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JANUARY 9, 2025

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Photo courtesy of Josh Mitchell

The first wave of arrivals for the competition stand in a line while Jared Demetri explains the process.

## Minnechaug hosts Winter Arts Show

By Noelle Hisgen  
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - On December 11, 2024, Minnechaug Regional High School hosted its annual Winter Arts Show.

The first hour put its focus into the visual arts, where an art show was put on in the art hallway. The art show presented works from all of the fine and applied arts classes over the first semester.



Turley photos by Noelle Hisgen

Tom Ingram directs the Mixed Choir in a vocal performance.

Over the semester, students were able to learn various artistic skills and practice those techniques. They would then start to apply those skills in larger projects that were more challenging.

Finally, they worked on the projects that they were most proud of and then displayed them at the showcase.

Various classes who contributed to the art show include Foundations of Visual Art, Communicating Through Art, Graphic Communications 1 and 2, Clay and AP Studio Art.

The second portion of the Winter Arts Show consisted of performances from the band and chorus in the auditorium.

Musical performances were from the Strings Ensemble, Jazz Band, Honors Wind Symphony, Symphonic Band, and the newly formed Percussion Ensemble. They were led by director of band and strings Dave Morris.

Vocal performances were from the Mixed Choir, Honors Camerata, and Combined Choirs. They were led by choral director Tom Ingram.

Various teachers who contributed to the show spoke about the progress made by the first semester students

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## Knights of Columbus host Annual Free Throw Competition

By Hannah Yeasley  
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - The Knights of Columbus 10195 of Wilbraham hosted their annual Free Throw Competition on Saturday, Jan. 4.

The event was held at St. Cecilia's Parish and participants could stop by anytime between 10 a.m. and Noon.

Jared Demetri, Lecturer for K of C, was running the event, alongside several Knights who were working as scorekeepers and rebounders.

To begin, Demetri introduced the K of C and what their work in the community entails, including the yearly free throw competition that is hosted up to the national level.

Once the first round of partici-



Michael Hayes shoots a free throw while the scorers John Hegarty (background left) and Bob St. Martin (background right) watch. Hayes later shot a second round of free throws for the district level of the competition.

pants were checked in and warmed up, Demetri explained the process.

"This round is the council level of the competition, and competitors will shoot 15 free throws with an additional ten that will count in case of a tie breaker," Demetri said. "The top scoring boy and girl from each age group will have the opportunity to shoot another 25 to use as their score for the district level of the competition."

There was an additional piece of tape marking 12 feet from the basket for those in the 9, 10, and 11 age groups instead of the regular free throw line, but those competing had a choice.

The day's event consisted of

Please see **FREE THROW**, page 7

## Selectboard advises resident to address health violations

Also, not to live on property

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
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HAMPDEN—The Selectboard advised a resident to address health violations and not to live on a property during an emergency appeal hearing on Jan. 6.

An emergency appeal hearing, which is a public hearing providing a resident an opportunity to respond or address violations, was to address an area on Scantic Road at Parcel 09-62-002.

The decision comes after Finn McCool, director of East-

ern Hampden Shared Public Service, relayed to the board about the violations during their December 23, 2024 meeting, with the issues being lack of heat, no running water which equates to inadequate sanitary conditions and the use of a porta-potty as a main bathroom. Also, alleged zoning violations, which will be addressed at a separate appeals hearing.

After that Dec. 23 discussion, the board voted to evict the resident, Anthony Basile.

On Jan. 6, Basile agreed not to live on the property, including no overnight stays, and to remove the porta-potty by the end of this week. It was, also, clarified he could still visit and spend time on the property.

**The Timeline**  
McCool explained on Oc-



Turley photo by Kristin Rivers

The Selectboard advised a resident to address public health violations during an emergency appeal hearing at their Jan.6 meeting.

tober 30, 2024, he was notified about someone possibly living on the parcel in a trailer and a porta-potty was present.

"Between Oct. 30 and Dec. 2, we documented ongoing violations and then on Dec. 3, the violation letter was issued. It was a formal notice and order to evict to the owner because of those violations," McCool said. "It was then on Dec. 11 that we were notified by USPS that the owner got the letter. I then proceeded to go over to check the property again. I had ran into the owner and chatted about what's going on there."

At that time, McCool said Basile confirmed that he was living in the trailer part-time and does contracting work outside of Massachusetts. When not contracted out, Basile lives there.

"And then that led us to the third meeting and discussed this

Please see **HEALTH**, page 13

# Selectboard awards \$2.8 million project contract for Water District

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
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HAMPDEN - The Selectboard awarded a \$2.8 million project contract to Baltazar Contractors Incorporated for the Water District during their December 23, 2024 meeting.

Town Administrator Brian Domina explained the project was "put out to bid" by Tighe & Bond and was broken down into three parts, or one main part and two alternates: the pump station upgrade and increasing capacity, a water main extension and the service connections for individual houses.

Domina said the three bids received were from Baltazar Contractors Incorporated for "just over" \$2.8 million, Bay-state Regional Contractors for \$3 million and Biszko Building Systems for \$4.75 million.

"The recommendation from

our consultant Tighe & Bond is to award the contract base bid one and two to Baltazar Contractors," Domina said. "The Water Commissioners met last Tuesday and I'm conveying their recommendation that they support Tighe & Bond's recommendation that the town award the contract to Baltazar Contractors Incorporated."

After Phil McDonald, who lives at the corner of Glendale Road and Cross Road, shared he came to the meeting with a series of questions, Selectboard Member Craig Rivest provided an overview of the Water District.

Rivest also noted McDonald was on the testing schedule and his water was currently being tested, which had "gotten hits of positivity" for PFAs.

"What this originated from was the DEP came in and started this new program and they were going after small towns and municipalities that had munic-

ipally-owned transfer stations, dumps, have you," Rivest said. "They just started testing for that containment."

Rivest then shared what happened next with the Water District.

"So what happened now is the DEP is mandating this new test for the PFAs," Rivest said.

"Right," McDonald said.

"And because certain homes detected positive for the presence of PFAs in the parts per trillion, it triggered from an annual testing to a quarterly testing," Rivest said. "So, now you're getting tested more."

Rivest added the DEP's recommendation was to either "filter your home or connect you to clean water, PFAs free."

"So, the DEP in the state is very concerned about the PFAs and liability and all the known hazards that come along with it. So, they've told us that we need to test and fix," Rivest said. "So,

that's what we're trying to do now. We're trying to appease the DEP to follow along their guidelines and guide us. So, their current guidance now is strongly recommend that residents hook up to the Scantic Valley Water District."

McDonald said he anticipated "that might happen in the future and that would give me an option."

"But I would hate to be forced into it," McDonald said.

In response to this, Rivest shared how the board met with DEP the week before "just to get a sense of what was going on."

"They said we can't technically force people to hook up. However, it would be in their best interest to hook up and kind of, 'Hey, you should really consider this option because PFAs are forever chemicals. They don't go away once they're there,'" Rivest said. "It's public health safety to kind of think about that."

The other option if "there's somebody that's completely adamant against it," Rivest explained, is "there may be a way for them to sign over to liability away from the town."

After Chair Don Davenport said the important part for the sign-up to get connected is free, Rivest replied that was correct.

"There's no cost to the connection and any of the homeowners that live in any of the service connections won't pay," Rivest said. "It's just if you sell your home outside of town, then new residents will be paying customers on the Water District. It's very small."

After answering McDonald's other questions, the Selectboard added the Water Commissioners would be holding a meeting in the near future to provide all Water District participants an opportunity to ask their questions as well.

# School Committee learns gains, continued work in Accountability Report

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
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WILBRAHAM - Superintendent Dr. John Provost presented an Accountability Report to the School Committee on Dec. 19 highlighting the gains and continued work to be done in the school district.

Among the topics were discipline, bullying, student achievement, mental health and effective instruction in classrooms.

Provost explained how school quality measure surveys were implemented for the first time during the 2023-2024

school year and "revealed some interesting things."

"Among those was that students and teachers agree that our faculty members are well-prepared for the courses they teach and they implement effective instructional practices," Provost said. "I'll say that was true for every school in our district. Not just at one school, not just in some grades, but all the students and all the teachers in general felt like what was happening in the classroom was effective."

### Students' Views

On students' views of climate and

learning, Provost said fourth and fifth grades showed a moderately positive difference for emotional safety, physical safety and bullying/cyberbullying. Eighth and 10th grades had not significantly different listed.

"Last time I presented this data, there were no moderately positive differences and the eighth grade showed a slight negative difference compared to statewide averages," Provost said.

Prioritizing improving the efficacy of anti-bullying efforts at the elementary school level after students voiced a need for anti-bullying efforts focusing on younger students was also a highlight.

"Because while the behaviors of bullying may manifest more so in the middle school and the high school, the seeds are really planted in the elementary schools," Provost said. "My hope is in that three or four more years when these students are now eighth graders, we'll be seeing the eighth graders in the green as well."

Meanwhile, student perceptions of cultural competence, relationships and student participation had not significantly different for grades four, five and 10, while grade eight had a moderate negative difference. For student perceptions of instructional environment, mental health environment and discipline environment, grades four and five had not significantly different, grade eight had a moderate negative difference and grade 10 had small positive difference.

### Student Achievement

Addressing student achievement, examining performance for English Language Arts, Math and Science MCAS was the major highlight.

On English Language Arts for grades

three through eight, Provost noted how people may have heard about the statewide decline in performance for this area.

"This year, much of that was attributed to third grade entering the testing window. I think it's important to remember that last year's third graders who are represented here were in kindergarten during COVID. So, missing that experience appears to have had an impact on them on which we can still see," Provost said.

For the district, Provost said the percentage of third graders meeting or exceeding expectations here dropped by 10%.

"However, the performance of students in the other grades was stronger. So, including all grades three through eight, we saw just a 1% decline in students meeting or exceeding expectations," Provost said.

For math, Provost stressed this subject "has been and continues to be our area of greatest need."

"In math, lower grades had relatively stronger performance and we saw some declines in the middle school. It's a nuanced picture, but we think the primary problem we had in middle school was a problem of coverage," Provost said. "As you may recall, you had to increase the length of the math block in order to give teachers enough time to get through the longer lessons that are part of the new math curriculum, and last year that was accomplished by implementing a schedule of the rotating drop block that gave us longer periods, but fewer periods."

