

Wilbraham Public Library hosts NEON JELLYFISH PAINTING CLASS

By Natalie Proulx
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - On Tuesday, Feb. 17, the library held a Glow-in-the-Dark Neon Jellyfish Painting class for teens.

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

Erin Leigh Boughamer from Paint Sip Fun instructed the class and provided all the materials for everyone to enjoy the program.

Though the library has hosted many Paint Sip Fun classes in the past, this one had a new twist. Using new black lights, attendees were able to paint both in the light and see how their artworks looked in the dark. The whole glow-in-the-dark painting process was new for both the teens and the instructor.

"This is my first time doing neon," Boughamer said, a professional artist and newly retired educator who hosts Paint Sip Fun classes for public, private, and fundraising events all around Massachu-



Teens painting their jellyfish artworks!

Photo courtesy of Rachel Hapgood

Please see **NEON**, page 15

Scantic River Artisans host 'Big Art Show of Small Works'

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - The Scantic River Artisans kicked off its first art show of 2026 with the "Big Art Show of Small Works" on Feb. 14 and 15.

The two-day event featured acrylic, mixed media, watercolor, oil, graphite, pastel and charcoal paintings, photography, jewelry, pottery, metal art, woodwork, quilted arts, glass art and many more.

Also, a performance by Harpist Harriette Block, a raffle and—for the first time ever—a silent auction.

This year, the SRA is also hoping to raise \$3,000 to purchase a much-needed portable folding art display wall.

The art show was sponsored by Lawn Tech Lawn Care, Blick Art Materials, Mass Cultural Council and Hampden Cultural Council, Monson Savings Bank, RAH (Recreation Association of Hampden) and the Friends of Hampden Senior Citizens.

Tony Restivo of Wood Wonders explained he does

a variety of things beyond woodworking, including cabinetry and dining room tables. He always loved construction and had fixed up 9 homes.

"So, I started out just watching 'This Old House' back in the 80's and I learned a lot from that and then I bought my first house and there was a lot of work to be done," Restivo said. "So, I tried to do it myself and I learned a lot from that. Some of that, I made a lot of mistakes along the way, but I learn from my mistakes, and then I started doing woodworking when I got into the 50s once the kids were grown, I had more time."

He got involved with the SRA after meeting Nan Hurlburt at the Big E, where they had booths next to each other. From there, he spoke with President Laura Salerno and featured furniture pieces in a prior show.

"So, I'm here to show off my stuff and talk about what anybody's interested in," Restivo said.

Please see **SMALL WORKS**, page 10

Selectboard discusses possible regional agreement change

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - The Selectboard discussed a possible change to the regional agreement during their Feb. 17 meeting.

After Chair John Flynn noted at the School Committee's Planning Committee meeting, "it seemed like" they were discussing "a lot of changes that, perhaps, we hadn't seen at this point," Selectboard Member Don Davenport provided additional information on Para-

graph D.

"So, the original change was when the district assigns students from any grades from both member towns to a single school building, which single school building is a lease building, the building will be treated as a district-owned building, and then we would pay a portion of the number of students," Davenport said.

After Flynn asked if this was a proposed change or a previously existing change, Davenport clarified, "proposed change."

"So, they're eliminating a proposed change, basically," Flynn said.

"Right. So, they're eliminating a proposed change and they put in E," Davenport said. "It says, 'Capital costs of the district-owned equipment and property shall be a portion to the member towns based on the ratio with that member town's foundation enrollment calculated on the basis of the member's town's three-year rolling average foundation enrollment for grades served at that property, for the member town bears to

the total foundation enrollment of the member town district, calculated on the basis of combined three-year rolling average for grades served by that property for all member towns."

Flynn replied if this was in reference to Wilbraham Middle School, "it's not in reference to it because it's not district-owned."

"Or is there something else after that's going to, like, play into this?" Flynn said.

Please see **REGIONAL**, page 5



Turley photo by Kristin Rivers
The regional agreement was a big point of discussion for the Hampden Selectboard on Feb. 17.

Stuffies take over WPL at sleepover

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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WILBRAHAM - The library was taken over by several stuffie visitors during this year's Annual Stuffed Animal Sleepover on Feb. 19 and 20.

On Feb. 19, the stuffies were dropped off by their owners and had a bedtime story read to them by a teen

volunteer, who were then tucked in for the night when their owners left.

Upon departure, the stuffies ran amok in varying ways from drinking from the water fountain, wearing cheater glasses for reading, having fun at the front desk and in the Teen Loft, hiding in the bookshelves, hanging out on the railing, playing around the coffee machine and many more shenanigans.

The following day, the stuffies were picked up by their owners as they enjoyed a craft with their families and checked out a slideshow of the prior day's adventures.

The program was made possible by the Friends of the Wilbraham Public Li-

Please see **STUFFIES**, page 13



Photo courtesy of Rachel Hapgood

A group photo of this year's teen volunteers for the Stuffed Animal Sleepover.

HISTORICAL WILBRAHAM

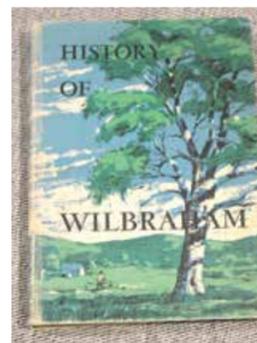
The promise of Spring in 1965

Charlie Merrick throws a monkey wrench into the 1965 Election

By Charles F. Bennett
Times Editor Emeritus

The trend in Wilbraham back in 1965 was all about holding card parties at smorgasbord's. Whether the sponsoring group was the Republicans, the Democrats or the Parent-Teacher Associations. The new library in the center of town had not yet been built and the Friends of the Library hadn't met with the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board to pave the way for a brand new library building.

The new library was all the talk in 1965. The February meeting was mostly about acquiring the land where it would be built. No definite plans were announced but it was pointed out that the need for a new library was more



(Charles F. Bennett photo)

Three years after Charlie Merrick wrote and edited "The History of Wilbraham", he disrupted the 1965 Town Election.



Charlie Bennett

evident than ever.

Jesse L. Rice, chairman of the board of Selectmen, was heard saying, more than ever, that the town has suffered a great loss in the passing of Irving J. Corder, a man who served the community well in many capacities. The Selectmen said Corder was "an outstanding civic leader who always had his community's best interest at heart."

61 Years Ago

Blue and Gold Dinner

Here is a news clipping reported by my mom, Ethel M. Bennett, who was the Wilbraham correspondent for the Springfield daily newspaper The Morning Union from the 1940s through 1970s. From a February 1965 edition "A Blue and Gold Banquet to celebrate Boy Scout Week was held Monday Night at Memorial School with more than 125 Cub Scouts, leaders, parents and families of Pack 175. Delano Denard presented the charter for the 11th year in a row. Entertainment was furnished by the Minnechaug Gymnastics Team."

Prof. Arnold Rhodes, professor of forestry at the University of Massachusetts said that 1965's problems stem largely from people, too many who are crowded into areas which are not suitably planned to give them adequate living space.

Please see **HISTORICAL**, page 8

DL&G TREE

Tree
Removal



Structural
Pruning



Crane
Service



Storm
Damage



Stump
Grinding



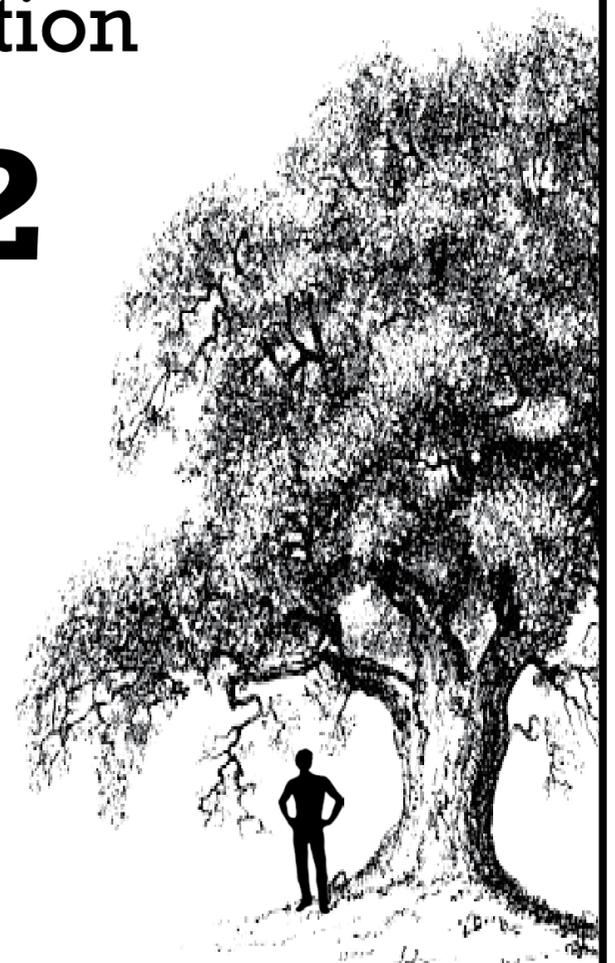
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DL&G TREE



INSURED AND CERTIFIED

Adults enjoy Paint, Sip, Fun at WPL

By Angelina Acevedo
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - On Feb. 17, the library welcomed Erin Leigh Boughamer from her very own business, Paint Sip Fun, to recreate the painting Cardinal in the Birch.

The event welcomed adults to the library and provided refreshments as they watched and learned from Boughamer with a step-by-step process for the design.

The program was sponsored by the Friends of the Wilbraham Public Library.

Boughamer's business started in November 2013, where her dream of creating a traveling art studio came true. Paint Sip Fun is available for public events, private parties, bridal and baby showers, birthday parties, fundraisers, and anything in between.

Her business offers not just painting, but work with ceramics, glass and more.

Her vision was to educate and inspire adults to get back in touch with their creative sides.

"My favorite part about teaching these classes is the opportunity I have to empower people," Boughamer said. "It's also just fun to hang out with people when we're all working on the same thing! The entire process just lights me up. I love seeing people walk into a

class sounding very skeptical, saying things like 'oh I'm not good at this', to then saying, 'Wow I kind of like art!' and feeling accomplished."

During the event, Boughamer guided the adult group through the steps of creating a beautiful snowy painting.

"The basic steps for this painting are starting with a blue sky background and some white birch trees. Then adding some brown to the birch trees for bark, and finally a cardinal to complete it," Boughamer said.

She also offered advice to the painters, such as suggesting thinking in thirds for the paintings composition, and provided support when painters felt less confident about their works.

As Emilie Lang, the adult librarian, said, "Erin would probably say to enjoy the process, and not as much on the product."

"We've had Erin at the library multiple times, for adults and teens most recently, and these event registrations fill up very quickly. For this current painting event, all the adult slots were taken within the hour of the event posting on the Wilbraham Public Library website. We're hoping that we can have her back again in the spring time, since it's so popular," Lang said. "The



The adult group with their final products.

Photos courtesy of Emilie Lang



Erin Leigh Boughamer guiding adults while painting the Cardinal in the Birch.



An example provided by Erin Leigh Boughamer of Cardinal in the Birch.

library always tries to listen to the wants and needs of the community, and it's great to know that we offer something that people really want to do. These programs are free to the public, which only makes them even more accessible for

those in our community that want a place to be creative."

Even though another event with Boughamer and Paint Sip Fun has yet to be announced, there are other art related events happening at the library. For all ages, the Tiny Art

Show allows anyone to come pick up a small 4x4 canvas at the library and return it with any type of artwork drawn.

"Some adults who signed up to paint with Erin already picked up a small mini canvas," Lang said.

At the end of the program, thanks to Boughamer's help, attendees were able to take home a beautiful wintery scene that fits the season, and surely made memories while creating these pieces of artwork.

Carolyn Averill in Concert Feb. 28

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham United Players proudly present Carolyn Averill in Concert, an afternoon of music and storytelling on Saturday, Feb. 28 at 4 p.m.

Joined by several WUP friends, Carolyn Averill invites audiences on a heartfelt musical journey through songs from her life that hold deep personal meaning. The program will feature audience favorites from past WUP productions, along with music that may be entirely new to listeners.

