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FEBRUARY 20, 2025

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A group photo of some of the attendees. From left to right: Library Page Gracen Moriarty-dressed as Harley Quinn, Eva Breau, Emma Lewis and Miyan Tessier.

## TEENS have villainous good time

By Hannah Yeasley  
Correspondent

HAMPDEN - The library hosted a Teen "Villaintine's" Party on Saturday, Feb. 8, with the party set up in the Sheila R. Flynn Teen Center and kicked off at 11 a.m. and until 12:30 p.m.

Anyone in grades six through 12 was invited to drop in any time after 11, hang out, and celebrate the schemiest villains around.

With a series of themed activities, a Disney villain song playlist playing in the background and the invitation to dress as their favorite villain, attendees were in high spirits for this holiday party.

Young Adult Librarian Maxine Girard organized the event, citing her desire to do something interesting for the teens in the community.

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Turley photos by Hannah Yeasley  
Jake (left) and Kayla (right) Vanderleeden sit at the zombie doll making station, each at different stages of the building process.

## Artisans host Big Art Show of Small Works



Turley photos by Kristin Rivers  
Joe Burger stands with his painting "Old Dogs" which was made by colored pencil.

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - The Scantic River Artisans kicked off a new year of art shows with the Big Art Show of Small Works on Feb. 8 and 9.

The two-day event featured a variety of watercolor, oil, colored pencil, pastel and acrylic paintings, photography, scratchboard, pottery, handcrafted jewelry, decorative arts and sculpted metal pieces.

Also, a drawing to win an original painting from Nan Hurlburt.

New to this show was the debut of artwork from students at Minnechaug Regional High School, featuring several ceramic and colored pencil painting pieces.

The art show was sponsored by Affordable Waste Solutions, Blick Art Materials, La Cucina, Monson Savings Bank and the Friends of Hampden Senior Citizens.

SRA President Laura Salerno explained the parameters for the artwork had to be 10 inches or smaller, expressing excitement at a lot of new artwork this year.

"I love small works. I think when you have small works, a lot of artists pay a little bit more attention. They don't get lost in a big canvas and get bored, so some of these pieces are just stunning," Salerno said.

Salerno was ecstatic with the turnout.

"I've seen a lot of new faces and that's really our goal is to get new faces. I've seen some young people coming through to see the artwork and, really, that creates a culture and isn't that really the idea?" Salerno said. "That's what artwork does. It creates culture and intrigue and amusement and beauty and that's really what we're supposed to be doing out there."

She was also encouraged by it.

"It's good publicity for the town, it's good publicity for the senior center, it's good publicity for our artists," Salerno said. "It's just an overall good, happy vibe here and that's what we're trying to portray. So, the more we get involved, the more they get involved."

Kyle Garron, a photography

Please see **ART SHOW**, page 13

## Wilbraham United Church holds Mother-Son Dance

By Noelle Hisgen  
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - On Feb. 8, the Wilbraham United Church held its annual Mother-Son Dance for families in the Wilbraham and Hampden communities.

Many areas in the church were used for the event: The nursery became a photo booth, the basement became a cafe, and the Fellowship Hall was used as a dance floor. They were able to, also, enjoy music played by the DJ, Shawn Santanello.

People were everywhere in each room, actively participating in the activities that were supplied. A game of tag and a conga line that left the dance room added to the fun festivities that night.

The event was entirely organized by the church's Discipleship Committee, which were inspired to do a Mother-Son dance after recognizing various Father-Daughter

Turley photos by Noelle Hisgen  
Aurora Pierangelo Frias and her son Oliver attended the Mother-Son Dance on Feb. 8.



Dances in Western Mass. To celebrate mothers and their sons, they started the dance at the church.

Aurora Pierangelo Frias and her son Oliver, a kindergarten student at Mile Tree Elementary School, were in attendance. Pierangelo Frias is on the church's Discipleship Committee.

"I like this event, in particular, because it's a great way for moms and sons to get together. Sometimes we don't always get to have the quality time with our sons that we get with our daughters," Pieran-

gelo Frias said.

Patricia Colkos, another member of the Discipleship Committee, welcomed families in for the dance at the registration table.

"It really brings the community in and gets to see no other in this immediate area, there's no other mother and son events. There's a lot of father and daughter. So, this gives an opportunity for celebration of mothers and sons," Colkos said.

Along with Colkos, Pa-

Please see **DANCE**, page 8

## Theatre Guild gearing up for 'Dial M for Murder'

Tickets on sale now

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
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HAMPDEN - The Theatre Guild of Hampden is kicking off its milestone 20th year with its upcoming production of "Dial M for Murder."

The production will be directed by Stuart W. Gamble, with Karolina Kopczynski as Stage Manager, set construction by David Carlson and costumes by Karolina Kopczynski and Stuart W. Gamble.

The cast features Andy Price as Tony Wendice, Katie Whalen as Margot Wendice for the evening

performances, Taylor Raucher as Margot Wendice for the matinee performances, David Martin as Max Halliday, Brad Shepard as Inspector Hubbard, Nathan Medlock as Captain Lesgate and Ben Bump as the offstage voices.

Based on Frederick Knott's (author of Wait Until Dark) thriller and adapted into the Alfred Hitchcock classic film starring Grace Kelly, this suspenseful tale of deception and intrigue has more twists and turns than a Grand Prix race.

All the performances will take place at Thornton W. Burgess Middle School on Feb. 28, March 1, March 2, March 7, March 8 and

Please see **THEATRE**, page 8

## Hampden marks Valentine's Day with luncheon

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - Love was in the air during the Valentine's Day Luncheon at the senior center on Feb. 14.

Throughout the afternoon, attendees enjoyed a delicious

Please see **LUNCH**, page 4



Turley photos by Kristin Rivers  
Volunteers Caryn Greco and Claudia Kapinos join Pat and Paul McDonald for a group photo during the Valentine's Day Luncheon on Feb. 14.



# School Committee meets with town boards on regional agreement

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - The School Committee met with the Select Board and Hampden's Selectboard on Feb. 5 to discuss proposed amendments to the regional agreement.

No decision or vote was made as this was a general discussion.

Superintendent Dr. John Provost directed everyone to his latest memo from Feb. 3 showing the latest version of the proposed modifications.

"At this point, you'll note that many of the changes that are being proposed here are changes that are required to bring the agreement into conformity with regulatory or statutory changes that have taken place since the last update," Provost said. "The actual part I think the School Committee is seeking to modify is somewhat modest as compared to the rest, but when you change an agreement, you have to change the whole thing so that it conforms to current laws and regulations."

Provost also noted the several parties involved in the regional agreement which are the School Committee, both towns and the commissioner "and one of the things that the commissioner will require is that the agreement is up to date with respect to regulations."

## The Discussion

After reviewing each proposed modification, the biggest highlight was about grades six through 12 attending schools in the district designated by the committee and capital cost concerns.

After School Committee Vice Chair Sean Kennedy shared he's heard from parents on this item and

under the middle school section about "residents of member towns in grades six through eight shall attend schools within the district as designated by the committee," Hampden Selectboard Chair Don Davenport asked if Wilbraham Middle School is made a regional school, "you're asking Hampden to pay a portion of capital costs, right?"

"Why would we pay capital costs on a building we don't own, and we have no say in, essentially? And if Wilbraham decides or if the region decides to close that school in five or 10 years, what's our investment?" Davenport said. "How would I explain that to the town meeting?"

Select Board Clerk Marc Ducey thought, "You would have as much say as you would have at Minnechaug."

"You don't own Minnechaug either," Ducey said.

Davenport believes that the regional agreement needs to be changed "so that the School Committee has an opportunity to put kids where they need to be to hold the overcrowding."

"But, I can see that as--I don't want to get Shakespearean--but that could be the death of Macbeth here," Davenport said.

Ducey said how "he wants this to pass as much as everybody else," but at the same time "it needs to be fair to everybody."

"For the past seven years or so, I think Wilbraham has really been generous. We haven't asked for any money except we had to contribute to this building or add to this building, and Hampden students have had--pretty much--a free pass," Ducey said. "And now, as we move forward, we're just saying help us share in the cost for the maintenance of it.

We're not asking for any money to join the building or anything else."

After a brief back and forth between Ducey and Davenport, Davenport stressed what his biggest point was.

"All I'm saying is I'd like to figure out an explanation to stand up in front of 400 people at the town meeting and say, 'This is a good deal because your kids go there and we should do this,'" Davenport said.

Select Board Chair Sue Bunnell shared the WMS building was being maintained, including a new roof and boilers, and the town was "waiting to see how the district decides to portion the shares of addressing the mold issue."

"So, we are looking at things that have to happen from this point forward and I think it's completely reasonable--and I had spoken to your Advisory group and so forth--that what we're asking for is for you to participate as fully on that as you have with your children being in the building," Bunnell said. "I think if our positions were reversed, we would have some of the same questions but I would be curious how you would frame it otherwise."

Davenport replied that would be something that would need to be figured out.

Bunnell also brought up how if WMS is a regional school, "it needs to not be Wilbraham Middle School."

"It needs to be Hampden-Wilbraham Regional Middle School or whatever the appropriate change to that is, and I think that's part of the message that needs to be very much a piece of all the ways in which we share this information out in both towns," Bunnell said.

Bunnell later brought up how

DESE told them \$5,000 "is a threshold for capital."

"That's a change to the lease agreement that we probably need to have some additional conversation about. I mean, is that going to change across all of the buildings that are leased by the district because that would change the equation about how a lot of capital costs are proportioned," Bunnell said.

Provost clarified how it's a revision of the entire agreement and not a revision of just one building.

"So it would," Provost said.

"So, all of those leases would need to be revised," Bunnell said.

School Committee Member Michael Tirabassi then asked if the committee did not have the option to put \$25,000 in the regional agreement.

"Because I could foresee it getting a lot more complicated. There's going to be many capital costs--it's going to be much longer--because he's exactly correct. A computer plus a projector is going to go over \$5,000," Tirabassi said.

Provost replied, "We can ask that question."

On how to address voters in Hampden, Town Administrator Nick Breault suggested a point to bring up would be this.

"I think the way that it could be done is to say, 'Look, we're already committed to paying a 20% portion for the operating costs going forward. Wouldn't it seem fair to commit to paying 20% costs--or whatever is agreed to--of the capital costs going forward on the building,'" Breault said. "Because if there's nothing in there then I find it difficult for the Select Board in Wilbraham to go forward and say, 'Well, we're reimbursed 80/20 on the operating, but

all of the costs for the building will remain the responsibility of the taxpayers of Wilbraham, even though students from Hampden are enjoying that same privilege of going to that school..."

After School Committee Member Timothy Collins stressed not postponing maintenance and prioritizing the health and safety of the students that go to WMS and Kennedy offered additional thoughts, School Committee Member Rich Rediker, a resident of Hampden, thought it was "a very fair deal what Wilbraham's asking for."

"Your comment was what do I tell people we get for it and we get the kids get to go to school there without buying the building, without paying a lease to go to the building, not paying rent to Wilbraham to go to the building," Rediker said. "I mean, it seems only fair that you pay part of the maintenance. Somebody says you can live in my house and you're going to pay for some of the improvements going forward if you're going to have a piece of it rent-free--living there rent-free--so it just seems that we're getting a good deal."

When Davenport asked if the plan was for this to be presented to the town meeting, Provost said, from his perspective, "That's one of the things we're trying to figure out tonight."

"To me, it all comes down to this one paragraph. I think the rest of it--whether it's \$5,000, \$25,000--no one going to care about that," Provost said. "But, if we can't figure out a solution that works for both towns--for the middle school--then we're stuck."

