts now withdrawn for Medicare Parts A and D alone are outrageously high. I'm a retired senior citizen on a fixed income.

According to SSA, my having sold a piece of land in 2024 allows SSA to decrease my SS income. Has this become a common practice against U.S.A. senior citizens? Thank you in advance for your input. Signed: Feeling Wronged

Dear Feeling Wronged:
From what you have shared, it appears that your SS benefit amount has been affected by a provision known as Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount. IRMAA isn't really a Social Security issue, rather it is a Medicare premium thing. But when IRMAA applies, it reduces your net Social Security payment because Medicare premiums are automatically taken from your Social Security benefit, thus making your net SS payment less.

If you look at your gross Social Security payment at your online "my Social Security" account you will see that your gross SS payment did not change, but your Medicare premium did, thus affecting your net SS payment. IRMAA, essentially, makes Medicare a "means tested" program, where those with a higher AGI can pay a higher Medicare Part B (and Part D) premium.

However, IRMAA is usually based on AGI from two years prior to the current year because your current AGI information isn't available from the IRS when Medicare premiums are determined in October of each year. FYI, you may have received a notice in the mail in early December tell-

ing you what your 2026 Social Security and Medicare amounts would be.

In a nutshell, the land you sold in 2024 apparently increased your AGI to exceed the base IRMAA thresholds, which are \$109,000 if you file your taxes as a single or \$218,000 if you file your income tax as "married/jointly." And the IRMAA supplements are "progressive" (higher if your AGI is more), so if your Medicare premiums went up by about \$400 about twice the 2026 standard premium, it's likely that your 2024 AGI was over \$137,000 if you filed as a single or over \$274,000 if you filed as "married/jointly." FYI, you can see the 2026 IRMAA brackets/premium amounts at this link: www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare/medicare-premiums.html

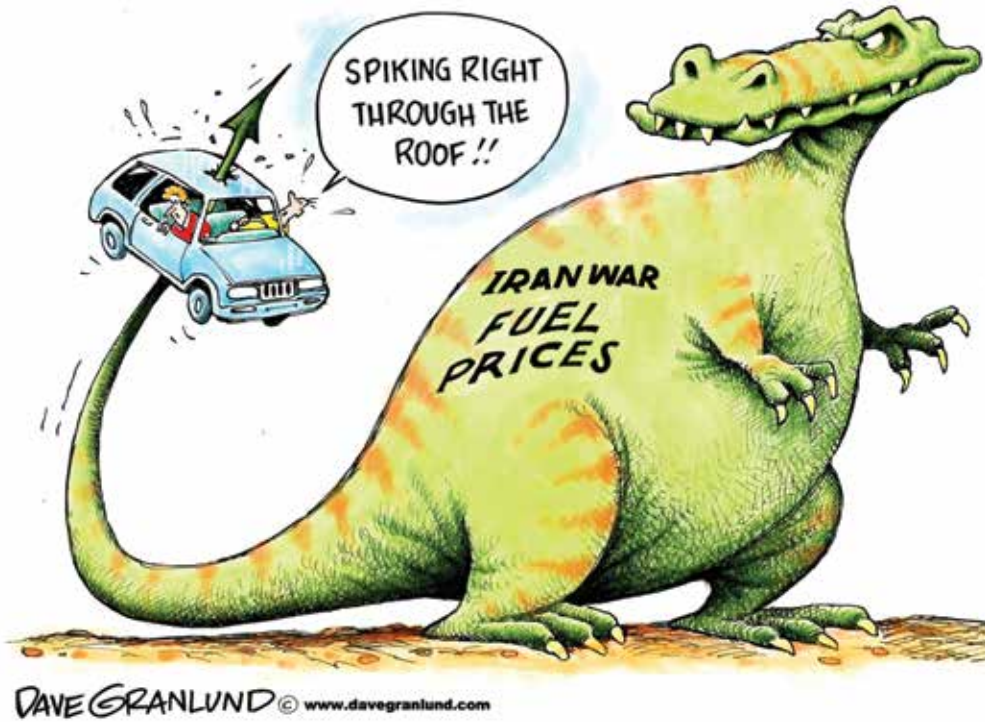
A couple of additional points:

Your Medicare premiums will, indeed, revert to the standard amounts for 2027, if your 2025 AGI amount is under the IRMAA threshold for your tax filing status.

There is no premium for Medicare Part A, which is coverage for inpatient hospitalization care, because you are receiving Social Security benefits. However, there is a premium for Part B of Medicare (which is coverage for outpatient medical services) and you must also separately pay a premium for Part D, which is coverage for prescription drugs offered by private insurers. And these IRMAA supplements apply even if you have a Medicare Advantage plan from a private insurer.

Unfortunately, your only "recourse" is, as SSA suggested, to appeal the IRMAA supplement, but that is usually successful only if you can prove you had a "life changing event," which caused (or will cause) your AGI to be less than that used to determine your IRMAA surcharge. Your best option at this point will likely be to appeal using a "Request for Reconsideration" (Form SSA-561) asking that your 2026 Medicare premium be based on a recent year's (e.g., 2025) lower income.

Finally, IRMAA isn't really a new thing – it was enacted in 2003, effective in 2007. But it does have a profound effect on many seniors, as I explained in this article I recently published on the topic: <https://amacfoundation.org/irmaa-a-medicare-surprise/>.



DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

GUEST COLUMN



By Ellenor Downer



Male yellow-bellied sapsucker

An Oakham resident saw a yellow-bellied sapsucker also known as yellow-bellied woodpecker at her suet feeder earlier this month.