The concert will be accompanied by Brett Boles, an award-winning musical theatre composer, lyricist, book writer and music director. Brett is the founder of The M Tea Songwriting Studio (the largest private online songwriting education program in the United States) and a proud member of the Tony-honored BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop, and the Dramatists Guild of America.

In addition to accompanying, Brett will also join Carolyn for several of

their favorite duets, adding warmth and collaboration to this special performance.

This is a free concert, open to the public. While there is no admission charge, the event is a benefit for the Players, and donations will be gratefully accepted.

Community members are warmly invited to attend and enjoy an inspiring afternoon of music in a welcoming setting.

The concert will be held at Wilbraham United Church, 500 Main Street, Wilbraham.

Wilbraham 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 this fall.

The criteria considered are academic achievement, character, and leadership. Applications are available in the Guidance Office at Minnechaug Regional High School. For those attending other high schools, please email Mrs.

Rae Teed (rae.teed@gmail.com) and an application can be mailed to you. All applications must be postmarked by March 20, 2026 to be considered.

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Hampden - Wilbraham Regional School District
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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: Thursday, March 5, 2026
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 12, 2026.)

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COMMUNITY

A watershed is full of action!

By Keith Davies
*Coordinator,
 Chicopee 4Rivers
 Watershed Council
 Guest Contributor*

Editor's Note: This is the second part in a multi-part series about the Chicopee 4Rivers Watershed Council.

By 2014, the original Chicopee River Watershed Council (1970s) had ceased to exist, it had not been able to engage new people.

A small group of people saw a need to change that and began to renew an idea: the Chicopee Watershed and its tributaries are a special place and should be better known and appreciated by its local residents. Why and how to do that?

Rivers have long been the lifeblood of communities across the region. They helped build New England and they were worked hard and taken for granted.

By the 1970s, people began to realize we needed to clean up our rivers, they benefited us and wildlife in ways

we had overlooked. Watershed Councils sprang up and helped start a process to turn things around and in the big picture, things improved, our rivers were cleaned up a great deal.



Yet the job is not done, and some practices still impact healthy rivers in undesirable ways. Today we enjoy rivers recreationally and realize they serve wildlife and people in many important and healthy ways.

The new effort started with going community to community sharing the idea and inviting people to get involved. We held many local meetings at town halls, libraries, and community centers and it stirred interest and awareness.

We hosted river paddles and clean ups. Some joined the effort!

To give this effort focus and connect people in meaningful ways to the rivers, C4R

inaugurated two programs: Water quality monitoring and Paddling trail development.

We would monitor the basic bacterial health of the river for recreational use and enjoyment. This would invite people to see these special places and learn if they were a healthy place to enjoy.

We started with six sites on two rivers in 2015 and are now at 20 sites on all four rivers.

We have created four Blue Trails, routes on and maps of the rivers that highlight both historical and natural places that people can explore to see how special our four local rivers are.

Knowing their special character and health benefits reveals their value.

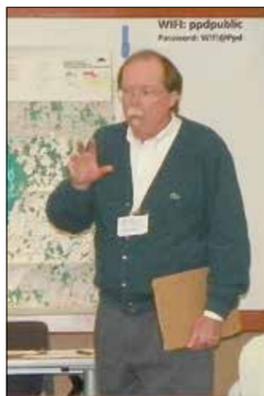
Good progress, yet just a start. The initial excitement of renewing the idea has worn off a bit.

But once something of value is recognized, it needs to be maintained, cared for, what a handful of people had started needs more hands to keep things going. Could you help?

Next week we share our vision going forward...



Volunteers stood near a pile of trash and debris collected during a cleanup.



Submitted Photos
 Keith Davies led a discussion about the Chicopee 4Rivers Watershed Council.



Paddlers made their way down river during a group paddle.



Volunteers participated in one of many river cleanups in the Chicopee River Watershed.



Paddlers explored the Quaboag River Blue Trail.

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Wilbraham Junior Women's Club Annual Scholarship applications now available

WILBRAHAM - The GFWC Wilbraham Junior Women's Club is pleased to announce the availability of its annual scholarship for graduating seniors at Minnechaug Regional High School.

In keeping with the Club's mission to strengthen the community through volunteer service and support of others, a \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded to a student who exemplifies these values and plans to attend a two-year, four-year, or other accredited institution of higher education.

Scholarship applications are available through the Minnechaug Regional High School Guidance Office. Completed applications must be postmarked by April 1, 2026 and mailed to Katy Reed, Scholarship Committee, 490 Glendale Road, Wilbraham, MA 01095. Students are encouraged to apply and take advantage of this opportunity to support their post-secondary educational goals.

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Irish Music Concert at the WPL

WILBRAHAM— Instrumentalist and vocalist David Polansky will perform “Erin Go Bragh: Songs From and About Ireland” at the Wilbraham Public Library on Monday, March 9 at 6 p.m.

Expect moments both poignant and humorous as this accomplished trumpet player and popular one-man show delights with classic Irish favorites including Gloccamora, Danny Boy, I’ll Take You Home Again, Kathleen, and many more.

Registration is appreciated for planning purposes, but seating is available on a first come, first served basis. This program is sponsored in part by a grant from the Wilbraham Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and by the Wilbraham Friends of the Library.

Library invites artists to participate in Tiny Art Show

WILBRAHAM— The Wilbraham Public Library invites artists of all ages to participate in its upcoming Tiny Art Show, a creative community exhibit celebrating artwork on a small scale.

Community members are challenged to create an original work of art measuring no larger than 4” x 4” and return it to the library by Tuesday, March 31, 2026. All artwork will be displayed in the library from April 1 through April 30, 2026.

Important: Participants must use a library-issued 4” x 4” canvas to be included in the show. Canvases will be available for pick-up beginning Tuesday, February 17, 2026, and must be picked up in person at the library. No registration is required. Supplies are limited and will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis while supplies last.

Artists may use any style or medium—painting, drawing, sewing, collage, or small sculpture—as long as the artwork fits within the 4” x 4” dimensions (with no more than 2” additional depth). Objects and materials may be attached (except food), but no candles or electrical or battery-operated devices are permitted. This is a family-friendly exhibit; no vulgar content will be accepted.

There is no age limit and no residency requirement to participate. Only one submission per person or group will be accepted. Each artist must complete and attach a Tiny Art ID sticker to the back of their canvas before returning it to the library by March 31.

Artwork may be picked up beginning Monday, May 4, 2026. Any pieces not claimed by Saturday, May 30, 2026 will become property of the library.

The Wilbraham Public Library is located at 25 Crane Park Drive, Wilbraham, MA 01095. For more information, call 413-596-6141.

Stop by, pick up your canvas, and show the community how creative you can be—one tiny masterpiece at a time!

Sokolowski named Business West Difference Maker

REGION - Pioneer Valley (PV) Financial Group is proud to share that Managing Partner and Wealth Advisor Ed Sokolowski has been recognized as a Difference Maker by Business West.



Ed Sokolowski

When Ed founded PV Financial in 2002 alongside partners Joe Leonczyk and Chuck Myers, they set out to build something different. From the beginning, the firm has been guided by what Ed calls “the triangle” — three areas that must work together to create real success: clients, employees, and community. For PV, giving back isn’t an afterthought; it’s one of the three sides that holds everything up.

“We’re not here to make the most money — we’re here to make a difference in all three areas,” Ed says.

That mindset continues to shape the company today. PV Financial operates with a simple mission: We believe in helping our clients and community live better. Our legacy is the people and the lives that we have touched.

For more than two decades, giving back has grown into a defining part of the firm’s culture. It’s not just about writing checks — it’s about showing up. The entire team is involved, volunteering their time with local nonprofits and supporting events that strengthen the community.

Longstanding initiatives like the annual Slide into Summer Safety event with local schools and first responders, as well as the First Responder’s Appreciation Dinner, have become traditions for the firm. At the same time, newer partnerships with organizations such as CHD, All In, and Rachel’s Table have created even more opportunities for employees to get involved throughout the year.

In 2025 alone, PV Financial worked with more than 64 organizations, participated in 51 community events, and contributed over 75 volunteer hours across the region. The Difference Maker recognition is an honor, but for PV Financial, the real reward is continuing to live out that mission every day.

Read full article at <https://businesswest.com/issues/feb-16-2026/#p=44>

The GFWC Wilbraham Junior Women’s Club to hold annual Bunny Breakfast

WILBRAHAM - The GFWC Wilbraham Junior Women’s Club is ready to welcome spring with its much-loved Annual Bunny Breakfast on Saturday, March 28 from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at St Cecilia’s Church Parish Center located at 41 Main Street in Wilbraham.

Families are invited to

start their day with a “Bunnylicious” Breakfast of freshly prepared pancakes, sausage, fresh fruits and their choice of orange or apple juice, coffee, tea, milk or water.

The Easter Bunny will be hopping by to visit and take photos with the kids. Guests can enjoy Free Face painting, Temporary Tattoos and

a variety of seasonal of Arts and Crafts activities! Raffle tickets will be available for purchase for a chance to win beautifully themed baskets for both children and adults.

The GFWC Wilbraham Junior Women’s Club would like to thank our sponsors The Joseph and Anna C. Dias Jr Family Foundation and

Luso Federal Credit Union. Luso’s representatives will be distributing Easter-themed items to all of the children!

The Bunny Breakfast is a long standing, cherished community event. Be sure to Hop on over! Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$6 for children 1-12 and those under 1 are free. Tickets can be pur-

chased at the door via cash, check or Venmo or online at www.Wilbrahamjuniorwomens.org via PayPal or Venmo. For more information, please contact Michele Mariani at Shellsteno@charter.net or (413) 531-1621.



REGIONAL from page 1

Davenport explained the concern Wilbraham has “is that they’re responsible for the capital repairs and the core program, under that writing.”

“Because it’s a town-owned building,” Davenport said.

“And they can’t assess us anything because it’s not covered in the regional agreement,” Flynn said.

Davenport said that was correct.

“They’re very concerned about that and they’re saying that our position of not wanting to pay for capital costs that were deferred over the course of 10 years is holding them hostage,” Davenport said.

After Selectboard Member Erik Vanderleeden said, “If they addressed it 10 years ago, this wouldn’t be an issue,” Flynn said. “But, I think they’re trying to conflate two different things here.”

“We never said if they got into the Core Program—and the Core Program said we’re going to totally renovate the Wilbraham Middle School for a new regional middle school—we never said we wouldn’t pay our part of that. Of course we would,” Flynn said. “It’d be like getting a new school.”

Flynn said their main concern was the deferred maintenance cost “that is part of Wilbraham’s cost,” which the other members agreed.

“What’s happening is in the rhetoric—I don’t mean to be critical—but in the rhetoric that they’re using is that they’re creating a narrative that Hampden is not paying its fair share for students in that building, when in fact we are. We pay 20% assessment or 21% assessment to the region, and so that means we pay 21% of the teacher salaries, the custodial salaries, the lights, the insurance, the routine maintenance, the snow plowing and everything else in the building,” Davenport said.

Davenport said Hampden’s only complaint or concern is “why should we pay for capital costs that should

have been done 10 years ago on a building that we own?”

“And that’s where it stands,” Davenport said.

On Paragraph F, Davenport said that just explains “the district will pay the emergency cost we’re not budgeting currently.”

Flynn said on Paragraph E, he didn’t see a problem, per se, “because it talks about regional-owned properties.”

“Which is what we’ve been doing. So, how does E move this? How does it move the goal line at all?” Flynn said.

After Davenport said, “because the school is not a regional building,” Flynn added “That’s my point.”

“To whatever argument they think we have here, that doesn’t change anything,” Flynn said.

“And that’s what concerns them because they want to change that. They want us to pay for any capital things and there’s concern that we won’t participate in the core program or the feasibility study,” Davenport said.

After Flynn added how the middle school program at Green Meadows closed in 2021 and “deferred maintenance at that building extended back long before that time,” Town Administrator Brian Domina said, to Flynn’s point, “the only change this actually allows for, this actually allows for a district-owned middle school,” which the board agreed.

“It kind of seems like (that’s) where we’re headed,” Vanderleeden said.

Davenport then reiterated that “we are not holding them hostage.”

“We’re paying our fair share of everything in all the schools,” Davenport said.