## Wilbraham Select Board prepares for challenging budget season

Selectman Ducey said it's the most difficult one in 10 years

By Dalton Zbierski  
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - The Monday night meeting of the Wilbraham Select Board on Feb. 10 came to pass quickly, but a large chunk of the discussion was spent focusing on the town's budget.

Town Administrator Nick Breault said there will be multiple opportunities for town residents to see where things stand before the Annual Town Meeting this spring.

"I haven't spoken with the chair of the Finance Committee yet, but I think I'm going to go make the town administrator/Select Board presentation maybe on Feb. 25 or possibly the following week on the first Wednesday of March. I think that'd be more effective," Breault said. "Beyond that, the chair of Finance also suggested that they would like to have another budget meeting much like they did at the senior center."

Members of the Select Board agreed it would be a sound strategy to seek more public information regarding the budget. Among them was Clerk Marc Ducey.

"I think this budget is one of the more difficult ones I've seen in at least a decade. At least it's been a while," Ducey said.

Ducey added that he still doesn't know what the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District's final number will be, but he hopes to hear more soon. He believes the School Committee will make its vote in early March but expressed that there may have been confusion with the timeline.

"I think they had their calculations wrong," Ducey said. "They were saying it had to be 45 business days prior to town meeting. It's 45 calendar days. They were planning on voting I

think on March 6 or something like that."

Ducey noted that the town's current budget number does not reflect the school district's wants or needs, so it's currently off by a lot. Ducey was enthusiastic that it would be a "really good idea" to do a budget meeting, or meetings, with town residents.

"I think we're going to need to make some difficult decisions," Ducey said. "And I think we're going to need to educate the public as much as possible to understand what their wants and desires are because I'm not sure how we get all this done within the confines of what we've done in the past."

Ducey said that he didn't want to sound like an "alarmist," but he reiterated that there is a reality here that the town has not experienced in a decade or more.

"Education is important," Ducey said. "Hearing people's concerns on what their true needs are and, of course, what their wants are is important. And [learning] what they're willing to pay for."

Ducey did note that there might be a solution that could be worked out, but he wasn't in full support of it himself.

"All of this can be solved by increased taxes. I'm not sure that's a good answer. I shouldn't say 'I'm not sure.' I don't think that's a good answer," Ducey said.

## Building Utilization Committee Now Complete

In an update on the Building Utilization Committee appointments, a representative from the Capital Planning Committee was, also, officially recommended.

Capital Planning Committee Member Paul Kukulka was appointed to a one-year term through June 30, 2026, thereby completing the nine-member committee; comprised of Kukulka, Finance Committee Member Jennifer Leydon, Planning Board Chair James Rooney, Britany Meece, Kevin Rothschild-Shea, Jeff Smith, Megan Eishen, Brad Senft and Stanley Soja.

## Theatre Guild of Hampden announces 'Lost in Yonkers' auditions

HAMPDEN - The Theatre Guild of Hampden is excited to announce their Fall (November) 2025 stage production of *Lost in Yonkers*.

This Pulitzer Prize-winning play by Neil Simon takes place in the 1940's and follows the life of Jay Kurnitz, a teenage boy sent with his younger brother, Arty, to live with his grandmother in Yonkers. It explores themes of abbreviated childhood, war and generational trauma.

Try-outs for the show will take place on Sunday March 2 at 2 p.m. and Wednesday March 5 at 7 p.m. in the Hampden Town Hall 625 Main St Hampden Mass. downstairs in the Melville Room. Tryouts will be the for the following roles:

Jay: He is fifteen "and a half" years old. The play tells his coming-of-age story.

Arty: Jay's younger brother, he is 13 "and a half" years old.

Bella: Jay's aunt, late 30's to early 40's. She

is sometimes a bit off-center and is mentally challenged, but despite this she is also loving and protective of her nephews.

Louie: Jay's flamboyant, jovial uncle, in his late 30s, who comes to live with the family when he is hiding from the local mob. He works as a "bag-man" for the mob.

Grandma Kurnitz: Jay's grandmother. A very old and stern woman, an immigrant from Germany.

Eddie: Jay's middle-aged father. After the death of his wife, he is forced to send his two sons to live with their grandmother, while he repays his large financial debts.

Gert: Jay's aunt, and Grandma's daughter. She is a very interesting addition to the family.

Performances to take place Nov. 7-9 2025 and Nov. 14-16, 2025

For more information, please contact Rick Rubin 413-250-8108 or rrubin1@hotmail.com.

## Wilbraham DPW seeks plow contractors

WILBRAHAM - The Department of Public Works is seeking plowing contractors to assist with town wide plowing.

If you are interested in plowing for the Town of Wilbraham, Massachusetts, USA please contact Wilbraham DPW 413-596-2800 x208 for more information.



## Essential Home Fire Electrical Safety Tips

WILBRAHAM/HAMPDEN - As the frequency of home fires caused by electrical issues continues to rise, it's crucial for homeowners to prioritize electrical safety.

Firstly, always plug major appliances such as refrigerators, stoves, washers, and dryer directly into a wall outlet. Using extension cords for these appliances is strongly discouraged.

For smaller appliances, remember to unplug them when they are not in use. Be mindful of power strips; do not overload them and choose those with internal overload protection for added safety. Lastly, be cautious about where you place cords.

Avoid running them under carpets or rugs, as this can lead to damage or pinching, increasing the risk of electrical fires.

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## The Road to Kindergarten 2025-2026

Parents and Guardians please join us for **The Road to Kindergarten.** This program will address Kindergarten Readiness, Screening, Curriculum, and a typical Kindergarten day.

**Date: Wednesday, March 5, 2025**  
**Time: 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.**  
**Location: Minnechaug Regional High School Auditorium**

*(In the event of a snow day, it will be rescheduled to Thursday, March 6, 2025.)*



# Finance Committee reviews Facilities Dept. budget

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - The Finance Committee met with Facilities Director Sam Boyd to review the Facilities Department budget on Feb. 12.

Boyd explained he would be able to go within zero percent across the board this year by rebidding services and cover increases for materials and labor, adding the budget with the senior center "is working out beautifully."

His biggest need and project was for Memorial School.

"I am asking for an increase in funding at Memorial School because, as I've shared with you before, the amount of activity there has increased ten-fold plus there, over the winter, especially, there," Boyd said. "There's hundreds of people visiting and I still have a budget that was set when it was softball after Cathedral. We make due, but I'm not able to keep the building up to the standard of the rest of our buildings."

Jennifer Leydon asked Boyd about the contract with the custodians.

"Who was that outsourced to?" Leydon said.

"That is outsourced to KleenRite. They are out of Ludlow," Boyd said.

Leydon next asked this.

"Just curious if any of the policy changes that we're seeing currently are affecting their funnel of labor and if have they communicated anything with you?" Leydon said.

Boyd replied he had not heard anything yet.

"That very well could impact things as I go out into the pool and start talking to the companies. But thus far, that hasn't come up on my radar," Boyd said.

Leydon also asked about decreases.

"Where do you see the decrease coming from? Less labor or their rates are decreasing?" Leydon said.

"The company that we are currently using--and been using for a while--they worked out well, but, last year, got a walkaround with another vendor and they came in with a much better price," Boyd said. "Especially last year when I was looking to get the staff, it was hard to justify that expense when the savings were off the table because they were going with a different third party."

"So, they matched that other ven-

dor?" Leydon said.

"Better," Boyd said. "Yes, absolutely."

Chair Todd Schneider explained how last year, the department was looking at putting on two custodial staff with that contract coming to a \$56,000 savings.

"So, this was a no-brainer," Schneider said.

Boyd also advocated for staffing.

"I still would love to have a staff. I understand that's an increase, obviously," Boyd said. "Just so it's known. I can better provide for the town if we were to have a couple of those."

Leydon agreed on staffing.

"At least a point person. I mean, there's a whole contract on that, right? On someone that could be flexible?" Leydon said.

Boyd said that would be him.

"I'm a one-man department, right? So, I think you're talking about the management depth of the maintenance, essentially," Boyd said.

Schneider noted the department's budget for FY25 was \$600,000.

"You're going to \$645,000, but \$40,000 is in Memorial School maintenance?" Schneider said.

"Yes," Boyd said.

"But you're saying you couldn't save some of that with the new contract? So, you are looking for a \$40,000 increase?" Schneider said.

Boyd confirmed yes.

"I'm guessing around \$30,000 I'll be able to save on the year. I'll be able to eat that up pretty easily with the increases, obviously, in costs. As well as staying at zero minimal percentage over the last couple of years. There's different maintenance I have deferred. I have a mulch fee, the vents, every year," Boyd said.

"I don't do the floor finishes like, you know, last year with the waxing around town every single year. That's something I kind of at the end of fiscal year see what I can fit in. So some of those--not like essential--but things that are best practices I'll be able to keep up with problems."

After Schneider shared he heard about asbestos problems with Memorial School, Boyd confirmed that was true.

"Are you coming at us with a reserve fund transfer or is that going to be a capital budget?" Schneider said.

Boyd said no and explained with the gym floor, there was an anonymous complaint to DEP about asbestos tile.

"We had it tested and it was asbestos. DEP came by and inspected. There's not an imminent hazard that would shut us down and fine us or anything," Boyd said. "To get on top of it, we are abating it partially. It's an old floor, right, so there are tiles that are cracked with additional piled with asbestos, which is the measure of where you would get in trouble if things are hazardous. So, I would be paying for that out of my projects line."

Boyd was told the cost would be around \$11,000 or \$12,000, including abating "a few hundred square feet of tile."

"We're being very conservative in just taking out any tile that's loose or has a crack and replacing it with another 12-inch tile," Boyd said. "To abate the entire floor that would be closer to 60-something thousand and that's just replacing with tile."

If switching to a similar surface, Boyd said, it would become a capital project.

Mike Mazzuca returned to personnel and Boyd's concerns.

"I remember correctly, last year, the biggest issue that you had was that if all of a sudden you get a phone call and you have to be--let's say--at Soule Road and then another call comes in and there's a toilet that's plugged at--let's say--Wilbraham Middle School. You can't get to two places at once," Mazzuca said. "And the company you contract with, it's not like they're just on-call."

Boyd said, "They kind of are."

"If they're available, they have somebody there," Boyd said. "So, this was a concern with the senior center, something that Paula brought up, and one of the reasons we wanted the staff in-house, on-hand, was if there is an accident where somebody could respond immediately."

On the few instances, Boyd said there were only a handful of times over the last year they were able to respond and get there.

"It's a nominal cost. It hasn't broken the bank for us or it's not a concern. We're able to absorb anything into our regular (budget)," Boyd said.

The review concluded when Boyd presented an FY24 data breakdown of funds spent out of the regular accounts by completion and percentage of total budgets for all the buildings in town, with a discussion on those numbers.

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# Wilbraham Boards and Committees Schedules

By Amanda Munson  
Correspondent

**WILBRAHAM** – Have you ever been curious about your local boards and committees, where they meet and what takes place? Ever wonder how you can share your thoughts or concerns with committee members?

Below, you will find a schedule of the boards and committee meetings taking place in town. Further information can also be found on the town website.

- **Select Board:** Mondays at 7 pm (as posted, subject to change) located in the Select Board Meeting Office.

