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Ice fishing season arrives at Spec Pond



Wilbraham residents Pam O'Coin and Matt Middleton hold fish they caught at Spec Pond on Monday. Photos courtesy of Matt Middleton.

By Dalton Zbierski
Editor
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WILBRAHAM – Recent weather has been bitterly cold, with temperatures dipping so far below freezing that a beloved winter tradition can resume.

Ice fishing season has arrived in Wilbraham, as was evidenced by the numerous residents who walked atop the town's frozen bodies of water this week to enjoy their favorite pastime.

"I've been ice fishing for years. Normally, I go up to the Berkshires, but we decided to stay a little local

because we can, and we found some safe ice. This is just barely safe enough," Wilbraham resident Matt Middleton said Monday from atop the Spec Pond ice.

Middleton relayed that a minimum of four inches of clear, solid ice is recommended to support an average person's weight on a frozen lake. Earlier this week, the ice at Spec Pond was just that.

"They say four inches is good for ice fishing, and that's what we're on right now," Middleton said. "Anything thicker than that, you can drive a snowmobile or ATV. I've driven cars on ice that's up to a foot thick. Anything less than four inches I

wouldn't even go out on."

Middleton was joined on the ice by Wilbraham resident Pam O'Coin. Together, they drilled holes with an ice auger and used little minnows, or shiners, for bait.

Middleton waited for weeks for the weather to freeze the ice. He was thrilled to take off work and enjoy ice fishing.

"It's awesome," he said. "We only drove a mile-and-a-half. The tough part is we have to drive a half-hour to go get bait. There's no local places to get bait right now, but this is awesome to have this available in

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Turley photo by Dalton Zbierski

A 29-year-old Wilbraham police officer was shot in the line of duty last Saturday.

Wilbraham police officer recovering after shooting

By Dalton Zbierski
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WILBRAHAM – A 29-year-old Wilbraham police officer is recovering after being shot outside a residence on Old Carriage Drive at approximately 8:20 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 20.

Wilbraham Police Chief Edward Lennon updated the public at the start of the Select Board meeting on Monday evening. He noted that officers initially responded to a call regarding a male resident threatening others in a home.

"Upon arrival, Wilbraham police officers outside of the residence exchanged gunfire with a 53-year-old male later identified as a Michael Ortega, who was inside the home. A male Wilbraham police officer sustained a gunshot wound and was transported to a hospital with serious injuries. The officer is currently in stable condition at the hospital," Lennon said, on Jan. 22.

Other occupants in the home were able to escape through a second-floor window. They exited onto a lower roof and were subsequently assisted off the roof by police officers using a ladder.

Ortega was wounded in the gunfire exchange, and a

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School Committee addresses district's response to bus fire

Parents concerned, disappointed by lack of communication

By Kristin Rivers
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WILBRAHAM – Last Thursday, the School Committee addressed the school bus fire that occurred in Hampden on Jan. 12.

Around 3 p.m. that Friday, the Hampden Police Department received several 911 calls for a school bus fire on Bayberry Road, with the Hampden Fire Department responding within minutes. The bus driver and all students were safely evacuated, with no injuries reported.

The cause is currently under investigation.

Superintendent Dr. John Provost explained he's been in touch with Hampden's fire and police chiefs and district collaborative administrative staff, holding a multi-agency action review the day before.

"I think what came out of that meeting was that the most positive part of the whole response was the emergency response and the bus evacuation training we do with students, that was followed. Students got off the bus safely and the firefighters' response, they got there, I believe, in four minutes and suppressed the fire," Provost said.

Provost said what didn't go well was communication and information sharing within and between agencies.

"There were gaps of information that I think would have allowed the district to communicate in a better way, so we talked about how if this should ever happen again, we want to be more tightly synced up with each other so we're getting more complete information out and more timely information out," Provost said.

Provost stressed that this was the first school bus fire the district ever had and apologized to the community for their response.

"We're working together as a district, fire department, police department and transportation company in order to try to make sure if that happens in the future, there'll be a different kind of response," Provost said.

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Photo courtesy of the Hampden Fire Department

A school bus caught fire in Hampden on Jan. 12. The School Committee addressed the issue.

Residents visit Hampden Senior Center for Grab and Go Dinner



Becky Moriarty, executive director at Hampden Senior Center, checks off a resident as they came by on Jan. 18 to pick up their Grab and Go Dinner.



Lil Fedora hands a grab and go meal bag to a resident during the Jan. 18 Grab and Go Dinner event at Hampden Senior Center.



Claudia Kapinos talks with a resident as she hands them a grab and go bag during the Grab and Go Dinner event at Hampden Senior Center on Jan. 18.

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
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HAMPDEN – Residents stopped by the senior center from 2-2:30 p.m. on Jan. 18 to pick up their first Grab and Go Dinner of 2024.

This month's meal was turkey casserole, a tossed salad, dinner roll and cake for dessert.

The dinners first began during the COVID-19 pandemic and have continued since with prior meals including spaghetti, beef stroganoff, green beans, salads, pork tenderloin, roasted turkey, chicken broccoli alfredo, barbecue chicken, pasta and more.

The meals cost \$5 per person, with orders to be placed in advance of the pickup date.

Outside of this, there are also special grab and go dinner events for Thanksgiving and the Halfway to St. Patrick's Day Grab and Go Dinner, which takes place in September.

Lil Fedora and Claudia Kapinos volunteered to hand out the meals while Council on Aging Executive Director Becky Moriarty checked everyone in as they arrived.

Despite the cold temperatures, Fedora and Kapinos



A shot of the grab and go dinners ready to be handed out during the Grab and Go Dinner event at Hampden Senior Center. This month's meal grab and go was a turkey casserole dinner with a tossed salad and dessert.

were excited to help.

"We do this every so often. It's a great opportunity to meet a lot of new people, and the people really appreciate everything that the senior center does for them," Kapinos said.

"And these homemade meals that they do at the senior center, you can't beat them. They're just delicious. The staff here does an awesome job, so we're happy to help them out," Fedora said.

Kapinos stressed how it's important to not only get the word out about the dinners but also about the events going on at the senior center.

"We got to get the word out; lot of good things going on here," Kapinos said. "We have a decent amount of people that come so I think we do a pretty good job. We love to meet more new people, have them join us here."

Kapinos added it's not just for residents of Hampden.

"It's for anybody in the



From the left, Phil Hanrahan and Claudia Kapinos smile for a photo after Hanrahan picked up her grab and go dinner while at the senior center during the Jan. 18 Grab and Go Dinner event.

area; any senior citizens in the area. We welcome everyone," Kapinos said.

Moriarty enjoys doing the grab and go dinners because it helps her and her colleagues connect with people who may not come to the senior center as often.

"It's also a way for us to do some outreach with people because we're able to answer some questions and people are also driving through and they're picking up their brown bag of groceries. That happened on Tuesday of this week," Moriarty said. "We're able to make contacts, so it's just a good way to stay in touch with people, but it's a great outreach for us, and we're happy to feed people."

Fedora shared she got involved with volunteering at the senior center during COVID and loves the people she works with. She also loves the people she meets during the grab and go dinners.

"To see their faces when they come to pick up their meals is just unbelievable. They're so thankful and they know that they're getting a homecooked meal, which is great. So, it's good," Fedora said.

Moriarty wants the community to know the senior center is the only social service agency in town and does a lot of things behind the scenes they may not think of.

"Like fuel assistance and help with food stamps and health insurance. Aside from showing movies and having exercise, there's a lot of other essential programs that we are fulfilling people's needs with right here in Hampden, so we have a lot going on," Moriarty said.

Fedora had this message for residents.

"It's important to come in to meet new people, to enjoy the great food that they make," Fedora said. "Look at your Scribe and it will always tell you what's coming up for the next month."

Turley photos by Kristin Rivers

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Wilbraham-Hampden Times

Hampden Parks maintenance man to receive hourly raise

By Dalton Zbierski
Editor
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HAMPDEN – Parks & Recreation Director Dan Blanchard and Parks & Rec. Chair Carrie Joseph made a case for their seasonal maintenance man to be paid more hourly during Monday’s Board of Selectmen meeting.

“We’re here to discuss Steve Bennett for a promotion/raise,” Blanchard said. “Steve has been an exemplary employee since he came on in 2021. He never complains, he never says no, just does it all with a smile on his face. You can just tell he cares about the community.”

