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Women's Club offers fellowship, opportunities to give back

The club meets on the second Tuesday of each month

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - The St. Cecilia Catholic Women's Club at St. Cecilia Church offers fellowship and opportunities to give back to the community.

The group, comprised of over 200 members, meets every second Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. from September through May in the church's Parish Center.

Some of the activities the club participates in include the Rummage Sale, Mixed Bowling League, monthly

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Members of the St. Cecilia Catholic Women's Club smile for a group photo. From the left, first row, Ann Mango, chair of the Rummage Sale Committee and the Toiletry Items Sorting & Distribution Committee for the St. Cecilia Catholic Women's Club, Norma Bandarra, treasurer of the St. Cecilia Catholic Women's Club, and Pat Serra, membership chair of the St. Cecilia Catholic Women's Club, and from the left, second row, Jackie Pahl, president of the St. Cecilia Catholic Women's Club, Mary Jerz, co-chair of the Loaves & Fishes Committee at the St. Cecilia Catholic Women's Club and Sue Agnew, chair of the Nominating Committee, chair of Fundraisers and oversees publicity for the St. Cecilia Catholic Women's Club.



Turley photos by Kristin Rivers

From the left, Mikki Langone, Claudia Kapinos, Caryn Greco, Mindy Meeker and Jocelyn Zanetti smile for a group photo as they get ready to serve lunch to attendees at the Valentine's Day Luncheon at Hampden Senior Center. Zanetti is a confirmation student from St. Cecilia Church in Wilbraham and volunteered at the event as part of her community service hours.

Hampden celebrates love at Valentine's Day Luncheon

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
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HAMPDEN - Huge crowds stopped by the senior center at Noon on Feb. 14 to celebrate Valentine's Day with a luncheon.

The luncheon included a meal provided by Village Food Mart and The Reserve at East Longmeadow, dessert prepared by senior center staff and performances by Freddie

Marion.

Activities Coordinator Diane Marino was elated at the turnout and happy to see so many people having a great time.

"I did not expect it to be this wonderful. I think that we really have a great crowd and a very happy, fun crowd too. It's a win-win," Marino said.

Marino said she and the staff love holding holiday-themed events at the senior center, adding they had help recently with students from

Elms College.

"They were excited to help out with anything we were doing here, so we had them making hearts decorations, and they were a big help to us having them here," Marino said.

Marino stressed celebrating holidays is important to seniors because of the chance to gather and spend time with one another.

"Most importantly, I think it is the social interaction; coming together, sharing a meal, conversa-

Please see **LUNCHEON**, page 10

FEISTY FORUM:

Residents grill Planning Committee on district reorganization

Parents are overwhelmingly against sending eighth graders to Minnechaug

By Dalton Zbierski
Editor
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WILBRAHAM - When the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District held a community forum on district reorganization on Feb. 15, several dozen attendees expressed significant concerns regarding the district's future.

Parents, teachers and community stakeholders made their way to the Minnechaug Region-

al High School auditorium to voice displeasure with the two options for district reorganization presented by the Planning Committee. Among other discussed items, both options would send eighth graders to the high school, a highly unpopular proposition.

"There are two options on the table right now, and the School Committee hasn't made a choice on either. We've done a lot of planning in order to try to get the information to this point to guide the School Committee in its decision," Superintendent John Provest reminded the crowd.

Two options

School Committee Chair Michael Boudreau spoke on the two options that the Planning Com-



Turley photos by Dalton Zbierski

The Planning Committee for the district reorganization listened to residents' concerns last Thursday.

mittee is currently proposing. She described where students would

be educated in each model.

"The first option that ev-

Please see **FORUM**, page 13

Author Bonnie Borrromeo Tomlinson visits Hampden library



Author Bonnie Borrromeo Tomlinson speaks with attendees during her Author Talk event at Hampden Free Public Library on Feb. 17. The event took place downstairs in the Town House Auditorium.

Attendees listen and ask questions during the Author Talk event with Bonnie Borrromeo Tomlinson

Turley photos by Kristin Rivers

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
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HAMPDEN - The library welcomed author Bonnie Borrromeo Tomlinson for an author talk on Feb. 17 on downsizing and organization.

Tomlinson's books are "Stop Buying Bins & Other Blunt but Practical Advice from a Professional Organizer" and "Stop Pushing Perfection & Just Create a Home You Can Actually Keep Neat". They can be found on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, libraries and more.

The event was sponsored by the Friends of the Hampden Public Library.

During the event, Tomlinson interacted with attendees, answering questions and providing advice on organizing bills, practical decorations for spaces, buying gifts, shopping post-downsizing and more.

Afterward, a book signing took place. Tomlinson said her books came from

her desire to be a writer and being a natural organizer, having previously held her own organizing decorating business.

"The first book really talks about different techniques depending on your reasons for holding on to things and each chapter deals with a different kind of client story," Tomlinson said. "The second book, as well, deals with client stories but they're broken up by rooms in the house. So how to organize your bathroom, bedroom, so forth."

She was thrilled with the turnout and feedback.

"I'm just really excited that it's gotten such good word-of-mouth and good reviews. People seem to be very motivated by it, which is thrilling for me. That's exactly what I wanted," Tomlinson said.

Audience engagement has also made an impact on Tomlinson.

"They have increasingly become more audience participation, which I love because I don't want to just stand up here

and read from the book. I don't want to just talk about my stories. I want people to learn something. I want people to walk away and have learned something. The only way to do that is to directly answer the questions that they have," Tomlinson said.

Tomlinson explained she connected with the library through a mass market mailing, and Director Ellen Moriarty invited her to Hampden to talk about her books.

Moriarty had told Tomlinson the library's Saturday Book Club also read her books.

"She's been nothing but gracious," Tomlinson said. "She's been fantastic. She even put together a poster about it."

In writing her books, Tomlinson wanted to emphasize how everyone can downsize and organize their things.

"Just start small and it's really about breaking the habits that created the clutter in the first place so that it doesn't happen again, because once you fix it, you don't want to go back," Tomlinson said.

Tomlinson is also working on her third book, focusing on helping the next generation in downsizing and organizing.

"What I do appreciate about this generation that's coming up is that they are really into the second-hand market, whether it's second-hand clothes, even making their own clothes, taking furniture and repurposing it for a reason that it wasn't originally intended to be. They're being creative, which is the only way they're going to be able to, financially, handle the possibility of living on their own," Tomlinson said. "Plus, it's just setting up good organizing skills from the beginning so that as you progress in life, the more you do accumulate as we do get older, you'll be able to handle the organization of that more, so you don't repeat what the previous generations have done."

Tomlinson thanked residents for coming to the event and for their engagement.

"Thank you so much for being here and for being engaging, bringing really interesting questions and projects to the con-



A shot of the books "Stop Buying Bins & Other Blunt but Practical Advice from a Professional Organizer" and "Stop Pushing Perfection & Just Create a Home You Can Actually Keep Neat" by Bonnie Borrromeo Tomlinson available for purchase during Tomlinson's book signing after her author talk at Hampden Free Public Library on Feb. 17.



Author Bonnie Borrromeo Tomlinson chats with attendees during her book signing after the Author Talk event at Hampden Free Public Library on Feb. 17.

versation," Tomlinson said. To learn more, email Tomlinson at bonnie.borrromeo.tomlinson@gmail.com or follow her on Facebook at @Stop Buying Bins and on Instagram at @stop_buying_bins.



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Select Board hears updates on inter-municipal agreement with Monson

The agreement focuses on veterans services

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
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WILBRAHAM - Select Board learned the latest on Feb. 12 around an inter-municipal agreement with Monson for veterans services.