- **Playground & Recreation Committee:** The first Thursday of every month at 5:30 p.m. (unless otherwise noted on the Town's website calendar) at 45C Post Office Park

- **Planning Board:** The second Wednesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. at the Town Hall in the Select Board Meeting Office

- **Board of Assessors:** Wednesdays at 4:30 p.m. in the Assessor's Office at Town Hall (check the town website for exact dates)

- **Cultural Council:** Once a month on Wednesdays at 7 p.m., Conference Room 1 at Town Hall (check the town website for exact dates)

- **Board of Water Commissioners:** Fridays at 8:45 a.m. at Town Hall (check town website for exact dates)

- **Council on Aging:** First Fridays of the Month at 9 a.m. at the Wilbraham Senior Center

- **Conservation Commission:** Wednesdays at 6 p.m., Conference Room 1 at Town Hall (check town website for exact dates)

- **Community Preservation Committee:** Thursdays at 6 p.m., Conference Room at Town Hall (check town website for exact dates)

- **Cemetery Commission:** Tuesdays at 6 p.m. in the Town Hall Multi-Purpose Room (check town website for exact dates)

- **Capital Planning Committee:** Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. via GoTo Meeting (check town website for exact dates)

- **Economic Development Committee:** Mondays at 5 p.m. at Town Hall (check town website for exact dates)

- **Finance Committee:** Every Wednesday until April at 6:30 p.m. at the Wilbraham Police Department Community Room and streamed on GoTo Meeting

- **HWRSD Curriculum Subcommittee:** Thursdays at 5 p.m., physical locations vary and streamed on YouTube (check town website for exact dates)

- **HWRSD Planning Committee:** Tuesdays at

5:30 p.m. in the District Office Conference Room, 621 Main Street, Wilbraham, and streamed on YouTube (check town website for exact meeting dates)

- **HWRSD Policy Subcommittee:** Mondays at 5 p.m. in the District Office Conference Room, 621 Main Street, Wilbraham, and streamed on YouTube (check town website for exact meeting dates)

- **HWRSD Technology Subcommittee:** Mondays at 5 p.m. in the District Office Conference Room, 621 Main Street, Wilbraham, and streamed on YouTube (check town website for exact meeting dates)

- **HWRSD Technology/Finance/Operations Subcommittee:** Mondays at 4:30 p.m. in the District Office Conference Room, 621 Main Street, Wilbraham, and streamed on YouTube (check town website for exact meeting dates)

- **Library Board of Trustees:** Tuesdays at 4 p.m. in the Brooks Room at Wilbraham Public Library and streamed via GoTo Meeting (check town website for exact meeting dates)

- **Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee:** Tuesdays at 7 p.m. at the Select Board Meeting Room at Town Hall or streamed via GoTo Meeting (check town website for exact meeting dates)

- **Personnel Advisory Board:** Tuesdays at 7 p.m. in Conference Room 1 at Town Hall (check town website for exact dates)

- **Playground & Recreation Commission:** Mondays at 5 p.m. in the Wilbraham Police Department Community Room (check town website for exact dates)

- **Historical Commission:** Tuesdays at 7 p.m., Conference Room at Town Hall (check town website for exact dates)

- **School Committee:** Second and fourth Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. at Minnechaug Regional

- **High School Library:** (the meetings are also streamed live on YouTube)

- **Wilbraham Housing Authority:** Tuesdays at 10 a.m. at The Pines Development at 88 Stony Hill Road (check the town website for exact dates)

- **Zoning Board of Appeals:** Thursdays at 5:30 p.m. in the Select Board Meeting Room and via GoTo Meeting (check the town website for exact dates)

If residents cannot attend in person, they can also access the meetings through GoTo Meeting or YouTube, with meeting links included in the meeting agendas.

If other boards and committees would like to be included on this schedule list, reach out to [krivers@turley.com](mailto:krivers@turley.com).



Throughout the afternoon, seniors and friends—and couples—showed off their festive Valentine's Day colors and enjoyed some good company.



Baird Souls provided the entertainment during the Valentine's Day Luncheon at the Hampden Senior Center.



Lil Fedora was decked out in a Paris-themed apron—the city of love—as she handed out 50/50 raffle tickets.



A crowd shot of the many attendees at the Valentine's Day Luncheon.



Gene and Ellie Belisle were all smiles as they enjoyed Valentine's Day together in Hampden.



Volunteers were happy to serve the seniors throughout the Valentine's Day Luncheon.

Turley photos by Kristin Rivers

## LUNCH from page 1

lunch comprised of chicken cordon bleu, parsleyed carrots, garlic mashed potatoes, wheat dinner rolls and a chocolate mousse for dessert that was provided by the Greater Springfield Senior Services.

Baird Souls served as entertainment and there was also a 50/50 raffle.

Pat and Paul McDonald were among the many couples in attendance, sharing they are regulars at the senior center and have attended prior holiday-themed luncheons too.

The couple will celebrate their 52nd wedding anniversary on March 17 on St. Patrick's Day.

"I was home on leave from Japan, got in a car accident in Iowa, spent a month in the hospital in Iowa and I got transferred to North Dakota," Paul McDonald said.

"My friend's fiancé was in North Dakota—they were both in the Air Force—and he got in a car accident there and was transferred to the Air Force hospital in Minot. So, I said I'd go out with her to be with her," Pat McDonald said. "He was just real amazing."

Paul McDonald said he was assigned to the same hospital room as the fiancé of his now-wife's friend, which is how they first met.

"So, we had met in August. We only had letter writing because we didn't have tech and all that and we got married on St. Patrick's Day," Pat McDonald said.

"Met in August, got engaged in November, got married the following March," Paul McDonald said.

Later, the McDonalds lived in Iowa and then moved to Massachusetts, where Pat McDonald grew up.

"So, we moved like 10 times since we've been married and just did our last move in December. We moved into a condo," Pat McDonald said. "So, it was meant to be!"

Caryn Greco regularly volunteers at the senior center's luncheons and enjoys every minute of it. She was thrilled with the turnout, calling it "very rewarding."

"It's very exciting! I love to see everybody come out in their red and very happy and festive," Greco said. "It's great, I love it!"

Greco's favorite part of volunteering—whether at the luncheons or other events—is the smiles.

"Just to see everybody happy," Greco said. "It makes me feel good to make people happy."

She also enjoys the group of volunteers she works with regularly, serving the meals alongside her and helping to prep for the events.

"We all work really well together, so it's a lot of fun," Greco said.

On the secret to a long and happy marriage, the McDonalds said this.

"Laughing," Pat McDonald said. "We have to have a sense of humor."

"Having fun," Paul McDonald said. "Being close with friends and family."

For the singles out there, this.

"Keep looking," Pat McDonald said.

"When it happens, it's meant to be," Paul McDonald said.

Greco stressed give and take, as that's what marriage is.

"Knowing what things are worth fighting for and what to let go," Greco said.

The McDonalds' message to everyone on this Valentine's Day was simple.

"Be kind to each other," Pat McDonald said.

"And take every advantage you can at this senior center," Paul McDonald said.

"And have fun every day," Pat McDonald added.

Greco also encourages the community to check out the senior center and its events throughout the year.

"We do the best we can here and we're here to serve and we're here to help and for people to learn about us and to come in and visit and see what we've got and what we can offer," Greco said.

Greco's message for all the couples was this.

"Give the love. That's it: give love and enjoy," Greco said.

## NOTICE

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USDA INSP. KAYEM ALFRESCO ROAST GARLIC CHICKEN SAUSAGE 11 OZ **99c** ea

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## Peach Blossom Festival will not take place in 2025

WILBRAHAM – The Peach Blossom Festival will not be taking place in 2025.

The announcement was shared on the event’s Facebook page on Feb. 10, reading in part:

“To our Wilbraham Community and Partners,

The Wilbraham Peach Blossom Festival is taking a break this year and we will not be having the festival this June.

The board is currently reorganizing and hoping to find a path forward where there is more participation in the running of the festival by enthusiastic residents. We will be working to find pathways for more buy-in from residents.

The plan is to bring back the Peach Blossom Festival in 2026.

If you have questions or you are interested in working to produce the 2026 festival please send us a pm through our Facebook page.”

## Watercolor Painting Class at the Federated Community Church of Hampden

HAMPDEN - The Federated Community Church will host a watercolor painting class from 12:30 to 3 p.m. on six Saturdays: March 8, 15, 22, 29 and April 5 and 12 at the church, 590 Main St, Hampden, MA.

The Instruction will attempt to take the mystery out of the watercolor process. Dave Spencer, a retired architect and accomplished watercolorist, will lead the way.

Enrollees will have a small fee of \$10 per session to cover any expenses incurred by the church.

It’s always fun to paint and share new ideas and techniques. Make your interest and commitment known early. You may contact the Church Office at 413-566-3711 directly or contact Pastor Kwan Kim via email at [hampdenfederated@gmail.com](mailto:hampdenfederated@gmail.com).

## Wilbraham Garden Club Scholarship

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Garden Club is pleased to announce that applications are now being accepted for two, \$1,000 scholarships.

We are excited to financially assist graduating seniors, who are residents of Wilbraham or Hampden, as they transition to an institution of higher learning.

All applicants must be planning to major in one of these fields of study:

Botany, Horticulture, Conservation, Environmental Engineering, Environment Science, Earth Systems, Forest Management, Natural Resources, Plant, Soil and Insect Science, Sustainable

Agriculture, Sustainable Horticulture, Food and Farming, Turf Grass Science & Management, Landscape Design & Management Technology, Landscape Architecture, Oceanography, Clean Energy Technology, Floral Design or Land Management.

Applicants must include a personal essay of 100-200 words, official high school transcript(s), two letters of recommendation, college acceptance letter(s) if available, along with the completed Wilbraham Garden Club Scholarship application.

All required documentation must be

received on or before March 31, 2025. Notifications will be made by early May and the recipients will be awarded their scholarships at the annual meeting of the Wilbraham Garden Club on June 5, 2025.

Scholarship applications will be available at the Wilbraham and Hampden Public Libraries, Minnechaug Regional High School and Wilbraham Monson Academy.

Please contact [howella413@gmail.com](mailto:howella413@gmail.com) with questions or to receive an application.

## Junior Women’s Club Scholarship

WILBRAHAM - The GFWC Wilbraham Junior Women’s Club is dedicated to community improvement by enhancing the lives of others through volunteer service. In keeping with who we are, The Wilbraham Junior Women’s Club is offering a \$1,000 scholarship to a Minnechaug High School graduating senior who will be attending a 2-year, 4- year or other accredited institution of higher learning.

Applications are available in the Minnechaug Regional High School Guidance Office.

Completed applications must be postmarked by April 1, 2025 and mailed to: Wilbraham Junior Women’s Club, Attention Scholarship Committee , PO Box 14 , Wilbraham, MA 01095.

## Rotary Scholarship applications

WILBRAHAM - The Scholarship Committee of the Rotary Club of Wilbraham-Hampden has announced that applications for the 2025 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, 2025. The scholarships are available to qualified high school seniors who are residents of Wilbraham or Hampden.

The club will award nine scholarships, each in the amount of \$2,000. Applications may also be obtained from Brad Sperry by calling (413) 537-4171.

# CAMPUS NOTES

## Fairfield University Congratulates Fall 2024 Dean’s List

FAIRFIELD, Conn. - The following Fairfield University student(s) received Dean’s List Honors for the Fall 2024 semester.

In order to be placed on the Dean’s List, students must have completed a minimum of 12 credit hours in a semester, have no outstanding or incomplete grades for that semester, and have attained a semester grade point average of 3.50 or better.

Hampden

**Ty Cosenzi, Olivia Knode, Lauren LoMascolo  
Lena Sotiropoulos**  
Wilbraham

**Rose Caltabiano, Callie Dunbar,  
Anna O’Keefe, Vivian Tranghese**

## St. Cecilia Women’s Club awarding scholarships

WILBRAHAM - The Saint Cecilia Women’s Club is awarding \$1,500 scholarships to graduating seniors who are members of St. Cecilia Parish and who will be attending a two- or four-year college.