The board ruled that the decision was under the purview of Parks & Rec and did not object to the proposed raise. Bennett will receive a raise soon.

In 2021, Bennett attended a Parks & Rec meeting, as he was concerned about the condition of Memorial Park off Main Street. He offered his services, and the commission hired him on the spot.

“He came with a solution, and that was that he would help us out. It was only going to be for the season, but he ended up enjoying it – I assume because he’s still coming back,” Joseph said.

Bennett is currently paid \$17.73 an hour. He works in a seasonal capacity, from March through November.

Each year, Bennett works approxi-

mately 850 hours, averaging 30 hours per week. Blanchard and Joseph requested that he be paid a more appropriate wage for the work he completes.

“He’s really our head maintenance guy for anything we need from the park. He’s our go-to guy. He really does everything for us. He’s a great employee,” Blanchard said. “Around \$20.50 would be a nice bump for him. It would be appreciated and would help retain him.”

Blanchard noted that Bennett goes well beyond his job description and never asks for anything in return. He did not seek the raise himself; rather the department and commission considered it timely and deserved.

Blanchard said that Bennett is well underpaid in comparison to his peers in town. He shared several examples of individuals who are paid more.

“Looking at the comparable wages in town, this is really the crux of the matter. The police station custodian is making \$21.25 an hour. The senior center custodian is at \$23.52 an hour,” Blanchard said. “In my eyes, I’m not trying to lessen anybody’s position or anything, but Steven in my eyes does a lot more than just a custodian.”

Blanchard said that the employee tasked with seasonal law care for the Highway Department makes \$25 per hour and that seasonal gym attendants make \$20 per hour.

“Steve does lawn care and everything else; maintenance to the heavy

equipment, maintenance to the tools, all the lawn care. He coordinates with projects for repairing Memorial Park. He just does so much for us,” Blanchard said.

Blanchard also pointed out that Bennett won’t be working forever. Raising the wage of the position could make it more attractive to future candidates.

Blanchard rewrote the job description for the position to make it more official.

“This will position us better for if we need to hire in the future for this role. It will make it a much smoother process. As you guys know, it’s difficult to hire for a town position, so I think it sets us up a little bit better for that,” Blanchard said.

Blanchard said if the raise is approved immediately, the Parks & Rec Department would still come in at approximately \$2,200 under the budget for fiscal year 2024. For fiscal year 2025, the budget would go up approximately \$1,800.

“It really has minimal impact on the Parks and Rec budget,” Blanchard said.

Ultimately, the Selectmen decided that the call is one for the Parks & Rec Department and commission to make. They will not interfere with a raise for Bennett.

“It’s your budget; your money. If you can fit in there, (go for it),” Selectman Craig Rivest said.

Fundraiser at Country Club on Jan. 28 to benefit Baystate Health Foundation

Event to celebrate Jack Godin’s first birthday

WILBRAHAM – On Jan. 28, from 1 – 4 p.m., a fundraiser will occur at the Country Club of Wilbraham at 859 Stony Hill Road to celebrate Jack Godin’s first birthday and raise money for the Baystate Health Foundation.

Jack, of Wilbraham, is 11 months old. When he was eight days old, he was diagnosed with Viral Meningoencephalitis from a rare virus called Parechovirus and hospitalized and admitted to the PICU at Baystate due to seizure activity. The seizures were causing him to

he stopped breathing, and he was eventually intubated due to this. His symptoms slowly improved and after several days of being intubated, he was able to be extubated and eventually downgraded to the regular children’s floor where he was discharged home a few days later.

Jack’s parents, Cody and Liz, thank the entire medical team at Baystate Children’s Hospital for saving their son, who has had weekly physical therapy and occupational therapy sessions with early intervention services through CHD. Jack has seen many specialists in his young life but has been doing great so far and his parents are very hopeful and thankful.

Jan. 28 will be Jack’s first birthday, and Cody and Liz invite the community to attend the fundraising event that day.

There will be food, door prizes (which will be raffled off), activities

for children, raffle baskets, music, cake (of course) and lots of fun!

Tickets for this event will be sold for \$20 per person. Children 12 years and younger are free. You can purchase tickets at the door or ahead of time through: Venmo: @elizabethgodin CashApp: @lizawarner PayPal: @mamamadecrafting Make sure to include your first name, last name and phone number.

Raffle items, baskets, or gift cards will be greatly appreciated. Monetary donations can be made by going to <https://givebutter.com/h7RnBT>, mailed (contact us for address) or in person at the event. If you’d like to have a children’s activity there for your group or business please contact egodin23@gmail.com or gjwarner0410@gmail.com for more information.

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Hampden author Sandra Howell donates books to local organizations

Donations were supported by Unify Against Bullying grant

By **Kristin Rivers**
Staff Writer
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN – Author Sandra Howell, of Hampden, has donated numerous copies of her Angels Club book series to local organizations after receiving a grant from Unify Against Bullying.

Unify Against Bullying, founded in 2005 by Edward and Susanna Zemba, is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to end bullying by celebrating diversity, with grants supporting organizations in anti-bullying initiatives.

After she and her co-author, Courtney Vail, were awarded the grant in June 2023, Howell was looking for organizations to donate the books, later presenting copies to The Gray House, Shriner’s Children’s New England Hospital, adoptees and parents during Massachusetts Adoption Day at Springfield District Court, Christina’s House and a start-up Teen Center for girls in Essex, VT.

Howell shared this was her second grant award from Unify Against Bullying and each organization expressed gratitude and excitement for the books.

“It was such a worthy thing that Unify Against Bullying did. I mean, they made so many people happy, kids happy, to tell you the truth, and organizations,” Howell said.

Reflecting on when she and Vail received the grant last summer, Howell was grateful they were able to donate so many books and said it meant so much that Unify Against Bullying recognized their mission.

“I felt like they gave me the opportunity to do something wonderful and it made me feel so proud and happy to donate these books to these wonderful organizations,” Howell said.

Howell added Unify Against Bullying has a special place in her heart, given how the book series promotes a message of anti-bullying, inclusivity and kindness to all ages, cultures, races and more.

“In each book also not only does it talk about bullying and anti-bullying and how to combat bullying, but it also talks about the benefits of equine riding therapy and the healing of special children with disabilities,” Howell said. “So, there’s a lot about disabilities in my series.”

Howell hopes all the children who received books learn



From the left, Co-Author Courtney Vail, Isabella Brady-Prankus, education director at The Gray House, and Author Sandra Howell pose for a photo after dropping off book donations of the “Angels Club” series. Vail and Howell were recipients of a grant from Unify Against Bullying in June 2023 for their books promoting kindness and anti-bullying.



Author Sandra Howell and Springfield Juvenile District Court Judge David Paradis pose for a photo during Massachusetts Adoption Day. Howell donated copies of the “Angels Club” series to adoptees, parents and court officers as part of a grant award from Unify Against Bullying.

“a sensitivity towards other people or kids that look different and to be a friend and to be inclusive and to be kind.”

“That’s what I would like them to be able to recognize that even a child with cerebral palsy is like them, even a child with ADHD is really like them, even a child with autism. They’re all kids, but they have to be able to reach out,” Howell said. “By reaching out, they will feel so much better themselves and by standing up to someone who’s bullying a child like that, they will feel so much



Submitted photos Sandra Howell
From the left, Author Sandra Howell, Kerri-Lynn Tichy, donor development officer at Shriner’s Children’s New England, and Co-Author Courtney Vail take a group photo at the children’s hospital after Shriner’s received donated copies of the “Angels Club” book series.

better themselves.”

Reflecting on other writing projects, Howell said she is promoting her latest book, “Izzy and the Reluctant Spy,” with a sequel in the works. She also revealed she and Vail are writing a new series called “Silver Horseshoes” for young adults for release this coming summer.

Another future idea is working on a third or fourth-grade book.

“So as soon as we finish writing ‘Silver Horseshoes’ together, I want to write a third or fourth-grade book, and it will be simple and short, but it’s going to be about kindness,” Howell said. “We don’t even have a name or anything, but I kind of have an outline of where we want it to go.”

Howell wants the community to know the importance of being kind and to be aware and stand up to bullying. Also, to check out Unify Against Bullying to learn more about their mission.

