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WSC celebrates Poland
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Therapy Dog serves comfort at senior center

By Ben Hernandez
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - A therapy dog is now a feature on Mondays at the Wilbraham Senior Center. Riley, an energetic Australian cobbler dog, brightened the local residents' mood as he bounded across the carpeted floor.

His handler, Carol Kentner, is a former librarian and life-long dog lover.

"Dogs started coming into the libraries to help students with midterms and finals," Kentner said when asked how she learned about the outreach initiative. "I thought what a fantastic thing."

Kentner said that she was inspired to support senior centers when her father passed away during COVID times in hospice, stating that he wasn't able to experience the warmth and joy of a therapy dog.

"He loved dogs so much," Kentner said. "So, it's been in the back of my mind and I thought as soon as I retire, I'm going to get myself a companion dog and we're going to go visiting."

That time arrived two years ago when she was looking to adopt a labradoodle. The prohibitive wait times to find one prompted Kentner to



Carol Kentner holds Riley steady to pose for the camera.

Turley photo by Ben Hernandez

Please see **THERAPY DOG**, page 4

Provost presents budget strategies

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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WILBRAHAM - Superintendent Dr. John Provost presented 31 potential budget strategies to the School Committee on March 5 to review how to bridge the FY27 budget shortfall.

While he suggested a number of ways to raise revenue or make cuts, the exact shortfall is not yet known.

Provost emphasized this: "I don't consider these to be recommendations."

"Most of the time, I come to the School Committee and bring forward ideas that I want you to support, because I think they're good ideas. I hope that some of the ideas that I'm going to be presenting tonight you think are horrible or unacceptable, because these all really have to do with reductions to the budget, which will make the district not as good as it is now," Provost said.

Provost also explained the budget context, with challenges and factors including the following.

- Assessment method split between the towns of Wilbraham and Hampden, creating funding complexities
- Stagnant federal and state funds
- Dramatically higher insurance costs
- Wage inflation

"Because we're in a position of cutting back now—which we traditionally do—but since I've been here, often

the constraining factor has been what the town of Wilbraham thinks they can afford, that's had a knock-on effect of 20 cents. Every dollar that we may have reduced in order to come to an affordable budget for Wilbraham resulted in an additional 20 cents reduction in Hampden. Even if they

"I DON'T CONSIDER THESE TO BE RECOMMENDATIONS."

- Dr. John Provost
Superintendent of Schools

had the money because of the way the split works," Provost said. "In Hampden, every dollar that is reduced in order to reach their goal results in a \$4 reduction from what Wilbraham would be assessed. So, the difference between 20 cents and \$4, I believe, is 2,000%. So, when it's pointing the other way, the magnification of the funding problem is quite pronounced."

Sections 1-6

The first section was reducing assessments by increasing budgetary offset.

- 5% athletic fee increase: \$10,000
- 5% preschool fee increase and additional offset to support budget: \$15,000
- 10% Class C and Class D building use fee increase—so nonprofit or for-profit organizations that use the

Please see **BUDGET**, page 4

Selectboard holds FY27 budget review with Hampden F.D.

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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HAMPDEN - The Selectboard met with Fire Chief Ed Poulin to review the fire department's FY27 budget on March 2.

Poulin explained the only changes were "a little bit of operations only covered cost of exceeding expenses of the natural gas bill from Eversource and National Grid electrical."

"These are increases. We took last year's and how much we're paying this year,"

Poulin said. Chair John Flynn noted having a copy showing "the appropriation is dropping from 59 to 50." (\$59,000 to \$50,000)

"That's under salaries," Poulin said.

"I understand that. So, you don't have a more up-to-date

one?" Flynn said.

After this was clarified, another copy was presented to the board with the COLA, as that was put out a couple weeks ago.

After the board received the updated version, Flynn noted the salary went up by \$12,000.

"The bulk of that is COLA, you think, or hour change?" Flynn said.

"That would be the COLA," Poulin said.

On capital needs, Poulin said the only one is more fire pagers.

"We have a program software called IAmResponding

and it works good except we can't not monitor it 24/7. We're not at the station 24/7. So, a lot of times the computer will do an update and would kick that program off and then we lose the program."

Please see **FIRE DEPT.**, page 2

Minnechaug high school seniors reflect and look to the future

Their advice to underclassmen

By Natalie Proulx
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - With the second semester already in full bloom, Minnechaug Regional High School's Class of 2026 is in the midst of hearing back from col-

leges, applying for scholarships, and exploring big choices in their future.

The Class of 2026 is looking forward to many things coming up over these next couple months like Prom, bittersweet yearbook signing, Ultimate Party and the warmer weather especially. But with graduation soon approaching in the next couple of months, seniors have been reflecting on their

high school experience over the last four years.

With the high cost of college tuition, most seniors feel as though it conflicts with their opportunities and decisions. For some, going through community college to get their core classes out of the way is their priority, while others are heading to particular locations for its opportunity with the environment being the most important part of their college decision.

Callan Blanchard recently committed to Pennsylvania State University in hopes to get his degree in Mechanical Engineering and a minor in either Business or Chemistry. Though thrilled with his recent commitment to Penn State, he also stated that he was considering Northeastern University because Boston would've given him great opportunities.



Turley photo by Natalie Proulx

The MRHS Counseling Center's scholarship information forms and military resource materials.

Please see **SENIORS**, page 11



Turley photo by Kristin Rivers

A shot outside the Country Club of Wilbraham in Wilbraham.

Select Board approves application amendments for CCW Catering, LLC

Also, CCW golf course renovations

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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WILBRAHAM - The Select Board approved an application for multiple

amendments to a Section 12 Annual All Alcoholic Beverages License for CCW Catering, LLC during a public hearing on March 2.

The amendments included change of manager, change of officers/directors/LLC Managers, change of ownership interest and change of DBA.

Benjamin Coyle, president of the Country Club of

Wilbraham, explained the liquor license was owned by an LLC called CCW Catering and previously, vendors used to run the food and beverage service.

"At the beginning of last year, we, unfortunately, suffered a loss. Our vendor passed away. So, we

Please see **CCW**, page 11

COMMUNITY

A look at potential budget reduction strategies seven through 12

By Kristin Rivers

Editor

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WILBRAHAM - The School Committee was presented with 31 potential budget strategies by Superintendent Dr. John Provost on March 5.

These strategies are to review potential strategies to bridge the FY27 budget shortfall.

For sections one through six, check out this week's edition.

Sections 7-11

Section Seven was delaying or eliminating vacant positions.

- Facilities and Maintenance Administrative Restructuring: \$75,000
- Central Office Administrative Staff Restructuring: \$40,000
- Instructional Coach: \$93,000
- Middle School Teacher: \$72,000.

"That would be a savings of \$277,000, \$57,969 for Hampden and \$219,031 for Wilbraham," Provost said.

Section eight was eliminating instructional coaching functions.

"I just want to caution that 8A is the same as 7A. It's a position that's currently vacant. So, can't cut it twice as all I'm going to say. We can't

pick 7A and 8A. Then, if you did the rest of the coaching personnel, which are three more positions, you'd save \$120,000. So you might ask why doesn't it scale? Why isn't all four four times as much as a single vacation position? Two reasons why. Coaching is supported in part by grant funds, so not the entire cost of those other three positions are in the budget, about \$30,000 of that is in grant," Provost said. "And the other thing, it's not their salaries that you would save. It's the salaries of the teachers that they would bump out that you would save who are much less senior staff."

The total savings would be \$213,000, with a \$44,576 reduction for Hampden and a \$168,424 reduction for Wilbraham.

Section 9 is Appendix B reductions, meaning extra duties for personnel.

"These are all negotiated benefits, so you can't change the rates, but you can choose not to fund them and then things don't happen," Provost said.

This list includes the following items and savings if reduced.

- Don't fund coaching positions for teams that have not run for several years, including Girls Freshman Basketball, E-Sports Fall,

E-Sports Spring, Robotics Fall, Robotics Spring: \$12,242

- Do not fund freshman football assistant coach: \$4,774 (which also includes savings for officials and transportation)
- Do not fund assistant ski coach: \$2,778
- Do not fund strength and conditioning: \$4,125
- Do not fund drama assistant coach: \$1,005 (would not cancel drama club, just move duties to the other two roles)
- Do not fund Future Business Leaders of America: \$704
- Do not fund Lumberjack Club: \$1,585
- Do not fund one-act plays: \$1,428
- Do not fund peer mentors or student ambassador: \$1,172 (these are very similar, so one of them could be funded)
- Do not fund Table Tennis: \$557
- Do not fund middle school curriculum coordinators: \$8,160

The total savings would be \$41,323, with Hampden's reduction at \$8,648 and Wilbraham's at \$32,657.

Section 10 was traditional layoffs.

- High school paraprofessional: \$25,000 for savings
- High school reduced sec-

tions: \$72,000

- Middle School Strings: \$36,000
- School Nurse reduced by a half position: \$36,000.

"Just reducing staff because you don't have enough money to pay for them. So, high school paraprofessional, that's just the position. The next one is not really a position. It is reducing a number of sections, so like the parts of different people," Provost said. "So, the benefit to this is if the person doesn't leave, you still keep them working for your district. They don't lose their benefits. It's the way to sort of spread a cut over several people rather than having an entire cut made by one person, and it's more feasible for maintaining our courses and current offerings that we have. The downside is that because you have fewer sections, you have fewer class sizes."

The total savings were \$169,000, with Hampden's reduction at \$35,368 and Wilbraham's at \$133,632.

Section 11, the final one, was benefits cost avoidance. This would be a per FTE reduction, estimate of \$5,000.

"So, if we did do some of the reductions of staff, there would be a fall on benefit reductions of costs for their benefits. So, we think just based on what we've put in

these strategies, there's about a \$45,000 benefit savings. The reduction to Hampden would be \$9,417. The reduction to Wilbraham would be \$35,583," Provost said. "This is the amount if you accepted every single staff reduction we put up there. If you accept less than that, then this number goes down too."

Provost then showed a Dynamic Budget Reduction Strategy Tracker, which will track the numbers as things are filled in and choices are made on the strategies.

If all strategies were done, it came out to \$1.48 million.

Secretary Lisa Murray asked about the consequences, "because this is horrible."

"This is horrible. So, what are the consequences of not reducing? Like, I know there's consequences, so tell me," Murray said.

Provost said if the budget is put forward, approved by the School Committee, but then is not approved by both towns, there are several steps.

They are the School Committee reconsidering its budget and bringing it down to a number that could pass in both towns and then a district-wide meeting to see if they would pass the budget.

"If that doesn't work, essentially, I think at that point have to implement a 112 budget and continue working

through the process of trying to reach a negotiated agreement between the two towns and if that doesn't work, eventually the commissioner will come in and say, 'This is what your budget is,'" Provost said.

