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## Playground & Recreation Comm. holds Memorial School info session

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
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WILBRAHAM - It was standing-room only at the senior center on Feb. 24 as the Playground & Recreation Commission held an information session on Memorial School.

The meeting comprised a presentation from Parks & Rec Director Bryan Litz on the current standing of programming at Memorial

School, with topics including the town options for Memorial School, revenues and budget for the Parks & Rec Department, building history, program impacts if Memorial School were to close, maintenance needs and capital improvements, ideas for capital funding and more.

Following this, updates were provided by Building Utilization Committee Chair Jeff Smith, Finance Committee Member Joe Lawless and Town Administrator Nick

Breault.

Residents also had the opportunity to share their thoughts and questions.

To watch the full discussion, residents can visit the Video on Demand page on the town website.

Playground & Recreation Commission Chair Brian Hoar explained how many people come up to the commission members "quite frequently" to ask about the status of Memorial School.

"We don't have any an-

swers. I can tell you nothing's going to be determined tonight. This is an informational session and it's really just to give the town and the residents who live here an opportunity to get a little update from our stakeholders who know a little bit more than us on the Rec Commission," Hoar said.

Litz shared the three options: keep Memorial School and invest in its future, close/build Memorial School and build a new rec center or

close/sell Memorial School and relocate or cancel programming.

On investing in its future, this would involve a Friends of Recreation Capital Campaign, grants, opportunities to generate revenue through Memorial School and the ability to continue and expand programming.

On the closing option, Litz said this would involve



Turley photo by Kristin Rivers  
**Playground & Recreation Commission Chair Brian Hoar opens the meeting.**

Please see **INFO SESSION**, page 10

## A look at HPL's LEGO CLUB

By Angelina Acevedo  
Correspondent

HAMPDEN - The library hosted their Lego Club for grades kindergarten through third grade on Feb. 19.

During the hour-long event, kids could create anything their imaginations wanted with all of the library's Legos available to build with.

The youth services librarian, Kate Rumpalik, explained how "Lego Club is a very simple club, but still a ton

Please see **LEGO CLUB**, page 8



Turley photos by Angelina Acevedo

**Lego Club member Beau posing with his work "The Mysterious Islands"**  
**LEFT: An up-close shot of the creation "The Mysterious Islands."**



## SB reviews senior center FY27 budget

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
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HAMPDEN - The Selectboard began its FY27 budget reviews on Feb. 25, with one of those being with the senior center.

The Highway Department was also reviewed at this meeting.

HSC Executive Director Rebecca Moriarty said the budget was "pretty straightforward as usual."

"A couple of increases up in the salary side of things. I did add an hour and a half to the director line, as well as two hours to the receptionist line. This is just for payment for hours that are being worked. It is definitely level-service. This isn't an increase to responsibilities or anything like that. It just covers hours that are being worked," Moriarty said.

Moriarty said the outreach coordinator was increased to assistant director as well.

"So, that reflects that in-

crease there. in that line item as well," Moriarty said. "I used the cost of living adjustment increases that were provided by Dick Patullo to calculate the salaries."

On expenses, Moriarty explained she maintained "level funding with the expense line item."

"We're doing fine with that. We don't have the need for an increase there," Moriarty said. "I did increase utilities by \$1,000. The utility bills have been high right now, but I think it's been so cold. Our gas bills have been higher than normal. So, I'm hoping that they will level out for this year and that \$1,000 increase will be enough for next year. I was glad when Brian took away the \$21,000 National Grid bill...so that was good."

On building maintenance, Moriarty noted a decrease.

"That reflects a decision that Herb Foley would not be taking care of generator

Please see **BUDGET**, page 9

## Sen. Jake Oliveira receives Legislator of the Year Award at conference

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer  
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REGION - The Massachusetts Municipal Association hosted its annual conference, this year called Connect 351, in Boston, in order to award two State Senators and two State Representatives with the Municipal Advocate Award, recognizing them for their service to the communities they represent and serve.

The Massachusetts Municipal Association, or MMA, works to connect and support municipal leaders by creating a nonpartisan space for shared learning, ideas, and a voice to bring to Beacon Hill in order to make the 351 towns and cities of Massachusetts more connected and unified.

"The more state support that municipalities can get, the better. Making sure that we have reliable state support for our 351 towns and cities is a lot more equitable. I believe that we are in a Commonwealth, and we should work together to benefit our towns," said Senator Jake Oliveira.

Oliveira worked hard to file legislation for towns to have the option to make hybrid meetings permanent, offering a way for meetings

to become more accessible to the public, amongst many other benefits.

"It's worked so well, even at the state house, and it makes it easier for people to participate in their government. It definitely improves services, and it was a great help in the long run to allow for more flexibility and an easier time to share informa-

tion," said Oliveira.

Oliveira partnered with the MMA to obtain funding for essential services at the local level, including Chapter 70 funds, school transportation, and much more. He also helped work to change the Chapter 90 funding formula in order to help West-

Please see **AWARD**, page 9



Submitted photo  
**Recipients of awards at Connect 351: Representative Jim Arciero, Representative Danielle Gregoire, Senator Brendan Crighton, and Senator Jake Oliveira.**



Submitted photos Rosey Bonner

**Master Gardeners make wreaths and arrangements for Symposium.**

## 'Let's Get Growing!' Spring Gardening Workshops coming up on March 28

By Kristin Rivers  
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WESTFIELD - The Western Massachusetts Master Gardener Association will be holding the 27th Annual "Let's Get Growing!" Spring Gardening Workshops on March 28 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Westfield Middle School - South.

The festivities will include a marketplace fair, raffles, an Ask a Master Gardener table,

refreshments, soil testing and 10 classes to help educate and empower attendees in gardening this spring.

This year's topics are "Using Trees and Shrubs for Year-long Interest," "Berry Delicious Gardens," "Practical Tips: Growing for a Changing Climate," "Gardening in Small Places," "From One Comes Many: Propagation Workshop (Hands-on)," "Invasive Species 101: Identification & Management," "Vegetables vs. Pests: How

to Win!" "Design Your Own Water Feature," "Let's Go Native: A Sustainable, Attainable Approach," and Get your Hands Dirty: Creating a Succulent Garden (Hands-on)."

The hands-on workshops, it should be noted, are already filled.

The speakers include Dan Ziomek, owner of Sugarloaf Gardens, Berry Specialist Laura Griffin McDermott,

Please see **WORKSHOPS**, page 16

# COMMUNITY

## Comments, town updates on Memorial School

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
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WILBRAHAM - During the Playground & Recreation Commission's information session on Memorial School on Feb. 24, town boards and residents shared updates and their thoughts.

For Parks & Rec Director Bryan Litz's presentation, check out this week's edition.

Building Utilization Committee Chair Jeff Smith provided the background history of the committee, which has been looking at many buildings in town, including the Highway Department, the town hall, the Atheneum Society of Wilbraham, the old and new police departments, the library, the Wilbraham Public Access building aka the Little Red School House, fire station two and many more.

Memorial School is on this list to review.

"Each one of those buildings we went extensively through as a committee and we looked at every nook and cranny and there was the aforementioned EBI study that was done a few years back. We kind of used that as a guide as to what we are looking for in these buildings, what's falling apart, has anything been done since then," Smith said. "We used that to kind of guide us through the buildings and see where any deficiencies were and then we tried to talk to people who use these buildings and see how the buildings are being utilized."

After four surveys that went out, Smith said the committee will be doing "a structured workshop process to analyze all this data that we've acquired."



Turley photo by Kristin Rivers  
**Parks & Rec Director Bryan Litz explains the Parks & Recreation Department's budget.**

Also, a request for information was put out to get ideas from potential developers of properties. A visit to Hampden to see how they used the former Thornton W. Burgess Middle School for their new town hall was also done by the committee, along with periodic updates presented to the Wilbraham Select Board.

"The end result that we are tasked with is to report back our findings to the Select Board," Smith said.

Finance Committee Member Joe Lawless—who also serves as liaison to Parks & Rec—said there's been discussions around the Parks & Rec budget, but no vote taken as of yet.

The options, Lawless reiterated, were to "mothball" Memorial School for \$15,000, which would be to shut it down for, roughly, a year and a half to give the Building Utilization Committee time to



**Finance Committee Chair Todd Schneider provides information on the budget season.**

consider the long-term decisions, a \$60,000 maintenance budget as done before or increasing that maintenance budget to \$100,000.

"So, the question is, what do we do, how do we handle this? Obviously, today, for

us, it's really an opportunity to listen to some of the citizens of the community to see what you're looking for. Try to give you an update as far as where we are," Lawless said. "At some point, the building's going to need a roof and it's probably pretty soon. I'm not an expert on what the building needs, but probably within the next year or two."

It was then clarified the roof section over the gym was replaced in 2025 and the rear-view section should be "ideally replaced within the next couple of years."

The other big item was the two boilers, as the backup one doesn't work and only the main one does. If the main boiler stops working, Lawless added, it would cost roughly \$250,000 to replace it.

Lawless said there's still a lot to consider, noting the other town department budgets as well.

"Ultimately, whatever we vote as a budget, it's still just our vote and opinion. It really comes down to the taxpayer coming out of Town Meeting and voting the way you want. What you want done with your taxpayer dollars," Lawless said.

After Finance Committee Chair Todd Schneider provided additional information on other town budget numbers and what could be coming down the road, Town Administrator Nick Breault also emphasized the three financial options on the table.

One issue Breault also

brought up was the building temperature.

"We are keeping it very stingy on that regard. Even so, we know that Sam (Boyd) is likely going to need to come and request reserve funds to get through the rest of the fiscal year. They may need another \$15,000 or so. We'll know that in a couple of weeks," Breault said. "So, yes, money is the object and at the same time, that \$15,000, \$60,000 or \$100,000 alone is not going necessarily to make or break the budget. But, when Finance is looking at things and we're making decisions to, maybe, not fund a printer in a department this year and hoping we can get along for another year, these are the kinds of real decisions that are being made to try and stretch the dollar as far as we can."

After noting the other capital needs, Breault stressed, "If we're going to commit, then we'll commit to making this a true community center."

"Then taxpayers and everybody in this room are going to have to consider what is the threshold we're willing to consider paying to do that," Breault said.

Amongst the numerous residents who voiced their thoughts, the general consensus was that everybody wants to keep Memorial School and maintain it, with questions about how to get the process moving to support the building, what the funding would look like and how to get it, who's responsible for bringing this to Town Meeting for consideration and many more presented.

Aurora Pierangelo-Frias went to Memorial School as a child and praised Litz's "visionary leadership," noting the transformation of Spec Pond to what it is today.

"If there's anyone in this town that I would trust 100% to execute a vision, it would be Bryan, and the thing is that we know that Spec Pond didn't happen overnight. It took a lot of time, it took a lot of funds and it took a lot of patience, but we need Memorial School," Pierangelo-Frias said.

She added how people come to Wilbraham for the schools and noted the impact of Parks & Rec programming, with offerings for all ages and different disciplines from sports and culture to the arts.

"I encourage everybody here—you're wonderful for being here—but we're just a small portion of the town residents and we really need to be mindful of the fact that we're in a tricky financial situation. It's not going to get better next year or the year after that, so we need to be really focused on paying attention, going to meetings, talking to volunteers and to our elected officials because change starts here in our little town of Wilbraham and we really just need to start paying more attention and making our needs and wants known," Pierangelo-Frias said.