The selection criteria are academic achievement, character and leadership. Applications are available at Minnechaug Regional High School and at Saint Cecilia Parish.

Applicants may also contact the chairperson, Linda Hitas at 413-537-0014 or [lindahitas1@gmail.com](mailto:lindahitas1@gmail.com) for an application.

The deadline for receipt of the application is March 10 and should be sent to Saint Cecilia Women’s Club, Saint Cecilia Parish, 42 Main St., Wilbraham 01095 or dropped off at the parish office.

## Hampden Boards and Committees Schedules

By Amanda Munson  
Correspondent

HAMPDEN – Are you curious about when your local boards and committees meet every

week? Learn how you can share your thoughts and comments with committee members by viewing the following meeting information.

Below is a schedule of the boards and committee meetings taking place in town. Information can also be found on the town website.

Selectboard/Board of Health: Every Monday at 6 p.m. at Town House Auditorium or in the Selectboard’s Office (they currently run on a biweekly schedule and will resume to a weekly schedule soon, they also meet on Tuesdays after Monday holidays)

Ambulance Oversight Committee: Tuesdays at 7 p.m. in the Melville Room at the Town House (check town website for exact meeting dates)

Cemetery Commission: Wednesdays at 2 p.m. at the Town House (check town website for exact meeting dates)

Fire Department Building Committee: Thursdays at 2 p.m. in the Melville Room at the Town House (check town website for exact meeting dates)

Parks and Recreation Commission: Every other Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall

Planning Board: Every other Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. at the Town House Auditorium (check town website calendar for exact dates)

Board of Assessors: Wednesdays at 9 a.m. in the Assessor’s Office (check town website calendar for exact dates; online meeting access is through emailing a

request at [assessors@hampdenma.gov](mailto:assessors@hampdenma.gov))

Conservation Commission: Wednesdays, typically once a month, at 6 p.m. in the Town House Auditorium (check the town website calendar for exact dates)

Advisory Committee: Mondays at 6 p.m. at the Town House

Hampden Housing Authority: Wednesdays at 9 a.m. at community building of the Hampden Housing Authority at 26 Springmeadow Lane (check town website for exact meeting dates)

Library Board of Trustees: Saturdays at 9 a.m. at the Hampden Free Public Library (check town website for exact meeting dates)

CoA Board: Tuesdays at 9 a.m. at the Hampden Senior Center and on Zoom

Senior Center Building Committee: Mondays at 11 a.m. at the Hampden Senior Center (also streamed on Zoom) (check town website for exact meeting dates)

School Committee: Second and fourth Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. at Minnechaug Regional High School Library (the meetings are also streamed live on YouTube)

Veterans Services: Monthly on Mondays at 8:15 a.m., remotely on Zoom (check town website for exact meeting dates)

Zoning Board of Appeals: Tuesdays at 6 p.m. in the Town House (check town website for exact meeting dates)

If residents cannot attend in person, they can also access the meetings through Zoom, with meeting links included in the agendas.

If other boards and committees would like to be included on this schedule list, reach out to [krivers@turley.com](mailto:krivers@turley.com).

## Reading with Tucker at HPL

HAMPDEN – Children can visit the Hampden Free Public Library to read to Tucker, a dog from Bright Spot Therapy Dogs.

People can sign up by emailing me at [krumplik@cw-mars.org](mailto:krumplik@cw-mars.org).

The upcoming dates are

Feb. 11, Feb. 25, March 11, March 25, April 8 and April 29.

There are four slots every day, 15 minutes each starting at 3:30 p.m.

To learn more, contact Kate Rumpalik at [krumplik@cw-mars.org](mailto:krumplik@cw-mars.org) or call 413-566-2151 ext. 112.

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## VIEWPOINTS



By Ellenor Downer



Male and female hooded merganser

My daughter saw a pair of hooded mergansers on the Ware River on two different occasions.

She said, "They were riding those rapids to the bridge and looked like they were having a blast. Then they just hung out under the bridge."

The hooded merganser is the smallest of the mergansers at 18 inches long. It has a short thin

bill and crested head. The male has a black head, white fan shaped patch within the crest, which is only visible when the crest is raised. The flanks are brown and the back black. It also has black vertical lines on its white breast. The female is plain brown with a darker back and red brown crest. The immature female looks like the adult female and the immature male similar to the female, but they some white in the crest.

Hooded mergansers dive underwater and eat small fish, frogs, crustaceans, mollusks and aquatic insects. Courtship begins in mid winter. Females do head bobbing and pumping. Most male displays involve crest raising. The male makes a frog like note and the female makes a hoarse "gak."

The female lays six to eight white eggs in a nest of grasses and down placed in a tree cavity or nest box. Mergansers summer on wooded rivers and lakes and winters on similar locations as well as along the coast.

### Ludlow birds

On Saturday, Jan. 25 a Ludlow resident emailed about the birds in her backyard. She said, "The usual visitors are purple finches, white-throated sparrows, juncos, titmice, nuthatches, bluejays, mourning doves, cardinals and red bellied woodpeckers. Yesterday Jan. 24, we had a cowbird at the feeder. We haven't had any visit us in the five years we've fed the birds in winter. Just wondering if others in the area have seen a cowbird this early."

### Bluebirds and northern flicker

I received an email on Sunday, Jan 26 from a North Brookfield resident, She said, "I live in North Brookfield, down on Lake Lashaway. I had

five blue birds and a northern flicker on my feeders this morning along with the usual birds. Early Spring?"

### Brimfield birds

I received an email from a Brimfield resident on Jan. 21. He said, "Today in the yard all the usual birds were about however the junco flock has increased to about 65 birds. Other not so commonly seen birds were a Carolina wren, and a white-throated and a tree sparrows."

In another email he wrote, "Yes the blue jays sure do like the peanuts. The titmice also get their share. And once in awhile a red-bellied woodpecker with show up and take a peanut. When I walk around the yard there are a couple of places under a tree or shrub where the ground is littered with empty peanut shells."

### Birds in my yard

I continue to have the usual birds at my feeders and suet feeder such as black capped chickadees, titmice, white breasted nuthatches, downy woodpeckers, mourning doves and blue jays. Now that it is February, I expect to see male red-winged blackbirds.

I received a state of the art bird feeder equipped with a camera for my birthday. I have not set it up yet. I will take it down once bears come out of hibernation because I would not want it destroyed.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing my-backyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.

## 'Spring' into action with these tasks

The groundhog determined we would have six more weeks of winter. Is that really a surprise to anyone?

I mean, as I write, it is only Feb. 2. But we gardeners are an impatient lot, and we so want to get our hands back into the soft earth.

There are many tasks, albeit those that are behind the scenes, that can be done now, so that when warmer weather does arrive, we can "spring" into action.

### Take inventory

Last month I talked a lot about prepping for indoor seed starting, first by taking inventory of our seeds and then gathering the necessary supplies that go along with that task. But what about our outdoor ventures?

I have been busy shopping around for new IRT mulch, greenhouse supplies and amendments. How are you set on lime, grass seed, and fertilizers?

Plan to take advantage of pre-season sales by knowing what you need ahead of time. Also, assess the condition of your tools. Is your rototiller working its best? Mine needs to be serviced.

By taking it to the repairman now, I'll beat the spring rush and avoid having to turn the garden over by hand! The same goes for lawn mower blades. Have these sharpened yearly for the healthiest possible turf.

### Practice good garden hygiene

Regularly inspect summer bulbs that have been stored away for the winter. Throw away any that are rotten or moldy.



If you find a lot of these, consider moving what is left to a drier location. On the other hand, dahlia tubers will shrivel when conditions get too dry, mist them with clean water to rehydrate.

It is also a good idea to take a close look at vegetables in storage. Squash with signs of rot can be cooked and the flesh frozen for later use. Sprouts that appear on potatoes should be rubbed off and used before they soften.

Experiment with onions that have sprouted by planting them outside once the ground thaws. This vegetable is a biennial and will produce seed during its second season.

If the sprouts come from an heirloom or open pollinated variety, save a few seeds come July and start them this time next year! In the seedling stage, onions thrive on ample nitrogen to develop thick tops that will feed what we hope are big bulbs.

### Perform appropriate garden chores

I am usually negligent in cutting down aspara-

gus foliage in the fall. Weather permitting I will get out there and cut it back to its base soon, then haul off the branches to prevent any bugs that overwintered there from infesting this year's spears.

It is also time to prune blueberries, apples and grapes. Pruning can vary depending on the age and health of your specimens. If you are not experienced at it, consult any number of good books on the subject before you head outdoors with your pruning shears and loppers.

Do make sure your tools are sharp, and if there is any hint of disease, be sure to disinfect in between cuts or at least in between specimens. If any of your fruit trees have old fruit, called "mummies" hanging from the branches, be sure to get rid of them for fear of overwintering pests.

### Hang tight

Winter will be gone soon enough. Come out of hibernation and accomplish pre-season gardening tasks now, before the spring rush but also remember that this is a season of rest and taking care of yourself is a good thing too.

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



## Reader asks about Social Security benefits for someone with multiple ex-spouses

Dear Rusty

If a financially well-off individual had multiple ex-spouses, could it happen that the multiple ex-spouses could each be collecting Social Security based on their own financial situation as compared to their rich ex-spouses?

Thus, multiple payouts by SS? Just curious, because there are probably many people in this situation as a result of the ever-increasing number of people involved in multiple marriages that each lasted more than ten years.

Signed: Curious Ex-Spouse

Dear Curious Ex-Spouse:

A former spouse can only collect one SS benefit either their own SS retirement amount, or an amount as an ex-spouse if the marriage lasted 10 years or more. And it is possible for multiple ex-spouses of a marriage to the same person to qualify for benefits from those unions, if each marriage lasted at least 10 years. But each ex-spouse can only qualify for one benefit payment either their own earned SS benefit, or their benefit as an ex-spouse.

In other words, someone with two or more ex-spouses might have their ex's collecting full benefits on their record, provided that each marriage lasted at least 10 years. But an ex-spouse can only get one benefit—their own SS retirement amount or an ex-spouse amount, whichever is higher.

It's possible, also, that an ex-spouse can col-

lect benefits from a former spouse at the same time as a current spouse is also collecting spouse benefits on the same record. And there is no detriment to either's amount because multiple spouses or ex-spouses are collecting on a one person's SS record (Social Security is, after all, a means for spouses, or ex-spouses, to avoid poverty). However, an ex-spouse's own SS retirement benefit from their personal lifetime work record must be less than any ex-spouse benefit they are entitled to from a former spouse. Essentially, if the "10-years-married" rule is satisfied, ex-spouses are subject to the same benefit rules as a current spouse.

You are correct that we see some cases like this these days, but each eligible ex-spouse can only get one benefit and their ex-spouse benefit is always offset by any personal SS retirement benefit

the ex-spouse may also be entitled to on their own lifetime work record.

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



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



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Letters to the editor should be 350 words or less in length. No unsigned or anonymous opinions will be published. We require letter writers to include his or her town of residence and home telephone number. We must authenticate authorship prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions deemed to be libelous or contain unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks, defamation of character and offensive language. All unknown or alleged facts and quotations offered by the author need to cite credible, unbiased sources. Send letters to: Editor, Wilbraham-Hampden Times, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-682-0013 or via e-mail to [krivers@turley.com](mailto:krivers@turley.com). The deadline for submissions is Thursday at noon.

### Correction Policy

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

The Wilbraham-Hampden TIMES is published every Thursday by Turley Publications, Inc. One year out of town subscriptions are available at \$45, out of state \$50 by calling 800-824-8458 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.