School Committee Member Sean Kennedy also noted the 2 1/2 budget override triggered "in either town or both towns because of the budget" was another item.

Assistant Superintendent for Finance, Operations and Human Resources Dr. Douglas Slaughter explained what would happen if the commissioner came in.

"They could essentially hold you to this current year's sort of budget funding level and divide it by 12 and progress, and you have six months to get it sorted. If you reach the end of December and if we don't resolve to a formal budget, that's when the commissioner weighs in and says, 'Here's the number' and then the towns just have to find the money depending on what they pay," Slaughter said. "If the commissioner picks something that's challenging for the towns to support—again, in mid-fiscal year—so it's, really, has a cascading effect. It's a very drastic place to be."

Shred Day Fundraiser set for April 24

HAMPDEN - SAVE THE DATE: Friday, April 24, from Noon to 2 p.m., Pro Shred will be at the Hampden Senior Center Parking Lot, located at 104 Allen Street in Hampden.

Once again, The Friends of The Hampden Senior Citizens will hold this fundraiser

to assist you in disposing of your documents that need to be shredded. This notice will allow you time to gather all those important papers and place in a box or bag.

We can allow only five boxes (paper copier size) per car or five kitchen size trash

bags. Limit is total of five per car. Pro Shred is not charging for this event but the Friends of The Hampden Seniors will appreciate any monetary donation that you would like to donate. We look forward to seeing you all there.

Wilbraham United Players presents 'The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged) [revised] [again]

WILBRAHAM - Wilbraham United Players presents "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged) [revised] [again]" by Adam Long, Daniel Singer and Jess Winfield, with new revisions by Daniel Singer and Jess Winfield, March 20-22, and March 27-29, 2026 on the stage at Fellowship Hall. Deb Trimble will direct.

The show is an irreverent, hilarious, high-speed

romp where three talented performers weave their way through all 37 of Shakespeare's comedies, histories, and tragedies in one wild ride that will leave audiences breathless and helpless with laughter. The performers are Craig Duda, Kevin Bechard and Joe Lessard.

With its inclusion of pop culture and audience participation, the production is a clever and painless way to introduce Shakespeare's

plays to new audiences while being Shakespeare-smart enough to delight long-time fans. You will not want to miss this one!

Tickets can be purchased online at www.wilbrahamunitedplayers.org/buy-tickets. The performances will take place on the Stage in Fellowship Hall at Wilbraham United Church, 500 Main Street, Wilbraham, MA 01095



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FIRE DEPT. from page 1

gram," Poulin said. "So, it's not going out on to people's cellphones and stuff. They're not receiving the messages. Or, another instance, is we lose the Wi-Fi or cable internet, so it's not 100% reliable. A lot of people rely on it, but in those situations, especially recently, we found out that a lot of people don't have the pagers or they should have pagers. So, this is just an article for 10 additional fire pagers. It's not on the town meeting thing because it's a one-time cost."

When Flynn asked if he was requesting a town meeting warrant article for the pagers, Poulin said yes. On the cost, he added it would be "roughly \$6,000 for 10 pagers."

Town Administrator Brian Domina added information on this warrant article request was brought to him recently as well.

On the ladder truck, Poulin said the new forestry truck is supposed to be delivered that week.

When Selectboard Member Don Davenport asked about the shift coverage, Poulin said, "that's for if people go out on vacation or sick days."

"We need money to pay for them because when they're out, they're still getting paid. So, just that fund goes to pay trip coverage," Poulin said.

"Like you would call a call person, right?" Davenport said.

"Yeah," Poulin said. "Fill in."

"And that's worst case. It might be on occasion you might not have that third person there," Flynn said. "Might happen."

"Right," Poulin said.

On Davenport's question on if they get the same rate of pay as firefighters do when out on a call, Poulin said no.

"They get \$2,606 for someone that comes in on a shift," Poulin said.

"And then they would be there for the eight hours, right?" Davenport said.

"Correct," Poulin said.

On the EMS quality assurance, Lt. Joshua Sterling oversees that item.

"Does the ambulance service have the same thing? They must have to do that too, right?" Davenport said.


"Yeah," Poulin said.

As for the fire chief's pay, that is a salary, while it's a stipend for the fire officer.

On any questions Poulin had for the board, he said he had none.


"If we get the contract for the architect designer for the fire station sign, that'd be good if we get that done this week. That would be huge for us. Get moving on that and answer everybody else's questions," Poulin said.

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Wilbraham Senior Center celebrates Poland

By Patricia Sullivan
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - As scores of seniors streamed into a meeting room at the Wilbraham Senior Center on Feb. 26 for a virtual journey to Poland, Barbara Harrington, social services coordinator, welcomed them with the Polish greeting "Czesc!"

"When some people answered me in Polish it touched my heart," Harrington said, who is of Polish descent.

Program Assistant Amanda Renna, who also has family from Poland, organized the event, the first in a planned Armchair Traveler series at the center. The afternoon included Polish food, music, dancing, crafts, a gallery of photos from Poland, and a slideshow displaying images from the country of 38 million people.

Renna dressed for the occasion in a blouse embellished with Polish embroidery and was thrilled that more than 70 people came to the celebration, including many with Polish heritage and many others eager to learn about Poland.

"It was even better than what I expected," Renna said.

Those who attended learned that Poland is home to the world's biggest castle—The Castle of the Teutonic Order in Malbork; that vodka originated in Poland; and that Poland has one of the most diverse environments in all of Europe—including a desert.

The main attraction at the lunchtime gathering, funded by the Friends of the Wilbraham Senior Center, was the Polish food from Bernat's Deli in Chicopee. There was Kapusta and kielbasa, golumpki, and potato and cheese pierogis. Blueberry pierogis were especially popular with the crowd.

Harrington is 100 percent Polish and a Polish speaker. She was happy to see that many seniors came to the center with friends to learn



Turley photos by Patricia Sullivan
Sharon MacDonald of Wilbraham crafted a Polish-style collage of cut paper at the Senior Center.

about Polish culture and traditions.

The photos of Poland's castles, forests, cities and villages inspired many to share their travel memories and others to dream of journeys to Poland.

Harrington said that her trip to Poland as a teenager, when she was able to visit both her parents' hometowns, was the best experience of her life.

As is her habit, attendee Sandy Bolek asked everyone she met at the Senior Center if they were Polish.

"It's a good opener," Bolek said.

Both of her parents are of Polish descent, as is her husband's family. She said that she has only lived in two houses her entire life—both in Wilbraham—and treasures memories of her trip to Poland five years ago.

"The food was excellent and the people were wonderful," Bolek said. "You should go! The prices of everything

are really reasonable."

Bolek, who wore Polish amber earrings, an amber necklace and an amber bracelet, shared that Poland has the world's richest deposits of amber.

Sharon MacDonald of Wilbraham came to the event for the lunch and to learn more about Polish culture. As she tried "wycinanki," the craft of Polish paper cutting and collage, she watched the slide show of images of Poland. By the end of the session she had added the country to her travel bucket list.

"The pictures have made me realize how varied and beautiful it is," MacDonald said.

To continue the center's Armchair Traveler series, Renna plans to organize three more events themed around other countries from three other continents in the near future. Spotlighting Mexico for Cinco de Mayo will probably be next, she said.



Wilbraham Senior Center staffers and Barbara Harrington and Amanda Renna brought their personal ties with Poland to the Center.

Teen Clay Gnomes Workshop offered

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. This program is sponsored by the Wilbraham Friends of the Library.

Artists invited to participate in Tiny Art Show

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

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

Important: Participants must use a library-issued 4" x 4" canvas to be included in the show. Canvases will be available for pick-up beginning Tuesday, February 17, 2026, and must be picked up

in person at the library. No registration is required. Supplies are limited and will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis while supplies last.

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

There is no age limit and no residency requirement to participate. Only one submis-

sion 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!

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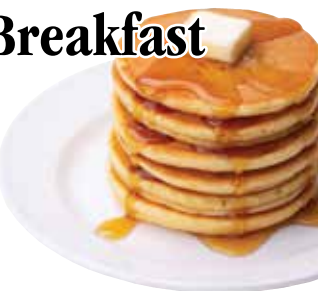
The GFWC Wilbraham Junior Women's Club to hold Bunny Breakfast

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

Families are invited to start their day with a "Bunnylicious" Breakfast of freshly prepared pancakes, sausage, fresh fruits and their choice of orange or apple juice, coffee, tea, milk or water.

The Easter Bunny will be hopping by to visit and take photos with the kids. Guests can enjoy Free Face painting, Temporary Tattoos and a variety of seasonal of Arts and Crafts activities! Raffle tickets will be available for purchase for a chance to win beautifully themed baskets for both children and adults.

The GFWC Wilbraham Junior Women's Club would like to thank our sponsors



The Joseph and Anna C. Dias Jr Family Foundation and Luso Federal Credit Union. Luso's representatives will be distributing Easter-themed items to all of the children!

The Bunny Breakfast is a long standing, cherished community event. Be sure to Hop on over! Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$6 for children 1-12 and those under 1 are free. Tickets can be purchased at the door via cash, check or Venmo or online at www.Wilbrahamjuniorwomens.org via PayPal or Venmo. For more information, please contact Michele Mariani at Shellsteno@charter.net or (413) 531-1621.

Wilbraham Children's Museum Resource Fair set for March 14

WILBRAHAM/HAMPDEN - The Wilbraham Children's Museum Resource Fair will be taking place on Saturday, March 14 from 11 a.m. to p.m. at the Hampden Free Public Library.

The event is sponsored by the Hampden Free Public Library.

Parents are invited to

bring the family to learn about various resources in the area, including wellness, health and support for parents. Entry is free.

More information to come on vendors. Check out wilbrahamchildrensmuseum.com for more info.

There will be activities and fun for the kiddos.

THERAPY DOG

from page 1
research other breeds, where she discovered the Australian cobbler dog; one that she found was bred specifically for human companionship.

Through a series of obedience classes taken last fall, she learned of the Northampton-based organization Bright Spot Therapy Dogs, where they trained for outreach services.

"They really understand what all the dogs are thinking when they're in the scenarios," Kentner replied when asked about the training program. "They alert you to things to watch out for, like if your dog is getting tired."

When questioned about what the most important aspect of her business was, Kentner added that the dog was always the priority.

"You have to take care of your dog first, no matter if you're there for the people. The dog has to be comfortable, happy, and not stressed," Kentner said.

She stated that therapy sessions are capped at 45-minutes, a time limit imposed to ensure that the dog isn't getting overwhelmed or burned out as a result of prolonged contact with people. Of course, constant supervision of the animal is always important in case the session needs to be ended earlier.

"You're a team, basically," Kentner added as she held Riley. "They call us teams."

The unique partnership is



Turley photos by Ben Hernandez

The Wilbraham Senior Center is just behind the Wilbraham Town Hall, nestled in the back of the property.