## Wilbraham Womens Club March General Meeting

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Women's Club will hold their March General Meeting on Thursday March 12.

It will be a 11:30 a.m. Social then a noon Lunch, taking place at the St. Cecilia Parish Center.

Fit After 60 with Erin Pincince from the Wilbraham Senior Center

Erin will provide lots of tips for keeping fit and healthy after 60. She will be incorporating some cognitive and balance exercises in her demonstration. With many tips for taking care of our bodies and boosting our wellness in daily life. All welcome. Please give Pat Serra a call if you have any questions 413 530-3183.

## Irish Music Concert at 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 Gluccamora, 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.

## St. Cecilia Women's Club March meeting

WILBRAHAM - The St. Cecilia Women's Club March meeting takes place on Tuesday, March 10.

Evening of Reflection with Dr. Rob Robinson, Liturgy at 5:30 p.m. and Soup & Sandwich at 6 p.m.

Following mass and a light supper our guest speaker will be Dr. Rob Robinson, Clinical Director of Family Care Counseling who will speak on "How to be Happy in Today's World."

Please bring children's clothing to this meeting for infants and toddlers in need.



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# Whalen seeks to challenge Neal for congressional seat

SPRINGFIELD – On Tuesday, Feb. 10, public school teacher Jeromie Whalen pulled papers to begin his campaign to challenge longtime incumbent Congressman Richard Neal in a bid to represent the people of Massachusetts' 1st Congressional District.



Jeromie Whalen

A proud product of Western Massachusetts, Whalen grew up in Belchertown, built a life with his wife in South Hadley, and earned three degrees from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, most recently his Ph.D. in Mathematics, Science, and Learning Technologies in 2025. He has spent over a decade as a high school teacher in the Pioneer Valley.

"I'm coming from outside the traditional political world, and I think that's exactly what we need right now," said Whalen. "Old-school establishment thinking and the corporate greed that has seeped into our campaign finance system have pushed this country in the wrong direction. The way forward is electing real people from our communities who are not tied to those entrenched systems and who will actually fight for the policies we need to create change."

Massachusetts' 1st Congressional District represents 83 cities and towns across Western and Central Massachusetts, including communities in Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin, Worcester,

and Berkshire counties. The district spans a wide range of urban, suburban, and rural areas. Neal, who has held the seat since 1989, once served as chair of the House Ways and Means Committee.

"Some worry about losing perceived influence in the halls of Congress," said Whalen. "But when I hear about the power our current congressman is supposed to have, I can't help but ask who he's actually using that power for. When nearly all of your funding comes from corporations and large donors, it means Congressman Neal is motivated to support policies that benefit those contributors rather than the people in his district. What you're left with is a congressman who's rarely around, out of touch with the communities he represents, and advocating for corporations instead of constituents."

Whalen has a strong record of civic activism and has dedicated his career to helping future generations gain both the educational opportunities to succeed and the social skills to grow into caring, compassionate members of the community.

"I'm putting in the work to meet people where they are and hope to earn the support of voters across Western and Central Massachusetts in the Democratic primary on Sept. 1. This grassroots campaign is building a new

political infrastructure, and I'm proud of the authentic, honest relationships we've built with community stakeholders along the way. At its core, this campaign is about connecting the dots between municipal, state, and federal government and bringing real relief to local communities grappling with shrinking budgets and skyrocketing costs," said Whalen.

Previously, Whalen served as communications director and building delegate for the Northampton Association of School Employees (NASE). He has also served as vice president of the board of directors for Northampton Open Media.

As an educator and community media advocate, Whalen led a team of students and local volunteers in the Emmy Award-winning production of "Young@Heart." This Boston/New England regional award was given by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

As an academic researcher, he has published numerous studies that have garnered over 1,800 scholarly citations on the impact of technology in education, including examinations of emergency remote teaching and artificial intelligence.

Neal was last challenged in a primary several years ago by former Holyoke Mayor Alex Morse. Morse was unsuccessful in his challenge and since moved on to be the town administrator in Provincetown.

## HPL to hold Open House March 7

HAMPDEN – The Hampden Free Public Library will be holding an Open House at their new location on Saturday, March 7, at 11 a.m.

The library is located at 85 Wilbraham Rd. Look for the blue flag to find the library entrance.

Ask local author and historian David Bourcier questions and look at our collection of local history in our Local History Room!

Com see our new Kid's Playroom as we continue our Grow, Play and Learn, 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten and Pre-K Storytime!

Check out our new Sheila R. Flynn Teen Center with a tv, Nintendo Switch, Oculus, 3D printer, green screen, crafts and more!

Sponsored by and refreshments courtesy of the Friends of the Hampden Public Library.

## Open burning through May 1

WILBRAHAM - Open burning will begin on Jan. 15 and will run through May 1.

Daily permits are required for burning and can be obtained free of charge at [hcburnpermits.com](http://hcburnpermits.com).



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# Michael's Café reopens to the public

By Ben Hernandez  
Correspondent

LONGMEADOW – Robust spreads of sandwiches, cookies, wraps, soups and parfaits celebrated the reopening of Michael's Café located within the campus of JGS Lifecare.

The cafe, which had been closed since 2020 due to the pandemic and the loss of their main chef, was commemorated with great fanfare, named after Michael Frankel, past board chair, a cherished friend, dedicated leader and longtime supporter of JGS Lifecare.

Frankel passed away in 2013.

Michael's Café will be open five days a week from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

There, also, will be a spring reception to celebrate all of the donors who made Michael's Café possible.

"It meant a lot to recognize what you did for Michael," State Rep. Brian Ashe (D-Longmeadow) said during the commemoration speech as he addressed the small gathering. "As well as realize what he meant to this community."

Ashe added that the facility was "absolutely beautiful" and commented on the inviting ambiance and cozy feel to the tucked away restaurant.

Co-chairman Brian Zippin spoke at length about their shared love of golfing, how their daughters grew up together, and how the beloved lawyer was the drummer of local band the Mid Life Vices. He praised the cafe dedicated to his friend's legacy.

"My dad is here today; he is a resident," Zippin said. "He and I come here for a sandwich. The staff is terrific. We had a very warm welcome and the food was served with a smile."

Mary-Ann Schelb, the regional director of Legacy Life Care, presided over the reception. She stated that everyone was excited for the renovated kosher café.

"I'm business development," she said when asked about what the reopening meant to her. "I love the fact that I can market that we have this gorgeous café with wonderful food and drinks right here on campus."

Schelb expressed tremen-

dous excitement about the new facility, stating that Michael's Cafe wasn't just for the residents and local staff. She mentioned that the cafe is open to the public and that their intent was to service the community at large.

She also floated the idea of small businesses using the space as a meeting place, turning the seating area into a makeshift workplace.

"My favorite is the tuna salad," Schelb said when answering what her favorite menu item was.

As someone both gluten and dairy free, the myriad of options that the restaurant provides is invaluable to her.

The café is part of the Transformative Life Care project, an initiative that aims to grow the wider life care facility.

"It'll be a very big project over several years," Betsy Cross, Vice President of Development at Legacy Lifecare, said. "We'll be upgrading all of the nursing units to what's called a greenhouse, which allows people to grow and thrive."

The proposed greenhouses are small housing units complete with separate kitchens, allowing the residents to "have food prepared outside their bedroom door," rather than the traditional delivery service from a remote kitchen campus.

"It's a bit different from the typical nursing home you think of," Cross said.

She added that she's grateful for the cafe not only for the fundraising opportunity, but for the convenience.

"It gives me a great place to have lunch every time I'm here," Cross said. "I think it's a great way to really open up this campus and this facility to the community. We want to be open to all."

"Vivian [Hatwood] is doing a great job," Rabbi David Aminia said when asked about the new head chef.

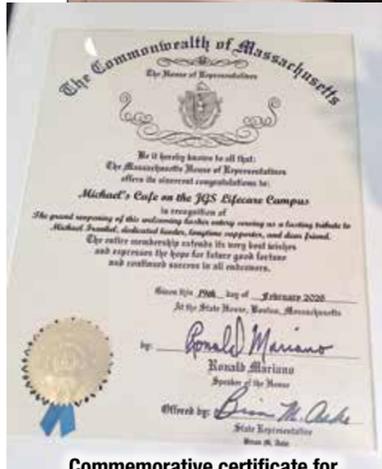
The rabbi was a close friend of Frankel and even instructed Frankel's daughters through their bat mitzvah education.

Aminia stressed how im-



Turley photos by Ben Hernandez

A plethora of sandwiches, wraps, parfaits, salads, and cookies adorn the reception hall.



Commemorative certificate for Michael's Cafe awarded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

portant it was for him to have kosher representation outside of the home.

"It's very hard to find kosher foods in the Springfield area," Aminia said, who expressed gratitude for the cafe's reopening.

He recommended the pastrami sandwich and authentic matzo ball soup off the menu.

"I feel supported and I come here often. I'm happy that it's here," Aminia said.

He also expressed how Michael's Café strives to be both affordable and waste reductive, points emphasized by JGS Lifecare president Rob Whitten.

"Honestly, every lunch that you buy now is \$12 to \$15 on the cheap end," Whitten said.

He mentioned that the low price point is a key strategy for the renovated business.

As items range between \$4 to \$8, Whitten stated that the average prices are "extremely helpful to everybody" and also strengthen communal bonds between the life care center and the general public.

"We're a non-profit organization from top to bottom," Whitten said. "So, any dime we make is reinvested."

Whitten echoed his peer's hopes that the café will draw an average of 40 to 50 people a day for the lunch hour, a statistic that he reports they are already achieving. As for his plans for expected food waste, he replied that he didn't expect much, if any.

"If there's any soup left on Monday, we always cart it out to staff members and it's sold at a discounted price. As they're walking through, they can bring it home for dinner," Whitten said.

"Convenience," he replied when asked what the cafe's reopening meant to him.

He explained how important it is to have spaces to con-



Michael's Cafe staff ready to serve with a smile.

nect with the grander community at the center, as it brings to light what is truly important to him.

"It's a place where I can come in as the president of the campus and sit in here, to have lunch with whoever comes in," Whitten said.

He highlighted how unusual it is to have a publicly available restaurant located on campus in the senior living facility. The practice is not common within his industry,

a unique element that he expressed at length.

"An actual cafe in a healthcare setting is pretty cool. It's nothing you see in the skill nursing world or in a continual care community," Whitten said.

As for the food offerings that were gobbled in earnest by the hungry crowd, Zippin summarized it well in his dedication speech.

"The food is good and I speak firsthand," Zippin said.