Provost acknowledged the district learned "that was not a good way to plan

Please see **SCHOOL**, page 4



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# Hundreds of donations support Boy Scout Troop

By Amanda Munson  
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - Bearing the cold on Saturday morning, Jan. 4, were the members of Boy Scout Troop 359, waiting for donors of the Annual Bottle and Can Drive at Saint Cecilia Parish parking lot to arrive.

Surrounded by bags, filled to the brim of generous donations left by local business owners to Wilbraham residents, people were happy to support a local troop.

With the cold January winds whistling the bags away, Troop Committee Chairperson Jean Heinhold talked about her involvement with the Annual Bottle and Can Drive and why it's important to hold drives like these for the troop members.

Mentioning before that her son Daniel has been part of the troop for four years, Heinhold shared this.

"This is a community service project we do and the funds raised help defer some of the costs that we incur doing camping trips and stuff like that. This bottle and can drive is more of a community event," Heinhold said. "Some don't have the ability to go to the recycle center all the time and this is a way that they are helping us and we're helping them."

Donors were able to drive in and drop off with the help of scouts, without ever leaving their car. "Today we have a set number of scouts, volunteers that are parents like me, our Charter Organization Representative Lorna, Mr. B who has been part of scouting for 57 years, and donors who you see driving in. We do what we can to make it happen!" Heinhold said. "An example of what we do is at the transfer station, where all the donations go, the troop goes weekly and cleans it all out. That becomes revenue and helps support us as well. The scouts here today will receive credit hours for volunteering, a percentage of the money will go into each kid's individual scout account, which will allow them to defer costs for scout camp they attend every year. It also defers costs for other activities we do on a monthly basis. The more service hours, the more resources they have."

Talking with one of the scouts himself, Elliot Sylvester, who has been with the troop since 2017, said his involvement started by wanting to socialize when he first moved to the town.



A group photo of the Boy Scout Troop 359, composed of volunteers, scout leaders, and donors for the Annual Bottle and Can Drive.



Bearing the cold and winds on Saturday morning, volunteers of all ages were bagging up bottles and cans to raise money for the scouts' next adventure.

"When I joined, this is when I made my lifelong friends. My favorite part of being a scout is when you actually get to use your knowledge, like the other day when I was running my hands became really cold, almost like frostbite. I used my first aid knowledge and saved my hands by tucking them into my armpits," Sylvester said. "Today this is a fundraiser for our troop, every bag of cans that we have earns us money for our troop. We all want to grow up and lead big lives, by being a scout that's how it happens."

To anyone who is considering joining the troop, Sylvester said, "Join scouts and support us!"

Charter Organization Representative Lorna Lawrence shared what she loves about the troop.

"I've been involved in scouting with my son going on 10 years. First, as a parent volunteer with his Cub Scout pack and then as an adult leader. I truly believe that scouting is an important and invaluable program for our young people which also benefits our community," Lawrence said.

Lawrence said scouting provides opportunities to learn many lifelong skills.

"In addition to leadership, teamwork and problem-solving, the knowledge that scouts learn through merit badges and their scouting experiences translates into a wide variety of career paths such as military service, law enforcement, civil service, firefighters, teachers, trades people, doctors, nurs-

es, healthcare professionals, sports, lawyers, engineers and business leaders/owners," Lawrence said.

Continuing with the idea of what the scouts stand for, Heinhold recognizes the scouts that came before and built the foundation of what the troop continues to do each and every day.

"It's the whole idea of paying it forward, one of the scout mottos is 'To turn a good deed' so by doing that, they are learning that even on a Saturday I could be sleeping in but here I am doing service to the community," Heinhold said. "The other thing I love is paying it forward. Hearing past scout's parents come in and reconnect with the younger generation of scouts, it's nice to perpetuate that feeling of 'you did good and here we are 20 years later still doing good.'"

### How to Get Involved

For anyone between the ages of 11 and 17 interested in adventures in the great outdoors, getting involved in the community through volunteering, developing confidence through leadership skills and creating a lifetime of memories with friends, readers can learn more about the Scouts BSA program by visiting [www.beascout.org](http://www.beascout.org).

As for Boy Scout Troop 359, families can contact Scoutmaster Dr. Thomas Wadzinski at [Troop359Wilbraham@gmail.com](mailto:Troop359Wilbraham@gmail.com). Troop meetings take place on Thursdays from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at St. Cecilia Parish at 42 Main St. in Wilbraham.

For the younger ones currently in kindergarten through fifth grade, they can check out Wilbraham Cub Scout Pack 177, which meets Wednesdays from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Wilbraham United Church on 500 Main St. in Wilbraham. No prior scout experience is needed and those who want to have fun, explore the outdoors and learn new things while making new friends are encouraged to join.

For the Cub Scouts, contact Cubmaster Jeff Choinski at [jchoinski@gmail.com](mailto:jchoinski@gmail.com) for more information.

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# School Committee offers ideas after Accountability Report presentation

Student Representative also shares thoughts

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - After Superintendent Dr. John Provost presented the Accountability Report to the School Committee on Dec. 19, members shared their questions and ideas on what they could do next.

To learn more about the report, check out this week's article.

Vice Chair Sean Kennedy asked about the decrease in suspensions, which were from over 100 students years before to just four this school year.

"Have we seen an increase in violence inside schools? Have we seen poor behaviors draining more of our resources? Have we noticed any kind of correlation?" Kennedy said.

Provost replied, "We certainly continue to struggle with student behaviors from time to time," but what's different is the approach.

"So, instead of relying on suspension as one of the main tools for dealing with that, there are other types of sanctions that we're giving as an alternative," Provost said. "One of the ones that I think has been most impactful is Saturday detentions. We've had parents and kids come back to us and say, 'Can you please just suspend us? We'd rather have a suspension than serve Saturday detention.' So, I think that it's a change of approach that, I think, hasn't necessarily made a big difference in terms of overall rates of what we're seeing in terms of things that need to be disciplined, but it's dealing with it in a way that's not taking kids out of instruction."

Kennedy acknowledged the decrease in suspensions was positive but expressed caution.

"I mean, that is drastic and extreme, but I'm just hoping that we're getting the positive result that we want out of this, rather than making it more of a distraction for students who are in school by those students with poor behavior," Ken-

nedly said.

On the question of other tools as opposed to suspension, Provost said the focus is on restorative approaches too, including teaching students expected behaviors, conflict mediation and behavioral boosters.

After asking Provost about offering extra time after school to help the third graders, Sherill Caruana presented an idea.

"I'm wondering if there's any way to put even a task force together just to monitor that," Caruana said.

Provost approved of the idea.

Student Representative Elaina Bergeron suggested addressing behaviors through resources for students to reach out, such as a feedback form.

"I know some teachers at Minnechaug have taken initiative of that, but definitely not enough for kids to kind of use it enough," Bergeron said.

Bergeron noted there's already an anonymous reporting tool, but this one could help students who "have a little bit more struggles" and be sent out monthly by teachers.

"Just giving feedback about how a student thinks that the teacher is teaching and how the student is understanding something or, also, if the student needs help or care from anything—anyone—in the school," Bergeron said.

Provost thought, "that's an excellent thing to work on."

"My first response to that is I can tell you that one of the frequently cited findings around success factors for kids is having at least one trusted adult in the school is critical," Provost said. "I'm not sure that a form creates that, but maybe we can work on making sure that every kid has a trusted adult, so that when something's going on, they have someone they can go to."

After Bergeron wondered if teachers and staff checking in more with students "would limit the amount of negative numbers that we see in those required surveys" with mental health issues, drugs and alcohol abuse, Provost said he thought "it's really hard to be a

young person right now."

"The challenges that you all face are monumental. Just the social media piece alone is grinding, right? Add to that, many of the other challenges kids face if they're different in any way, that's hard, right? If they have many—have any—economic needs which we're seeing increasingly among our students, that's hard. If they have their own mental health issues, which we're seeing in increasing numbers, that's hard," Provost said. "I wish there was a healthier environment for kids. I want to do whatever we can, but the only reason I'm responding to it that way is it seems like teachers checking in more—which is so important and I'm not diminishing that—it's like but what about the world that kids are living in now? Who do you check in on a Saturday morning when you get that Snapchat or that Instagram—or whatever you guys are using now—that is hurtful or lets you know that you were left out of something or worse than that?"

Provost said he didn't know what the answer was.

"But I hear you and I really, really empathize with what it's like to be a kid," Provost said.

Bergeron agreed with the trusted adult idea.

"Adjustment counselors and teachers, I feel, need to be a little bit more available to students and be less of someone that is strictly guiding them through just their education," Bergeron said. "But, also, teachers implementing the fact that they're not only nourishing their education, but also nourishing the fact that they understand that school can be hard and school can be tough on your mental health no matter whether it's with friends or with education, whatever you're struggling with."

Timothy Collins thanked Bergeron for adding her perspective to the conversation.

"The superintendent is right that that every student should have a trusted adult in the building, but trusted peers are, also, a big help and I bet you're helping a lot of people," Collins said.

# Wilbraham Hiking Club January Hikes

WILBRAHAM - Here are the January hikes for the Wilbraham Hiking Club and for the Wilbraham Senior Center Hiking Club. All hikes are "weather permitting".

- Th., Jan. 9 - Easy - MCRT, Church St section, Ware
- Th., Jan. 16 - Easy - Horse Mountain, Haydenville
- Mon., Jan. 20 - Easy - Laughing Brook, Hampden
- Sun., Jan. 26 - Easy - Thayer Brook, Wilbraham also Sun. Jan. 26 - a tentative high-moderate hike, location TBD

For more info on the hikes above (and possibly additional hikes), use the club's TeamReach App or write to wilbrahamhiking@gmail.com

And...

The Wilbraham Senior Center Hiking Club has two January Hikes and is thinking about planning a multi-day hiking trip:

- Fri., Jan. 10 at 9:15 Conant Brook easy-low moderate 3 miles, Old Wales Rd Monson.
- Tu., Jan. 28 at 9:15 Avery Loop at Shenipsit SF easy 4 miles, 25 Galbraith Rd Stafford Springs

The Senior Center is also gathering a list of folks who are interested in a three to 10 day regional/national hiking trip. The location and dates will be determined by those who express interest.