The ever-photogenic Riley is eager to support the local residents at the senior center.

one of constant observation and requires the human to gauge how well the dog handles the environment. She

mentioned that she chose to support senior centers first and foremost because she thought it to be a good first assignment for Riley.

She added that he wasn't bothered by medical equipment, something she identified as an advantage for her next anticipated step.

Kentner expressed an interest to support the Veteran's Affairs Centers in the future, assuming that Riley will be up to the task. The former librarian is a veteran herself and wants to use her existing connections to expand her service area.

She already visits the Northampton VA Service Center once a year and believes that it will be a natural

fit for them, as there are already therapy dogs that serve and an expressed need for even more. However, this is all up to Riley.

"If he doesn't want to do it, I can't force him to do it," Kentner added as she gave Riley a hug and reiterated that it was a team effort.

For now, she is monitoring him to see if he is ready for the next step. When asked about her overall thoughts about the program, she stressed the need for more therapy dogs in general.

"A lot more dogs are needed. I mean, just the program down at Bradley Airport, you wouldn't think, but there are people in stressful situations there. Planes are late or they're traveling for terrible reasons like illness or death. The dogs really make the difference," Kentner said.

BUDGET

from page 1

schools—:\$5,000

• Increase school choice offset: \$100,000

• Increase in E&D Utilization: \$100,000

"So, these are ways that we raise our revenue, which means we have to ask for less from the towns," Provost said. "The total impact of these strategies would be to reduce the assessments by \$230,000, saving Hampden \$48,133, saving Wilbraham \$181,867."

After School Committee Member Timothy Collins suggested organizing to garner more support for K through 12 education, Provost said he and Assistant Superintendent for Finance, Operations and Human Resources Dr. Douglas Slaughter would meet the following day with legislators at

a legislative luncheon to share those concerns, with one other possible strategy he didn't list about getting more revenue from the state.

Section two was reducing assessments by managing the timing of expenditures and utilizing prior-year surpluses.

Implementing an immediate spending freeze (savings from FY26 flows into E&D from which could be spent in FY27) for up to \$150,000

Pre-purchases/prepay tuitions and consumables (reduces FY27 expenses) for up to \$150,000

"That would be a potential strategy of \$150,000. \$31,391 reduction to Hampden, \$118,609 to Wilbraham," Provost said.

On Vice Chair Dr. Michael Tirabassi's question on how this would impact the decrease of E&D for next year, Provost

replied this.

"It depends how you think about it. If we froze it now, that would blow up E&D for next year more than we think it would be. If we spend it now, it wouldn't flow into E&D, but it would reduce the amount that we need to put for line items next year," Provost said.

Section three was capital cost reduction strategies, using the Minnechaug Capital Stabilization Fund for boiler heat exchanger for \$160,000 in savings.

"We have put our draft budget into the assessment, but we could take it out of the Capital Stabilization Fund for Minnechaug High, which would then reduce those assessments. It would take the money there," Provost said. "The reduction to Hampden would be \$31,520, reduc-

tion to Wilbraham would be \$128,480."

Section four was limiting ICP growth and expansion costs, which would be to cap the number of eighth graders enrolled in ICP to 20 and pause eighth-grade ICP enrollment.

"We have put some money into the budget in anticipation of having another group of students joining us, expanding it, as we were very likely to get the second pathway approved. If we held the number of eighth graders at the current number, saying regardless of which pathway, we can't take more than 20, we can take that position out, which would save us \$72,000," Provost said. "If we were to pause the eighth grade and say you have only to enroll in 9th grade, then we could reprogram \$267,000 to other costs. Basically, reduc-

ing the high school budget ask for next year."

If 4B were done, it was a \$267,000 total budget reduction, with Hampden's at \$56,505 and \$213,495 for Wilbraham.

Section five was implementing hiring caps to maximize savings from staff turnover, with M6 implement a hiring cap for new Unit A hires.

"This is a strategy where we try to maximize what we get sometimes from turnover called breakage by turning new people at a lower rate than exiting retirees. We would implement, probably, an M6 hiring cap, which we think would give us a potential reduction of \$40,000," Provost said. "It does mean that we might have difficulty hiring some of the specialty roles and, also, might mean we're not always hiring the best person to educate the students. But, it would be an opportunity for us to save

some money. There might be more on this. I think we have an exceptionally small number of retirees right now. I think it's because we don't have the settled contract, because when you're thinking about retiring, you want to get your final pay increases, so that those count towards your retirement. So, I think if we do get a settled contract, we may see a swell of retirements, which might give us some more room to run on this strategy."

The reduction for Hampden would be \$8,371 and \$31,699 for Wilbraham.

Section six was limiting work beyond the school year, which would focus on canceling summer curriculum development, saving \$20,000.

"That would save Hampden \$4,186 and Wilbraham \$15,814," Provost said.

For sections seven through 12, check out this week's edition.

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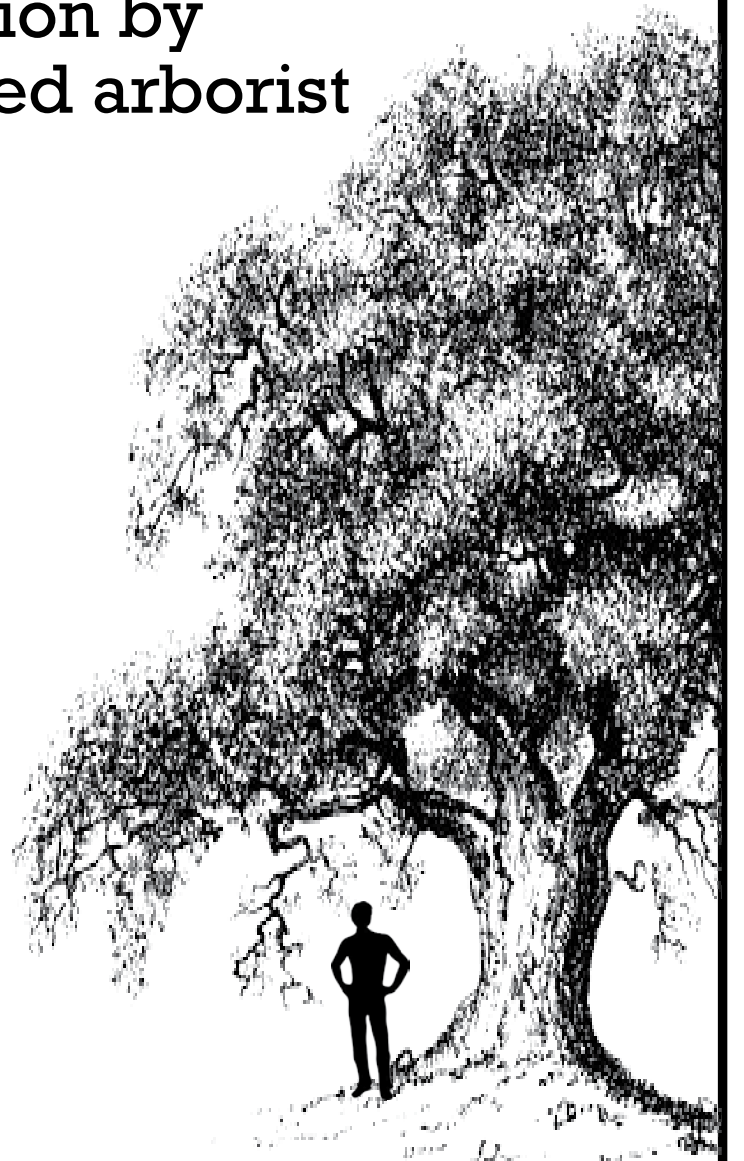


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VIEWPOINTS

SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor

I lost money as a ex-spouse and widow by not knowing the rules

Dear Rusty:

I just found out, as someone who was collecting widow's benefits on my second husband, a very small amount, for some time, that I was, all along, entitled to divorce benefits from my first husband, which are much more. I thought I had to wait until my first husband passed before I could collect anything from him. Now I learned I have the right to collect as a divorcee. All of these years I have been missing out on a bigger benefit because I didn't know this. Please make this clear and stress it for others in my position.

Signed: Lost Benefits

Dear Lost Benefits:

I am truly saddened that you lost out on benefits from your first husband for such a long time. Although you could not collect an ex-spouse benefit from Husband #1 while you were married to Husband #2, as soon as your current husband died you again became eligible for ex-spouse benefits from Husband #1.

Basically, the rules say you cannot collect benefits from an ex-spouse if you have remarried and remain married. In other words, you cannot be "currently married" to collect benefits from an ex-spouse. But the death of Husband #2 meant that you were now eligible to collect ex-spouse benefits from your first husband - husband #1. I hope when you later filed for your ex-spouse benefits you asked for six months of retroactive benefits.

In your situation, when your Husband #2 died, you actually had a choice - either collect your surviving spouse benefit from your recently deceased husband #2, or to collect a regular ex-spouse benefit from your first husband if that is more than your benefit as your second husband's widow. Regular ex-spouse benefits from your first husband are available even though he is still living (and, indeed, even if he remarried) because you are no longer married to husband #2.

This, however, is not always the way things work out for someone who has had multiple marriages. It all depends on the SS benefit each former spouse was entitled to. That's because your survivor benefit as

your 2nd husband's widow is based on the full (100%) amount he was receiving from Social Security when he died.

In contrast, your benefit as your first husband's ex-spouse while he is still living will be based upon half (50%) of his full retirement age SS entitlement. And often, 100% of a deceased person's SS benefit is more than 50% of another living person's amount. But not always.

It's important to also know that if you claim any SS benefit before reaching your personal Rull Retirement Age, the monthly amount will be reduced. Benefits as a spouse (or a surviving spouse) do not reach maximum until the spouse reaches FRA, which is somewhere between age 66 and 67 depending on the spouse's year of birth.

It's also important to know that if a surviving spouse is working, any SS benefit received will be subject to Social Security's Annual Earnings Test, which limits how much can be earned before SS benefits are affected. For 2026, the earnings limit for those collecting early SS benefits is \$24,480 and, if that limit is exceeded, Social Security will take away some of your benefits. Note that the earnings test goes away when you reach your full retirement age.

Finally, be aware that if your first husband also predeceases you, you will then become eligible for a surviving ex-spouse benefit from him, even if he has remarried.

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

Garden related chores to ease in the season

Last week I'm writing about a blizzard, while this week it looks as if the mercury is going to climb! How about our crazy New England weather?

If the skyrocketing temps have you feeling the urge to get a jump on the gardening season, you are not alone! Here are a few tasks, straight from the archives that will get you outside, and a few more to get you back indoors, because inevitably, winter is here for awhile longer. I think.

Perform appropriate garden chores.

I am usually negligent in cutting down asparagus foliage in the fall. Weather permitting, in other words, if the snow melts enough over the course of the next two weeks, I will get out there and cut it back to its base soon, then haul off the branches to prevent any bugs that overwintered there from infesting this year's spears.