“To be kind, that’s the big thing,” Howell said. “Be aware of bullying. It comes in all shapes or forms. It doesn’t matter if you’re a child or an adult. Adults still get bullied too.”



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Proceeds from the Soup Off will go toward additions and maintenance of Light Up Palmer’s community programs; including the Purple Heart banner, American flag and flower display on Main Street, Depot Village, as well as the Xmas holiday decorations and event. LUP thanks the Tailgate Tavern, their employees, and patrons for their continued support of our efforts to honor resident Veterans who have received the Purple Heart medal.
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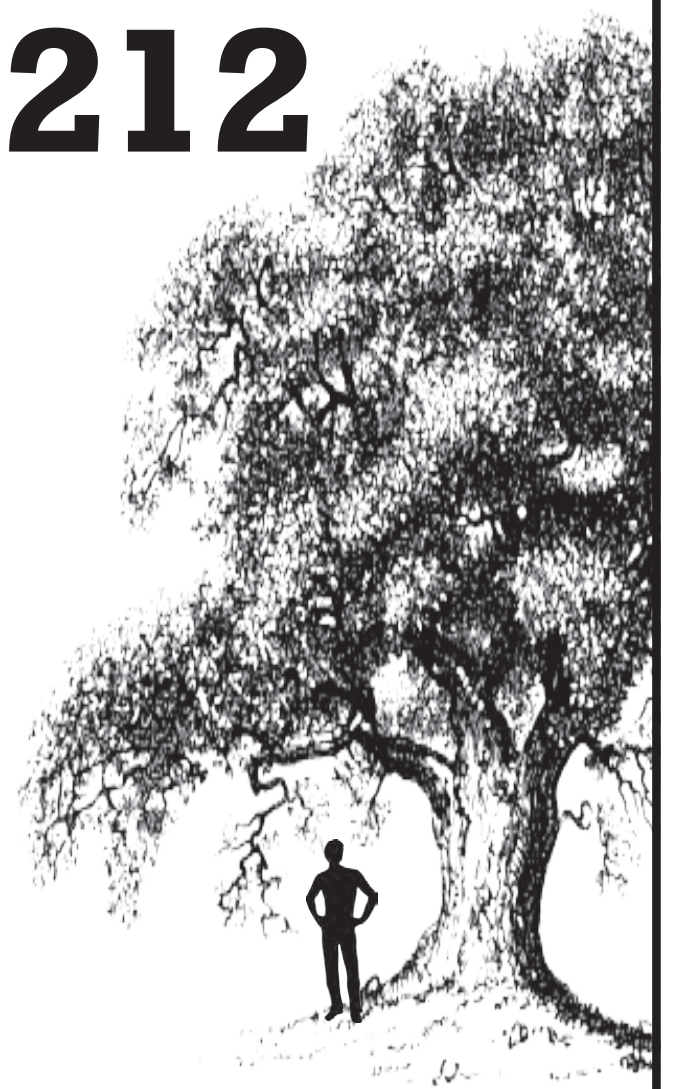
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VIEWPOINTS



By Ellenor Downer

Bluebirds

Courtesy photo by Jane Higgins

I received an email from a West Brookfield resident, who included two photos of bluebirds at her feeder.

She took the photos on New Year's Day and had six or seven of them. She said last year she had bluebirds visit regularly in late winter arriving on Valentine's Day.

She said in the email, "We built a meal-

worm feeder (thanks to Mark Blazis instructions) and the outcome was a pair nesting in one of our nesting boxes and bringing their pair of fledglings to the feeder.

Bluebirds are migratory, but some stay around all winter just like some of the Canada geese and robins do. Bluebirds, along with other small birds, will use nesting boxes for shelter during storms or at night. The boxes provide a dry place and protection from the wind and cold.

The bluebird is about 6 1/2 inches long. The male has a brilliant blue head, back, wings and tail with a brick red throat and breast. The female has a rich, buffy throat and breast. She has a grayish blue head and back with light blue wings and tail and a white eye ring.

Bluebirds may come to feeders for peanut butter mixes, berries, meal worms and raisins. The female lays three to six pale blue eggs in a nest in a tree cavity, abandoned woodpecker hole or birdhouse. The nest consists of grasses, plant stems, pine needles and is lined with hair, feathers and fine grasses.

They inhabit farmlands, open woodlands and rural yards.

Brimfield birds

A Brimfield resident said in an email, "Yesterday (Jan. 6) there were about a dozen robins in the yard feasting on the crab apples and they were joined by a few cedar wax-wings."

He said, "Today we awoke to about 8 inches of snow and all of the trees were covered with snow that was stuck to the branches. The crab apple trees were full of robins. One tree near the front of the

house had over a dozen robins in the tree eating apples along with a wax-wing or two."

The robins and wax wings also finished off

the last of the fruit from the mountain ash and gleaned a bush with red berries. He said there were about three dozen robins and a half dozen cedar wax-wings in his yard as well as the "regulars" and two white-throated sparrows.

Grackles

I received an email from a woman, who had grackles at her feeder on Jan. 12. She also reported seeing some robins and a flock of about 30 to 40 juncos. She said she usually doesn't see grackles until spring.

Christmas bird count

Results for some Christmas Bird Counts that took place in our area are now available by visiting the website at <http://www.warerivernatureclub.org/announcements.html>. Many new records were set, and many old ones broken, with high numbers of species and individuals recorded. An open, ice/snow-free landscape, unfrozen waterways, and an abundant wild food crop were combined factors that encouraged many species to linger longer than usual.

Feeder activity

Birds at my feeder before the Jan. 7 storm consisted mainly of a few juncos, a white-throated sparrow or two and a few chickadees and downy woodpeckers. That all changed on Sunday, Jan. 7. I saw my cardinal pair, bluejays, lots of chickadees and tufted titmice. I also had mourning doves, white-breasted nuthatches, a downy woodpecker and a few goldfinches.

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.



Comments on CONGRESS

By Lee Hamilton

Bashing China is easy but not always helpful

Here's one thing we can count on in the upcoming election year: American politicians will find ways to criticize China, even if they're running for jobs that have little to do with U.S. foreign policy.

China-bashing is a tried-and-true way to appeal for votes.

It's politically safe: China has few defenders anywhere in the United States. Politicians can take shots at China without worrying that they will offend anyone or lose support and, certainly, China often deserves criticism.

But there is a downside to reflexive anti-China rhetoric. With the world's second-largest population and its second-largest economy, China is a force in world affairs.

We need to push back when it threatens our interests, but we also need to engage with China when appropriate.

It's understandable that China would be a target for attacks. We live in a bipolar world, with the U.S. and China competing for global influence.

Under President Xi Jinping, China has positioned itself as our chief rival and China's actions often call for pushback. It engages in unfair trade practices, disregards intellectual property rules and tramples on human rights.

It has been accused of genocide against the Uyghur population in its Xinjiang province. It threatens Taiwan and antagonizes its neighbors over the South China Sea.

To many Americans, China can seem foreign and far away. Its people look different and speak different languages. Its autocratic system of government is very different from our democratic system.

A recent Pew Research Center survey found half of Americans consider China to be the biggest threat we face; that's three times as many as view Russia as our biggest threat. In another survey, more than 80% of Americans had negative views of China.

Some of China's actions do call for strong responses. We should expect candidates for

Hamilton on Foreign Policy

relevant government offices to adopt clear positions toward China.

But China-bashing can go too far.

In Indiana, where I live, one candidate for governor has made "combating China" a centerpiece of his campaign. He and his rivals say they will confront China over fentanyl imports, online theft of personal information, and other matters.

The next governor of Indiana will have a lot of important issues to address, but getting tough with China won't be high on the list.

Demonizing China also has a long and sometimes ugly history in the United States. Chinese immigrants in the 1800s did hard and dangerous jobs, working in mines and building railroads, but faced discrimination in housing, employment and education.

Anti-Chinese bias led Congress to pass the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, barring further Chinese immigration. Sensationalistic newspapers fanned fears of a "Yellow Peril" that threatened native-born Americans.

A 1924 law further restricted Asian immigration.

Some of those old prejudices can resurface today. One recent poll found that voters linked politicians' anti-Chinese rhetoric to a spike in violence against Asian Americans.

With election campaigns getting underway, some experts predict a rise in hate incidents.

At the end of the day, U.S. officials will have to lay aside the rhetoric and engage with China. That means standing firm when China threatens our interests and those of our allies, but it also means finding ways to work together.