Jered Sasen, director of Veterans Services, explained Town Administrator Nick Breault put together the inter-municipal agreement and the language "is very consistent with what the state is looking for."

"When we talk about district forming, the state is specifically looking for manning, which we are meeting that goal and oversight which, in this situation, would set a district board which, again, meets that goal," Sasen said.

Breault elaborated on the draft agreement's highlights, including going with a model forming a district between two municipalities adjacent to one another and the apportionment of costs.

"There are two methods to use. One is to consider the percentage of equalized value of property within each community and if we were to use that, that would be 69% apportionment for Wilbraham, 31% for Monson," Breault said. "Or to go with per capita, and when we look at population, the split there is 64% Wilbraham and 36% Monson, so we

think that's very equitable, that's the way to go."

Breault clarified on estimated apportionments, the numbers are subject to final changes because the town will need to speak with Monson about them.

"If anything, they're on the conservative, meaning the high side. So, I don't expect that they would be going up and certainly, we don't want to present something that's going to be more costly to either community than what we presently do," Breault said. "So, this is to be determined."

On governance, Breault explained the district formation requires forming a district board "which would oversee policy and decision-making."

"This agreement would propose that the boards consist of the town administrators of both communities, but it could certainly be a board member of either of the communities, depending on what the communities themselves want to do, or it could even be a designee that is not a staff member or it could be a member of the public that the Select Board would want to (appoint)," Breault said.

For administrative purposes, Breault said the agreement proposes "all of the employees of the district would be, in effect, administratively handled through Wilbraham."

"So, where we have a similar situation with the shared public health services where Longmeadow is the host community if you will for administrative purposes, Wilbraham

would be the host community in this case for that as well," Breault said.

Sue Bunnell, reflecting on the board's prior conversation with Monson's Select Board, looked for clarification on the positions.

"So, this proposes you as the service director and the hiring of another veteran's agent?" Bunnell said. "Plus, clerical support?"

Sasen replied yes. "And the clerical support, is that a full-time person?" Bunnell asked.

Sasen replied it would be a part-time position.

When Select Board member Michael Squindo asked for clarification on whether both models for district governance would be acceptable as practice, Sasen said yes.

"I've seen different models. I've seen models where it's the town administrator, I've seen models where it's somebody from either the Select Board or, in some cases where a city forms with a small town, a city councilor, but yes, absolutely. Both are, and when I spoke to the state about it, they said, 'However you guys want to govern it is up to you,'" Sasen said. "So as long as it's being governed."

After Squindo wondered if an extra member could be the potential appointment of a veteran's citizen from either community, alternating depending on the term, Breault said it could be part of the discussion.

From here, Wilbraham will meet with Monson on the next steps.

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Wilbraham Middle School students perform, 'Little Mermaid Jr.'



WILBRAHAM – Wilbraham Middle School put on the play “Little Mermaid Jr.” on Feb. 8 and 9. Director Darcey Walulak led the way, and Music Director Laila Hosnander helped steer sound. Choreographer Lainey Bergeron designed the dance moves, and Stage Manager Olivia Maserati led the behind-the-scenes action. It was a packed house both nights. The students did a phenomenal job. Photos courtesy of Administrative Asst. Maureen Budrow



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Turley photos by Kristin Rivers

An exterior shot of St. Cecilia Church on Main Street in Wilbraham, where the Cecilia Catholic Women's Club meets.

CLUB from page 1

food distributions to the Community Survival Center, Loaves & Fishes, where members serve the homeless five times a year, fundraisers, including calendar raffles, donations for toiletry items and many more.

President Jackie Pahl explained the group was established in 1952, with monthly meetings dedicated to a topic and speaker. Next month, the club will also be collecting nutritious snacks to support Loaves & Fishes.

"We feel that they come to the facility for their meals but they leave and then they don't, perhaps, have any food until maybe the dinnertime. But if we get hungry in between, we can go get something to eat," Pahl said. "So, we're going to collect nutritious snacks so that they can take something and have it in their pocket."

Treasurer Norma Bandarra oversees the member dues, costing \$5, explaining the club supports the church and several charities including the Gray House, Friends of the Homeless, the Battered Women's Shelter, the Community Survival Center and Open Pantry.

The club also provides scholarships for local students at the end of each year.

"The main thing is we distribute all of the money in May at the end of (the) club year and then we just keep enough money to take us to September and October," Bandarra said.

Sue Agnew, chair of the Nominating Committee, Fundraisers Committee and oversees publicity, said officers for the club stayed two years until the bylaws were changed as people expressed a desire to serve longer.

"In many cases, they're willing to do it for a lot more than a couple of years, which is great because the continuity helps with what we're doing," Agnew said.

Mary Jerz, co-chair of the Loaves & Fishes Committee, shared she came to St. Cecilia's when her previous church closed in Ludlow. She later joined the Catholic Women's Club.

"After a couple of meetings, I just felt like I belonged here. It felt very, very welcoming here. It's a wonderful place to be," Jerz said.

Ann Mango, chair of the Rummage Sale and the Toiletry Items Sorting & Distribution Committee, emphasized fellowship, community support and helping one another contribute to the club's success.

"The activities that we do are always very, very successful due to the fact that everybody is willing and happy to do. Happy to do whatever to make it a success," Mango said. "We get a lot of support."

Pahl admires the club members' dedication to



A spread of brochures highlighting the different committees and activities from the St. Cecilia Catholic Women's Club in Wilbraham. Some of their offerings include Loaves & Fishes, Survival Center Bag Distribution, Hospitality, Rummage Sale and many more.

serving others.

"We have many dedicated, very compassionate, very giving members come to our club and, as I said, Ann has said, everyone has said, some long-term members who have been doing this for very many years," Pahl said.

Membership Chair Pat Serra wants the community to know the club always welcomes new members.

"We'd love to have new members join us. Come for just an evening to enjoy the program and if they like what they see, we'd be happy to sign them up," Serra said.

Mango added anyone can join the club at any time.

"They can join any time, not just at the beginning of the year. They can join any time," Mango said.

To learn more, contact Serra at 413-279-1945 or visit the church's website at <https://www.saintceciliawilbraham.org/index.php/parish-life/womens-club>.

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**CAMPUS
NOTES**

Grozio named to Clemson Univ. President's List

Clemson, S.C. – Taryn Grozio, of Wilbraham, has been named to Clemson University's President's List for the fall 2023 semester. To meet eligibility requirements for the President's List, a student must be enrolled full-time and earn a GPA of 4.0 for the semester. Grozio is a freshman in the Honors College majoring in Financial Management with an emphasis area in Real Estate and a double minor in Accounting and Entrepreneurship.

Fairfield Univ. congratulates students named to Dean's List

FAIRFIELD, Conn. – The following Fairfield University students from Hampden and Wilbraham received Dean's List Honors for the Fall 2023 semester.

HAMPDEN: Olivia N. Knode
WILBRAHAM: Molly B. Cronin, Anna E. O'Keefe and Vivian R. Tranghese

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.

Wilb. students graduate from Elms College

CHICOPEE – College of Our Lady of the Elms congratulates 75 students who graduated in December 2023 following the conclusion of the Fall 2023 semester. The following students are from Wilbraham:

Tyler Galenski, Master of Business Administration in Management
Malwina Gorzynska, Bachelor of Science in Nursing
Gerald Sheehan, Master of Arts in Applied Theology

Nolah Lee named to Muhlenberg College Fall 2023 Dean's List

ALLENTOWN, Pa. - Congratulations to Nolah Lee of Wilbraham on being named to the Muhlenberg College Dean's List for the Fall 2023 semester.