It is also time to prune blueberries, apples, raspberries and grapes.

Pruning can vary depending on the age and health of your specimens. If you are not experienced at it, consult any number of good books on the subject before you head outdoors with your pruning shears and loppers.

Assess your tools

Was the rototiller running rough last fall? Perform or schedule a tune up for later this month and beat the rush. Same goes for the weed whacker and lawn mower.

Hoe and spade blades can be washed of dirt and debris then sharpened with a metal file. Medium grit sandpaper works wonders to smooth out the wooden handles of these and other garden tools.

After which, boiled linseed or tung oil can be applied

to both the handle and the metal blade. It helps the wood resist moisture which leads to cracking and prevents rust on the blades.

I love my Dad's old spade. It has a great, hand-made wooden handle that is about to crack through; sure wish I had oiled it 20 years ago!



Take inventory.

Many of us have our seed orders in by now. If you don't, or if you plan to buy your seeds locally, it is a great idea to go through your leftovers.

Before you decide whether or not they are keepers, consider their age and how they were stored. My rule of thumb is that if any seed is over three years old it isn't worth the risk. Some seeds, such as those for parsley, hybrid onion, carrot and parsnip expire even sooner. These are discarded after only one year.

If seeds were stored in a moist or overly hot location, their viability can be cut short sooner than normal. If you have concerns that they might not germinate, sow a few seeds indoors in pots in a warm location and see what kind of results you get.

Nothing is more upsetting than planting seeds in the garden and having few or no seedlings come up. Time is wasted and the harvest is delayed by unknowingly utilizing dead seeds.

We can also take inventory of the various supplies we use during the growing season. How are you set on lime, grass seed, and fertilizers?

Plan to take advantage of

preseason sales by knowing what you need ahead of time. Do you have enough containers, trays and labels?

If you find yourself short, you need not buy them. You can start seeds in repurposed fruit and vegetable boxes, the kind that mushrooms, strawberries and lettuce mixes come in. They work great as long as you make a few drainage holes in the bottom.

Pint sized ice cream containers are perfect for a second transplanting of tomato or pepper plants. Seeds of squash or annual flowers can be sown in single serving ice cream cups. As a kid I always saved our Popsicle sticks for labeling seedlings or garden rows.

When I run out of labels, all it takes is a trip to the recycle bin to make some more.

Last year I cut them out of quart-sized yogurt containers; they were the perfect length.

Practice good garden hygiene

Disinfect any containers, labels, stakes etc. that you wish to reuse this gardening season by washing them in hot soapy water then a quick rinse of one part bleach to nine parts water. This mixture will kill any pathogens left behind from previous gardening endeavors.

Out with the old, and in with the new - all in due time!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 34 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

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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.

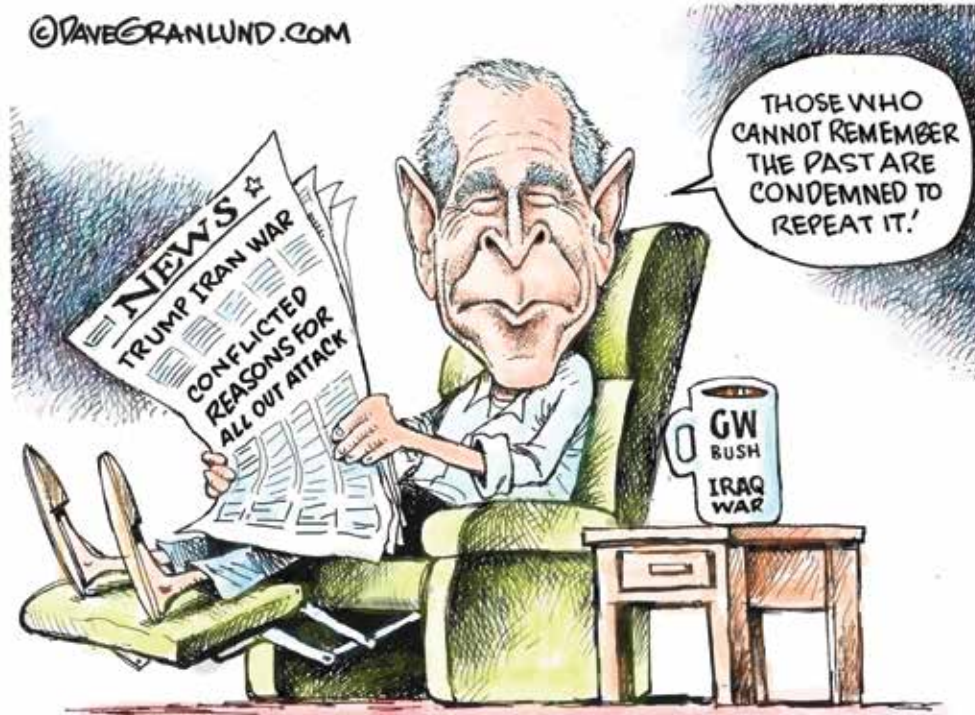
For more information, call the editor at 413-283-8393.

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.

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during the winter of up to a million birds.

Brimfield resident

A Brimfield resident sent an email recently. He said, "On Saturday I was driving to West Springfield to put up some picture at the library for an exhibit. Some members of the Allen Bird Club are displaying photographs there for the month of March. On the way I stopped by a nest in Ludlow that bald eagles have used for at least three years."

In Brimfield, he said, "Lately we have been seeing a Cooper's several times in the yard and a broad-winged hawk was seen on Feb. 22. The broad-winged hawk sat in a tree in front of the house for over an hour. Last year a pair of broad-wings had a nest on the next door neighbor's property. They could see the nest from their deck, but I was never able to see the nest walking around near where

they described its location."

Turkey vultures

On Feb. 11, the Brimfield resident saw a turkey vulture in the center of Palmer near the intersection of Routes 20 and 32. This week, his wife saw 25 turkey vultures flying above that area. They often see vultures soaring over that area and the first of the year shows up in mid-February. He said, "I believe the vultures nest in the area, possibly on or near Mount Dumplin that is just north of the turnpike ramps."

Other birds and more

The Brimfield residents still has lots of junco about as well as a healthy the gray squirrel population. Recently they saw two and sometimes three red squirrels. He is enjoying the longer days and

Please see **BACKYARD**, page 13

in my BACKYARD

By Ellenor Downer

On March 2, I received an email from a Worthington resident that he just saw a red-winged blackbird.

Male red-winged blackbirds arrive before the females. They are one of the first birds to return to northern breeding grounds, arriving in late February or early March.

Red-winged blackbirds are abundant songbirds, who inhabit marshes, wetlands and fields. The male is glossy black with bright red and yellow shoulder patches or epaulets. Females have streaked brown plumage.

The highly territorial



Male red-winged blackbird

males often sit on high perches, singing and displaying their epaulets. Their "conk-la-ree" is heard frequently. They are known for "dive bombing" crows, hawks and even humans to defend their territory. They primarily eat insects such as beetles, dragonflies and moths during the breeding season and seeds

and grains during fall and winter.

They nest in loosely associated colonies in shrubs or cattails and are found across most of Northern America. They are polygamous and a single male may mate with up to 15 different females in his territory. Red winged blackbirds can form huge roosts

Life in

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

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HAPPY 38TH ANNIVERSARY MY LOVE.



I appreciate and love you more each day.

All my love,
Janine



HAMPDEN GIRLS 3/4 BASKETBALL



Submitted photos Dan Blanchard



Enjoy some photos of the Hampden Girls 3/4 Basketball team during the 2025-2026 run.



Sledding Fun

Submitted photo Kerri Gauouette

Here's a photo of Ryan Gauouette while sledding at Fountain Park during the recent snow.

Love is in the Air

Submitted photo and caption Cheryl Phillips

The Wilbraham Red Hatters celebrated Valentines at the Senior Center by enjoying sweet treats and a Game of Hearts. Linda Nichols did a fantastic job as chair lady for the event.



WPL TAB visits Ronald McDonald House



Submitted photo Rachel Haggood

On Jan. 12, the Wilbraham Public Library's Teen Advisory Board took a trip to the Ronald McDonald House to donate homemade blankets made by the group, tour the Ronald McDonald House and learn more about its mission.

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Monthly Highlights for March at the Hampden Senior Center:

Please call 566-5588 to RSVP for all events or register for classes at the senior center.

Lunch is provided by Greater Springfield Senior Services daily at Noon. Suggested donation is \$3 per meal. You must reserve lunch by 11 a.m. one day prior. Feel free to schedule reservations for the month.

WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY

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

Watch for HAMPDEN SENIOR CENTER and GREATER SPRINGFIELD SENIOR SERVICES for information.

Lunch & Learn Presentation:

Pre-Planning Your Funeral and Why It's Important for You and Your Loved Ones with Jim Brasco

Friday, March 13 at Noon. This is a FREE event. RSVP is required.

Join us for a FREE lunch of pizza, salad, and cookies, and learn about the importance of pre-planning your funeral. Sponsored by Forastiere Funeral Home.

Coffee with Town Administrator, Brian Domina

Wednesday, March 25, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Stop in for a cup of coffee and light refreshments. While

there is no formal presentation, the Town Administrator will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Boost Your Brain Health by Eating Well

Wednesday, March 25, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. This is a FREE event. RSVP is required.

Join Armbrook Village for a presentation about eating a diet rich in brain-healthy foods. A brain-healthy diet reduces inflammation, regulates blood sugar, promotes heart health, and can delay the symptoms of Alzheimer's Disease. A sandwich lunch will be provided. Seating is limited.

Crafts with Kim:

Special Make & Take Spring Album - Registration is required.

Tuesday, April 7, from 10 a.m. to Noon. This is a FREE event.

Create a Spring-themed paper album to take home. Please bring 4-6 photographs no larger than 4"x6".

All materials will be provided.

Derby Hat Making Day - Registration is required.

Tuesday, April 14, from 1 to 3 p.m. Cost is \$7.00. All materials will be provided.

Watch the next Scribe for details about when you can wear your new Derby hat at two great programs coming in May, a Kentucky Derby Party and a High Tea!

Greeting Cards with Ellie

Monday, March 23, 1 to 3 p.m. Cost is \$3.00 per person. All materials are provided.

Come and discover endless possibilities for creating your own personal greeting cards. Learn new techniques each month. Class will meet on the 4th Monday of every month.

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

Mondays from 9 to 10 a.m.

Cost is \$10 per class or purchase 8 classes for a pre-paid rate of \$65.

A Parkinson-specific exercise class that "makes function exercise" to keep you moving and doing more of what you want to do! As you practice, you will be challenged physically and cognitively while working on fitness goals: strength, balance, agility, aerobics, and flexibility. Exercises are designed to improve your fitness, counteract your PD symptoms, and increase your daily activity. This whole body, function-focused exercise class will push you to do more than you think you can in a fun, empowering, and enriched environment!