For more information, to register for Senior Center hikes, or to be added to the list for the multi-day hiking trip, contact Jen at 596-8379.

# St. Cecilia Catholic Women's Club meeting Jan. 21

WILBRAHAM - The St. Cecilia Catholic Women's Club January meeting takes place on Tuesday, Jan. 21 from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

## Card and Game Party Luncheon

Come enjoy an afternoon of card playing and board games following a delicious lunch and dessert. A raffle with many prizes is held. It's a great way to spend your day while raising money for our charitable contributions. The public is invited!! Hope to see you there!

## SCHOOL from page 2

instruction" and the schedule was changed this school year to eliminate the drop block.

10th grade, meanwhile, was "quite a strong performance across the board" for math.

Science "saw some nice improvements in student performance in grades five, eight and 10" according to Provost, also noting 10th grade "did, however, see large performance gaps for students of different racial and ethnic groups."

## Attendance and Discipline

Attendance and discipline were other major takeaways. Provost said the overall percentage of chronically absent students decreased from 13% to 11.4%, which "is good news since outcomes for chronically absent students are so much worse."

"But it still leaves more than 10% of students missing more than 10% of instructional days," Provost said.

Provost also looked over special education attendance data.

"It was quite dramatic. By eighth grade, we were finding that due to attendance, many students with disabilities were missing the equivalent of a year and a half of school," Provost said. "And when you put that together with the sort of rubric out there that many students with disabilities are three years behind before they're even diagnosed or identified, that's quite a gap to try to make up."

After noting students are now passing all 9th-grade courses and improvements in MassCore completion and enrollment in post-secondary education, Provost highlighted the number of suspensions "has come down remarkably."

"You may recall a couple of years ago, we had numbers of suspensions in the hundreds, or over 100 I should say, at both middle and high school," Provost said. "I can tell you, to date, there's been four suspensions at middle school this year."

So, what happens next? Check out this week's edition for the questions and feedback provided by the School Committee members.

# Women's Club hosting Luncheon Card & Game Party

WILBRAHAM - The Saint Cecilia Women's Club is holding a LUNCHEON CARD & GAME PARTY, Thursday, Jan. 23, at the St. Cecilia Parish Center, 42 Main St., Wilbraham.

Come with friends to play any game of your choice and enjoy a delicious luncheon. Donation is \$10. Check-in begins at 11:30 a.m. with lunch served at Noon.

There will also be a raffle for

many prizes and gift cards. Proceeds help to fund the club's scholarships and donations to other needy organizations in the area.

For reservations, please call Sue Agnew, 596-9480.

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# PET PAGE

## READERS!

Send in your pet picture for our "Pet of the Month" and receive a free weekend get-away or spa package for your pet courtesy of Porter Road Pet Care. Email your photos to: [jwalker@turley.com](mailto:jwalker@turley.com). Please include your name and your pet's name.



### PET OF THE MONTH Meet McKenna!

She is a beautiful girl who is very photogenic! She lives in Wilbraham with her family the O'Connors.



### Finding a Good Dog Groomer

Choosing the right dog groomer is more than just picking the closest or cheapest option. It's about ensuring your pet feels comfortable and safe while receiving top-notch grooming services. Here are some things to keep in mind while finding the ideal groomer:

**Start with recommendations.** Ask friends, family, neighbors, or even your vet for their recommendations. **Check for qualifications and experience.** A qualified groomer will have gone through proper training and might hold certifications from recognized grooming schools or professional organizations.

**Visit the grooming salon and observe the environment.** Is it clean? Do the dogs seem happy and well-treated? Is the equipment sanitized? A good grooming salon should feel welcoming, organized, and clean. Trust your gut feeling — if something feels off, it probably is.

**Ask the right questions:**

- What kind of grooming services do you offer?
- Do you have experience with my dog's breed?
- How do you handle dogs with anxiety, disabilities, or any other special needs?
- What products do you use, and are they safe for all skin types?
- How do you ensure the safety and comfort of the dogs during grooming?
- What is your procedure in case of an emergency?

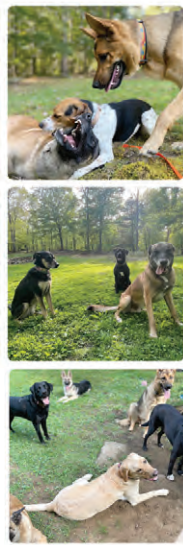
**Discuss your dog's specific needs.** Every dog is unique, and so are their grooming needs. Whether your dog has sensitive skin, anxiety, or special haircut requirements, make sure the groomer is equipped to handle them.

**Observe their interaction with your dog.** Pay close attention to how the groomer interacts with your pet during the initial meet and greet. Are they patient and gentle? Do they take the time to let your dog get comfortable with them? First impressions matter.

**Read reviews.** In this digital age, online reviews can be incredibly telling. Look up the groomers on social media.

**Understand their services and pricing.** Grooming services can vary widely in terms of what's included and how much it costs. Make sure you understand what's covered in a basic grooming package and what services might cost extra. On average, most dog groomers charge between \$30 and \$90 for a standard grooming session. Specialized services like de-shedding treatments, teeth cleaning, or flea treatments can add an extra \$10 to \$30 to your bill.

**Book a trial session.** Before committing to a long-term grooming relationship, consider scheduling a trial session. This can help you assess how well the groomer handles your dog and how your dog reacts to the grooming process. It's also a good opportunity to see if the groomer follows your instructions and preferences.



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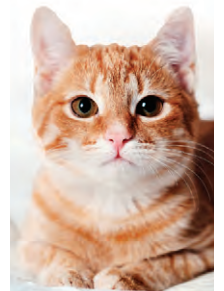
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## VIEWPOINTS



I spent last night curled up on the couch with a seed catalog in hand. It was a nostalgic few hours for me, in which I was transported back decades, to when gardening was new and my time and energy were boundless.

Regardless of it being the present day, I began circling this and that, and even curled a few pages too. All the fruit and vegetables I could grow, and store, and preserve, and eat, all year long.

Could my homesteading nature be bubbling back up to the surface? Perhaps. And wouldn't that wonderful if it could be a reality? It surely would.

Talk about an admirable ambition for the New Year.

I started to think about what my family eats on a regular basis and what I would have to do to grow enough food to last throughout the year or at least seriously supplement what we typically buy. The most important considerations are taste and productivity.

If a variety is productive, but doesn't taste great, then what is the point?

I have "plugged" Fedco Seeds a number of

## A New Year of possibilities

times through the years. The newsprint catalog is full of such great information; follow up by looking online (fedcoseeds.com) to get a color picture of what you will grow. I specifically enjoy reading the personal recommendations from the trialers in many of the descriptions!

The biggest problem I have growing tomatoes is with early blight. Last night I found a great disease resistant paste tomato called Plum Regal that will suit my needs well, hopefully yielding many quarts of sauce for the cupboards.

And what about that Little Dipper Butternut Squash? Disease resistance reigns true here, with taste and productivity ranking high too. Twenty-two fruits from three plants? I'll take it.

Succession planting is paramount if I want to grow lots of food consistently. This planting method is defined as "planting more than once."

It can be planting lettuce, for example, every two weeks throughout the growing season or planting beets in the spot the peas vacated. Reading the catalog reminded me that not every variety is suited for successional sowing.

In other words, the lettuce I sow for an early spring sowing might not be best for planting in the summer, and summer lettuce definitely won't be the best to extend my growing from fall into winter. I will definitely plan accordingly.

Likewise, I may love "Jade" green beans, but they wouldn't be the best for my first sowing because they are white seeded and typical-

ly white seeded beans rot in cool soil. I'll start with a dark seeded bean.

I am really looking forward to trying to grow a few new things this year, watermelon and cantaloupe to be exact. Less fruit to buy is a good thing, right?

I learned some tips from the catalog. Namely, to start the melons indoors, then transplant at two or three weeks old, before the roots tangle, into soil that has been amended with lots of aged manure or compost and prewarmed with black plastic mulch.

Using row covers over the plants until flowers appear will keep off the cucumber beetles and provide additional heat. The catalog also provided some interesting tips on how to harvest ripe melons.

When I did manage to grow a plant to maturity, there is absolutely nothing worse than cutting into a melon notoriously unripe with no way to ripen it. Best to call it chicken food at that point.

So this year I will grow ripe melons, lots of lettuce and butternut squash along with gallons of tomato sauce. And more. A New Year of possibilities.

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



## Have I saved Social Security money by claiming at 62?

Dear Rusty:

I had to start collecting Social Security at 62 and I am 75 now.

I believe that in the last 13 years I have saved Social Security money, so I do not know why I cannot draw my full benefits now.

If I had started drawing at 65 at \$1,200 per month, then I would have drawn \$16,400 per year. Instead, I got \$680 per month from 62 to 75 or \$8,160 per year or about \$106,000 over 13 years. Compare that to the age 65 amount of \$14,400 per year for 10 years, which is \$144,000. So, by claiming at 62, at age 75 I

have saved the government over \$38,000. It would make seniors lives so much easier if they could draw full Social Security at 75 years old, after getting only part of their SS.

Signed: Second-guessing

Dear Second-guessing:

The difference between benefits claimed at various ages causes many to reflect, as you have done, about what might have been had you waited longer to claim. But there is an error in your calculations. If your age 62 monthly benefit is \$680, your age 65 monthly benefit would have been about \$845, not \$1,200. Thus, at 75 you would have collected about \$101,400 by claiming at 65, vs. the \$106,000 you have received by claiming at age 62. In other words, you still would not have broken even had you claimed at age 65.

Social Security says that it doesn't matter when you claim they say that if you claim early your payments will be less, but you'll get more of them. Where SSA's argument falls apart is when life expectancy is longer. Our experience is that if you wait until your Full Retirement Age to claim, which is age 66 in your case vs. claiming at age 62, you will collect the same amount of total money at about age 78.

