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APRIL 9, 2026

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Turley photo by Kristin Rivers
The Friends of Wilbraham-Hampden Veterans hosted a coffee social event at the VFW Post 9397 on March 28, bringing local Veterans, friends and families of Veterans and more together.

Friends of Wilbraham-Hampden

VETERANS host coffee social

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - The Friends of Wilbraham-Hampden Veterans hosted a coffee social at the VFW Post 9397 on March 28.

The event invited local Veterans, families and friends to gather for connection and

fellowship, with the donuts and coffee donated by Rice Fruit Farm. The event came ahead of Vietnam War Veterans Day, which takes place on March 29.

This event was the first hosted by the group, which formed earlier this year with a mission to support local Veterans and their families.

The Friends of Wilbra-

ham-Hampden Veterans meet on the second Wednesday of every month at 5 p.m. at the Wilbraham Senior Center in Wilbraham and are currently overseen by co-chairpersons Donna Gregory and Joseph Bonilla, with VSO Advisers Patrick Renna and Jered Sasen. All members also offer their ideas and input.

Another upcoming event

is ECI Technologies and Route 20 Bar and Grille teaming up to support the Wilbraham Veterans Assistance Fund at Route 20 Bar & Grille on 2341 Boston Road in Wilbraham on May 20 from 4 to 8 p.m.

Bonilla emphasized building fellowship, hoping to build relationships with organizations.

“Understand that Vets have a diverse spectrum of experience when it comes to reintegration and after leaving service, so understanding that social dynamic, it’s really important to provide opportunities for that, especially because of a lot of our

Please see **VETERANS**, page 8

SB talk about ConCom revolving fund

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - The Selectboard met with the Conservation Commission on March 30 to discuss the commission’s revolving fund.

Chair John Flynn explained how Town Administrator Brian Domina “had a recommendation for some changes to how the revolving fund for Conservation is authorized, and etc,” wanting the commission to be included in the discussion.

Domina said he and Bonnie Geromini, the administrative assistant for the Conservation Commission, spoke earlier in the day.

“This gets back into a proposal that the board had talked about in terms of the \$1,000 annual appropriation that happens for con-

Please see **REVOLVING FUND**, page 9

OPRO to celebrate 40th Anniversary Season

Submitted by Sara Melikian & Elaine Gernux

WILBRAHAM – Patti Sullivan, a correspondent with the Times, recently connected with Elaine Gernux of the Old Post Road Orchestra ahead of the organization’s 40th anniversary this year.

Here, Gernux and Sara Melikian shared with Sullivan the origin story of OPRO.

Readers should, also, mark their calendars for Friday, April 17 at 7:30 p.m. for the OPRO 40th Anniversary Gala Concert.

The event takes place at Minnechaug Regional High School with a pre-concert reception from 6:15 to 7:15 p.m.

The concert is sponsored in part by Country Bank and the Wilbraham Cultural Council, a local agency, which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

The Story of OPRO

With the bold, ominous opening brass fanfare of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov’s Scheherazade this spring, the Old Post Road Orchestra will launch not only a stir-

ring concert – but also mark the pinnacle of its landmark 40th anniversary season.

Founded in 1986 by Wilbraham resident Malita Brown, OPRO has been a vibrant presence in the local arts scene for four decades. Brown, then a musical production pianist and vocal coach at Wilbraham & Monson Academy, saw a need for a community orchestra when she noticed students abandoning their musical pursuits shortly after enrolling. A cellist herself, she gathered adult musicians from Wilbraham and nearby towns to fill the ranks of the orchestra, and enlisted former Minnechaug educator Raymond Drury as the group’s first conductor.

The orchestra’s debut performance took place at Monson Town Hall in 1986. Soon after, Paul Coffil stepped in as musical director, leading the group through its second performance. In 1987, the ensemble officially adopted the name “Old Post Road Orchestra” – a nod to the historic route that links many of the towns its members call home. Under Coffil’s direction, the orchestra

Please see **OPRO**, page 9



Turley photo by Kristin Rivers

The Knights of Columbus 10195 pose for a group photo during this year’s Easter Food Drive.

Knights host annual Easter Food Drive

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - Volunteers from the Knights of Columbus 10195 gathered at the St. Cecilia Parish Center on March 30 for their annual Easter Food Drive event.

Through teamwork and a heart for service, the Knights organized and distributed Easter holiday trimmings—including the traditional ham—

to the community, including The Gray House, the Community Survival Center, families in the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District, the Latino ministry of the Diocese of Springfield and St. Michael’s Cathedral.

This year, parishioners donated over \$7,000 to support the food drive, with any monies left over split equally for The Gray House and the Community Survival Center, two other local organizations

the Knights supports.

