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From the left, Teen Advisory Board members Abby Patterson, Allison Demetri, Maggie Babbs, Andrew Banker, Caroline Euber and Owen Wright hold up their TAB Recommends book picks in front of a display of no-sole fleece blankets during their Teen Advisory Board meeting on Jan. 8.

Hampden teen earns Eagle rank

Boy Scout adventures take him from Fla. to N.M.

By Dalton Zbierski
Editor
dzbierski@turley.com

HAMPDEN – Hampden teenager Jaden Desmarais recently earned the Eagle rank, the highest achievement attainable for members of the Boy Scouts of America.



Jaden Desmarais, a member of Boy Scout Troop 359, stands next to one of the trail registers he installed in Hampden, earning him his Eagle rank.

Desmarais, 17, is a member of Boy Scout Troop 359 in Wilbraham and a senior at Minnechaug Regional High School. He's been with the Boy Scouts for nearly seven years and spent five years as a Cub Scout beforehand.

To achieve his Eagle rank, Desmarais accumulated 21 mer-

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Teen Advisory Board shares bright ideas

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - Teens gathered in the library's Brooks Room on Jan. 8 to plan upcoming events and activities as part of the Teen Advisory Board.

TAB meets once a month from September through May on Monday nights from 4 - 5 p.m., with their next meeting scheduled for Feb. 12.

This month, the teens worked on a TAB book display to add book recommendations, placing bookmarks with their names inside the books and explaining what they love about them. Afterwards, they worked with Teen Services/Young Adult Librarian

Rachel Hapgood on planning varying activities and ideas including Teen Winter Reading, a cookbook program, an animal program, a gem painting event and planning for the upcoming Stuffed Animal Sleepover next month.

Hapgood enjoys collaborating with the teens on planning activities at the library and their work on no-sole fleece blankets to donate to the Ronald McDonald House.

"They like to give back, and it's a really good way to do that, to be able to give, make something, donate it and give it to someone else," Hapgood said. "So, it keeps us busy and it's a

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From the left, Andrew Banker and Owen Wright review posters to display in the Loft, the library's teen space, or as prizes for summer reading programming during the Jan. 8 Teen Advisory Board meeting in the Brooks Room at Wilbraham Public Library.

Friends group raises \$819,736 for new senior center

Residents encouraged to 'keep the momentum going'

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - The Friends of Wilbraham Seniors announced at the Jan. 8 Select Board meeting they reached their goal for the new senior center capital campaign.

Friends President Matt Villamaino, who also serves as capital committee chairman, announced as of Dec. 31, 2023, the Capital Campaign Committee has raised \$819,736, exceeding the campaign fundraising goal of \$750,000.

Villamaino said the successful fundraising campaign can be credited

to donations, campaign pledges, past fundraisers and two state earmarks.

However, there was an update on

Please see **SENIORS**, page 7

The Friends of Wilbraham Seniors presented a check to the Wilbraham Select Board at the Jan. 8 Select Board meeting for \$96,159 in support of the new Senior Center under construction. They announced that the Capital Campaign Committee has raised \$819,736 so far, exceeding their goal of \$750,000. From the left, George Fontaine, chairman of the Building Committee, Paula Dubord, director of Elder Affairs, Matt Villamaino, Campaign Committee chairman, Select Board Clerk Mike Squindo, Chairman Theresa Goodrich, Vice Chairman Sue Bunnell and Capital Campaign Fundraising Committee member Steve Cooper.



Turley photo by Charles T. Bennett

Hampden narrows town administrator search to three candidates

By Dalton Zbierski
Editor
dzbierski@turley.com

HAMPDEN – Three candidates have emerged in Hampden's search for its next town administrator, as was reported by Bernard Lynch, principal of Community Paradigm Associates, LLC, during the Jan. 8 Board of Selectmen meeting.

The town contracted Community Paradigm on Oct. 19, 2023, to help find a successor to retiring Town Administrator Bob Markel. On Monday, Lynch reported that the three finalists for the position are Christopher Caputo, Brian Domina and Ryan McNutt. Each candidate will be interviewed on the afternoon of Jan. 18.

The process

Lynch said the purpose of his virtual appearance on Jan. 8 was to inform the board where the town administrator search stands. He used a PowerPoint presentation to walk the Selectmen through the process thus far.

Lynch said Community Paradigm identified the town's priorities, as well as attributes that are being sought in a candidate, after completing research and a series of stakeholder interviews. The search firm developed a position profile that was reviewed by the Selectmen.

"We don't just post an ad and take whatever's out there," Lynch said. "We actually try to understand the needs of the community and find people that meet those needs as we go through our recruitment process and our evaluation of candidates."

Active recruitment began on Nov. 5 when the position was posted on the Massachusetts Municipal Association job board among other sites.

Lynch said a challenge facing Hampden and Community Paradigm is the tremendous turnover of town administrators across the state over the past five years.

"I think we're now up near three quarters of communities have turned over their town managers over that period of time, so it's made for a very competitive environment," Lynch said. "That makes this very challenging and necessary for us to

have some real active engagement with candidates and really try to present the message about the opportunities a community offers in regard to (a candidate's) chance to really make a difference within a community."

To simplify matters, Community Paradigm uses a database that features profiles on almost 400 individuals who could possibly fit town management positions.

Lynch said, "We're very proud of the fact we are the leading municipal search firm in the commonwealth," and that qualified candidates reach out to Community Paradigm to express their interests, building up the database.

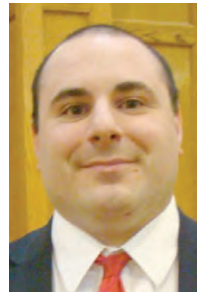
When the application process closed on Dec. 20, 2023, the search firm identified 10 candidates after reviewing their municipal career experience. The Selectmen feel strongly that the ideal candidate has experience of some form in municipal government, especially pertaining to the relationship between a board of selectmen and a town administrator, and that factored into the search.

From there, five candidates were identified. Two withdrew, as one accepted a position in another community and the other determined Hampden wasn't the right fit based on their experience and what they could bring to the table.

Christopher Caputo

Caputo earned his BS in Finance from Bentley University and has served as Agawam's treasurer/collector since November 2022. He previously served the same role in Springfield and was the city auditor in Westfield. Caputo also served as assistant town accountant in Longmeadow.

"In speaking with Chris, he's looking for a position that he can sink his teeth into that's more of a management position (where) he can utilize his background in municipal finance," Lynch said.



Christopher Caputo

Brian Domina

Domina earned his JD from Pace University Law School and his BS from Northeastern University. He has served as town administrator for the town of Whately since July 2016.

Prior to that, Domina was a senior planner for the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission from June 2009 to June 2016. From 2006 to 2008, he was a law clerk for Zarin & Streinmetz.

"Brian has extensive knowledge of municipal government and has served in a similar role in the town of Whately," Lynch said. "He currently resides in the town of Southampton and is looking for the next step in his career and believes that Hampden is a place he can bring those skills he learned... and have an impact upon the town."



Brian Domina

Ryan McNutt

McNutt earned his MA in History and BS in Education at then-Fitchburg State College and served as town manager of Palmer from July 2019 to November 2023. Before that, he was the city manager in Claremont, N.H. from February 2017 to February 2019.

McNutt was town administrator of Lancaster from August 2014 to February 2017 and served as Fitchburg's director of housing from September 2011 to August 2014. He was chief of staff to the mayor of Fitchburg from October 2009 to September 2011.

"Claremont, as you may or may not know, is a challenging community in the western part of New Hampshire that has a number of challenges given the economic conditions of that city," Lynch said. "(McNutt) was able to serve there for two years, and we've spoken to people in



Ryan McNutt

Claremont who have spoken to his experience and background. Likewise, we've spoken to people in Palmer, and with the work he's done there, the feedback (has been positive)."

Interview

Each candidate will interview in the Town House on the afternoon of Jan. 18, beginning with the first candidate at 3 p.m. The Selectmen will ask for a career overview and gauge each candidate's specific interest in Hampden.

Leadership and management style, as well as municipal finance and grant experience, will also be discussed.

"We want to talk about their overall style, particularly as to how it relates to volunteer boards and committees that you have in the town of Hampden," Lynch said. "Municipal finance obviously underpins everything within local government, and we want you to have a sense of the philosophy they have."

Lynch said Hampden has been pleased with how Markel has gotten the town grant money so it is important that his successor also be skilled in that regard.

Project management, procurement, land development and personnel management will also factor into the interviews. So too will community relations and the envisioned relationship with the Board of Selectmen.

"Community character, we understand, is important to the town of Hampden, so their understanding of planning and development is crucial," Lynch said. "Personnel management and community relations, interacting with citizens and above all else what they envision their relationship being with the Board of Selectmen, working to institute policies and then execute upon those policies (is significant)."

The interviews will occur in open session. After the meeting, Lynch emailed the Selectmen a copy of each candidate's resume. He left the board with the following advice.

"In our opinion, candidates should be chosen based on the positives they bring to the interview, or the position, as opposed to the negatives," Lynch said.

Photos courtesy of LinkedIn

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'From the Heart' shares stories of adoption

Eighteen women collaborate on anthology

By Dalton Zbierski
Editor
dzbierski@turley.com

WILBRAHAM – Amazon's latest number one new release book about adoption is "From the Heart".

The anthology includes short stories, essays and poems portraying the highs, lows and intricacies of adopting or being adopted. Wilbraham author Kelly Pramberger edited, curated and shared several of her own truths as part of the collaboration.

"The book is about all different stories of adoption," Pramberger said. "Eighteen women have contributed their stories. Some are birth mothers, some are adoptees, some have adopted from international countries and others have adopted domestically."

Pramberger's own history with adoption inspired her to launch the project. In the process of bringing her own adopted son home from Guatemala, Pramberger discovered that her mom was a birth mother, and she had a half-brother named Jack, who then lived in Maine.

"So, that was quite a shock," she said. "And the more I sat down to write about things and process all of that, other stories came up that I wanted to share with people. Instead of just having my stories in one book, I wanted to include other people's points of view to make it more well-rounded."

In "From the Heart", Pramberger writes about her mother's experience, which was never shared publicly before. After capturing her mother's story, the project gained momentum, and Pramberger began interviewing people she knew before reaching out to others on social media who've shared stories related to adoption.

Pramberger said completing the anthology wasn't an easy task, as it was an emotional process. From seasoned writers to first-time story tellers, Pramberger was able to connect with a variety of women who con-



Photos submitted by Kelly Pramberger

Wilbraham author Kelly Pramberger recently completed "From the Heart", featuring stories about adoption. The anthology can be purchased on Amazon.

tributed,

As the stories came in, Pramberger edited them and returned the work to each writer for feedback. She laid each segment into a Google doc; chapters began to take shape and eventually the book came together.

Pramberger said the experience was unique, as she spent countless hours collecting 18 different viewpoints and arranging them accordingly. Thus far, the publication has been met with positive reviews, although some of the subject matter is heart wrenching.

"The feedback I'm getting so far is that they're emotional stories," she said. "People aren't able to really read it all at once. They have to take their time with the words because it is a heavy topic."

Having watched her aunt and uncle adopt her two cousins from Guatemala, and having seen her brother and sister-in-law adopt domestically, adoption is nothing new to Pramberger or her family.

Reflecting on creating "From the Heart", Pramberger is proud of how she leaned on those powerful influences to create a final product she

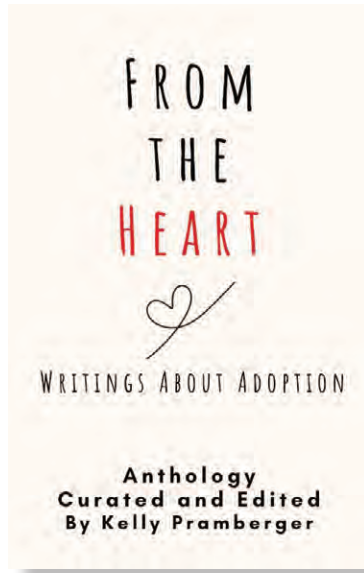
hopes inspires many.

"It moves people, and the whole goal with the book was to get people talking about the subject in an open way instead of keeping so many secrets around adoption and that whole 'hush, hush,' and assuming things about why people are adopted or why families are going that route. It's been exciting to see how it all came together," Pramberger said.

Regarding adoption, Pramberger hopes more people view it with an open mind. By reading "From the Heart", she hopes they come to find a better understanding of the process and different ways that exist to build a family.

"I think people that don't have any idea of what adoption is, or maybe they don't have someone in their family that was adopted. You're going to learn a lot; you're going to have some pretty big emotions I think that will come out," she said.

"From the Heart" can be found on Amazon in e-book and paperback forms. Connect with Pramberger on Instagram @coffeuntil.



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Jocelyn Walker
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Dalton Zbierski
dzbierski@turley.com

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GUEST COLUMN

The Atheneum Society finishes a busy year

By David F. Bourcier, President
Wilbraham Atheneum Society

The Atheneum Society of Wilbraham, operating as The Old Meeting House Museum, just finished a busy year. The society was established in 1963 as a non-profit organization with the mission of preserving artifacts and memorabilia related to the history of Wilbraham. Our goal is to share knowledge, educate, and engage the local community.



Dave Bourcier, President

Funding for our operations comes from the dues, gifts, and activities of our diverse membership, which is open to individuals that are interested, from Wilbraham and surrounding communities.

This year marked a significant milestone as the Atheneum celebrated its 60th anniversary during a joyous Open House in September. The success of this achievement is attributed to the dedication of our volunteers, members, and contributors. We extend heartfelt thanks to all who have played a role in shaping the organization into what it is today.