We can, and should, cooperate on addressing climate change, combating terrorism, deterring drug smuggling, promoting free and fair trade, and other issues.

Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar at the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice at the IU O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

SIGNS THAT YOU MAY HAVE FROZEN PLUMBING ...



DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

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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.

HISTORICAL from page 1

four-hour standoff ensued. MassLive reported first that state troopers from the Massachusetts State Police Crisis Negotiation Unit attempted to negotiate with Ortega.

Ortega did not surrender. The State Police report that after several hours its Special Tactical Operations unit used an armored vehicle with a battering ram to break a window. A State Police drone was flown in, revealing that Ortega was wounded.

“Ortega was located within the home with gunshot injuries. He was

transported to a hospital, and he remains in the hospital in stable condition. Ortega’s booking charges are assault with intent to murder and assault with a dangerous weapon,” Lennon said.

Local, state and federal law enforcement agencies responded to the event, as did multiple fire and EMS agencies. Currently, the incident is being investigated by the Wilbraham Police Department, the State Police and the Hampden County District Attorney’s Office.

“The scene was challenging due to extremely cold temperatures occurring at the time,” Lennon said.

“Several Wilbraham police officers are on administrative leave while this incident is being investigated. This is routine in these matters. Later this week, there will be a voluntary critical incident stress management debriefing for all officers involved in the incident. That’s essentially the information we have at this time.”

Select Board Chair Theresa Godrich said that the officer is in the community’s thoughts.

“I want to say on behalf of all of us that we wish the officer the best recovery; he’s in our prayers,” she said.

Rotary Scholarship applications now available

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham-Hampden Rotary Club Scholarship Committee, has announced that applications for the 2024 Rotary Club scholarships are now available in the Guidance Departments of Minnechaug Regional High School, Wilbraham & Monson Academy and Pope Francis Preparatory School.

Applications are due no later than April 1, 2024. The scholarships are available to qualified high school students who are residents of Wilbraham or Hampden.

The club will again award nine scholarships, each in the amount of \$1,500. Applications may also be obtained from Brad Sperry by calling 413-537-4171.

Wilbraham Women’s Club to meet Feb. 8

WILBRAHAM – The February 2024 meeting of the Wilbraham Women’s Club will be held on Thursday, Feb. 8 at Noon at the St. Cecilia Parish Center on Main Street. The luncheon will be a Quiche Party, which will include Salad, Rolls, and Dessert. Reservations are required. Please call: Michelle Axtmann at 596-3325. The cost is \$12.

The speaker for the day will be David Bourcier, retired fire chief, a local historian from Wilbraham, who has a deep passion for the history of his town. With a keen eye for detail and a love of storytelling, Bourcier has become known for his engaging and informative short stories about the people and events that have shaped Wilbraham over the years.

Wilbraham Women’s Club to Award Scholarships

WILBRAHAM – The Wilbraham Women’s Club will be awarding several \$1,000 scholarships to graduating seniors who are residents of Wilbraham or Hampden and who will be attending a four-year college or university.

The criteria considered are academic achievement, character and leadership. Applications are available in the Guidance Office at Minnechaug Regional High School. For those attending other high schools, please email Mrs. Teed, at rae.teed@gmail.com. All applications must be postmarked by Tuesday, March 26, 2024, to be considered.



Matt Middleton, of Wilbraham, shows off his set up on the ice at Spec Pond on Jan. 22.



Wilbraham resident Pam O’Coin and Matt Middleton pictured atop the ice at Spec Pond on Jan. 22.

FISHING from page 1

our town.”

Middleton and O’Coin relocated to Spec Pond on Monday from Nine Mile Pond, where they only caught one fish. Middleton said that Spec Pond was much more encouraging, and O’Coin described the feeling of being out on the ice and patiently waiting for a fish to latch on.

“It’s cold but fun. It’s nice being out in the fresh air. When you actually catch something it’s very exciting. You’re waiting hours sometimes. It’s a bit of an adrenaline rush,” O’Coin said.

Middleton has been a Wilbraham resident since 2008 but never before ice fished on Spec Pond before Jan.

22. He said he’d only fished at Spec Pond on the dock or in a kayak, but local fishermen advised him to try ice fishing there.

“They told me it was really deep here and there’s good fish. There was a guy leaving just as we got here who said he caught a trout, and we’ve had two flags (wave) and almost got a bass out of the ice. It came off the hook right at the top of the ice, but that’s really promising.”

Middleton explained the flag system. The flag sits in the hole and signals when a fish latches onto the bait.

“You see a flag up and you run to the flag. Maybe it’s a false flag; maybe the wind tipped it off or maybe the shiner set it off. You don’t know

until you grab that line and pull,” he said.

For Middleton, the change of perspective when looking at Wilbraham from the ice was noteworthy. He said he got to see restaurants such as Mandarin Wilbraham and Crazy Jake’s from a whole new vantage point.

“It’s definitely different when you’re out on a body of water that’s frozen,” he said. “You drive by all year long and see water, but now you’re walking on it, and you see it from a different perspective. You drive by here two or three times a day but don’t see it from this perspective.”

SCHOOL from page 1

Brett Castellano said, “This is one of the first times that I’ve ever been truly disappointed in the school district.”

“The only communication we got was that it was a mechanical error on the bus or a mechanical issue on the bus. There was no follow-up to it, there was nothing to tell us that it was a fire,” Castellano said.

Castellano said phone calls were frantic, with children crying and parents not knowing where they were or who was on the bus.

“I just think it would have gone a long way for the district, it would have gone a long way in my eyes, and I think in many other parents’ eyes if there was that follow-up communication to tell us how serious it was, but also to tell us that we were okay,” Castellano said.

Kyle Jourdain, whose 12-year-old daughter was on the bus at the time, criticized the lack of response from the district.

“The fact that I’m sitting here tonight nearly a week after the event for the first time hearing from you about this without a reach out, personal reach out to my family, my daughter, there was no response,” Jourdain said.

Jourdain said the lack of response hurts.

“It was 72 hours before the principal tried to reach out to us. That’s not an environment that a child feels safe. That’s not an environment where a child feels engaged with adults. Since we’ve dropped off our children in kindergarten, we tell

them, ‘These folks are here for you. These folks are here to be advocates for you. These folks are here to keep you safe,’” Jourdain said. “That trust is broken with my 12-year-old, and, quite frankly, many other folks in the district.”

Shannon Sears, whose son was also on the bus, said the situation “could have been a very different story had the littler kids been on the bus.”

“Just given the scenario of what had happened, I think it would have been very chaotic, very traumatic for them,” Sears said.

Sears’s biggest concern is the state of the buses, citing Bus 32 having multiple issues all school year.

“So, my concern going forward is that this never happens again, and I just want to know as far as accountability with the district and the School Committee with the bus company, are there regular maintenance checks? Is there communication between the district and the bus company regarding those things? Because we just want to keep the kids safe and, again, I know there’s been multiple issues with that particular bus, so the signs were there, so this never really should have happened,” Sears said.

Briana McCarthy said her older daughter, a seventh grader, had gotten off one stop before the fire and her son, a second grader, would have been on the bus later. She agreed with Maura Ford, who spoke before her, about considering bus monitors for elementary school children, asking how often bus evacuation drills are practiced.

“My daughter in seventh grade, you



Photos courtesy of Hampden Fire Department

The School Committee addressed the Jan. 12 school bus fire in Hampden during its Jan. 18 meeting.

know, I’m not even sure the last time she had a drill,” McCarthy said. “When I asked her about it, she couldn’t off the top of her head confidently say that she would know how to be able to open the door, so it’s very concerning.”

School Committee Member William Bontempi suggested to Chair Michal Boudreau the incident be on the next meeting’s agenda along with any available documentation and an LPVEC representative in the maintenance field help.

“The way that things played out from what these parents have said would be very upsetting to me as well, so I don’t think it should end here. I think we need a considerable amount of time for this,” Bontempi said.

Vice Chair Sean Kennedy said they

need to come up with a solution.

“Just something that all parents know that if something goes (on), call this number or listen in the bus and come out and something. I mean there has to be a solution that we can provide,” Kennedy said.

Sherrill Caruana agreed on reviewing bus evacuation drills.