They have a long pointed bill and the typical black and white feather pattern of the downy and hairy woodpeckers. Sapsuckers are larger than downy woodpeckers and smaller than hairy woodpeckers. The yellow feathers are muted and not that visible as the resident noted. They also have vertical, white wing patches. Both adult males and females have a red forehead. However the male has a red throat and the female, a white throat. Their young have brownish coloration, but they do have the white wing patches

As the name sapsucker implies, these woodpecker drill holes, row after row, to

get at the sap found in many native species of trees such as aspen, birch (paper and yellow), elm, eastern hemlock, sugar maple, etc. in springtime. Other birds such as ruby-throated hummingbirds, bats and insects also drink from these "sap taps."

People who burn wood most likely have seen the neat rows of holes drilled by the sapsucker in some of the wood from their pile. The drumming of the yellow-bellied sapsucker is very distinctive, consisting of a roll with clearly separated taps at the end and sometimes at the beginning "tap-tap trrrrrrrrrr ta-ta-tat-tat." Both sexes drum. Ritual tapping at the lower rim of the nest hole is a rather common acoustic signal.

The yellow-bellied is the only sapsucker seen in the eastern half of the U.S. and across the northern forests. These sapsuckers are migratory, which is a fairly rare trait for woodpeckers. They live in a variety of habitats from low-lying floodplains to mountainous forests at 10,000 feet. Their breeding range extends from Alaska to Newfoundland and south along the Appalachians. They winter across the East from New Jersey west to Texas and all the way south to Panama.

A common breeding display involves males pointing their bills skyward as they showcase their red throat patch for an interested female. Though both sexes are involved with excavating nesting cavities; males do most of the work. Occasionally, sapsuckers visit bird feeders for suet.

Bald eagle and turkey vultures

Early this month, a Worthington resident sent an email. He said he had a "lucky and thrilling sighting of an eagle, white tail obvious, circling on high with three turkey vultures and he called it "intra species cooperation" or more likely, the eagle using the vulture's ability to find carrion.

I saw three turkey vultures along Route 122 in Barre near Vernon Avenue on March 16. I saw two turkey vultures in Oakham on St. Patrick's Day. Their return is a sign of spring.

Robins

Huge flock of robins. Last week, I saw a huge flock of robins, probably close to 100 birds fly over head along Route 32 in Gilbertville. Robins overwinter in this area, but large flocks are the returning robins that migrate.

Canada geese

The Canada geese are also returning. I saw quite a few geese in a cornfield in Spencer last week. I also saw about a dozen or saw fly overhead.

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

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.

Smoking cessation is beneficial at any age

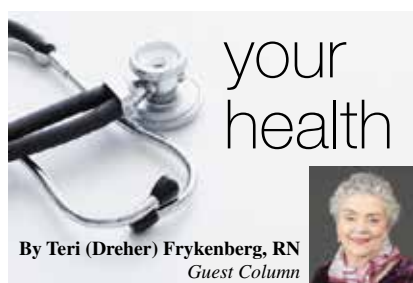
If there's one habit every doctor wishes you would break, it's smoking. Quitting significantly improves health and reduces the risk of diseases.

And this is true no matter what age you are, from your 20s right into your 70s. While some older adults may believe it's "too late" to change, evidence shows that about one-third of older adults who attend specialized clinics successfully quit and stay off cigarettes for at least a year.

Research has also found that even 75-year-olds who are able to stop cigarettes gain an average of one year of life expectancy. That's one more year to do some of the things you enjoy, like visiting with grandchildren (and not being relegated to the patio to light up).

Besides life expectancy, other benefits for older quitters are

A lower risk of disease: Older adults who quit have lower rates of death from heart attacks, strokes



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

and cancer compared to those who continue to smoke.

Reduced frailty: Stopping smoking is associated with a lower degree of "frailty" (a measure of increased vulnerability and weakness) over time, promoting healthier aging and better physical function.

Cognitive and sexual health: Quitting smoking can lead to improved brain function and has been shown to improve long-term sexual function recovery following procedures like prostate surgery.

Surgical success: For older adults facing surgery, quitting at least eight weeks prior can significantly decrease the risk of lung-related compli-

cations. If you can go eight weeks, you can keep going.

Quitting cigarettes is really, really hard because of the addictive properties of nicotine, which has been shown to boost dopamine in the reward circuits of the brain, but causes cravings and withdrawal symptoms when it's stopped. This is true whether your source of nicotine is a cigarette or a vape.

Most adults who smoke say they want to quit. A 2022 survey found that more than half of adult smokers tried to quit in the previous year. If you fall into that group, don't go it alone, especially if smoking is a decades-long ingrained habit. Chances of success improve with support from doctors and family.

Support for smoking cessation is everywhere you look. The National Cancer Institute hosts a website, smokefree.gov, which is chock full of tips and tech-

Please see **HEALTH**, Page 9

Tell Us What You Think

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

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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: Mon 9-5, Tue 9-8, Wed 9-5, Thu 9-8, Fri 9-5, Sat 10-2. Closed Saturdays during the summer, Sundays and holidays.

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

FOR ADULTS

Burial Grounds of Ludlow, Tuesday, March 31, 6:30-7:30 pm. Presentation on the cemeteries of Ludlow, given by Robert Comeau. Will appeal to anyone interested in genealogy, ancestry, and local history. Sponsored by the Ludlow Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency. Please register.

Sound Energy Healing Series, One Saturday per month, 10:30 am. Enjoy an hour of peace and calm absorbing healing vibrations from instruments like the quartz crystal bowl. Session led by Mystic Willow. Bring a yoga mat, towel, or something to lay on during the program, as well as a blanket. Dates: 3/28, 4/25, 5/23, 6/13. Sign-ups are for the individual session, not the entire series. Please register.

Technology Appointments, Have questions about your smartphone, tablet, or laptop? Book a 30-minute, one-on-one technology appointment by visiting the reference desk or calling (413) 583-3408, x114.