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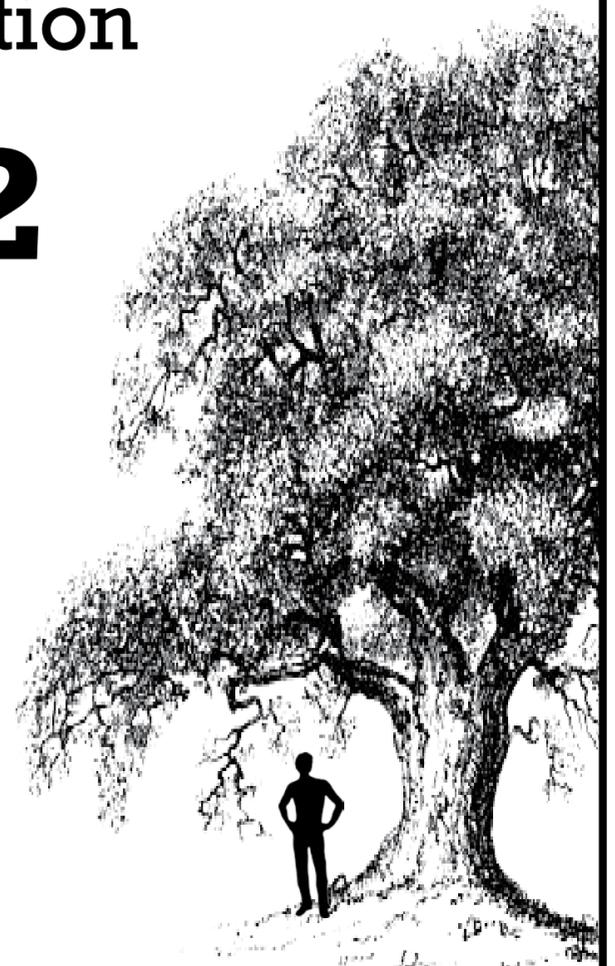
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# DL&G TREE



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## VIEWPOINTS

### Guest Column

# Trauma, ACEs, mental health and addictions

The interconnection of substance use and eating disorders

By Suzanne Yerdon Lewandowski, M.Ed.

Guest Columnist, 32 1/2 years sober, 30 year tobacco free, 26 years eating disorder free

Up to 50% of individuals with eating disorders misuse alcohol or illicit drugs, a rate five times higher than the general population. (1)

Up to 70% of adults with bulimia nervosa and up to 18% with anorexia nervosa have a coexisting substance use disorder. Conversely, up to 35% of those with substance use disorders have a co-occurring eating disorder, a rate roughly 11 times higher than in the general population, confirming a strong, dangerous link.

These intertwined, often hidden, conditions share common risk factors like anxiety, depression, and trauma. (2)

Scientifically defined, "Addiction is a complex, chronic brain disease driven by a combination of biological, environmental, and developmental factors, rather than a mere failure of willpower or moral weakness."

Addiction is also a developmental disorder, usually beginning in adolescence as a result of what is identified as ACEs. Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences are the strongest predictors of addiction.

Trauma may be caused by a single stressful or dangerous event, or repeated and prolonged exposure to highly stressful events such as child abuse, bullying, or domestic violence.

Individuals with an ACE score of four or higher face significantly elevated risks for substance use disorders: they are seven to 10 times more likely to report illicit drug addiction, and seven times more likely to be alcoholics.

Research considers trauma as the "gateway drug." Trauma survivors struggle with anxiety, depression, PTSD, emotional dysregulation, shame and low self-worth. Many individuals use substances to escape, "not feel," or self-medicate for emotional, physical, or sexual abuse.

Because the brain does not fully mature until age 25, young people are more vulnerable to addiction; PTSD and trauma can have varying degrees of severity and long-term effects

SAMHSA 2024 data reveals that 16.8% of the U.S. population aged 12 or older (about 48.4 million individuals) met the criteria for a substance use disorder (SUD) and that 10.1% of youths aged 12-17 reported significant suicidal thoughts. 2.7% attempted suicide.

Prevention and intervention by friends, families, teachers, and professionals, at any stage of development, can reduce the risk of an individual turning down the very dangerous path of addiction.

Awareness and education are the best places to begin and why public and mental health agencies and advocacy groups designate certain months to encourage people to recognize the signs of trauma and associated mental health concerns.

January brings us National Mental Wellness Month as well as Substance Use Disorder Treatment Month. Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month and National Eating Disorders Awareness Month follows in February. All mental health conditions are intertwined!

Eating disorders, again scientifically defined, can be understood as a maladaptive coping mechanism. This means that they serve a function for people; an eating disorder may help someone feel safe or in control during challenging times.

Eating disorders in teens often emerge as a coping mechanism for control, trauma, or emotional pain stemming from unhealthy relationships. Eating disorders are serious mental illnesses, where one's relationship with food and eating is disturbed. This can also extend to preoccupation with movement and body size/weight/shape.

Early signs of an eating disorder include body dissatisfaction and feelings of unhappiness, rapid weight loss or weight gain, changes in body shape and size, or particular body parts/areas, an intense fear of gaining weight, fear, avoidance or lack of interest in food and certain types of foods, denial of being hungry, deceptive behavior around food (hiding or tossing out food), avoiding food and eating in social situations, excessive or compulsive physical activity, cutting out particular food groups, developing food rituals – such as always using the same bowl, cutting food up into tiny pieces or eating very slowly.

These in turn can bring on behavioral changes such as social withdrawal, or not engaging in activities once enjoyed, sleep difficulties, low self-esteem, moodiness, and/or irritability.

Binge Eating Disorder (BED) is defined by recurring episodes of eating large quantities of food, often quickly and to the point of discomfort, accompanied by a feeling of a loss of control and shame.

Bulimia Nervosa is characterized by frequent episodes of binge eating followed by vomiting, using laxatives, or exercising to excess to avoid gaining weight. Your hungry body responds to its need for food with powerful cravings and another binge ensues. To

feel (short-lived) relief and regain control, you purge, but purging only reinforces binge eating and a vicious cycle of bulimia begins.

Anorexia Nervosa is a restrictive eating disorder, characterized most notably by weight loss and nutrient deficiency. Those with anorexia have difficulty maintaining an appropriate weight for their size and shape. In addition to restricting calories, compulsive exercise, use of laxatives, and/or purging is used to keep their weight low.

There are other specified feeding disorders (OSFED) that are subcategories of eating disorders that do not fit into the diagnostic criteria. A few include:

- Atypical Anorexia is a disorder that despite food restriction, the person's weight is average or above for their height, not under

- Rumination disorder (habitual regurgitation of food after eating, which may then be re-chewed, re-swallowed, or spit out) avoidant or restrictive food intake

- Pica (the persistent eating of non-food substances with no nutritional value, such as dirt, hair, paint chips, or soap)

- Orthorexia (an obsession with healthy eating with associated restrictive behaviors)

- Drunkorexia (skipping meals or excessive exercise along with heavy alcohol consumption.)

- Diabulimia is a life-threatening eating disorder specifically affecting individuals with Type 1 diabetes, characterized by the intentional restriction or omission of insulin to induce weight loss.

- Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID) is similar to picky eating in children or restricted intake in adults, this involves limiting food intake based on a lack of interest in food, avoidance of sensory characteristics (texture, smell), or fear of negative consequences (choking, vomiting).

In addition to affecting mental health, addictions can seriously damage the physical health systems: gastrointestinal, endocrine, nervous, cardiovascular, immune, respiratory problems, as well as liver damage and kidney disease.

It doesn't take long for tolerance to increase with substance use; more of the drug/alcohol is required to have the same effect. Dependence follows, and the body needs the substance to function normally.

Addiction takes time to develop but soon the cravings and compulsions are stronger than the consequences that follow. If you try to quit, the negative physical and mental health symptoms of withdrawal take over.

Recovery from substance use disorders and eating disorders have many similarities but also a big difference. Abstinence is the goal for many recovering from SUD, but for anyone with an eating disorder, abstinence becomes an eating disorder.

Never in your right mind would you even think about telling an alcoholic to have a beer for breakfast, wine for lunch, cocktails for dinner and a few shots for snacks. One sip, one drug, or one cigarette and the body and mind crave the substance – substance reuse ensues!

For an eating disorder, food is both the enemy (drug) AND the cure. The body and mind crave food in the same way as a SUD, but eating is essential for recovery.

One must eat to regain both mental and physical health, yet EVERY SINGLE BITE triggers intense emotions, anxieties and potential knee-jerk bingeing/restriction reactions. One must sit with those overwhelming negative feelings day in and day out.

You can only imagine what it is like for those 35%-50% with dual diagnosis to abstain from substance use while relearning what is the right amount of food to pro-

vide the best nutrition for healing. What is good for the body will not feel good to the mind and the person resists!

The interplay between physical health and mental health is intense.

With food disorders, there is an interplay of the endocrine and nervous system constantly trying to keep the body at equilibrium whether a person is suffering from bingeing, purging or starvation caused by anorexia nervosa.

Once you're in recovery, it can take three months or more to heal metabolism after an eating disorder. This includes unwanted weight gain, digestive issues, thyroid and hormone problems, and fatigue.

Like alcoholism, anorexia can have fatal consequences without medical intervention. Typical eating disorder recovery takes three-six years.

Marilyn Barrett, author of "Creating Eden: The Garden as a Healing Place" encapsulated my recovery when she wrote:

"Come into the garden with me. Don't worry about not knowing your way: Your heart remembers, even if your head has forgotten. When you were small and first had time to create your dreams, you were at one with the earth you played in and with each leaf, bird, and cloud you saw. This is the garden to which I invite you to return.

Imagine a place to which you can bring stress, sorrow, loneliness, and confusion and from which you can leave with a sense of resolution, understanding, and calm. Imagine a place where you can express your own unique nature, create beauty, grow pure food, and gain control over your life. In my life, the garden has been such a place."

Marilyn so aptly penned that the garden is a place for clearing away anger, confusion, and pain, the trash of

Please see **DISORDERS**, page 15



## Small team. Big impact. Powered by community.

By Brandice J. O'Brien  
Marketing and Communications Manager,  
Greater Springfield  
Habitat for Humanity

WEST SPRINGFIELD - Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH) operates much like other nonprofits—with ambitious goals, growing needs, and limited resources. What makes us unique is our scale: a four-person full-time team managing daily operations, programs that benefit our partner families, donor engagement, and construction efforts across our service area. Community support isn't just appreciated — it's what makes this work

possible.

Greater Springfield Habitat manages two programs — homeownership and home preservation — serving families across Hampden County. While our expenses currently exceed revenue by \$27,000, and individual donations account for 13% of our income, this gap represents an opportunity for our community to strengthen and sustain this vital work.

"When you donate directly to GSHFH, your impact is exponential," said Michael Clemente, vice president of the Greater Springfield Habitat Board of Directors. "Local donations stay right here. We prioritize keeping our operat-

ing costs low to ensure every dollar maximizes its impact within our community."

Even with these challenges, Greater Springfield Habitat continues to build two to three new homes annually, while completing multiple home repair projects across Hampden County. Three new construction projects are in development for 2026.

"I've always been a fan of the 'octopus' partner concept that leads to a finished home — the many hands, including Habitat for Humanity, the donors of every size, the volunteers and the eventual owners," said Kevin Bowler,

Please see **HABITAT**, page 9



Jennifer, a Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity homeowner, beams as she holds up a key to her new home.

The Wilbraham-Hampden  
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### Correction Policy

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

The Wilbraham-Hampden TIMES is published every Thursday by Turley Publications, Inc. One year out of town subscriptions are available at \$45, out of state \$50 by calling 800-824-8458 Ext. 201. The deadline for submission of news material, letters to the editor and photos is Monday at 12 p.m. The TIMES is not responsible for submitted photos.