“Usually in a school, you just have the kids come out by their class and they walk through the bus and come out and you have two adults helping them jump off from the emergency door,” Caruana said. “But that’s not in real life, so we need to look at how, in real life, we need to help kids get off the bus.”

Boudreau said the district will share more information as it becomes available.

A COMMUNITY GALLERY



Engine 1 was on scene on Jan. 16 with a car versus pole accident at the intersection of Wilbraham Road & Pondview Drive. No injuries were reported, but the pole was damaged. Please use extra caution on the roads as they have been slippery! Photo and caption courtesy of Hampden Fire Department.

Life in &

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

WIL HAM



The view of Wilbraham from atop the ice at Spec Pond is a unique one. Turley photos by Dalton Zbierski.

The town of Hampden congratulates Brig. Gen. Daniel J. Begin for his service. Turley photo by Dalton Zbierski.



Christian and Cody Erskine organized a winter clothing drive with Soule Road The Gray House was filled with gratitude!

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Community Bulletin Board

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... School and the Gray House in Springfield. Thank you for your donations!

On Jan. 18, the Hampden Fire Department responded to this incident on Scantic Road along with the Wilbraham Fire Department, the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services Haz-Mat and Rehab and the Hampden Police Department after a propane truck rolled over. The driver was extricated from the vehicle with minor injuries and refused transport to the hospital. No leak was reported from the truck at the time of the Hampden Fire Department's post on the afternoon of Jan. 18, however, crews stood by until vehicle was safely removed. The call originated at 9:20 a.m. and the scene was still active several hours later.

Photos courtesy of Action Ambulance Service, Inc.

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OBITUARIES

Death Notices

Joyce Lewis
 Died on Jan. 16, 2024
 Services on
 Jan. 26, 2024
 Wilbraham Funeral
 Home

Joyce Lewis

Joyce Lewis, a beloved member of the Wilbraham community, passed away on Jan. 16, 2024, at the age of 83. She was the loving wife of Stephen B. Lewis for 60 years and a devoted mother to Stephen



D. Lewis and Katherine E. Lewis. Joyce was also a proud grandmother to Sage T. Lewis and Taylor J. Scholes. She was a daughter, sister, aunt, wife, mother, grandmother and a dear friend.

Joyce had a fulfilling career, working for the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts in Springfield and previously at Minnechaug Regional High

School's Athletic Department in Wilbraham. She was a dedicated professional, who earned an associate degree from Western Michigan University.

Joyce's memory will be cherished by her family and friends, as well as her brother Gerald D. Reynolds and his wife, Cheryl, as well as Joyce's sister Shirley May Schlereth. She was predeceased by her parents, William F. and Bertha M. Reynolds, as well as her siblings; four brothers; John K., Homer J., J.T., William Noel and her two sisters; Elaine Shields and Geraldene Wheeler.

Calling hours will be held on Friday, Jan. 26 from 4-7 p.m. at Wilbraham Funeral Home, 2551 Boston Road, Wilbraham, MA. Her funeral service will take place on Saturday, Jan. 27 at 11 a.m. at Christ Church Cathedral, 35 Chestnut St., Springfield, MA. Joyce had a deep appreciation for flowers. However, the family would be grateful for charitable donations to the Alzheimer's Association, MA/NH Chapter. Contributions can be sent to 309 Waverley Oaks Road, Waltham, MA 02452. Your support in her memory would be greatly appreciated.

Joyce's kindness and warmth left a lasting impact, and her absence will be deeply felt by all who had the privilege of knowing her.

OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

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

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$225, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph.

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

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

Select Board hears latest steps for regional dispatch

By Kristin Rivers
 Staff Writer
krivers@turley.com

\$42,000 every three years, which is about \$14,000 a year."

DeLong added the price is a fixed amount and would not go up or down, with Gentile later adding that the \$14,000 can be reapplied for every year.

"Once you buy into their solution, it's a fixed price for the life of that amount of storage that you need," DeLong said.

WILBRAHAM - The Select Board learned the latest around regional dispatch on Jan. 22 including the allocation of funds and next steps for regionalization with Belchertown.

IT Director Nate DeLong explained on the allocation of dispatch funds for the server "there's a critical need to upgrade the storage," with issues including the current system going offline and being considered a legacy hybrid storage system using spinning discs and utilizing a front-end solid-state caching system.

"The system was designed prior to Wilbraham's regionalization of dispatch and put in place just prior to integrating Hampden into the system. With the addition of the Hampden police data and remote systems, it's begun to reach its performance limit," DeLong said.

Other issues, DeLong said, include the system taking "approximately 20 minutes to reboot and multiple reboots are required during firmware updates" and the recent expiration of the system's three-year warranty.

"Performing maintenance on the system requires the entire dispatch and police infrastructure to be shut down for at least two to four hours, sometimes more hours, so as a result, we've had to wait to install critical updates," DeLong said.

DeLong added the proposal to fix these issues is replacing the current system with a storage appliance from Pure Storage, which the town of Belchertown already uses.

"The system is built with high availability, it never has to go offline, even when being updated, it will always stay up and running. Also, as part of the support subscription, the vendor can perform these updates for us," DeLong said.

The funding is in the works, with Wilbraham Regional Emergency Communications Center Director Anthony Gentile currently working with the state to identify grant funding.

When Chairman Theresa Goodrich asked DeLong about the cost of the storage system, he said this.

"The unit itself with the first three years of service is \$89,543.39. It renews every three years, and as I mentioned, they replace the hardware every three years," DeLong said. "So, the payment would be



Turley photo by Kristin Rivers

From the left, Wilbraham Regional Emergency Communications Center Director Anthony Gentile, Select Board Chairman Theresa Goodrich, Police Chief Ed Lennon, Vice Chairman Sue Bunnell, IT Director Nate DeLong and Town Administrator Nick Breault discuss the latest on regional dispatch during the Jan. 22 Select Board meeting. Select Board Clerk Michael Squindo attended the meeting via GoTo Meeting this week.

When Michael Squindo asked Gentile when he expects to hear back from the state, he said, "Within the next few days."

DeLong added that the storage system can be installed in the next few weeks.

"This quote is good until the 31st of this month and it is lower than the original quote they gave us because it was their fiscal year ending. When they refreshed the quote at the end of the year they said, 'Hey, we can give you a better deal,' so they dropped about 30% off the price and about 10 grand off the annual cost," DeLong said. "So, taking advantage of this by Jan. 31 would be a significant cost savings just for this fund."

No motion was presented as the item focused on sharing information.

For regionalization with Belchertown, Gentile explained the town is ready to move forward on the plans, with the next step being the boards for the two towns meeting to come up with an assessment.

"Everything is in line for us to go. Thinking of a phase one start would be in the beginning or end of May we would take over their 911 calls. Phase two would be June, middle, end of June we would take over all their non-emergency calls and July 1 would be full 100% dispatching from Wilbraham," Gentile said.

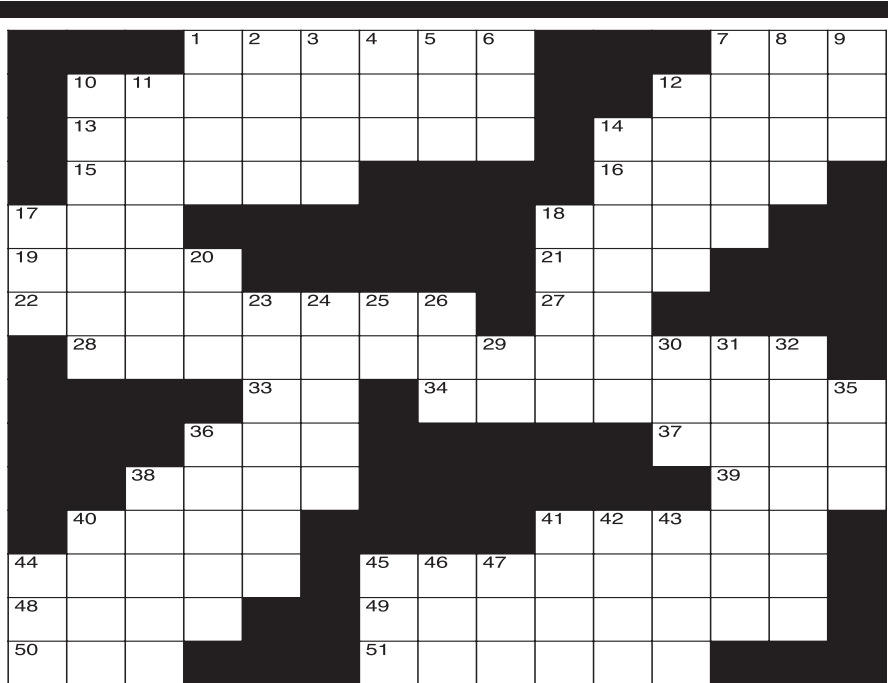
her excellent party skills to make this a memorable "Fat Tuesday"!