## Election letters to the editor welcome

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

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

### Campaign news

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

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



A COMMUNITY GALLERY

*Life in &*

Readers are encouraged to send in medium to high resolution photos for this page by e-mail to [krivers@turley.com](mailto:krivers@turley.com) or mail to TIMES, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

# WILBRAHAM HAMPDEN

WFD takes part in BFIT Challenge at TD Garden



Photo and caption courtesy of Wilbraham Fire Department

Members of the fire department participated in the BFIT challenge by climbing the stairs at TD Garden on Feb. 2, supporting numerous nonprofits focused on first responders in need and the health and wellness of firefighters.

## COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

Send us in your announcements! Happy Birthdays, Anniversaries, etc.

We will pick one each week to run here free of charge, please keep it to less than 50 words. Please send to [krivers@turley.com](mailto:krivers@turley.com)

A special congratulatory message



Submitted photo and caption Allison Cross Lopez

Anthony and Michael Lopez Cross are excited to celebrate their Nonni Paula's latest career accomplishment.



Ladder 1 on the scene of a chimney fire investigation on Feb. 2. Our Top Fireplace Safety Tips: Use only dry, seasoned wood for burning to minimize smoke and creosote. Have your chimney inspected and cleaned annually by a professional to prevent chimney fires. Make sure all family members know how to safely use the fireplace and the importance of fire safety.

WPD reminds drivers to be careful on slippery roads



Photo and caption courtesy of Wilbraham Police Department

The Wilbraham Police Department is reminding drivers to be careful during slippery road conditions, sharing this crash photo on Feb. 13 after a snow/winy mix event: "Slippery Roads Continue - Use Caution - Slow Down."

WMS News Crew welcomes special guest!



Submitted photo and caption Kristen VanDerBeken

Wilbraham Middle School's morning show, run by the WMS news crew, airs twice a week and is entirely student-led. Students handle scripting, idea generation, interviews, and camera operations. On Feb. 11, former HWRSD student and current WWLP reporter Julia O'Keefe appeared on the show. The WMS News Crew consists of Timothy Euber, Dillon Noonan, William Kern, Leo Dizel, Ashley Manning, and Alexandra Robles-Blasenak.

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## Don't miss out on a totally rad time!

WILBRAHAM - Minnechaug's Ultimate Party Committee is hosting a 90's themed Murder Mystery event for their 2025 Spring Fundraiser.

Never heard of the Ultimate Party? For over three decades, a group of Minnechaug Regional High School parents have organized an event on the night of graduation that has become known as the Ultimate Party.

This party is fully supervised, lasts all night and is filled with lots of food, activities and entertainment.

In Hampden/Wilbraham, there continues to be a need to offer our graduates a chance to be together and have fun without being subject-

ed to the pressure of drinking, driving under the influence, vandalism, pranks and other high-risk activities on graduation night. The goal of the Ultimate Party is to provide our teens with just such an alcohol/drug free environment.

Since this is a privately funded event, we rely on fundraising and donations to help defer the associated costs.

Want to know how to help but also enjoy a fun night out? Join us for our 2025 Spring fundraiser.

What: 90's Murder Mystery featuring The Murder Mystery Co. as seen on Shark Tank (90's attire is encouraged, but not required)

When: Friday, March 14 from 6 to 9 p.m.

Where: Ludlow Country Club, 1 Tony Lima Dr., Ludlow, MA 01056

Tickets: \$65 per person or \$120 per couple (Guests must be 18+ to attend.)

Venmo @TheUltimateParty-AndRenaissance (comment 'murder mystery' and # of tickets) or mail cash/check to: Jen Pelletier, 2 Overlook Dr., Wilbraham MA 01095

There'll be dinner, raffles, 50/50 and a cash bar! Be there or be square!

## Women's Club to Award Scholarships

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Women's Club will be awarding \$1,500. 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. Application guidelines are available in the Guidance Office at Minnechaug Regional High School.

For those attending other high schools, please email Mrs. Rae Teed, Scholarship Committee Chair, at rae.teed@gmail.com. Applications must be postmarked by March 21, 2015 to be considered.



Mothers and their sons enjoy snacks in the café.



Patricia Colkos welcomes everyone in for the Mother-Son Dance at Wilbraham United Church.



Kathy Timpson (Left) and Larry Harris (Right) give out treats in the café.

## DANCE from page 1

mela Byers was helping anywhere that she could. While also attending the dance with her son, she helped make the Facebook events, organize the food for the café and organize people in aspects of the dance for the event.

"I love seeing the kids coming in with their moms and, you know, there always was a Father-Daughter Dance. And so we said, hey, why don't we have mom and son dance? So, we've had it here for a long time, so I can't take credit for the thought of it, but we've been continuing it for the years," Byers said.

In attendance for the dance was Kristyn Sheehan, who was with her son Tommy, as well as her friend Danielle who was with her son Byron.

"It is a great bonding experience with my son and I am so excited to be able to show him my moves on the dance floor. I love that," Sheehan said.

Rev. Janet Sandquist Skagerlind was also involved supporting the Mother-Son Dance.

"It's fun and it brings mothers and sons together, which is a little different than the Father-Daughter dance," Sandquist Skagerlind said. "And look at how much fun everybody's having, and this great food downstairs and it's just a very fun event that brings people together."

It was a wonderful night to celebrate mothers and their sons this special week. Everybody left the church with a smile on their face.



Kristyn Sheehan takes a photo with her son Tommy.

The Discipleship Committee did a fantastic job at putting the dance together once again for the community.

At the end of the night, everybody went home with a special gift too: Light up sunglasses.

Wilbraham United Church also invites families to their Sunday Services every Sunday at 10 a.m. Church School is available during the service for grades Pre-K - Eight.

In March, the church also plans to host a Family Service Night and Pancake Supper on March 15, and their One Great Hour of Sharing on March 30.

For any questions, please reach out to discipleship@wilbrahamunit-edchurch.org.

## THIS WEEK IN REC

### Summer Employment Opportunities

Andrea Rust  
Administrative Clerk

WILBRAHAM - Although we all have winter on our minds, here at the Rec Department we are already planning for Spec Day Camp. With 6 weeks of camp and over 600 campers, it takes a dedicated staff to make camp a success. This year, we are hiring for both the Camp Director and Assistant Director positions. Both of these positions are incredibly important in the planning and implementation of Spec Day Camp to ensure campers have a memorable experience.

The Spec Day Camp Director should be a minimum of 21 years of age and have completed a course in camping administration or have at least two seasons of previous experience as part of the administrative staff of a recreational camp program for children. The Director is responsible for planning and developing a varied schedule of age appropriate themes and activities for the six weeks of camp. The Director plans the scheduled field trips, secures all necessary supplies needed to execute the chosen themes, provides proper guidance and instruction to campers during the day, and oversees parent/guardian communication. Additionally, the Camp Director organizes and runs staff meetings and evaluations for hired staff, works closely with and updates the Parks and Recreation Director, supervises camp counselors, and ensures safety and emergency policies are in place

and checks the program area daily for safety, cleanliness and repair.

The Spec Day Camp Assistant Director should be a minimum of 20 years of age and have experience working with children. Under the direction of the Camp Director, the Assistant Camp Director is responsible for assisting in the running of the day to day program, which may include securing supplies, maintaining attendance and medical records, setting up and cleaning up after the day's events as well as assisting in the coordination of the entire camp program. The Assistant Director assists the specialty aquatic staff as needed, keeps accurate daily attendance, maintains positive relationships with participants and parents at all times, and coordinates arts and crafts activities. In addition to assisting the Camp Director with all camp operations, the Assistant Director is responsible for developing and leading all aspects of the Counselor-In-Training Program.

The Spec Day Camp Director and Assistant Director positions are vital to creating a safe, successful, and diversified Spec Day Camp. Additionally, we are hiring Camp Counselors and Junior Counselors for Spec Day Camp as well as for the position of Water Front Director, Lifeguards, and concession staff for the beach. Applications for those interested in applying for any of these positions, will be available on the Town of Wilbraham Website at Wilbraham-ma.gov beginning Feb. 16. All applications must be received by Friday, March 21.

## THEATRE from page 1

March 9. The show times are Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday Matinees at 2 p.m.

Tickets can be purchased at theatreguildofhampden.org.

Mark Giza, who started the Theatre Guild of Hampden with Rick Rubin and has directed numerous productions over the years, expressed excitement, sharing how two actresses playing the lead had never happened before.

Giza said this unique experience also provides a unique one for the audience, depending on when they attend the show.

"Stuart couldn't decide because they were both really good," Giza said. "So he said, 'You know what? If the ladies don't mind, one will have evening performances and one will do matinee performances.' So, that's what he did with the leading ladies."

Giza has watched one rehearsal so far while he works on "Jerry's Girls"--the guild's next production slated for April--and is ecstatic to see what Gamble does with "Dial M for Murder."

"I hope people come out and support it and I'm curious to see another director's take reading the script and how the director takes the characters, working with the characters and structuring the characters in certain ways and working with them. So, I'm very curious to see what he does with that," Giza said.

Giza also looks forward to experiencing the cast, noting the many new faces.

"So, it's going to be very interesting to see what they do, what he does with the characterizations of these people. The style of the play--it's a very stylized play--so it will be very interesting to see how it all comes together," Giza said.

Giza also hopes attendees get to escape the world for a while.

"That they go and enjoy it because the world's kind of a crazy place right now. So, if you go out and just have a good night of laughing or suspense or seeing live theater. There's nothing like seeing live theater," Giza said. "Movies are great and stuff, but when you go to a performance of anything that's live on stage, you never what's going to happen or whatever, but it's just a whole different feeling of just seeing something raw and exposed on the stage. I hope they have a good time and hope they could break away from this crazy world for a while and just enjoy the show."

**A Special 20th Anniversary**  
Giza shared the Theatre Guild of Hampden is also marking 20 years this year and after "Dial M for Murder," two more productions



The cast and crew get prepped as they rehearse "Dial M for Murder."



The Theatre Guild of Hampden will be kicking off their 20th anniversary with a production of "Dial M for Murder," with rehearsals ongoing.

are on the way for 2025 with "Jerry's Girls" and "Lost in Yonkers."

"It's amazing how fast 20 years goes by," Giza said. "There's productions that remain in my heart that were very special. Our production of "Picnic" that we did was very special and won six MCC Awards, the Massachusetts Critics Awards. Then the following year, I did "The Normal Heart" and that was very touchy because it was dealing with the AIDS crisis and that won six awards and that was a big hit for us."

On favorite musicals he's directed, Giza highlighted "Sunset Boulevard," "Cabaret," "A Chorus Line" and "Driving Miss Daisy," crediting the many casts he's worked with over the years for their success.

"A director's job--and people ask me this all the time--casting is 90% of a director's job. If you get the right people in the right roles, you're golden. I mean, I'm very organized, have a floor plan. You got

to do this and blocking and staging," Giza said. "But when you get the right people in the right roles, it's wonderful. It's the best. It's the best feeling in the world, it really, really is."

Giza also emphasized supporting local theater and community arts.

"Hampden's so tiny, we're a little village here. Rick and I started the company 20 years ago and we've had wonderful support from the town and people coming to support our shows," Giza said. "It's a financial thing too, because Monson Savings Bank has been wonderful to us and different people will take ads in the program to support local theater. You have to do it because it's an outlet for a lot of people too. People really look forward (to) either coming to the shows or being in the shows."

Giza added besides Hampden, there are many local theater groups including the Wilbraham United Players in Wilbraham, K and E Theater Group in Northampton, the Opera House Players in Enfield, CT, the Suffield Players in Suffield, CT and the Exit 7 Players in Ludlow.