Indoor Cornhole

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

Monday Ukulele with Amy Scott - Drop-ins are welcome!

Current session runs through March 16. New 8-week session begins March 23 through May 18.

Beginner Ukulele - Mondays, 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Cost is \$50 for the session if paid in full or \$7 per class.

Advanced Ukulele - Mondays, 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm.

Cost is \$80 for the session/\$10 per class.

Common Threads Led by Joan Tompkins, PhD

Monday, March 23 at 12:45 p.m.

The group will meet in person on the second and fourth Mondays of the month. Joan will join via ZOOM.

Lunch is available at 12:00 noon, and a table will be reserved for the group. If you wish to have lunch, please sign up by 11:00 am on the Friday before. Suggested donation is \$3.00 per meal.

Living Stronger... Longer... with Lamar Moore

Tuesdays from 2:15 to 3 p.m.

Current session runs through April 7.

Cost is \$6 per class.

Join Lamar to learn about balance and how it impacts your overall health and wellness. Get tips on strength training and cardiovascular endurance to increase mobility and flexibility. "It's

never too late to start making progress on your health span. Muscles and balance are the two things you can train and improve even as you age.

Pickleball at Thornton Burgess, 85 Wilbraham Road

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

This program is for anyone 60 and older who is new to the sport or at the beginner-to-advanced beginner level, who wants to learn the rules and practice playing.

Pickleball Clinics with Mary Grassetti

Wednesday, March 25, 8:30 to 10:30 a.m., and 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

We will have two clinics on the last Wednesday of every month. Mary will run drills and practice games to hone our skills. Clinics will replace regular session times. Anyone who is 60 and older is welcome to participate in a clinic, but everyone must sign up for a spot. Space is limited.

MEMORY CAFÉ

EVERY FRIDAY AT 10:15 a.m. Please call Wendy for more information.

Sponsored by: Friends of Hampden Senior Citizens & private donations.

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

supportive, and engaging environment.

Here's what's happening at the Memory Café in February:

March 13 - St. Patrick's Day Craft & BINGO

March 20 - Rhythm & Motion with Diane

March 27 - Music w/Reenee

"African Drumming" with Jason

Current session runs through April 10.

Fridays from 2 to 3 p.m.

All are welcome! No previous experience is necessary.

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Please see **SENIORS**, page 10

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Falcons score upset in quarters, advance to state semifinals

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

FOXBOROUGH— Foxborough High School hosted both a dance competition and a state tournament girls basketball game at the same time last Saturday afternoon.

The basketball fans who attended the Division 2 Elite 8 match-up between the fifth-seeded Minnechaug Lady Falcons and the fourth-seeded Foxboro Lady Warriors witnessed a fiercely contested defensive battle.

The Lady Warriors held a 39-37 lead with a little more than two minutes remaining in regulation before the Lady Falcons scored the final eight points and advanced into the semifinals with a 45-39 victory.

“We’re a very tough de-

fensive team,” said Minnechaug head coach Ryan Minns. “Our style of play might not be very pretty to watch at times, but it has been very successful for us this season.”

The victory in the Elite 8 improved the Lady Falcons overall season record to 20-4.

“I’ve never made it this far in basketball before and it just feels great,” said senior Kelly Cronin, who scored 15 of her career-high 19 points during the second half. “We’re one of the best defensive teams in the state. Our goal was to keep it a low scoring game. We do have the potential to win a state title.”

Cronin, who wears a brace on her right leg, made a couple of put-backs hoops and a lay-up, along with three shots from beyond the three-point



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Elizabeth Woytowicz tries to get around a defender while balancing the ball.

line. She also added four free throws.

“Kelly is still recovering from an ACL injury, but she has played well all season long,” Minns said. “She made some big shots and played very well defensively in today’s game.”

Cronin, along with classmates Cailin O’Brien, Quincie-Jade Clayton, Ava Manning, Lyric Nelson, and Elizabeth Woytowicz managed to keep their varsity basketball careers going for several more days.

“It was very important to just play our style against them,” said O’Brien, who was the Lady Falcons’ only other double digit scorer with 10

points. “They made a comeback against us in the fourth quarter, but we just kept playing hard.”

Foxborough, who has won four state championship titles during the past eight years, finished their season with a 17-2 overall record.

A large contingent of Minnechaug supporters, which included Principal Stephen Hale, and Athletic Director Steven Burndrett, made the 80 mile trip to the home of the New England Patriots last Saturday afternoon.

“A lot of our fans have been consistently coming to

Please see **FALCONS**, page 10



Chloe Lawless tries to bat the ball away.

Wilbraham youth advances in playoffs

CHICOPEE – In the Suburban girls basketball playoffs, Wilbraham defeated West Springfield to advance in the playoffs last week. Wilbraham was scheduled to play in the finals on Sunday, March 8.

McKinley Jaeger heads for a shot.



Louise Shaughnessey dribbles into the arc.



RIGHT: Maycie Eldridge shoots from close range.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com



Ava Manning keeps the ball moving around the perimeter.

Local high school seniors headed to All-Star Games

SPRINGFIELD – The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame announced the team rosters for the 2026 Western Massachusetts Senior High School All-Star Games. On Friday, Mar. 20, the Hall of Fame will host the 2026 All-Star event on the Jerry Colangelo Court of Dreams at the Hall of Fame. Sixty of the region’s top seniors were selected from different divisions to participate in the final high school contests of their prep career.

“We are honored to welcome Western Massachusetts’ top high school basketball players to the 15th annual All-Star celebration at the Basketball Hall of Fame,” said John L. Doleva, President and

CEO of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame. “This event is a special opportunity to recognize the hard work and achievements of these outstanding seniors, and we invite the community to join us as they take the court one final time in their high school careers.”

A committee of local coaches and media members, representing each division on both the boys’ and girls’ sides, selected the teams. Using the designated classes for the PVI-AC Tournament, the players will be divided into six teams: two girls’ teams, two boys’ teams of Class A and B players, and two boys’ teams of Class C and D players. Only

graduating seniors are eligible for the All-Star Games. Rosters are on the next page.

For the 15th year, the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame will recognize one boy and one girl as the Western Massachusetts Players of the Year. A special presentation will be made for the recipients during halftime of one of the participating games. A panel of local media members selects the award winners, who are recognized for their achievements on the court as well as their sportsmanship and character off the court.

Participants in the Boys Class C and D game include: Ware’s Jack Gaudreau and Brady Guimond, Palmer’s

Dylan Doherty, Gavin Smola, and Stephen Fredette, Mahar’s Jayden Delgado, Granby’s Zavier Fernandez, and Monson’s Austin Meacham.

In the girls game, participants include: Minnechaug’s Cailin O’Brien, Kelly Cronin, and Elizabeth Woytowicz, Mahar’s Hayden Comeau, and Agawam’s Isabella Laprise.

And in the Boys A and B game, participants include: Holyoke’s Jordan King-Perilli, Chicopee’s Dominic Garcia, Belchertown’s Jake Pacunas, Minnechaug’s Miles Fergus, Chicopee Comprehensive’s Brody Fay, and South Hadley’s Isiah James.

Holyoke St. Patrick’s Day Road Race set to kick off big weekend

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

HOLYOKE – Last March, for the first time in several years, it was gorgeous weather for the Holyoke St. Patrick’s Road Race.

More than 6,000 people participated in this year’s event, with nearly 5,000 participants finishing the 10K, or 6.2-mile course.

It was Samuel Whittaker of Salem, CT, who finished the race in 31:24. Alex Corbett, who placed second in last year’s race, came in 23 seconds later at 31:47.

The top female finisher was Angelia Rafter at 34:13 and she placed 12th overall. Rafter is from Glastonbury, CT.



Female winner Angelia Rafter crosses the finish line at 34:13.

Among local finishers, Matt Provost of Monson was 19th overall at 35:09. Ryan Davis of South Hadley was a

close 20th at 35:10. Lindsay Smith of South Hadley finished 22nd at 35:12.

While the race course,



The first wave of harriers starts the course on Maple St.

commonly known as a “hilly” off Beech St. and up the hill course throughout downtown Holyoke ending with a turn

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

Please see **RACE**, page 10



Alex Corbett takes second in the race for the second year in a row.

T-Birds upset by Wild

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (22-27-5-2) put forth a big push down the stretch but succumbed to a late goal in falling 2-1 against the Iowa Wild (19-30-4-1) on Saturday night before the ninth consecutive Pink in the Rink sellout crowd of 6,793 inside the MassMutual Center.

The two clubs, who combined for 23 goals in two games in Des Moines in February, continued a weekend of tight checking in the opening period, with young netminders Will Cranley of Springfield (eight saves) and William Rousseau of the Wild (nine saves) turning away every shot that reached the target in period one. Dillon Dube came the closest to breaking the tie for Springfield, ringing the post behind Rousseau with one offering.

The Thunderbirds were frequent penalty killers in the opening half of the game, and the Wild finally connected as their fourth power play began at 9:01 of the third, as Dylan Gambrell stole a clearing attempt, firing a shot on net to force a rebound off Cranley's pads. Tyler Pitlick drove to the rebound and backhanded it under Cranley to make it a 1-0 game as the veteran potted his ninth goal in 14 AHL games this season.

Cranley had to atone for his own gaffe late in the period when he turned a puck over right in front of an open goal, but he recovered to

sprawl back into his crease and make a stop to hold the score at 1-0 into the third.

Steve Ott's team emptied the tank in the final period, to the tune of an 18-5 shot advantage. After failing to connect on two more power plays, the T-Birds used a great effort on the rush to finally crack into the score-sheet as Matthew Peca made a perfect drop pass onto the tape of Hugh McGing, who one-timed it through Rousseau to even the score at 13:49.

The Thunderbirds had thoughts of jumping to the lead down the stretch, but Rousseau and Iowa kept Springfield from a tie-breaking goal. Instead, it would be the visitors who tasted victory late in the third. After a misplay at the offensive blue line from the T-Birds, Jean-Luc Foudy raced up the ice to set up a 2-on-1 with Gambrell, who one-timed a shot past a stretching Cranley with exactly 2:00 remaining in regulation. Springfield's last-ditch efforts with Cranley on the bench for a sixth attacker came up empty, and Iowa completed the two-game sweep of the weekend. The visiting team won each of the four matchups in the season series between the teams.

The T-Birds returned to a sold-out Thunderdome on Wednesday, Mar. 11 as they host the Providence Bruins for the first of two games wearing St. Patty's Day specialty jerseys.



Zahara Wilson looks for a path inside the arc.



Cailin O'Brien gets ready to make a three-point attempt.



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Kelly Cronin heads down the court.