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

Saint Cecilia Women's Club February meeting

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

13 at 6 p.m. at 42 Main St. Join us for a fun filled night of games, prized and delicious treats. Kim Lawler will provide



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Winged nut
- 7. ___ Humbug!
- 10. One who sets apart
- 12. Circle above a saint's head
- 13. Unpleasantly loud and harsh
- 14. Expressed pleasure
- 15. Feminine given name
- 16. Company of badgers
- 17. Popular Dodge pickup truck
- 18. Witty sayings
- 19. Leader
- 21. Autonomic nervous system
- 22. Premolar
- 27. Atomic #28
- 28. Holiday decorative item
- 33. Exclamation of surprise
- 34. Rusk or

- cracker
- 36. Returned material authorization (abbr.)
- 37. Scottish or Irish Gaelic language
- 38. Eat
- 39. Marxist economics theory (abbr.)
- 40. Ceases to exist
- 41. Male Arabic name
- 44. Series of ridges on an organ wall
- 45. Places where bees are kept
- 48. One-time Yankees sensation Kevin
- 49. Church office
- 50. Single lens reflex
- 51. Pieces of fibrous tissue

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Classify
- 2. Dismounted
- 3. Produced
- 4. Consumed
- 5. Director Howard
- 6. The products of human creativity
- 7. Thai monetary units
- 8. Away from wind
- 9. Builder's trough
- 10. Relating to Islam
- 11. It can sometimes ache
- 12. Small quantities (Scot.)
- 14. Poisonous plant
- 17. Laugh at
- 18. Vogul
- 20. C. European river
- 23. Type of cat
- 24. Exclamation of disgust
- 25. Stephen King novel
- 26. Without armies
- 29. Expression of sympathy
- 30. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
- 31. Previously
- 32. Illegal drug
- 35. Kiloelectronvolt
- 36. Large, flightless birds
- 38. For smoking
- 40. Binary
- 41. Competition
- 42. Mark resembling an arrow
- 43. Containers
- 44. Root mean square (abbr.)
- 45. Commercials
- 46. I.M. ___, architect
- 47. 007's creator

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Free throws help Falcons hang on for win



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Lylah Jeannotte gets ready to shoot.



Ainsley Holden moves the ball around the perimeter.



Elizabeth Woytowicz looks to make a pass after crossing midcourt.

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WILBRAHAM—After trailing Valley Wheel league rival Minnechaug by almost twenty points two minutes into the second half, the Chicopee Comp girls' varsity basketball team battled back during the final 14 minutes of the contest.

Led by junior Taryn Carriveau, who

scored 20 of her game-high 22 points during the second half, the Lady Colts closed the gap to four points with one minute remaining in regulation.

With the aid of three free throws, the Lady Falcons managed to hang on for a 48-41 home win, last Thursday night.

"We battled back, and we never gave up during the second half," said Chicopee Comp head coach Tony Couture. "We

just gave them too big of a lead in the first half."

The home victory improved Minnechaug's overall record to 9-2.

"I thought we played with a lot of energy during the first half," said Minnechaug head coach Ryan Minns. "They (Chicopee Comp) did make it a very interesting game in the fourth quarter. They deserve a lot of credit. I'm expecting another hard

fought battle when we play them again at their gym in a couple of weeks."

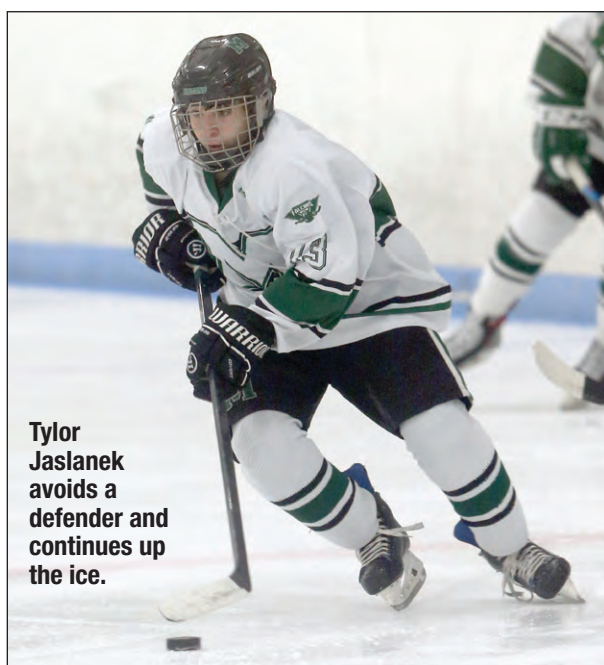
The Lady Falcons won their seventh game in a row since suffering a 55-23 loss at Springfield Central on December 19. Their only other loss this season was at home against Northampton (41-34) on December 12.

Please see **FALCONS**, page 12

Falcons run into tough opponents



Enzo Hrycay makes his way up the ice under pressure.



Tylor Jaslanek avoids a defender and continues up the ice.



Derek Semanie takes the momentum and head out of the defensive zone.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Jake Klakkotskiy tries to outskate his opponent.



Brayden O'Sullivan chases down a loose puck.

WEST SPRINGFIELD – After edging East Longmeadow to start 2024, Minnechaug hockey has run into some tough competition, falling in four of their last five games. Their only win during the past week was a 4-2 triumph over Amherst Regional. The Falcons suffered losses against Longmeadow, Algonquin, Marlborough and West Springfield. They are now 6-6 on the season with six games remaining in the regular season.



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Andrew Grasso sends a long pass up the court.



CJ Socha looks to overcome three defenders to make a shot.



Nick Disa goes for the bank shot.

Slow start hurts Falcons

CHICOPEE – Last Monday night, Chicopee Comprehensive boys basketball rode early momentum and defeated Minnechaug 59-40. The Colts had a 16-5 advantage early on thanks to some crafty shooting and a couple of treys that broke the scoring open. The Falcons offense improved later in the game, but could not overcome the early deficit as Minnechaug dropped to 6-5 on the year. The Colts are an impressive 9-2 and have already qualified for the state tournament. Tineus McCluster had 22 points to lead all scorers. Minnechaug was led by Nick Disa with 10 points.



Nate Pace holds the ball looking around to make a pass.



Gus Pryzbyl holds the ball at the top of the arc.

FALCONS from page 11

When the Lady Colts (6-4) visited the Minnechaug Regional gymnasium last February, they celebrated a 54-46 victory. Carriveau led the way offensively with 15 points in that game.

Other than Carriveau, who has scored more than 750 points during her outstanding varsity basketball career, no other Comp player scored more than five points in the first meeting of this season between the two squads.

“Taryn is a great basketball player,” Couture said. “She put us on her back in tonight’s game. We had trouble handling their defense in the first half.”

The two Minnechaug double figure scorers were sophomore Kelly Cronin, who scored 11 of her team-leading 13 points before halftime, and senior Layla Jeannotte (10 points).

“We’ve been on a winning streak during the past couple of weeks and this is a very good win for us,” Jeannotte said. “Comp is one of the better teams in our league and they beat us here last year.”

The duo of sophomore Elizabeth Woytowicz (5 points) and junior Ava Ofarcik (7 points) combined to score nine points for Minnechaug during the first five minutes of the opening quarter.

The Lady Pacers broke the ice when senior Mariah Rodriguez hit a jumper in the lane with 2:55 left in the first quarter. It was Rodriguez’s only basket of the game.

Then two free throws by Comp senior Marley Makowski (2 points) made the score 11-4 before sophomore Ava Manning (3 points) buried a 3-pointer from the left corner pushing the Lady Falcons lead into double digits (14-4) for the first time.

Carriveau’s only points of the first half was a lay-up with 6:20 left in the second quarter reducing the Lady Colts deficit to 14-6.