Rivest’s Letter

Flynn then read a letter that was written by former Selectboard Member Craig Rivest.

“I am writing in reference to the recent Wilbraham Select Board meeting where discussions centered on the middle school and the regional agreement between our two communities. (February 9, 2026 start-

ing at the 1:45:00 mark <https://u.peg.tv/s/mjwurg>). During that meeting, Wilbraham Town Administrator Nick Breault referenced the possibility of removing Hampden students from the middle school due to Hampden’s position on capital costs, suggesting that Wilbraham may need to say ‘enough is enough,’ Rivest wrote. “Select Board Member Marc Ducey expressed that Wilbraham feels as though it is being ‘held hostage,’ while also acknowledging that Hampden is not at fault for the situation, as it was the School Committee that allowed Hampden transfers into Wilbraham.”

Rivest wrote that “what seems to be missing from the conversation is important historical context.”

“Between 2015 and 2018, Hampden was effectively forced into this situation when the district closed Hampden’s middle school after a long, drawn-out process. Hampden middle school students were then educated within an elementary school environment, resulting in unequal class offerings and limited educational opportunities compared to their peers. This was not a voluntary strategic shift by the Town of Hampden, but rather a district-driven deci-

sion that significantly altered the educational structure for our middle school students. Middle school parents were also encouraged to apply for transfers to Wilbraham Middle School which was allowed under the regional agreement,” Rivest wrote.

Rivest next noted how “before any moves were made, a feasibility study was conducted in 2015 to determine whether Wilbraham Middle School (which is owned solely by the Town of Wilbraham) could serve as a regional middle school for both communities.”

“That study identified substantial building deficiencies, including HVAC failures, water and sanitation concerns, windows and doors in need of replacement, fire protection system upgrades, kitchen deficiencies, serious air quality concerns, and asbestos-containing floor tiles that were beginning to crack. It was also noted there would be overcrowding in its current configuration without modular units installed,” Rivest wrote.

Rivest added as a former member of the Selectboard, his position has “consistently been that Hampden should not invest significant capital dollars to ‘band-aid’ repairs for a

building and property owned by another municipality, particularly one that had known deficiencies prior to its use as a regional facility.”

“Many of those concerns remain unresolved today, especially overcrowding. In its current configuration, the district structure does not provide Hampden with ownership equity or long-term security relative to capital investment,” Rivest wrote. “That said, I do not believe this is a dead end. In fact, I believe it is an opportunity. While I do not support Hampden assuming capital responsibility under the district’s current framework, I strongly support exploring a true regional solution through the Core Program. Both towns should commit to a unified regional middle school vision; including location, governance structure, ownership, and long-term capital planning. The Core Program provides a structured path to determine whether the existing Wilbraham Middle School can realistically be transformed into a modern, fully regional educational facility, or whether a new structure would better serve both communities for the next 50 years.”

Rivest ended his letter with this.

“We have done this suc-

cessfully before. The regional high school and the Minnechaug campus stand as examples of how joint ownership, shared equity and collaborative capital planning can work when both towns have a clear stake in the outcome,” Rivest wrote. “If we are to move forward productively, the focus should not be on assigning blame or drawing lines in the sand, but on determining what a fair and sustainable regional middle school model looks like, one that respects taxpayers in both communities, while providing equitable educational opportunity for all students.”

Final Thoughts

Flynn noted Rivest’s letter was “a great letter” and did “a really great job of summarizing some of the things we’ve been saying all along.”

“I think Craig was very consistent in saying this during his tenure on the board as well. So, I think a really good job articulating where we are and where a lot of people in town are as well,” Flynn said.

Flynn added how there’s nothing to act on at this point, “but we’d like to know where they are going with this,” and learn more information in a future meeting.

INFLATION

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VIEWPOINTS

SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor

My friend is 65; shouldn't she be exempt from Medicare payroll taxes?

Dear Rusty:

My girlfriend is 65 and she just enrolled in Medicare.

She is still working full time as a nurse, but they are still deducting Medicare taxes from her paycheck. I thought as soon as you started Medicare, that they would no longer take any Medicare taxes from her paychecks. Is that not correct?

Signed: Concerned Friend

Dear Concerned Friend:

Your understanding about Medicare payroll tax is, indeed, not correct. Medicare taxes are levied on everyone, who works and earns, regardless of whether or not they are currently enrolled in the Medicare program. That is how Medicare has worked since it was first enacted in the mid-1960s and how it still works today.

For Your Information, everyone who works for an employer must pay Federal Insurance Contributions Act payroll tax of 7.65%. Most (6.2%) of that payroll tax goes to support Social Security, but 1.45% goes to support Medicare Part A. Self-employed individuals must also pay this tax under the Self-Employed Contributions Act, which is equivalent to FICA, except the self-employed individual must also pay the employer portion of the payroll tax. The Social Security portion of the FICA/SECA tax has an earnings cap (\$184,500 in 2026), but there is no cap on earnings for the Medicare portion of the FICA/SECA payroll tax. FYI, employers pay an equivalent amount of Social Security and Medicare taxes and the Medicare portion of the payroll tax is paid on all earnings. There is no cap on earnings from

which the Medicare payroll tax is withheld.

To ensure understanding, Medicare Part A provides healthcare coverage for inpatient hospitalization services and Medicare Part B provides coverage for outpatient medical services (doctors, medical tests, etc.). That 1.45% of the FICA and SECA tax for the self-employed is paid by those who work to help fund the Medicare Part A program, which is premium-free for most Americans after age 65. For Medicare Part B, there is a separate premium which helps pay for Medicare outpatient healthcare services. The standard Medicare Part B premium for 2026 is \$202.90 per month, compared to Medicare Part A which is free to all who are eligible for Social Security benefits. But the 1.45% payroll tax which is being withheld from your girlfriend's paycheck is paid by everyone who has work earnings, even if they are enrolled in Medicare.

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 or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.



By Ellenor Downer

On President's Day I saw a northern flicker fly up into a tree as I traveled in Barre.

The white rump patch was clearly visible. A Brimfield resident said he has a friend in Belchertown, who occasionally has a flicker come to his suet feeder. Four or five bluebirds also frequent his suet feeder.

Northern flickers are a fairly, large woodpecker about 11 to 12 inches long. They are larger than a hairy woodpecker and smaller than a pileated woodpecker.

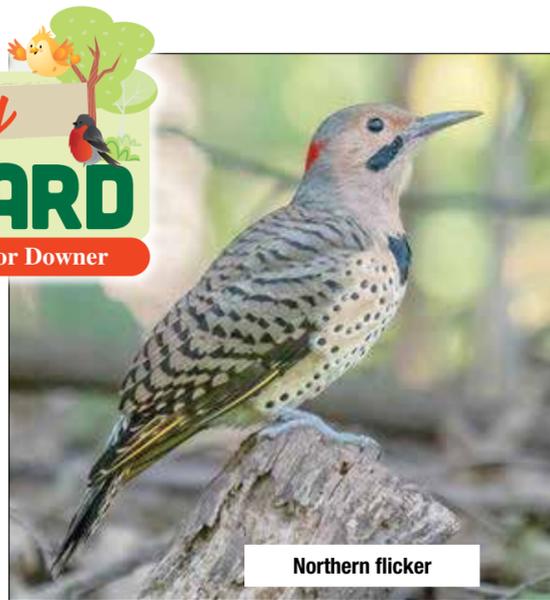
They appear brownish overall with a white rump patch that's is conspicuous in flight and often visible when they perch. The undersides of the wing and tail feathers are bright yellow for eastern birds or red for western birds. The brown plumage has black spots, barring and a black "bib." The sexes are similar, but the male has a black mustache.

Flickers spend a lot of time on the ground and like many woodpeckers fly in an undulating up and down path with flapping and gliding. They make a repeated flicker or "wicka-wicka-wicka" call and a loud "kleeer."

They inhabit open forests, woodlots, groves and semi-open country. The female lays five to eight eggs sometimes more. Both sexes incubate the eggs with the male incubating at night and part of the day. Both parents feed the young by regurgitation. The young leave the nest in about four weeks after hatching, but parents feed them for whilet. Later, they follow them to good foraging sites. They mainly eat ants and other insects. They also eat fruits and berries in fall and winter.

Bird bath visitors

A Brimfield resident sent an email recently. He said, "I have a heated bird bath so I modified it by placing rocks in the center so that the only



Northern flicker

water available is near the edge and birds can't immerse themselves in water to take a bath. The birds sit on the edge of the bird bath to drink."

He also said, "I have a trail camera aimed at the bird bath. I was looking at pictures taken during December (40,000) and saw that blue jays, house finches and juncos are the most frequent birds taking a drink. Birds that show up less often are cardinals, titmice and mourning doves. Curiously chickadees drink infrequently even though they are often seen in the yard. We seldom see goldfinches drinking, but they are not seen in the yard often. I was surprised to see a downy woodpecker show up twice to get a drink. I can't recall ever seen a woodpecker drink at the bird bath before, summer or winter."

Helping birds

The Brimfield resident said creating brush piles provides shelter for birds. The piles also provide shelter for small animals as well. He said this time of year is a good time to trim trees and shrubs, a source of materials for a brush pile.

He said someone sent him a link about the possible dangers to birds of their feathers freezing if they take a bath in cold weather. For more information, people may visit the link at <https://blog.nature.org/2022/01/31/should-you-provide-birds-water-in-winter/>.

Project Feederwatch

The Brimfield resident also said, "I recently visited the Project Feederwatch 2025 results (https://cdn.feederwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Winter-Bird-Highlights-2025_12.22.2025.pdf). The chart shows the top 25 birds seen in the Northeast during last year. The top 11 species can be seen most days in our yard."

Here is the list: 1. chickadee, 2. dark-eyed junco, 3. northern cardinal, 4. downy woodpecker, 5. blue jay, 6. mourning dove, 7. white-breasted nuthatch, 8. American goldfinch, 9. house finch, 10. red-bellied woodpecker, 11. tufted titmouse, 12. American robin, 13. European starling, 14. house sparrow, 15. hairy woodpecker, 16. Carolina wren, 17. white-throated sparrow, 18. song sparrow, 19. red-winged blackbird, 20. common grackle, 21. American crow, 22. brown-headed cowbird, 23. chipping sparrow, 24. northern flicker and 25 purple finch.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005. The Palmer office has a new phone system and I will be getting an extension where messages may be left. I will publish the number as soon as it is set up.

The Wilbraham-Hampden TIMES TEAM



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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.

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A different kind of concierge medicine

The rise of concierge medicine shows no signs of slowing down. Frustrated with long wait times for appointments, waiting room delays and only brief conversations with their doctor, those who can afford it are shelling out hundreds of dollars each month for faster care and attention, 24-hour access and personalized health programs.

It's understandable that, in our fractured health-care system, people would start looking for alternatives. There are some drawbacks to concierge care, however.

Many don't accept insurance, in order to keep their own costs low. You will still need to pay for insurance in case a serious illness or injury requires hospitalization or a specialist. And not all concierge docs have hospital privileges, which may complicate care coordination – especially important for someone with multiple chronic illnesses.

It's that coordination, or "wraparound care," that sets private patient advocates apart from concierge doctors. Both offer concierge-style service, but a patient advocate goes above and beyond. When you pay for a patient advocate, you can expect them to be there when you need them, anti-



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

pate your needs, cut through red tape and run interference with hospitals and insurance companies.

Here are some scenarios where I think the concierge services of a nurse patient advocate may exceed those of concierge doctors.

When an aging loved one is on their own: Very often, patient advocates are hired by family members trying to care for an elder who lives far away and may not have family close by. We are their boots on the ground, their eyes and ears, and their go-between with the medical professions caring for their loved one.

When you feel the hospital medical staff isn't hearing

your health

you: It's not uncommon for patients and patients' families to feel like their concerns are being overlooked or, worse, dismissed. A medically trained patient advocate speaks the language and can build bridges, mediate conflict and dial back the drama.

When your insurance claim is denied: Insurance documents can be wildly confusing. It helps to have someone on your side who can read through the mumbo-jumbo and explain whether an appeal may be successful. A patient advocate can also help prepare an appeal.