## Election letters to the editor welcome

The Wilbraham-Hampden Times welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to Wilbraham-Hampden Times, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to krivers@turley.com. 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](mailto:krivers@turley.com) or mail to TIMES, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

# WILBRAHAM HAMPDEN

## WFD assists Monson in fire response



Photo and caption courtesy of Wilbraham Fire Department  
At approximately 4:30 p.m. on Feb. 19, Engine 3, Car 1 & 2 responded to the Town of Monson to assist with a house fire on Silver Street.

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

HAPPY 11<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY

*Rayna*

You are growing before our eyes and we are so proud of who you are becoming.

Love you lots, Babcia and Papa!



Submitted photos and caption Jason Weber

## National Champion Track and Field

Callan, eight year old from Wilbraham, traveled to Ypsilanti, Michigan on Feb. 14 and 15 to compete in the U14

AAU National Track & Field Championships. Callan competed in the difficult 1500m, 800m double while also competing in the High Jump. On day one of the two-day meet, Callan competed in the High Jump and the 1500m for his first two events of the weekend. Callan was cleared 1.02m clean and hit a .11m PR in High Jump taking second place and earning his first Track & Field All American Honor and national runner-up. Callan came back about an hour later in the 1500m with a personal best of 5:48.96 to win the National Championship! Callan has now gone back-to-back in the 1500m and defended his National championship! On day two of the competition Callan competed in the 800m (2:58.36). Callan came back earning his third All-American honor by placing fourth! Callan is now a 19 time All American in track and Cross Country and a 3 time National Champion! (1500m 2x and 800m).



## Sharing nutritious food...

Members of the Wilbraham-Hampden Rotary Club joined with Evangel Assembly Church to help reduce the incidence of food insecurity in the area when the club whined down the last delivery of a nutritious food grant from Rotary District 7890 Feb. 25. The club provided a 50 percent match. (From left) club officers Ann Marie Ottoson, Diane Ryan, church member Lee and Dolly Gadoua and Brad Sperry.

Snow, snow and more snow!

Submitted photo Donna Hutchins  
Wilbraham and Hampden got hammered with more snow with a snowstorm on Feb. 23. Once again, the community shared some of their pics with the Times!



Submitted photos Claudia Kapinos

Claudia Kapinos of Hampden shared a photo of an American flag blowing in the wind and visits from feather friends.

Submitted photo Edralin Norman  
Another fun snow day.

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**LEGO CLUB** from page 1  
of fun. The library has many bins full of Lego bricks, and we just bring them all out for an hour.”

“After building their creations, they’re displayed in the children’s section of the library with their name and a title for their work. The creations get displayed for a few weeks, then when it comes time for next month’s meeting, they get taken down to be reused,” Rumpalik said.

Lego Club takes place each month at the library, with this meet being the first at the newly opened Hampden Public Library location on Wilbraham Road.

“With the process of moving buildings, Lego Club was on a bit of a halt, but now we’re starting it back up again for the school year,” Rumpalik said.

The club focuses on many important aspects for young

children, like collaboration, social interaction, and of course, creativity. During these early years, it’s important for children to have spaces to enhance these skills available to them.

“Kids really don’t get an opportunity to create without any kind of rules. In school, yes you can create, but there’s usually some sort of instruction or assignment that needs to be completed. Here, we let the kids build anything they want,” Rumpalik said. “Sometimes kids make simple designs, more intricate pieces, or anything in between. We’ve had all different types of builds, like outdoor scenery, boats, planes, schools, and much, much more. We actually thought of possibly trying to have themed Lego Clubs, where the kids make creations based on an overarching theme, but decided against it due to how creative the kids are.”



Turley photos by Angelina Acevedo  
**Kids looking for the perfect Lego piece for their creations.**

Sign-ups for the March 26 Lego Club from 4 to 5 p.m. are now open on the Hampden Library’s website, and are preferred for the event. Along

with Lego Club, the library offers other events catered towards children, such as Reading with Tuck-

er the Therapy Dog and Story Times.

The Hampden Library’s Lego offerings don’t end at just Lego Club, and there are many Lego-related books available to be checked out.

“We have nearly every kind of Lego book that someone could think of. There are books about actually building with the Legos and getting great ideas, but there’s also story books about Lego characters,” Rumpalik said.

Rumpalik is always impressed with what comes out of this hour-long club.

“My favorite part is just the amount of creativity these kids have, and how they can turn building blocks into designs I’d never think of on my own. It’s also really amazing when the kids sometimes come together to create one big building creation, all on their own,” Rumpalik said.

Lego Club at the Hampden Library is a great learning space for children, and is always welcoming new members to share a fun and creative time during the school year.



**One of the many Lego bins available for kids to play with during Lego Club.**

# SUMMER CAMP

Check Out These Great Camps!

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

Check out our adult enrichment courses, too! [hcc.edu/bcs](http://hcc.edu/bcs)

**HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

## Make the most of the summer camp

Summer camp season will soon be here, and throngs of children will board buses each morning or pack their parents’ cars full of essentials to survive a few weeks away from home.

Looking back, many adults who experienced summer camp have fond memories of their adventures — whether they all went according to plan or there were some hiccups along the way. Parents want their children to make their own summer camp memories. Even if the canoe capsizes or the cabin leaks during a summer thunderstorm, such experiences can build character and strengthen friendships.

According to RegPack, an online registration software company, more than six million American children participate in some form of camp each year, including sleep-away camp or day camp. The American Camp Association says that number is closer to 14 million, with the most popular camp session length around one week or less. Families getting prepared for camp can follow these guidelines to ensure the experience is one kids won’t soon forget.

### Search for an accredited camp

Accredited camps must meet more than 300 standards related to program quality, safety and health, according to the ACA. An accredited camp will likely give parents the most peace of mind.

### Consider children’s readiness

There’s no magic age when a child may be ready to go to camp, but generally kids who are ages seven or eight may be fine to start a resident sleep-away camp. Day camp kids can begin as early as age three, the same age kids often begin preschool programs. Gauge whether the child has spent time away from home at friends’ or family members’ homes to decide if a resident camp will be the right fit or if a day camp is a better fit.

### Connect with fellow campers

If possible, attend a meet-and-greet prior to the start of the season. Neighborhood day camps tend to draw kids from local communities, so there’s already a chance kids will know a few fellow campers.

### Get to know camp counselors early on

Campers can introduce themselves to camp counselors and other program directors and are urged to ask questions about specific programs. Counselors can direct campers toward activities they may enjoy.

### Make the most of all situations

Much of summer camp will likely be smooth-sailing, but it’s reasonable to expect some bumps along the way. Campers shouldn’t expect perfection, but use the situations that may go awry as learning experiences on how to handle adversity — trying to find the fun in them anyway. Even a medical situation can be overcome, particularly because camps staff qualified medical personnel to ensure campers are safe and well.

### Greene Acres Equestrian Center L.L.C.

**2026 Summer Riding Sessions**  
June 29 - July 3 • July 20 - July 24  
August 10 - August 14 • August 24-28

9AM - 3PM LUNCH NOT PROVIDED

Basic Horse Care, Daily Riding, English & Western, Ages 5 & up

Call to Register (413) 813-9291  
53 Ware Road, Belchertown  
Email: [Amanda.greeneacres@gmail.com](mailto:Amanda.greeneacres@gmail.com)



### Girl Scout Camp For All Girls!

DAY & OVERNIGHT

[www.gscwm.org](http://www.gscwm.org)



## Belchertown Kidz Club

**TODDLER • PRESCHOOL • SCHOOL AGE**  
Offering Flexible Care Programs For Kids Ages 15 mo. - 12 yrs.  
Open 7:00 a.m.-5:30\* p.m. / MONDAY - FRIDAY  
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**KIDZ SUMMER PROGRAM/K-6TH GRADE**  
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9 Weeks • Full & Part Time Options/Single Weeks or All Summer!  
Swimming • Field Trips • Close walk to Playgrounds & CHCS Pool  
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\*Start of camp based on Belchertown School Schedule

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## BEMENT SUMMER CAMP

FOR CHILDREN ENTERING GRADES K-9  
Campers participate in a wide variety of fun activities including arts & crafts, swimming, nature programs, hiking, and 18 enrichment themed! Lunch is included and before and after care is available!

DAY CAMP JR. DAY CAMP	ENRICHMENT CAMPS	Weekly Tuition \$350-\$500	MOUNTAIN BIKING & ADVENTURE CAMPS
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WEEK 1: JUNE 15-19	WEEK 2: JUNE 22-26	WEEK 3: JULY 6-10	WEEK 4: JULY 13-17	WEEK 5: JULY 20-24	WEEK 6: JULY 27-31	WEEK 7: AUGUST 3-7
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Studio Arts & Crafts	Speech & Debate	Broadway at Bement	Graphic Novel Camp	Little Explorers Camp	Movie Magic Camp
Cross Country Camp	Taylor Swift Camp	Soccer Club	D&D Camp	Counselor in Training	Soccer Camp
Spanish Explorers	Game’s Guild	STEM Challenges!	Missoua Monadnock	History Hunters	Flag Football & More
PE Games & Sports					

The Bement School  
94 Old Main Street  
Dartmouth, MA 01842

Registration Link  
[bement.org/summer](http://bement.org/summer)




**BUDGET** from page 1

maintenance. So, that had always been a part of the senior center building maintenance line. So, some money was taken out of there, so he will take over the maintenance of the generator," Moriarty said.

Chair John Flynn asked about the utility increase on current bills.

"Do you think that's enough? I mean, we see a tremendous increase from Ever-source with the gas as well," Flynn said.

Moriarty replied that "it's tough to say."

"I do feel like our gas bill will go down once it's not so cold. They have leveled out a little bit. The last two have been \$2,000 monthly, so that was a higher hit than we've gotten in the past," Moriarty said.

"And there's also a hope that the new system will be more energy efficient, maybe bring that down as well," Flynn said.

"Yep. So, I'm hopeful that that will track accordingly," Moriarty said.

On the decrease to hours for the outreach coordinator due to grant funding was also brought up.

"Down below, you can see the title 3B Grant we still don't have that was federal funding that was eliminated last year, but the Formula Grant has picked up the additional outreach hours increase to salary and then it also continues to pay for the outreach coordinator or the assistant director and myself to attend the Annual Fall Conference for senior centers across the state," Moriarty said.

Flynn next noted the 25% decrease in DTA, SNAP.

"How will that affect us?" Flynn said.

Moriarty said the senior center just got word about that that week.

"The funding that we receive through being a DTA outreach partner for doing SNAP applications has been reduced by 25%. So, that money that we get goes back

into the community. We give out personal needs bags to people, so they include toiletries, things that you can't buy with your SNAP benefits. Toilet paper, tissues, toothpaste, toothbrushes, things like that," Moriarty said. "So, we'll have to scale back on that a little bit. I did ask Brian just this week if we could put a collection box here at the town hall that if any coming in would like to donate a tube of toothpaste or a box of Kleenex or something like that, we do take donations from the community. So, the impact isn't necessarily to our budget, but it is to the personal needs bags that we send out."

On the hours, Flynn said this.

"You're increasing to 39 and I personally know from stopping there, you're there all the time. Maybe you go by on weekends, you see Becky roof raking the snow off," Flynn said. "Do you think it should be 40?"