With the help of two 3-pointers from senior Jayla Comes, the home team held a 26-11 halftime lead.

Two minutes into the second half, Minnechaug was leading 30-12 following a Jeannotte inside hoop.

Comp’s comeback began with a 3-pointer from the left corner by senior Natalie Fournier (3 points).

Then Carriveau scored seven of her team’s next nine points, which sliced the Lady Colts deficit to 34-24 en-



Kelly Cronin passes on the run.



Ava Ofarcik takes a jump shot.

tering the final eight minutes of the contest.

The fourth quarter began with Cronin burying a 3-pointer from the right corner. Ofarcik added a free throw before a Jeannotte lay-up increased the lead to 40-24 with a little more than five minutes remaining in regulation.

With 3:28 left, Comp was trailing by only ten points again, as Carriveau made back-to-back 3-pointers from the top of the key. She also made a pair of free throws.

A little more than a minute later, a Cronin lay-up increased the Lady Falcons lead to 45-34.

Comp responded by scoring the next seven points.

An old fashion three point play and two more free throws by Carriveau made the score 45-41 with 58.3 seconds left in regulation.

Minnechaug sealed the deal when Cronin made one free throw and Comes, who missed a couple of games with an injury, made two more shots from the charity strip.

The Lady Falcons will be looking to sweep the season series against the Lady Colts when they visit Herbert H. Curry Gymnasium on Feb. 5.



Turley photos by Kristin Rivers
A participant works to open a jar of dog food during the virtual dementia demonstration at Wilbraham Town Hall on Jan. 22.



Stephanie Zelazo, director of community relations at Orchard Valley at Wilbraham, demonstrating a task of sorting kitchen utensils during the virtual dementia demonstration event at Wilbraham Town Hall.



Heather Jagodowski, memory care specialist at Benchmark Senior Living, and Stephanie Zelazo, director of community relations at Orchard Valley at Wilbraham, smile for a photo during the virtual dementia demonstration at Wilbraham Town Hall.



Heather Jagodowski, memory care specialist at Benchmark Senior Living, talks with participants after they took part in the virtual dementia demonstration event at Wilbraham Town Hall.



Submitted photos Stephanie Zelazo
A wide shot of participants taking part in the virtual dementia demonstration at Wilbraham Town Hall on Jan. 22.



Submitted photos Stephanie Zelazo
A close-up shot of participants working on varying tasks during the virtual dementia demonstration event at Wilbraham Town Hall.

Virtual dementia demonstration educates community

The event took place at Wilbraham Town Hall

By Kristin Rivers
 Staff Writer
 krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM – The community visited Town Hall from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Jan. 22 for a virtual dementia demonstration called “Dementia Live.”

The program is part of the town’s dementia-friendly initiative.

During the demonstration, participants participated in five tasks and experienced what it’s like living with dementia by wearing gloves replicating arthritis, headphones replicating varying loud noises and specialized eyeglasses replicating macular degeneration.

Going around a table in five

to seven-minute time blocks, the participants worked on tasks including sorting kitchen utensils, folding, hanging or buttoning a shirt, tying shoelaces, taking a pill at a specific time, putting dog food in a bowl and more.

Afterward, participants shared their experiences with Memory Care Specialist Heather Jagodowski of Benchmark Senior Living and Stephanie Zelazo, director of Community Relations at Orchard Valley of Wilbraham.

Jagodowski said participants felt anxiety and confusion during the demonstration but added that it gave them a better understanding of dementia.

“I think a lot of people didn’t expect it to cause as much anxiety as it did for them. I also had two parents who have children with autism who said it reminded them of some of the sensory overload that their children deal with, with autism,” Jagodowski said.

Jagodowski expressed excitement

at the community, including residents and town employees, participating in the demonstration.

“I get so excited over it because I feel like this is such a disease that people don’t understand, so the more outreach and education I can do, the better,” Jagodowski said.

Jagodowski added how many people are living with dementia, including friends and neighbors, which residents may not be aware of. She said they can live happy and successful lives “with the right tools and the right support.”

Offering the program at the Town Hall also brings more support to people who need it and an opportunity to learn.

“I talked to the city clerk and the tax collector, and they’ve mentioned to me, ‘We see changes in some of our citizens and we bring that to the senior center, and they outreach to those folks to see if they need any help,’”

Jagodowski said. “So, I think it’s just wonderful for a community like Wilbraham to be together, wanting to learn more about this and wanting to help other citizens.”

Jagodowski explained she’s worked in dementia care for 15 years, getting into the work when she took care of a man with dementia, enjoying spending time with him and the activities they did together, including painting birdhouses and squirrel feeders and feeding the animals.

After finishing a second job teaching children, she went into programming for people with dementia, becoming director of a memory care community and later working with the Alzheimer’s Association.

“It’s very rewarding for me,” Jagodowski said.

By participating in the demonstration, Jagodowski hopes the community learned how “we have to treat people living with

dementia with dignity and respect, but we should treat everybody with dignity and respect.”

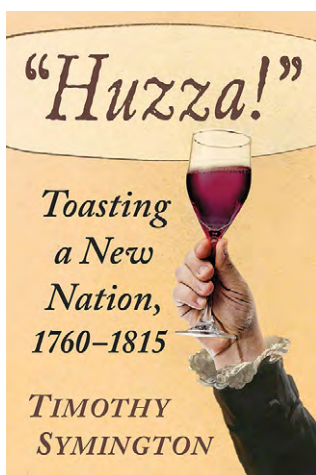
“This initiative for the town, I think, is not only about being dementia-friendly but maybe being more friendly to people with any type of disability. We really don’t know what someone else might be experiencing, especially when it comes to something like dementia,” Jagodowski said.

Jagodowski expressed gratitude to the participants and encouraged residents to attend future demonstrations when they’re offered, with plans for a special demonstration for the fire and police departments in the works.

“I want to thank them for coming and for being such good sports and I think, most of all, for being advocates for people that live with dementia,” Jagodowski said.

Symington to present book ‘Huzza! Toasting a New Nation, 1760-1815’ on Feb. 12

WILBRAHAM – The Wilbraham Public Library welcomes local author Timothy Symington for a presentation on Monday, Feb. 12 at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Symington will discuss his book, “Huzza! Toasting a New Nation, 1760-1815” published by McFarland Books. Raising a glass to toast someone at a wedding or birthday is a familiar and usually informal occurrence, but at one time it was a carefully orchestrated ritual. They were planned, revised, given at an event, and then printed in newspapers. Americans learned who was or was not toasted for early national celebrations: King George III, George Washington, the Fourth of July, Washington’s birthday, Jefferson’s election, or military victories. During the tumultuous years of partisan fighting, toasts were used to



spread or attack certain ideologies. The toasts became glimpses into what Americans honored at specific moments in the years from the beginning of the American Revolution to the end of the War of 1812. This book is a history of the early American republic viewed through its many toasts, which were raised and published throughout the new nation. As one of the earliest forms of social media, they offer a unique lens to view American history and early popular opinion.

Timothy Symington is a scholar of American History and is a frequent contributor to the Journal of the American Revolution. Please register for this program through the library’s event calendar at www.wilbrahamlibrary.org.



Well, winter has figuratively and literally arrived, and to look at the site of the new Senior Center Building, one might think that there is no work being done. Nothing could be further from the truth!! Even though the outside paving, curbing and landscaping may be covered in a blanket of white, inside finishing touches are being accomplished daily. At the Jan. 9 Building Committee meeting, updates were reported on sprinklers, ceiling installation, interior lights, bathroom floors and fixtures, elevator and first floor moldings. The transformer and switch gear, which are two articles that would have seriously delayed the building’s occupation, are finally enroute to the site and should arrive and be ready for installation within the next two weeks.

The Committee was informed that a \$100,000 earmark grant from the

state has been reduced to \$50,000. This has put a “chink” in our budget, but thanks to the generosity of the Friends of the Wilbraham Seniors, funds are available that have allowed for the ordering of furniture, exercise equipment and pool tables for the upstairs activity area. Kitchen supplies and equipment is also being purchased and will be available on opening day. Though winter can be long and hard in New England, a Spring grand opening looks like it will be achievable! And that is right around the corner!!

Watch this space for details, and as always, feel free to send questions/comments to seniorinfo2021@gmail.com or leave a voicemail at 596-2800 ext. 315.