Throughout 2023, the ASW hosted a comprehensive schedule of programs from May to November, covering a range of subjects such as the Wilbraham Historic Hill Climb, Restoring/Preserving Glass Plate Negatives, The Pesky Serpent Folk Song, Wilbraham Art League Show, The Gilded Age, History of the Eastern States Exposition, History of the Federal Period, and a Veterans Look at History. Noteworthy events also included our annual Ice Cream Social, generously supported by Friendly's Ice Cream Corporation for the second consecutive year, and a two-day Christmas Tree Festival featuring an ice carving demonstration on one of the days.

Collaborations Participation in regional events was a highlight of the year. We joined the W.H.O. Fest on March 5, sponsored by the Wilbraham Welcome Project and the Wilbraham Children's Museum, and the "History on the Go!" program, contributing to the "Changing Boundaries Trail



Old Meeting House on Main Street

on Aug. 19. These endeavors allowed us to connect with a broader audience and share our passion for history.

This year has witnessed two remarkable collaborations. The first involves the esteemed Wilbraham Candle Company, a devoted supporter of the Old Meeting House Museum. Together, they have meticulously crafted a Historical Collection of candles, each serving as a tangible embodiment of a distinct facet of Wilbraham's rich history. Notably, "The Meeting House" candle was specifically designed with our organization in mind. A percentage of the proceeds from the sale of these candles will be dedicated to supporting the Old Meeting House Museum of Wilbraham.

The second collaboration is with Wilbraham Historical Tidbits, a research blog curated by myself. The blog's mission is to illuminate followers with captivating anecdotes about the local town's history. Launched in 2021, the website and its accompanying Facebook Page, established in 2023, serve as a virtual repository for historical stories and information. Many of these captivating narratives are seamlessly linked to the Old Meeting House Museum of Wilbraham's Facebook Page and featured in our periodic newsletters, fostering a deeper connection with our



Charlie Bennett and Rich Howell present tee shirt to raffle winners Ann and Mike Kober.



Trustee Marty Lyman at Christmas Tree Festival.

community.

New Ramp Construction on the front-entrance handicapped ramp, initiated in the fall of 2022, was completed this year, enhancing accessibility for mobility-impaired visitors. Additional improvements such

as landscaping, the installation of a front OMH sign, and parking reconfiguration, slated for completion in spring 2024. Various upgrades to the building, such as electrical repairs, LED lighting installation, cellar bulkhead rebuilding, front door painting and repair, hot water heater replacement, landscaping tree work and central air conditioning repair, further enhance the museum's infrastructure.

Consider supporting the ASW by donating artifacts with a Wilbraham or local connection and a known history. We welcome a wide range of items that reflect the historical fabric of Wilbraham. Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to the community, supporters, and volunteers for their invaluable contributions over the years.

We also invite individuals interested in becoming new members or Trustees to reach out to us for more information. Join us in preserving and sharing the rich history of Wilbraham. Please visit us on Facebook and at our website <https://wilbrahamatheneum.org/GetInvolved.htm>.

Officers and Trustees are Nick DeCondio, secretary; Lucy Peltier and JoAnne Degray, treasurers; Patricia O'Brien, corresponding secretary; Charlie Bennett, Town Historical Commission representative; Marianne Wagner, Marty Lyman, Liz Pacosa-McEvoy, Lynne Ahern, Sandy Sanders, trustees.

Big Art Show of Small Works

A Scantic River Artisans exhibit

Feb. 10, 11 at Hampden Senior Center
HAMPDEN – Join the Scantic River

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

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

All will occur in the Community Room at the Hampden Senior Cen-

ter, located at 104 Allen St. in Hampden. Visit the Scantic River Artisans at: www.scanticriverartisans.com. For additional information about the Artisans and exhibiting opportunities, please email: info@scanticriverartisans.com.

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Exterior shot of Wilbraham Middle School in Wilbraham.



Mile Tree Elementary School in Wilbraham.



Stony Hill Elementary School in Wilbraham.

Turley photos by Kristin Rivers

Strategic Plan update shares processes and successes for student learning

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM – Principals from the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District shared processes and successes with the School Committee on Dec. 21, 2023, as they addressed student learning practices.

The data is part of the district’s Strategic Plan.

Mile Tree Elementary School Principal Alison Petit highlighted reading instruction, using a screener called Dibbles focusing on early literacy skills and assessing where students are at, whether above, right at or below the benchmark.

Petit explained when students fall below the benchmark, the schools look for additional information to pinpoint “exactly where they’re falling down in their reading instruction.”

“If students fall in that area, they kind of follow one of two paths. Either we follow that yellow arrow, and they receive tier-two intervention instruction in a small group, or they follow the red arrow, and that’s when we identify students who need a little bit more intensive intervention and that might be done by a reading specialist, where they’re seeing the reading specialist as well as their teacher,” Petit said.

When School Committee Member William Bontempi asked Petit about communication with parents, she replied families receive a home connect from Dibbles outlining where students fall on the benchmarks along with ideas to help their child.

“When students get assigned into those intervention groups, parents receive information about which group their student was placed in and what exactly that target skill will be, what are some things they could do at home to support that and then we share information about their

progress as we move through the intervention cycle,” Petit said.

Stony Hill Elementary School Principal Monique Dangleis focused on the tier-two intervention program, comprising three paths: discontinue intervention, continue intervention or change intervention. Tier-two includes a progress monitoring schedule, with intervention review team meetings to go over data every eight weeks.

Dangleis spotlighted student examples for each path, including a success story with reading skills improving.

“You can see that this child started below benchmark and skyrocketed up to exceeding benchmark in both individual sounds and whole words,” Dangleis said. “We had many children who fell into this category and what is just amazing to me is that in eight weeks, we saw this level of growth. So, this is a child we discontinued intervention.”

Wilbraham Middle School Principal John Derosia focused on math strategies. He discussed a mathematics intervention class supporting students struggling in math.

Derosia said the class meets every day for all three grades. Data examines current performance in class, prior year performance, prior year MCAS scores and other circumstances, including the amount of homework students are able to do.

The newest diagnostic tool the middle school purchased is called aimsweb and provides “a wider array of information on individual kids.”

“So that information is all solidified and brought together and then we identify whether the kids should be in the math strategies pipeline or class and that’s when we reach out to parents to try and get consent as to whether they want their student to participate in the class or not,” Derosia said.

Derosia provided an example of an

Imagine Math benchmark summary with five levels and an examination of aimsweb scores, with reviews done in 10-week intervals.

“There’s currently, I think, 38 kids that are in the math strategies class so that could go up (or) that could go down depending on what the identification is and (how many) parents consent to that particular strategy,” Derosia said.

Minnechaug Regional High School Principal Stephen Hale emphasized time when summarizing several tier-one initiatives, including bi-weekly huddle meetings with school counselors, rotational blocks for groups of teachers to discuss assessments and study hall time for seniors taking AP courses.

Hale explained study hall time alternates with physical education classes and occurs during the semesters when seniors have the most AP courses.

“We just recently surveyed all those students to see, ‘Did you like it?’ and the survey responses have been positive, so we’re currently looking at the possibility of expanding it to juniors and also seeing if it’s a motivator for students with disabilities to take an AP class by providing them time within the day,” Hale said.

Associate Principal Nicole Smith also stressed taking time to look at tier-two supports utilizing Student Success Teams,

General Education Academic Support, MCAS supports and math and English intervention blocks.

Smith added that General Education Academic Support makes a difference for students if they need individualized support to get back on track after a long absence from school.

“It really is nice to see students say, for example, return from a hospitalization or something where it did cause them to miss a significant amount of school, but through huddle we know why they were absent,” Smith said. “We have spoken with all the appropriate providers and now we’re really targeting for four to six weeks. How can we use this class time to make sure that we get caught up where we need to? It can be overwhelming, so that’s an awesome thing that we’re able to do.”

Superintendent Dr. John Provost expressed how proud he was of the principals along with their teachers and staff.

“You got success stories you can document right now. Kids who weren’t reading who are now reading, kids who didn’t know how to do math who can now do math. That’s tremendous work and that’s work I’m proud of and that’s work you should be proud of, and I think it’s work the whole community should be proud of,” Provost said.

Cosmic Bracelet Class: Unveil the power of your zodiac gemstone

Presented by the Scantic River Artisans

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

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unlocking the hidden energies and traits that make you truly one-of-a-kind.

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

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

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



Sponsored by the Western Mass Fly Fishermen, the Ludlow Elks Lodge 2448 and Turley Publications are starting January 11th, 2024.

Held at the Ludlow Elks Lodge located at 69 Chapin St. Ludlow Mass.

Thursday nights for eight weeks from 7PM to 9PM.

The classes are open to the public with children 8 years and up accompanied by an adult.

Classes are geared to the beginner or novice.

Course materials and tools will be supplied.

Should you have your own tools, feel free to bring them.

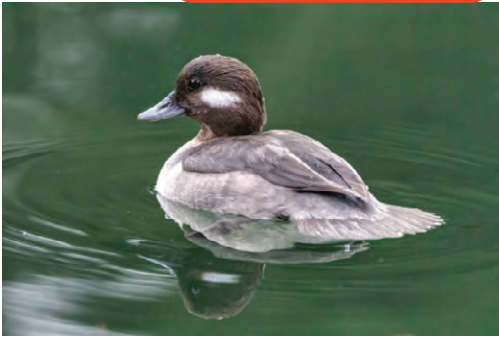
No Registration is Necessary!

Should there be Bad weather please contact the Ludlow Elks after 4:00 PM for any cancelations at (413) 583-2448 or check our website <http://www.wmffclub.org>

VIEWPOINTS



By Ellenor Downer



Female Bufflehead

I received an email from a Brimfield resident, who along with his wife, participated in the Allen Bird Club's Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, Dec. 16.

One unexpected species they saw were three female buffleheads at the Springfield Reservoir.

The bufflehead is a small duck about 14 inches long. It has a distinct, large rounded head.

The male has a white wedge behind its black head. The male also has white flanks and breast. The female is gray brown with a small

patch of white behind the eye.

They are diving ducks and feed on mollusks, fish, snails and crustaceans. They summer on wooded lakes, rivers and winter on lakes and coastal waters.

The female lays eight to ten ivory to buff eggs in a tree cavity or nest box. Their courtship begins in January and these ducks show a high level of aggression during that time.

Buffleheads are generally silent. However, the female makes guttural sounds during courtship.

Bird count

In his email, the Brimfield resident said he did his first Allen Bird Club count in the late 1970s. He said, "We have been covering the town of Ludlow, excluding the Westover Conservation Area covered by others, since 1989. The club's count circle center is in Springfield and includes adjacent towns.

He also said, "We had an excellent day weather wise, but the songbirds were hard to come by. With all the water ice free, we had high number of Canada geese (93), common mergansers (170, mostly males) and mallard (115). The common mergansers and many of the mallards were at the Springfield Reservoir."

He reported 20 ring-necked ducks at a pond near the Ludlow Country Club was another unexpected species in the count. In all, they had 32 species on their list, slightly more than the average of 29 species. Following the time in the field, the participants held a zoom meeting to discuss the results. No one mentioned seeing any winter finches i.e. redpoll, siskin or evening grosbeak.

Large flock of Canada geese

Recently, I saw a large flock of Canada geese in a cornfield in Spencer. There must have been at least 100. I did not stop to take an accurate count, but it was the largest flock I've seen.

Christmas card count

Years ago, Thelma Crawford, told me she kept a Christmas card bird count every year. While she was alive, we would share our card counts. Often the bird fell into the unspecified species category. I wven received a Christmas card one year with a loon with an evergreen wreath around its neck.. This was the first year I did not receive any Christmas cards with birds even one perched off in a distant tree in the background.

Suet feeder

I now have my suet feeder out all the time as I have not seen any sign of wandering black bears in awhile. I also feed a combination of mixed bird seed, black oil sunflowers and shelled peanuts, which I mix together to put out daily. I have the usual juncos, chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, blue jays, mourning doves and of course, squirrels. I have not seen the cardinal pair yet, but then I don't have a lot to time to spend watching my feeders.

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

The Wilbraham-Hampden TIMES TEAM



EDITOR
Dalton Zbierski
dzbierski@turley.com



ADVERTISING SALES
Jocelyn Walker
jwalker@turley.com



SPORTS EDITOR
Greg Scibelli
sports@turley.com



STAFF WRITER
Kristin Rivers
krivers@turley.com

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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WEB

www.wilbrahamhampdentimes.turley.com

PATRICK H. TURLEY
CEO

KEITH TURLEY
President

DEANNA SLOAT
Graphics Manager



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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.

New Year's Wish

By: Lou Scungio, Wilbraham

The eve of New Year's is a time to gather with your friends, to look back on the year just past, to cheer or make amends, to wonder if we did enough to make each season shine, to give a toast to future friends or those we left behind.

We gather with our hearts a-glow, with plans and hopes galore, and wish that only good news comes to settle at our door.

So raise your glasses way up high and say to all you see to pray that peace will settle here and bring prosperity.

Letters to the Editor

Thank you for Hartsprings Bin donations

Letter to Editor

As we begin the New Year, I would like to take this opportunity to first thank residents for your donations to The Hartsprings Bin for the year 2023. It was a very successful year for this fundraiser for The Hampden Senior Center at 104 Allen St. Hampden, which was sponsored by The Friends of The Hampden Senior Citizens.

We will continue to accept your donations at the bin of usable clothing, shoes, pocketbooks, jewelry, bedding, towels, dishes, glassware, suitcases in good working order or duffel bags. Books are also accepted, however as a reminder, NO Encyclopedias or textbooks, bed pillows, rugs or sports equipment can be taken.