Muhlenberg College students and Muhlenberg College School of Continuing Studies students with a term GPA of 3.50 or higher were recognized for this academic achievement.

Wilb. students make Fall 2023 Dean's List

WORCESTER - More than 1,600 students were named to the College of the Holy Cross' Dean's List for outstanding academic achievement during the Fall semester of the 2023-24 academic year. The following Wilbraham students made the list:

Molly Brewer, Class of 2027
Luke Wadzinski, Class of 2026

To qualify for the Dean's List, students must pass four or more letter-graded courses with no failing grades during the semester and earn a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

Grace Coopee named to Curry College Dean's List

MILTON – Curry College congratulates Grace Coopee, of Hampden, who was named to the Fall 2023 Dean's List.



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VIEWPOINTS



By Ellenor Downer



American Goldfinch winter plumage

I received an email from a Brimfield resident who counted 36 plus American goldfinch in his yard during a snow storm. The next day he saw about a dozen.

I also had about 20 plus goldfinch eating on the ground under my feeder. I had seen two or three mixed in with juncos and sparrows from time to time, but not this many. In winter, they are found in flocks that wander in search of food.

The American goldfinch is five inches long. The male during breeding season has a bright yellow body and black cap, wings and tail. The wings also have white bars. The female is yel-

lowish, green overall with black wings and tail.

In winter, the male looks more like the female with a yellowish brown, yellowish wash on the face and chin and black wings with white wing bars. The female in winter is grayish brown with a little yellow and dark brown wings with white wing bars.

Goldfinch feed on the ground, on weed stalks, thistles and foliage. At feeders, they prefer hulled sunflowers and thistle (Niger) seeds.

The female lays three to seven light, blue eggs in a nest of strands from weeds and vines, downy elements from wind-dispersed seeds such as thistles bound with caterpillar webbing placed in a shrub or tree.

Bluebirds

A flock of about eight male and female bluebirds continue to come to my raisin suet cake and the feeder with mealworms. I fill it once or twice during the day as I enjoy watching them as I work at my desk. During the snow on Tuesday, they visited the mealworm feeder and suet feeder frequently. The blue against the white snow was almost as striking as the red of the cardinal against fresh snow.

Bald eagles

I received a photo of a pair of bald eagles taken by a Palmer resident at Forest Lake in Palmer. They were in the top of a pine tree by the lake.

Brimfield birds

A Brimfield resident sends emails of the birds in his yard on a regular basis. He said, "One day last week a Carolina wren showed up for a day. The warm brown coloration of the bird caught my eye when I glanced out at the feeders. It was feeding on the suet cakes and the 'log' made of suet, berries and mealworms."

He counted 36 plus goldfinch in the yard

during a snow storm. The next day there were over a dozen still about. Usually it is three or four goldfinch that show up.

He shared an email from a friend in Belchertown, "We had a female redwing at the seed trays today. It's unusual to get one here this early. We also had four bluebirds show up and munch on the suet. They seem to make a visit when the weather is crummy."

The Belchertown resident also said, "We're inundated with goldfinch. The thistle seed bag is covered with them. I had to fill the hearts feeder three times today due to the numbers of goldfinch around."

The Brimfield resident reported a large number of juncos, four white-throated sparrows and come house finch. He said, "A pileated woodpecker did a fly by the other day. That is how we most often see then although a few years ago a male was coming to our suet feeders. The female came close to the feeders but never feed that I saw." His wife drove past Wheeler Pond in town and was surprised to see the pond was not completely frozen and that there were two pair of hooded mergansers on the pond.

Birds on Feb. 13

The Brimfield resident observed ten species of birds in his yard during the snow on Tuesday, Feb. 13. He counted five mourning doves, one downy woodpecker, one hairy woodpecker, two black-capped chickadees, three tufted titmice, two house finches, one American goldfinch and 80 dark-eyed juncos.

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



Eleanor wrote in with this question for the Garden Lady regarding amaryllis bulbs: "I have three bulbs from last year that have been hibernating and now they are in the sun and have produced long green leaves but no buds. I read it somewhere that if you let them dry out, no more water, but keep them in the sun they will send out buds, but I cannot find where I read that. I hope it is true...so I can still get flowers this year before I have to repeat the whole process (by putting them back in dormant condition in August for a few weeks). I do have one more bulb from last year that did give me a flower...but these other three ones are not showing me any prospects. Can you help?"

Without seeing your bulbs and the foliage, my best guess would be that they will likely not flower this year. What leads me to that conclusion is that one other bulb you have already flowered.

If they were on the same timeline, then probably the other bulbs did not have enough strength to send up a flower stalk. I would not let them dry out, but continue to water and fertilize monthly so that the foliage will grow strong, and be able to make enough energy for blooms next year, after a period of dormancy in the fall.

I know this is upsetting after all of your hard work. Re-bloom is often an experiment.

Sadly, sometimes it happens and sometimes it doesn't. It may not be anything you did wrong – it could be that the one bulb that did flower was a bigger bulb to begin with or was from healthier stock initially.

Meredith, who gardens in Wilbraham, posed this question to the Garden Lady: "As I look at all of the seed packets strewn before me, what your best advice would be for starting seeds indoors?"

Ah-hah! I have been itching to talk about this, so your timing is perfect.

Although we are excited to get the season started, the biggest mistake peo-

More questions for the Garden Lady

ple make is starting seeds too early. Always research the varieties you want to grow in a good seed catalog.

Johnny's Selected Seed and Fedco come to mind as having great advice on how many weeks prior to the last frost seeds should be sown. For example, tomato seeds should be planted indoors the last week of March or first week of April.

Although that seems late (we want to do it now), we don't want root bound transplants come May.

While average household temps will still result in seeds sprouting, bottom heat by use of heat mats will aid in germination because it will keep the seed bed a constant temperature.

Plants usually suffer without enough light – placing seedlings in the window usually results in seedlings that stretch to the sun. A simple shop light with fluorescent bulbs set a couple of inches above growing plants works out great.

Think about the soil you are using, too.