FALCONS from page 9

our road games throughout the season and we really appreciate them," Cronin said. "They provided a lot of energy, and it really helped up out a lot in today's game."

The Lady Warriors (21-2), whose only regular season loss came against Worcester South, took the lead for the final time at 39-37 with 2:20 left in the fourth quarter when freshman Gia Porazzo knocked home a 3-pointer from the right corner, which were her only points of the game.

A little more than a minute later, a Woytowicz steal led to an O'Brien inside hoop, which tied the score for the final time.

With 35 seconds left on the scoreboard clock, freshman Zahara Wilson (9 points) received a pass from Cronin before making a lay-up giving the visiting team a two point lead (41-39).

Then Cronin blocked a shot before making a pair of free throws. Wilson also made two more foul shots with 1.8



Lyric Nelson faces off with an opponent.

seconds left, which sealed the Lady Falcons Elite 8 victory.

The Lady Falcons didn't score their first basket of the game until O'Brien (10 points) was fouled while making a lay-up with 19.7 seconds left in the first quarter.

Foxboro only made a jumper and two foul shots

during the first eight minutes of the contest.

A little more than a minute into the second stanza, Manning buried a 3-pointer from the left corner. It wound up being her only points of the game giving the Lady Falcons a 5-4 advantage.

Cronin also hit a 3-point-er from almost the same spot,

which gave the Lady Falcons a slim 8-7 lead with 3:35 remaining in the first half.

After Foxboro junior Alaysia Drummonds (team-high 16 points) made a jumper, the Lady Falcons scored the next five points. Wilson and junior Ainsley Holden made a lay-up and an inside hoop, while Cronin added a free throw making the score 13-9.

Cronin scored ten of her team's 16 third quarter points.

An O'Brien old fashion three-point play with 1:20 left in the third quarter gave Minnechaug a 28-15 lead.

The Lady Warriors closed the gap to 29-22, entering the final eight minutes following a 7-1 run.

The home team retook the lead late in the fourth quarter with the help of five 3-pointers, but the Lady Falcons managed to pull it out in the end.

Minnechaug was scheduled to face top-seeded and undefeated Medfield in a semifinal game held at Worcester North High School on Tuesday night.

This week in recreation

Erin Carroll,
Assistant Director

WILBRAHAM - Do you have an aspiring artist at home? Or maybe an aspiring actor? Perhaps a young athlete who dreams of becoming a professional one? Whatever

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If your 14- or 15-year-old enjoys working

their interests may be, our upcoming summer programs offer a wide range of activities and classes that are sure to provide a fun and rewarding experience.

Registration for all summer programs opens on Tuesday, March 31, and spots are expected to fill quickly. We offer programs for ages 5-14, with plenty of opportunities to keep your children active, engaged, and excited throughout the summer.

Our sports offerings include volleyball, soccer, tennis, basketball, baseball, football, and speed & agility training with TF Performance. These programs feature high-quality instruction, and participants benefit from our top-notch facilities right here

with children, consider our Counselor-in-Training (CIT) Program at Spec Day Camp. The goal of the CIT Program is to provide teens with the opportunity to continue their camp experience while developing leadership and workplace skills. Participants will gain valuable experience that can help prepare them for future employment at our camp or elsewhere.

All of these offerings give children the opportunity to explore their interests, stay active, socialize, and make new friends. Many programs are already filling up, so be sure to register early to secure your spot.

For registration, additional details, and full program information, please visit WilbrahamRec.com.

Samuel Whittaker crosses the first line first overall.



Samuel Whittaker crosses the first line first overall.

RACE from page 9

on Hampden St. toward the finish line remained largely the same, there was one noticeable change in this year's event.

Presidential Timing took over the official timing duties after 4RUN3 went out of business last year. Those looking for more results from the events can go to www.presidentialtiming.com to look at more specific results from the race. Like previous timers, you can look up people by name and bib number to get more specific results.

This year, the road race is set to take place on Saturday, Mar. 21 with the main race beginning at 1 p.m.

This year's race would

feature runners from all over the region, the state, and surrounding states as many are preparing for the Boston Marathon, set to take place in just under a month. Many runners over the years have enjoyed using the St. Patrick's Day Road Race as practice for the marathon because of the challenging hills throughout the streets of Holyoke that runners must navigate through.

While there has been a considerable amount of snowfall this past winter, the Holyoke DPW will have the streets utilized in the race ready to go for both runners and spectators. Helping matters has been the recent warmer weather that has helped ac-

celerate the melting a lot of the snow.

For participants in this year's race, Runner numbers and bib-tags can be picked up on Friday, Mar. 20 from 3 to 6 p.m. They can also be picked upon Saturday morning between 9 a.m. and 12 noon.

There will be free shuttle service going from Holyoke Community College to the race area. The shuttle will drop runners off at the Mater Dolorosa School parking lot outside of the clothing drop. Race officials advise using a shuttle by 12 noon in order to make the start of the race.

Please call 566-5588 to schedule your appointments.

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Fridays, March 13 & 27 from 10 a.m. to Noon.

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

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March 18. Pick-up at 9:30 a.m.

D & R Farm offers fresh produce twice a month, running through May. FREE with SNAP/HIP if you qualify! If you do not qualify for SNAP/HIP, you may purchase a share for \$40 cash per month. NEW applications are required. If interested, please call Wendy at 566-5588 to sign up!

SENIORS from page 8

on-one with representatives in the senior center lobby and stay for as long as you need to get your questions answered. Perhaps there is an organization you would like us to welcome? Please let us know.

March 12 – Bluebird Estates

March 19 – STCC Dental & Elms Nursing Students

March 26 – Pat Sherman from Edward Jones

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SENIORS from page 1

"However," Blanchard said. "the tuition is around \$90,000-\$100,000 a year and...I just wouldn't feel comfortable paying that."

Hayden Carlotto, though not having committed to a particular college or university, will be majoring in Psychology and minoring in English.

She explained that she's, "choosing a slightly cheaper undergrad...as it allows me to save as much as possible for graduate education."

There are heavy decisions and difficulties when it comes to navigating application season alone. Irene Chen, a first-generation college student who recently committed to New York University, plans on majoring in Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering.

Chen described that the admissions process was very difficult to navigate but the MRHS teachers and staff helped her through this in multiple ways. She was able to lean on some of her favorite teachers for support with her mental health while also gaining wisdom from her



A section of college flags posted on both walls of the guidance center's hallway, representing all colleges and paths for seniors.

Turley photos by Natalie Proulx

guidance counselors.

"I had tons of questions about the specifics of applying and even what attending college would look like for me," Chen said. "and I found that all of the resources available to me here at MRHS were so helpful in navigating that process."

Something special about the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District is the way staff expose students to different career choices and passions. Sometimes this is more subtle than a student can realize.

From walking over to the fire station or watching the eggs hatch into baby chicks, as a preschooler, to joining the MyCap, CTEC, or internship programs as a high schooler, the district's staff helps students navigate career exploration and align it with their personal interests, skills, and talents.

Seniors had noted an issue they have been dealing with on top of semester two classes has been the difficulty of applying to scholarships as well as dealing with "senioritis": the drastic drop in moti-

vation in regards to academic performance, in high school seniors near graduation.

Renee Considine, the head guidance counselor in career readiness and director for MRHS's counseling center, urges seniors to "apply for everything", that not applying to a scholarship is like saying no to free money. As well as to check their Schoollinks accounts often as the staff does their best to update the scholarships on the platform daily.

Having now been through their entire high school experience, the Class of 2026 has

a couple messages that they would like to share to both the upcoming seniors and underclassmen.

Blanchard informs the underclassmen that, "You can always do more than you think you can... I can't stress enough how much wasted potential hurts in hindsight."

Chen explains that you should, "Do only what you are passionate about. Don't try to join every club and extracurricular."

She encourages that quality always rules over quantity when it comes to building a

resume.

For the upcoming seniors, Carlotto stresses that, "There will be a lot of "lasts" that you don't even think about or anticipate, so really take the time to enjoy this year and those moments as much as possible."

A message emphasized for upcoming seniors is to start early on college applications, essays, and scholarship opportunities, for once school is in full swing, it can get difficult to navigate.

Casey Moriarty, a current teacher and alumni of Minnechaug, urges current seniors, as they move into adulthood to, "say yes to every opportunity that makes their world bigger; travel, work different jobs, make friends, and never stop learning!"

As well as emphasizing to not have a one-track-mind about any decision.

The Class of 2026 also had a message for their fellow seniors: Look how far you've come. Never stop exploring, experiencing, and experimenting.

CCW from page 1

essentially have taken food and beverage in-house, so to speak, and are running it through CCW Catering LLC, but we no longer have a vendor," Coyle said. "So, with that, we needed to file the applications for both change of manager, change of LLC managers and officers and directors and change of ownership interest."

Coyle said the new change of manager would be to Javier Correa, a 54-year-old chef and general manager.

"He is there 50 to 60 hours a week. He is in charge of everything from back of the house, front of the house, make sure that everything runs smoothly there. We have a great menu, he's a great chef, great all-around person. It's been a pleasure working with him and we couldn't have done it without him," Coyle said. "He's had a lot of experience with CCW's since 2022. He has previously worked in other restaurants in Springfield and he is TIPS-trained."

On the change of managers, LLC managers and officers and directors, Coyle said there were two managers, which would be himself and Tyler Cudnick, who is the current treasurer.

On change of ownership interest, Coyle said, "the current ownership interest shows the Country Club of Wilbraham Inc. and the vendor," so this would be changed to "the Country Club of Wilbraham Inc. as the sole member of CCW Catering LLC."

For the change of DBA, Coyle added this was submitted and discussions with Administrative Assistant Heather Knelius on how to approach this as the ABCC renewal application didn't have the change.

"But, it may have been approved, but we threw in belt and suspenders to make sure that we're all on the same page," Coyle said. "We're doing business as The Grille at CCW, so we wanted to make sure that we had that all taken care of as well."

Chair Michael Squindo asked this question.

"For clarity, historically it's been a 90/10 split between CCW and the vendors and it's 100% CCW that you're talking about," Squindo said.

"Correct," Coyle said. There were no further comments or questions from the board and no comments were presented by the public.

The application with the amendments was unanimously approved and will be referred to the ABCC for final review and approval.

Golf Course Renovations

Following this, Coyle presented information on golf course renovations, sharing that the town and CCW entered into an amendment to the lease agreement for the leased premises back in 2022 when the senior center was being built.

"Some of the land needed to be reclaimed in order to build the senior center, which resulted in some tee relocation and modification

work that needed to be done at the Country Club as a result of that being built," Coyle said. "Essentially, what we had to do is take one hole and change it from a par five into a par four, so we had to shorten it and we had to do some other things."

There was also a "pretty extensive modification list that we included in the lease amendment as an exhibit," with Coyle presenting the updated information to the board.