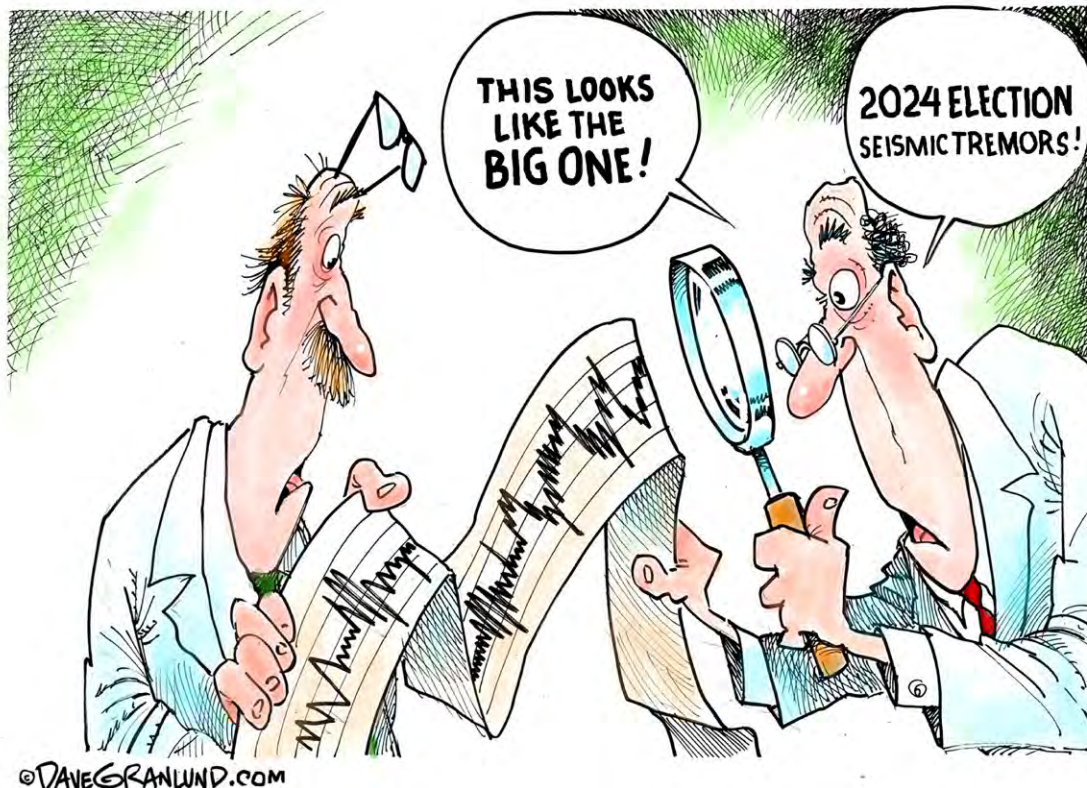
If items are placed in a white kitchen-size trash bag, they should fit easi-

ly in the door opening at top of bin. If breakable items are put in boxes carefully wrapped or items that might not fit in drop down door, please call Joan Shea at -413-566-8224. Please leave a message if I am not readily available, and I will return a call and make arrangements with you.

Please refrain from leaving items outside the bin. If you are at the bin during the Senior Center hours of 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., you may leave your donation with them, and they will notify me. Also, if you have any questions, please call me and I can advise you or make special arrangements to help you out.

Thank you again for your continuing support to this fundraiser. Your donations are what make this a great success.

Joan Shea, Hampden



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SENIORS



I am sitting here two days after Christmas wondering why I feel so blue. We had a wonderful few days with family and friends, my grandson was here for four days of playing with Nana, we ate delicious food and had a lot of laughs. So why so glum? It is hard to get motivated.

Many folks get the blues once the holidays are over. There can be many psychological reasons for this: this is only time all year we see certain people, and that makes us sad; we remember those who weren't with us this year; we need to go back to our usual routines which may seem dull after the last few weeks.

Sometimes, feeling depressed can have a physical component. While we enjoy attending parties and family meals, the changes in our diet and activity can have aftereffects that feel less than enjoyable. Sweets and alcohol are abundant during this time. We all have heard of the "sugar high" and "sugar crash" but did you know that alcohol is actually a nervous system depressant? While it makes us feel good for a while, it is actually a lot of work for our liver to get it out of our systems. This means our liver is too busy to help regulate our blood sugar or produce hormones to help us digest all our rich food and clear out the bad stuff from our blood as quickly as usual. This can cause fatigue, trouble sleeping, indigestion, etc. Having a couple of drinks often means we don't drink other fluids which can lead to dehydration. Even mild dehydration can cause fatigue and depressed feelings. We don't always feel our best after a cocktail party, especially if alcohol is not a regular part of our diet. Having several parties in one week can have lingering effects.

Most of us eat differently at this time. We eat more than usual; after all, we only get Aunt Emily's cake once a year, right? We eat bigger meals at later times, or snack more. While this is fine, remember that if you don't normally eat a lot of sugar or fatty foods, it is more work for your

body to deal with them. You might feel sluggish, have more heartburn and not sleep as well. These things contribute to an overall feeling of malaise that can last for a while, especially if we try to eat up all the leftovers afterwards!

Don't discount the effect of a disrupted routine on your mood. Going to bed later, sleeping later, not having as much time for exercise, eating at various times and in different places, being more social than usual, having folks in your home more often can all affect your mental wellbeing. We love our families and parties are fun. I am not saying we should stop any of this! We should be aware, however, that for our bodies change equals stress. Your body and mind doesn't necessarily know the difference between good stress (like staying up late playing board games) and bad stress (staying up late waiting for a teen to come home). Social interaction takes mental energy which might need time to replenish.

So, what to do? We aren't going to stop celebrating, but we can do things to alleviate the aftereffects. Get back to your routine as soon you can in regards to mealtimes and bedtimes. If you are still working this might be easy, but for some of us it might take some thought after a month of parties. Go back to your regular exercise routine. Pay attention to what you are eating and when, especially if that is not something you normally do. Make sure you are drinking plenty of water; sometimes when the weather is cold it is easier to forget about this. When we do have a sunny day (a rare occasion lately) try to get outside for at least 20 minutes, especially during the late morning/early afternoon. A little bit of sunshine helps energy levels tremendously.

As always, feel free to reach out at seniorinfo2021@gmail.com with questions or comments. Best wishes for a healthy and happy 2024.

Diane Weston, RN

SENIORS from page 1

the state earmark earlier that morning due to the state's \$379 million spending cut announcement.

"We were supposed to receive \$100,000 for the senior center and that's been cut to \$50,000, so that is reflected in the number I gave you. The '819' includes that reduction," Villamaino said.

Despite this, Villamaino said he and the Friends "are pretty happy about where we are right now," with nearly 250 donations received from businesses and individuals not only in Wilbraham but in other surrounding communities.

"It really reflects the adage that you've heard over the years that you can tell the character of a town by how they treat their seniors, and I think it speaks well, in volumes, of our community and how we view our seniors," Villamaino said. "For them to step up at this level, this quick, speaks volumes, and we're thankful to all of them for participating in that."

Villamaino, reiterating earlier comments from Capital Campaign Fundraising Committee member Steve Cooper, said fundraising is not over and "we want to keep the momentum going."

"When you move from a 3,000 square foot building into a 15,000 square foot building, there's going to be surprises and unexpected expenses that are going to pop up," Villamaino said. "So, we need to be

prepared for the unexpected."

Next, Villamaino presented a check to the town for \$96,159 to cover new exercise equipment, pool tables, a bocci court and a new pathway from the patio to the bocci court.

"This donation, this gift here, represents now about \$300,000 that we have gifted the town and there's a lot more to come," Villamaino said.

When Chairman Theresa Goodrich asked about the projected timeframe, Senior Center Building Committee Chairman George Fontaine said the building is 85% complete, including kitchen equipment installed and most of the flooring is in except for the common area.

A transformer is on the way later this week or early next week, with the last part of the switch gear forthcoming.

"We're just waiting for the inner workings, which right now we're expecting to be shipping out of Minnesota on or about the 16th of this month, about two weeks-ish," Fontaine said. "There's still plenty to do in the building, but it's really coming quite well."

Fontaine said the next two weeks will be key for the remaining items left to finish.

"When you say turning over the key means moving in and starting, I am very hopeful that between March 1 and March 15, Paula (Dubord) will be working out of there every day," Fontaine said.

Monthly highlights for January at the Hampden Senior Center

HAMPDEN – The following programs will occur at the Hampden Senior Center on Allen Street.

Winter Weather Advisory

Remember to watch channels 22 and 40 for information about cancellations.

Watch for *HAMPDEN SENIOR CENTER* and *GREATER SPRINGFIELD SENIOR SERVICES* for information.

Sand for Seniors

Now through April 2024 the Hampden Fire Department and Hampden Senior Center will work together to manage the Sand for Seniors program. This program is available for anyone over the age of 60 living in Hampden. The Fire Department will deliver a FREE five-gallon bucket of sand to your home for you to use on your steps and walkways.

If you wish to have a bucket of sand delivered, please call the Senior Center at 566-5588 and leave a message with your name, address, phone #, and the location of the property where you would like the bucket delivered. If we need additional information we will call you back, otherwise, you're all set!

Thanks to the Hampden Fire Department for continuing this great program!

Hampden Resident Emergency Fuel Fund

The Fuel Fund is available to any Hampden resident who is in a heating crisis. A resident must have received a shut-off notice from the electric company, have less than a quarter of a tank of oil, or be in another emergency heating situation.

Please call Wendy at 566-5588 for more information or to schedule an appointment.

All information provided is confidential.

The Hampden Emergency Fuel Fund is made available through private donations throughout the year. We are so grateful for the support of this valuable program.

WARMING HEARTS PROGRAM for Homebound Older Adults in Hampden

Do you know an older adult in

Hampden who is homebound and could use some mid-winter cheer?

Our warming hearts deliveries are a small way for us to let people know we are thinking of them and that we are here should they need anything. Deliveries will include soups, treats, games, and more and will take place during the month of February.

Interested in delivering? Call Wendy at 566-5588.

HELP US STOCK OUR SHELVES with Tissues!

Thank you to those who donated liquid dish soap last month. Every month we will target a different item to fill our shelves to provide non-food items to SNAP recipients.

Make a Valentine's Wreath with Sheree!

Tuesday, Jan. 16, 1-3 p.m.

The cost is \$5 per person (all materials are included). Please call 566-5588 to reserve your seat.

Space is limited.

D & R Winter Farm Share

D & R Farm will again offer fresh produce twice per month starting in January and run through June.

FREE with SNAP/HIP if you qualify.

If you do not qualify for SNAP/HIP, you may purchase a share for \$40 per month.

New applications are required.

If interested, please contact Wendy at 566-5588, or email outreach@hampdenma.gov to sign up.

PICK-UP is on Wednesdays, Jan. 10 and 24 at 9:30 a.m.

Grab & Go Dinner - Thursday, Jan. 18, pick up from 2-2:30 p.m.

Becky and Wendy will be in the kitchen again whipping up a delicious dinner of

Turkey Casserole, Tossed Salad, and Dessert.

The cost is \$5 per person. Please call 566-5588 starting Jan. 2 to order your dinner.

Join us for a delicious slice (or two!) of PIE on National Pie Day.

Monday, Jan. 22 at 12:30 p.m.

Please call 566-5588 to sign up to let us know you're coming.

WPL to present Teen Makers: Edible Terrariums

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

Town Clerk: Nomination papers are available

WILBRAHAM – Wilbraham Town Clerk Carole J. Tardif is announcing that nomination papers are available in her office by calling 596-2800 ext. 200 and setting up an appointment. The last day to obtain nomination papers is Wednesday, March 27, 2024, for the Annual Town Election scheduled for May 18, 2024.

The positions being voted that day are Selectman for three years, Town Clerk for three years, Moderator for three years, Assessor for three years, two Regional School Committee members for three years, Cemetery Commissioner for three years, Water Commissioner for three years, two Library Trustees for three years, one Planning Board Member for five years.

The deadline for submission to the Registrars for certification is Friday, March 29, 2024, at 5 p.m. Town Clerk's office hours are Monday thru Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 50 signatures from registered Wilbraham voters are required to have a name listed on the ballot as a candidate. A letter stating the candidate's name, address and the office being sought must be submitted at the time of the request to the Town Clerk. Contact the Town Clerk's Office at 596-2800, ext. 200 if you have any questions.

Select Board approves Broadband Committee recommendation for Open Access Provider

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - The Select Board approved on Jan. 8 the Broadband Committee's recommendation for an Open Access Provider.

Broadband Committee Chair Tom Newton, joined by Co-Chair Mat Nelson and member Nick Rau, explained after working over the last 19 months reviewing alternative solutions and providers, they decided to move forward on an Open Access Platform.

Newton said after putting out an RFP, two bids were received, with the committee recommending EntryPoint Networks.

"We're quite comfortable with our recommendation. It was unanimous. We do have a meeting with them on the 25th of January. We have some additional questions that we plan to ask them," Newton said. "Based on the answers and information that we get from them, we would turn that over to the attorneys in town and then hopefully have a contract execution and get our Open Access Provider."

After Chairman Theresa Goodrich thanked Newton and the committee for their work, saying how "I think people can appreciate the amount of work you do," the conversation shifted to ARPA Funds, which the town would intend to use to cover the services, not tax dollars.

"At this point, we really want to focus on governance of the project and of the product itself, how we manage it going forward. With that comes facilities

concerns, budgetary concerns and the like," Newton said. "We've had discussions with (Town Administrator) Nick (Breault). We do feel and hope that you will see our way through possibly recommending development of a town department for this project. So, we're going to need storage space."

Newton added how "This is really the first milestone, and the other ones will unfold," the committee also appreciating assistance from Sue Bunnell on the process.

"So, this project is by and large, now, official, obviously, given the contract, but I don't see anything precluding it. It's time to move forward," Newton said.

After an opportunity to ask questions was presented, none of the Select Board had questions for Newton and the committee.

The motion to approve the Broadband Committee's recommendation to appoint EntryPoint Networks Inc. as the town's open access services provider for \$472,500 pending final contract negotiations with the Broadband Committee passed 3-0.

Following this, an application to operate an annual residential kitchen on Brainard Road for Yono Hayashi LLC dba The SugarBot, operated by Shukuka (Sara) Hall was presented.

Hall said she would be making custom cakes, cookies and confections.