When a "simple" medical procedure turns into a nightmare: One of my clients was a 75-year-old gentleman who

developed complications after a procedure. Unfortunately, the hospital and his physicians didn't meet the standard of care, leading him to have a stroke, internal bleeding, dehydration and a host of problems. He became delusional after days in the hospital and was given antipsychotic drugs. I was able to intervene with the care team, and his condition improved.

When a patient isn't ready for discharge: Hospitals very often want to get chronically ill patients out of their beds and into a nursing facility. Sometimes this is the right thing to do, but sometimes it isn't. A nurse patient advocate can evaluate a patient and work with the care team to make sure it's the proper course, and then help with the transition.

When a college student with a medical condition is away from home: It's unlikely that the typical 18- or 19-year-old has the maturity to advocate for themselves in a medical crisis. Parents may not be there to give their student the personal attention they may need to understand their treatment, speak with medical staff and schedule tests and appointments. A patient advocate in the student's location can help.

When there's no one to go

with you to a doctor appointment: Doctor appointments these days can feel rushed, and often patients are confused about what they're supposed to do next, what medications are changing and what prescriptions need to be filled. Anyone can accompany you to an appointment to take notes, but if you're on your own, a patient advocate can explain the details.

The most important aspect of a patient advocate's "concierge service" is that they work for the patient, their client – not the hospital, not the insurance company. If you need help, find a board-certified patient advocate in your area by visiting Greater National Advocates (gnanow.org) or the National Association of Healthcare Advocacy (nahac.com).

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, is a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate and founder of www.NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com, which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. Teri offers a free phone consultation to Turley Newspaper readers as well as to nurses interested in becoming advocates. Reach her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com

Election letters to the editor welcome

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

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

Campaign news

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

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

Life in &

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

WILBRAHAM HAMPDEN

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



Submitted photos and caption Susan Rigney



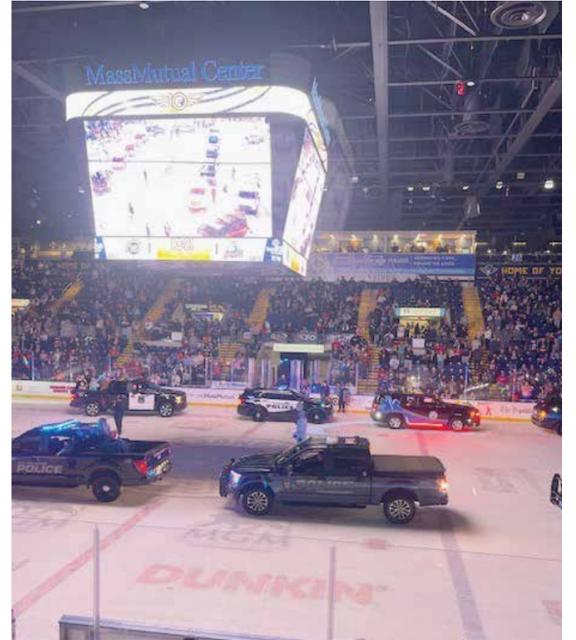
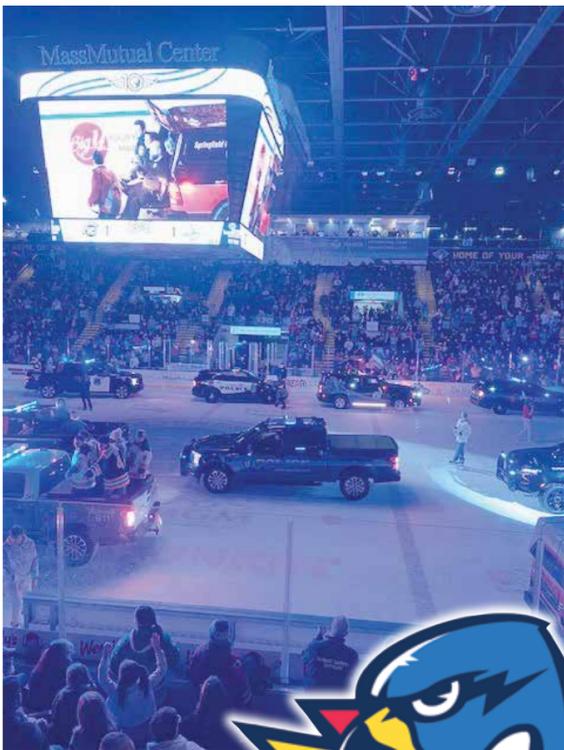
Wilbraham Women's Club Thanks

We would like to thank all the of our community that supported our Shoe Drive. We were presented a check for \$1,026 that we will be able to put towards our Scholarship Fund. Our February meeting brought out all of our hidden towns and designing greeting cards.



WE ♥ OUR READERS

Wilbraham Police Department takes part in Hometown Heroes Night...



Photos and caption courtesy of Wilbraham Police Department

On Feb. 1, the Wilbraham Police Department participated in the Hometown Heroes Night at the Springfield Thunderbirds game. We had the honor of being invited onto the ice during the first intermission to be part of the first responder parade. Over 20 local police, fire and EMS vehicles participated, receiving a standing ovation from the crowd. The T-Birds topped the night off with a win, GO BIRDS!



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Monthly Highlights for February at the Hampden Senior Center:

Please call 566-5588 to RSVP for all events or register for classes at the senior center. Lunch is provided by Greater Springfield Senior Services daily at 12:00 noon. Suggested donation is \$3.00 per meal. You must reserve lunch by 11:00 a.m. at least one day prior. Feel free to schedule your lunch reservations for the month.

WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY

Remember to watch channels 22 & 40 for information about cancellations and/or delayed openings.

Watch for Hampden Senior Center and Greater Springfield Senior Services for information.

PWR! Moves Group Exercise Classes with Lisa Kern, OT, Reiki Master/Holistic Therapist

Mondays from 9 to 10 a.m.
Cost is \$10.00 per class, or purchase 8 classes for a pre-paid rate of \$65.

A Parkinson-specific exercise class that "makes function exercise" to keep you moving and doing more of what you want to do! As you practice, you will be challenged phys-

ically and cognitively while working on fitness goals: strength, balance, agility, aerobics, and flexibility. Exercises are designed to improve your fitness, counteract your PD symptoms, and increase your daily activity. This whole body, function-focused exercise class will push you to do more than you think you can in a fun, empowering, and enriched environment!

Indoor Cornhole

Mondays at 10 a.m.
All are welcome! No experience necessary!

Monday Ukulele with Amy Scot

Drop-ins are welcome
Current session runs through March 16.
Beginner Ukulele – Mondays, 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.
Cost is \$7 per class.
Advanced Ukulele – Mondays, 1 to 2:30 p.m.
Cost is \$10 per class.

Living Stronger Longer

with Lamar Moore
Tuesdays from 2:15 to 3 p.m.
Current session runs through April 7.
Cost is \$6 per class.

Join Lamar to learn about balance and how it impacts your overall health and wellness. Get tips on strength training and cardiovascular endurance to increase mobility and flexibility. "It's never too late to start making progress on your health span. Muscles and balance are the two things you can train and improve even as you age.

Pickleball at Thornton Burgess 85 Wilbraham Road

Wednesdays, 8 to 9:30 a.m., 9:30 to 11 a.m., or 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

This program is for new players and beginners who want to learn the rules and practice playing.

Memory Café

Every Friday at 10:15 a.m.
Please call Wendy for more information.
Sponsored by: Friends of Hampden Senior Citizens & private donations.

The Memory Café is a welcoming place for individuals with memory challenges, along with caregivers, family, or friends, to gather in a safe, supportive, and engaging environment.

Here's what's happening at

the Memory Café in February:

Feb. 27 – Music w/Renee "African Drumming" with Jason

Current session runs through April 10. Fridays from 2 to 3 p.m.

All are welcome! No previous experience is necessary.

Cost is \$7 per class for drop-ins.

"Come What May" Boutique... is open in our lobby for all to shop during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

We accept donations of new or gently used clothing, outerwear, accessories, and footwear.

All proceeds from Boutique sales will benefit the needs of the Senior Center.

Lobby Learning

Don't have time to come in and sit for a long presentation? We understand! Lobby Learning is aimed at welcoming businesses and organizations to provide helpful information to you. You are welcome to stop in to pick up information and speak one-on-one with representatives in the senior center lobby and stay for as long as you need to get your

questions answered. Perhaps there is an organization you would like us to welcome? Please let us know.

Feb. 26 – STCC Dental

Help us stock our shelves with disinfecting wipes.

Thank you to those who donated toothpaste last month. Every month, we will target a different item to help fill monthly Personal Needs Bags.

Due to space constraints, please refrain from purchasing warehouse-sized items.

Elms College Nursing Students will be here on Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Students will do blood pressure screening and provide educational health information.

Did you know we offer the following services....

Free Blood Pressure Clinic – Walk-in 9:15 to 10:45 a.m. Tuesdays with Ann Maggio, RN, or Ruth Haley, RN Thursdays with the Elms College Nursing Students.

Gift Cards are available and make great gifts!

Anyone is welcome to schedule appointments for

these services.

Please call 566-5588 to schedule your appointments.

Need a button sewn? Pants hemmed? Fix a rip? Help is on the way!

Fridays, Feb. 27 from 10 a.m. to Noon.

The senior center welcomes seamstress extraordinaire, Georgina Hamilton, on the second and fourth Fridays of every month to help with your tailoring needs and more.

This service is FREE, but donations will be accepted for senior center programs and services.

Warming Hearts Program for Homebound Older Adults in Hampden

Do you know an older adult in Hampden who is homebound and could use some mid-winter cheer? Let us know! Our warming hearts deliveries are a small way for us to let people know we are thinking of them and that we are here should they need anything. Deliveries will include soups, treats, games, and more and will take place during February. Interested in delivering? Call Wendy at 566-5588.

HISTORICAL from page 1

Rhodes spoke at the Wilbraham Women's Club meeting in the Church of the Epiphany.

Reflecting how Civil Defense was regarded during the mid-century, the Civil Defense leaders) were trying to recruit people for its 12-week first aid course by the CD underwater rescue team. The Wilbraham Boy Scouts were also active recruiting Boy Scouts as well.

Despite the inclement weather the town political committees held their cau-

ses and nominated their candidates for Selectman that winter.

Court of Honor

Assisting in activities at the Court of Honor ceremonies of Boy Scout Troop 175 was Scoutmaster Paul Knight. Those receiving awards were Eagle Scout Mourad Meregian, Eagle George Riggs, Eric Wales and second class Joseph Twining and Kirk Stevens.

A glance through the local Wilbraham news pages of the Morning Union yielded a host of local readers and showed a

news rivalry between Fred Reidy of the Daily News and my Mother Ethel Bennett of the Morning Union.

Two longtime leaders took firm control of the Democratic and Republican parties in February of 1965 and it promised to be leading to a spirited race for the March 20 Town Elections. John Fitzgerald was the Democratic nominee for Selectman. S. William "Billy" Whyte was the standard bearer for the Democrats. All the Democratic candidates believed in bipartisan government. "As the campaign progresses, we

intend to be honored personally honored to run with a group of very qualified candidates and we intend to point that out, said Whyte.

Valentine's Day

As the month progressed, the annual Valentine's Dinner-Dance was held planned for the Men's Club of St. Cecilia's Church at Belli's Restaurant.

The Senior Citizens Group awarded an all-expense paid trip for two. The group hosted Frank Auchter, a lawyer who had been a practicing lawyer law for the previous 50 years. Auchter spoke about "Wills, settlements, estates and matters pertaining to property ownership.

The play "A Man for all Seasons" by Robert Bolt was staged that Saturday that and Sunday in Fisk Hall at 8 p.m. Under the direction of faculty member of Arthur Kelley, Jr. the play has a cast of 14.

Stage Manager for the production is Harry Dixon of Bingham, N.Y. Students involved in the production behind the scenes include Robert Richmond and John Pinney of Somersville,

Blue and Gold

Cub Scout Pack 359 sponsored by the Men's Club of St. Cecilia's Church will planned its Blue and Gold Dinner in the Social Center of the church. Following the dinner the Hosaga Indian Club performed Indian danc-

es. Charles Merrick, whose ancestors predate the founding of the town made news in political circles.