A soilless mix is far superior to regular

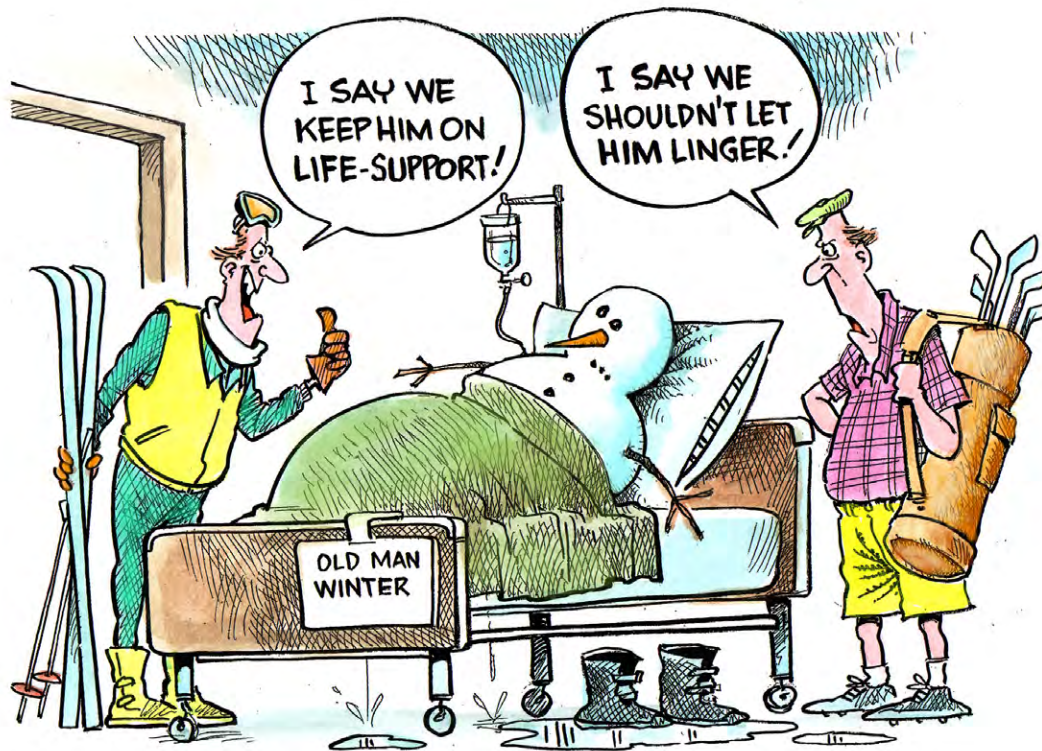
potting soil or garden soil. It's milled a little finer, and is made to be well-drained weed and pathogen free.

Moistening it to the consistency of a wrung out sponge before use is perfect. Don't bury small seeds too deep. Tiny seed should simply be pushed into the soil surface and not covered.

Hardening off the seedlings you grew before planting them in the ground is very important. Start acclimatizing them to the great outdoors slowly, first by putting them in the shade for a few hours, working up to full sun over the course of a week's time.

By taking my advice into account, you will be well on your way to growing healthy seedlings indoors.

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.



DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

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Correction Policy

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

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

SENIORS



The view of the main staircase

As I write this, the icy winds of February are swirling around me. I need to realize, Spring 2024 is right around the corner. There are a lot of reasons to be excited: the new buds on trees, early flowers, greener grass and the opening of our long-awaited Senior Center!!

It is amazing how much progress has been made since our last update. We are down to the “fine details” now! Ongoing projects include flooring, light fixtures in the fitness room, cleaning of building, staircase millwork. Systems that have passed testing are plumbing, gas, elec-



And for those chilly days when you just want to curl up with a good book, the library is taking shape!! Check out the ceiling details!

trical and pretesting of the generator with the elevator. HVAC is working.

Furniture was delivered on Feb. 16; fitness room equipment and pool tables were soon to follow. Before furniture was delivered, here are some recent photos:

Mark your calendar to join us for the official Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting

Ceremony to be held on Saturday, April 20.

As always, feel free to send questions/comments to



Our Kitchen is almost “ready to serve”



The carpeting in the Fitness Room will make folks want to exercise!

seniorinfo2021@gmail.com or leave a voicemail at 596-2800 ext. 315.

-Linda Tatko Cooper,

RN for Wilbraham Senior Center Building Committee

WILBRAHAM LIBRARY
Gentle Flow Yoga Class

WILBRAHAM - Certified Instructor Michelle Bouchard will lead a light and rejuvenating yoga class at the Wilbraham Public Library on Saturday, March 9 at 10 a.m. Participants ages 18+ will explore breathing practices, mindfulness and meditation techniques and a physical approach to sustainable exercise. All skill levels are welcome. Please bring your own yoga mat and dress comfortably. Space is limited and registration is required. To register, please contact the library at 413-596-6141 or visit the Event Calendar at www.wilbrahamlibrary.org. This free program is sponsored by the Wilbraham Friends of the Library.

To learn more, contact Emilie Lang at 413-596-6141 or elang@wilbrahamlibrary.org.

Pastel Workshop

WILBRAHAM - Award-winning pastel artist Gregory Maichack will return to the Wilbraham Public Library to teach his new workshop, Seascapes inspired by Winslow Homer, on Monday, March 18 from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. This pastel painting workshop is designed for beginners to experienced artists. Participants ages 18+ will experiment with the artist’s professional-grade pastels, pencils and paper. Materials will be provided and all attendees will get to take their artwork home. Registration opens Monday, Feb. 26, and space is limited. To register, please contact the library at 413-596-6141 or visit the Event Calendar at www.wilbrahamlibrary.org. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Wilbraham Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. Funding is also provided by the Wilbraham Friends of the Library.

To learn more, contact Emilie Lang at 413-596-6141 or elang@wilbrahamlibrary.org.

It’s not often I get to share stories about communities outside of the towns I write for, but I know this story encompasses other areas too because its congregation comprises of members from them, including the Lyons from Wilbraham who I’d recently featured. They referred me to Sue Peloquin of Chicopee, the one who spear-headed this idea from originally having a tag sale to benefit her church. With the downstairs space of the Trinity Lutheran Church located at 400 Wilbraham Rd. in Springfield, they have created a clean and beautifully organized Thrift Store with a wide variety of items at very reasonable prices.

Here you might find that beloved Beanie Baby you’ve been looking for that sells for \$2 each or three for \$5. Or perhaps you’re looking for that special Easter decoration, some starting at 50 cents. Baby clothing starts at 50 cents and jeans start at \$2 or maybe you’ll find a sweater for \$5 or less. Perhaps you’re in the market for boots or sneakers, toys, books, CD’s, lamps, jewelry or glassware. They’ve got a great selection of all these as well as many other items. The inventory constantly changes, which is why they have regular shoppers who don’t want to miss a good deal and come each week to check out the new merchandise.

The idea for the Thrift Store was originally hatched with 11 women who had taken part in the tag sale benefiting the church, but as the commitment became a reality that number dwindled to three. Sue, along with another Chicopee resident, Mary Vaughn and East Longmeadow resident Wanda Prahm keep this amazing shop running and orderly which involves about seven hours from each per week. Each volunteer staff member comes with their own uniqueness and expertise, but they all agree Sue is the mas-



By Barb Turcotte

termined of the operation. Mary retired after many years of nursing at Baystate Medical Center prior to the merge of becoming such, whereas Wanda retired after eighteen years as the church’s secretary and Sue owned her own catering business. Wanda has only been a resident of East Longmeadow for about two years, having moved from North Brookfield after losing her husband but previously had traveled to this church each week regardless of the distance. They do have others who occasionally volunteer but too numerous to mention them all by name. Though Sue admits she couldn’t do this without everyone’s help, she’s the one who often picks up the donations, organizes the space with a vision of how items should be displayed, does the pricing and makes the final decisions regarding sales. *(The volunteers squealed on her saying that sometimes a much-wanted item gets slipped into the shopper’s bag as a special surprise for them when they get home)*

They are excitedly beginning their third season of this undertaking and are very proud of being able to help their congregation by doing this. These ladies are known as the “Golden Girls” of the Trinity Lutheran Church! Each shared with me their own Random Acts of Kindness, as both recipients as well as the doers. These truly are some light-hearted, humorous, amazingly dedicated women!

Each December in the Narthex of the church, they have a Christmas tree that is decorated with donated scarves and mittens they then donate to a local library

where they are distributed to those in need. This creates a pooled effort for the entire congregation to partake in to help others. During the cold weather you’re apt to see winter jackets hung on the church’s fence for anyone who needs one to keep warm. They’re also anxiously waiting to start collaborating more with the Red

Cross who currently give vouchers for their Thrift Store to help people during their crisis. They do have a few collection sites in various areas that help with donations as well.