"I used to be a professional pastry chef and I used to work at different bakeries. We just moved into Wilbraham, and I wanted to start my own business, so that's what I hope to do," Hall said.



Turley photo by Kristin Rivers

From the left, Select Board Clerk Michael Squindo, Broadband Committee member Nick Rau, Select Board Chairman Theresa Goodrich, Broadband Committee Co-Chair Mat Nelson, Select Board Vice Chairman Sue Bunnell, Broadband Committee Chair Tom Newton and Town Administrator Nick Breault discuss the committee's open access provider recommendation during the Jan. 8 Select Board meeting.

The application to operate an annual residential kitchen passed 3-0.

Lastly was a final review of food truck regulations for the town.

After Breault clarified the final items, Select Board member Michael Squindo asked what would happen if the Wilbraham Farmers Market changed locations.

Breault said if the location changed, they would have to be approved by the fire department, Board of Health and the Select Board.

The regulations were accepted.

More on the Jan. 8 Select Board meeting in next week's edition.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Defensive nuclear weapon
- 4. Moved back and forth
- 9. One-time coach of the Cowboys
- 14. Last letter
- 15. Cause to become less intense
- 16. Genus of tree bugs
- 17. Body art
- 18. Romance novelist
- 20. Be filled with love for
- 22. City
- 23. Make vivid
- 24. Horses
- 28. Mauna __, Hawaiian volcano
- 29. Atomic #18
- 30. Shortly
- 31. A type of prejudice
- 33. Whirls
- 37. Six
- 38. Old world, new
- 39. __ Hess, oil company

- 41. Talk
- 42. Not off
- 43. Begets
- 44. Cars need them
- 46. Computing architecture (abbr.)
- 49. Of I
- 50. Journalist, activist Wells
- 51. Takes apart
- 55. Lists
- 58. Positively charged electrode
- 59. Hard, colorless compound
- 60. Inflammation of the peritoneum
- 64. Trent Reznor's band
- 65. Simply dry fruit
- 66. "Ivanhoe" author
- 67. Google certification
- 68. French commune
- 69. Medieval circuit courts
- 70. Soviet Socialist Republic

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Indigenous people of Mexico
- 2. Dietary supplement
- 3. Having a particular sheen or luster
- 4. Views
- 5. Academic Bill of Rights
- 6. Automobile
- 7. When you anticipate arriving
- 8. Beef or chicken intestine
- 9. Conspiracy
- 10. Blood disorder
- 11. Long-time NBAer Shawn
- 12. Time zone
- 13. US, Latin America, Canada belong to
- 19. Upton Sinclair novel
- 21. What a cow does
- 24. Cavalry-sword
- 25. Ancient Greek war galley
- 26. Stars
- 27. Rebukes
- 31. Billion year periods
- 32. Some are in a bottle
- 34. Tears down
- 35. Lethal dose
- 36. Humorists
- 40. Midwestern US state (abbr.)
- 41. Frameworks
- 45. Rocker Billy
- 47. More thin
- 48. Dog
- 52. Habitual repetitions
- 53. State of fuss
- 54. Uneasy
- 56. Chemical compounds
- 57. More cognizant of reality
- 59. A place to build
- 60. Exclamation that denotes disgust
- 61. Supplement with difficulty
- 62. Very slick
- 63. Hill or rocky peak

DESE to conduct another Tiered Focused Monitoring Review of school district

During the week of Jan. 29, 2024, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Office of Public School Monitoring will conduct a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review of the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District. The Office of Public School Monitoring visits each district and charter school every three years to monitor compliance with federal and state special education and civil rights regulations. Areas of review related to special education include student assessments, determination of eligibility, the Individualized Education Program team process and IEP development and implementation. Areas of review related to civil rights include bullying, student discipline, physical restraint, and equal access to school programs for all students.

In addition to the onsite visit, parent outreach is an important part of the review process. The review chairperson from the Office of Public School Monitoring will send all parents of students with disabilities an online survey that focuses on key areas of their child's special education program. Survey results will contribute to the development of a report. During the

onsite review, the Office of Public School Monitoring will interview the chairperson(s) of the district's Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC). Other onsite activities may include interviews of district staff and administrators, reviews of student records, and onsite observations. Parents and other individuals may call Michelle Hennessy-Kowalchek, Public School Monitoring Chairperson, at 413-314-6709, to request a telephone interview. If an individual requires an accommodation, such as translation, to participate in an interview, the Department will make the necessary arrangements.

Within approximately 60 business days after the onsite visit, the review chairperson will provide the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District with a report with information about areas in which the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District meets or exceeds regulatory requirements and areas in which the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District requires assistance to correct or improve practices. The public will be able to access the report at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/reports/>.

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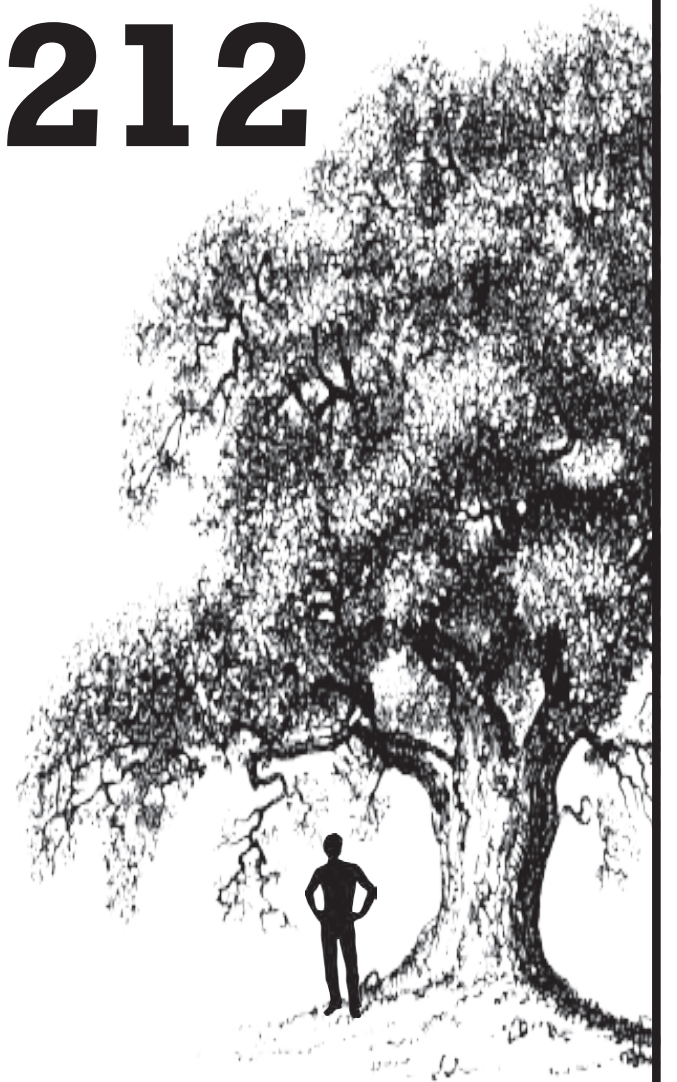
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DL&G TREE



New Year's resolutions for mental wellness

HOLYOKE – As we approach the dawn of a new year, Miravista Behavioral Health Center is championing the spirit of mental wellness by encouraging individuals to set realistic and attainable New Year's resolutions. Recognizing the importance of fostering positive mental health habits, Miravista is dedicated to empowering individuals on their journey towards overall well-being.

In a world where the pursuit of perfection can sometimes overshadow the significance of self-compassion, MiraVista Behavioral Health Center emphasizes the need for resolutions that prioritize mental health and which are both realistic and achievable. This approach aims to reduce the pressure often associated with traditional New Year's resolutions and promotes a more holistic perspective on personal growth.

So how best to set resolutions which focus on one's mental health and well-being? MiraVista offers these helpful key themes:

Prioritize self-care rituals

Resolve to incorporate daily self-care rituals into your routine. This could include activities like meditation, reading, taking a warm bath, or going for a nature walk.

Establish healthy boundaries

Set clear boundaries in your personal and professional life. Learn to say 'no' when necessary and prioritize activities that contribute positively to your well-being.

Cultivate mindfulness and presence

Make a commitment to being more present in the moment. Practice mindfulness through activities like meditation, deep breathing exercises, or simply taking a moment to appreciate the present.

Nurture positive relationships

Focus on building and strengthening positive relationships. Invest time in meaningful connections with friends and family, fostering a support system that contributes to your emotional well-being.

Limit screen time

Reduce the time spent on electronic devices and social media. Allocate time for activities to promote mental health, such as reading, engaging in hobbies, or spending quality time with loved ones.

Practice gratitude

Start a gratitude journal and make it a habit to reflect on the positive aspects of your life. Regularly expressing gratitude can shift your focus towards positivity.

Engage in regular physical activity

Choose physical activities that you enjoy and make them a regular part of your routine. Exercise has proven benefits for

mental health, releasing endorphins that can boost mood and reduce stress.

Seek professional support

Break down the stigma surrounding mental health by committing to seeking professional support when needed. Therapy or counseling can provide valuable tools for managing stress, anxiety, or other mental health challenges.

Embrace a healthy sleep routine

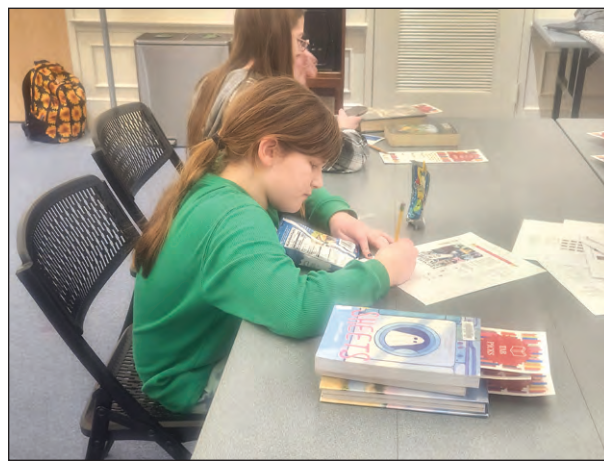
Prioritize sleep by establishing a consistent sleep routine. Ensure that you are getting enough restorative sleep each night, as it plays a crucial role in mental and emotional well-being.

Learn a new skill or hobby

Engage your mind in positive and creative activities by learning a new skill or picking up a hobby. This can provide a sense of accomplishment and contribute to your overall sense of well-being.



From the left, Caroline Euber and Maggie Babbs work on their TAB Recommendations for the book display during the Teen Advisory Board's Jan. 8 meeting at Wilbraham Public Library.



Abby Patterson adds her thoughts on suggested posters for The Loft or summer reading programming during the Teen Advisory Board's Jan. 8 meeting.



From the left, Caroline Euber and Maggie Babbs watch as Youth Services/Young Adult Librarian Rachel Hapgood talks with them about suggestions for teen programming during the Teen Advisory Board's Jan. 8 meeting at Wilbraham Public Library.

ADVISORY from page 1

fun activity for them to do, so we enjoy it."

Hapgood looks forward to seeing the teens taking part in the library this year.

"It's just exciting to see them take part in the library and want to better the library for teens," Hapgood said.

TAB members Maggie Babbs, Caroline Euber, Owen Wright and Andrew Banker shared they enjoyed putting together their book recommendations for the book display.

Euber has been with TAB since sixth grade, while Babbs, Wright and Banker are all new members.

"I really like doing the TAB Recommendations because we have been talking

about that for a long time and it really gives us a platform to be able to recommend books which I've been waiting to do for a long time," Euber said.

"The main thing that I enjoy is just that I get to discuss with other people who are also interested in books the libraries and getting more people to be involved with them," Babbs said.

Wright stressed it's really important for teens to share their ideas so they can create events and generate interest for everyone.

"It's important to get your ideas out there because there might be people out there who have the same ideas as you," Wright said.

Banker loves the opportunity to impact the community, having explained

volunteering with TAB helps with volunteer hours at his school.

"Also, it's fun to influence younger kids with books to read for books and stuff," Banker said.

Outside of TAB, the members all enjoy studying, getting new books, taking part in programming and hanging out together.

"It's a really nice place to study. There isn't noise. It's just very quiet and calming," Babbs said.

"I like coming here to get new books that maybe you don't have at your house and have a chance to read things that you usually don't get to read," Wright said.

The members encourage fellow teens to join TAB if they're interested.

"Join, because we need more voices

and it would also be really good to have more people here," Babbs said.

"There's no requirements. You can be pretty much any age," Euber said. "You can go to the website or email Ms. Hapgood because we would love to have you."

"I think it would be great having more people. The more people, the more ideas," Wright said. "Teen Advisory Board is pretty fun."

"Having more kids would be interesting and you get to meet more people," Banker said.

To learn more, contact Hapgood at rhapgood@wilbrahamlibrary.org or visit wilbrahampubliclibrary.org.

EAGLE from page 1

it badges, which range from first aid to swimming, hiking and cycling. For his Eagle project, Desmarais installed trail registers for the Goat Rock and Memorial Park trailheads in Hampden.

"Basically, the purpose is to allow people to sign in, provide a phone number and whatever information they can give, like where they're going to be going, when they're going into the trails, when they plan to come back, so just to make it safer for everyone," Desmarais said.

If someone gets lost or goes missing, Desmarais is hopeful that the trail registers will make it easier for safety officials to locate the individual, or group of people. Desmarais was inspired last year while camping in New York with his parents, when he came upon a trailhead with a trail register. He thought the idea could be useful back home.

Although he will soon age out of Troop 359, Desmarais has made enough memories for a lifetime as a Boy Scout. His favorite part of the Boy Scout experience was visiting several BSA National High Adventure Bases, locations designed to take outdoor adventures to the next level.

"In 2021, I went to Philmont, N.M.



Photos courtesy of Jaden Desmarais

Boy Scout Jaden Desmarais hopes that this trail register in Hampden will help keep people safe and accounted for when they go on a hike.