Merrick threw a monkey wrench into the political process for the campaign for Board of Selectmen. Merrick, author and editor of the "History of Wilbraham in 1963 at the town's 200th anniversary, announced that he was withdrawing from the selectmen's race. Merrick made a surprise statement. "After filing nomination papers recently I am now withdrawing from the race," he said. Merrick's erstwhile candidacy now was crashing and burning.

Merrick ended his candidacy with the following statement:

"Besides some factors Pertaining to the March Town Election I have withdrawn my nomination for the office of selectman effective 4:58 p.m. and will offer my services to the Republican caucus candidate William Sullivan Jr. in his campaign for election.

Two of the nation's February-born historical figures were depicted in a patriotic program replaced program given by the Grade 4 students, Theresa Campion portraying Betsy Ross Matthew Madeira, George Washington and Eric Mowrey as Abraham Lincoln shown receiving last minute adjustments to an American flag, a colonial flag and colonel wig.

What was going on in history at that time? Jack Ruby

found guilty of killing Lee Harvey Oswald, the alleged assassin of President Kennedy. He died of cancer in 1965.

A U.S. destroyer is allegedly attacked off North Vietnam in reprisal, escalation of war, heavy fighting.

Arthur Miller wrote the play "After the Fall". Martin Luther King was given Noble Peace Prize. Krushchev was replaced by as Soviet prime minister and as party secretary. Pope Paul makes a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Composer Cole Porter died in 1893. Brain:Drain British scientists immigrate to U.S.

Cassius Clay wins world heavyweight boxing championship from Sonny Liston.

Six former Auschwitz prison camp officials are sentenced to life imprisonment.

Movie star Elizabeth Taylor divorces Eddie Fisher, and 10 days later weds Richard Burton.

Sources: The Timetables of History by Bernard Grun. The Springfield Morning Union daily newspaper.

Editor Emeritus Charlie Bennett is a member of the Wilbraham Historical Commission and a trustee of the Atheneum Society of Wilbraham. Readers can contact him with comments or ideas for the column at cbennett4765@charter.net. Historical photos also welcome.

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Ed Sokolowski, Managing Partner and Wealth Advisor at Pioneer Valley Financial Group, Named Business West Difference Maker

Pioneer Valley (PV) Financial Group is proud to share that Managing Partner and Wealth Advisor Ed Sokolowski has been recognized as a Difference Maker by Business West.

When Ed founded PV Financial in 2002 alongside partners Joe Leonczyk and Chuck Myers, they set out to build something different. From the beginning, the firm has been guided by what Ed calls "the triangle" — three areas that must work together to create real success: clients, employees, and community. For PV, giving back isn't an afterthought; it's one of the three sides that holds everything up.

"We're not here to make the most money — we're here to make a difference in all three areas," Ed says.

That mindset continues to shape the company today. PV Financial operates with a simple mission: We believe in helping our clients and community live better. Our legacy is the people and the lives that we have touched.

For more than two decades, giving back has grown into a defining part of the firm's culture. It's not just about writing checks — it's about showing up. The entire team is involved, volunteering their time with local nonprofits and supporting events that strengthen the community.

Longstanding initiatives like the annual Slide into Summer Safety event with local schools and first responders, as well as the First Responder's Appreciation Dinner, have become traditions for the firm. At the same time, newer partnerships with organizations such as CHD All In, and Rachel's Table have created even more opportunities for employees to get involved throughout the year.

In 2025 alone, PV Financial worked with more than 64 organizations, participated in 51 community events, and contributed over 75 volunteer hours across the region. The Difference Maker recognition is an honor, but for PV Financial, the real reward is continuing to live out that mission every day.

Read full article at <https://businesswest.com/issues/feb-16-2026/#p=44>.

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Welcome Dr. Meunier

We are excited to introduce the newest addition to Ludlow Family Dentistry, Dr. Zachary D. Meunier. Dr. Meunier is returning to Western Massachusetts and is a general dentist who has earned his D.M.D. degree from Midwestern University in Illinois.

During dental school Dr. Meunier presented research nationally at the American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research (AADOCR) conference in Portland, Oregon through the Academic Dental Career Fellowship Program (ADCFP). He also lectured and taught dental students reflecting his dedication to both excellent patient care and continued dental education.

Dr. Meunier has shadowed and trained alongside specialists across every dental discipline and completed one-on-one implant training through the Implant Pathway program. As a general dentist, he provides endodontics, implant dentistry, and oral surgery while referring highly complex cases to specialists to ensure the best outcomes for his patients.

He believes in listening carefully to his patients to fully understand their needs and concerns, allowing him to provide personalized, high-quality care for every individual.

Outside the office, Dr. Meunier and his wife, Joyce, share their home with their three loving cats. He enjoys cooking, mountain climbing, hiking and camping.

Dr. Meunier looks forward to partnering with you in achieving a lifetime of excellent oral health.



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SUMMER CAMP

Check Out These Great Camps!

Registration open for HCC Summer Youth Programs

It's still winter, but it's not too early to start thinking about summer.

Registration is now open for 2026 Summer Youth Programs at Holyoke Community College.

Starting July 7 and running through August 8, HCC will offer 16 week-long, in-person summer programs for youth aged 8 to 16.

For more than 40 years, HCC has offered fun, challenging summer education activities for youth, providing early opportunities for students to experience a college environment guided and encouraged by experienced professionals.

summer youth programs run Monday through Friday, some for a full day and others for a half day.

All in-person programs will be held on the main HCC campus, 303 Homestead Ave., except for cooking classes, which are held at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute, 164 Race St., Holyoke:

July 6-10:

Cooking without Borders with Chef Marangelly Vargas-Gonzalez (ages 9-16): In this lively hands-on camp, young chefs will team up to chop, stir, and create tasty dishes from around the world. Each day brings a new theme and a chance to dis-



cover fresh ingredients, cool cooking techniques, and the joy of working together in the kitchen. By week's end,

they'll walk away with new cooking skills, delicious recipes to show off at home, and plenty of tasty memories. (9 a.m. – 3 p.m., \$425)

Fun Bites with Chef Diana Swanigan (ages 9-16): Join us for an exciting week of hands-on culinary fun, where young chefs will discover the joy of cooking delicious, easy-to-prepare meals to share with family and friends. Participants will work together to chop, season, cook, and taste a variety of recipes – all made from scratch. Each day introduces new menu themes, ingredients, and techniques designed to build confidence in the kitchen. (9 a.m. – 3 p.m., \$425)

July 13-17: Cooking without Borders with Chef Marangelly Vargas-Gonzalez (ages 9-16, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., \$425)

Fun Bites with Chef Diana Swanigan (ages 9-16, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., \$425)

ROBLOX Coders (ages 8-10; 11-14): Discover the Lua coding language while designing experiences in ROBLOX, an online universe where you can create anything you dream of. New developers will learn to use ROBLOX's Studio software to reimagine the popular game genres with their own custom code. Instructor Brittany Pietskowski. (9 a.m. to noon for ages 8-10; 1 to 4 p.m. for ages 11-14, \$199)

July 20-24: Around the World with Chef Diana Swanigan (ages 9-16): Cuisine around the world serves as a universal language that unites people across cultures through shared flavors, traditions, and stories. Learn to prepare full-course meals from Asia, Puerto Rico, Greece, Italy,

and New Orleans. (9 a.m. – 3 p.m., \$425)

Make Your First Video Game (ages 8-10; 11-14): Go beyond the limitations of traditional 2D game design classes and create an immersive 3D world. Students will learn the physics behind 3D games, explore beginner event scripting, level design, controlling the flow of gameplay, and storytelling. Instructor Brittany Pietskowski. (9 a.m. – noon for ages 8-10; 1 – 4 p.m. for ages 11-14, \$199)

Passport to Flavors with Chef Marangelly Vargas-Gonzalez (ages 9-16): This hands-on cooking camp takes kids on a delicious journey across global cuisines, exploring flavors, techniques, and ingredients that make each culture unique. Dive into fun daily themes like diner classics, Mexican favorites, Mediterranean feasts, Filipino street bites, and southern comfort food, all while building confidence one tasty dish at a time. (9 a.m. – 3 p.m., \$425)

July 27-31: Around the World with

Chef Diana Swanigan (ages 9-16, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., \$425)

Minecraft Designers (ages 8-10; 11-14): Learn how to create a custom map, design structures to share with Redstone and Command blocks, and create custom textures for you to import at home or share with friends. Instructor Brittany Pietskowski. (9 a.m. – noon for ages 8-10; 1 – 4 p.m. for ages 11-14, \$199).

Passport to Flavors with Chef Marangelly Vargas-Gonzalez (ages 9-16, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., \$425)

August 3-7: Python Programmers (ages 8-10; 11-14): Learn the world's fastest-growing programming language favored by Google, NASA, YouTube, and the CIA. Learn how to code with Python to create engaging apps and games. Instructor Brittany Pietskowski. (9 a.m. – noon for ages 8-10; 1 – 4 p.m. for ages 11-14, \$199).

For more details or to register for Summer Youth Program classes, please go to: hcc.edu/summer-youth.

summer@HCC

Holyoke Community College Summer Youth Programs for Ages 8-16

Save your spot and register today for summer fun!

July 27-31, Minecraft Designers (ages 8-10, 11-14)

August 3-7, Python Programmers (ages 8-10, 11-14)

July 20-24, Make Your First Video Game (ages 8-10, 11-14)

July 13-17, ROBLOX Coders (ages 8-10, 11-14)

July 6-10 and 13-17, Fun Bites with Chef Swanigan (ages 9-16)

July 20-24 and 27-31, Around the world with Chef Swanigan (ages 9-16)

July 6-10 and 13-17, Cooking without Borders with Chef Vargas-Gonzalez (ages 9-16)

July 20-24 and 27-31, Passport to Flavors with Chef Vargas-Gonzalez (ages 9-16)

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DAY CAMP JR. DAY CAMP	Enrichment Camps	Cross Country Camp	Taylor Swift Camp	Soccer Club	D&D Camp	Counselor in Training
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Registration Link
bement.org/summer



Tess Alberg of Tessimals Creations was also a new featured artist at the event.

SMALL WORKS from page 1

A favorite piece he's worked on is called Kumiko. "You have to have an interest in Japanese woodworking," Restivo said. "There's about 80 to 90, maybe 100 pieces in one table. The other one has probably even more than that, and so I've seen a lot of those online and I learned how to do it from online and just made one myself and I really enjoyed that."

Penny Goodman of Pen Art & Design shared she's always been an artist and creating art, having joined the SRA a month ago, thanks to Hurlburt, her neighbor.

Goodman showcased painted glass, jewelry, lazy susans and charcuterie boards. Also, had acrylic paintings on display.

"I started doing that because I was looking to make a gift for somebody and so that's how I started. I made a set of glasses and then I decided I might as well try to sell them," Goodman said.

Goodman enjoyed meeting her fellow artists and emphasized how the event brings more attention to local art.

"I think it's nice. I think that people like to come and actually see the art in person," Goodman said. "I have a website, but you need to see it, I think, in person."

On a favorite piece, Good-

man said this. "I'd say I'd probably like the ocean boards," Goodman said. "I just love the water, love the ocean, and it's fun to paint."

Salerno said this show is always successful because of the price and they fit "into those perfect little nooks in your home."

"They're a perfect little gift for someone and they're just as beautiful as any large piece would be," Salerno said.

On upcoming shows, Salerno said next is the Spring Art Show on April 11 and 12 and, on March 12 from 6 to 8 p.m., the first Interactive Learning Through Art event centered on Tissue Paper Art.

The cost is \$20 and participants

Danny DiFillippo had these unique house creations as part of Danny's Creations.



Metal Artist Brian McQuillan had this "Texas Breakfast" metal sculpture, which created a lot of conversation.



must sign up by March 6. "You're painting with paper. It's fantastic. I can't wait to try this!" Salerno said. "You cut paper, you rip paper and you glue—I mean, it's going to be fabulous—and you do layers and see through each other. It's going to be so much fun. So, that'll be our first one kicking off this year."

Salerno was thrilled with the turnout.