John Philip was among the volunteers that Monday morning, sharing that this “has always been one of my favorite projects.”

“A lot of things that we do, we raise money for that or we raise money for that,” Philip said. “Later on today, we’ll be helping to take some boxes down to the Cathedral for the people at St. Michael’s and that’s always good. It’s always nice to see Father Da-

ley. This crew, really, works well together.”

Philip said this event is fun for the Knights too.

“We get together and build the boxes and fill the boxes, then you can see what you’ve done and it makes you feel good. It is a festive week and it’s good that we can provide some food that we can make it better for some people,” Philip

Please see **FOOD DRIVE**, page 5

WJWC holds Bunny Breakfast

By Natalie Proulx
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - On Saturday, March 29, The GFWC Wilbraham Junior Women’s Club held their annual Bunny Breakfast event at St. Cecilia’s Church Parish Center from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Upon entry, walking into the parish center, you could smell the delightful scent of pancakes and sausage. Attendees were able to purchase tickets directly at entry through cash or in advance via Venmo or on the Wilbraham Junior Women’s Club website.



Photo courtesy of Michele Mariani

The Easter Bunny posing with a couple of volunteers at the Bunny Breakfast event.

Tickets for all adults were \$8, \$6 for children 1-12 years old, and free for those under 1.

Michele Mariani, a member of the GFWC Wilbraham

Junior Women’s Club and the main coordinator for the Bunny Breakfast event, explained a bit of the behind the scenes of the set up.

“It was a bit of planning.”

Mariani said. “We have our kitchen crew that does all the food stuff so that really helped

Please see **BREAKFAST**, page 8



Photo courtesy of Elaine Gernux

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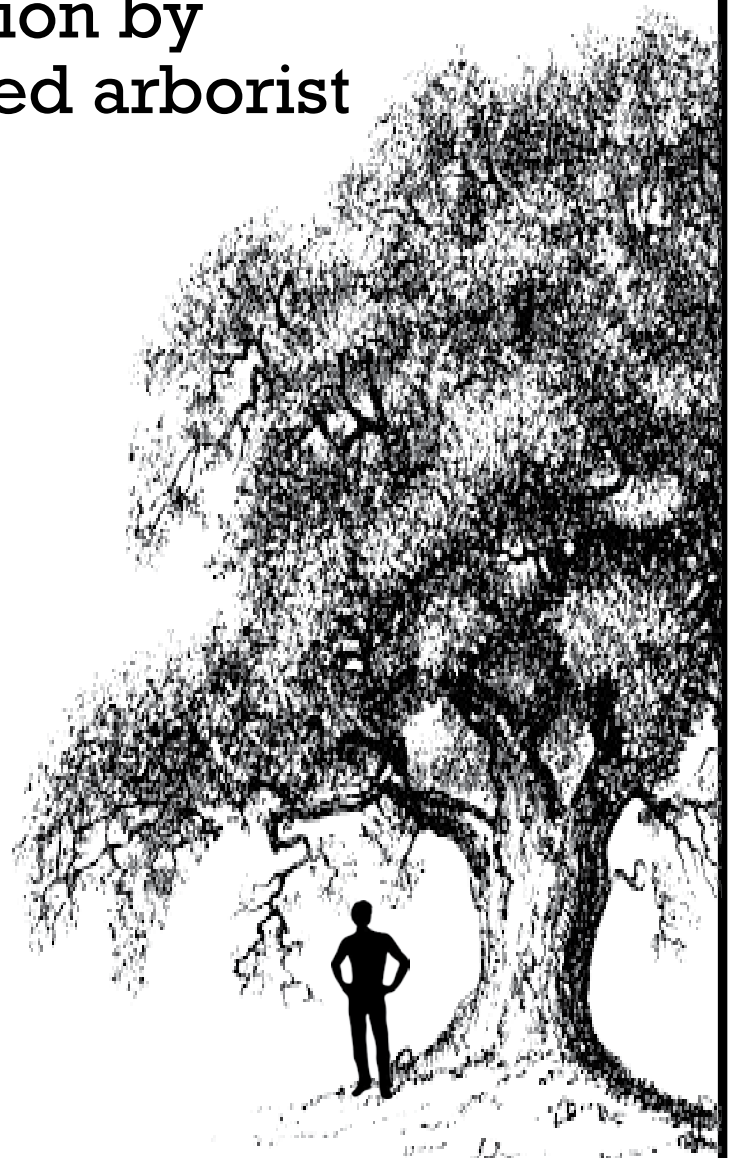
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Sidewalk Extension Project reviewed by SB

Also, updates on other street improvements

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

WILBRAHAM – Tonya Capparello, the Department of Public Works Director and Town Engineer, provided a status update to the Wilbraham Select Board on March 30 regarding property acquisition between Stony Hill Road and Boston Road.