Linda Tatko Cooper RN for Wilbraham Senior Center Building Committee

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Random Acts of Kindness

By Barb Turcotte

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

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

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

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

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

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

Angel knew that her plan would also help

Mary, who so unselfishly was helping during this difficult situation, so she began contacting family and friends asking for their support to create a memorable Christmas for Grace. They, knowing her, jumped right in to help as elves to create Angel's vision. Angel was overwhelmed when she received well over 20 responses offering their help with amazing items and cash donations. Mary was also astonished when Angel showed up bearing all kinds of gifts. Angel included a card with the names of all the donors who had made this Christmas vision become a true miracle. Angel has been in contact with Mary since Christmas and she explained how much she and Grace have enjoyed playing the board games included. How wonderful that they weren't just put on a shelf, but that the true meaning of sharing is that Grace and her aunt share quality time together. Grace made a beautiful thank you card for Angel thanking her and everyone for the incredible Christmas they'd created for her!

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

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

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

CAMPUS NOTES

Bridgewater State University Dean's List

BRIDGEWATER - The following local residents were named to the Dean's List for the fall 2023 semester at Bridgewater State University.

Hampden: Nyasia Adames
Wilbraham: Adrianna Britton, Sophie Dobosz, Taylor Fahey, Brennan Gravanda, Jack O'Toole and Bridget Reilly.

Cedarville University Dean's Honors List

CEDARVILLE, Ohio - Andrew Demos, of Hampden, was named to the Dean's Honor List at Cedarville University for Fall 2023. This

recognition requires the student to obtain a 3.75 GPA or higher for the semester and carry a minimum of 12 credit hours.

Springfield College Dean's List Students

SPRINGFIELD - Springfield College recognizes Dean's List Students from Hampden and Wilbraham for academic excellence for the 2023 Fall Semester.

Hampden

Kaelin Cerasuolo was named to the dean's list. Cerasuolo has a primary major of Health Sci / Pre-PT.

Carly DeGray was named to the dean's list. DeGray has a primary major of Accounting.

Mary-Elizabeth Hrycay was named to the dean's list. Hrycay has a primary major of Health Science.

Connor Joyce was named to the dean's list. Joyce has a primary major of Exer Sci / Applied ES.

Wilbraham

Francesca Bongiorno was named to the dean's list. Bongiorno has a primary major of Health Care Management.

Sarah Champagne was named to the dean's list. Champagne has a primary major of Health Sci / Pre-PA.

Emma Delamarter was named to the dean's list. Delamarter has a primary major of Health Sci / Pre-PT.

Olivia Dragon was named to the dean's list. Dragon has a primary major of Health Science.

Franklin Graziano was named to the dean's list. Graziano has a primary major of Finance.

Frank Gulluni was named to the dean's list. Gulluni has a primary major of Sport Management.

Abigail Hotaling was named to the dean's list. Hotaling has a primary major of Physical Education.

Olivia Long was named to the dean's list. Long has a primary major of Sport Management.

John Manning was named to the dean's list. Manning has a primary major of Business Management.

Joe Manning was named to the dean's list. Manning has a primary major of Sport Management.

Emma Robinson was named to the dean's list. Robinson has a primary major of Health Sci / Pre-PA.

Jaclin Robinson was named to the dean's list. Robinson has a primary major of Psychology.

Madison Roy was named to the dean's list. Roy has a primary major of Health Sci / Pre-PA.

Maggie Skorka was named to the dean's list. Skorka has a primary major of Education.

Zavier Villanueva was named to the dean's list. Villanueva has a primary major of Integrative Studies.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Town of Hampden
Notice of Public Hearing
The Hampden Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, February 14, 2024, at 6:30 PM** in the Town House, 625 Main Street, Hampden, MA on the application of Vincent and Meggie DeCesare for a Special Permit under Section 6.1, 6.11 (1) of the Hampden Zoning Bylaw to allow the construction of a private garage which exceeds, in aggregate area, a square footage which is more than one half (1/2) the ground floor area of the main dwelling including any attached garage, at the DeCesare residence located at 17 Potash Hill Lane. Information related to this application is on file in the Town Clerk's Office and is available for review by the public during normal business hours. For the Board, Madison Pixley, Chair, Hampden Planning Board. 01/25, 02/01/2024

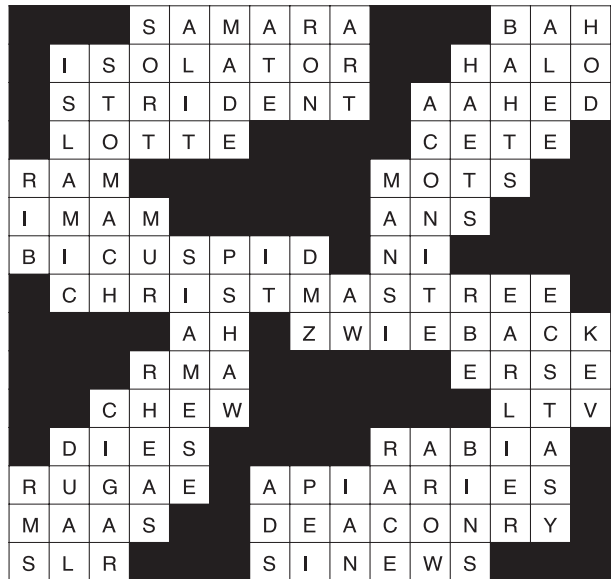
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Docket No. HD24P0037EA
Estate of:
Sarah D. Howard
Date of Death: 12/01/2023
CITATION ON
PETITION FOR
FORMAL
ADJUDICATION
To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **John C. Howard, Jr. of Tolland, CT** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.
The Petitioner requests that: **John C. Howard, Jr. of Tolland, CT** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.
IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00

a.m. on the return day of 02/06/2024.
This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.
UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.
WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of

this Court.
Date: January 08, 2024
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
01/25/2024
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD22P0795EA
Estate of:
Donna Christine Posley
Date of Death: 03/19/2021
CITATION ON
PETITION FOR
ORDER OF COMPLETE SETTLEMENT
A Petition for **Order of Complete Settlement** has been filed by **William C Posley of N. Hollywood CA** requesting that the court enter a formal Decree of Complete Settlement including a determination of testacy and heirs at law and other such relief as may be requested in the Petition.
IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right

to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 02/12/2024.
This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an

affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.
WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M. Hyland, First Justice of this Court.
Date: January 08, 2024
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BOOK YOUR NEXT FUNCTION WITH US!

See our website for our Banquet & Catering Menu
lacucinahampden.com
 Mon.-Thurs. 3-9pm, Fri. & Sat. 11:30am-10pm & Sun. 11:30am-9pm
LOUNGE OPEN & PIZZA 7 DAYS
BAR OPEN LATE!

ROUTE 20 Bar & Grille
 EST. 2016

Ask About Our Customer Loyalty Program!
 JOIN US **Valentine's Week**
 WE'LL HAVE **SWEET** dinner specials and **LIVE** music!
 (NO RESERVATIONS REQUIRED)

JOIN US FOR THE BIG GAME
 Sunday, Feb. 11th
Pre-Game Tail Party!
 Specially Priced Apps
 2-6pm in the bar

LIVE MUSIC!
 Thursday 1/25 Frank Serafino
 Friday 1/26 Luther
 Saturday 1/27 The Storytellers
Meet up with friends at Route 20!

SERVING LUNCH Thursday - Sunday 11:30
BRUNCH Sundays 11:30-2:30 PLUS OUR REGULAR MENU UNTIL 8PM

\$15 PRIME RIB NIGHT EVERY TUESDAY
 Dine In Only • While Supplies Last

3 COURSE MEAL \$25 EVERY WEDNESDAY NIGHT

HAPPY HOUR THURSDAYS 4-7:30PM!
 Specially Priced Apps & Live Music

\$17 STEAK N' BREW EVERY SUNDAY NIGHT!

2341 Boston Rd., (Rt. 20), Wilbraham, MA
413.279.2020
route20barandgrille.com
 SERVING: TUES. & WED. 4-9PM
 THURS.-SAT. 11:30AM-9:30PM • SUN. 11:30AM-8PM
 WITH EXTENDED BAR HOURS EVERY NIGHT
 RESERVATIONS ACCEPTED FOR PARTIES OF 6 OR MORE **KENO**