"Relative to what was described in the lease amendment and then what we've done so far that we're seeking a release from the escrow, because pursuant to the terms of the amendment of the lease agreement, under Section Eight, we were authorized to, essentially, escrow all of the rent that we typically pay to the town as rent credit in exchange for the lease amendment," Coyle said. "So, we have been paying funds into an escrow account since 2022. The balance as of January 31, 2026, is \$121,490.06."

Coyle added the quarterly reports submitted to the town, which showed "payments that were made," had a final page showing the escrow bank account statement showing the balance as of that day.

"The spreadsheet that I provided really homes in on the work that we've done to hole six, which is the hole that was adjacent to the senior center that we had to change from par five to a par four. You can see the extensive list of tasks that we completed in conjunction therewith,

together with a few on hole three," Coyle said. "If anyone's played the golf course, there used to be a very large oak tree in the middle of the fairway. We had our study done. The person who did the study indicated that it was one of the most difficult and just a tree that shouldn't be in the way there, that it just made the hole so unfair. So, we wound up taking that down as well as all the work that we did on hole six."

The report also included information on the estimated amount contained in the lease amendment, the amount that was paid, the over/under of the work that was completed, the date it was completed and the total account that the CCW is seeking reimbursement for from the town.

"As the town knows, we self-funded this. So, we've been paying for the repairs out of our operating budget and we haven't requested any release from the escrow as of yet. We're at that point in time where, for us, to do some additional work, we really need to get a release of that escrow in order to keep moving with the projects," Coyle said.

The amount for the ap-

proval of the release of the escrow is \$121,000, with Coyle adding \$128,081 that has already been paid.

Vice Chair Marc Ducey asked this.

"What are the terms of that? I mean, how much are we going to reimburse? Is it a period of time or is it an amount of money that we're supposedly able to reimburse?" Ducey said.

Coyle replied, "It's an amount of money based on one of the exhibits to the lease amendments," and noted the total cost of all projects with the 20% contingency was estimated as \$322,260 pursuant to the terms of the lease amendment.

"So, that's the amount we'll be exposed to, \$322,000, and then we'll start to collect it and then apply it to the general fund, wherever it goes?" Ducey said.

"Correct," Coyle said.

Clerk Sue Bunnell expressed approval of the report.

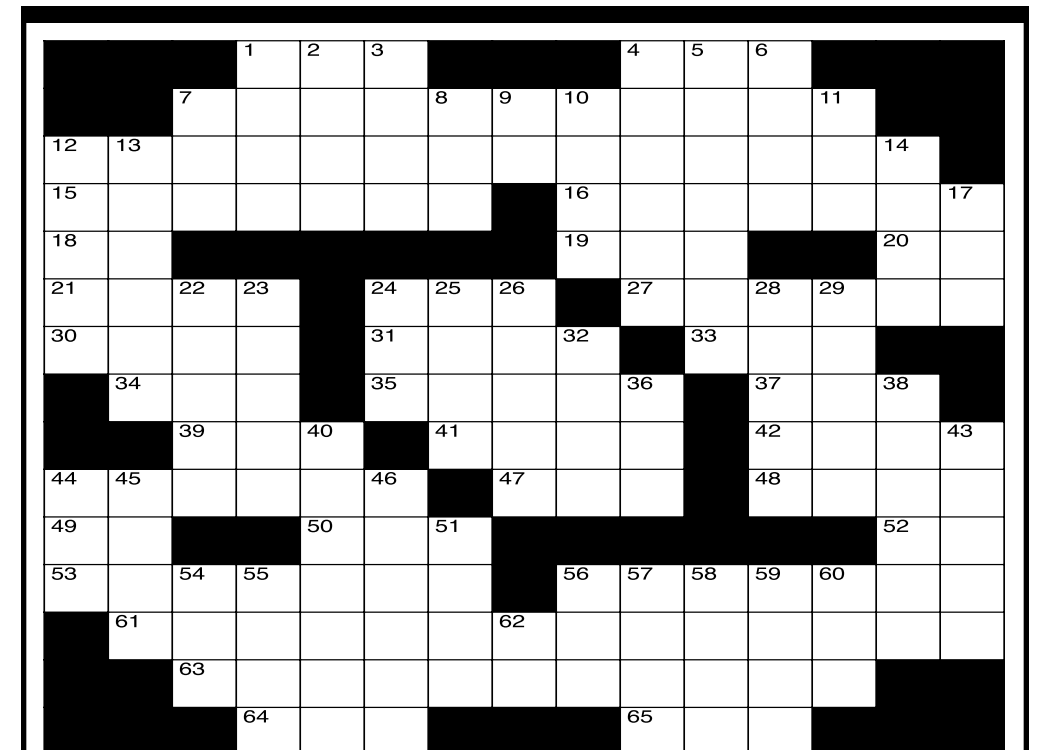
"It's a pleasure to get the report that we just got. I'm glad things are moving along. Looks like things are going well," Bunnell said. "I remember back in the negoti-

ations that there was discussions that, in fact, the course would be improved, even though you went from a five-par to a four-par."

Coyle ended his report sharing that membership has been doing great, Mass Golf Association events have taken place at the CCW and, in 2027, the country club will celebrate 100 years as it was founded in 1927.

"So, we're going to be back before this board with some ideas. We have a 100th Year Anniversary Committee with a lot of historians from the Country Club, as well as some of the younger individuals who are involved with it now, so we're excited about some different opportunities that we might be able to present to the town and really partner up with that to make it a huge success for us next year," Coyle said. "It's great to have a golf course that's turning 100 years old."

The motion to release \$121,000 from the escrow account as reimbursement for portion of the CCW golf course renovation expenses passed unanimously.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Blockchain-based entity
4. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
7. Painted with glue
12. Legendary crooner
15. Structure made with strips of wood
16. Tropical fruits
18. Commercial
19. Comedienne
20. The Ocean State
21. Ancient Scot
24. Basics
27. Stated propositions
30. Scottish island group
31. Expression of annoyance
33. Large tree
34. Engine additive
35. Conspiracy
37. Drunkard
39. Someone who is morally reprehensible
41. Ancient Syrian city
42. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
44. Carry (slang)
47. Sweet potato
48. European river
49. The Golden State
50. Windy City ballplayer
52. New Testament
53. Possess spiritually
56. A treeless grassy plain
61. Popular historical novel
63. In a law-abiding way
64. A place to sleep
65. Criticize
4. Occupant
5. Member of Great Plains people
6. Social media firm
7. Digital audiotape
8. Midway between east and southeast
9. Chronic, progressive disease
10. Chinese lute
11. Not wet
12. Moves wings up and down
13. Communication devices
14. Swiss river
17. Female sibling
22. Receive
23. Relating to a type
24. General's assistant (abbr.)
25. Steep bank
26. Taxi driver
28. Moves into without difficulty
29. Bicycle manufacturer
32. Traditional rhythmic pattern
36. Fugitives are on it
38. Bitter-tasting organic substance
40. Die
43. Matched
44. Literary genre __-fi
45. Cannon
46. Pounded
51. British rock group
54. Debt relief order
55. 2006 NL Cy Young winner
56. Green vegetable
57. Tough outer skin of fruit
58. __ Spumante (Italian wine)
59. Ailments
60. Famed singer Charles
62. Camper

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Impression in a surface
2. Computer language
3. Relating to the ear

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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. Email admin@oakham-ma.gov for a full job description and town employment application.

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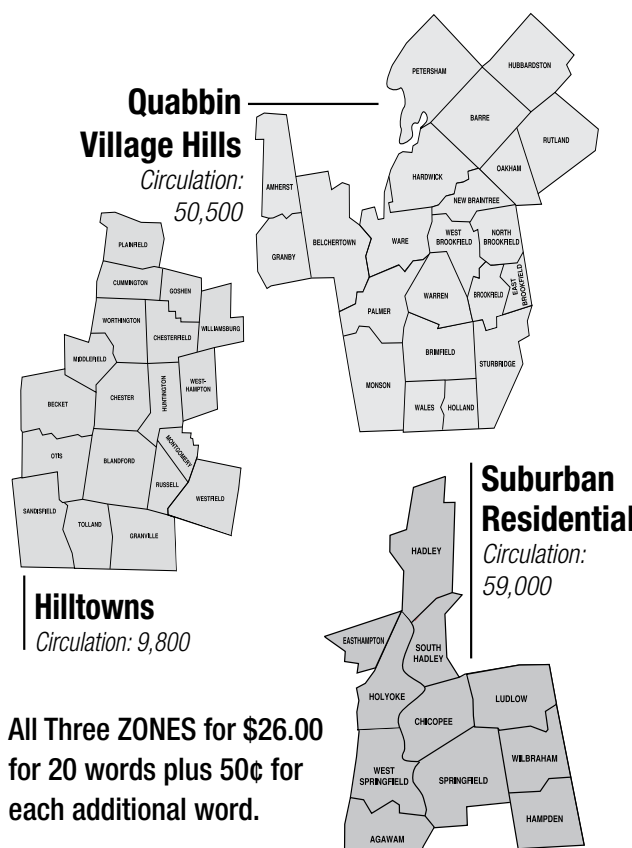
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Wilbraham Public Library holding contest for a new logo

WILBRAHAM - Wilbraham Public Library is looking for a new logo! The library is hosting, with sponsorship from the Wilbraham Friends of the Library, a new logo design contest. To enter, the artist must be a resident of Wilbraham, Massachusetts from high school age and up. Entries must be original artwork, of scannable quality, and on 8x11.5" paper. The logo entry must include an animal, or animals, reading a book or books. It must also display the words 'Wilbra-

ham Public Library.' "We are excited to open up this opportunity to artists in Wilbraham! The library is a community center, and as such, it is fitting that our new logo come from a resident. What a great way to celebrate how important our library is to Wilbraham!" - Melissa Harter, Library Director. Submissions will be accepted at the Library Service Desk until April 15. The design chosen will win a prize of \$250. The winner will be announced on April 25, 2026.

BACKYARD from page 6

looking forward to warmer temperatures.

Red-tailed hawk

A Rutland couple saw a red-tailed hawk quickly grab a gray squirrel her husband shot. They watched it hungrily consume a "warm meal" in the yard. They moved their feeder nearer to the house due to the deep snow. They have lots of black-capped chickadees and woodpeckers come to the new location

Bluebirds

An Oakham resident sees bluebirds on a daily basis. She enjoys watching them.