In other words, the "breakeven age" for waiting until FRA to claim is about 78. So, you will reach your personal "breakeven age" in about 2 1/2 years, at age 78). And this is precisely why we encourage everyone to understand their life expectancy when deciding when to claim Social Security those who expect to live longer will, indeed, get more SS money if they delay claiming.

Your benefit is determined by your age when you claim and if you claim before your FRA your monthly amount is permanently reduced. If you claimed at age 62 and your monthly amount was \$680, then in the four years until you reached age 66, your FRA, you would have received about \$32,640. If you had, instead, waited until your FRA to claim, your benefit at age 66 would have been about \$906/month. Collecting \$906/month (at 66) vs. \$680/month (at 62) would make your breakeven age about 78. If you claimed at age 65 instead of 62, your breakeven age would have been about a year earlier (77).

So, have you saved Social Security money? Up to this point, you have not. Since you claimed at age 62, you have collected about

Please see **SOCIAL SECURITY**, page 15

## Election letters to the editor welcome

The Wilbraham-Hampden Times 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 Wilbraham-Hampden Times, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to krivers@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.

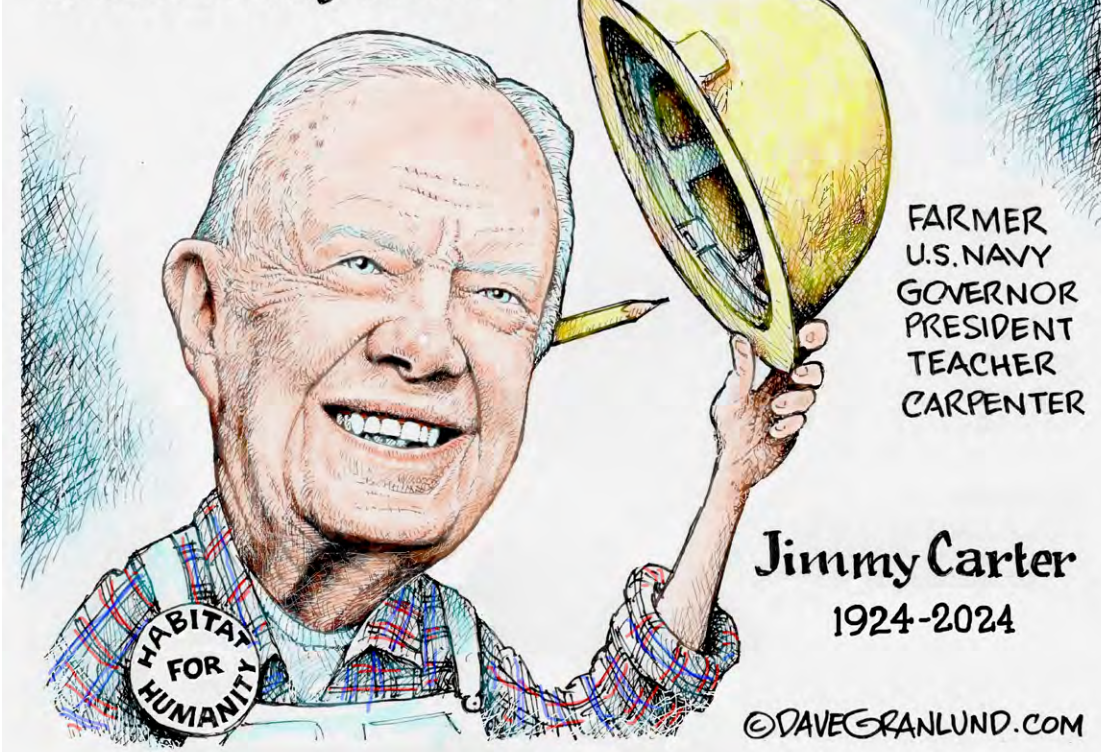
For more information, call the editor at 413-283-8393.

### 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 Wilbraham-Hampden Times.

## Man of many hats...



## The Wilbraham-Hampden TIMES TEAM



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The Wilbraham-Hampden Times is published every Thursday by Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, Mass. 01069. Telephone (413) 283-8393, Fax (413) 289-1977.



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Letters to the editor should be 350 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: Editor, Wilbraham-Hampden Times, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-682-0013 or via e-mail to krivers@turley.com. The deadline for submissions is Friday at noon.

### Correction Policy

The TIMES will gladly correct factual errors that appear in this paper and can be substantiated. Corrections or clarifications will always appear on the editorial pages. To request a correction, send information in an e-mail or mailed communication to the editor at the above address listed above.

The Wilbraham-Hampden TIMES is published every Thursday by Turley Publications, Inc. One year out of town subscriptions are available at \$45, out of state \$50 by calling 800-824-6458 Ext. 201. The deadline for submission of news material, letters to the editor and photos is Monday at 12 p.m. The TIMES is not responsible for submitted photos.



**Jared Demetri, Lecturer for the Knights of Columbus 10195, explains the process and the rules of the competition to the competitors.**



**Elijah Timothy-Aguirre shoots his free throw on the other basketball hoop used for the day's competition. First in his age range, he later shot a second round of free throws for the district level.**

Turley photos by Hannah Yeasley



Photos courtesy of Josh Mitchell

**Chloe Lawless, 2nd place winner of last year's competition, prepares to shoot a free throw.**

**FREE THROW** from page 1

two levels of the competition, so participants are given a chance to compete in the regional and then state level.

Participants shot their free throws two at a time; one on each half of the basketball court in the gym at St. Cecilia's Parish. Each side had two scorekeepers and two rebounders.

Those competing could arrive from even before 10 a.m. up until noon, with the option to leave once they were done.

"Everyone gets a certificate when they shoot their council-level free throws. If they are going to be asked to reshoot for district, we will ask before they leave," Demetri said. "And then overall winners will be notified at the end of the day and we will coordinate getting them their medals and giving them information about regionals."

One participant, Chloe Lawless, is a returning competitor. Winning second place at the state level last year, Lawless hopes to be this year's overall winner.

"This is my third year in this competition, but I've been playing basketball my whole life," Lawless said.

With only a few participants in each age group, almost everyone that joined the event on Saturday shot both rounds of free throws.

Besides Lawless, other district participants include but are not limited to Harry Peterson, Shea Ryan, Michael Hayes and Elijah Timothy-Aguirre.

Two of the scorekeepers, John Hegarty and Bob St. Martin, have been part of this competition for years.

"An event like this is good for the community," St. Martin said. "The winners get a big trophy at the end. It would be wonderful to be able to offer scholarships and things like that, but it's still nice to just have a fun thing for folks to come out and do. Kids who do or don't play winter sports or year-round basketball can come out and just have a good time."

Although the free throw competition is a competition, the level of competitiveness seemed to be dampened by the support from the Knights and from the other participants.

"I'll be at all levels of the competition, even if we just have one kid from this area that goes," Demetri said. "I like to attend to show my support, and it's always exciting to see how far everyone gets."

The regional level of the competition will be held in Greenfield sometime in March, with the state level at an undetermined location in April.



**Harry Peterson gears up to shoot a free throw. Scoring highest in his age group for the council round, he also re-shot for district.**



**Skylar Goodrow shoots a free throw from the 12-foot line. Anyone aged 11 or younger could choose to shoot from that line.**



**Abbi Stachowicz, one of many returning competitors, preps her free throw while others look on.**

## Town Committee hosting Inauguration Day Celebration

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Republican Town Committee will be hosting an Inauguration Day Celebration at 6 p.m. at the Country Club of Wilbraham on Monday, Jan. 20. All are welcome to join the festivities.

For those who would also like to join for a meal or beverage, a special menu and bar will be available. We hope to see you at the Celebration.

## SR Artisans hosting Big Art Show of Small Works

HAMPDEN - The Scantic River Artisans will be hosting the Big Art of Small Works on Feb. 8 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Feb. 9 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

A reception will be held on Feb. 9 from Noon to 2 p.m.

Folks can also clip out a coupon from the Wilbraham-Hampden Times and enter a drawing for an original piece of artwork. This event will take place at 104 Allen Street, Hampden, MA (The Community Room at the Hampden Senior Center).

For more information, please visit: [www.scanticriverartisans.com](http://www.scanticriverartisans.com) or email: [info@scanticriverartisans.com](mailto:info@scanticriverartisans.com)

## Stay off the ice this winter

WILBRAHAM/HAMPDEN - How thick is safe ice? Ice on moving waters in rivers, streams and brooks is generally not safe.

The thickness of ice on ponds depends on factors such as water currents, depth and natural objects like stumps or rocks. Daily changes in temperature can cause ice to expand and contract, which affects its stability. Because of these factors, no one can declare the ice to be safe. The only safe ice is at a skating rink.

A message from fire and life safety educators of Wilbraham and Hampden.

## WPD seeking owner of found cell phone

WILBRAHAM - The police department is asking for the public's help in finding the owner of a found cell phone, sharing this bulletin to their Facebook page on Dec. 31: "An Android cell phone was recently found at Fountain Park. If it's yours, it will be at the Wilbraham Police Department, 2780 Boston Road.

You will need to provide proof of ownership. It appears to be functional and is currently charging."

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# A COMMUNITY GALLERY



JAN 11  
WINTER IN WILBRAHAM

Submitted by Vira Syrota, Wilbraham

Last year on Jan. 7, snow fell all day, turning the town into a winter fairy tale.

*Life in & HAM*

Readers are encouraged to send in medium to high resolution photos for this page by e-mail to [dzbierski@turley.com](mailto:dzbierski@turley.com) or mail to TIMES, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069. Please note that if you send us a photo of the Times in different parts of the world, please include a recognizable landmark in the background. Examples: Eiffel Tower; castle in Spain.