Moriarty said it could be.

"I was just cognizant of the fact that this is a lean budget year, so I just decided to do an hour and a half increase as opposed to going up to the full 40," Moriarty said.

"Which would actually be restoring back to the level it was at that point, going back to '05 or whatever," Flynn said.

"Right," Moriarty said.

"So, it's taken us 20 years to get back to just this point," Flynn said.

"Yeah," Moriarty said.

"But the reality is you're working those hours, and the same thing we went through—I think—Jane a couple years ago where we said it wasn't fair that Jane was working hours past the amount she was being paid for," Flynn said. "So, I would just put to the board that I think it's reflective of us and our responsibility to make sure that our people are properly taken care of for the hours they work, and we appreciate your thinking of the town in this regard."

**HABITAT** from page 6

new GSHFH volunteer. "As a believer in the value of building familial wealth, any time a neighbor can have the opportunity for that brought into their reach, I'm a fan."

In June 2025, GSHFH sold a colonial home in Springfield to a Moroccan family of six.

"This house represents stability for us," said new homeowner Driss. "It will allow us to focus on raising our children and helping them achieve their goals, so they can grow and contribute positively to society."

In December 2025, the affiliate celebrated the completion of construction on a modular home. The project was a collaboration between Holyoke Housing Authority (HHA), the University of Massachusetts DesignBuild program, and GSHFH.

"We at the Housing Authority are always excited to see vacant parcels become homes, particularly at a time when there's a huge demand in the Commonwealth for good housing," said Matt Mainville, HHA executive director, at the dedication. "... we also recognize housing resources are limited, dollars for development are hard to acquire. So, when we're able to partner with Habitat, UMass, and the City, it's always a recipe for success."

The work we're doing today is meaningful — but it represents just a fraction of what's possible. With greater local investment and engagement, Greater Springfield Habitat could expand our programs, serve more families, and bring our board's long-term vision for affordable housing to life.

Michael said if the affiliate had an abundance of resources, he'd like to see old mill buildings in Holyoke, Springfield, Chicopee, West Spring-

field, Westfield, and Ludlow converted into housing.

"These larger spaces would allow us to support dozens of families at once. Commercial developers often struggle with abatement costs and regulations. GSHFH is uniquely positioned to secure grant funding and navigate these processes. It's a long-term goal that could truly transform our community. The first step is funding."

Greater Springfield Habitat hosts a variety of community-friendly fundraisers throughout the year, bringing together supporters of all ages to celebrate, connect, and invest in affordable housing in Hampden County.

Our upcoming Pickleball Tournament will take place on Sunday, March 29, at The Picklr in Westfield. Whether you're a seasoned player or just looking for a fun way to support a great cause, this event promises friendly competition and meaningful impact. Learn more at [habitatspringfield.org/pickleball](http://habitatspringfield.org/pickleball).

Supporters can also participate in Hops for Habitat — an ongoing partnership with local breweries that allows craft beer enthusiasts to give back while enjoying their favorite pours. Learn more at [habitatspringfield.org/hops-for-habitat](http://habitatspringfield.org/hops-for-habitat). We continue to offer our popular, Habitat-themed in-house designed dress socks for purchase ([habitatspringfield.org/socks](http://habitatspringfield.org/socks)), and our signature fall fundraiser, Habitat Family Fun Fest, will return this October. Throughout the year, we also host bingo nights, raffles, and other fun opportunities for community participation.

Every event — big or small — helps build and preserve homes for families across Hampden County. Every gift makes a local impact. To support our work, visit [habitatspringfield.org/donate](http://habitatspringfield.org/donate).

**Tiny Art Show at Wilbraham Public Library**

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, Feb. 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 sub-

mission 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.

**Babes, Brews & Browsing presents 'The 90s Boom'**

HAMPDEN – Babes, Brews & Browsing will be presenting "The 90s Boom" on March 28 from 5 to 9 p.m. at GreatHorse.

Throwing back while giving back. Tickets are \$60 and can be found on EventBrite.

Attendees can eat, shop 10 to 12 Babes Brews & Browsing women owned businesses, dancing, music spun by DJ Dave Costa, the JD 360 Photobooth and more.

All proceeds will support Shriner's Children's New England.

**Minnechaug Ultimate Party Murder Mystery Event**

WILBRAHAM – The Minnechaug Ultimate Party will be hosting a 90's Be There or Be Square Murder Mystery Event on Thursday, March 12, from 6 to 9 p.m. \$40 per person or \$75 per couple. Raffles, 50/50, dessert and drinks for sale, BYO food. 90's attire encouraged but not required. Guests must be 18+ to attend.

It is through The Murder Mystery Co., as seen on Shark Tank.

The event will take place at the Lusitano Club, 385 Windsor St. Ludlow, MA 01056.

Venmo: @Theultimate-party - Andrenaissance.

Mail cash/check to: Jen Pelletier, 2 Overlook Dr., Wilbraham, Ma 01095



Submitted photo

The room was packed with people at the awards ceremony hosted by the Massachusetts Municipal Association.

**AWARD** from page 1

ern MA communities have better roadways that are more cost-effective.

"It was a good conference, and it was very meaningful for me to receive the award," said Oliveira. "It was great to go to the MMA conference, because you

got to see town managers, city councilors, and more, some of whom I worked with while I was part of the school committee."

To further honor Oliveira's dedication and service to the communities, the Selectboard from the town of Longmeadow also presented him with an award.

"As someone who came from municipal government, it was very meaningful to receive this award. We really work and fight hard to get these resources for our towns and cities, and working with that is something that I take a lot of pride in."

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# The Next Watershed Moments...



Paddlers explored the Ware River from the Robbins Road launch site in Ware to Bennett Street in Palmer.



Chicopee 4Rivers Watershed Council Coordinator Keith Davies prepared paddlers for the inaugural launch on the Lower Ware River Blue Trail in spring 2023.

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

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

So, what's next for these four rivers: Swift, Ware, Quaboag, and Chicopee? C4R has got the ball rolling, but it won't keep rolling if there is no push behind it.

Who pushes? Leaders and



Turley File Photos

Cub Scouts worked to remove a tire from the riverbank.

volunteers, communities.

During 2026, C4R will hold a series of community information sessions to highlight our potential and vision. The first will be a spring kick-off event at the Palmer Historical Cultural Center, 2072 Main St., in Three Rivers on Sunday, March 22 at 2 p.m.

Throughout the year, C4R will have fun paddles, nature paddles, clean ups (suggested sites?), water quality monitoring, and more.

We hope to post on our website our events schedule by March 22. These events and the meetings will be a good opportunity to see our rivers, meet others and hear how we can together Care 4 rivers-C4R.

Our needs: we need to strengthen our leadership team, add qualified and committed people to help with organizational, communication, database and financial management. People with water resource and aquatic biological savvy can also help. We have reached a point where we can do more as a community group to Care 4 rivers.

Our vision is to promote stewardship, conservation, enjoyment, and restoration of the rivers, ecosystems and wildlife habitats of the Chicopee-4 Rivers basin, while balancing and fostering river friendly city and town economies and community life.

We have planted the seed for this with our basic moni-

toring and paddling trails. But sprouts need more to grow.

We could go to the next level by adding broader water quality monitoring (adopt a stream, macroinvertebrates), trail teams, storm water education and action efforts, wildlife monitoring, annual rivers report card, restoration efforts, and perhaps a rivers celebration event!

We could be the source for Caring for our local 4 Rivers. Now we're talking!

Sounds inviting? Something inside you saying: "yes, I feel I want to help and make a difference!" Our local rivers are beautiful and magical places, places to discover – but also to care for.

Rivers have been the lifeblood of New England for centuries, likely thousands of years. They still are and can continue to sustain us and wildlife as we live in balance with them.

C4R is a means to gather us together to do that, albeit in a humble way. We invite you to join in the vision, let's C4R!

For more information about C4R and to get involved, people may visit [www.c4rivers.org](http://www.c4rivers.org), email [chicopeewatershed@gmail.com](mailto:chicopeewatershed@gmail.com), or mail C4RWC, P.O. Box 126, Three Rivers, MA 01080.

### INFO SESSION

from page 1 private leasing of \$100K to \$150K a year rent (Post Office Park) and new construction at \$7.5 million (OHA report figures), not including land acquisition.

"If the town were to mothball the building—which is that last topic that we're talking about—it'd be about \$15,000 per year for the town. Right now, it's funded at \$60,000 in fiscal year '26, which is the current fiscal year

we're in right now. It's funded as an unoccupied building. I know most of you are probably aware, at times, it's rather full in there. It is funded as an unoccupied building," Litz said. "The town would need \$100,000 for fiscal year '27 to maintain the status quo, which would mean to keep that building open and in its current state. Obviously, you're all probably aware, unused buildings—if we were to mothball it—that would probably further deteriorate

the condition of the building. Buildings that are rarely maintained and unmaintained quickly decay and turn into hazards."

Litz said many rec programs would be negatively impacted, listing eliminated programs would include youth wrestling, indoor pickleball, pre-k basketball (ages four to five) and instructional basketball (K-12), affected programs for dance, acting and art classes and for re-structured, limiting Competi-

tive Suburban to eight teams instead of 10.

"If we lose Memorial, we lose roughly 10 slots, so we go from 4 p.m. to about 9 p.m. Monday through Friday for basketball. If we lose Memorial, the only way we can make basketball work in this community is to get rid of that program, which would be awful," Litz said. "It would be awful from development, all kinds of different things. It would set back basketball years and years and years..."

If this building closes and we lose another gym, we have to try to find ways to make our basketball program work."

For the WPRD Funding and Memorial School Debate section—which discussed taxes versus program fees—Litz shared how the commission voted 6-0 on Feb. 2 for the town to fund capital and maintenance at Memorial School, just like it does for all other town-owned buildings in Wilbraham.

"If other departments are paying out of registration revolving accounts, then we certainly will. Why should we be held to a different standard? We do pay almost \$10,000 to \$13,000 a year. Every other town building has a cleaning contract that's paid for by the town," Litz said. "We have a person come in once a week and we also have our gym supervisors clean daily, so we pay for that out of the revolving account. So we pay for pickleball or basketball or wrestling, part of your fees go in towards that. We pay for all the cleaning products, paper supplies products, soap, lightbulbs, trash. Small purchases, vacuums, signage, mops, buckets, brooms, we pay for all that."

After presenting the budget and revenues, Litz reviewed the cost per taxpayer, noting the \$588,426 budget amount for FY26, with \$499,425 geared towards salaries—four recreation staff and three parks staff—and \$89,001 for expenses.

If \$100,000 was added to support Memorial School, it would bring the total budget amount to \$688,426.

The 6,000 number pertains to the number of taxpayers in Wilbraham Litz received from contacting the town clerk's office.

"So, if you took our budget—our \$588,000—divided it by 6,000, under \$100 a month you are paying for what you get out of Park & Rec...\$8.17 per month. So,

\$100 for the year," Litz said. "If you factored in Memorial, that \$688,000 number we talked about, we would pay about \$115, \$10 per month."

If \$250,000 was added in for capital plus the \$100,000—creating \$350,000—and divided by 6,000, it would be \$58.33, for \$4.86 per month.