"You got to support these local theaters because there's a lot of them have been around for 50, 60, even 70 years," Giza said. "We've only been around 20 years. We've been really lucky."

Giza encourages the residents to enjoy a night out--or matinee afternoon--with "Dial M for Murder."

"It's going to be a murder mystery night and a high-energy production of this show," Giza said. "Just go and have a good time. Just lose your mind a little bit, just relax and have fun."



# SPORTS

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## State tourney spot clinched by Falcons



Josh Disa extends for a basket.



Landyn Eldridge goes for the three-pointer.



Darren Duah two-hands the ball to the hoop.



Orlando Pagan sets to shoot.



Miles Fergus nails the hook shot.



Nathan Pace gets the easy layup.

WILBRAHAM – Last Monday night, the Falcons boys basketball team made it an even 10 wins for the season with a 57-36 win over Amherst Regional. In the victory, Miles Fergus had 13 points while Gus Przybyl had 11 points. The Falcons were scheduled to face Pope Francis in the Western Mass. Quarterfinals last Monday evening. The Falcons are also qualified for the state tournament, which begins next week.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com



Lila Keegan powers through to the court.



Alani Botas looks to shoot.



Ava Ofcarcik looks to pass to the other side of the paint.



Elizabeth Woytowicz drives into the paint.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli



Ava Disa looks to pass around the perimeter.

## Falcons defeat Granby

WILBRAHAM – Last Wednesday night, Minnechaug Regional girls basketball faced Granby, Conn. in a rare interstate matchup. The Falcons had no trouble with the Bears, winning 50-23. Cailin O'Brien had 15 points to lead the team while Elizabeth Woytowicz added 10 points. The Falcons finished the regular season with a 13-5 record. The Falcons went on to participate in the Western Mass. Class A Tournament, with a quarterfinal home game against Chicopee Comprehensive. The Falcons will also make the state tournament, which will begin next week.



Zoey Lape looks to shoot.



## Falcons continue to pursue tourney spot

WILBRAHAM – The Minnechaug Regional High School ice hockey team is looking to finish with a .500 record, but they also are seeking a spot in the top 32. Last week, the Falcons would split their games last week with West Springfield and Westfield. The Falcons would beat West Springfield 3-1 but narrowly lost to Westfield 5-4.

Minnechaug has remaining matchups with Westborough and Wachusett and could also have an additional playoff or non-playoff games in order to make the state tournament. The Falcons were No. 36 as of last week.

## Bonsignore scores third-place finish in opener

Four-time NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour champion Justin Bonsignore opened his 2025 NASCAR season with a third-place finish in the Whelen Modified Tour opener at New Smyrna Speedway last Saturday night. Now, his eyes will turn to the World Center of Racing.

Bonsignore will make his second career NASCAR Xfinity Series start for Joe Gibbs Racing in Saturday's United Rentals 300 at Daytona International Speedway.

The New York native made his Xfinity Series debut in 2024 with Joe Gibbs Racing at New Hampshire Motor Speedway and ran inside the top-five for a long portion of the race. He also competed in

the ARCA Menards Series event at Daytona in 2024, his only Super-speedway experience leading into this weekend.

"Running the ARCA race at Daytona certainly helps a bit with the learning curve of a Superspeedway and the drafting," Bonsignore said. "The Joe Gibbs Racing team and Toyota have proven over the years they have incredibly fast cars. I'm excited to get out there in practice and learn as much as possible in our No. 19 M3 Technology, USNE Power, Toyota GR Supra. I know our goal will be to get to the end of the race with a shot... that's about all you can ask for at a place like Daytona."

## T-Birds suffer one-goal loss to Rockford

ROCKFORD, Ill. — The Springfield Thunderbirds (23-19-2-3) suffered a second straight gut-wrenching loss in the closing moments, falling 4-3 to the Rockford IceHogs (19-22-5-1) on Saturday night inside the BMO Center.

Things got off to a rocky start for the T-Birds, who fell behind 1-0 just 64 seconds into the game after a mis-played puck wound up on the tape of Joey Anderson inside the right-wing circle. Anderson made no mistake in snapping it through Colten Ellis on the stick side, giving Rockford the 1-0 advantage.

Ellis solidified things over the next 15 minutes, turning away the next nine IceHogs attempts while the T-Birds struggled to find offense. Finally, a pair of Rockford penalties afforded Springfield a 4-on-3 power play, and Matt Luff unleashed a perfect wrist shot that squeaked past Ben Gaudreau's blocker

to tie the game, 1-1, at 18:17.

Springfield's momentum would not last long, though, and just 32 seconds later, Brett Seney picked off a loose puck in the high slot and quickly wri- stled a try under the crossbar to restore the IceHogs lead, 2-1, heading into the intermission.

Anderson's hot hand carried over into the early stages of the second, as he found a gap through the five-hole of Ellis to make it a 3-1 score at 5:19 of the middle stanza.

Through the opening 30 minutes of play, the T-Birds had managed just six shots on goal. However, the visitors clawed their way back, beginning with Illinois native Hugh McGing tucking home a rebound outside the blue paint at 12:55 to cut the Rockford lead to 3-2.

Dylan Peterson thought he had brought the T-Birds back even when he shuffled a loose puck across the

goal line just over a minute later, but the call was changed to no-goal after the referees congregated. Nevertheless, Springfield pressed on, and on the next shift, Matthew Peca punched home a rebound off an Alek Kaskimaki shot, and the game was deadlocked at the 14:56 mark of the second.

Ellis and Gaudreau did their part to lock things down from that point, as the two netminders kept the score locked in the 3-3 stalemate into the game's final minutes. Unfortunately for Springfield, they succumbed to a late game-winner for a second straight game when Andreas Athanasiou broke up the ice in a 2-on-1 with Anderson and tucked a backhand around Ellis to win it for Rockford with just 1:59 left in the third. Ellis suffered only his second loss in his last 11 starts, and the Springfield goalie also saw his five-game win streak get snapped in the process.

## Railers take care of Americans

ALLEN, TX – The Worcester Railers HC (23-20-2-4 52pts) beat the Allen Americans (13-27-7-2, 35pts), on Sunday afternoon by a final score of 3-1 in front of a crowd of 3,144 at the Credit Union of Texas Event Center. The Railers are back on the ice next at the North Charleston Coliseum taking on the South Carolina Stingrays on Wednesday, February 16th at 10:30 a.m. EST.

Worcester got the scoring started as they tacked on the first three goals of the game in the first period. The first came from Jordan Kaplan (1-0-1), followed by Tyler Kobryn (1-0-1) and it was Lincoln Hatten (1-0-1) who finished off the first period trifecta. Brayden Watts (1-0-1) scored the

first goal for Allen on the power play 11:35 into the second period making it 3-1. Neither team would net one in the third period leading us to the 3-1 Worcester win.

For the second time in the weekend series the Railers jumped out to a 3-0 first period lead. Jordan Kaplan (16th) started the scoring party 11:21 into the first period. Tyler Kobryn (4th) followed up Kaplan 15:06 into the first, and it was Lincoln Hatten (5th) who scored the third Worcester goal in the period giving them a commanding 3-0 lead heading into the second. Shots favored Worcester 16-4 in the first period.

Allen had three power play opportunities in the second period, it was

not until the third power play that they grabbed their first goal of the night. It was Brayden Watts (17th) who cut the Railers lead to two. Watts had the only goal of the period, giving Worcester a 3-1 lead heading into the third period. Shots favored Allen 17-10 in the second period.

Despite a 5-on-3 power play chance for Worcester as well as an Allen power play chance neither team was able to cash in on their respective opportunities. The scoreless period led to a 3-1 final, with Worcester walking away with the series sweep over the Allen Americans. Allen outshot Worcester 16-8 in the third, and 37-34 in the game.

## HoopHall announces award winners

SPRINGFIELD – The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame announced the recipients of the 2025 Curt Gowdy Media Award and John Bunn Lifetime Achievement Award at NBA All-Star Weekend.

Legendary Detroit Pistons play-by-play announcer George Blaha, renowned CBS analyst Clark Kellogg, veteran women's basketball writer Michelle Smith, and influential NBA journalist Adrian Wojnarowski are the 2025 Curt Gowdy Media Award recipients. Boston Celtics long-time Vice President of Media and Alumni Relations Jeff Twiss is the recipient of the 2025 John W. Bunn Lifetime Achieve-

ment Award.

The Curt Gowdy Media Award is named in honor of the late Curt Gowdy, a legendary sports broadcaster and former Hall of Fame Board member and President. This prestigious award is presented to members of the print, electronic, and transformative media whose efforts have made a significant contribution to the game of basketball.

The Bunn Lifetime Achievement Award was instituted by the Basketball Hall of Fame's Board of Trustees in 1973 and is the most prestigious award presented by the Hall of Fame outside of Enshrinement. Named in honor of Hall of Famer John W. Bunn (Class of

1964), the first chairman of the Basketball Hall of Fame Committee who served from 1949-64, the award honors coaches, players, and contributors whose outstanding accomplishments have impacted the high school, college, professional, and/or the international game.

Blaha, Kellogg, Smith, Wojnarowski, and Twiss will be recognized for their contributions to basketball during the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame Enshrinement Weekend on September 5-6. For further details, including ticket information, visit [hoophall.com/events/enshrinement-2025](http://hoophall.com/events/enshrinement-2025).

## SCHOOLS

### Wilbraham Middle School Honor Roll

WILBRAHAM - The following students received Honor Roll status for the Term 2 marking period at Wilbraham Middle School.

Distinguished Honors is all A's in all subjects; Honors is all A's and/or B's in all subjects.

#### Distinguished Honors – Grade 8

Zakaria Ardolino, Alison Aucoin, Sireen Awkal, Ariana Balwa, Olivia Barnett, Bailey Burgmyer, Jason Cao, Nolan Carney, Juliana Coffey, Ryan Criscitelli, Oliver Cunha, Sadie Dos Santos, Grace Falzone, Charlotte Fitzgerald, Kathryn Fulton, Olivia Goodrow, Nicole Grabowski, Lily Guo, Teaghan Haluch, Isabel Horne, Jackson Hulseberg, Alexandra Jaslanek, William Kern, Jillian Lajeunesse, Willis Lam, Daniel Lareau, Johanna Lewis, Griffin Litchfield, Owen Lucarelle, Ashley Manning, Summer McInnes, Michael Murray, Ethan Nunlist, Logan Richard, Sierra Rocha, Jackson Rust, Kayla Smith, Abigail Stachowicz, Ian Stratton, Carolina Tangredi, Maya Usher