# WILBRAHAM

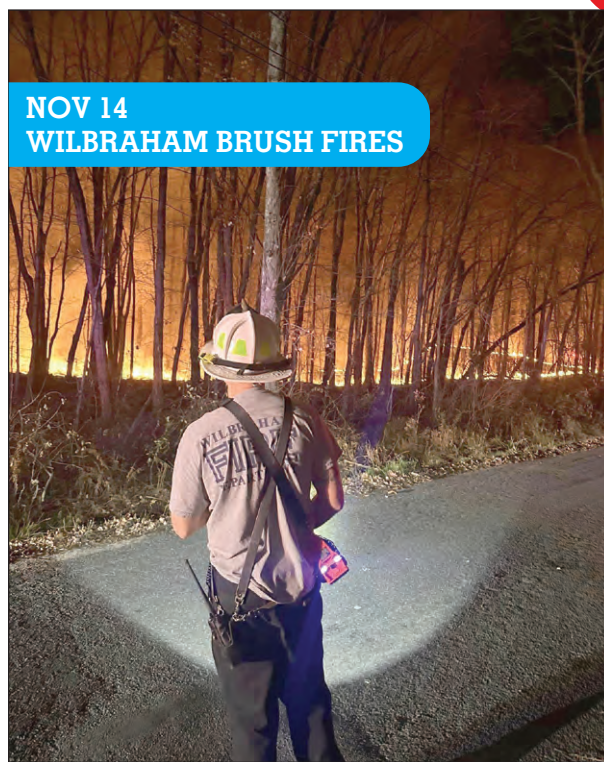
The Hampden Parks & Recreation Department hosted a watch party at Memorial Park on April 8 to watch the solar eclipse. The department also handed out over 1,000 viewing glasses to residents ahead of the eclipse.



OCT 31  
HAMPDEN BRUSH FIRES

Courtesy of the Hampden Fire Department

The Hampden Fire Department responded to brush fires in the area this past week. The state was also under Red Flag Warnings due to the dry and windy conditions.

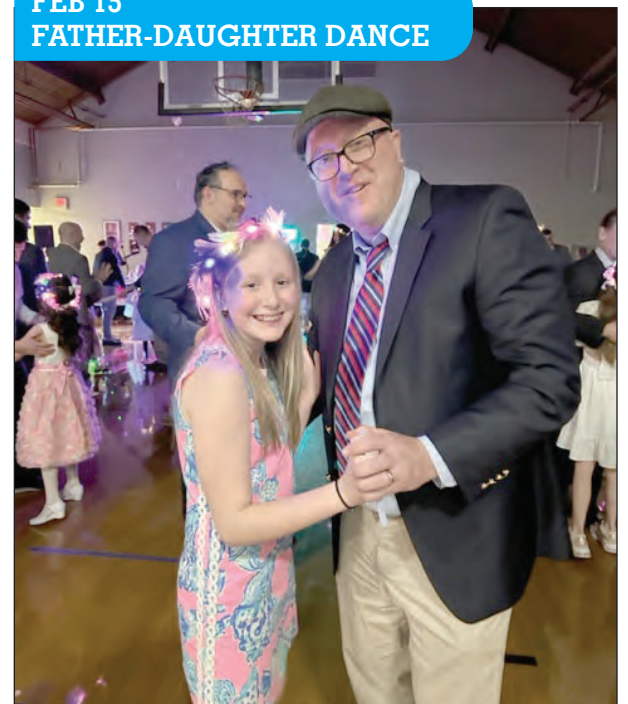


NOV 14  
WILBRAHAM BRUSH FIRES

Courtesy of Wilbraham Fire Department

The Wilbraham Fire Department responded to several brush fires—and illegal burns—in the past week. The fire department later announced a restriction on outdoor fires in Wilbraham on Nov. 4.

FEB 15  
FATHER-DAUGHTER DANCE



Courtesy of Rosemary Oldread, director of Religious Education

On Friday, Feb. 9, St. Cecilia's Parish hosted its 25th annual Father-Daughter Dance. Over 200 guests made their way out and danced the night away. There was good music, great friends, and wonderful memories were made.



DEC 12  
WREATH SALE

Submitted photo Lorna Lawrence

Members of Scout Troop 359 held a Wreath Sale on Dec. 1 in the St. Cecilia Church parking lot from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. The wreaths were decorated with pinecones and berries, with all proceeds going towards camping equipment and materials.



MARCH 28: K OF C HOST ST. PATRICK'S DAY DINNER

Courtesy of Knights of Columbus Council 10195

The Wilbraham Knights of Columbus Council 10195 held their annual St. Patrick's Day dinner at St. Cecilia's Parish on March 16 to huge fanfare. The event included a traditional Irish meal of corned beef, cabbage, carrots, rye & soda bread, raffles and an Irish sing-along.

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# WILBRAHAM HAMPDEN 2024



APRIL 11: "THE GREAT SOLAR ECLIPSE"

Photos submitted by Dan Blanchard



JULY 27 PEACH BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

Knot a Chance Crochet made special peach items to sell at the Peach Blossom Festival on June 14 and 15 on the front lawn of Wilbraham & Monson Academy.

Submitted photo and caption Jen Powell



AUGUST 1 ROTARY CLUB CELEBRATES 50 YEARS!

Submitted photo Don Flannery

Wilbraham-Hampden Rotary Club President Peter Salerno addresses attendees during the rotary club's 50th anniversary celebration on July 24.



SEPT 19: OPEN HOUSE

Gerry Schmidt (left) and Ginny McGovern of Wilbraham had fun guessing what antiques were used for at the Old Meeting House "Treasurers from the Attic" Open House on Sept. 7. Gerry holds the explanation for an antique hat mold. (Charles F. Bennett photo)

## engagement announcement

### Gregory to wed Durkin

WILBRAHAM - Donna J Gregory of Wilbraham announces the engagement of her daughter Anna Marie Gregory to Kevin Durkin.

Submitted photo Donna Gregory

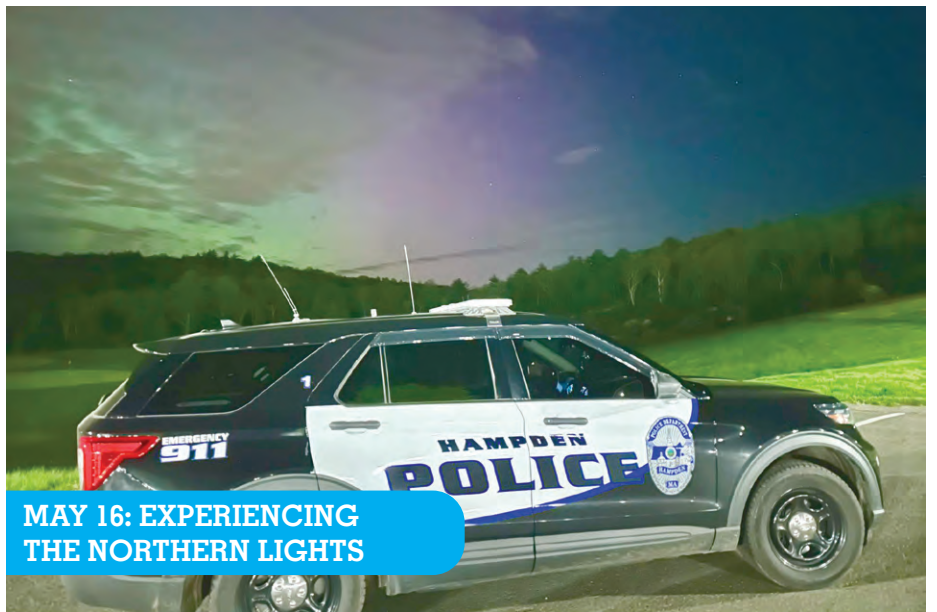


JULY 4 SUMMER LUNCHEON



Submitted photo Diane Marino

Hampden celebrated the start of summer with a Summer Luncheon on June 20! Pictured here are Ann Albert, Jean White and Judy Fleury excited to celebrate the start of summer.



MAY 16: EXPERIENCING THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

Courtesy of Hampden Police Department

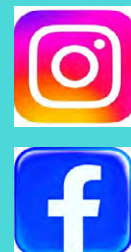
The Hampden Police Department shared this photo of the Northern Lights in the early morning hours of May 11.

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# St. Cecilia Parish hosts Annual Christmas Pageant

By Noelle Hisgen  
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - On December 21, 2024, St. Cecilia Parish held their annual Christmas Pageant as part of their Saturday Mass.

The pageant included over 30 children who were in grades one through six. First and second grade students played the roles of the angels and sheep, while third to sixth grade students were given the opportunity to play various featured roles.

For over 17 years, the Christmas pageant has been directed by Meg Cyr and Lori Callahan.

"It's just beautiful to see the kids, to see up on the altar the night at the pageant, seeing the kids up there, seeing the holy family up there, seeing the smiles on their faces," Cyr said. "It's just such a beautiful way to remember the meaning of the season, the real meaning of the season, and for the kids to be able to learn more about the birth of Jesus and about the story, and for them to better understand the meaning of Christmas."

"I hope that they will enjoy and have fun. That's the most important thing," Callahan said. "Second thing is I hope they learn the real story behind Christmas and third thing is it's just great for kids to get up in front of people and have the experi-



The children playing Mary, Joseph, Donkey, and the Donkey's Angel enter the center of the church.

ence."

Rosemary Oldread, the head of religious education, spoke about what the Christmas pageant meant to her.

"I love this event. It is the perfect opportunity for the kids to learn the true meaning of Christmas," Oldread said. "It gets them really in Christmas spirit and our parishioners love it as well. They love seeing the children act out the Christmas story."

Along with Oldread, Deacon Andrew Nowicki spoke on the importance of the Christmas Pageant in Wilbraham.

"They'll always remember this. The people who were Joseph and Mary, they'll always remember they were Joseph and Mary. And every Christmas, they'll tell their kids someday how they were Joseph



Photos courtesy of Rosemary Oldread  
The children come together to sing "Joy to the World."

and Mary, because I tell my kids that I was an innkeeper. But that the most important thing is they'll remember the story of Christmas," Nowicki said.

There were many teen volunteers as well, helping the children get ready for the pageant. One of them, in particular, was Minnechaug sophomore Leah LoMascolo.

LoMascolo chose to volunteer with the kids after a very positive experience volunteering as a counselor with St. Cecilia's Youth Summer Camp this past summer.

"I want them to take away teamwork. I want them to learn more about the Christmas story, and they get to understand more of it through actually doing it and participating in it. It will get them more invested in church," LoMascolo said.

An interesting feature in the St. Cecil-



Over 30 children participated in this year's Christmas Pageant at St. Cecilia Parish on Dec. 21.

ia's Christmas Pageant is the addition of vocal performances done by the St. Cecilia's Youth Choir in between part of the pageant.