On capital improvements, this list includes insulation, gym window frames, men's bathroom drain, main door, air handlers, HVAC, floor tiles, flat roof, boiler(s), plumbing (bathrooms) and access road/parking for immediate needs.

Litz said these could be funded through the Community Preservation Act, Green Communities, Historical and Cultural Council Grants and the Capital Committee.

As for next steps, they would be setting up a joint meeting with the Select Board, Finance Committee and Recreation Commission, the Building Utilization Committee continuing its work reviewing buildings in town and keeping Memorial School maintained, in good condition, to maintain the asset value and fund as an occupied building.

"We appreciate, obviously, a great turnout. We appreciate all of you coming out, this is great," Litz said. "I think for all of us, it means the building means something, the programming means something. I'm coming from a programming perspective, you might be coming from a building perspective and a programming perspective, but it means something to this community. I've said for the last 10 years, I think that building could be a crown jewel. It could be Spec Pond. I don't know what you want. You want that building sold? No problem. You want the building kept? No problem. But, there's potential there."

For the comments from residents and town board updates, check out this week's edition.

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# SPORTS

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## Falcons girls basketball have strong showing in tournament opener



Kelly Cronin gets pressured near the free throw line.



Elizabeth Woytowicz drives to the hoop.



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli  
Zahara Wilson passes on the run.



Cailin O'Brien runs into a guard.

**WILBRAHAM** – Last Friday night, Minnechaug Regional High School girls basketball scored a tournament-opening win in the Division 2 states as they welcomed Leominster High School scoring a 47-34 win after going up big in the first quarter. Minnechaug limited Leominster to just four points in the first quarter and never let the visitors back into the game. The Falcons were scheduled to move into the second round, hosting Mansfield earlier this week.



Lyric Nelson goes for a short-range jump shot.



Ava Manning sends a pass inside.



Brie Foisy looks for an open lane to the hoop.

## Minnechaug hockey falls in WMass tournament

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

**WEST SPRINGFIELD**—The zamboni only refreshes the ice between the second and third periods for the high school hockey matches that are held at the Olympia Ice Center in West Springfield during the regular season.

The ice was also resurfaced at the end of the first period during Western Mass. Class A quarterfinal matchup between fourth-seeded Minnechaug Regional and fifth-seeded Longmeadow. Minnechaug head coach Kyle Bousquet and his players were not notified of the change before the start of the game.

After a scoreless first 15 minutes of the match, the Longmeadow Lancers came out of the locker room and quickly seized momentum, scoring two goals during the opening two minutes of the second period. The Falcons struggled to overcome the deficit and ultimately suffered a 4-1 loss on President's Day, Feb. 15.

"Nobody knew what they were going to do with the ice at the end of the first period. The door did finally open and both teams went to their locker room," Bousquet said. "This is a frustrating loss for us. We held the momentum in the first period, but then they scored two soft goals at the start of the second period. We were forced to play from behind the rest of the game."

The Falcons (12-7-1) did finish the regular season with a 3-1 victory against Greenfield in a consolation game the following day. They entered the Division 2 state as the 25th seed and was scheduled to play at eighth seeded Barnstable on

Thursday night.

The last time that the Falcons captured the Western Mass title was 1999 when they defeated Longmeadow, 3-2, in the Division 3 finals.

The seniors listed on this year's Falcons hockey roster are Brody Faneuff, Kelly Balog, Enzo Hrycay, Dominic Fiorentino, Anthony Garib, Tyler Jaslanek, and Jacob Moore.

"The seniors really wanted to win the Western Mass. title this year," Bousquet said. "We're looking forward to the states now."

The Lancers (11-7-2) suffered a 5-4 setback against top-seeded Westfield in the semifinals.

During the first period of the quarterfinal match, Minnechaug had a power play, which Longmeadow managed to kill.

The Falcons also had several more scoring opportunities, but they couldn't take the lead.

Following the ten-minute break at the end of the first period, Longmeadow senior Alex Hensch put a rebound shot into the net past Minnechaug sophomore goalie Matt Lafley less than a minute into the second period.

The Lancers took a 2-0 lead 17 seconds later following a goal by sophomore Anthony DiPietro.

It remained a two goal game until the start of the third period when a goal by junior Matthew Desosiers gave the Lancers a 3-0 advantage.

The only bright spot for the Falcons was a goal with 5:14 left in regulation from Brody Faneuff, which was assisted by his younger brother, Cam, who's a junior.

Hensch scored an empty net goal with 26.2 seconds left on the scoreboard clock.

## HCC Women celebrate final home game

**HOLYOKE** – Women's basketball played their last regular season game on Friday evening, Feb. 20, hosting regional opponent Bunker Hill CC. The Lady Cougars defeated their opposition 67-56 to earn their seventh straight win. Holyoke's two second-year players, Emily McGrail (Ware, MA / Ware HS) and Erin Bullough (South Hadley, MA / South Hadley HS), were honored with a sophomore night that included a pregame ceremony recognizing the athletes and their accomplishments. Posters, photos and decorations were hung on the walls and in the stands around Golas Court.

McGrail led the Cougars in blocks during Friday's game and was second in rebounds, tallying six of each. She leads Holyoke in blocks this season with

59 and blocks per game, averaging 3.5. McGrail is sixth in NJCAA Division III in blocks and third in blocks per game. Bullough sunk the Lady Cougars first basket of the game on Friday. She leads Holyoke in three-point shooting percentage this season and is second in three-pointers made. Bullough has made 41.3% of the three-point shots she has attempted this year, ranking her fourth in NJCAA Division III. She



Turley photos by David Henry  
www.sweetdogphotos.com  
Johany Andrade goes for the layup.



Tatiyana Zuniga passes in transition.

has drained 31 total shots from long range on the year. Annastacia Dixon (Keene, NH / Keene HS) had an outstanding game in the regular season finale, leading Holyoke in points with 24 and rebounds with eight.

Women's basketball closes out the regular season with a 10-3 regional record and a 14-7 overall record. They are the second-place team in the New

Please see **HCC**, page 12

## SPORTS

## Thunderbirds score much needed win over Checkers

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (21-25-5-2) overpowered the Charlotte Checkers (30-18-4-0) on Saturday night before a sellout crowd of 6,793 inside the MassMutual Center on Military Appreciation Night, coming away with a 5-1 victory.

Zach Dean provided instant offense on Friday night, and the third-year pro experienced déjà vu on this night, jabbing home a 2-on-1 pass from Hugh McGing just 2:20 into the action to give Springfield a 1-0 lead.

Unlike a night earlier, Steve Ott's team was able to build upon its early lead with two successful penalty kills, followed by a power-play redirection by Matthew Peca at 18:57 of the first, as the captain tipped a Calle Rosen shot through Kirill Gerasimiyuk.

The T-Birds' offense proved to be far from finished, as Alek Kaskimaki took a breakaway pass from Otto Stenberg at 4:30 of the second and stayed with his initial shot to cash in on a rebound past Gerasimiyuk, extending the lead to 3-0.

Charlotte finally got on the board just 52 seconds later when Noah Gregor crashed the net to chip a Brian Pinho pass over the shoulder of Will Cranley, but it proved to be just a small blip on the T-Birds' radar in what would evolve into a firestorm of offense for the home team.

Only 1:03 of game time passed before Springfield had restored its three-goal advantage, as Jakub Stancl circled the offensive zone to the right circle before firing

the puck back toward the goal mouth. Dylan Peterson parked himself right outside the crease and allowed the puck to ricochet off his skate and past Gerasimiyuk to make it a 4-1 game, chasing Gerasimiyuk from the game in the process.

Charlotte backup Louis Domingue did not fare much better, as McGing revved up the ice on a breakaway 55 seconds later. McGing was tripped and may have earned a penalty shot, but as he was falling, the puck continued on a straight line path under Domingue's legs, giving McGing credit for the third T-Birds goal in a 2:50 blitz, extending the lead to 5-1.

There would be no more goals in the final half of the game, but the fireworks were far from done, and with just eight seconds remaining and tempers flaring, Cranley and Domingue met at center and dropped the mitts for a goalie fight, the first in T-Birds history, which left the sellout crowd in an uproar to close out the victory.

## This week in recreation

Alex Soares  
Administrative Clerk

WILBRAHAM - Despite all the cold and snow, spring is right around the corner! Registration for spring sports is now open. Baseball, Girls Lacrosse, and Track and Field registrations have just wrapped up, but Tennis, Volleyball, and Pre-K Baseball will be starting soon.

Additionally, in-person registration for the much-anticipated Spec Day Camp will be held at Memorial School on March 4th. Our 22nd Annual Spec-Tacular Easter Egg Hunt is scheduled for Saturday, April 4th, and registration opens this week. Don't forget the Annual Falcon 5K Trail Race, hosted by the Friends of Recreation, on April 12th. Registration is available on Active.com.

Looking to host a work party, birthday party, or family reunion? Reserve Pinney Pavilion at Spec Pond for your summer event—dates are filling up quickly!



We also have several spring and summer job openings for youth ages 16 and older. Our seasonal summer employment opportunities include Admissions and Concession Workers at Spec Pond, Spec Day Camp Counselors and Junior Counselors, Lifeguards, and Baseball/Softball Umpires. We are also hiring Summer Basketball Scorekeepers for those ages 14 and older. In addition, we are seeking a new Spec Day Camp Director and Assistant Director for this coming summer. If you are interested, please visit the Town of Wilbraham's website for more information on all current job

openings. To apply, print an application from the Town website and drop it off at WPRD before the deadline listed for each position.

Registration for all summer one-week programs will open on March 31st. We offer a variety of programs, including sports, art, science, LEGO, acting, and more for all ages. You're sure to find something for everyone! Be on the lookout for our one-page insert coming soon in The Times.

NOTE: Please visit WilbrahamRec.com for more details on all of our programs, to register, and to download necessary registration forms.

## Different name, but OT win for Worcester

WORCESTER – Did anyone in the city see their front door blow open unexpectedly at about 5:30 Sunday afternoon?

If so, it had nothing to do with the weather. It was the entire staff and roster of the Worcester Monkey Wrenches exhaling in unison after veteran Drew Callin scored what up to now is their biggest goal of the season.

It came at 4:27 of overtime to give the home team a 1-0 victory over the Adirondack Thunder, one of the four teams ahead of them in the North Division standings. The goal snapped a four-game losing streak on home ice and allowed Worcester to earn four of a possible six points for the weekend.

The game marked only the second time in team history it was 0-0 after 60 minutes. Worcester won the last one, as well, on March 21, 2018 at Wheeling in a shootout.

The goal was Callin's 20th goal of the season. Anthony Repaci set it up by stealing the puck in the left circle. Callin was alone on the right side, moved in on Thunder goalie Jeremy Brodeur and beat him with a backhand fake.

"Patch made a great pass over," Callin said, "that gave me some free space. I just picked my head up, saw (Brodeur) sliding over and I figured I'd go the other way."

The overtime victory was the home team's seventh of

the season, fifth at the DCU Center.

The goaltending was great, as it often is in this division.

Brodeur stopped 27 shots. Worcester's Parker Gahagen made 25 saves for his second 1-0 victory in 29 days.

The Monkey Wrenches killed five penalties and had just one power play. They killed them beautifully to keep the game scoreless.