These volunteers meet on Wednesdays to organize the new donations, decide what should go into the front hall as sale items and then Sue gathers the new clothing and takes it home to launder before putting them in the store. They are open from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., Fridays only and depending on weather conditions.

Their answer to the question of what to do with items left over from your tag sale, estate sale or spring cleaning, call them? I know I have donations I’ll be making arrangements for as my own Random Act of Kindness and will certainly be contributing again when the process of spring cleaning begins. I’m so happy that I was introduced to these ladies and am able to support their cause which is helping others.

If you’d like to donate, call Sue Peloquin at 413-250-2499 and make arrangements for your Random Act of Kindness items. You’ll be helping many!

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

A COMMUNITY GALLERY



Life in **WILBRAHAM**

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

WILBRAHAM



The Minnechaug Ski Team competed at Berkshire East on Thursday Feb. 15 for Individuals and Overall finals. In individuals Freshman Isabella "Izzy" Usher was third in Slalom, fourth in Giant Slalom and fourth Overall Individuals. She sits in third place for the Girls High School North Division. Paige Holt sits in eighth in the North Division, and her younger brother Ted (seventh grade) sits in fourth place in the boys South Division and was ninth in Giant Slalom Individuals.

Ted Holt, Paige Holt and Izzy Usher proud of their achievements for 'Chaug.

Photos and captions courtesy of Michael Usher.



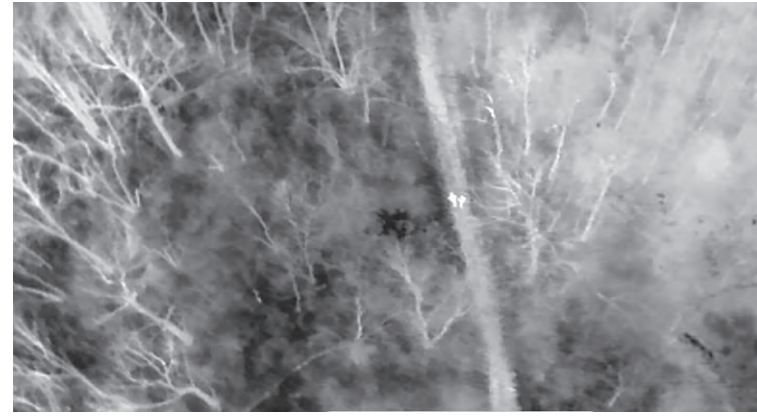
Izzy Usher, full speed and fearless on GS.



Paige Holt, crashing gates on SL.



Ted Holt, full speed on SL.



At approximately 7:40 a.m. on Feb. 14, the Wilbraham Fire Department dispatched to assist the Wilbraham Police Department with a missing juvenile. Officers were able to locate the juvenile, who was uninjured. The drone unit was established a year ago, and the department currently has certified drone operators. The drone unit has been dispatched over a dozen times the last year. Photo and caption of the Wilbraham Fire Department.

Chief updates Rotary Club...

Wilbraham Police Chief Edward Lennon (left) receives a gift from Wilbraham-Hampden Rotary Club President Don Flannery for being guest speaker at the club's Feb. 14 meeting at the Country Club of Wilbraham. Lennon updated the club on how police officers are handling 911 calls and new policies about dispatching calls for service. (Charles F. Bennett photo)

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Community Bulletin Board

Happy 12th Birthday
Ella Boudreau!

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 dzbierski@turley.com



The Wilbraham Fire Department hosted an ice rescue class on Jan. 29 for Western Mass departments. It was taught by Water Training Resources. Rescuers were able to learn and practice skills for ice emergencies. Photos and caption courtesy of the Wilbraham Fire Department.



drone was juvenile. ty has four ozen times in



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A couple dances to a love song, as Freddie Marion serenades attendees during the Valentine's Day Luncheon at Hampden Senior Center on Feb. 14.



From the left, Bob St. Marie, Susan Poirier, Leo Coughlin, Maureen Coughlin, Mary Hamel and Kimberly Converse celebrate Valentine's Day during the Valentine's Day Luncheon at Hampden Senior Center.



A crowd shot of attendees enjoying Valentine's Day festivities during the Valentine's Day Luncheon at Hampden Senior Center on Feb. 14.



Activities Coordinator Diane Marino serves dessert to attendees during the Valentine's Day Luncheon at Hampden Senior Center.



Freddie Marion performs a catalog of love songs in festive red attire during the Valentine's Day Luncheon at Hampden Senior Center on Feb. 14.



Attendees enjoyed baked ziti and garlic bread during the Valentine's Day Luncheon at Hampden Senior Center. The meal was sponsored by The Reserve at East Longmeadow and Village Food Mart.



Turley photos by Kristin Rivers
Mike and Joan Shea smile for a photo as they enjoy the Valentine's Day Luncheon at Hampden Senior Center.

LUNCHEON from page 1

tion, laughter and, very important, music! Soothes the soul," Marino said. "Gets the hands clapping and feet tapping!"

Leo Coughlin and his wife, Maureen, were one of the many couples in attendance, enjoying time with friends, supporting the senior center and watching Freddie Marion perform.

The Coughlins have been married for 58 years and

shared their advice about love and marriage.

"I have the last word in every argument. 'Yes, dear.' That's how we got to stay together," Leo Coughlin said.

"We're just fortunate that we like each other a lot and don't have all similar likes. We kind of go our own way a lot, do our own different hobbies and stuff but it's worth it," Maureen Coughlin said. "It's worth it."

The couple encourages residents to support the senior center, praising the staff for supporting the seniors in the community and for their events.

"As you can see by the big crowd, everybody supports the senior center because, again, go back to Becky

(Moriarty) and her staff," Leo Coughlin said. "They have nothing but the interest of our seniors at heart."

"It's a diverse event that they have, that they run, so there's something for everyone. There's something for everyone," Maureen Coughlin said. "And if you notice, there are some people here who are not senior citizens but who enjoy coming here with their parents, you know, which is fine and nice anyhow."

Marino wants the community to know the senior center provides as many events as they can and are always open to new ideas, with recent programs including African Drumming and Ukulele.

"If they don't see something in the newsletter that they're interested in, we always welcome suggestions. Maybe they don't see something happening that they would like to have happen and I'm very open to any of that to create," Marino said.

The Coughlins' message on this Valentine's Day stressed not only showing love to one another but also kindness.

"It's a day to be kind to each other. Absolutely. Not just so much as love, but if you have a friend, give them a hug and just be kind. It goes a long way," Maureen Coughlin said.

"I wish it could be like this every day, not just one day," Leo Coughlin said.

Marino thanked everyone for attending. "Thank you for supporting us and for being a big part of our each and every day that we're here," Marino said. "We just want to grow as a family."

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Offense shines in finale



Jayla Comes sends a three-point shot away.

WILBRAHAM – The Minnechaug Regional High School girls basketball easily won its regular season finale last Thursday evening, defeating Chicopee handily 78-30. Jayla comes had 14 points to lead the team while Elizabeth Woytowicz had 11 points. Kelly Cronin added 10 points. The Falcons finished the regular season 15-3 and qualified for Western Mass. The Falcons were scheduled to host Holyoke earlier this week.



Lylah Jeannotte shoots in traffic.



Ainsley Holden goes after a loose ball.



Laila Smith eyes the other side of the court as she dribbles.



Lyric Nelson turns play around as she heads back up the court after a rebound.



Kelly Cronin goes for the score under coverage.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com Ben Daniels clears the puck away. More photos page 12.