Seeking Local Artists, Seeking local artists, craftspeople and collectors who would like to display their wares in the library's display case. Exhibits remain in place for one calendar month. For more information, or to arrange a showing, call (413) 583-3408, x113.

Mass Center for the Book Monthly Reading Challenge, Each month, read a book based on a chosen theme. Participants 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 pm. Have some fun and join us for chair volleyball! No running or jumping required. Please register, though walk-ins are welcome.

Who picked this book? Book Club Meeting, first Thursday of the month, 3:30 pm. Join us for this month's Who picked this book? Book Club meeting! Pick up a copy of this month's book at the circulation desk.

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

FOR YOUTH

Grow, Play & Learn Playgroup for 0-2 year olds, Thursdays, March 26, April 2, 9:45 - 10:30 am. Sponsored by Pathways for Parents CFCE. Please register.

Grow, Play & Learn Playgroup for 2-5 year olds, Thursdays, March 26, April 2, 10:45 - 11:30 am. Sponsored by Pathways for Parents CFCE. Please register.

Online Gaming Club for YAs, Thursdays, March 26, April 2, 3:30 - 5:00 pm. For ages 10-15. Drop-in, first come first served.

Tween Graphic Novel Book Club, Thursdays (monthly), March 26, 5:00 pm. For ages 10-14. Please register.

"Read Between the Lines" High School Book Group, Fridays (monthly), March 27, 3:00 - 4:00 pm. For high school age. Please register.

Minecraft Club, Saturdays, March 28, April 4, noon to 1:50 pm. For ages 7-11. We have Minecraft accounts. Please register.

Dino Explorers: Unearth a Story - Storytime for 3-5s, Mondays (weekly), March 30 through May 11, 10:00-11:00am. For ages 3-5. Please register.

Make "Homemade" Scratch Art, Tuesday, March 31, 6:00 pm. For ages 5 to 17. Please register.

Pokemon Club, (biweekly) Wednesdays, April 1, 3:30 to 4:45 pm. For gr. 3-8. Please register.

Dino Explorers: Unearth a Story - Storytime for 2-3s, Fridays (weekly),

April 1 through May 8, 10:00-11:00am. For ages 2-3. Please register.

True Tales Storytime for homeschooled 5-8s, Wednesdays (weekly), April 1 through May 6, 1:00-2:00 pm. For homeschooled 5-8 year olds. Please register.

Sewing Clinic, Thursdays (biweekly), April 2 through May 28, 5:30 pm. For middle and high school. Please register.

EGGSTRAVAGANZA, Saturday, April 4, 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. For youth of all ages and families. Bring a basket, find all the eggs (from the coloring contest) on your gameboard and win candy filled eggs for your basket! Drop-in.

Youth Chess Club, (biweekly) Mondays, April 6, 3:30 to 4:30 pm. For ages 9-17. Please register.

Anime Club, (biweekly) Tuesdays, April 7, 3:30 to 5:00 pm. For middle and high schoolers. Please register.

Youth Crochet Club, (biweekly) Tuesdays, April 7, 5:30 to 6:30 pm. For ages 10 - 17. Please register.

Sing With Me, every Tuesday, 10:30 to 11:00 am. For 0-5s. Drop-in.

Lego Build Challenge, every Wednesday, noon to 5:00 pm. 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.



State Senator Jacob Oliveira, Mary Stone, and Select Board Member Anthony Alves with the citations in hand.

STONE from Page 1

daughter in Pennsylvania. There comes a time in everybody's life when they've got to connect with your family. Carl chose to come to visit me so I could schedule my appointments on those mornings. I thank him for doing that for me every time I see him, and he always says, it's a pleasure.

He's an adult and when you reconnect with your adult children at our ages, it's a gift," said Stone. Alves shared a few words with Stone and members of the Senior Center, "Happy birthday! Working with numbers all day, it hit me thinking of 100 years and what that means and something to relate it to. In our town and our nation, we are celebrating 250 years. Ms. Stone has experienced 40% of the history of this nation; I'm not even 40 years old. That's a testament to a life well lived," said Alves.

On behalf of the Select Board, Alves presented a citation from the Town of Ludlow for Stone's 100th birthday and shared a quick hug with her. Oliveira followed, "It's nice to recognize the birthdays here at the Senior Center and an incredible staff that always recognizes the birthdays. Thank you to the staff at the Ludlow Senior Center.

Miriam, you look wonderful. The important thing is to celebrate longevity and bring you to great places that bring people together, to find a community that you can see. That's why our senior centers are so important and Miriam, as someone who patronizes the center often,

someone who knows this facility well, I am so pleased to offer this citation from the Massachusetts Senate," said Oliveira.

Oliveira presented the citation from the Massachusetts Senate on behalf of himself and State Representative Aaron Saunders, recognizing the celebration of her 100th birthday.

When asked what her best advice was for people reaching milestone birthdays, Stone encouraged all to keep going. Stone has been going to the center for around 20 years and celebrated her birthday on Sunday at her church in Wilbraham.



Outreach Coordinator Sheila Rubin, Executive Director Jodi Zepke, State Senator Jacob Oliveira, Mary Stone, Select Board Member Anthony Alves, Activities Director Maria Ardolino, and Assistant Director Heather Jolicoeur.



WRITERS HELP WANTED

Turley Publications seeks **EXPERIENCED WRITERS/JOURNALISTS** to produce news and/or feature stories of local interest for various towns and cities.

- Must be dependable, professional and able to meet strict deadlines
- Salary based on a flat rate by story and photo

Send writing samples with resume to:



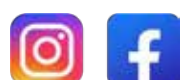
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DATEBOOK

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

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 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 Setian, 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.