It's a massive hiking scout ranch, and over 10 days, we hiked over 100 miles with backpacks on; we were carrying all our food, tents and everything we needed

for the hike," Desmarais said. "This past summer, I went to Sea Base, which is in Florida in Key West, and that's a lot of fun too. You go boating, you go hiking around the island, and it's a great time."

Desmarais considers the lessons he's learned as a Boy Scout to be invaluable. He said tying knots is one example of a skill he developed with Troop 359 that he wouldn't have otherwise acquired.

"The first couple years in scouting, I never thought that I would make it this far or do the things I've done," he said. "You learn a lot of very helpful things where if you weren't in scouting, you would have no idea how to do or what to do."

Upon graduating from Minnechaug, Desmarais will look to enter the electrical union. He believes his hands-on experiences as a Boy Scout will surely help him in the future.

Desmarais considers his experience as a Boy Scout to be so incredible that he won't venture far from the troop when he ages out this

year.

"I've absolutely loved every minute I've been in scouting, and I'm also trying to stay as involved in my troop and the scouting community as possible. Since I'm staying local, I'm going to stay within my troop and help out as an adult leader. I think it has been an amazing trip so far, and I'd love to keep going with that," he said.

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Meditation, yoga classes teach mindfulness, breathing practices



A close-up shot of Lillian Fedora meditating during the meditation class led by Mark Kent in the Town House Auditorium on Jan. 4.



From the left, Alice Wickman and Ellen Moriarty, director at Hampden Free Public Library, strike a yoga pose during the yoga class led by Sue Kent in the Town House Auditorium on Jan. 4.



Attendees raise their arms and put their hands together as part of a Sun Salutation yoga pose during the yoga class led by Sue Kent at Town House Auditorium on Jan. 4.

Turley photos by Kristin Rivers



From the left, Melissa Putnam and Adam Cross hold their feet up for a yoga pose during the yoga class led by Sue Kent in the Town House Auditorium.



A crowd shot of the attendees taking part in the meditation class led by Mark Kent on Jan. 4. Throughout the meditation, attendees were in positions that were comfortable for them to best connect with themselves.



Yoga Instructor Sue Kent provides instructions to her students during the yoga class in Town House Auditorium.

Occur on Thursdays at the Hampden library

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - Residents kicked off a new year practicing mindfulness, fitness and breathing techniques during the library's meditation and yoga classes on Jan. 4.

The classes, offered for free with no registration required, are sponsored by the Friends of the Hampden Public Library.

Mark Kent teaches meditation; the class takes place every first Thursday of the month from 5:30 – 5:45 p.m. Sue Kent, meanwhile, teaches yoga on the first and third Thursdays of each month from 6 – 7 p.m. and Yoga Nidra, a restorative practice supporting mental, physical and emotional relaxation, every second Thursday from 6 – 7 p.m.

Sue Kent, who also teaches yoga and fitness classes at the senior center, explained the couple started holding classes at the library after Library Director Ellen Moriarty made the suggestion. She likes to provide a chill atmosphere for all her classes.

"At the end of the day here at the library, I think people are looking for something a little more calming and a little bit more relaxing," she said. "Taking yourself, you know, into that last part of your day and getting ready to settle."

Besides fitness and mindfulness, she wants to provide a safe space for attendees to ground themselves and disconnect from the world's stresses.

"Sort of the unspoken rule, I think, in most yoga places, whether they're in a studio or at a library or a senior center, is when you come in, it's a safe space," she said. "I think people come in and they feel like it's a safe space where they can relax and they can put all of those things aside."

Mark Kent reflected on how breathing practices helped him during his battle with cancer.

"That was about 23, 24 years ago and really took a physical toll and the only thing I could do was breathe. I didn't really have enough physical strength or physical fitness to do much else, but the ability to do that breath practice and provide a point of focus other than the stuff I was dealing with right then was a big part of being able to get through that," he said.

In his meditation class, he uses books and research to lead them, along with his own experiences.

"The calmness and focus that it brings to my life is something I feel people can benefit from, so I like the opportunity to share with other people some of the benefits that I personally get from a meditation practice and, hopefully, some of that comes through in the class," he said.

The Kents stressed the importance of grounding yourself in meditation and yoga practices and staying fit all year round.

"Anybody can do it and it does not take a lot of time. As little as three minutes can be beneficial," Mark Kent said.

"We don't just move in January. We don't just move when we're 16 or 25 or 45 or whatever, so it's important to keep the body moving and active at all points in our life," Sue Kent said.

Mark Kent encourages the community to check out the classes.

"I think this is a wonderful program that the library puts forward and it's an opportunity to try a yoga class and to try meditation at no cost and it's a big space," he said. "I think it's a really good resource that the town and library are offering."

Sue Kent said residents can learn more by asking Moriarty, who can put people in touch with her, or by visiting the library's website.

"She's here. She takes classes, she's a great resource," she said.



Yoga Instructor Sue Kent does the Warrior II pose as she leads her yoga class in the Town House Auditorium on Jan. 4.



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A COMMUNITY GALLERY



Mary Hernandez and Paula Serafino Cross pose in front of the Girl Scouts umbrella mural that was painted in Wilbraham last summer. Both Hernandez and Cross are Wilbraham residents, as is photographer Michael Cross. Photo submitted by Hernandez.

Life in &
Readers are encouraged to send in medium to high resolution photos for this page by e-mail to dzbiarski@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

Winter



A field camera captured this Bobcat on Jan. 4 around the 600 area of Glendale Road near Indian Ridge. Photo submitted by Brad MacPherson, Wilbraham.



Springtime in Antarctica

Wilbraham residents Georgann and Mark Collins caught up with their hometown happenings on Cuverville Island, Antarctica, home of the largest Gentoo penguin population. Submitted photo and caption.



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Theme Cakes
by Joelene

Amazing Assortment of **SPECIAL TREATS** For All Your Valentines!

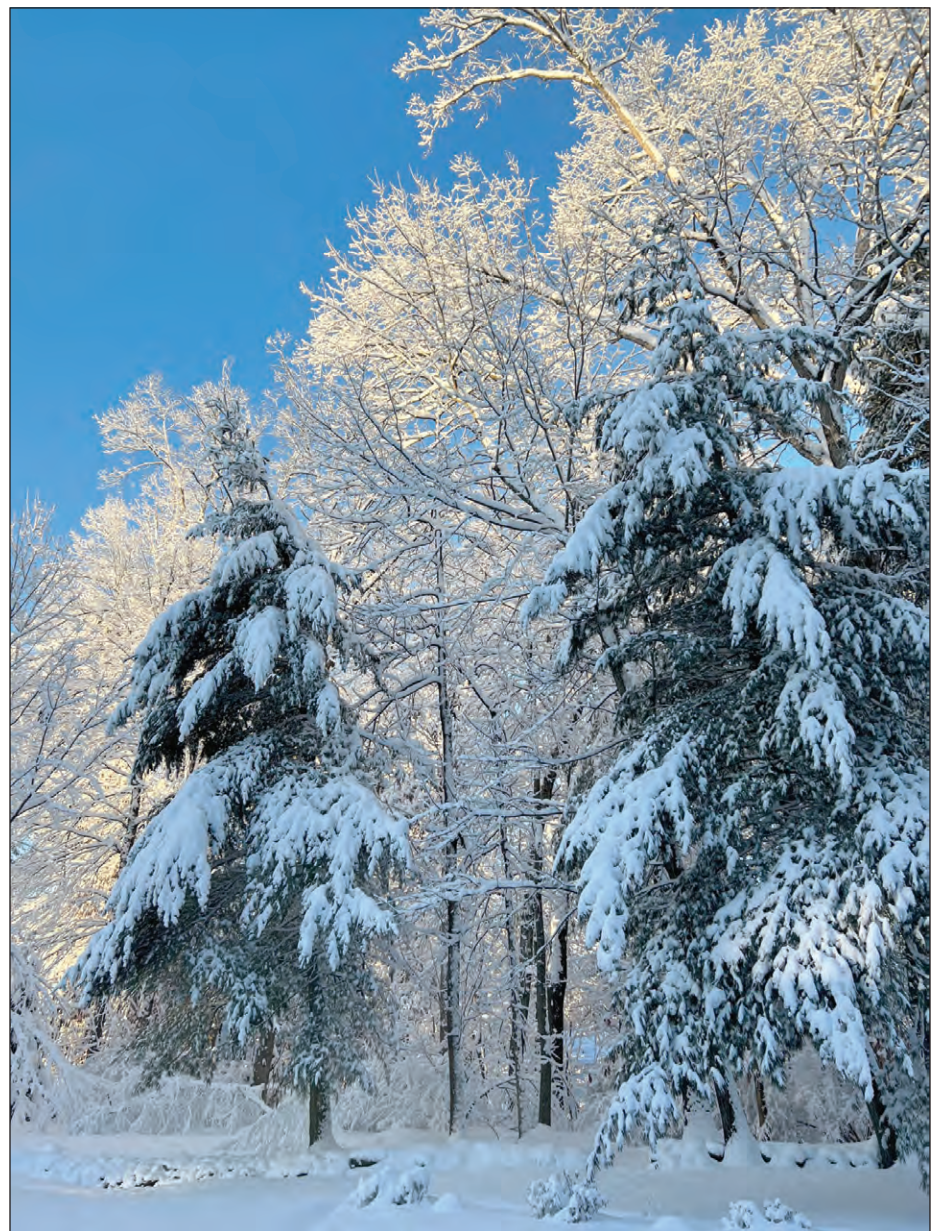


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WILBRAHAM HAMPDEN

in Wilbraham

Last Sunday, Jan. 7, snow fell all day, turning the town into a winter fairy tale. Black trees seemed to wear white hats and coats, and a white snow tablecloth was spread on the ground. Snow fell and fell, sparkling in the sun the following morning. It is so quiet all around, there are almost no cars. Only joyful children's voices can be heard. Children go skiing in sledges. Winter has come to them! Photos and caption submitted by Vira Syrota, Wilbraham.



Finally, a real New England snowstorm!
Photo and caption submitted by Shelby Hines, Wilbraham.

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Late surge lifts Falcons over Orioles

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WILBRAHAM—Four of the previous five games played between the Belchertown and Minnechaug Regional girls' varsity basketball teams were decided by five or fewer points. Their only meeting of the 2023-24 regular season was another close affair for the first 16 minutes.

The Lady Falcons, who held a 21-14 halftime lead in the non-league contest, outscored the Lady Orioles, 29-16, in the second half enroute to a 50-30 home victory, last Tuesday night (Jan. 2).

"We really didn't play very well in the first half," said first-year Minnechaug head coach Ryan Minns. "I thought we played with a lot more energy during the second half."

Minnechaug senior guard Jayla Comes didn't play in the game against Belchertown because of a right foot injury.

"Jayla suffered an injury at practice the other day," Minns said. "While it stinks not having her on the court, it gave a few of our other players an opportunity to play in tonight's game."

Freshman guard Ainsley Holden (4 points) made her first start in a varsity basketball game against the Lady Orioles.

"Ainsley is a very good bas-



Lyric Nelson is in full layup mode for the Falcons.



Turley photos by Sofia DiGrande
Elizabeth Woytowicz eyes a teammate as she heads down the court.



Lincoln Stiles holds the advantage after a takedown.



Zayde Fachetti looks to keep his advantage.



Kai Lee scores the takedown.



Devin Purchas goes for a takedown.

Minnechaug wrestling defeats Agawam

WILBRAHAM – Last Thursday night, league rivals Agawam and Minnechaug wrestling gathered for a key meet. Both teams, which boast large programs, were vying for the advantage with the tournaments just a month away. The Falcons were able to get the win 43-27 thanks to some big wins in the meet. Zeke Vargas scored a win at 106 over Agawam's James Cascio. Agawam's Nick Ugolini had a pinfall win for the Brownies in the meet.

Turley photos by Sofia DiGrande



Ryan Ice tries to escape a waist lock.

Falcons overcome late attack by 'Hamp



Turley photos by Sofia DiGrande
Andrew Grasso makes his way down the court.



Nick Disa looks to pass.



Nathan Pace goes for a near-dunk.



Max Baroni holds the ball outside the arc.



Gus Pryzbyl looks to overcome a block and shoot.

WILBRAHAM – Last Wednesday evening, Minnechaug Regional boys basketball almost relinquished a lead in the fourth quarter, but were able to hold on late and defeat Northampton 60-53. In the win, Nick Disa and Miles Fergus both scored 13 points and Nathan Pace had 10 points. The Falcons also beat Westfield on the road last week and are now 4-3 on the season.

Candlepin League News

By Ryan Drago
 Staff Writer
 rdrago@turley.com

Tuesday Night Commercial Elks League

PALMER – The Tuesday Night Commercial Elks League returned to Diamond Junction Bowling Lanes for their first night of league in 2024.

The standings as of Dec. 12 have Acres in first place with a record of 12-4. In second place, Life is Good has a record of 11-5; just one point behind Acres. In third place, The Champs R Here stand at 10-6. Tied for third place is Team BK at 10-6.

What breaks the tie is Champs

R Here having a higher team high single of 439 to BK's 422. The team who won the first round Compression stands in fifth place at 7.5 wins and 8.5 losses. In sixth place, the Blue B's are at 7-9 and seventh place is Last in Line at 5.5 wins and 10.5 losses.

In one match, Blue B's bowled against Last in Line. In game one, Last in Line won the first game by a score of 317-307. In game two, Last in Line was victorious again by a score of 357-322. Vinny Navarro of Last in Line carried the team by bowling a 106.

In the last game, Blue B's won by a score of 357-344. Mike Zwirecki of the Blue B's finished the night breaking the century mark with a 102. Last in Line

won total pinfall by a final score of 1018-986.

The #1 seed Acres bowled against the #4 seed Team BK. In game one, Team BK managed to stay ahead of the #1 seeded team by scoring 425 to Acres' 381.