Carolee McGrath directs the Youth Choir.

"I love the Christmas pageant because you hear from the children themselves the beauty of Christ's birth," McGrath said. "They retell the nativity story, and I think it's a great witness in a way to evangelize even the parents how beautiful our Savior is and how we really need to prepare room in our hearts to receive Jesus at Christmas."

It was a great way to get children together and teach them about the true meaning of Christmas. While it being an interactive experience for them, it was also a very educational one as well.

## ART SHOW from page 1

and what it means to make art as well as to share it with the community.

"I would like students to walk away from this showcase seeing the hard work that they along with their peers have put into this semester. To have an appreciation for art, to pause and look and try to see deeper into what the work might convey," Fine/Applied Arts Department Chair Jennifer Zera said, who taught Foundations of Art and Clay I. "We have some very talented students here at Minnechaug. Sometimes the arts are a little overlooked and not as supported as our sporting events. The arts are important for many reasons, it is a place of acceptance,



Various colorful art pieces are displayed on the wall of the art hallway.



Digital art from the Graphic Communications are displayed on the walls

Turley photos by Noelle Hisgen



The band all joins together for a performance of "Sleigh Ride."

a safe space and of course they help foster and support creativity. A wide range of offerings from digital art, to clay and 2D."

"I would like students to take the moment to step back from their work and appreciate how far they've come!" Kyle Garron said, who taught a Foundations of Art Class, Graphic Communications, and AP Studio Art and Design. "Most of the classes showcasing their work

are introductory level classes. Many students enter those classes with little formal skill and little confidence in what they can do. The Art Show is the space where they can take a step back and appreciate what they have created and how far their skills have developed!"

"The first part of the year is getting the ensembles to focus on their sound with techniques such as blend, pitch accuracy and tonality. Once this is established, the musical selections are determined and prepared for performance. The process has been smooth and comfortable," Tom Ingram, said who directed the mixed choir and camerata.

Ingram added what he'd like the community to know about the Fine Arts Department at the high school.

"I would like people to know that the Fine Arts Department here at Minnechaug consists of passionate and hard-working professionals that care very deeply about the students and the subjects that they are teaching. Their sole ambition is to instill the value of creativity and self-expression in all artistic capacities," Ingram said. "Personally, I would like the community to know how much I appreciate their support of the Arts and I never take it for granted."

"The experience has been incredibly rewarding," Band Director Dave Morris said. "Our ensembles are the largest that they have been since we came out of COVID and the students come to rehearsal each day ready to put in the work and raise their level of musicianship. We have a good balance of experienced veteran players demonstrating great leadership, with younger players who are eager to achieve. The level of collaboration and trust between them is inspiring to observe. Watching them improve every day is one of the best parts of my job."

It was a fantastic way to showcase all of the work that the arts students have been working so hard on during their first semester, and it showed the community that the arts are—and should always be—supported at Minnechaug now and for years to come.

# CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

"My experience with Maureen was nothing short of amazing. Her communication throughout the whole process was perfect. I could always count on her if I needed a question answered, a quick response, or if I needed to vent. I was a client that was hoping to sell my condo and purchase a house. I have 2 young daughters so the process had to be done just right in order for it to be successful. It wasn't an easy process, but as my realtor she made sure I sold my condo, she made sure I got my house, and on top of it all, she made it a priority to actually care about how I felt during the whole process. She was not only my realtor but she became my friend! She is such an empathetic, caring, thoughtful, involved individual. She really showed me how much of a passion this is for her. I am now in my beautiful home. My daughters get to run around, scream, and play all they want; and my fiancé is so happy. I do not know how I would've gotten through the process without Maureen. It is not often where you get to experience someone who is extremely passionate about what they do. If anyone needs a realtor I HIGHLY will recommend Maureen. Thank you so much for our home."  
- Kayleen W.



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# SPORTS

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## Girls basketball gets win over Warriors

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

FISKDALE—With the help of six 3-pointers in the first half, the Minnechaug Lady Falcons built a 24-point halftime lead, and defeated the Tantasqua Lady Warriors for the second year in a row.

The Lady Falcons, who made a total of ten shots from beyond the 3-point arc in the contest, continued to pull away from the Lady Warriors during the second half en route to a 56-20 non-league victory at the Tantasqua Fieldhouse on December 30.

“We did make a lot of our shots, and we also played very well defensively which gave us a lead against a strong Tantasqua team,” said Minnechaug girls’ varsity basketball coach Ryan Minns. “We also played in a similar size gym the other day, which helped us prepare for today’s game.”

Minnechaug Regional, who lost at Wachusett Regional, 70-51, two days earlier, entered the new year with a 2-1 overall record. They defeated Holyoke at home in their season opener.

Tantasqua had a 3-2 overall record. They began the regular season with victories against SWCL rivals Southbridge, Leicester, and David Prouty before suffering a 10-point loss at Shepherd Hill.

“We’re a young basketball team this year and we had a difficult time handling the Minnechaug pressure,” said Tantasqua head coach Andy Haley. “Minnechaug plays a very difficult schedule, and we knew that this was going to be a very tough game for us.”

When the Lady Falcons made their last visit to the Tantasqua Fieldhouse two years ago, they suffered a 47-39 setback on the Lady Warriors senior night.

“They beat us on their senior night two years ago,” said Minnechaug senior Ava Ofcarcik, who finished this year’s contest with a game-high 13 points. “It feels really nice to come back here and celebrate a win.”

The Lady Falcons, who squeaked out a 36-30 home win versus the Lady Warriors a year ago, raced out to a 12-0 lead in the final game of 2024.

The trio of junior Cailin O’Brien (10 points), junior Elizabeth Woytowicz (6 points) and Ofcarcik knocked down 3-pointers during the first three minutes of the opening quarter giving the visiting team a 9-0 lead.

“The 3-pointers early in the first quarter gave us a lot of confidence,” Minns said. “We made a bunch of threes in tonight’s game.”

Then an old fashion three point play from junior Ava Manning (6 points) increased the lead to 12-0 with three minutes remaining in the quarter.

While a total of nine players scored for Minnechaug, O’Brien and Ofcarcik were the only players to reach double digits. Sophomore Ainsley Holden finished the contest with nine points.

“We really don’t have one player who’ll score 25 points per game,” Minns added. “We need three or four players to score for us in every game.”

The Lady Warriors only made basket during the first eight minutes was an off balance jumper in the lane by junior Jules Petersen (4 points) with 2:45 remaining in the first quarter.

At the end of the first quarter, an Ofcarcik steal and fastbreak lay-up gave the Lady Falcons a 17-2 advantage.

With 5:22 remaining in the first half, a Holden base-line lay-up gave the visitors from Wilbraham a 25-3 lead.

Please see **GIRLS BASKETBALL**, page 13



Max Baroni drives to the hoop under pressure.



Nate Pace gets the short-range jumper.



## Falcons fall to Tantasqua

Miles Fergus looks to approach the hoop.

Turley photos by Sofia DiGrande



Orlando Pagan looks around to make a pace.

WILBRAHAM – The Minnechaug Regional High School boys basketball team suffered a loss against Tantasqua Regional High School last Monday afternoon 58-54. The Falcons would lead early in the matchup, but Tantasqua made a strong comeback, then out-scored Minnechaug 9-5 in overtime. Miles Fergus led Minnechaug with 16 points. Logan Conboy had 11 points and Gus Przybyl finished with 10 points. The Falcons rebounded with a win over Westfield last Friday 54-49 and are 5-2 on the season.



Gus Przybyl gets around an opponent and heads for the basket.

# Chaug hockey takes loss on MassMutual ice



**Ben Daniels makes a pass forward.**

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

**By Tim Peterson**  
Sports Correspondent

SPRINGFIELD—The first line of the Amherst hockey team is made up of freshman Nathan Desbien, junior Ethan Mooney, and junior Benjamin Remensnyder.

Desbien and Mooney, who were teammates on a couple of youth hockey teams, helped the Hurricanes get into the win column for the first time this season against Minnechaug Regional.

Desbien netted Amherst's first two goals before Mooney scored what turned out to be the game winning goal six minutes into the second period.

The Hurricanes, who held a one goal lead at the end of the second period, managed to keep the Falcons off the scoreboard for the final 15 minutes of the non-conference match before celebrating a 3-2 victory at the MassMutual Center in Springfield on December 27.

"This is a very good win for us," said Mooney, who was named as an assistant captain prior to the start of the regular season. "We played a little more physically than they did, and we were able to come out on top. It was also very cool to have the opportunity to play a hockey game in this building for the first time."

The only high school hockey game scheduled to be played at the MassMutual Center this winter was organized by Joe Manning, who's an Account Executive for the Springfield Thunderbirds.

Manning graduated from Minnechaug Regional in 2020 and was a four year member of the Falcons hockey team, which is coached by Kyle Bousquet. One of Manning's youth hockey coaches was Amherst hockey coach Michael Rousseau, who's also a longtime family friend.

"This is a full circle moment for me. I played hockey for both coach Bousquet and coach Rousseau when I was younger,"

Manning said. "This was the first time that we've held a high school hockey game at the MassMutual Center in a while. I never had the opportunity to play a game here during my high school career. I did have a lot of help setting this game up. We just wanted to create a cool experience for these kids."

Manning gave a lot of credit to both head coaches, along with Amherst Athletic Director Victoria Dawson and Minnechaug AD Steve Burndett for helping him set up the memorable experience for the players.

The fans who attended the high school hockey game could also stay for the Springfield Thunderbirds game that night against the Hartford Wolfpack.

Rousseau is very glad that his team was invited to play in a hockey game at the MassMutual Center.

"The first reason why I accepted the invitation to play in today's game was the hard work that Joe Manning did putting it together. He's just an outstanding young man," Rousseau said. "The second reason is these kids will probably never get another opportunity to play a varsity hockey game here. It was an unbelievable experience for the players on both teams."

Following the match, the players from both teams took a picture together.

The last time Amherst played a game at the MassMutual Center was in the 2016 Division 3A state finals, which was a loss to Nashoba Regional.

Rousseau and his players walked out of the MassMutual Center feeling a lot better about things this time.