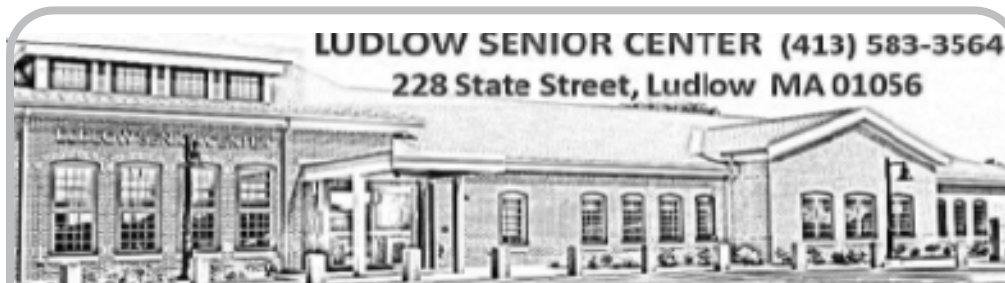
SUPPORT FOR FAM-

ILY 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.



Welcome to the Ludlow Senior Center

Spring has sprung! Come gather with friends in the Center's beautiful dining room and enjoy a delicious lunch, complete with coffee, tea, and dessert. To join us, call 413-583-3564 at least one day in advance to reserve your \$2 lunch (call Friday for Monday reservations).

We have several new events and activities to keep you busy, including a Caregiver series and an important Lunch & Learn presentation. Pick up our monthly newsletter at the Center or share your email with us to have it delivered directly to your inbox. You can also explore programs, find important forms, and learn more about what the 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 brighter, we look forward to sharing warm meals, engaging programs, and good company. There's no better way to welcome spring than with a brisk walk! We are looking for facilitators to lead an early morning walking group beginning in April. If you're interested, please call the Center at 413-583-3564 and ask for Maria.

Activities Calendar:

Please register in advance for items with*

Thursday, March 26

9 a.m. Tai Chi
9:30 a.m. Dominos
10 a.m. Sunshine Painting Class*
10:15 a.m. Mindful Meditation*
12:45 p.m. Mahjong
2 p.m. Book Club: *The Indigo Girl* Natsha Boyd
2:30 p.m. Active Yoga

Friday, March 27

8:45 a.m. Boomer Bootcamp*
9 a.m. Reiki by Appointment*
10 a.m. Boomer Bootcamp*
10 a.m. Blood Pressure Checks
10 a.m. Age & Dementia Friendly Celebration
1 p.m. Ceramics
1 p.m. Healthy Bones & Balance*
1:30 p.m. Forget-Me-Not Circle w/ Laura Lavoie*

Monday, March 30

9 a.m. Knitting
9:30 a.m. Boomer Bootcamp*
10 a.m. Computer Help by Appointment*
1 p.m. Scrabble
1:15 p.m. Pitch
2:30 p.m. Zumba Gold

Tuesday, March 31
9 a.m. Quilting
9 a.m. Line Dancing
10 a.m. Cribbage
10:30 a.m. Gentle Yoga
1 p.m. Ultra Beginner Line Dancing
1:30 p.m. Bingo
4:30 p.m. Power Pump
4:30-5:30 p.m. Souper Supper
4:30 p.m. Movie: *Song Sung Blue* (2025)
5:30 p.m. Compass & Anchor with Laura Lavoie*

Wednesday, March 25

8:45 a.m. Zumba Gold
9 a.m. Facials by Appointment*
9 a.m. Ceramics
10:30 a.m. Healthy Bones & Balance*
12 p.m. Lunch & Learn*
1 p.m. Dominos
1 p.m. Movie: *People We Meet on Vacation* (2025)
1 p.m. Healthy Bones & Balance*

Thursday, March 26

9 a.m. Tai Chi
9:30 a.m. Dominos
10 a.m. Sunshine Painting Class*
10:15 a.m. Mindful Meditation*
12:45 p.m. Mahjong
2 p.m. Book Club: *The Indigo Girl* Natsha Boyd
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.
Open Billiards: Monday - Thursday 8 a.m. - 11 a.m. Fridays 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Tuesdays 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Menu:

Thursday, March 26: Open Hot Turkey Sand/Mashed Pot/Glazed Carrots
Friday, March 27: Eggplant Parm Over Pasta/Bread Stick
Monday, March 30: Vegetable Lasagna/Caesar Salad
Tuesday, March 31: Chicken Marsala/Jasmine Rice/Veggie
Wednesday, April 1: Sloppy Joe
Thursday, April 2: Ham Dinner

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.

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.

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Polish food sale March 28

INDIAN ORCHARD—
Frozen Polish Food Sale on Saturday, March 28 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Immaculate Conception Church located at 25 Parker St. in Indian Orchard, Mass.

Golabki (3) \$12; Kapusta (Large) \$10; Pierogi-Cabbage, Potato & Cheese \$14; Sweet Cheese, Blueberry \$15
All are welcome, no credit cards will be accepted. Thank you

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Perfect day for a road race: Holyoke runs 49th holiday 10K

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

HOLYOKE – A warm and hot day is not ideal for running long distances, but give a harrier a 40-50-degree day, and it's the perfect environment make great time.

Louis Serafini, of Cambridge, experienced that as he completed a sub-30-minute 10K in the 49th running of the Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Road Race last Saturday afternoon. Serafini completed the hilly course throughout downtown Holyoke in 29:45. He had a great pace going, averaging 4:47 a mile with thousands of people cheering him on as he completed the course 50 seconds ahead of the runner-up.

Yankarlos Diaz was the second-place finisher. He comes from Manchester, CT. He completed the 6.3-mile course in just 30:35.

This year's top female finisher was Rachel Schilkowsky. She comes from Providence, RI and placed 12th overall. She completed the course at 34:03, winning the race for the very first time.

Among local finisher, Monson's Matt Provost came in at 34:15. He had a pace of about 5:30 per mile.