"What's very nice is we're starting to get a lot of those repeat customers now, who are bringing friends and I love that. Not only that, but we have people who have decided that they now want to be members," Salerno said. "We have beginners, we have professionals. I mean, we have the gammat on artists in our group. Anywhere from your brand-new artist to your seasoned professional people, so I think that's exciting that they're comfortable enough to say, 'I can do this.' It's like a family. They want to be around other artisans. You're going to get inspired, you're going to learn a lot."

She also noted the "In Memorium" pieces, featuring a member or somebody in the community who did artwork and had passed away. This art show featured pieces from Frank Siciliano, who helped build the Hampden Country Club and the Elmcrest Country Club, living in East Longmeadow and Hampden.



Penny Goodman, a new member of the Scantic River Artisans, had a variety of pieces on display.



Carol Winters showed off her quilted art pieces.

Turley photos by Kristin Rivers



The In Memorium display remembering Frank Siciliano, who was originally born in Locre, Italy and lived most of his life in East Longmeadow and Hampden.

Salerno hopes to bring this back as the SRA had done this in the past.

"The family members allowed us to display just a piece or two of theirs with a little write-up about who they are. This year, it happens to be my husband's grandfather. So, I was fixing up his paintings for my mother-in-law, fixing up the frames, cleaning up her father's paintings and

I thought, 'You know what, let's get this going again.' So, this was a great way to honor him too," Salerno said. Goodman said these shows have "a lot of variety and a lot of talent," encouraging the community to check out future shows.

"There's a lot of beautiful, beautiful, different things and you're supporting the local person," Goodman said.

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49					50			51		52	53	54	55
56					57			58					
59					60				61				
62					63					64			

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. What travelers must do
- 5. Calendar month
- 8. Hopefully quickly
- 12. Once more
- 14. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!
- 15. "Cheers" actress Perlman
- 16. Astronomy unit
- 18. Savings vehicle
- 19. Get your ducks in this
- 20. Right away
- 21. Popular sports league
- 22. Containers
- 23. Entireties
- 26. One who wassails
- 30. Turned-up position
- 31. Extreme modesty
- 32. Writing utensil
- 33. Rewards (archaic)

- 34. Ancient capital
- 39. S. American wood sorrel
- 42. General discomfort
- 44. Philippine island
- 46. A witty saying
- 47. One who summarizes
- 49. Covered in
- 50. Mimic
- 51. Henry was a notable one
- 56. Daughter of Hera and Zeus
- 57. Retired NFLer
- 58. Playground equipment
- 59. Concept
- 60. Satisfaction
- 61. Fishing net
- 62. Hammer end
- 63. A father's male child

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Off-Broadway figure
- 2. Gelatinous substance
- 3. Concern
- 4. "Lick It Up" rockers
- 5. Serbian river
- 6. Part of a hat
- 7. Bowl-shaped drinking vessel
- 8. Semitic language
- 9. Utter a shrill cry
- 10. Long times
- 11. Animal parts
- 13. Causing annoyance
- 17. Amorous talker
- 24. Attempt
- 25. Harmonic effects
- 26. Cost per mile
- 27. They
- 28. Bitterly regret
- 29. Not even
- 35. A way to drop
- 36. Title of respect
- 37. World leader
- 38. Georgia rockers
- 40. National capital
- 41. Great Plains people
- 42. Duck-sized dinosaur genus
- 43. Architectural recesses
- 44. Member of U.S. Navy
- 45. Mountainous
- 47. Kite bird
- 48. Sweetheart (archaic)
- 49. Popular snack made of potato
- 52. 70s songsters The Bee
- 53. SE China port -men
- 54. Something to fill up
- 55. League of Legends character

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Chaug girls edged in finals after OT



Kelly Cronin tries to get a shot under pressure.



The Minnechaug girls basketball team was the runners-up in Class A this year.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

WESTFIELD – Last Wednesday afternoon, Minnechaug Regional High School girls basketball fell to Central in the Western Massachusetts Class A championship game 50-48. The game ended in a 43-43 tie after regulation, and the Golden Eagles were one basket better during the overtime period to capture this year's section title. Minnechaug got 19 points from Cailin O'Brien while Zahara Wilson scored 12 points. Minnechaug, which is 17-4 now, will be spending some time at home now as they enter the Division 2 state tournament. Minnechaug is ranked No. 5 and will host at least two state playoff games. The Falcons Round of 32 game was not scheduled as of press time, but is likely to take place sometime this week.



Ava Manning attempts a three-pointer.



Lyric Nelson tries to avoid a block as she shoots.



Zahara Wilson goes for the fade-away shot.



Cailin O'Brien gets the left-hand layup.



Elizabeth Woytowicz takes a shot.

Registration for Pioneer Valley Baseball opens

SOUTH HADLEY – The Pioneer Valley Baseball League, an adult baseball league for players who are age 18 and over, has just opened up its registration for the 2026 season.

The adult league will be administered by the Quabbin Valley Baseball League, and a registration link is on the home page of the league's website www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org. Thought it will be under the Quabbin umbrella, there will be no major changes in how the league is operated.

This year, the PVBL will have a 22-game regular season schedule followed by a double-elimination playoffs. The league, which had five teams last year and had to utilize multiple byes throughout the season, will be fielding a sixth team this season.

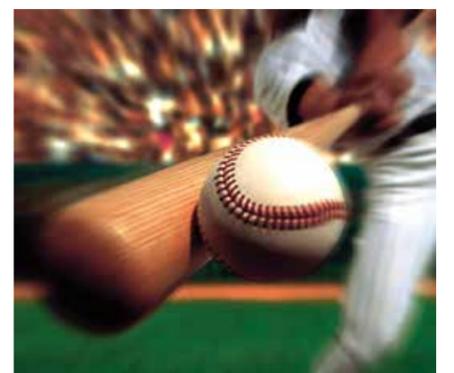
There are several spots open for that sixth team, so players interested in joining the league should get signed up as soon as possible to claim a spot.

The league is a wood-bat only league utilizing playing under regular baseball rules though all players do bat. The league operates on a Saturday-Tuesday schedule. Games are played on Saturday mornings with 10 a.m. starts typical and on Tuesday evenings with start times in the 5:30 to 6 p.m. range. The league will start play in late April and running through the end of August. There are slots open for both full-time players and part-time players. The fee for full-time players will be \$260 with part-time players getting up to 11 games for \$130. Fees paid go toward the operation of the league, paying for insurance, umpires, fields, and baseballs and no one profits in any way.

In addition to the new sixth team, there are limited open roster spots on the other teams in the league, so get your registration in as soon as possible to participate in this season.

Games are played at ballfields throughout the region from as far south as Southwick's Whalley Field, through South Hadley's Beachgrounds and up north at Frontier Regional High School in South Deerfield.

For any questions, please go to the league website for more information. The league hopes interested players will come out and join the fun this spring and summer.



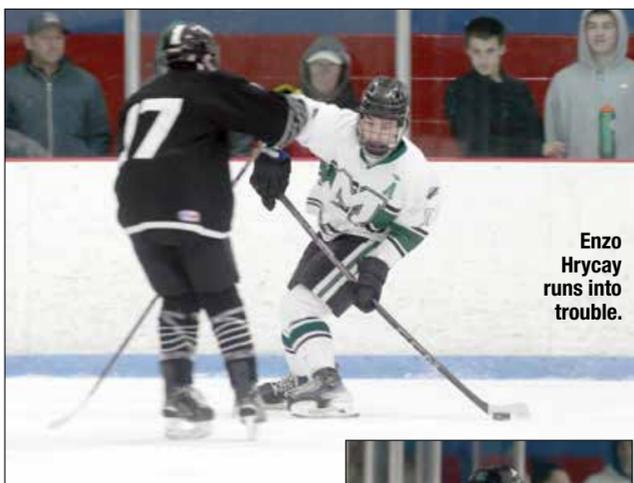
Falcons defeated in WMass quarterfinals

WEST SPRINGFIELD – The Minnechaug Regional High School hockey team was defeated by Longmeadow in the quarterfinals of the Western Mass. Class A Tournament. Longmeadow scored twice each in the second and third. The Falcons' offense was shut down

in the match up with just one goal in the third period. Brody Faneuff had the lone goal for the Falcons, who were scheduled to enter the Division 2 state tournament against Barnstable earlier this week. That game was scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 26 at 6:30 p.m.



Brody Faneuff makes his way up the ice.



Enzo Hrycay runs into trouble.



Dom Fiorentino tries to settle the loose puck.



Jack Gagner passes out of the corner.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

RIGHT: Joey Comes heads up the ice.

Railers score win in overtime

RAPID CITY, SD — The Worcester Railers HC (23-19-5-1 pts) grabbed a 5-4 overtime victory over the Rapid City Rush (21-23-4-0) on Friday, February 20th at The Monument in front of a crowd of 3,409. The Railers will wrap up their three-game road series against the Rush on Saturday, February 21st, with puck drop at 7:05 p.m. MST.

Rapid City struck first with back-to-back goals from Briley Wood (2-0-2) in the opening half of the first period. Matt DeMelis (1-1-2) got Worcester on the board with a one-timer at 9:35 in the second. Drew Callin (3-0-3) kept it rolling for Worcester with two goals for the Railers, the latter of which was on the power play to put the team ahead 3-2 heading into the final period of play. Rapid City's Ryan Chyzowski (1-1-2) tied the game for the Rush once more at three apiece early in the third. Linemate Blake Bennett (1-0-1) put Rapid City ahead for the second time of the evening with a power play shot atop the right circle to make the new score 4-3 at 10:31. Callin scored his first hat-trick as a Railer and pushed the night into overtime with a quick shot off from the left faceoff circle over the shoulder of Nathan Torchia (4-4). Anthony Repaci (1-1-2) lit the lamp for a final time for the Railers just fifty-nine seconds into OT and picked up the 5-4 victory off a pass from DeMe-

lis. Rapid City established an early two-goal lead for themselves with back-to-back unanswered goals at 7:05 and 9:43 in the first, both from Briley Wood. Wood (7th) deked out goaltender Tristan Lennox and created an opening along the right side of the Railers' net to score the Rush's first tally. Wood (8th) followed up the play with a second unanswered goal for the team three-and-a-half minutes later, a shot that snuck its way in between the pads of Lennox (0-2). Worcester was unable to respond to the new lead before the horn sounded. No penalties were called in the period. Worcester led in shots on goal with 13 to Rapid City's 6.

The second period was Worcester's turn to chase down the Rush's lead and take the game for themselves. In the span of six minutes and twenty-four seconds, Worcester went from trailing by two to a three-goal lead. Matt DeMelis (14th) got the scoring streak going with a quick one-timer assisted on by a pass through the crease from Riley Ginnell at 9:35 (1-2). Drew Callin (16th) capitalized on a center ice breakout as Rush goaltender Nathan Torchia was unable to block the push (2-2). Khristian Acosta was then sent down to the ice on the next play as he collided with the Rush's net. The act put the Railers on their first extra-man advantage of the

night as Mitchell Smith headed into the box for roughing. The two minutes with the man-advantage proved fruitful as Callin (17th) nabbed a second tally, his fourth in two games. Amidst heavy traffic, Callin finished off a rebound and put the puck into a wide-open Rush net, which gave Worcester their 3-2 lead as the second frame of play came to a close. Shots on goal once again favored Worcester 15-9. Smith's penalty was the only one called for the period.

Rapid City quickly re-tied the game for the second time early in the third. The goal was tucked into the Railers net by Ryan Chyzowski (21st) at 4:18. Rapid City then reclaimed the game lead at 10:31 with a top-shelf shot atop the right circle from Blake Bennett (18th) (4-3). The play came from a man-advantage delivered by a tripping penalty called on Railers' defenseman Adam Samuelsson at 9:35. Drew Callin (18th) kept a victory in the Railers sights with a late-game hat-trick as netminder Lennox was called to the bench to give Worcester the extra body. Callin drove the puck from the left faceoff dot over the shoulder of Torchia, and both teams skated into overtime, nodded up at four apiece. As the overtime clock began to count down, it was Anthony Repaci (15th) who claimed the game winner just fifty-nine seconds into play.

This week in recreation

TF Performance partners with Wilbraham Parks & Recreation to offer Spring 2026 Sports Performance Clinics

WILBRAHAM - TF Performance (TFP) and Wilbraham Parks & Recreation are once again teaming up to offer sports performance clinics for baseball, softball, lacrosse, and soccer players in grades 3-8. These clinics are designed to help young athletes improve their speed, agility, strength, endurance, and injury prevention through structured training sessions tailored to their sport.