Falcons will make state tournament

WEST SPRINGFIELD – With three straight wins, the Minnechaug Regional High School ice hockey team has qualified for the state tournament set to take place next week. The Falcons did lose their regular season finale 4-0 against Westfield, but their wins over Northbridge, Taconic, and East Longmeadow got the Falcons to 10 wins for the season. Brackets for the Western Mass. tournament were not released as of press time, but the Falcons will either have a semifinal matchup in the tournament, or a nonplayoff game this week followed by the start of the state tournament next week.

Wrestling: Falcons, Lions crown champions

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

NORTHBRIDGE – At the Central/Western Massachusetts Division 2 tournament held earlier this month at Northbridge High School, Minnechaug wrestling was a runner up for total points with 232 while Agawam placed third with 202 points.

The Falcons crowned the most individual champions with four while Agawam had two champions

Holyoke and Chicopee also were part of the tournament. Holyoke had 72 points for 10th place and Chicopee placed 11th with 54.5 points.

Kal Ly won the 126-pound weight class, representing Minnechaug. Hunter Gormally took the championship at 157 pounds, Matthew MacPhail won at 175 pounds, and Sam Dean was a champion at 180 pounds.

Agawam had a pair of champions as Max Halloway took the title at 215 pounds and Nicholas Ugolini took a championship home at 132 pounds.

More Falcons had successful experiences at the sectional meet, including Ezekiel Vargas, who was the run-

Please see **WRESTLING**, page 12

Miracle League to receive Doyle Award

SPRINGFIELD – The Miracle League of Western Massachusetts, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing inclusive baseball opportunities for individuals with disabilities, have been selected as the recipient of the Ryan Doyle Courage Award by the Western Mass Baseball Hall of Fame.

The Ryan Doyle Courage Award, named in honor of the late Ryan Doyle, a courageous young athlete who battled cancer, recognizes individuals or organizations that demonstrate exceptional courage, resilience, and dedication to the sport of baseball in Western Massachusetts. The Miracle League of Western Massachusetts was chosen for their unwavering commitment to creating an inclusive environment where all individuals, regardless of ability, can experience the joy of playing baseball.

Founded in 2015, the Miracle League of Western Massachusetts has been providing accessible baseball programs for children and adults with disabilities. Through their adaptive facilities and volunteer support, they ensure that every player has the opportunity to participate in America's favorite pastime. The organization has positively impacted the lives of countless individuals, fostering camaraderie, self-confidence, and a sense of belonging within the community.

The Miracle League of Western Massachusetts will be formally presented with the Ryan Doyle Courage Award at the Western Mass Baseball Hall of Fame induction ceremony on March 7th 6pm at Twin Hills Country Club in Longmeadow. This event brings together Western Mass baseball legends, enthusiasts, community leaders, and former MLB players to celebrate the accomplishments of the inductees.

For more information about the Miracle League of Western Massachusetts, their inclusive baseball programs and to volunteer, please visit <https://miracleleaguewestma.com/> or contact Brian Feeley at brian@miracleleaguewestma.com.

To Learn more about Ryan's story: Please visit the Ryan Doyle Foundation at <https://rd26.org/>.

For tickets to attend the induction dinner on March 7th please go to www.valleybluesox.com or email WMassHOF@valleybluesox.com

Checkers get best of T-Birds

CHARLOTTE, N.C. -- The Springfield Thunderbirds (23-20-3-2) were unable to complete a third-period comeback attempt, as they fell by a final score of 5-3 against the Charlotte Checkers (24-20-5-0) on Sunday inside Bojangles' Coliseum.

The Checkers carried much of the offensive play in the opening 10 minutes, making Malcolm Subban work a lot in the first period. Moments after a Springfield delay-of-game penalty ended, Charlotte maintained offensive pressure and got on the board as Gerry Mayhew found open ice in the low slot and one-touched a pass from Casey Fitzgerald through Subban at 9:22. The Checkers hit two other posts in the period on their way to outshooting Springfield 17-7 in the first frame.

Springfield had its own chance clip iron in the early stages, as Jakub Vrana narrowly missed giving the T-Birds a 1-0 edge when he one-timed a Ryan Suzuki saucer pass off the pipe behind Spencer Knight. Despite the disparity in shot attempts, the T-Birds still found a way to get the game evened up when Zach Dean deflected a Leo Loof

shot from the left circle all the way to the crease and through Knight's legs with just 1:09 left in the first, tying the game, 1-1.

The tying marker, however, proved to do little to quell Charlotte's offensive mojo in the second period. Another lengthy defensive zone sequence for the T-Birds ended in a Ryan McAllister one-time goal at 2:13 of the middle frame. Springfield's penalty kill then got dented for the first time in the season series at 10:49 when Zac Dalpe found a loose puck deep in the blue paint before Subban and the defense could clear it away. The Checker captain's 12th goal of the season upped the lead to 3-1, which would stand through the end of the second. Charlotte outshot Springfield 33-12 through 40 minutes.

Springfield threatened another third period comeback just 41 seconds into the third as Joey Duszak wristed a shot over Knight's blocker to make it a 3-2 game off assists from Matthew Peca and Adam Gaudette. Despite a heavy presence in the Charlotte zone in the opening half of the final frame, the score stayed 3-2 until Justin Sour-

dif guided a Mayhew centering pass through Subban to restore the two-goal cushion for the Checkers at 12:04.

Still undeterred, Peca and the T-Birds responded in kind just 48 seconds later, as the captain circled the offensive zone before elevating a wrist shot through traffic and over Knight's glove to cut it down to a 4-3 score.

With 2:51 remaining, the Springfield power play was given a grand opportunity following a tripping penalty on Sourdif, but the Charlotte penalty killers answered the call, and another Springfield minor penalty nullified the power play and spoiled any chances of a tying goal. Mayhew finished his three-point night, finding the empty net with just over 30 seconds to play.

It marked Charlotte's first win in four tries this season against the Thunderbirds. Springfield returns home to begin a three-game weekend on Friday as the I-91 rival Hartford Wolf Pack comes to town. Puck drop is set for 7:05 p.m. at the MassMutual Center this Friday night.

WRESTLING from page 11

ner up in the 106-pound weight class. Zayde Facchetti was the runner up in the 165-pound finals. In the consolation finals at 138 pounds, Owen Goldberg scored the win with a quick 28-second pinfall.

Jordin Agosto came in second for Agawam with a great effort in the 120-pound championship match. Ryan Sexton was also a runner-up, falling 6-0 in the championship match at 138 pounds. Keymani Rivera was a winner in the consolation bracket at 165 pounds, taking third place in the meet.

Steven Santiago brought home a championship for the Knights, winning the 113-pound weight class over runner-up Jordan Dietz from Minnechaug.

Ludlow High School traveled to Ashland High School and the Lions participated in the Central Mass. meet for Division 3. The Lions placed third in the tournament with 168 points. Host Ashland won the meet with Wayland taking second place.

Champions for Ludlow included Ryan Gomes at d126 pounds. He defeated Ethan Anastasia from Holliston by an 8-2 decision. Lucas Alvan was the other champion with the victory at

165 pounds. He scored a third period pinfall for the sectional title.

Samantha Bertini was defeated by technical fall to be the runner-up at 106 pounds while Tristin Stephens won the consolation bracket, taking third place at 215 pounds at the meet.

The top six finishers in each weight class moved on to their respective division state meets and the top placers from that meet head to the All-State meet, also known as the Meet of Champions for the opportunity to head into the New England meet, which takes place next weekend.



Tim Hanigan attempts to break away with the puck.