According to the results provided by Presidential Timing, which took over the timing of the race last year, nearly 4,900 runners, male, female, and many children and teenagers, completed the 10K race.

In addition to the ideal temperature for running, the day was sun-splashed and beautiful, making for a great setting for the running of the race, which had more than 6,200 runners signed up.

The race included mul-



The runners are off in the 49th running of the Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Road Race.



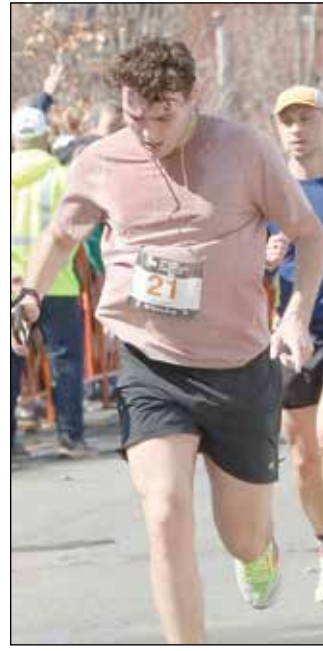
Ludlow's Caden Vilinkis gets in full stride near the end.



Benjamin Farias heads for the finish line.



Javi Najera completes the course.



Liam De Gobbi, of Ludlow, hustles toward the end.



David Wright is nearing the finish.



Louis Serafini, of Cambridge, won the 10K race at 29:45.

iple waves of competitors, and also included a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem by a member of the Holyoke Grand Colleen Court, Bridie Bowler.

Crews in the city did an excellent job preparing for the race, getting the course prepared despite a lot of snowfall during the past couple of months.

While there were plenty of local runners, race results showed individual participants from all over New England, New York, and New Jersey. There were even some inter-

national runners.

Last Saturday's even included a fun run for children and a walk as well that have been traditions in recent

years. Prior to the race, there were musical performances and other entertainment downtown.

Mateus joins banner 1,000-point scorers

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—Only five boys' basketball players in the history of Ludlow High School have reached the remarkable milestone of scoring 1,000 career points.

The first four 1,000-point scorers for the Ludlow boys' varsity basketball team were Jim Rooney, Chris Kolodziej, Jason Knowles, and Mike Kane.

Senior guard Jackson Mateus became the newest member of the elite 1,000-point club in the Lions home finale, which was a 60-56 overtime loss to Hampshire Regional on February 12.

Mateus described the pivotal play that brought him to a major milestone in his basketball career.

"(Senior) Filipe Fernandes passed me the ball along the baseline before I made a lay-up in overtime for my 1,000th career point," he said. "I'm very glad that I was able to do it at home because the crowd was electric that night. It was awesome."

Mateus is the first player to score 1,000 points under the guidance of Ludlow head coach Cliff Zimmer.

"I was an assistant varsity basketball coach at Minnecheaug Regional High School when Lance Hill Jr. scored his 1,000th career point," Zimmer said. "Since I've been a varsity coach, Jackson is the first player to score 1,000 career points. It's been such a privilege and

honor to watch him grow both as a basketball player and person during the past four years. He has made an impact on our basketball team. We're really going to miss him and the other seniors a lot."

Mateus entered the Hampshire South league contest 28 points away from reaching the milestone. He finished with exactly 28 points, which was his new career high.

"That was the first time that I've scored 28 points in a varsity basketball game," Mateus said. "Going into our final home game, I was just hoping to cut it down as much as I could because we still had at least one more game in the Division 3 state tournament. My shots kept falling that night and I also had an extra four minutes to accomplish it."

After scoring his 1,000th career point, Mateus took pictures with his family and friends.

Jackson's parents (George & April) have always been his biggest supporters. He also has an older sister, Bella.

He took another picture with Kane, who was the last Ludlow boys' basketball player to score 1,000 career points in 2005, following the game. Kane finished his high school career with 1,179 points.

"I've heard many stories about Mr. Kane, but it was the first time that I met him," Mateus said. "He congratulated me on my accomplishment. It was a very special

moment."

The three girls' basketball players listed on the 1,000-point banner that's hanging from the Mullins Gymnasium rafters are Elisha Homich, Jenna Williamson, and Alyssa Guyon, who's the school's all-time leading scorer with 1,576 points.

"There are a lot of great basketball players listed on that banner and I'm honored to be one of them," Mateus said. "It took a lot of hard work for me to achieve the milestone, especially doing it in only four years."

Mateus scored nine points in his first varsity game as a freshman, which was a 70-44 home win over St. Mary's of Westfield on December 12, 2022. He wound up scoring a total of 69 points that season.

The Lions finished the 2022-23 campaign with a 16-4 record and captured the Tri-County North league title. Their season came to an end following a loss at Norwood High School in a Division 2 state tournament preliminary round game.

"I really didn't get a lot of playing time for the varsity team when I was a freshman," Mateus said. "We had a bunch of talented seniors that season and they got most of the playing time. I did learn a lot from those guys."

Mateus scored 185 points the following season, but the Lions just missed qualifying for the state tournament with

Please see **MATEUS**, Page 8

Senior All-Star games at Hall of Fame



Last Friday night, three Senior All-Star games took place at the Naimsmith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame featuring the best senior players from all over Western Massachusetts. The tradition puts an exclamation point on the high school season as spring practices get started.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

Saunders supports \$1.8B state investment in schools, transit, and local farms

BOSTON — State Representative Aaron Saunders joined colleagues in the House of Representatives to pass a \$1.8 billion supplemental budget focused on strengthening public education, expanding transportation access, and supporting local agriculture.

The legislation includes \$150 million for special education costs, \$2 million for rural school aid, \$150 million for early education, and \$25 million for Regional Transit Authorities. It also establishes a new \$5,000 refundable tax credit to encourage food donations from local farms.