This is part of the Complete Streets funding program designed to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel within town limits.

This item was also an article at last year's Annual Town Meeting.

"I've been working with a liaison of the property. His name is Jeff Casey. So, I've distributed documents throughout—we'll call it—throughout the year, really, that talk about the sidewalk and the retaining wall and the project. They were sent an appraisal of what the value of what that land was and they've been given all the information," Capparello said.

Eminent domain is the process of reclaiming private property for public use, providing compensation to the former owner for their loss.

The area in question, which she referred to as the Balise property, is located at 1979 Boston Road.

"So, we're at a point now where we're ready to proceed with your vote," Capparello said. "Pending the final approval by the Finance Com-

mittee and town meeting, we will be constructing a sidewalk and retaining wall in that location."

Vice Chair Marc Ducey asked how far the sidewalk would run down Stony Hill Road when the project was completed. Capparello stated that they would "pick up where they left off," which is around the Wilbraham Commons just past Old Farm Road. Her intention is to extend the sidewalk all the way down Stony Hill Road to the Boston Road intersection.

"The sidewalk goes down Stony Hill on the west side basically all the way from the grammar school, and we've made improvements and extended the sidewalk and our stopping point was basically at the Commons, which is also at the location where we installed the two RRFs where the intersection of Old Farm is. Our plan is to continue at that location down to Boston Road," Capparello said.

Capparello added that she applied for a grant to help fund this, which is currently pending approval. The results are expected to return in a "couple of months" and will also be subject to Finance Committee evaluation as it's on the funding list.

"So, in simple terms," Ducey said. "It goes from Springfield Street to Boston Road if we get all of this completed."

Capparello replied this was correct.

Ducey then made the motion.

"I hereby move that the Select Board acquire by eminent domain for the purpos-

es incidental to intersection improvements, sidewalk installation and retaining wall installation located at the intersection of Stony Hill and Boston Road. A permanent and temporary easement in, on, over, under and along the parcels of land shown as E1 and TE1 on a plan entitled Easement Plan Boston Road and Stony Hill Road, Wilbraham, Hampden County, Massachusetts, prepared by Sherman & Frederick dated March 19, 2026 and to be recorded with the Hampden County Register of Deeds as authorized pursuant to Article 46 of the May 12, 2025 Wilbraham Annual Town Meeting," Ducey said. "And further authorize the chair, Michael A. Squindo, to execute and enter into any and all documents necessary to effectuate the acquisition of said property, including but limited to, the execution and recording of an order of taking and the form of the order of taking drafted and approved by town counsel appended hereto."

Ducey added that the owner be awarded a total of \$18,970 as a result of the eminent domain taking. The motion was unanimously passed.

As for the proposed planning improvements between Springfield Street and Stony Hill Road, Capparello stated that they were "in the final stages" and planned to have the bid documents outlining the project available for prospective contract bidders on April 8.

"The bid opening is scheduled for April 30, so we will have a final set of plans probably by the beginning of next week and they will be

completed," Capparello said.

The construction phases are projected to begin in "mid-May to end of May" for what she describes as "minor construction," with school still being in session during this work period.

"Major construction is to begin the day after school is out. So, we have provisions in there to talk about what we will allow for alternating traffic and things like that. The specifications require that the substantial completion of all the work that's in the roadway and also involving a sidewalk that would impact traffic in a major way has to be completed before the day that school starts as well," Capparello said. "So, the project will continue, but we will handle it as we do any other project where they'll be traffic detail out there and such. The traffic light itself will take many months to arrive—the materials—so I don't anticipate that really going up until the fall."

The planned changes of road widening, line painting, sidewalk extensions as well as landscaping, is all slated to be completed by the end of August if all should go according to plan. All of this is, also, pending Town Meeting approval of the funding.

"There's a pole hearing scheduled that is required. The poles need to be relocated in order for this project to move forward," Capparello said.

The petition for the joint or identical pole locations at Stony Hill Road #31218572—which is related to this project—was later unanimously approved after the public hearing.

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Annual Walk, Run, Remember for Rick's Place

WILBRAHAM - The Annual Walk, Run, Remember for Rick's Place, a 5K/1M event, will be held, rain or shine, on Saturday, April 25 at Minnechaug Regional High School in Wilbraham. The race will begin at 9:30 a.m. Register on RunSign Up by

April 9 to receive a t-shirt. \$30 for adults and \$15 ages 17 and under: Walk, Run, Remember for Rick's Place

If your business is interested in sponsoring this event, please reach out to us at 413-279-2010 or send an email to: info@ricksplacema.org

Established in memory of Rick Thorpe, who died in Tower Two of the World Trade Center on 9/11, Rick's Place opened in 2007 and provides free grief support to youth (ages 5-18) and their families throughout the Pioneer Valley and Northern CT.