Filling in for Team BK was Bryan Surprise and Ryan Drago. Surprise started off with a 106 and Drago started off the night with a 136. Paul Tereso of Acres had a good start by bowling well over his league average with a 107.

In game two, Acres won by a score of 370-355. Drago stayed strong in game two by bowling a 122. In game three, BK won the last game of the evening by a score of 402-388. Three out of

the four bowlers on Team BK were over 100 in game three.

Jeff Whyte finished with a 102, Surprise finished with a 104 and Drago finished with a 109. Tereso of Acres finished the night strong with a 116 and three-game series of 310. Surprise of Team BK finished with a series of 305 and Drago had a three-game series of 367.

Team BK won total pinfall with a final score of 1182-1139.

#2 seed Life is Good bowled against #3 seed Champs R Here. In game one, The Champs started off strong with a 397-357 victory over Life is Good. The father and son duo of John and Taylor Colkos had a good start to their evening with Taylor starting with

a 109 and John with a 112.

In game two, The Champs were victorious again by a score of 385-342. In game three, The Champs R Here won for a three game sweep over Life is Good by a score of 396-360. John Colkos finished with a 118 and three game series of 324. Steve Manolakis finished with a 110 and a three game series of 310.

The Champs R Here won total pinfall by a final score of 1178-1059.

Compression bowled against their average and won two out of three games. The team fell just one pin short against their averages in game three by a score of 346-345.

T-Birds suffer loss against rival Bruins

PROVIDENCE, R.I. -- The Springfield Thunderbirds (16-12-3-2) could not overcome an early blitz by the Providence Bruins (19-12-3-0) in a 6-3 loss on Sunday afternoon at Amica Mutual Pavilion.

It did not take the Bruins long to flex their offensive muscles, as John Farinacci slipped into an open area in front of the net, received a pass from Brett Harrison, and one-touched it past Vadim Zherenko to make it a 1-0 Bruins lead just 2:40 into the game.

Just 1:04 later, Justin Brazeau added to the advantage, taking a Georgii Merkulov pass and deking to the backhand past Zherenko on a point-blank opportunity. Anthony Richard added a third at 6:05, and before the T-Birds knew it, the home side had a 3-0 lead.

After a pair of matching minors put the game at 4-on-4 for the first time, the Bruins found another seam in the defense, as Frederic Brunet made a perfect diagonal pass to the right post, where Ian Mitchell guided it into the twine, ending a potent first period for the Bruins with the 4-0 goal at 17:05.

Malcolm Subban entered in relief of Zherenko to start the second period, but the Bruins were not done on the attack, as Jayson

Megna beat Subban on an odd-man rush from the slot, and the lead ballooned to 5-0 at 6:27 of the frame.

Despite the mountain of a deficit, the T-Birds showed tremendous character as Zach Bolduc and Adam Gaudette each found the back of the net behind Michael DiPietro in just a 2:12 span to bring the margin down to 5-2 at the 13:52 mark of the period. Bolduc's fifth of the season broke a personal 11-game drought, and Gaudette scored for a third straight game, becoming the first AHL player to reach 20 goals this season.

The third period went 11 minutes with relatively minimal offensive chances for each team. Springfield would get another one as MacKenzie MacEachern roofed a shot from the right of the crease at 11:54 to cut the margin down to 5-3 off a slick set-up from Wyatt Kalynuk, but the comeback effort would not get any closer. Richard's second goal of the afternoon, a power play marker into an empty net, ended the scoring at the 17:54 mark of the third.

The T-Birds continued their four-game road swing on Wednesday night when they visited the Bridgeport Islanders.

Railers fall to Mariners on the road

PORTLAND, ME – The skate was on the other foot here Sunday afternoon, much to the Railers' dismay.

After spending a lot of the first part of this season crafting miraculous comebacks, Worcester had it happen in reverse, losing to the Maine Mariners, 4-2.

The Railers squandered a 2-1 lead as they allowed two goals by Alex Kile in the game's closing minutes, then an empty-netter by Curtis Hall at 19:59.

Kile's goals were his 19th and 20th of the season. The tying goal came with Maine on a power play at 17:09 of the third period. The winner was a 5 on 5 shot through a screen from about 55 feet at 19:33. It came after a Railers' mistake, an errant pass that led to an icing call and a faceoff in their own end.

Joey Cipollone and Anthony Callin scored the Worcester goals. Owen Pederson had the first Maine goal.

John Muse stopped 25 of 28 Maine shots. Brad Arvanitis was excellent for the Mariners with 34 saves.

Worcester had a chance to put things out of reach earlier in the third period but could not capitalize on more than three straight minutes of power play time, much of it skating 5 on 3.

The first period was a real trip for the Railers, but in the worst way.

Referee Michael Zyla did not call a penalty and missed a blatant trip that took down a Worcester player and it cost the Railers a goal. It happened at 11:12, or just before that,

as Riley Piercey controlled the puck along the right wing boards in the Worcester zone.

As Piercey began to move out he was tripped. The puck wound up on Pederson's stick. He carried it into the slot and popped a high backhand past Muse.

Otherwise, Muse and Arvanitis were equal to the task to make 18 combined saves.

It took Worcester a while to tie the game but Cipollone finally did at 5:02 of the second period. He entered the Maine zone with Piercey on his right and one Maine defender between them. Cipollone took the puck in deep and his wrist shot broke through Arvanitis to make it 1-1.

Worcester made it 2-1 about seven minutes later on Callin's power play goal. He was set up by Blade Jenkins and zipped a 40-foot wrist shot just under the crossbar to go ahead goal. The goal snapped an 11-game drought without one for Callin, although he had seven assists in that time.

Jenkins continued a very productive run of games with the assist. He is 2-9-11 in the last eight.

The Railers' next game is Friday night at the DCU Center, the first in a three-in-three versus the Norfolk Admirals. Worcester and Norfolk are likely to jockey for playoff position for the rest of the season and the Admirals have been leading the series to date, winning four of the five meetings.



Ava Ofcarcik lifts a three-point shot.



Laila Smith looks to shoot.



Cailin O'Brien drives into the arc looking for a shot.

FALCONS from page 1

ketball player," Minns added. "I thought she handled everything very well."

The Lady Falcons (5-2), who closed out 2023 with a two game winning streak, has now won the last four meetings against Belchertown on the hardwood. They squeaked out a 49-44 road win versus the Lady Orioles last January.

A total of ten players scored at least two points for the Lady Falcons led by sophomore guard Kelly Cronin, who scored a game-high 12 points. She made three 3-pointers.

Sophomore forward Cailin O'Brien contributed with nine points off the bench. Senior forward Lylah Jeannotte scored all eight of her points in the second half. Sophomore guard Elizabeth

Woytowicz added six points.

The last time that the Lady Orioles (1-2) celebrated a win in the series was a 50-45 victory on February 6, 2017.

"We managed to keep the score close in the first half," said longtime Belchertown head coach Jason Woodcock. "We're a very young team this year, and we're just trying to get better in every game that we play. I'm very proud of my players effort in tonight's game."

Junior forward Chole LaRoche, who's one of the few Lady Orioles returning varsity players, scored eight of her game-high 13 points in the first half. She also made three 3-pointers.

Another returning varsity player for Belchertown is senior guard Laura Cote (4 points).

"Chole and Laura are the only two players who played a

lot of minutes at the varsity level last year," Woodcock said. "We have a bunch of new players this year."

Freshman guard Morghan Litz provided a spark offensively for the Lady Orioles during the second half. She scored seven of her nine points during the final three minutes of the third quarter.

"We haven't had a true point guard like Morghan in a very long time. She sees the court very well," Woodcock said. "Her father (Bryan) coached her at the youth level. He did a very good job of coaching her and the other four freshmen on the varsity team."

Besides being a youth basketball coach, Bryan Litz is also the Director of the Wilbraham Park and Recreation Department.

The Lady Falcons, who nev-

er trailed, took a 5-2 lead a little more than three minutes into the opening quarter with the help of an old fashion three-point play and a lay-up from Woytowicz.

With two minutes left in the first quarter, Minnechaug was leading 12-4 following an inside basket from junior guard Ava Ofcarik, which were her only points of the game, and an O'Brien lay-up.

A Holden jumper pushed the Lady Falcons lead into double digits (18-8) for the first time with 6:35 remaining in the opening half.

The Lady Orioles responded with a 5-0 spurt.

A LaRoche 3-pointer from the right side closed the gap to 18-13 with 4:15 left in the first half.

The visitors wouldn't get any closer than five points, as the


Lady Falcons began the second half with a 9-3 run.

Cronin and Jeannotte combined to score the first seven points of the run before an O'Brien lay-up pushed Minnechaug's lead to 30-17 with a little more than three minutes remaining in the third stanza.

Then Litz made an inside hoop, a pair of free throws, and a 3-pointer from the top of the key cutting the deficit to 33-24 entering the final eight minutes.

With the help of six different players, Minnechaug pulled away during the final quarter.

The Lady Orioles squeaked out a 46-41 home win over Southwick the following night. The duo of LaRoche (17 points) and Cote (12 points) combined for 29 points.



CAREER Education

HCC announces healthy cooking series for new year

If you've made a New Year's resolution to eat healthier in 2024, Holyoke Community College might have just what you need.

The college is running a series of noncredit cooking classes this spring focused on diabetes but geared toward anyone interested in learning how to prepare healthier, more nutritious meals.

Classes in the "Nutrition for Diabetes" series run either on Tuesday or Wednesday nights beginning Feb. 7. All classes are held at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute, 164 Race St., and taught by Marissa Chiapperino, a registered dietician and instructor in HCC's Culinary Arts program.

"Certain foods can lower your risk of heart disease and diabetes or help to manage it," Chiapperino said. "Making healthy adjustments to your daily meal plan does not have to be hard or boring. Oftentimes, adding in sources of healthy fats, whole grains, and high fiber fruits and vegetables can boost flavor and decrease the risk of chronic disease."

Each three-hour, stand-alone class will focus on a different theme. The first

hour will be an education session with Chiapperino, followed by a two-hour hands-on cooking activity after which participants can take home leftovers and recipes that align with the nutritional topic of the evening.

Wed., Feb. 7, 6-9 p.m.: "What is a carbohydrate?" (white bean egg shakshuka, breakfast casserole, overnight oats, vanilla bean pancakes, salmon toast)

Tues., March 5, 6-9 p.m.: "What is a protein?" (grilled skirt steak with chickpea salad, fideo, raspberry chicken, tahini-baked cod)

Wed., March 20, 6-9 p.m.: "What is a fat?" (smoothie bar, zucchini fritters, roasted chickpeas, cheesy egg souffles, Vietnamese spring rolls with peanut sauce)

Wed., April 17, 6-9 pm.: "How to read a food label" (grilled swordfish and pepper salad; chicken, lemon and olive bake; sweet potato berry muffins; easy breakfast salad; cheddar and herb savory overnight oats)

Tues., April 30, 6-9 p.m.: "What is a carbohydrate?" (desserts for diabetes:

chocolate date spread, oatmeal cookies, orange chamomile blondies, homemade popcorn four ways, caramelized spiced pears)

In addition, on Tues., April 2, from 6-9 p.m., Chiapperino will lead a similarly structured class on meal planning, "Building a balanced meal," featuring chilled avocado and cucumber mint soup, eggplant and lentil meatballs, chili-stuffed spaghetti squash, kale and fava bean salad, and grain-free granola.

"Making dietary changes can feel overwhelming," she said. "In this class, we will talk about how meal planning can make or break your ability to lead a more nourishing life with food. The concepts discussed will be suitable for those with many different health concerns and also those who just want to get more comfortable in the kitchen."

Chiapperino holds a bachelor of science degree in dietetics from the State University of New York at Oneonta and a masters of public health from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She specialized in medical nutrition therapy for critical care and oncology at West-



chester Medical Center in New York and was the first bariatric dietician at Holyoke Medical Center, where she helped build their nutrition program.

She is a past president of the Western Massachusetts Dietetic Association and currently serves as executive secretary.

Each session is \$84. For more information, or to register for classes, please go to hcc.edu/healthy-cooking

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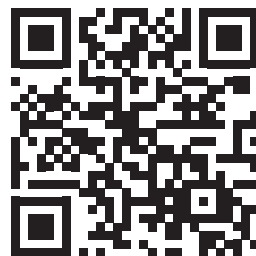
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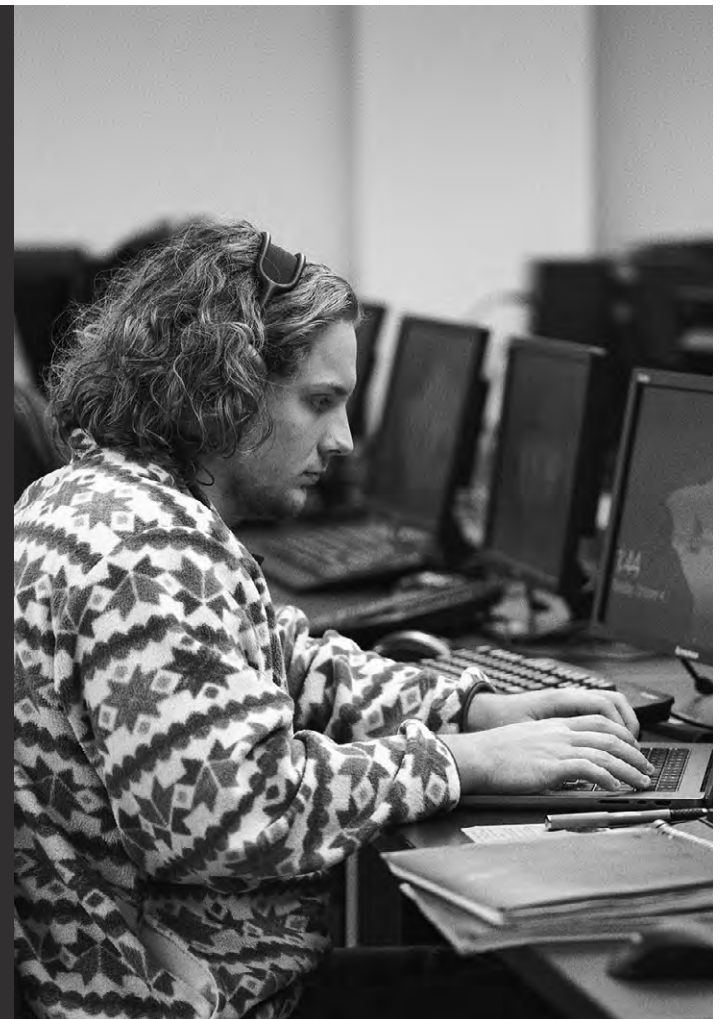
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CAREER Education

Hampden Charter School of Science marks 14 years of educational excellence

Hampden Charter School of Science (HCSS) is a top-ranking free college-preparatory public school founded in 2009 and serving families with students in grades 6th-12th at two campuses in Western Massachusetts: HCSS-East (Chicopee Campus) and HCSS-West (West Springfield Campus).