Saunders highlighted the \$150 million investment in

the Special Education Circuit Breaker program as a key measure to help school districts manage rising costs.

"This funding helps ease the burden on local property taxpayers while ensuring students receive the services they need," said Saunders. "It gives districts more stability and reduces pressure on essential programs as we continue working toward long-term improvements to the state's education funding formula."

For Ludlow, the additional special education funding is expected to help offset rising district costs, easing pressure on the local budget and property taxpayers. In-

creased support for Regional Transit Authorities will also benefit residents who rely on PVTA service for commuting, school, and daily needs.

The bill also includes a provision championed by Saunders to support agriculture and address food insecurity through a new farm donation tax credit. "Our farms are central to both our local economy and our food system," said Saunders, who serves as Acting Chair of the Joint Committee on Agriculture. "This tax credit helps farmers give back to their communities while strengthening their operations. It's a win for everyone."

BEHIND THE SCENES

from Page 1

formance went and the collaboration between everyone involved.

1. How did you find yourself teaching at HBES? What made you become involved with the drama club?

"I started teaching at Chapin Street School and moved to HBES when it was built. I have always taught second grade in Ludlow; it has been my only full-time teaching job. As soon as Fernandes announced that she was starting the Drama Club again last year, I wanted to be involved. I have always loved musicals. It sounded like a new challenge to me, and I would get to work with older kids who I do not work with day-to-day," said Anderson.

2. Describe your favorite part about your roles as co-directors.

After explaining that Anderson oversaw the music and singing, with Fernandes working on students with lines, staging, and acting, the production had support from teachers, LPS Administration, and families.

Fernandes began, "My favorite part about directing is the relationships I build with students and watching students grow their confidence from their audition to their powerhouse performance on show nights."

Anderson followed, "My favorite part about directing the play this year was helping our actors learn a new language while learning new songs and how to sing. We all started out unsure of new words and phrases, but by the time the show came around, they had their lines and songs mastered! I loved hearing more than 100 kids sing together as one."

3. For those who missed the musical, please describe how it was opening night and the guest experience within the auditorium.

"You could feel the energy and excitement in the auditorium and backstage! Backstage, kids were rehearsing lines and singing the Lion King songs. They talked and played nervously in groups. In the audience, parents were greeting each other and trying to save the best seats for family members. As soon as the lights dimmed, the audience immediately took their seats and fell silent, waiting for their children to appear onstage," said Anderson.

4. Why is it important to continue to let kids be exposed to the arts? Do you see a difference between them after the musical and attending the drama club?

"It has been such a wonderful experience to see these kids grow their confidence, responsibility, and social-emotional skills this

year. Some kids were shy at the beginning, but as soon as they stepped onto the stage, they came alive. Students learned brand-new songs (in African languages, nonetheless) and performed with joy for their families. Students from a wide range of grade levels and abilities, including those working on speech articulation and others learning English for the first time, came together to support one another and shine on stage. It was amazing to see students who I knew in second grade turn into confident, skilled performers by show week-end. Many kids truly found a love of performing through drama club; some are even auditioning for other theater groups in Massachusetts!" said Anderson.

5. If someone is on the fence of becoming involved with their own drama club/music group/etc., what would you say to them to encourage them to join?

"Drama Club is a safe place to show up just as you are, whether you can act, sing, dance, or have other creative talents to share. There is a place for everyone in the Drama Club. Most Drama Club students start off as strangers, become friends, and support each other through the process. Many people gain newfound strength and a creative outlet through Drama Club," ended Fernandes.

MATEUS from Page 7

an 8-12 overall record. He made his first career varsity start at East Longmeadow in the season opener.

"We were a very young team that season," Mateus added. "We had two or three sophomore starters and only a couple of seniors."

During the past two seasons, Mateus scored a total of 755 points.

With the help of 49 3-pointers, Mateus scored 371 points as a junior.

The Lions squeaked into the Division 3 state tournament that season with a 10-10 record. He scored 15 points with the help of five 3-pointers in a preliminary

round road loss to Apponquet Regional.

For the second consecutive year, the Lions qualified for the Division 3 state tournament with a 12-8 record. Mateus scored nine points in his final high school game at Lynnfield in another preliminary round road game.

The other seniors listed on this year's varsity roster are Mason Morace, Brandon Hanifin, Spencer Huntley, Cameron Lyman, and Ethan Love.

"I'm very glad that I had the opportunity to play on the same basketball team with my classmates," Mateus said. "My basketball career went by very fast. Our senior night game against Easthampton was emotional."

One of the Lions underclassmen is junior Tyler Tatro. He and Mateus are cousins.

Mateus, Lyman, and Love were the Tri-Captains of this year's squad.

"I was also a team captain last year with Ethan," Mateus said. "Cam and Ethan are also outstanding leaders. We connected very well on and off the court. I've always loved playing the game of basketball."

Mateus, who also excels in the classroom as an honor roll student, is looking forward to sitting in the Mullins Gymnasium bleachers and watching his former basketball teammates play next winter.

FOOD SERVICES

from Page 1

at the Ludlow High School from 12noon to 2 p.m.

The special event that Director of Food Service

Kathleen Keady was excited to share was the celebrity bartending event at the Student Prince & Fort Restaurant in Springfield. Today, Mar. 25, the Kitchen Jam Trio with celebrity

bartenders will be at 8 Fort St. from 5 to 8 p.m.

Keady ended with a few words, "I believe this event is a wonderful example of community spirit."