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

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

Hampden Zoning Board of Appeals

Notice of Public Hearing
The Hampden Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, March 24, 2026 at 6 PM** in the Town Hall, 85 Wilbraham Road, Hampden, MA, for those interested in the petition of owners Kevin and Kelly Sacco for a Special Permit or Variance for the side setback under Section 7, Table 7.2 of the Zoning Bylaw to allow the addition of a garage (14 ft 6 in X 24 ft) to their residence located at 356 South Road. The petition and related materials are on file in the Town Clerk's office and may be viewed during normal business hours. For the Board,

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

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
Docket No. HD26P0435GD
In the matter of: Joanne Guiel
Of: Wilbraham, MA
RESPONDENT
Alleged Incapacitated Person
CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN FOR INCAPACITATED PERSON PURSUANT TO G.L.c. 190B, §5-304

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by **Paige Lawor of Wilbraham, MA**
Patricia Vaselacopoulos of Chicopee, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that **Joanne Guiel** is in need of a Guardian and request-

ing that **Paige Lawor of Wilbraham, MA**
Patricia Vaselacopoulos of Chicopee, MA (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Guardian to serve **Without Surety** on the bond.

The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is incapacitated, that the appointment of a Guardian is necessary, and that the proposed Guardian is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court and may contain a request for certain specific authority.

You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 a.m. on the return date of **03/31/2026**. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.

WITNESS, Hon. Claudine T. Stoudemire, First Justice of this Court.
Date: March 02, 2026

Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
03/12/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD26P0443EA
Estate of: Harold Joseph Nadeau, Jr.
Also known as: Harry Hal
Date of Death: 04/16/2025
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Tina M Nadeau of Springfield, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in

Marilyn (Petty) Jordan

Marilyn (Petty) Jordan of Sarasota FL, formerly of St Petersburg, FL and Hampden, MA, passed away on February 6, 2026, at Brookdale Colonial Park. Marilyn was born in Springfield, MA, to Raymond Petty and Edith (Naughton) Petty. She graduated from Commerce High in 1959. She cherished her childhood friendships and maintained them throughout her life. She enjoyed being a stay-at-home mom and participated in volunteering at Girl Scouts and as a Boy Scout den mother. She was a ro-

mance novel aficionado and many friends left her home with a bag full of books to borrow. She loved photos. We had to make sure to take plenty of photos of family as well as flowers, artwork and swans for her. Marilyn loved to dance to '50s music and play card games like Hand and Foot. She enjoyed crafts, including painting and crochet and I loved teaching the kids and grandkids all kinds of arts and crafts. She would also participate in Ladies Aid at the Hampden (MA) Federated Church. Marilyn Jordan is survived by her children Deb-

DEATH NOTICE

Marilyn (Petty) Jordan
Died: Feb. 6, 2026
Private celebration of life

orah Jordan, Ronald Jordan and his wife Angie and Robert Jordan and his wife Jenn, eight grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Predeceased by her husband Richard Jordan and her brother Clinton Petty, brother-in-law Raymond Jordan and his wife Ethel and sister-in-law Hazel Mallory and her husband Arthur Mallory. In lieu of a funeral service, there will be a private celebration of life held this summer.

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OBITUARY

Wilbraham-Hampden Times OBITUARY POLICY

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

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICES

the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that **Tina M Nadeau of Springfield, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 03/31/2026. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE

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

WITNESS, Hon. Claudine T. Stoudemire, First Justice of this Court.
Date: March 03, 2026

Rosemary A Saccomani
Register of Probate
03/12/2026

SALE OF MOTOR VEHICLES

This ad is pursuant to MA Gen. Law Ch.255, Sec. 39A as of March 27, 2026 the following motor vehicle will be for sale to satisfy a garage keepers lien:

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VIN#: 1C4RJFAG7CC115586

COLOR: Red
LKO: Michael Barrett
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Three Rivers, MA 01080

2010 Jeep Liberty
Vin#: 1J4PN2GK9AW178856
Color: Tan
LKO: Mozanth Nazareth
323 South St.
Marlborough, MA 01752-5132

Vehicle : 2015 Honda Civic
VIN#: 19XFB2F53FE220400
LKO: Edward De LaCruz
260 State St.
Ludlow, MA 01056
Lien Holder : United Consumer Finance
150 West Grove St Suite 16A
Middleboro, MA 02346
R & S Assoc. Inc
PO Box 543
Wilbraham MA 01095
413-596-4374
03/12, 03/19, 03/26/2026

NOTICE TO BIDDERS REPAINTING THE OLDMEETING HOUSE 450 Main Street Wilbraham, Massachusetts 01095

The Town of Wilbraham, the Awarding Authority, invites sealed bids for repainting The Old Meeting House, 450 Main Street, Wilbraham, MA 01095.

The work, estimated at \$110,000, involves minor scraping areas of loose existing lead bearing paint, and repainting the exterior of the building, with alternates to also repaint the interior of the 2 floors of the rear porch and repainting the Hearse House in the rear yard.

Bidder selection, procedures and contract awards shall be in conformity with M.G.L. Chapter 149 section 44. State mandated prevailing wage rates must be paid according to M.G.L. Chapter 149 sections 26-27H.

Digital copies of the drawings and specifications may be obtained by emailing requests to the office of Roy S. Brown Architects at 85rsba@gmail.com after Thursday, 03. 12. 2026. A contractor briefing on site is planned for Thursday, 03.19. 2026 at 10:00 am.

Questions pertaining to the general bid will be accepted until Saturday, 03. 21.2026.

All questions are to be emailed to the office of Roy S. Brown

Architects at 85rsba@gmail.com. All answers to questions pertaining to the general bid will be distributed to all plan holders by Tuesday, 03.24.2026 at 12:00 pm.

General bids will be accepted from eligible bidders at the office of the Board of Selectmen, 240 Springfield Street, Wilbraham, Massachusetts 01095 Thursday 03.26.2026, at 12:00 noon when they shall be publicly opened and read aloud. A 5% bid security is required to be included in the bid package..

The Awarding Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids, should it be deemed in the public interest to do so.

Samuel Boyd,
Facilities and Grounds Director
03/12/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD26P0449EA
Estate of: Robert H Zepke
Also known as: Robert Henry Zepke
Date of Death: 01/25/2026
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

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

The Petitioner requests that **Amanda Lee Haldeman of Hampden, MA** and **Christopher Hans Zepke of Hampden, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You

have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 03/31/2026. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE

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

WITNESS, Hon. Claudine T. Stoudemire, First Justice of this Court.
Date: March 03, 2026

Rosemary A Saccomani
Register of Probate
03/12/2026

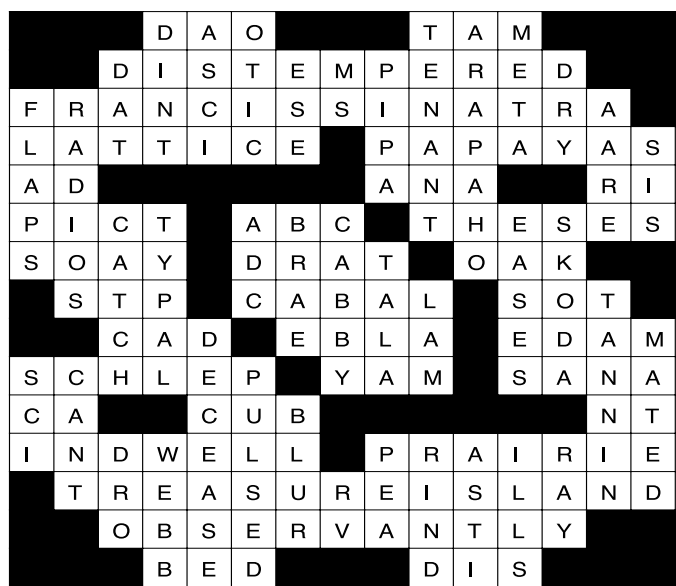
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- 2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.
- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts' public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

Public notice deadlines are Friday at 3 p.m.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com



SUMMER CAMP

Check Out These Great Camps!

The benefits of attending summer camp

Summer camp is something akin to a rite of passage for millions of youngsters each year. Many adults look back fondly on their experiences at summer camp, often crediting such times as formative periods in their lives.

Summer camp benefits children in myriad ways. Recognition of the many advantages of attending summer camp can serve as a great reminder of just how fun it can be for children to spend their time away from school at a camp of their choosing.

• Campers continue to socialize throughout summer.

Socializing isn't just for the school year. While children in high school might be independent enough to come and go with their friends during summer break, kids who are still in elementary school or middle school might not be old enough to handle such freedom. That can make it hard to stay in touch with friends, which in turn can contribute to feelings of boredom and loneliness. Camp provides ample opportunities for young children to socialize during a time of year when they might not see their school friends as often as they're used to.

• Campers can expand their horizons. Though some summer camps are exclusive to residents of certain communities, many tend to feature children from numerous towns or municipalities. Such camps provide an opportunity for campers to expand their horizons by engaging with youngsters who come from different backgrounds. Indeed, the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University notes that summer camp may be the first time children spend substantial amounts of time with people whose backgrounds differ from their own.

• Camp can get kids off their devices. Modern children are growing up in a digital world, and parents know how hard it can be to get kids to put down their devices and get outdoors. But the key to making that pivot could be access to outdoor play spaces. A 2025 study from researchers at the University of Michigan published in the journal Health and Place found that efforts to reduce kids' screen time are more successful when children are given a chance to play outside. Many summer camps are structured around outdoor play, making them a

potentially invaluable ally as parents seek to help children cut back on the time they spend using their devices. Children who do not attend camp and live in households where both parents work or in single-parent households where Mom or Dad works may be forced to spend much of summer indoors, which could increase the frequency with which they turn to devices to occupy their time.

• Camp adds structure to summer days. Once a school year ends, the structure a school day provides vanishes into thin air. Couple that with extracurricular

activities that go on hiatus during summer vacation, and kids accustomed to structure are left with little to do and no need to schedule their time. That can add an aimlessness to summer days. Camp can provide the structure kids are accustomed to but still offer a break from responsibilities like homework or the commitments required of extracurricular activities.

There's no shortage of benefits to enrolling youngsters in summer camp, where kids can socialize, grow and get off their devices while engaged in structured but stress-free activities.

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

HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

PATHFINDER TECH 2026 SUMMER YOUTH ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

REGISTRATION OPENS 8AM APRIL 1ST



CHOOSE YOUR FAVORITE PROGRAM!

WEEK #1: July 6 - 10
 WEEK #2: July 13 - 17
 WEEK #3: July 20 - 24

Hands-on fun for students entering grades 4 to 8!

Visit our website for program descriptions and availability!
WWW.PATHFINDERTECH.ORG/SUMMER-YOUTH-PROGRAM/



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 August 10 - August 14 • August 24-28

9AM - 3PM LUNCH NOT PROVIDED

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 53 Ware Road, Belchertown
 Email: Amanda.greeneacres@gmail.com



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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 themes! Lunch is included and before and after care is available!

WEEK	DAY CAMP JR. DAY CAMP	ENRICHMENT CAMPS	Weekly Tuition \$350-\$500	MOUNTAIN BIKING & ADVENTURE CAMPS
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				

The Bement School
 94 Old Main Street
 Deerfield, MA 01342

Registration Link
bement.org/summer