Worcester's penalty kill featured some excellent work by Cole Donhauser, who played a major role in Sunday's victory.

"We have a little bit of plan going into it," Donhauser said, "but the main thought is to deny the seams, don't let the puck get going east to west, deny the one-timers, try to protect the house and our D-men did a great job blocking shots."

Gahagen's presence has made a huge difference in all the close games Worcester has played recently. Throughout the back-and-forth havoc, especially in the third period and overtime, he looked like the calmest person on skates.

And the home team is playing nothing but close games these days.

"I think everybody deems it important this time of year to play the right way," Tuzolino said.

Callin became the 14th player in team history to score 20 goals. He joins brother Anthony who had 24 last season.



HCC from page 11

England (Region XXI) standings and will be the #2 seed entering the regional tournament. This will be HCC women's basketball's first postseason appearance in over 15 years. The Lady Cougars will get a bye to the tournament semifinals and will host the winner of one of the two quarterfinals.

Mileidy Rosado avoids a block and gets a shot.

Anastacia Dixon gets the short jumper away.

## HCC scholarship season open for 2026-2027

HOLYOKE - The Holyoke Community College Foundation is now accepting scholarship applications for the 2026-2027 academic year.

The application deadline is Friday, March 13, 2026.

Last year, the HCC Foundation awarded 410 scholarships worth about \$364,000 to 379 incoming, current, and transferring HCC students. Some students received multiple scholarship awards. The average scholarship award is typically around \$900.

"The scholarship program is the flagship initiative of the HCC Foundation, and it reflects the incredible generosity of our donor community," said Amanda Sbriscia, vice president of Institutional

Advancement and executive director of the HCC Foundation. "Every scholarship tells two stories - one of a donor who believes in the power of education, and one of a student whose path forward is made possible by that belief."

Students must be currently enrolled at HCC or have been accepted for the upcoming academic year to be eligible for scholarships.

Applicants only need to fill out a single online form to be automatically matched with the scholarships they are most qualified to receive. There are scholarships for new students, current students and students transferring to other institutions, scholarships based on financial need, scholarships for

students in specific majors, scholarships for residents of certain communities, and scholarships that recognize academic achievement.

"Last year's 410 scholarship awards represent 410 opportunities for students to focus on their studies rather than financial stress," said Sbriscia. "We're proud to continue this tradition of supporting HCC students as they work toward their goals."

To view scholarship opportunities and begin the application process, please go to: [www.hcc.edu/scholarships](http://www.hcc.edu/scholarships).

The HCC Scholarship Resource Center, on the first floor of the Donahue Building (Room 158), is open Monday through Friday, 9

a.m. to 5 p.m., to help current and incoming students navigate the process of applying for scholarships.

The HCC Foundation is a 501(c)(3) that works to advance the college's mission, vision, and values. Founded in 1968 as the Friends of Holyoke Community College, in response to a devastating fire that forced the college to rebuild on a new campus, the Foundation now manages assets of more than \$20 million, the largest community college foundation endowment in Massachusetts.

Questions should be directed to the HCC Foundation office at 413-552-2182, or by email to [scholarships@hcc.edu](mailto:scholarships@hcc.edu).

## Fan-favorite teen programs return: Henna Tattoos & Bling Your Book

WILBRAHAM - Two of the most anticipated teen programs are back at Wilbraham Public Library and mashed into one.

On Wednesday, March 11 from Noon to 2 p.m., during a HWRSD no school day, students in grades six through 12 can join us for one of the coolest experiences at the library: Henna & Bling Your Book! Teens will get their choice of a henna design from Wicked Good Henna's Mandy Roberge. She uses high-quality, natural henna that is safe for skin and lasts for one to two weeks. Participants can choose from a variety of beautiful designs, favorite characters, or even collaborate with Mandy to create a one-of-a-kind tattoo!

Also during this two-hour program, bring your favorite book to give it a sparkly makeover with diamond art gems. Using rhinestones and glue, you'll transform a plain book cover into a unique treasure. Don't forget your own book to decorate (or you can bring one of ours to keep).

Come be creative, express yourself, have fun, and relax with your friends at Wilbraham Public Library!

Grades six through 12 only and online registration is required. For more information or to register, visit [www.wilbrahamlibrary.org](http://www.wilbrahamlibrary.org) or call the library at (413) 596-6141. This program is sponsored by the Wilbraham Friends of the Library.

## Art Show at Longmeadow Adult Center

LONGMEADOW - Roger Kellman will be having a solo show in March at the Longmeadow Adult Center. This show will feature sixteen large abstract paintings, all part of a series called "Fire and Ice". The show will be from March 4 thru March 30. The Center is open Monday - Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturdays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. however access may be limited if classes are in session. Call 413-565-4150 to check. There will be a reception on Thursday, March 5 from 5 to 7 pm. The Center is located at 211 Maple Road in Longmeadow.

The paintings in this series share common attributes. All are painted in acrylic on raw stretched canvas. A lot of water is used while applying the base

layers of paint, creating a soft background, onto which areas of heavier pigment provide focal points. Unpainted areas create negative space and add depth. Some paint reaches the edge of the canvas and wraps along the sides, inviting the viewer to move on and off the canvas. The 'Fire' paintings in the series are in warm colors while the 'Ice' paintings are in cool colors.

Roger comes from a family of artists and began painting at an early age. He still has brushes that his mother used seventy-five years ago. Over the years he has worked in oil, watercolor, pastel, color pencil, charcoal and graphite. He has taken numerous classes at the Springfield Quadrangle Museums, is a member of sev-

eral local art groups, and has exhibited extensively. Most of his work is realistic, partially reinforced by his engineering background.

About twenty years ago he took an abstract art class and began using acrylic paint. He said, "I thought abstract would be easy. It was the hardest class I ever took". Six years ago, he decided to take the class again and after watching several YouTube artists now feels very confident in abstract art. Along with three other artists in the class they formed 'The Abstract Art Squad'. They have been meeting monthly to paint together ever since. Their website, <https://www.abstractartquad.com/>, includes a page devoted to Roger's Fire and Ice series.



Black Spot Blue



Sun Spot



Fire and Ice



# PET PAGE



### PET OF THE MONTH Meet Barney!



He is a 6 1/2 year old Jindo - Husky mix. He loves riding in the car, playing tug of war, and fetching a ball or a Frisbie. But most of all he loves children and people. He lives with Richard Zaranek.

### ATTENTION READERS!

Send in your pet picture for our "Pet of the Month" and receive a FREE weekend get-away or spa package for your pet courtesy of Porter Road Pet Care.

Email your photos to: [jwalker@turley.com](mailto:jwalker@turley.com). Please include your name and your pet's name.

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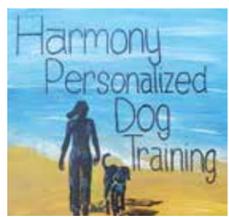
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## Understanding Cat Behavior

#### When a Cat Turns Away

When a cat shows you her backside, with tail held high, it's not an insult. It's actually a friendly greeting. So, appreciate the cat butt!

#### The Purpose of Purring

Most people think a purring cat is a euphoric cat, and that certainly is true sometimes. But what is less well-known, is that purring can also mean the animal is hurt, ill or stressed.

#### Tummy Time

When a cat rolls onto her back and shows you their belly, it's seldom a request for a belly rub. It's just a display of trust (after all, she's exposing the most vulnerable part of her body—the soft underbelly). Take note: there are cats who love belly rubs, but most decidedly

do not. Backs, legs and tails can also be problematic. But even when you're petting the generally safe areas of the cheek, chin and head, stick to the 3-second rule, caress for 3 seconds, and then stop. If she moves in for more, go for 3 more seconds. If not, move along! Cat parents who do not take hints are usually the ones talking about how their cat is all lovey-dovey one minute, and then "out of nowhere," bites.

#### Nuzzling Might Be a No-No

Getting right up in a cat's face for a nuzzle is not as appealing to them all those cat food ads would make it appear. In fact, it makes many cats downright uncomfortable. Within about a foot of their faces, cats' vision is extremely poor. The best advice is to wait for them to nuzzle you.



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The Town of Oakham is seeking an experienced working **HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT.** The Highway Superintendent serves as the working department head responsible for the planning, administration, and day-to-day operations of the Town's Highway department. Pay rate is \$31.82 - \$40.30/hr depending on experience.

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All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.

This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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## Teen Clay Gnomes Workshop

WILBRAHAM— The Teen Department at the Wilbraham Public Library is excited to announce a Clay Gnomes Workshop on Tuesday, March 24 from 5 to 6:30 p.m.

Taught by Master Potter Rick of Pied Potter Hamelin, this teen workshop is where creativity knows no bounds! While exploring hand-building techniques such as pinch pots, coils and slabs, teens will work with white clay and transform it into an adorable gnome.

Each teen will paint their creation, and then take it home at the end of the workshop. No experience necessary and all supplies will be provided.

This workshop is for students in grades 6-12 and registration is required as space is limited. To sign up, please contact the library at 413-596-6141, or visit the Event Calendar at [www.wilbrahamlibrary.org](http://www.wilbrahamlibrary.org). This program is sponsored by the Wilbraham Friends of the Library.

## Wilbraham Junior Women's Club to offer Sewing Classes

WILBRAHAM - Have you always wanted to learn how to sew? Now's your chance!

The GFWC Wilbraham Junior Women's Club is excited to offer a beginner sewing class series for Wilbraham and Hampden resident adults and children ages 10 and older. Whether you are brand new to sewing or just looking to refresh your skills, this supportive, hands-on class will guide you step-by-step as you create a lined fabric tote bag.

Classes will be held at the Wilbraham Senior Center on three consecutive Saturdays beginning March 7, from 10 a.m. to Noon. The class is free, though participants will be asked to bring some of their own materials. Space is limited, so early registration is encouraged.

To register or for questions, please contact Cate Duquette at [CDuquette@charter.net](mailto:CDuquette@charter.net) or 413-596-8315.

## PUBLIC NOTICES

**Town of Hampden Notice of Public Hearing**  
The Hampden Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 6:30 PM** in the Town Hall, 85 Wilbraham Road, Hampden, MA on the application of Salmar Realty, LLC c/o Peter Martins for a Special Permit under Section 6, Table of Use Regulation Use Code 4.14 within Table 6.0 of the Zoning Bylaw for a restaurant and a Special Permit with Site Plan Approval under Section 6, Use Code 4.12 for a retail establishment both within the Business District located at 2 Somers Road, Lot #3 (Parcel #12-040-000) owned by Hampden Farms LLC. Information related to this application is on file in the Town Clerk's Office and is available for review by the public during normal business hours.

For the Board,  
Madison Pixley, Chair  
Hampden Planning Board  
03/05, 03/12/2026

L. Jed Berliner, Chair  
Zoning Board of Appeals  
03/05, 03/12/2026

**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.hwrsd.org/> 02/26, 03/05/2026



**Please check the accuracy of your legal notice prior (i.e., date, time, spelling). Also, be sure the requested publication date coincides with the purpose of the notice, or as the law demands. Thank you.**

## Rotary Club Scholarship applications now available

WILBRAHAM - The Scholarship Committee of the Rotary Club of Wilbraham-Hampden has announced that applications for the 2026 Rotary Club Scholarships are now avail-

able in the Counseling/Guidance Departments of Minnechaug Regional High School, Wilbraham & Monson Academy, Pope Francis Preparatory School and LPVEC's Career and Tech-

nical Education Center. Applications are due no later than April 1, 2026. The scholarships are available to qualified high school seniors who are residents of Wilbraham or Hampden. The

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

## DISORDERS from page 6

the past. She added this clearing is a prerequisite to achieving inner peace, balance and harmony and people must sort through the emotional rubble of the past they have inherited, and they must get to the roots of attitudes and behavior patterns that have stunted their growth.