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PUBLIC NOTICES

Ludlow Conservation Commission LEGAL NOTICE

The Ludlow Conservation Commission will hold a Public Hearing under W.P.A. (M.G.L. Ch. 131, § 40) and Town of Ludlow Bylaws, Chapter XV, in Ludlow Town Hall, 3rd floor, Select Board's Conference Room, on **Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at 6:50 p.m.** on the **Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation** application of Brian Benito, Rhyndland Energy Development LLC, for the property located at **0 Moore Street** (Assessors' Map 32, Parcel 34). The subject of the hearing is: confirm wetland boundary.

If for any reason this hearing is cancelled, it will be rescheduled to Wednesday, May 6, 2026.

Angela Tierney, Chair
03/25/2026

Ludlow Conservation Commission LEGAL NOTICE

The Ludlow Conservation Commission has scheduled a Public Meeting under W.P.A. (M.G.L. Ch. 131, § 40) in Ludlow Town Hall, 3rd floor, Select Board's Conference Room, for **Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at 6:55 p.m.** for the **Request for Determination of Applicability** application of Adrian Zapala, for the property located at **0 Nash Hill Road** (Assessors' Map 9, Parcel 29). The subject of the meeting is: to allow for site testing and confirmation of resource delineation.

If for any reason this meeting is cancelled, it will be rescheduled to Wednesday, May 6, 2026.

Angela Tierney, Chair
03/25/2026

Ludlow Conservation Commission LEGAL NOTICE

The Ludlow Conservation Commission will hold a Public Hearing under W.P.A. (M.G.L. Ch. 131, § 40) and Town of Ludlow Bylaws, Chapter XV, in Ludlow Town Hall, 3rd floor, Select Board's Conference Room, on **Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at 6:40 p.m.** on the Notice of Intent application of Hemlock Ridge, LLC c/o Mr. Armand Deslauriers, for the property located at **1252 East Street & 0 Ventura Street** (Assessors' Map 31, Parcels 127 & 121B). The subject of the hearing is: construction of a residential subdivision with a roadway crossing an intermittent stream and wetland. Portions of the proposed roadway, stormwater management system, and individual lot development are

located within the buffer zone to wetland resource areas.

If for any reason this hearing is cancelled, it will be rescheduled to Wednesday, May 6, 2026.

Angela Tierney, Chair
03/25/2026

Ludlow Conservation Commission LEGAL NOTICE

The Ludlow Conservation Commission will hold a Public Hearing under W.P.A. (M.G.L. Ch. 131, § 40) and Town of Ludlow Bylaws, Chapter XV, in Ludlow Town Hall, 3rd floor, Select Board's Conference Room, on **Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at 7:05 p.m.** on the **Notice of Intent** application of Nikkie Pollis, Ludlow, MA West St. Solar LLC, for the property located at **155 West Street** (Assessors' Map 2D, Parcel 1). The subject of the

hearing is: construction of a 2.0 Mega-Watt (MW) photovoltaic solar field along with associated infrastructure.

If for any reason this hearing is cancelled, it will be rescheduled to Wednesday, May 6, 2026.

Angela Tierney, Chair
03/25/2026

Ludlow Conservation Commission LEGAL NOTICE

The Ludlow Conservation Commission has scheduled a Public Meeting under W.P.A. (M.G.L. Ch. 131, § 40) in Ludlow Town Hall, 3rd floor, Select Board's Conference Room, for **Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at 7:10 p.m.** for the **Request for Determination of Applicability** application of Eversource Gas of Massachusetts d/b/a Eversource Energy, for the property located

at **Miller Street** (within public roadway layout). The subject of the meeting is: installation of approximately 3,150 feet of new 6-inch diameter high density polyethylene gas main within the existing paved roadway of Chapin Street and Miller Street.

If for any reason this meeting is cancelled, it will be rescheduled to Wednesday, May 6, 2026.

Angela Tierney, Chair
03/25/2026



Lions Club scholarship applications available

LUDLOW—The Ludlow Lions Club is pleased to announce that it is accepting applications for the James and Mary O'Neil Scholarship \$40,000 paid over 4 years, the S. Louis Marceau and the Paul R. Baird scholarships \$1,000 each.

Eligible applicants must be residents of Ludlow, regardless of the high school attended, and entering freshman year at an accredited college or technical school in the fall. The James and Mary O'Neil scholarship is available only to students who will be attending the University of Massachusetts Amherst campus.

Applications may be ob-

tained from the Guidance Departments of Ludlow High School, or Pope Francis Preparatory School, by using the "Scholarship" button on the Ludlow Lions Club Web page (https://e-clubhouse.org/sites/ludlow_ma/index.php), on our club Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ludlowlionsclub/>) by request at LUDLOWLIONS@YAHOO.COM or by contacting a Ludlow Lions Club member.

The Scholarship applications must be postmarked by March 31, 2023. Mail applications to the Ludlow Lions Club, Attn: Scholarship Committee, P.O. Box 72, Ludlow, MA 01056-0072.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

from Page 1

sure/collector starting on Mar. 30, Michele Hill. Just a reminder for folks, Hill has upwards of 20 years' experience as a treasurer/collector, as a town clerk, and most recently as a finance director.

She's also a veteran and formally elected official in her town and we are very ex-

cited for her to get started," Strange ended. Vice-Chairperson William Rosenblum shared the announcement that the Townwide Cleanup Day will be May 2 at 9 a.m. and will meet at the Veterans Memorial at the gazebo. Trash pickup, removal, sidewalk cleanup, flower beds and tree belts and for more information, visit the Town website.

Church DIRECTORY

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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
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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.

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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.