#### Honors – Grade 8

Goudy Abuata, Teddy Acquah, Margaret Babbs, Evan Barcome, Charlotte Beaulieu, Lauren Beaulieu, Joshua Branham, Nicholas Bretta, Thomas Brogle, Nolan Burke, Benjamin Butts, Charlotte Castellano, Xavier Catellier, Emilia Connors, Nolan Costello, Ava Cowles, Madelyn D'Amore, Brynn DeForest, Nathan Demetri, Amelia DePace, Lacey Desjardins, Kayla Dooley, Owen Downey, Keeley Doyle, Liam Doyle, Isabelle Ellis, Samantha Engel, Azary Eskandarinejad, Dina Ferentino, Jack Ford, Austin Fortune, Eva Gagliarducci, James Gallagher, Olivia Gaudreau, Evan Gilmartin, Aviana Gomez, Judah Gunn, Tegan Haluch, Max Harrigan, Lauren Hoar, Andria Holder, Kate Holt, Ted Holt, Tyler Hoskinson, Ethan Johnson, Neal Johnson, Elizabeth Jourdain, Aurora Kirton, Kaitlyn Labadorf, Stephanie Labadorf, Sophie Laliberte, Christie Lang, Lucas Lawrence, Jackson McCullough, Madelyn McNabb, Joy Mendonca, Noah Metzger, Emily Meunier, Gavin Meunier, Alina Mishchuk, Louie Morin, Cohen Nelson, Evan Niemi, Brielle Nieves, Dillon Noonan, Sarah O'Connor, Madeleine O'Sullivan, Brayden Pacifico, Jack Parastatidis, Olivia Parent, Kenisha Patel, Ava Pelloso, Owen Piquette, Megan Pronovost, David Quinn, Calvin Quintana, Mason Quintana, Lara Riberdy, Camden Rodrigues, Colton Rogers, Annalyse Roszko, Ava Rowe, Kyla Sacco, Mallory Sample, Quintis Saviengvong, Marcello Severino, Emmett Shattuck, Liam Shattuck, Adrielle Sheridan, Olivia Spiller, William Stromwall, Peyton Sullivan, Liam Sutherland, Stepan Syrota, Sean Tillberry, Nathaniel Tirabassi, Addison Trosky, Joseph Twarog-DeJura, Grace Tzoumas, Ryenne Vedovelli, Annelise Waldron, Mason Waskiewicz, Caitlyn Wetherbe, Shannon Wietecha, Mia Yvon, Jacob Zanetti

#### Honors – Grade 6

Logan Abdelmaseh, Alexis Adames, Pheobe Babineau, Owen Benninger, Louis Bertelli, Olivia Beston, Jackson Bourke, Bella Brown, Cassidy Bryan, Emily Burke, Sophia Cantalini, Maddox Carreira, Jackson Chappel, Nathaniel Choinski, Colin Conboy, Philip Costello, Aaryis Crespo, Audriana Desousa, Anna Fletcher, Quinn Folli, Jack Ford, Maxwell Gawron, Nathan Gencarelli, Dylan Giroux, John Guerin, Carter Hanks, Sawyer Haugh, Charlotte Hemingway, Gavin Hoar, Brennan Hoey, Lucas Inguagiato, Emily Jourdain, Noah Kelly, Liam Knowlton, Riley LaBarre, Michael Lafield, Eli Laravee, Zara Lotterer, Ella Luszc, Caroline Maserati, Brooke McCloske, Savannah McNabb, Cole Michael, Adriana Monteleone, Ali Mourad, Merliah Nguyen, Justin Nowicki, Joelky Nunez De Jesus, Adriana Pafumi, Betty Pagoaga, Colin Paige, Austen Paterno, Lilly Peltier, Stella Petit, Amelia Pluciennik, Axel Reed, Olive Reed, Ava Ricketts, Madison Riker, Brayden Rivest, Audrey Roach, Taishla Rowe-Singleton, Hanna Salvador, Mia Santos, Nicolas Siciliano, Anthony Soto-Tovar, Daniel Soto-Tovar, Samantha Strange, Connor Sullivan, Dominick Tangredi, Juliany Torres, Kayson Twarog-DeJura, Jake Vanderleeden, Patrick Vanderscoff, Carter Verteramo, Hailey White, Eviana Wright, Samuel Zanetti

#### Distinguished Honors – Grade 7

Cassandra Alvarez, Aubrey Appleby, Molly Baroni, Dylan Bean, Reid Blanchard, Brenna Bryan, Rose Christensen, Jacob DeGray, Maycie Eldridge, Timothy Euber, Peyton Eusebio, Jada Haqq, Oliver Hart, Gavin Hisgen, Jasper Hulseberg, Andrew Kmelius, Jack Lapalm, Madeline Lee, Adeline Look, Julia Magee, Siobhan Mahoney, Sophia Mazzaferro, Vivian McIntyre, Zahra Minha, Joseph Montano, Maeghan Morris, Andrew Mullen, Mia Newman, Shana Oguku, Sunmi Oh, Mya Pafumi, Abigail Paterson, Ryleigh Picard, David Roberts, Garrett Roberts, Alexan Robles-Blasenak, Christopher Romano, Grace Romano, Greta Rust, Jake Salemi, Epi Sanchez, Jamie Sclipou, Jack-

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**TEENS** from page 1

"I wanted to do something that wasn't centered entirely around Valentine's Day and having to have a Valentine, so this seemed like a fun alternative," Girard said. "They were invited to dress up, but not required. They could come in and get a break from the cold and dreary weather we're having."

Girard, dressed as Darla from Finding Nemo—fish-in-a-bag included—cleverly labeled the items at the party to be in keeping with the villainous theme.

Among others, there were "Poor Unfortunate Souls" candy hearts and "Cruella's Puppy Treats" Oreos to eat, and there was "Scar's Soda" and "Poison Punch" to drink.

One attendee, Irelyn Coffey, is a regular at the library and was enjoying a cup full of "Darla's Dead Fish" goldfish.

While others were discussing the origins of their costumes, she admitted that she dressed as herself, stating, "I'm my favorite villain."

As the music played—sparking many inconclusive debates about what the best villain song is—attendees drifted between activities or chose to just socialize and discuss new vs old villains while they snacked.

One activity to choose was "Broken Heart Cookies"

for decorating sugar cookies; there were two different kinds of frosting and a plethora of sprinkles to choose from.

There was also an "enemy" bracelet making station, where anyone could use letter and multi-colored beads to make something for their arch nemesis, or their best friend, if they had so chosen.

The final station of available activities was a "zombie doll" making station. A number of felts and fabrics could be picked from to trace an outline on, cut out, sew together, stuff and decorate with buttons of all shapes and sizes.

There were no limitations or specifications of how the doll should look, but there was one example made by Library Page and long-time villain fan Gracen Moriarty—who was, by the way, dressed in a fantastic Harley Quinn-inspired outfit.

Two siblings in attendance, Jake and Kayla Vanderleeden, were focused on their zombie dolls. Repeat librarygoers, the brother and sister said this activity is a large part of what appealed to them about this particular party.

"It seemed like something fun to do," Jake Vanderleeden said. "I had no real vision in mind when I started out making it, so we'll just see what it turns into."



Emma Lewis (left) dressed as Annabelle the doll poses with Eva Breau (right) dressed as a pirate from "The Girl Before the Legend (The Red Pirate)."



The space of the library set up for the party. Teens in attendance were free to move through activities as they pleased; most in attendance mingled between activities rather than moving quickly through each one.

Both agreeing that they would help ward off other monsters, the siblings decided the best place for their new zombie dolls would be in their rooms at home.

Girard wanted to point out how wonderful it has been to host events since opening the Sheila R. Flynn Teen Center at the library.

"It's been almost three years since we redecorated, but the vibes in here are just so much nicer with a dedicated space for teens to come and hang out and relax," Girard said.

Although the exact craft event for March is still to be determined, Girard encourages anyone interested in



The example zombie doll made by Library Page Gracen Moriarty.

attending a library event to check the event calendar on the website, hampden-library.org.



Irelyn Coffey sits on her wheeled stool, posing in her outfit of her "favorite villain", which she identified as herself.

Turley photos by Hannah Yeasley

**OBITUARIES**

**Shirley A. Downey**

1926-2025



HAMPDEN—Shirley Ann (Kibbe) Downey, 98, died peacefully on Monday, Feb. 3, 2025, at home. Born in East Longmeadow to the late Raymond and Mary (Curtin) Kibbe, she worked as a wholesale florist and beef farmer for many years until her retirement.

In addition to her parents, Shirley was also predeceased by her husband Raymond Downey, her daughter Lynn Marie Glancy, five brothers and three sisters. She is survived by her four sons; Raymond Downey and his wife Katherine of Monson, Richard Downey and his wife Rebecca of Belchertown, Jeffrey Downey and his partner Claudia Sarti of Hampden, Kevin Downey and his wife Emily of Northbridge, MA and son in law Kevin Glancy of Fort Mills, SC. Shirley also leaves eight beloved grandchildren; Wes, Derek, Lydia, Austin, Onna, Myles, Kerri and Nicole and eight cherished great grandchildren; Owen, Liam, Lorna, Collin, Raymond, Kenly, Caroline and Stavros. A Graveside Service will be held at a later date in Old Cemetery, Hampden. Wilbraham Funeral Home is assisting the family. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Baystate Hospice, 30 Capital Drive, West Springfield, MA 01089 or to Pancreatic Cancer Action Network at WWW.PANCAN.org.

**DEATH NOTICES**

Shirley A. Downey

Died Feb. 2, 2025

Wilbraham Funeral Home

**Saint Cecilia Women's Club says thank you**

WILBRAHAM - The Saint Cecilia Women's Club members would like to thank the following businesses for their prizes and gift card donations for the club's Card & Game Party & Luncheon on Jan. 23.

Your generosity is greatly appreciated and helps the club fund scholarships and donations to needy organizations in the area.

Thank you: Cima's Restaurant, Country Bank, Graziano Gardens, Crazy Jake's, Ken's Automotive, La Cucina de Hampden House, Leone's Restaurant, Luso Federal Credit Union, Maureen's Sweet Shoppe, Monson Bank, NEPM, Pafumi's on Main, Randall's Farm, Rice's, Route 20 Bar & Grille, Scented Garden Gift Shop, Sixteen Acres Garden Center, The Grille at the Country Club of Wilbraham, The Nest Boutique, Wilbraham Flowers and Wilbraham Funeral Home.

**Wilbraham Earth Day 2025**

WILBRAHAM - Keep Wilbraham Beautiful is excited to announce this year's Wilbraham Earth Day Clean Up Event.

The event will take place on April 12 at Fountain Park from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. and everyone is welcome to attend. Volunteers are also needed!

To learn more, visit <https://sites.google.com/view/wilbraham-earth-day-cleanup/home?authuser=0>.

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Danny Di Filippo poses with his acrylic painting of "Charm of NE." The frame was also made by handcrafted wood.



Attendees check out the artwork during the Big Art Show of Small Works hosted by the Scantic River Artisans in Hampden.



Joe St. John chats with attendees about his pottery.

teacher at Minnechaug, became a member of the arts association the day before and credited them for getting the students at the high school more involved in the community.

"They started offering scholarships to our students who are in the arts and we're kind of trying to build a partition with them, which is really nice," Garron said. "It's nice to see the artwork move outside of the classroom and into the community."

Garron has done photography since 2008, when he took an elective class in high school and then started college as an accounting major, until he shifted into photography and art history. Since then, he's worked as a photography teacher at the high school and college levels and, also, as a wedding photographer.

This was also his first time taking part in an art show, joining on a whim when he was bringing the student artwork to the senior center.

"I thought, 'Why not? It's a small works art show.' So, I came in, I bought a membership

in the hopes that we'll keep doing these shows and showed my work," Garron said.

Jean Zampiceni shared it was her first time displaying a table for her sign art consisting of welcome signs, home, decorative mailboxes, lazy susans and more, having had oil paintings hung up at prior shows.

Zampiceni owns The Painted Sign in East Longmeadow and has done oil painting since opening her business.

"This is like a line I've been thinking about doing. They can say anything. Again, they can call the shop, tell me what they want, whatever, and it's like being at a fair," Zampiceni said. "Today, we had a very nice turnout, so it's like an opportunity to show what you do and see what happens."

Zampiceni was also excited about the MRHS student artwork.

"It's great and it's nice getting--it's like fresh blood--so it's nice and you want to see that going back and forth," Zampiceni said.

Salerno wants the community to know

how much the SRA appreciates their support whether by attending the show or participating.