"We finally got the monkey off of our backs," Rousseau said. "We played with a lot of heart against a very good Berry Division team. We believed in our sys-



**Liam Fancuff advances up the ice.**



**Dom Fiorentino takes the wrist shot.**



**Joey Comes goes after a loose puck.**



**Nick Garib heads for the goal.**



**Enzo Hrycay struggles to keep possession of the puck.**

tem and were able to win a hockey game."

While Amherst entered 2025 with a 1-2-1 overall, the Falcons overall record fell to 2-3. They lost to Longmeadow less than 24 hours earlier.

The Falcons, who outshot the Hurricanes, 31-15, took a 1-0 lead at the 3:34 mark of the opening period when senior Brayden O'Sullivan pushed a shot into the net past Amherst senior goalie Spencer McDonald. Sophomore Nick Garib assisted on the Falcons' first goal of the contest.

With 39.2 seconds left in the opening period, Amherst tied the score with a Desbien power-play goal. Senior Eric Chen was credited with the assist.

Desbien's second goal came on a breakaway shot three minutes into the second period. The unassisted goal gave Amherst the lead for the first time.

"I had only scored one goal before today's game," Desbien said. "It was cool scoring my team's first two goals, especially in this building."

A little more than two minutes later, Mooney, who's a student at Pathfinder Tech, netted an unassisted power-play goal which gave his team a 3-1 advantage.

Mooney can play hockey for Amherst as part of a co-op. He also made the switch from being a defenseman a year ago to being a forward.

"Ethan didn't play a lot last year," Rousseau said. "He improved his skills a lot during the offseason, and I decided to give him a shot up front. He has the skills

to play both positions. I also named him as an assistant captain and he's one of our leaders this year. The other three Pathfinder players have had some shifts this season, but they're still learning how to play the game at this level."

The other Pathfinder Tech players listed on the Hurricanes varsity hockey roster are freshmen Noah Latulippe, Landon Lukasik, and Nolan MacTavish.

With a little more than six minutes remaining in the second period, Minnechaug freshman starting goalie Matt Lafley was replaced between the pipes by his classmate Chase Folli.

Bousquet said before the start of the game that he was planning to use both of his goalies.

The Falcons sliced the deficit in half following a goal from sophomore Liam Faneuff with 3:17 remaining in the second period, which was assisted by junior Enzo Hrycay.

Amherst also made a goalie change with 8:13 remaining in the third period, as junior Jason Kim replaced McDonald.

During the Falcons first power-play chance of the match, one of Faneuff's shot attempts was saved by Kim. He also fired another shot that deflected off the crossbar.

**HEALTH** from page 1

issue and the board voted with the findings and then scheduled this meeting," McCool said.

Building Commissioner Wendel Hulbert spoke with Basile after the trailer showed up at the beginning of October and had put a copy of the town's trailer bylaw on his trailer "with a note to call me so we could talk about it."

"We did speak about it. Basically, told me his property was posted, setting up for a bit and so he was kind of irate. The next time we spoke, I just tried to, basically, calm the situation and say, 'If you're going to be building a house there, we're going to need to work together. I don't feel like this is the way we should start,'" Hulbert said.

Hulbert said after getting no results, a letter went out at the end of that month outlining the violations and his concerns.

After a brief discussion of MGL Chapter 40A about the zoning bylaws, the floor opened for Basile to address the board.

**Basile Responds**

Attorney Charles Scalfani Jr., representing Basile, noted from his understanding, no one was living in the trailer and his client said he wasn't living there.

"So, he's just using it because he's trying to work on getting the necessary permits to start building on the vacant parcel," Scalfani said. "And that was the whole idea of purchasing it."

After reviewing MGL Chapter 40A, Scalfani said Basile has the right to have the trailer--or trailers--on the property.

"I think that was the misunderstanding of what was going on here," Scalfani said.

Basile explained when he returns to town and wants to spend time with his wife, he lives with his mother.

"I got this property, sold my house, things happened real quick. We're homeless, period, and I'm not looking for no sympathy. Bouncing around, place to place, okay, with the house sold quick and they're handing me a check," Basile said.

After buying the property and being told it was ready to build, Basile said he got into town and never applied for building permits.

"I'm in the construction trades, they do all that," Basile said.

After struggles with finding contractors and sharing about not knowing or understanding the process, Basile stressed how he didn't check when he was bringing items to the property, figuring

it was his.

"The God's honest truth and so I'm dealing with the violations. I work out of town a lot, do come in from time to time. My other vehicles are there, the storage container with my personal property, moved the house got to put it somewhere. It happened like a two-week period," Basile said.

Basile added until he gets the building permit, he can't work on the property and a well was in when he bought the place, along with him having a septic design.

On living there, he said this.

"He said I admitted to living there. Well, I said we do come back time to time, but I'm not living there like it's my residence. I have a P.O. Box," Basile said.

After Basile confirmed he spends overnights there, Selectboard Member and Board of Health Chair John Flynn said this.

"I think it's definition time, maybe it's semantics, but it's a definition thing. So, living --whether you say it's like days at a time or one night staying there--I think the rule is that no overnights. I mean, that's living there," Flynn said.

After Flynn asked if there would still be health violations if there were no overnights and the porta-potty was removed, McCool responded this way.

"I guess there's no violation if that's not going to be where he's staying at overnight and if the porta-potty was not the permanent bathroom there," McCool said.

Flynn then emphasized the need for cooperation on both sides so this does not come before the board or Board of Health again.

Selectboard Member Craig Rivest asked about the timeline for Basile's project.

"Do you have a timeframe that you're looking to build a residence there?" Rivest said.

Basile replied after getting the permit and paperwork, he wants to build as soon as he's able.

Flynn then summarized what the recourse would be if action is not done.

"If an understanding is not lived up to, that's our recourse is to padlock and condemn," Flynn said.

## Upcoming Memorial School projects include removal of island

Parks and Recreation Director Bryan Litz had plans approved Monday.

By Dalton Zbierski  
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM – Parks and Recreation Director Bryan Litz appeared before the Select Board Monday evening to request approval for two projects at Memorial School.

Litz asked to eliminate the island with a flagpole that exists outside the front of the former school building, which is now used for a variety of Parks and Recreation Department activities. He also requested the removal of the bleachers from the school's gymnasium.

The board unanimously approved both items.

Litz described the island outside of Memorial School's entrance as looking disheveled with weeds growing from it. He believes that eliminating it will free up much needed space.

"The island has become a bit of an eye sore," Litz said. "With the usage of the building, it's just additional parking that we could quite frankly use."

Facilities Director Sam Boyd said the island originally served as a round-about when the building was used as a school that allowed parents to safely drop off and pick up their children each day. Now that school is no longer in session there, the island has become more inconvenient than useful.

One Parks employee spoke briefly, discussing the obstacles presented by the island.

"With plowing, when we come up with the plow truck, it's right in the middle of the way, and then we have to back around it. It adds some time; with all the plowing we have on our plate now, any time we can save to help the other properties is [helpful]," he said.

Litz noted that the building's popularity for recreation activities has forced the department to add extra lighting around the side of the building, where parking is spilling over. Then, he doubled down that the island no longer looks good.

"It's just a way to add more parking, make it easier for the park staff to plow and get rid of an eye sore when the first thing [you see] when you pull up to the building is a flagpole with no flags, weeds and different things," Litz said.

Litz added that this is a good time to accomplish projects that surface over the course of the

year. When asked if the flagpole on the island was still usable, Litz wasn't sure.

He did point out why it would be hard to maintain a flag there.

"I don't know if it's functional. It hasn't been used since I've been here. It's rusty, it's old," Litz said. "Even if it was useable, there's no electricity there so it wouldn't follow flag etiquette [because there would be no light]."

Litz proposed leveling the island in the coming weeks and patching it in the spring with asphalt millings, which are already on site. In the future, Litz will bring another request to the board relating to the parking lot.

"Down the road, the hope would be -- and it's not essential -- to line the entire parking lot, which would create more order to parking and address some of the ADA issues in terms of handicap, but that's something that would be nice down the line. Whether the island's there or not, that's something that should be done," Litz said.

A smaller project, the removal of the bleachers from Memorial School's gym, was considered the easiest by Litz. He said they've been there for more than a quarter-century, which he said he knows because that's how long he's been with the department.

"We don't use them because they're difficult," Litz said. "When you pull them out, it's difficult to get them back in. It's a two to three-person job to get them back in. We don't want our staff who's there by themselves potentially hurting themselves."

Litz said that the department provides chairs for people to sit in during activities and events. While the project is minor, the need is realistic.

"It would just free up more space in a small gym and it would allow us to not have to worry about folks pulling them out unbeknownst to us and having to worry about getting them back in. It's truly to open up more space and make it easier on our staff quite frankly," Litz said.

Litz added that the department won't get rid of the old bleachers, as there is plenty of space to store them in Memorial School.

Boyd said both projects are feasible, before the board voted in approval of them.

"Each of these projects is relatively straightforward and certainly within the capability of our Parks Department," Boyd said. "No electrical is involved in either one, as you're okay with the flagpole coming down... I would like to see that area [of the island] paved eventually if it's taken out. Millings won't stand up for a very long time."

**GIRLS BASKETBALL** from page 11

Minnechaug held a 31-7 halftime advantage.

Tantasqua's only two made field goals during the second quarter were lay-ups by senior Maggie Johnson and Petersen. Junior Sophia Ezzo also added a free throw.

Ezzo would score eight more points during the second half, and she finished the contest with a team-high of nine points.

Both teams struggled offensively at the start of the third quarter.

The only points either team scored during the first three minutes of the third quarter were foul shots.

Ezzo made a pair of free throws and sophomore Tessa Sheldon also added a foul shot, which was her only point of the game.

Six of the 11 points scored by Minnechaug in the third quarter came on 3-pointers from Holden and O'Brien, who also made a free throw.

Ofcareik and junior Lyric Nelson (5 points) added inside hoops, as the Lady Falcons entered the final eight minutes holding a 42-14 lead. Nelson also made a couple of key steals in the third quarter.

The Lady Falcons outscored the Lady Warriors, 14-6, during the fourth quarter and enjoyed the bus ride back to Western Mass.