Tristen Hottin looks to pass past an opponent.



Brayden O'Sullivan tries to pass before an opponent catches up.



Gabe Tassinari heads up the ice after making a defensive recovery.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com



Donald Davenport of the Planning Committee for the district reorganization speaks on Feb. 15.



School Committee Vice Chair Sean Kennedy spoke multiple times during the Feb. 15 community forum at Minnechaug.



Residents spoke against moving eighth graders to the high school on Feb. 15 at the community forum at Minnechaug.

FORUM from page 1

Everybody is speaking of would be Green Meadows being pre-k to (grade) five. Mile Tree being grades one and two. Stony Hill being grades two to three. Soule Road being grades four to five. Wilbraham Middle School being grades six to seven and Minnechaug Regional High School being grades eight through 12," Boudreau said.

Boudreau continued, listing the second option.

"Option two is Green Meadows being pre-k to five, Mile Tree being grades K to one, Stony Hill being grades two to five, and there's three sections of each grade. Soule Road would have four sections of grades two to five, Wilbraham Middle would be grades six and seven and Minnechaug would be grades eight to 12," Boudreau said.

The difference between the two options is whether or not Stony Hill and Soule Road should continue to serve grades two to three and four and five respectively or if they should change to a grade two through five configuration.

Timeline: Narrowing the options to two

Provost began the forum by sharing an extensive timeline of the proposed reorganization, which is part of the strategic plan, whose creation began in May of 2021 and was completed after Provost joined the district in 2022.

"This work was led by a 34-member steering committee and included input from more than 800 individuals," Provost said, noting that the strategic plan includes 100 action steps and five domains.

One of the domains addresses the use of facilities within the district and notes that it should be determined if the buildings can be used more efficiently and effectively. To guide the process, the Planning Committee first met in January 2023.

"In February 2023, members of the Planning Committee toured each of the schools to better understand the challenges facing our district," Provost said. "Overcrowding was noted at Mile Tree, Stony Hill and Wilbraham Middle. In all three of these schools, students and staff were working in spaces that were not originally intended as classrooms or work areas."

Closets were being used as offices, offices were being used as classrooms and libraries were being converted into testing areas. At the same time, unused space was found at Minnechaug, Green Meadows and Thornton Burgess School, which has less than 15 students in the ages 18-22 transitional program.

When Provost began listing possible reconfigurations, there were over 100 possibilities, but most were not educationally sound. Meanwhile, the Planning Committee developed five goals to guide its work, which included improving the quality of the district's education, eliminating overcrowding, reducing student transitions, maximizing available space in the schools and exercising fiscal responsibility.

"Based on these criteria, the Planning Committee narrowed down the list to the 10 most viable reconfiguration options," Provost said. "During March and April, the Planning Committee met with various stakeholder groups, including parents, staff and elected officials to evaluate the list of 10 options and solicit ideas about other possible ways to reconfigure the district."

Four options were then selected, and the district began working with Christine

Lynch from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to discuss the state review process that the reconfiguration will be subject to. As part of the reconfiguration, the district would have to update its regional agreement.

"(DESE) completed its legal review by mid-September and sent the district a preliminary list of 39 items that should be addressed in an updated agreement. With the assistance of legal counsel, the School Committee has been working on incorporating the changes that DESE has highlighted into a draft revised agreement," Provost said.

Over the summer, Provost surveyed the community to gauge its temperature on the four possible plans. All options involved moving the eighth grade to Minnechaug.

During the process, the district has reported a high acceleration in the transfer of middle schoolers from Hampden from Green Meadows to Wilbraham Middle School, as Green Meadows is nearly vacant.

"As of this date, 110 of 118 Hampden middle school students have transferred to WMS. With almost no middle school students left at Green Meadows, most of the teachers who were there have left for different positions, leaving us in the position of relying upon online instruction for many of the subjects for the few students who remain," Provost said.

In November, the Planning Committee, along with School Committee members and district staffers, visited three high schools on Cape Cod that each have an eighth grade to grade 12 model. From all accounts, those who went on the trip were impressed by their observations.

Then came last Thursday's meeting. "Tonight's meeting is focused on hearing feedback on that decision (to narrow the options to two)," Provost said. "Looking to the future, there is still work to be done on a revised regional agreement and a choice needs to be made as to which model the district would implement under a new agreement."

Under the current timeline, the School Committee could develop a revised regional agreement sometime this winter or spring. Then, the question would go to each town for a vote.

"If the revised agreement passes the School Committee and the two towns, it will then go on to the (DESE) commissioner for his approval," Provost said.

The changes would be implemented in the 2025-2026 school year.

Eighth graders to Minnechaug: Discussion of the night

As part of the public speaking segment, which lasted 90 minutes, community members were given two minutes to speak; a digital timer was visible on the table. After talking and waiting a turn, speakers could return to the microphone; some individuals spoke up to four times.

No one from the audience who spoke seemed thrilled with the Planning Committee's work or the options it selected. A group of teachers expressed concerns about being scattered throughout the district, parents spoke against adopting neighborhood schools and others voiced concerns about moving the TWB Transitional Program from TWB to Minnechaug.

Most notably, a contingent of speakers bashed the committee for finalizing two options that would both send eighth graders to the high school.

"Middle school kids have a hard enough time figuring themselves out mentally and emotionally. You get them confined with the high schoolers, I think you're going to have another issue on your hands," one female attendee said.

Another woman said, "Eighth graders and 12th graders are living such different lives. They're exposed to different things."

School Committee Vice Chair Sean Kennedy, a member of the Planning Committee, defended the committee's stance on sending eighth graders to Minnechaug.

"We visited three different schools on the Cape. They said parents were very much against that happening, but once it happened, about two months later, no one had any issue," Kennedy said. "(Instead of segregating), we were told it's better to let the eighth graders participate more and understand more about what happens in the building."

Kennedy was told that students in the three Cape Cod high schools "self-regulate" to make sure that the youngest students stay out of trouble, and the teachers keep a watchful eye as well.

"They said those problems that the parents feared didn't materialize," Kennedy said, noting that his child would be among the first eighth grade class to go to the high school. "Make eighth grade count. Have eighth grade be the year they get used to the (high school) and different schedules (and can) be around students who are a lot more mature than they are."

Provost also listed several benefits of sending eighth graders to the high school, although he acknowledged there could be a negative aspect.

"You can have students in eighth grade who are eligible to play (high school) sports, you can have students in eighth grade who are able to take higher level math classes, able to participate in competitive band, etc., but the question is what's the cost of that? Does that mean adolescence doesn't get a chance to do everything adolescence is supposed to do? That's what I would see as the downside," Provost said, describing it as "the shadow of the benefit."

One woman said that the comparison to the three Cape Cod schools was an insult to residents. She said no one wants to put their eighth-grade child in such a high-pressure situation and that not one audience member seemed to find value in the option.

"Frankly, as a taxpayer, a mother, a resident, somebody who purchased a home here because of the school system, I have to say I'm so irritated by hearing that somebody that doesn't live here and doesn't pay taxes is the brainchild or the spark of this. They can answer whatever question they want, but they don't live here," she said.

Another woman balked at Provost's mentioning of AP classes.

"You're talking about bringing eighth graders to the high school and you're mentioning AP classes for college? I don't know what is going on. They are eighth graders. They have a right to be kids. If

this district only cares about the college outcome of these graduates, I don't know why I'm living here because value is not only in kids who go to college," she said.

Another woman, who works for a law firm, said she's seen a rise in cases of older students assaulting younger students and specifically mentioned multiple cases that have occurred on the Cape.