"If they haven't been able to see this show, we will hang artwork here--after the show--on the walls throughout the senior center. We'll also be hanging our artwork at Rice's if they want to see," Salerno said. "But these shows really give you a snapshot of just the amount of talent that's in the neighboring towns--Monson, East Longmeadow, Longmeadow, we're all over, Wilbraham, Palmer, Belcher--town--everywhere. Hampden, of course. But it's really a great snapshot of what's out there."

For Garron, art is best seen in person.

"I teach an art history class as well at the University of Hartford and looking at images on a screen only goes so far. Whereas, seeing the work in person, getting up close and personal with it, looking at the hand of the artist, their brushstrokes, how they treated their medium is a completely different experience," Garron said. "So, I think that the turnout speaks to that. It speaks to people's want and need to see things and experience things in person and also connect with their community in the process."



Nan Hurlburt of Tangled Vine Jewelry shows off her latest jewelry pieces, all on display on a Valentine's Day-themed backdrop.



A shot of "Princess," a sculpted metal art piece from Brian McQuillan.

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### PUBLIC NOTICE

This ad is pursuant to MA Gen. Law Ch.255, Sec. 39A as of February 21, 2025 the following motor vehicle will be for sale to satisfy a garage keepers lien:

Vehicle :  
**2014 BMW XI**  
 VIN: WBAVLIC59EVY17128  
 COLOR: Gray  
 LKO: Ludero Monterio  
 67 Fuller St Apt 1  
 Brockton MA 02301  
 R & S Assoc. Inc  
 PO Box 543  
 Wilbraham MA 01095  
 413-596-4374  
 02/06, 02/13, 02/20/2025

during normal business hours and posted for public viewing on the Planning Board page of the Town of Wilbraham website at [www.wilbraham-ma.gov/123/Planning-Board](http://www.wilbraham-ma.gov/123/Planning-Board).

All persons interested or wishing to be heard on this matter are urged to attend the public hearing.

Both in person and virtual participation are available. To participate virtually go to <https://meet.goto.com/231896485> or call 866-899-4679 (Access Code: 231-896-485).  
 James Rooney, Chair  
 02/13, 02/20/2025

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
 The Trial Court  
 Probate and Family Court  
 Hampden Probate and Family Court  
 50 State Street  
 Springfield, MA 01103  
 Docket No. HD21P2069GD  
 In the Interests of:  
 Josephine Carabelle  
 Of: Wilbraham, MA  
 RESPONDENT  
 Incapacitated Person/  
 Protected Person  
 CITATION GIVING NOTICE  
 OF PETITION TO EXPAND  
 THE POWERS OF A  
 GUARDIAN**

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by Greater Spfld Senior Services of Springfield, MA in the above captioned matter requesting that the court:

Expand the powers of a Guardian of the Respondent.  
 The petition asks the court to make a determination that the powers of the Guardian and/or Conservator should be expanded, modified, or limited since the time of the appointment. The original petition is on file with the court.

**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 **03/12/2025**. 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: February 12, 2025  
**Rosemary A. Saccomani**  
 Register of Probate  
 02/20/2025

**Public Notice CHANGES**  
 Deadline has changed to **FRIDAY at 3 p.m.**

Zampiceni suggested for anyone who missed this show to check out future ones, including the Spring Art Show on April 12 and 13.

"There's new stuff happening all the time. Like I said, these people are prolific so there's going to be all kinds of stuff out there," Zampiceni said.

### TOWN OF HAMPDEN CONSERVATION COMMISSION NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, (MGL CH 131, S 40), it's implementing regulations (310 CMP 10.00) and the Town of Hampden's Wetlands Protection Bylaws, the Hampden Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, March 19, 2025 at 6 PM** at the Town House, 625 Main Street, Hampden, on a Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA), submitted by Paul Yasi for the construction of a detached 20x24 garage to rebuild the pre-existing garage that was destroyed by a motor vehicle accident at 174 Wilbraham Road, also known as Assessor's Map 17, Block 130 Lot 0 and to replace landscaping. Additional information relating to this request is on file in the Conservation Commission office and available for review by the public by contacting the Commission. Anyone interested in or wishing to be heard on the request may appear at the time and place designated.  
 Hampden Conservation Commission  
 02/20/2025

### WILBRAHAM PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 40A, Section 5, the Wilbraham Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, March 5, 2024 at 5:45PM** in the Town Office Building, 240 Springfield Street, to give interested parties the opportunity to comment on a proposed amendment to the Wilbraham Zoning By-Law to adopt regulations for Retail Sales of Used Automobiles and Trucks and modify related regulations for Retail Sales of New Automobiles and Trucks by amending Sections 3.4.5.20, 6.5.2, 6.5.3 and 6.5.7, and by adding a new Section 6.5.11.

The complete text of the proposed amendments is available for review in the Town Clerk's Office and the Planning Office during normal business hours and posted for public viewing on the Planning Board page of the Town of Wilbraham website at [www.wilbraham-ma.gov/123/Planning-Board](http://www.wilbraham-ma.gov/123/Planning-Board). All persons interested or wishing to be heard on this matter are urged to attend the public hearing.

Both in person and virtual participation are available. To participate virtually go to <https://meet.goto.com/231896485> or call 866-899-4679 (Access Code: 231-896-485).  
 James Rooney, Chair  
 02/13, 02/20/2025

### WILBRAHAM PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 40A, Section 5, the Wilbraham Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, March 5, 2024 at 6:00PM** in the Town Office Building, 240 Springfield Street, to give interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed amendments to the Wilbraham Zoning By-Law to modify regulation of Large-Scale Ground-Mounted Solar Energy Systems by amending Sections 10.7.7 and 10.7.13.  
 The complete text of the proposed amendments is available for review in the Town Clerk's Office and the Planning Office

### LEGAL NOTICE:

The Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School Committee announces the public hearing on the proposed regional budget for FY2026 is scheduled for **Thursday, March 6, 2025, 6:00 p.m.** at Minnechaug Regional High School IRC, 621 Main St., Wilbraham, MA and via Live Stream on YouTube: <https://youtube.com/live/cLn7V3RDByc?feature=share> For additional information visit: <https://www.hwrsd.org/>  
 02/20/2025

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|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>CLUES ACROSS</b>               | 37. Evade or escape                      | <b>CLUES DOWN</b>                      | 27. Expressed pleasure                               |
| 1. Tropical Asian plant           | 38. A way to confine                     | 1. Body art                            | 29. Song of praise                                   |
| 5. Yankees' slugger               | 40. Volcanic crater                      | 2. Boxing's GOAT                       | 32. Shock treatment                                  |
| 8. Judge                          | 41. Weekday                              | 3. Film for posterity (abbr.)          | 34. Patti Hearst's captors                           |
| 10. Helps to preserve food        | 42. Women's service organization (abbr.) | 4. Prayer                              | 35. Counteract                                       |
| 12. Plant disease                 | 44. Local area network                   | 5. Calculating machine                 | 36. Goes over again                                  |
| 14. One who predicts              | 45. Sensory receptor                     | 6. Keyboard key                        | 39. Popular Dodge truck                              |
| 16. Equally                       | 48. Posted                               | 7. Outburst                            | 40. Male adult                                       |
| 18. Burundian franc               | 50. Tibetan pastry                       | 8. Man-eating giants                   | 43. A part of a river where the current is very fast |
| 19. Pouch                         | 52. Licensed for Wall Street             | 9. New Hampshire                       | 44. Rope used to lasso                               |
| 20. Arizona city                  | 53. Very willing                         | 10. Type of sword                      | 46. Become less intense                              |
| 22. Surround                      | 55. Golf score                           | 11. Counting                           | 47. Subway rodent                                    |
| 23. Hard, heavy timber            | 56. Consume                              | 13. Pants style                        | 49. Lead alloy                                       |
| 25. Witnessed                     | 57. Touchdown                            | 15. Political action committee         | 51. Japanese honorific title                         |
| 26. They ___                      | 58. Tends to remind                      | 17. U.S. government legislative branch | 54. Advise someone                                   |
| 27. French river                  | 63. In a way, smoothed                   | 18. Civil Rights Act component         | 59. Famous NYC museum                                |
| 28. A way to drink                | 65. Poke holes in the ground             | 21. Contractors take one               | 60. Ocean  |
| 30. Small constellation           | 66. Herbaceous plants                    | 23. Spanish soldier                    | 61. Cathode-ray tube                                 |
| 31. Peruse a written work         | 67. Taiwanese river                      | 24. A person's brother or sister       | 62. Cologne  |
| 33. Type of hound                 |  |  | 64. It starts with these two                         |
| 35. Plant of the goosefoot family |  |  |  |



# DL&G TREE

Tree Removal



Structural Pruning



Crane Service



Storm Damage



Stump Grinding



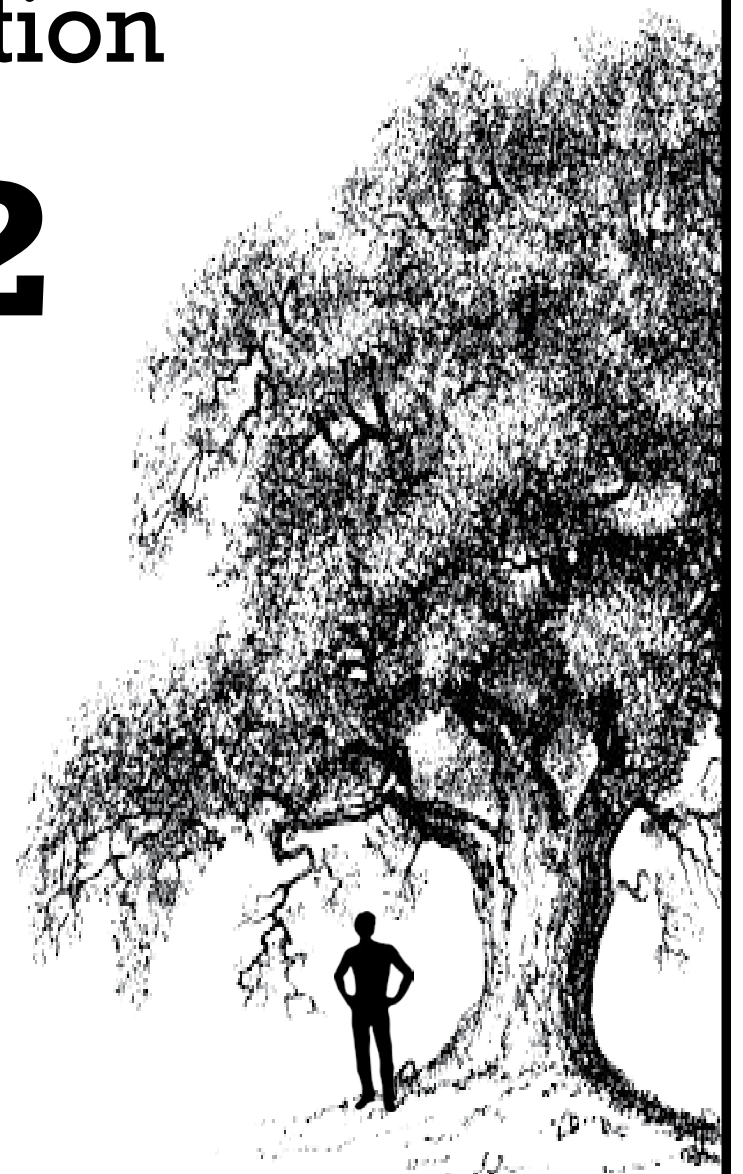
Lot Clearing



Give us a call for your free estimate and tree evaluation

**413-478-4212**

# DL&G TREE



**INSURED AND CERTIFIED**