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

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**PJ's Electrical** offers fast and reliable electrical services for your home or business. Call now for a FREE estimate! **(413) 366-1703**  
 LICENSED & INSURED

## SERVICES

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## SERVICES

### PAINTING

**DUTCH TOUCH PAINTING**  
 Interior only \$199.00 for average 12x16 room. Very neat, references, prompt service call **(508)867-2550**

## PLUMBING

**GREG LAFONTAIN PLUMBING & HEATING** Lic #19196 Repairs & Replacement of fixtures, water heater installations, steam/HW boiler replacement. Kitchen & Bath remodeling. 30 years experience. Fully insured. \$10 Gift Card With Work Performed. Call Greg **(413)592-1505.**

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**BOB ROBILLARD'S RUBBISH REMOVAL** Attics, Cellars, Garages cleaned, Pools/Hot Tubs Removed. Family owned/operated since 1950 **(413)537-5090.**

## TREE WORK

**AAA-TROM'S TREE SERVICE PROFESSIONAL SERVICE.** Residential removal of trees. Free estimates. Fully insured W/Workman's Comp. Remove them before the wind takes them down. Cordwood, stump grinding. Call **413-283-6374.**

**DL & G TREE SERVICE** - Everything from tree pruning, tree removal, stump grinding, storm damage and brush chipping. Honest and Dependable. Fully insured. Now offering a Senior Citizen and Veteran discount. Call today for free estimate **(413)478-4212**

## SERVICES

**H & H TREE SERVICE** All phases of tree care. Call Dave **413-668-6560** day/night.

## TUTORING

**TUTORING:** Literacy, all ages. Math K-8, online, your home or library. Call **978-799-9096.**  
**petedon151@live.com**

## STUMP GRINDING

**DL & G STUMP GRINDING** Grinding stumps of all sizes, insured & certified. Senior discounts. Call Dave **413-478-4212**

## AUTO

**CASH FOR JUNK AND REPAIRABLE CARS**  
**FREE TOWING FAST SERVICE CASH PAID AS IS CALL OR TEXT 413-219-6839**

## HELP WANTED

Small church in West Brookfield seeking a **PART-TIME SECRETARY.** Approximately 5 hours/week. Candidate must have organizational and computer skills, social media experience, good communication and people skills a must. Starting paying \$16-18/hr. based on experience. Send resume to: **fccwbworship@gmail.com.**

## HELP WANTED

### TOWN OF BLANDFORD HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

The Town of Blandford is seeking a qualified individual for the position of Highway Superintendent. Salary range starting at \$75,000-\$80,000+ negotiable based on experience/skills.

Please visit our website **TownOfBlandford.com** or email **Administrator@TownofBlandford.com** for more information.

## REAL ESTATE

### FOR RENT



**ALL REAL ESTATE** advertised herein is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination." We will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. All persons are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised are available on an equal opportunity basis.

**GREEN STREET, PALMER** Newly renovated 1 bedroom apt. porch, off-street parking, coin-op laundry, \$1,500/ mo includes heat. No Pets. Call Tom **413-896-1555**

Find archives of this local newspaper at **www.newspapers.turley.com**

## FILL OUT AND MAIL THIS MONEY MAKER

**MAIL TO: Classifieds, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069**      **DEADLINES: MONDAY AT NOON**  
 or call: 413-283-8393

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1	2	3	4
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9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 <small>Base Price \$26.00</small>
21 <small>Base Price \$26.50</small>	22 <small>Base Price \$27.00</small>	23 <small>Base Price \$27.50</small>	24 <small>Base Price \$28.00</small>
25 <small>Base Price \$28.50</small>	26 <small>Base Price \$29.00</small>	27 <small>Base Price \$29.50</small>	28 <small>Base Price \$30.00</small>
29 <small>Base Price \$30.50</small>	30 <small>Base Price \$31.00</small>	31 <small>Base Price \$31.50</small>	32 <small>Base Price \$32.00</small>
33 <small>Base Price \$32.50</small>	34 <small>Base Price \$33.00</small>	35 <small>Base Price \$33.50</small>	36 <small>Base Price \$34.00</small>
37 <small>Base Price \$34.50</small>	38 <small>Base Price \$35.00</small>	39 <small>Base Price \$35.50</small>	40 <small>Base Price \$36.00</small>

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# PUBLIC NOTICES

## TOWN OF HAMPDEN CONSERVATION COMMISSION NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, (MGL CH 131, S 40), it's implementing regulations (310 CMP 10.00) and the Town of Hampden's Wetlands Protection Bylaws, the Hampden Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, January 15, 2025 at 6 PM** at the Town House, 625 Main Street, Hampden, on a **Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA)**, submitted by Fiore Grasseti for the construction of a detached metal building and a carport at 115 Stafford Road, also known as Assessor's Map 10, Block 028. Additional

information relating to this request is on file in the Conservation Commission office and available for review by the public by contacting the Commission. Anyone interested in or wishing to be heard on the request may appear at the time and place designated.

Hampden Conservation Commission  
01/09/2025

### Town of Hampden Notice of Public Hearing

The Hampden Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at 6 PM** in the **Town House, 625 Main Street, Hampden, MA**, for those interested in the petition of Antonio F. Basile to appeal the decision of the Building

Inspector regarding three zoning violations. The violations under Section 7.11 of the Zoning Bylaws include an unauthorized travel trailer and storage trailer and his residing in the travel trailer located at Parcel

09-046-002 Scantic Road. The petition and related materials are on file in the Town Clerk's office and may be viewed during normal business hours.

For the Board,  
L. Jed Berliner, Chair  
01/09, 01/16/2025

**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. HD24P2350EA

### Estate of: Matthew Phillip Metzler Date of Death: 02/22/2024 CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons: A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **John E Pearson of Greenfield, 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: **John E Pearson of Greenfield, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administra-**

### 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 01/27/2025. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.**

**UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION**

### UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

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

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of this Court.

Date: December 30, 2024

**Rosemary A Saccomani,**  
Register of Probate  
01/09/2025

## SOCIAL SECURITY

from page 6

\$680/month for 13 years until you were 75 (or about \$106,000). If you had waited until age 65 to claim you would have, instead, collected about \$101,400 – in other words you have received more, so far, by claiming at age 62. But that will change when you reach 77, your breakeven age, had you claimed at 65). Starting at age 77, you will have received less in cumulative lifetime benefits because you claimed at age 62.

Which, again, is why – at the AMAC Foundation's Social Security Advisory Service – we encourage everyone to consider life expectancy when deciding when to take Social Security. Of course there are other factors too, not the least of which is financial need, but life expectancy is key. And since the benefit you get when you claim is permanent except for annual Cost of Living Adjustments, deciding when to claim Social Security is a decision which affects a lifetime.

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

## WPL winter reading kicked off

WILBRAHAM - Get a head start on your 2025 reading resolutions with our annual Winter Reading Challenge

Record your reading for a chance to win gift cards, books, and other cool prizes. If you've participated in our seasonal Reading Challenges in the past, get started by logging into your Beanstack account and selecting the challenge for your age group.

First-time participants can create an account by visiting [wilbrahamlibrary.beanstack.com](http://wilbrahamlibrary.beanstack.com), or by downloading the Beanstack Tracker app. Paper logs and review forms

will also be available in the library. Teens and adults will receive one raffle ticket for each book read. Participants must log and review each book to earn a ticket.

Children through Grade Five will earn raffle tickets by tracking the minutes they read each day. All reading and reviews must be submitted by Feb. 28.

Kids and teens can pick up participation rewards starting March 3. Raffle winners will be notified starting March 4. Questions? Give the library a call at 413-596-6141 for more info.

# HOMETOWN SPOTLIGHT

WILBRAHAM-HAMPDEN TIMES

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■  
Structural Pruning

■  
Crane Service

■  
Storm Damage

■  
Stump Grinding

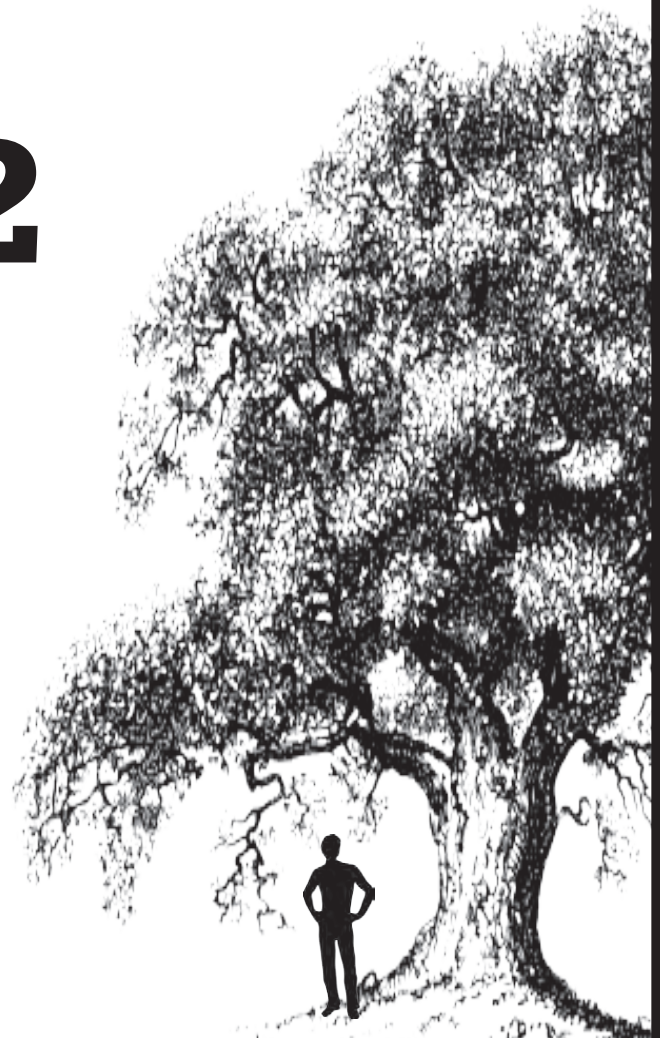
■  
Lot Clearing



Give us a call for your free estimate and tree evaluation

## 413-478-4212

# DL&G TREE



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