"It's foreseeable it's going to happen. The theory here should be protect the child and not worry about the looks of the building," she said. "I beg of you to reconsider the eighth grade to the high school."

One woman said it was telling that the committee had no teacher or parents on its side defending the idea of eighth graders to the high school.

One man relayed the same message by calling out Kennedy and questioning why he was so attached to his stance.

"Sean, not one parent tonight has agreed with your comment, but yet you sit there and defend the eighth graders going to the high school," he said. "At some point, you have to start listening to your town who is speaking to you. We don't want them to go, Sean. Find us another option Superintendent Provost."

Ultimately, Kennedy backed off his position. While he said he truly believes sending eighth graders to the high school is the best option for the district, he acknowledged the sentiment of the room.

"You guys are telling me you don't want that? Then that's fine. That's not what you're going to get. We're having this (conversation). We haven't made any decisions yet. We have taken a bunch of options and have brought them down to what we think were the best by looking at it, and no one here likes the idea of moving the eighth grade to the high school. If that's not what you want, I won't vote for that option. I do listen," Kennedy said.

Kennedy finished by expressing his belief that residents will instead have to choose an option that is worse for the town.

As the Planning Committee made little progress in establishing a preferred option last Thursday, it must go back to the drawing board quickly if it wishes to stay on track.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

**Town of Hampden
Notice of Public Hearing**
The Hampden Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 6:30 PM** in the Town House, 625 Main Street, Hampden, MA on the application of Glendale Road Development, LLC for a Special Permit under Section 7.16*, Solar Energy Systems, of the Hampden Zoning Bylaw to allow the construction of a 4.92 MW-ac Ground Mounted Solar Facility coupled with Energy Storage and associated access drive-ways, site grading and utilities located at 530 Glendale Road. The facility will be an Agricultural Ground Mounted System where the interior array areas will be maintained as pasture fields grazing sheep, cattle and chickens managed by Ledge Valley Farm who is already established at the site. Information related to this application is on file in the Town Clerk's Office and is available for review by the public during normal business hours.

*Correction of bylaw section described in 02/08/24 notice.

For the Board,
Madison Pixley, Chair
Hampden Planning Board
02/08, 02/15, 02/22/2024

**MASTER PLAN
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The Wilbraham Economic Development Committee (EDC) for the Town of Wilbraham (TOW), Massachusetts is soliciting Requests for Qualifications (RFQ) from Civil Engineering Planning and/or Landscape Architectural Firms, experienced in producing municipal parking and village center traffic flow Feasibility Studies and Master Plans and licensed in the State of Massachusetts, to develop a Feasibility Study and Comprehensive Municipal Parking and Pedestrian/Vehicular Traffic Flow Master Plan for Crane Park, 322V Main Street, Wilbraham, MA 01095.

RFQ documents will be available on February 21, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. Documents may be obtained by visiting the Town's website at: www.wilbraham-ma.gov, under "Government/Bid Postings"; and on Commbuys.

The Fee for this service is Not to Exceed \$50,000. The Fee shall be submitted with the RFQ in a separate, sealed envelope.

Questions should be directed in writing to Nick Breault, Wilbraham Town Administrator, at: nbreault@wilbraham-ma.gov

RFQ's due no later than 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 21, 2024 in the Select Board/Town Administrator's Office, Wilbraham Town Hall, 240 Springfield Street, Wilbraham, MA 01095.

RFQ's will be opened at 2:05 p.m. in the Select Board's Meeting Room on that date.

The Wilbraham Select Board shall be the Awarding Authority. The Wilbraham Select Board reserves in its sole discretion the right to reject any or all bids, to waive informalities, or to issue a new RFQ, as deemed in the best interest of the Town.
02/22, 02/29/2024

**WILBRAHAM
PLANNING BOARD**

The Wilbraham Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at 6:00 PM** in the Town Office Building, 240 Springfield Street, on the application of Wilbraham Monson Academy for site plan approval as required under Sections 3.4.4.1 and 13.5 of the Wilbraham Zoning By-Law to allow renovation and expansion of the Gill Chapel building (for conversion to a dining hall) and expansion of the associated parking lot on the Wilbraham Monson Academy campus on property known as 404 Main Street as shown on information on file in the Planning Office and posted for public viewing on the Planning Board page of the Town of Wilbraham website at www.wilbraham-ma.gov/123/Planning-Board. Both in person and virtual participation are available. To participate virtually go to <https://meet.goto.com/744758973> or call 877-309-2073 (Access Code: 744-758-973).

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02/22, 02/29/2024

Polish Plate Dinner to be held March 9 at Immaculate Conception Church

INDIAN ORCHARD – A Polish Plate Dinner (Four Pierogi, one Golambki, Kielbasa, Kapusta, Rye Bread) will be held on Saturday, March 9, from 3 p.m. – 6 p.m. at Immaculate Conception

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Wilb. Women's Club to meet

The March meeting of the Wilbraham Women's Club will be held on March 14, 2024 at noon in the Parish Center at St. Cecilia Church on Main St. Sandwiches and dessert will be served.

The speaker for the day will be Jen, who is the owner of the Flower Shed in Wilbraham's Post Office Park. Jen will be holding a workshop for us at this meeting. She will teach us how to make a lovely succulent to enjoy in our homes. The cost for this meeting will be \$10 and reservations are needed. Please call Michele Axtmann at 413-596-3325 or Linda Raffa at 413-596-8245.

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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Golf scores
- 5. Shock therapy
- 8. Ballplayer's tool
- 11. Quench one's thirst
- 13. Female relatives of American war vets (abbr.)
- 14. Every one of two or more things
- 15. Member of Muslim people
- 16. Play
- 17. Type of cheese
- 18. Type of lounge chair
- 20. ___ King Cole, musician
- 21. Fellows
- 22. North, Central and South
- 25. In an early way
- 30. Foes
- 31. Georgia rockers
- 32. Cryptocurrency
- 33. Narrow path
- 38. Disallow
- 41. Joyousness
- 43. Inaccessible
- 45. Evoke emotions
- 47. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
- 49. Boston Celtic punk rockers (abbr.)
- 50. Sword
- 55. Actor Idris
- 56. Affirmative (slang)
- 57. Afflicted
- 59. One point north of northeast
- 60. Born of
- 61. Arabic name
- 62. Traumatic brain injury (abbr.)
- 63. Extremity
- 64. Post
- along a slope
- nematodes
- 3. Indian king
- 4. Type of milk
- 5. One who brings home the bacon
- 6. More comprehensible
- 7. Connected with sense of touch
- 8. Red mineral
- 9. Breezed through
- 10. Therefore
- 12. Supplement with difficulty
- 14. Early kingdom of Syria
- 19. Satisfy
- 23. They confuse doctors (abbr.)
- 24. Brass instrument
- 25. Domesticated animal
- 26. Ribonucleic acid
- 27. Snakelike fish
- 28. Woman (French)
- 29. Economically-minded aircraft
- 34. When you hope to get somewhere
- 35. Tease
- 36. Actress Gretchen
- 37. Midway between northeast and east
- 39. Inoffensive
- 40. Yellowish cotton cloth
- 41. Consume
- 42. Does not tell the truth
- 44. Improved something
- 45. Spiritual leader
- 46. Abba __, Israeli politician
- 47. Fix
- 48. Evergreen tree genus
- 51. Swiss river
- 52. Prejudice
- 53. Major C. European river
- 54. Long, narrow strap
- 58. Male parent

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Pacific Standard Time
- 2. Protruding ridge on

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