Getting to the roots of attitudes and behavior patterns that have stunted growth doesn't have to be in the garden. Return to what you loved as a child - sports, art, music, writing, hiking. Find a safe place to face the past.

If you are able, volunteering can be crucial in recovery addiction because it provides structure, fosters a renewed sense of purpose, provides new skill-sets, builds a supportive sober community, and improves mental health by reducing depression and anxiety.

It helps individuals replace the self-centered nature of addiction with empathy and structure, ultimately reducing relapse risk by providing meaningful, productive activity.

Additionally, employers value volunteers because they demonstrate key, transferable skills like initiative, teamwork, and leadership, while also signaling a strong work ethic and passion. On a resume, it fills gaps, shows practical experience, and indicates a proactive, community-minded employee.

For every addicted individual, the descent into dependency is uniquely complex as is the journey of recovery. Professional treatment makes for a more successful outcome, so please insist that all your symptoms and conditions are addressed.

Be honest so that you can understand your past and how it affects today's

choices. Joy and well-being will return with each little success!

*National Eating Disorders Association: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/>*

*Multiservice eating Disorders Association: <https://www.medainc.org/>*

*Online Eating Disorder Treatment: Equip <https://equip.health/>*

*Quaboag Hill Substance Use Alliance: <https://qhsua.org/>*

*Recovery Center of Hope: <https://www.facebook.com/RecoveryCenterofHOPEWare/52>MainStreet,Ware.RCH> is run by people in recovery and helps those reach goals through a strength-based and community-based approach.*

*(1 National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA), 2 National Institute of Health)*

## PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

- 1 Email all notices to [notices@turley.com](mailto: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.

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### CLUES ACROSS

1. Unit of dry measure
5. One who defies authority
8. Social media giant
12. Render holy
14. "Much \_\_\_ about nothing"
15. Computer manufacturer
16. Creed
18. Immoral act
19. Mountain pass
20. Winged nut
21. Don't know when yet
22. Elected officials
23. Corrupt tendencies
26. Popular adult beverage
30. Made a mistake
31. Morally correct
32. Type of whale
33. Portable conical tent
34. Native people of the Congo
39. More (Spanish)
42. Classroom implements
44. Cognizant of
46. One who tells
47. Free from bondage
49. Thick piece of something
50. Containing two adjacent nitrogen atoms
51. Removed from the record
56. Legendary singer
57. Broke up the earth
58. Hunting expedition
59. Contributes
60. Unit of work or energy
61. Wreckage on the sea
62. Affirmative! (slang)

### CLUES DOWN

1. "\_\_\_ and flows"
2. Humble request for help
3. A position of leadership
4. Continent
5. Adherent of a particular religion
6. Things that can be eaten
7. Self-governing Netherlands territory
8. Long-tailed crow
9. Repeated
10. Bluish greens
11. Humanities
13. Someone who serves in the armed forces
17. Labor (Spanish)
24. Zero
25. Shared by involving three parties
26. Queens ballplayer
27. Consumed
28. Rest here please
29. Men's fashion accessory
35. American time
36. Sound unit
37. They \_\_\_
38. Soviet Socialist Republic
40. Places to play video games
41. A sudden attack of illness
42. When you hope to arrive
43. Charges
44. Actress Seyfried
45. A tributary of the Ohio River
47. Omit when speaking
48. Armored fish
49. Remain
52. From a distance
53. Adventure story
54. Geological times
55. Eat dinner

**WORKSHOPS** from page 1

Plant Magic Garden Owner and Gardening for Hot People Podcast Co-Host Cheryl Rafuse, Master Gardener Chris Ferrero, Wistariahurst Gardens Master Gardener Toi Graham, Environmental Biologist at the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources Jennifer Forman, Master Gardener Ed Sourdiffe, Full Circle Garden Master Gardeners Margery Gerard and JoAnne Palmer and Kessa McEwen, horticulturist and landscape designer at Berkshire Botanical Garden.

Anyone interested is encouraged to register quickly, as classes fill up fast. Mail-in registrations have to be post-marked and sent in by March 16 at \$35, online registration is through March 26 for \$35 and walk-ins are the day of at \$40 cash only.

Rosey Bonner, a member of the WMMGA and part of the Planning Committee for the event, expressed excitement for this year's workshops and said attendees have an opportunity to take two of them during the day.

"The sessions are an hour and 15 minutes long. The speaker usually speaks for an hour and then gives them a good 15 minutes because they usually have lots of questions that may not have come up in what we were talking about," Bonner said.

On the topics, Bonner explained, "our whole mission is sustainability and good practices" and community feedback also guides this, with evaluations at the end of the workshops. A couple of this year's workshops, for example, came to be through those evaluations.

"We didn't have anything on trees and shrubs last year, so a lot of people said, 'Can you bring back something else in trees and shrubs?' So, the person we have doing it this year is Dan Ziomek and he's been in the industry for



Submitted photos Rosey Bonner

**Vendors offer a variety of produce.**

20 plus years. He's currently the manager of the Sugarloaf Gardens in Sunderland," Bonner said. "He has a wealth of information. He will bring his truck loaded with shrubs and trees and his focus this year is make sure if you're going to use trees and shrubs, it's just like flowers. You just don't have them look good one season, you have them look good four seasons. So, he's really going to talk about what trees or shrubs might be featured for your garden or landscape over the year long. So, it's just good biodiversity, but it also makes pretty art too."

Another topic Bonner highlighted was "Vegetables versus Pests: How to Win!" as attendees always seek a topic on vegetables.

"They talk about some common vegetables that you grow and pests or diseases that take them over. Number one, how to prevent it and number two, how to manage insects and diseases if you get them. It's practical, useful ideas that really work," Bonner said. "I say they really work because the two presenters, Margery Gerard and JoAnne Palmer, are both master gardeners, but more important

than that, their expertise in this area comes from the fact that they are two of the people that oversee the South Hadley garden called Full Circle Garden. It's a vegetable garden and they raise way over 2,000 pounds of food in the summer for the food pantry there, so not only are they master gardeners, they have such practical, hands-on experience."

Bonner said another concern gardeners have is invasive species in "how to identify it and what to do about it," with the focus on spotted lanternflies, jumping worms, Japanese Knotweed and more.

"The person doing it is very careful to say manage, not completely eradicate, because sometimes, once you get these invasives in here, you can't get rid of them, but you could at least manage them. Others you catch them early enough because you've identified them early enough you can really get rid of," Bonner said. "She is the point person for Massachusetts that watches over what plants or insects that go on the invasive list, so she's really got her hands into this part."

After Bonner expressed gratitude to the Western Mass

community for supporting the event year after year and, also, for this year's raffle, as many community members donated items too, she added that she hopes attendees take away inspiration and ideas to help better understand biodiversity.

"They're an important part in saving our world and making a difference, and it's not mammoth things they have to do. It's small, little changes that they can do. Whether it's adding a little water feature or adding a native or addressing that invasive or adding a bush with berries for the birds, there's something that they're going to walk away with that they truly will make a difference in helping to save our world," Bonner said. "They're taking care of our environment and that's really what we need is everybody doing a little piece."

Bonner's message was this.

"If you're looking to get energized, inspired, get out of this humdrum of winter, come to our workshops. We guarantee you'll walk away with a smile and feeling spring is here!" Bonner said.

To learn more and to register, visit [wmmga.org](http://wmmga.org).



Master Gardener Debby Lapointe created a floral arrangement for the Symposium in 2025.



Other vendors including garden décor.

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**SINGLE FAMILY LISTINGS**

STATUS	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION	LIST PRICE	SOLD PRICE
ACT	Lot 602, Grandview Ave., Ludlow	8 room, 4 bed, 2f, 1h bath Colonial	\$650,000	
UAG	31 Canterbury Cir., E. Longmeadow	7 room, 3 bed, 2f, 2h bath Colonial	\$639,900	
UAG	85 Baldwin Dr, Hampden	5 room, 3 bed, 1f, 0h bath Ranch	\$225,000	
UAG	67 Hill Ter., Ludlow	8 room, 3 bed, 1f, 1h bath Colonial, Gambrel/Dutch	\$450,000	
UAG	80 Jean Dr. Springfield	9 room, 4 bed, 1f, 1h bath Cape	\$269,900	
UAG	79 Arvilla St., Springfield	6 room, 3 bed, 1f, 1h bath Ranch	\$289,900	
UAG	7 Ashbrook St., Springfield	10 room, 4 bed, 1f, 1h bath Color	\$379,900	
SLD	19 Westminster St., E. Longmeadow	6 room, 4 bed, 1f 1h bath Ranch	\$299,900	\$310,000
SLD	30 Saugus Ave., E. Longmeadow	9 room, 3 bed, 2f, 1h bath Colonial	\$504,900	\$525,000
SLD	37 Wyndermere Pl., Ludlow	11 room, 4 bed, 2f, 1h bath Colonial	\$620,000	\$627,000
SLD	246 El Paso St., Springfield	6 room, 3 bed, 1f, 0h bath Cape	\$272,500	\$280,000
SLD	30 Lively Lane, Springfield,	Sixteen Acres, 5 room, 3 bed, 1f 0h bath Ranch	\$279,900	\$290,000
SLD	254 Hartwick St., Springfield	5 room, 3 bed, 2f, 0h bath Ranch	\$309,900	\$315,000
SLD	98 Pine Grove St., Springfield	6 room, 3 bed, 1f 0h bath Ranch	\$319,900	\$350,000
SLD	28 Decorie Dr Wilbraham	7 room, 4 bed, 2f 0h bath Cape	\$480,000	\$485,000

**CONDOMINIUM LISTINGS**

ACT	140 Chestnut St., U:816, Springfield	3 room, 1 bed, 1f 0h bath High-Rise	\$84,900	
ACT	140 Chestnut St., U:819, Springfield	3 room, 1 bed, 1f 0h bath Mid-Rise	\$88,499	
UAG	119 Blisswood Village U:119 Ludlow	6 room, 3 bed, 1f 1h bath Townhouse	\$279,900	
UAG	140 Chestnut St., U:210, Springfield	3 room, 1 bed, 1f 0h bath Mid-Rise	\$84,900	
SLD	54 High Pine Cir., U:54, Wilbraham	6 room, 3 bed, 2f 1h bath Townhouse	\$494,500	\$492,000

**LAND LISTINGS**

ACT	7 Old Reed Rd., Lot:6, Monson	8.50 Residential acres (370,260 SqFt)	\$99,000	
SLD	Lot 16 Woodhill Rd., Monson	2.17 Residential acres (94,525 SqFt)	\$72,500	\$70,000

**COMMERCIAL LISTINGS**

ACT	599-609 Page Blvd., Springfield	3278 SqFt Mixed Use Building	\$850,000	
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