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Wednesday, March 25 - Daily Mass - 7:30 AM (C)
Holy Mother Choir - 4:30 PM (C),
Parish Penance Service - 6:30 PM (C)
Thursday, March 26 - Daily Mass - 7:30 AM (C)
Adoration - 6:30 PM (C)
Friday, March 27 - Daily Mass - 7:30 AM (C)
Stations of the Cross - 12:30 PM (C),
Stations of the Cross - 7 PM (C)
Saturday, March 28 - Confessions - 2:30 PM (C)
Saturday Vigil Mass - 4 PM (C)
Sunday March 29 - PALM SUNDAY
Daily Masses at 7:30 AM,
9:15 AM, 11 AM and 5 PM
Faith Formation - 10:15 AM (FLBH/ST
Lifeteen - 6 PM (JR)
Monday, March 30 - Daily Mass - 7:30 AM (C),
Faith Formation - 6 PM (JR)
Tuesday, March 31 - Daily Mass - 7:30 AM (C)
Middle School Youth Ministry - 3 PM (JR)
St. Rita Choir - 4:00 PM (C),
Faith Formation Adult Confirmation - 6 PM (JR)
- Bereavement Support Group - 6:30 PM (ER)

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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.

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Associate Pastor: Gary Coombs
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AA Group 7pm

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

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IN THE CLASSROOM

Valley Press Club Scholarships available for journalism students

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

The Valley Press Club Scholarships, funded by contributions and dues to the Press Club, are for students planning careers in print, online or broadcast journalism.

The Republican Scholarship, funded by The Republican, is for students living within the newspaper's circulation area who are planning careers in print journalism.

The 22News Scholarship, funded by WWLP-22News is for students planning careers in broadcast journalism.

The MassLive Scholarship is for a Massachusetts high school

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

The Edward J. Malley Jr. Memorial Scholarship, established in memory of a chief photographer for the Springfield Newspapers, is for students planning careers in photojournalism.

The Rhonda Swan Memorial Scholarship, established in memory of the award-winning journalist, editor and author, honors her legacy by supporting students from the Greater Springfield area who aspire to careers in journalism and bring voices and perspectives that have been historically underrepresented in the field.

Primary emphasis is

placed on career goals, writing ability, scholastic aptitude and overall achievement as measured by an applicant's high school transcript, class rank, academic awards, SAT scores and extracurricular activities. The deadline for submissions is April 10, 2026.

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

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

Visit us at www.turley.com

Springfield Garden Club hosts Gardening Series

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

The programs will be held at The Monkey House

in Forest Park at 10 AM. Admission is free to all with paid park admission. More information can be found on the club's website www.springfieldgardenclubma.org or on Facebook.

Saturday, March 28, 2026

- 10 a.m. "Vegetable Gardening 101" presented by Gretel Anspach On Saturday, April 11, 2026 - 10 a.m. "Planning and Growing a Bountiful Flower Garden" presented by Becky Sadlowski.

HEALTH from Page 4

niques to help you on your journey to becoming a former smoker.

For example, there's guidance on nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), which has been shown to increase the success rate, especially when several forms are used, such as a nicotine patch supplemented by lozenges or gum. Some studies suggest that older adults may actually have higher success rates using NRT compared to younger smokers.

You can also find apps, texting and social media sites that offer support, along with how to build a quit plan.

Medicare wants you to quit smoking, too. After all, it will save them money. Medicare covers counseling sessions to help you stop smoking under Part B, allowing up to eight sessions every 12 months at no cost if your provider accepts Medicare. Additionally, Medicare Part D covers certain prescription medications to assist with smoking cessation.

Medicare Advantage Plans are required to cover

counseling and some medications as well, though benefits vary by plan.

Here in Massachusetts, 1-800-QUIT-NOW is Massachusetts' tobacco and nicotine Quitline, where you can connect to a free trained quit coach by phone or line. They share strategies to curb cravings, handle life's big and small stresses and tackle. You can track your progress and learn how to access free NRT supplies.

Talking to your healthcare provider is also important, both as a source of support and advice on using certain prescription medications to curb smoking such as varenicline (Chantix). This medication can be used by older adults, but caution is advised because of a higher likelihood of age-related kidney issues. Your doctor may also recommend cognitive behavior therapy (CBT).

What does a quit plan look like? Pick a date you're going to quit and rid the house of cigarettes, ashtrays and other smoking paraphernalia. You might need to take some things to the dry clean-

er to get the cigarette smell out. Tell everyone that you've made a quit plan and you need their help.

Be proud of what you're accomplishing! Let people know when you've been smoke-free for a week, a month, a year. If you do happen to light up, don't give up. Tomorrow is another day.

And you may have more tomorrows when you've become an ex-smoker. Good luck!

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



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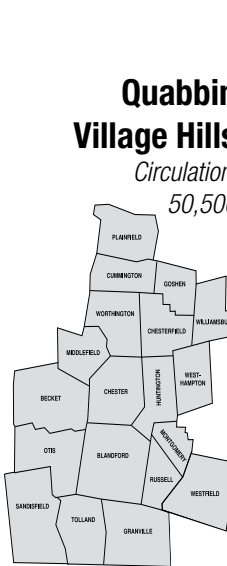
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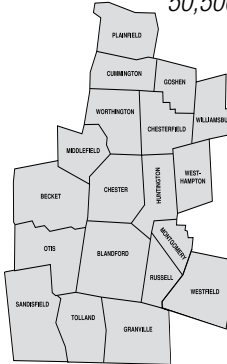
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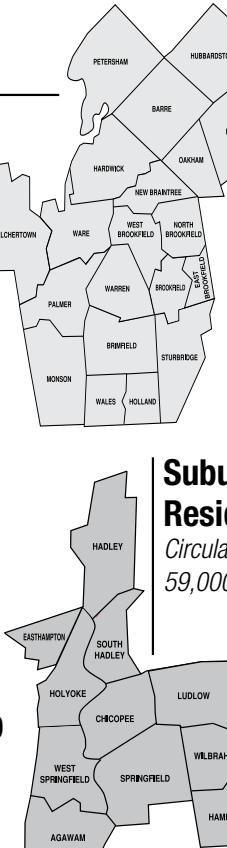
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