HCSS proudly provides seven years of unparalleled college preparatory education for grades 6-12 students, paving the way for college admissions and a wealth of scholarship opportunities. College and Career Readiness at HCSS is a tailored process forging the best possible alignment between each distinctively talented student and the most suitable college or university for them. Students collaborate closely with their counselors to delve into their manifold talents and interests, set aspirations based on these insights, and identify colleges that align with their ambitions.

• College Board AP Capstone Diploma Program: A prestigious program that enhances research, analysis, and presentation skills.

• Focused Attention in Small Classes: With an average class size of fewer than 20 students, each individual receives the attention they deserve.

• University Partnerships and Dual Enrollment: Engage in university outreach programs that offer dual enrollment opportunities, bridging the gap between high school and college.



• Enhanced College-Prep Curriculum: HCSS's amplified curriculum prepares students comprehensively for higher education.

• Early SAT and PSAT Preparation: To build a strong foundation, Rigorous SAT and PSAT training starting in 8th grade.

• Comprehensive College and Career Guidance: A thorough guidance program that starts as early as 6th grade, equipping students for future academic and career choices.

• Experiential College Campus Visits: Hands-on learning through college campus tours and informative sessions, providing real-world college experience.

• Community-Driven Guest Speakers and Career Workshops: Gain insights from guest speakers and partake in career workshops led by community professionals.

• Consistently High College Acceptance Rates: An impressive average college acceptance rate of 95% since 2014.

• Substantial Scholarship Achievements: More than \$51M in scholarships raised since 2014.

HCSS Curriculum Highlights:
• Project-Based Instruction and Con-

textual Learning: Engage in real-world problems and hands-on projects that bring learning to life.

• Developmentally Appropriate and Data-Driven Instruction: Personalized teaching strategies delivered by dedicated and highly qualified educators.

• High-Level Academic Discussions: Opportunities to improve critical listening, thinking, and analysis skills across all subjects.

• Advanced Placement (AP) Opportunities: Access 14 AP courses starting in 9th grade to challenge and elevate academic capabilities.

• Early Honors Courses: Availability of honors courses beginning in 7th grade for an academically accelerated path.

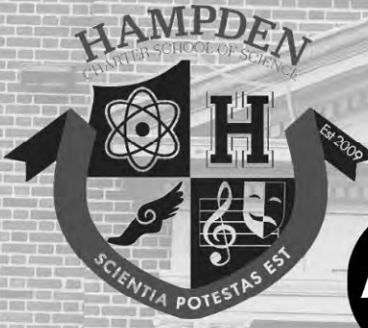
• Inquiry-Driven Curriculum: A focus on fostering inquiry, discovery, innovation, and collaboration in learning.

• Comprehensive Support Services: SPED and ELL services ensure that 100% of at-risk students meet high school MCAS graduation requirements.

• Extensive Tutoring Programs: Free in-school, after-school, and Saturday Academy tutoring, in addition to 24/7 online support in all subjects.

• Project Lead The Way (PLTW): A new addition fostering STEM skills through hands-on projects and real-world challenges, preparing students for future innovation and leadership.

Apply by March 3, 2024, for grades 6th-10th at www.hampdencharter.org.



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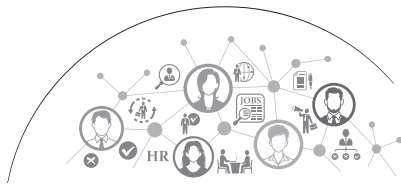
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January 20th
February 3rd
February 10th
March 2nd

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CAREER Education

St. Michael's Academy to hold Open House

Are you looking for a school that educates each of its students as an individual? Are you looking for dedicated teachers who want their students to succeed? Are you looking for a school that combines faith with education in order to teach strong moral values, respect and kindness? Are you looking for a school with a structured environment that promotes learning?

Then we have a school for you!

St. Michael's Academy, located at 153 Eddywood Street in the East Forest Park section of Springfield, invites you to an Open House and Curriculum Fair on Sunday, Jan. 28, 2024. There will be a special presentation for prospective students and their families that will begin at noon. The event will include an information session, followed by a panel of students, teachers

and parents for questions and finish with a full school tour. The full school will be open to visitors with teachers in each of the classrooms to accommodate questions.

Attend the Open House and learn what St. Michael's Academy can offer your child. St. Michael's Academy is not just books and papers. The educational process strives to form the entire child academically, spiritually, physically and emotionally. The dedicated teaching faculty truly care about their students and want them to learn, grow and succeed. The final result is a graduate who is well prepared for high school, college and beyond. Each student takes with them a solid foundation for continued growth and achievement, having learned the value of respect, kindness and community service.

Unable to attend the Open House on January 28th? Simply call the Admissions Office at (413) 782-5246, ext. 1208 and schedule an informational session and tour.

St. Michael's Academy is located off of Plumtree Road in Springfield, directly behind Holy Cross Church. The Academy educates students from preschool 3 years old, through grade 8. It is the largest Catholic elementary school in Western Mass and the only Catholic elementary school in Springfield.



Apex Homecare of Western MA expands programs and staffing to meet growing needs in the elder care arena

Direct Support Professionals at Apex Homecare of Springfield provides home care aides to increase independence for the people with disabilities and seniors, every day.

Caregivers and students pursuing a degree in the healthcare field are encouraged to contact the agency to take advantage of Apex's Direct Support Professional (DSP's) training program. To attract top quality Aide's, the agency provides attractive benefits and a career path.

The direct care worker shortage is a global issue, stretching well beyond Massachusetts. In the U.S., 3 out of every 4 agency providers has a wait list for caregiving services. According to the Global Coalition on Aging Report, 70% of Americans who reach age 65 will need long-term services and support. If nothing changes, the report predicts there will be a national shortage of 151,000 care workers by 2030, and a 355,000-caregiver shortfall by 2040.

Pew Research states that one in four Americans live with a disability that interferes with activities of daily living and a recent national survey reports 90% of Americans age 50 and over want to 'age in place'.

To compound the situation, demand in the family caregiving market is increasing as well. Currently, 53 million Americans serve as family caregivers and the number is growing.

An Executive Order from the White House signed in April 2023 offers new



Direct care workers and students pursuing a degree in healthcare are encouraged to contact Apex.

resources to remedy the caregiver shortage crisis to meet increased need. It is the most sweeping set of executive actions to improve care in the nation's history and takes immediate action to enhance job quality for the direct care workforce. Like many of Apex's services, the Executive Order also provides resources for family caregivers that foster emotional well-being and stems the financial and health strain that caregiving has on a family.

About Apex Homecare

Apex provides a safe, compassionate and friendly atmosphere to enable the client to enjoy and maximize the excellence of life in the comfort of his or her home. If you or a loved one needs services, contact Cheryl Rumley RN at Apexhealth01@verizon.net. If you are seeking a career in the caregiving, disability or healthcare field, visit the Apex career page.



St. Michael's Academy

Attention Elementary School Teachers!

Looking for a rewarding teaching experience?

St. Michael's Academy will be hiring teachers for the 2024-2025 academic year.

Interested? Send your resume to a.dougal@smaspringfield.org.



Looking for a new school for your child?

Join us on Sunday, January 28th

at noon for an

Open House

Learn what St. Michael's Academy can offer YOUR child!

St. Michael's Academy, 153 Eddywood St., Springfield, MA
Check us out at smaspringfield.org



Apex Homecare

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Apex Homecare has immediate Openings

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CAREER Education

Come and see what great things are happening at St. Stanislaus

St. Stanislaus School in Chicopee is under the new leadership of Principal Katherine Rorrio, who fully appreciates the Franciscan values and long-standing traditions of the school. Mrs. Rorrio is a graduate of the school, was a teacher at the school for 20 years, and is now Principal.

This year the school's theme is "For it is in giving that we receive", an inspirational quote from St. Francis about the value of giving back. Students are focusing on a different Corporal Work of Mercy each month. Some of the Corporal Works of

Mercy that have been covered are - Feeding the Hungry and Working for Peace. The most recent Work of Mercy was Shelter the Homeless. Students and families collected 100 blankets, 50 hats, coats, and many undergarments that were donated to a local homeless shelter to help those in the community. Service projects are done throughout the year to help teach students the value of giving back.

The school will be holding an Open House on Sunday, Jan. 21 from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. (no appointment needed).

If you would like to schedule a private tour for another time, please call the school to schedule an appointment at (413) 592-5135.

St. Stanislaus School is a Roman Catholic, Franciscan, co-educational Pre-K through 8th grade school. Students are assisted in developing their potential spiritually, physically, and socially within a safe and diverse community. A foundation of academic excellence is created to prepare students to become contributing members of a global society. The school

has a welcoming Franciscan environment, modern air-conditioned facility, strong core curriculum, enrichment classes, certified faculty, full-day preschool (PreK3 and 4) and Kindergarten, free breakfast and hot lunch, before & after school program, and one to one use and integration of iPads and Chromebooks into curriculum. Financial Aid is available. Interested students are invited to "spend a day with us". To learn more please visit www.saintstansschool.org.

We can't wait to meet you!

ST. STANISLAUS SCHOOL

SERVANT LEADERS FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

OPEN HOUSE
SUNDAY, JAN. 21, 2024
11AM-1PM

- Welcoming Franciscan environment
- Strong core curriculum
- Enrichment classes
- Certified faculty
- Full day Preschool & Kindergarten
- Free breakfast and hot lunch
- Before & After school program
- One to one use and integration of iPads & Chromebooks into curriculum

PREK - 8TH GRADE SCHOOL

PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL, AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

To learn more →

Call us for more information and to schedule a tour. We welcome the opportunity for you to experience St. Stanislaus School! Interested students are invited to "spend a day with us."

Best Private School

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www.saintstansschool.org
534 Front Street, Chicopee, MA 01013
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Saturday, April 6, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

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To foster in all students the intellectual habits of mind, high ethical standards, and respect for diversity required for becoming effective individuals in their personal and work lives, and moral and responsible participants in the world beyond.

There's no better way to get a feel for The MacDuffie School than spending time with us!

Please register for our Open House at www.macduffie.org or contact the Admissions Office at (413) 255-0000 to reserve your spot.

Come Be A Part Of Our Community!

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www.MacDuffie.org

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KIRSY SEGARRA -
[KSEGARRA@GANDARACENTER.ORG](mailto:ksegarra@gandaracenter.org)

↓ ↓ ↓

LUIS COLON -
[LCOLON@GANDARACENTER.ORG](mailto:lcolon@gandaracenter.org)



CAREER Education

Explore the difference at St. Joan of Arc School

Explore the difference at St. Joan of Arc School in Chicopee! Lively Letters and OSMO Tangible Play programs have been added to our PreK and Kindergarten programs. Lexia, a phonics instruction that gives students independent practice in basic reading skills, is now offered to Kindergarten through Grade 8 students. And a Robotics Curriculum is coming soon for our 8th graders.

The school will be holding an Open House on Saturday, Jan. 27 from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. (no appointment needed). Appointment only tours for families will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 30 and Thursday, Feb. 1 from 3 p.m. - 7 p.m. Please call Chris or Janine in the Business Office at 536-6038 for registration information or to make

an appointment.

St. Joan of Arc is a welcoming, safe and secure school community providing social, physical, spiritual & intellectual wellness for students in Pre-K 3 to Grade 8. SJA has innovative offerings that include affordable tuition and extended care, free breakfast and lunch, extracurricular programs to include Chess, Book and Lego Clubs, as well as a Performing Arts Club. Computer fundamentals with intro to computer science, music, library, and Duolingo language classes are also offered. Located at 587 Grattan St., Chicopee offers easy access to I-391 & I-90. Financial aid and tuition assistance is available. To learn more visit www.sjachicopee.org.

We look forward to meeting you!

St. Joan of Arc School ~ Pre-K to Grade 8
587 Grattan Street, Chicopee ~ 533-1475 ~ sjachicopee.org
Learning Rooted in Christian Values

OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, January 27th 9am-12 noon
No Appointment Needed

January 30th & February 1st 3pm-7pm
By Appointment Only



Affordable Tuition & Extended Care
Free Breakfast & Lunch
Extracurricular Programs
Technology ~ Phys. Ed
Music ~ Library ~ Duolingo
Welcoming, Safe & Secure School Community
Social, Physical, Spiritual & Intellectual Wellness
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HELP WANTED

The Town of Huntington is seeking an **INTERIM TOWN CLERK**. This is a salaried position for approximately 18 hours per week. Application and complete job description are available online at www.huntingtonma.us or by emailing admin@huntingtonma.us. Applications are due by January 26, 2024. Town of Huntington is an Equal Opportunity Employer

HELP WANTED

TOWN OF WILBRAHAM

P/T ADMINISTRATIVE CLERK - ASSESSORS

Looking for a reliable P/T Administrative Clerk for our Assessor's Office. For application and more information please visit www.wilbraham-ma.gov. Open until filled. EOE

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The Town of Palmer is seeking qualified applicants for the full-time position of Inspector of Buildings/ Building Commissioner. Must have certification as a local inspector by the State Board of Building Regulations and Standards and obtain Certification as an Inspector of Buildings/ Building Commissioner within the time limit allotted in Massachusetts State Building Code 780 CMP Section 110.R7. For a full job description please visit www.townofpalmer.com/jobs. Qualified and interested applicants should submit their cover letter and resume to Robert Reed rreed@townofpalmer.com.