Each session will focus on fundamental movement skills, sport-specific mechanics, and overall athletic development to help participants perform more efficiently on the field. Through guided drills and exercises, athletes will improve their acceleration, reaction time, coordination, and sport-specific strength and power. To support long-term athletic health, the clinics will also include injury prevention strategies, such as mobility work and proper warm-up

and recovery techniques. Whether an athlete is pre-

paring for their upcoming season or looking to enhance their overall physical ability, this program provides a structured and supportive training environment to help them reach their goals.

and the cost is \$75, which includes a clinic t-shirt and sports performance handouts. The clinics are divided into three Saturday sessions from March 21st - April 4th.

Why Participate?

These clinics provide young athletes a structured environment to improve their physical abilities and movement mechanics in a safe and supportive setting. Each session is led by experienced and certified sports performance coaches who will help athletes develop better control over their movement patterns, increase their strength and power, and enhance their overall athleticism.

Clinic Schedule and Registration Details

TF Performance will host the clinics at its facility, located at 2041 Boston Rd, Wilbraham, MA. The registration period is February 24 through March 16, with training sessions beginning on March 21. Group sizes will be limited to 5-20 athletes per session,

How to Register

Athletes can register online at wilbrahamma.myrec.com or in person at the Wilbraham Parks & Rec office (45C Post Office Park Wilbraham)



Registration now underway for 2026 Quabbin Valley League Baseball

SOUTH HADLEY - Registration has opened for the Quabbin Valley Baseball League, an over-28 recreational league, held its first meeting of 2026 to prepare for the upcoming season.

For the 2026 season, the cost will be \$215 and will include a 16th game added to the regular season schedule.

During the 2025 season, the league experimented with playing on Mother's Day Saturday as well as a weeknight game to allow players an opportunity to play under the lights. While the night games were very successful, the Mother's Day Saturday games were rained out.

Those elements will return along with a 16th game with

an opponent to be determine as the league's board explores possibilities for interleague matchups with another league in the region.

For returning players to the league, the deadline is Mar. 22 at 12 noon to be registered for the 2026 season in order to be guaranteed a roster spot. There will be open practices for all

players but specifically targeted at new players scheduled for March 29 and April 4 at times and locations to be announced. The draft is currently scheduled to take place on April 4 following that practice.

The season is currently slated to start on Sunday, April 19 and following the success of the six-team fall league last

year, the league will also have a fall league in September and October this season.

The registration is live at www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org. Players must register and then pay the league dues via Venmo or contact the league leadership if an alternate form of payment is needed.

Aside from the weeknight

and Mother's Day games, other games take place Sundays at 10 a.m. outside of Mother's Day, Memorial Day and July 4 weekends. Playoffs will be in August.

This is the 30th season for the league and league officials are looking to celebrate the anniversary with a couple of events.

Minnechaug Regional High School Term 2 Honor Roll

WILBRAHAM - Minnechaug Regional High School recently named the second term honor roll for the 2025-2026 school year.

Grade P8 Honors: Abigail Cadieux, Anastasia Claudio, Martin Garcia, Jada Haqq, Rieland Kearney, Adeline Look, George Nutting, Peyton Salvat

Grade P8 High Honors: Nicholas Kennedy, Madeline Lee, Lyla Raymond, Jessica Soukup

Grade 9 Honors: Teddy Acquah, Raymond Adorno, Emerson Atkin, Evan Barcome, Olivia Barnett, Joshua Branham, Eva Breau, Nicholas Bretta, Thomas Brogle, Bailey Burgmyer, Benjamin Butts, Sadie Campbell, Jose Carrasquillo, A'laynah Cartwright, Xavier Catellier, Emilia Colondres, Nolan Costello, Ava Cowles, Kailah Cox, Nathan Demetri, Amelia DePace, Lacey Desjardins, Johnathan Dinh, Owen Downey, Keeley Doyle, Liam Doyle, Samantha Engel, Dina Ferrentino, Charlotte Fitzgerald, Austin Fortune, Eva Gagliarducci, Olivia Gaudreau, Olivia Goodale, Judah Gunn, Lily Guo, Tegan Haluch, Benjamin Harpin, Cole Harris, Andriea Holder, Tyler Hoskinson, Zahara Kibodya-Wilson, Aurora Kirton, Maxxum Kowal, Kaitlyn Labadorf, Stephanie Labadorf, Aubrey Lafield, Jillian Lajeunesse, Sophie Laliberte, Willis Lam, Ella Landry, Christie Lang, Alyvia Leonard, Griffin Litchfield, Ashley Manning, Rihlan McCarthy, Madelyn McNabb, Joy Mendonca, Logan Middleton, Michael Murray, Cohen Nelson, Evan Niemi, Brielle Nieves, Dillon Noonan, Ethan Nunlist, Ava O'Connor, Sarah O'Connor, Olivia Parent, Ava Pellosa, Owen Piquette, Cameron Powers, Megan Pronovost, Calvin Quintana, Mason Quintana, Lara Riberdy,

Colton Rogers, Myralece Rosado, Annelise Roszko, Ava Rowe, Quintis Saviengvong, Emmett Shattuck, Liam Shattuck, Kayla Smith, Abigail Stachowicz, William Stromwall, Joseph Twarog-DeJura, Grace Tzoumas, Nora Tzoumas, Annelise Waldron, Mason Waskiewicz, Caitlyn Wetherbe, Mia Yvon

Grade 9 High Honors: Goudy Abuata, Zakaria Ardolino, Alison Aucoin, Sireen Awkal, Ariana Balwa, Charlotte Beaulieu, Lauren Beaulieu, Nolan Burke, Jason Cao, Nolan Carney, Charlotte Castellano, Juliana Coffey, Emilia Connors, Carly Coughlin, Oliver Cunha, Kayla Dooley, Sadie Dos Santos, Grace Falzone, Kathryn Fulton, James Gallagher, Ava Germain, Alyse Goldrick, Aviana Gomez, Olivia Goodrow, Carolin Grzebienowski, Ted Holt, Isabel Horne, Jackson Hulseberg, Alexandra Jaslanek, Collin Kennedy, William Kern, Daniel Lareau, Johanna Lewis, Owen Lucarelle, Sumner McInnes, Gavin Meunier, Louis Morin, Madeleine O'Sullivan, Jack Parastatidis, Logan Richard, Sierra Rocha, Jackson Rust, Adrielle Sheridan, Ian Stratton, Peyton Sullivan, Stepan Syrota, Carolea Tangredi, Sean Tillberry, Nathaniel Tirabassi, Maya Usher, Shannon Wietecha, Jacob Zanetti

Grade 10 Honors: Jewelyanie Andino, Peter Appleby, Tommy Appleby, Kayden Bain-Purdy, Cole Balog, Taylor Bartosz, Aidan Bean, Bryce Beckel, Seth Beebe, Madeline Bleau, Maxim Bruno, Braxton Burzenski, Annalecia Carlo, Bartosz Chciek, Gavyn Clark, Joseph Comes, Kaelyn Dionne, Ryan Donovan, Ava Eggsware, Caroline Euber, Lucas Ferreira, Ella Ferrentino, Chase Folli, Devon Fortenberry, Gavin French, Gianna Fusco, Jackson Gagner, Olivia Gates, Brennan

Gliesman, Gavin Goldrick, Madison Guertin, Danika Haygood, Daniel Heindold, Releana Jackson, June Keeler, Declan Kelly, Ryan Kinsman, Darius Koch, Isabella Kupis, Ashlyn Landry, Brayden Lane, Peyton Lee, Edwin Long, Cameron Lowe, Jacob Luttrell, Yman Ly, Vivien Martin, Dominic Mascaro, Elijah Mathias, Isadora Maurice, Ashley McDonald, Daizy McDonald, Marabella Melluzzo, Juliana Mooney, Cayden Moynahan, Luke Nichols, Nicholas Nordstrom, Killian Nutting, Demetri Papanikou, Owen Petit, Averie Picard, Kendall Placzek, Noah Ramos, Domenic Roach, Khalil Roc, Jillian Rumplick, Kaden Russ, Benjamin Salvador, Zachary Senecal, Lillian Serghienko, Alysandra Serju, Tanvi Sharma, Sofia Shores, Julia Smith, Mya Suarez, Michael Sullivan, Julius-Joseph Sutton, Elliot Sylvester, Anna Taylor, Jillian True, Calvin Webster, Sophie Weisser, Joseph Woytowicz

Grade 10 High Honors: Owen Antaya, Rama Awkal, Andrew Boilard, Nicholas Capen, Maximus Cayo, Thomas Chitiva Ortiz, Irellyn Coffey, Nathaniel David, Emmett Fitzpatrick, Nora Fletcher, Emmy Foisy, Mario Garcia, Nicholas Gencarelli, Eliza Gloss, Ashley Grigouli, Mallory Grono, Demetrius Holmes, Brielle Hunter, Emilia Imbriglio, Kelsey Jennings, Brooke Johnson, Hannah Learned, Savannah Lee, Adriana Lopez, Olivia Maserati, Clare McMahon, Mylie Mittler, Wilhem Morales Casillas, Tess Morrow, Dylan Niznik, Gianna Nowicki, Liam O'Brien, Youngsun Oh, Tristan Oliveira, Patrick O'Toole, Kirk Pagoaga, Madeline Pastore, Benjamin Patterson, Alexis Powers, Madison Quinlan, Brenan Rost, Ava Secor, Riley Senecal, Gabriel Solowinski,

Audriana Stasio, Joseph Sullivan, William Szpakowski, Grayson Tanguay, Connor Valle, Ormandy Velazquez, James Wadzinski, Olivia Zheng

Grade 11 Honors: Gana Abuata, Pedro Alvan, Lillian Bennett, Bryana Blaser, Benjamin Carpenter, Liliana Celetti, Eli Childers, Ivy Christensen, Kiera Connors, Fabiano Costa, Dylan Dalesio, Katie DeGray, Tucker Derosia, Catherine Dickson, Andrew Dolaher, Barbara Dos Santos Costa, Darren Duah, Angelina Dunn, Elizabeth Espinal, Saniah Evans, Brielle Foisy, Christian Fradera O'Toole, Jasmine Gaspariano, Brooke Germain, Gavin Grimley, Richard Hale, Liam Harrigan, Caitlin Hebert, Anne Hicklen, Jacovi Hisgen, Katelyn Hoar, Ainsley Holden, Madelyn Hoskinson, Carson Humphries, Kadence Illig, Ryan Jacobsen, Joel Johnston-Rivera, Ava Keegan, Ethan Kelliher, Amelia Kellogg, Isabella Kirton, Ryan Knox-Nelli, Sophia Kozub, Isabella Lafield, Drew Lang, Peter Langone, Zoey Lape, Abigail Lee, Mia Manseau, Avery Marceau, Olivia Martowska, Cameron Maziarz, Sky-Lynn McGrath, Alec McInnes, Liam Metzger, Molly Michels, Mason Mish, Athena Nguyen, Shiv Patel, Jack Paterno, Nicholas Pelletier, Matthew Perkins, Natalie Petit, Mackenzie Picard, Anthony Powers, Haley Powers, Collin Purcell, Devin Purchas, Jaison Richard, Xavier Rios, Lauren Roberts, Karolina Robles-Maurer, Sydney Rocha, Emanuel Roman, Brooklyn Rosas, Ethan Rose-Vialpando, Jillian Rubner, Makenna Sacco, Madelyn Sackrider, Yara Saleh, Quinn Salerno, Jolena Sanchioni, Dillon Shaughnessey, Landon Sheerin, Savannah Sheerin, Mykhael Sierra-Pabey, Gracie Smith, Andrew Stark, Cole

Stone, Sophia Sundheim, Tyler Supczak, Grayson Sweet, Kaleb Sweetman, Connor Tillberry, Grace Trombly, Hope Trombly, Brayden Tugie, Owen Tzoumas, Isabella Usher, Luis Vega, Ariella Velez, Drew Weinberg, Kei Williams, Thomas Wurm

Grade 11 High Honors: Angelina Bontempi, Annabella Cianflone, Addison Derosia, Ava Disa, Braedon Donahue, Jonathan Dyer, Nehir Elcin, Isabella Esteves, Marion Fil, Ella Gagliarducci, Olivia Gencarelli, Naomi Griffin, Eliana Gunn, Lucy Haile, Lily Houle, Teagan Lawor, Celayna Ledvina, Leah Lomascolo, Molly Lynch, Andrea Lyon, Reese Magee, Liam Maher, Nola Malmborg, Caroline Maloni, Riddhi Patel, Ainsley Patterson, Samuel Przybyl, Jack Rumplick, Cameron Salvador, Ava Scatolini, Alison Souza, Olivia Spring, Faith Trombly, Brahmaddutt Vijay, Sarah Rose Walsh

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STUFFIES from page 1

brary and the Teen Advisory Board.

Kay Dickson, Victoria Gumlaw, Maddy Hoskinson and Abby Patterson volunteered at this year's event, reflecting on the experience.

"This is one of my favorite events and I love helping out and reading to the kids and then once they leave, kind of throw them (the stuffies) all about and they go on a little adventure and then they come back and pick them up," Dickson said. "It's so nice to see the kids smiling and everything."

"I love to see it when they come back to pick up their animals and see their stuffed animal's adventures from the night before on the screen," Patterson said.

"It was good. Everyone was happy and it was good," Gumlaw said.

"It's always good to make sure the kids get comfortable and when we read them the stories before their stuffed animals get tucked in to just get them all happy and excited for the next day," Hoskinson said.

The girls shared that they loved volunteering at the event and connecting with the children in the community.

"It's good, especially nowadays with everyone on the phone instead of actually embracing their childhood," Gumlaw said.

"I agree with that. It's nice to see the magic of their toys almost in a 'Toy Story' way just hanging out with their stuffed animals and just enjoying the moment and doing a craft and seeing all of the pictures. You get to see the magic of their childhoods



Stuffies try on cheater sunglasses for reading.

come back and it's really nice to see that," Hoskinson said.

"I really think it's a great opportunity for grandparents and parents to come and spend some quality time with their kids and it's just so sweet to watch that happen," Dickson said.

"It's really good to see them having a good time as a kid, especially a memory that they'll always remember," Patterson said.

The teens also encourage others to get involved and volunteer.

"I would say join Teen Advisory Board. It's a really good group of kids who are dedicated to helping the library and we really just want to give our time to this because we care about it," Dickson said.

"I feel like it's good for everyone in the community because we do donations and stuff and also, do some very fun stuff," Gumlaw said.



A teen volunteer reads to a father and daughter, who brought a stuffed mouse.

"For me, it's like if you come here as a kid to do these events or just come to the library, it's a great way to come back as a teen, then give back to the library, help the next generation of kids

and just support the community," Hoskinson said. "Like, being a teenager, you can do so much more. You can come to the events, but you can also volunteer like we do."

"I think it's definitely



Photos courtesy of Rachel Haggood
The teen volunteers pose for a photo with some of the stuffies.



Turley photo by Kristin Rivers
A family checks out the slideshow of the stuffies' adventures.

good to join Teen Advisory Board and know what's going on in your community," Patterson said.

The girls wished everyone a happy February Vacation Week and encouraged the community to continue supporting the library and check out future events.

"I'd say it was an event that got quickly filled up. We had around 30 kids and their families and we love doing this event and will probably continue to do it next year and I recommend you sign up quickly," Dickson said.

"Thank you for doing this and supporting the Teen Advisory Board," Gumlaw said.

"It's really fun to come in if you can get your kids to come before the sign-ups are filled. You definitely need to remember this. It's a fun memory. For the parents too, even just to see their kids enjoy it," Hoskinson said. "We definitely hope you can."

"It's definitely a fun experience for everybody. Even the parents can even take pictures of their kids with their stuffies," Patterson said.

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COMMUNITY

NEON from page 1

sett. "I've been teaching private lessons for 30 years," Boughamer said. "I started doing private lessons out of my house."

Boughamer explained that she has been teaching art in public schools for about seven years and has taught all ages over the course of her career.

Her favorite part of Paint Sip Fun and her teaching career in general was this.

"It's being able to empower my painters. They walk out feeling accomplished, proud of themselves," Boughamer said.

Her mission is making it known that, "art is accessible to everyone," and that all ages can achieve that level of confidence and creativity with no experience necessary.

Boughamer started with explaining to the class why they need a solid dark background before they began, stating that they should use strong colors like black, purple or dark blue. She then showed how to make the head and tentacles of the jellyfish, giving everyone creative freedom to express their own ideas, leaving

room for customizing color choices, the way that tentacles were made, the addition of dots and algae, even bubbles or fish.

Boughamer showcased skills for the attendees to learn and apply to their own paintings like a technique she used similar to one of her last paintings of Aurora Borealis, showing the teens how to paint flowy looking tentacles to their glowy jellyfish.

While painting, teens were able to use black light flashlights to check on their hidden neon works. There was a unanimous agreement from all teens that their favorite part was getting to view their artwork in the large black lights when everyone was finished, seeing the neon paint come out from hiding and glow brighter than before.

Some of the teens shared that they had their own individual difficulties and wouldn't necessarily call themselves artists but that the class was easy enough to follow and would definitely do it again.

"This is the only way that I'll paint," one of the teens mentioned, indicating that following a class tutorial in a public setting with her

friends helped her with getting creative and getting out of the house this February break.

Like every Paint Sip Fun event, all materials were provided for the attendees. Teens were provided with canvases, paints, easels, aprons, brushes, fun glow sticks and bracelets, as well as snacks like Twizzlers, Goldfish crackers and lollypops.

"It takes me about an hour for 30 people," Boughamer explained a little about the process of setting up an event, "to set up every single paint station, the tables, and it takes about an hour and a half to teach for the small canvases."

The name of Paint Sip Fun stands for, "a canvas to paint, a drink to sip, and a lot of fun," Boughamer said.

Although the biggest pain for her is washing the paint brushes during the clean-up, she thoroughly enjoys the process of teaching her painting classes.

If you're interested in any upcoming Paint Sip Fun events or want to learn more about Erin Leigh Boughamer, you can visit her website: paintsipfun.com.

Snowman Contest 2026 makes a return

WILBRAHAM/HAMPDEN - Calling all kids: the 2026 Snowman Building Contest is back.

Winter fun is officially on the horizon, and the Wilbraham Junior Women's Club is inviting kids across Wilbraham and Hampden to grab their mittens, roll up some snow, and let their imaginations run wild! The 2026 Snowman Building Contest is here, and it promises frosty

fun, friendly competition, and fantastic prizes.

Young snow artists are encouraged to build their best, silliest, most creative snowman and snap a photo featuring the 2026 Snowman Building Contest flyer, which can be found on the club's website at www.WilbrahamJuniorWomens.org. Once the masterpiece is complete, parents or guardians should post the photo to the Wilbraham-Hampden

Snowman Contest Facebook page. Entries will be accepted throughout the winter season.

Winners will be chosen by the Junior Women's club and announced on the Facebook Page at the end of the season.

- Prizes will be awarded to three top snow creations:
- First Prize: \$30, a trophy, and ultimate bragging rights
 - Second Prize: \$25
 - Third Prize: \$20

The Snowman Building Contest is proudly sponsored by the Wilbraham Junior Women's Club, an organization dedicated to supporting local programs, charities, and community events in Wilbraham and surrounding towns.

Have questions about the contest, the club, or interested in joining the Wilbraham Junior Women's Club? Visit www.WilbrahamJuniorWomens.org to learn more. You can also contact Barbara Croteau at barbcroteau@gmail.com.

So when the snow starts falling, don't stay inside—get building, get creative, and get clicking. Your snowman could be a winner!



PUBLIC NOTICES

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 Email: jamie@turley.com

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
 The Trial Court
 Probate and Family Court
 Hampden Probate and Family Court
 50 State Street
 Springfield, MA 01103
 (413)748-7758
 Docket No. HD26P0351EA
 Estate of:
 Laurette M Bishop
 Date of Death: 01/04/2026
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
 A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Deborah A McDonald of Ludlow, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that **Deborah A McDonald of Ludlow, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
 You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 03/25/2026. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

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

WITNESS, Hon. Claudine T. Stoudemire, First Justice of this Court.
 Date: February 20, 2026
Rosemary A Saccomani,
 Register of Probate
 02/26/2026

Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School Committee Proposed Regional Budget FY2027

The Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School Committee announces the public hearing on the proposed regional budget for FY2027 is scheduled for **Thursday, March 12, 2026, 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/kNuCFByffjA?feature=share>
 For additional information visit: <https://www.hwrds.org/>
 02/26, 03/05/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
 The Trial Court
 Probate and Family Court
 Hampden Probate and Family Court
 50 State Street
 Springfield, MA 01103
 (413)748-7758
 Docket No. HD26P0316EA
 Estate of:
 Lorraine M Glover
 Also known as:
 Lorraine Mae Glover
 Date of Death: 09/09/2025
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION
 To all interested persons:

A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Laurie L Enderle of Wilbraham, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that **Laurie L Enderle of Wilbraham, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
 You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 03/13/2026. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

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

WITNESS, Hon. Claudine T. Stoudemire, First Justice of this Court.
 Date: February 13, 2026
Rosemary A Saccomani,
 Register of Probate
 02/26/2026

Wilbraham-Hampden Times
OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place. The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

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

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PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

- 1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com
- 2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.
- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts' public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

Public notice deadlines are Friday at 3 p.m.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com



WFD responds to 2-alarm structure fire

WILBRAHAM - At approximately 1:47 p.m. on Feb. 8 the Wilbraham Fire Department responded to a structure fire at 215 Three Rivers Road.

Firefighters arrived on scene within five minutes to find heavy smoke and flames coming from the basement and first floor. A second alarm was requested.

Crews initiated an aggressive interior attack and searched for any occupants.

Mutual aid responded from the Ludlow Fire Department, Palmer Fire Department, Westover Air Reserve Base, Three Rivers Fire Department, and the Hampden



Fire Department. The Springfield Fire and Emergency Services provided Station coverage. The Massachusetts Department of Fire Services

provided the rehab unit. The fire was extinguished in about 45 minutes. There were no reported injuries, and the cause of the fire is under

investigation, but it is considered not suspicious. - Chief Michael Andrews

Wilbraham Senior Center Programs

WILBRAHAM - A message from the Wilbraham Senior Center. Due to circumstances outside of our control, the February edition of the Wilbraham Senior Center Newsletter will not be mailed out.

We have hard copies of the newsletter at the senior center ready to be picked up or they can be found online on the town's website. Also, a reminder that you can also receive the newsletter to your email every month. This allows you to see the newsletter up to two weeks before it hits your mailbox. If you have any questions, please call the senior center at 413-596-8379

fall feels less overwhelming and more manageable. Tim Rice PA-C will be speaking more on this topic on Feb. 27 at 11 a.m., sharing practical guidance and answering questions to help support confidence, safety, and independence.

Yoga NEW!

Yoga will now be held TWO DAYS A WEEK. Wednesdays at 10 a.m. and Fridays at 10 a.m. Bring your own mat or use one of ours. \$5 per person. 596-8379 with any questions.

Hiking Club

To sign up for hikes, call the Senior Center at 596-8379 or download the app TeamReach onto your cell phone. Further instructions for TeamReach are posted in the Senior Center. Meet at the trail head.

Thursday, Feb. 26 Whiting Reservoir. Easy hike. Mountain Park Road, Holyoke. 9:30 a.m. Park on the side of the road before it crosses Route 91.

Falls Happen-Now what?

Knowing what to do before, during, and after a fall matters. This session focuses on techniques to reduce injury if a fall happens and safe, step by step methods for getting up from the floor. Participants will also learn when to seek help and how to prepare ahead of time so a

NOTICE

ERRORS: Each advertiser is requested to check their advertisement the first time it appears. This paper will not be responsible for more than one corrected insertion, nor will be liable for any error in an advertisement to a greater extent than the cost of the space occupied by the item in the advertisement.



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 Friday 2/27 **Riverside Station**
 Saturday 2/28 **Andy Cavanaugh**
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