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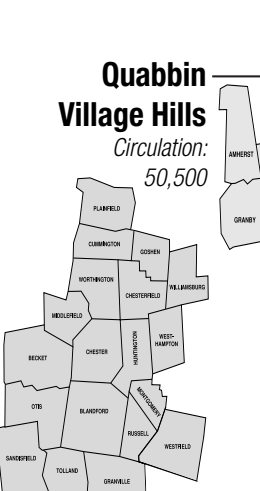
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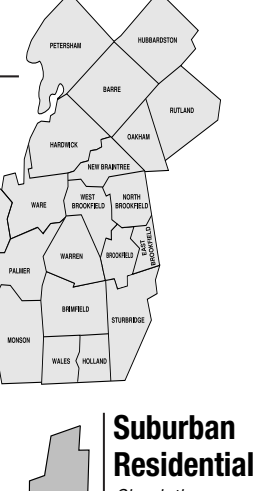
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29 Base Price \$30.50	30 Base Price \$31.00	31 Base Price \$31.50	32 Base Price \$32.00
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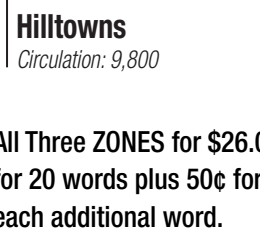
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SCHOOLS

This Week in Rec

Falcon Girls Lacrosse Signups for the 2024 Spring Season

Does your daughter want to be part of the fastest growing youth sport in the United States? You are in luck because we will open registration for the 2024 Falcon Girls Youth Lacrosse program on Jan 8, 2024, through Feb 16, 2024. The Falcon Girls Lacrosse Association (FGLA) will be fielding teams for the following age groups this season: Bantams (grades 3-4), Juniors (grades 5-6), and Seniors (grades 7-8). This is a Wilbraham Parks and Recreation Department (WPRD) program that is co-managed by the FGLA. The program has a strong history and is supported by a small group of dedicated volunteers. We are open to players and volunteers of all abilities. The goal is to expose your daughter to the dynamics of team play, build/enhance coordination and the fundamentals of lacrosse in a competitive and fun environment.

Your daughter can be signed up in-person at the Wilbraham Parks and Recreation Department office located at 45C Post Office Park Wilbraham, MA. Registration fees are: Bantam \$100, Juniors \$125, Seniors \$125. There will be a \$50 deposit required for the uniform for all age groups. This deposit will be returned to you when the player's uniform is returned to the WPRD at the end of the season. You will also be given the option to donate the \$50 uniform deposit back to the Falcon Girls Lacrosse Association (FGLA) to benefit the program. These funds are used for equipment purchases, development clinics, spirit wear, tournaments, etc. Players are asked to provide their own girls lacrosse stick, face mask and mouth guard. USA Lacrosse has an equipment guide that can be found on their website: www.usalacrosse.com/equipment.

We are also scheduling 2-3 tournaments for the season. Tournament play has been very well received in the past and is a fantastic opportunity to expose our players to other organizations outside of our league (Western Mass Girls Youth Lacrosse). Your daughters will also have a chance to warm up with the "big kids" on the turf at Minnechaug during the season and have some game time on the new high-tech playing surface we are so fortunate to have. Regular season play for the Junior and Senior teams will be held on the incredible grass surface at the Spec Pond Recreation Facility.

Additionally, there will be three indoor clinics held on March 13, 20, and 27 at Soccer City, 2041 Boston Road Wilbraham (Field # 3 - the back indoor field). Start time is 4:30 PM and these will run for 1-hour. Cost is \$10 per player (collected on site at the clinics) and all participants should be previously signed up as a Falcon Girls Lacrosse player through the WPRD. We will have an insurance waiver form available for any athletes looking to feel out the sport prior to signing up and making a team commitment for the season. This is a great opportunity to introduce the game to new athletes, dust off the sticks for returning players and meet some of the coaching staff.

Any questions can be directed to the FGLA through the WPRD and financial assistance can be provided if this is an obstacle for any aspiring players.

NOTE: For more information on all our programming, please visit WilbrahamRec.com.

Hunter Hembdt Named to SNHU Dean's List

MANCHESTER, N.H. – Hunter Hembdt, of Hampden, has been named to Southern New Hampshire University's Fall 2023 Dean's List. The fall terms run from September to December.

Mia Drumheller Named to SNHU President's List

MANCHESTER, N.H. – Mia Drumheller, of Wilbraham, has been named to Southern New Hampshire University's Fall 2023 President's List. The fall terms run from September to December.

Wilbraham native named to SRU Dean's List

SLIPPERY ROCK, Pa – Jacob Ferri, of Wilbraham, was named to the Dean's List at Slippery Rock University for the fall 2023 semester. The Dean's List consists of SRU undergraduate students who earned an adjusted semester grade-point average of 3.5 or higher, based on a schedule of at least 12 newly attempted and earned credits.

HCC gets \$600k grant to expand free child watch program

HOLYOKE - Holyoke Community College has been awarded a \$600,000 grant from the Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation to expand its Itsy Bitsy Child Watch program to serve more student-parents.

Itsy Bitsy Child Watch is a free center on HCC's main campus for parents in need of short-term childcare while they attend class, study, or meet with tutors and advisers. It opened as a pilot program for the fall 2022 semester with a \$100,000 state allocation. At the time, HCC was only the second community college in Massachusetts, and the only one in western Massachusetts, to offer a free campus child watch service.

The center is open to HCC student-parents with children three months to 12 years old.

Since its launch, the program has proven to be widely popular and transformational for many HCC students.

Without it, "I could not come to school," said biology major Alondra Serrano, of Holyoke, one of the first HCC student-parents to sign up for the Itsy Bitsy Child Watch program last year for her daughter, Anna, now 3.

"Our first semester, we had 19 students enrolled," said Kimm Quinlan, director of HCC's Early Childhood Initiatives, which includes the Itsy Bitsy Child Watch. "Now we have more than 40. After just one year, it has become clear

that there is a demonstrable need and demand for expansion."

The \$600,000 grant will enable HCC to relocate the center to a larger, fully renovated new space, hire additional staff, and extend its hours of operation to accommodate more children, especially during public school vacations, which do not always align with the college calendar.

"HCC remains at the forefront of pioneering innovative pathways to enhance educational accessibility for every student," said Paul Bel-sito, executive director of the Davis Foundation. "At HCC, the concept of community is a verb in action, and the success of The Itsy Bitsy Child Watch is a testament to this commitment. Here at the Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation, we are honored to be able to contribute to the growth of this vibrant and impactful program, which not only offers the highest quality childcare support to student-parents but also positions HCC as a proactive leader in early education and care as well as higher education."

Sometime in 2024, the Itsy Bitsy Child Watch center, now located on the first floor of the Marieb Science building, will move to a renovated space on the second floor of the Frost Building, closer to other student service and support programs, such as the Thrive Student Resource Center and Food Pantry; Homestead Market, which

accepts SNAP benefits; CHD Mental Health Services; Financial Aid; and the new Elaine Marieb Adult Learner Success Center (also scheduled to open in 2024).

"This investment will enable our early childhood team to provide high-quality early learning experiences for more children," said President George Timmons. "The remodeled space will provide the youngest members of our campus community with ample opportunities to explore, play, and learn. Dozens more HCC student-parents will be able to attend classes and access campus-based student resources without having to worry about childcare."

Based on one year of data, the Itsy Bitsy Child Watch has already proven to be having a positive impact on student retention, course completion, and success, said Quinlan. Fall 2022 to spring 2023 retention rates for students who used the child watch center were 86 percent, "which is a really great number," while 82 percent completed all their courses, and on average saw their grade point averages increase by more than 1 point.

"So, we do think that reducing the barrier of child care and allowing students to attend class, meet with their advisers, and meet with tutors has absolutely helped this small group of people, and we hope that continues," Quinlan said.

PUBLIC NOTICES

WILBRAHAM PLANNING BOARD
The Wilbraham Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, January 31, 2024, at 5:45 PM** in the Town Office Building, 240 Springfield Street, on the application of 2 Crane Park, LLC for a Special Permit as required under Section 12.11 of the Wilbraham Zoning By-Law for a Sign Master Plan to govern all commercial signage for businesses owned or leased by 2 Crane Park, LLC on premises located at 6 Burt Lane as shown on information on file in the Planning Office and posted for public viewing on the Planning Board page of the Town of Wilbraham website at www.wilbraham-ma.gov/123/Planning-Board. Both in person and virtual participation are available. To participate virtually go to <https://meet.goto.com/274121677> or call 877-309-2073 (Access Code: 274-121-677).
John McCloskey
Chair
01/11, 01/18/2024

WILBRAHAM BOARD OF APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING
The Wilbraham Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on **Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 5:30 PM** on the application of Robert Ward for a special permit (ZBA23-09) under section 3.4.5.4 of the Wilbraham Zoning By-Law to allow the operation of a beer and wine retail store in a portion of the existing building owned by 2 Crane Park LLC located at 6 Burt Lane as further specified in the application on file in the Planning Office and posted for public viewing on the Zoning Board of Appeals page of the Town of Wilbraham website at www.wilbraham-ma.gov/135/Zoning-Board-of-Appeals.
Both in person and virtual participation are available. To participate virtually go to <https://meet.goto.com/952191069> or call 866-899-4679 (Access Code: 952-191-069).
Edward Kivari Jr.,
Chairman
01/11, 01/18/2024

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758 Docket No. HD23C0369CA
In the matter of: Elizabeth Boyer
CITATION ON PETITION TO CHANGE NAME
A Petition to Change Name of Adult has been filed by **Elizabeth Boyer of Wilbraham, MA** requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to:
Elizabeth Powell
IMPORTANT NOTICE
Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: **Hampden Probate and Family Court before 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 01/23/2024.**
This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.
WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: December 26, 2023
Rosemary A Saccomani
Register of Probate
01/11/2024
Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 Docket No. HD24P0023GD
In the matter of: Rosa Soto Lopez
Of: Hampden, MA
RESPONDENT
Alleged Incapacitated Person
CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN FOR INCAPACITATED PERSON PURSUANT TO G.L. c. 190B, §5-304
To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by **Vantage At Hampden of Hampden, MA** in the above captioned matter alleging that **Rosa Soto Lopez** is

in need of a Guardian and requesting that **Marianna Diaz of Holyoke, MA** (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Guardian to serve **Without Surety** on the bond.
The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is incapacitated, that the appointment of a Guardian is necessary, and that the proposed Guardian is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court and may contain a request for certain specific authority.
You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 a.m. on the return date of **02/05/2024**. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must

file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.
IMPORTANT NOTICE
The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.
WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M. Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.
Date: January 05, 2024
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
01/11/2024



Events & announcements schedule



JOIN NOW AND GET YOUR FIRST MONTH FREE!




SCANTIC VALLEY YMCA
 P: 413.596.2749
www.springfieldy.org

WILBRAHAM & MONSON ACADEMY TITAN TALKS

Join us for coffee and conversation to learn more about WMA's programs and community.



<p>MIDDLE SCHOOL (families interested in grades 6-8) Tue., Jan. 23, 9 - 10 a.m.</p>	<p>UPPER SCHOOL (families interested in grades 9-12, PG) Thu., Jan. 25, 8 - 9 a.m.</p>
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RSVP: www.wma.us/TitanTalks

Wilbraham Public Library welcomes community feedback

Library is preparing to create next strategic plan

WILBRAHAM – The Wilbraham Public Library is beginning to work on its next strategic plan and invites all community members to complete a survey to provide input on the library's collections and services.

The survey is available to complete online through the library website, www.wilbrahamlibrary.org, and printed copies are available to pick up that the library, town hall, and senior center. The deadline to complete the survey is Jan. 12. The Strategic Planning Committee will meet this winter and spring, and the goal is to complete the new plan before June. If you have any questions, please contact library director Karen Ball at kball@wilbraham-ma.gov or 596-6141 ext. 159.

Sourdough Workshop to be held at the Wilb. library

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

Spiritual Healing to return to FCC

HAMPDEN – The Federated Community Church of Hampden, located on Main Street, will be offering Spiritual Healing on the first Sunday of each month at 11:30 a.m.

Teens Who Code to meet in Wilbraham

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

Wilbraham Men's Glee Club to begin rehearsals

WILBRAHAM – The Wilbraham Men's Glee Club began rehearsals for the 2024 concert season on Monday evening, Jan. 8, 2024, at Christ The King Lutheran/Episcopal Church, Wilbraham at 7 p.m. Rehearsals will continue each Monday thereafter at Christ The King Lutheran/Episcopal Church at 7 p.m. until local performances in late April.

The chorus is conducted by Ray Drury and accompanied by Marcia Jackson. Drury has selected a varied program for Men's voices consisting of contemporary works, folksongs, pop tunes and sea shanties.

Interested singers should be able to "carry a tune" and be willing to pay a nominal fee for sheet music. No audition is required. Hope to see you there!

Margolis Ortho. to hold January food drive

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

Great Decisions Discussion Group returns in 2024

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

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

Great Decisions Groups meet all over the country – in private homes, libraries, and other venues to discuss selected topics in the area of current affairs. Participants can have their opinions tallied in a National Opinion Poll, which then gets sent to the White House, members of Congress and the national media. This is a wonderful program to learn more about what is happening in the world and to have your voice heard by people who make the decisions.

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

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