New polling location

HAMPDEN – The Town Clerk's office would like to share the following public service announcement.

For all future elections, the polling location is now at the new town hall on 85 Wilbraham Rd. in Hampden.

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COMMUNITY

WPL holds final Great Decisions Discussion Group of 2026

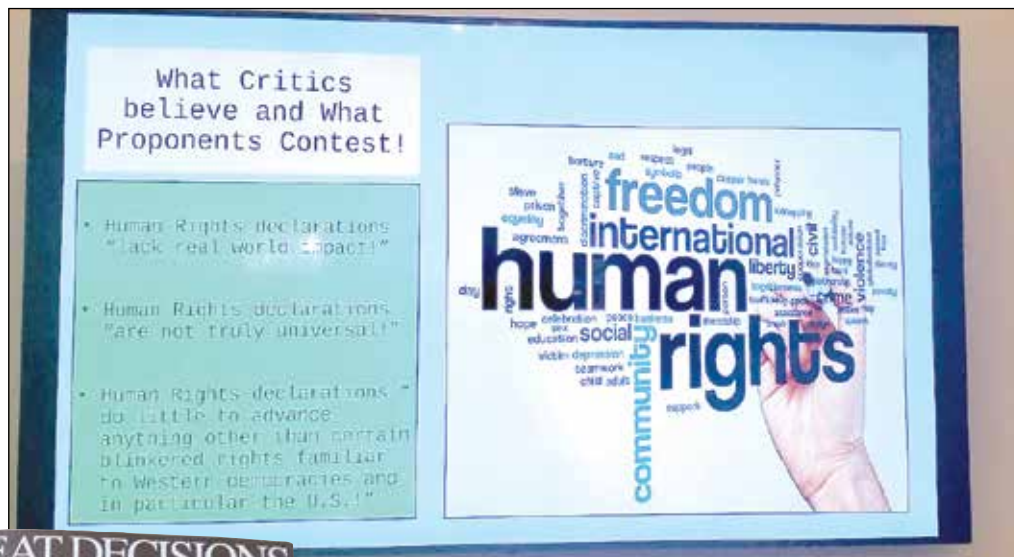
By Natalie Proulx
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - On Wednesday, March 25, the final session for the 2026 edition of the Great Decisions Discussion Group was held at the library.

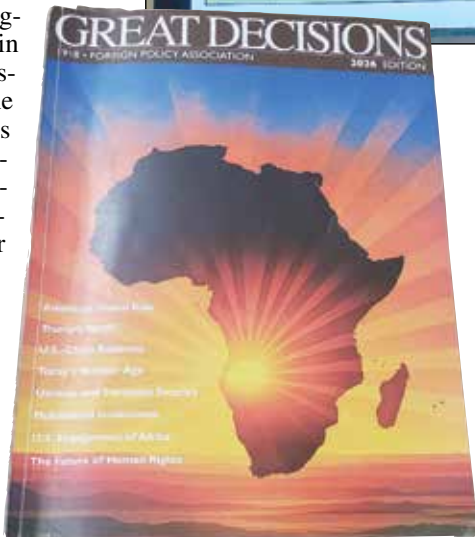
Great Decisions is America's largest discussion program on world affairs that has discussion groups all around the country. One was held weekly this year from Feb. 4, every Wednesday at the Wilbraham Public Library, up until March 25.

Adults who registered a month in advance for the sessions received the Great Decisions briefing book published by the Foreign Policy Association that, for over 100 years now, has discussed eight of the most critical global issues and current events that face America today. Attendees discussed one of eight topics or questions in global policy each week. From how tariff decisions affect the future of the world economy, engagement of Africa, and other country's security, the final discussion to wrap up this year's group was about The Future of Human Rights and International Law.

Each week, the group began with watching a video masterclass that followed the themes of the briefing, analyzing history, putting it in context of current events. The final video from the master-



Turley photos by Natalie Proulx



The Great Decisions briefing book by the Foreign Policy Association.

One of the slides of the discussion's presentation on Human Rights.

Timothy Hunter, began a presentation of that week's main questions and themes, explaining key things he found interesting in the video and posing questions that the group would later discuss.

Ken Furst, one of the group coordinators, mentioned that they have, "someone from our group lead a discussion and encourage people to speak up and say what they have to say."

Furst explained that some groups that are a part of the association have some discussion but a more professional leader or professor that gives a lecture on the topic, although their discussion group is the farthest thing from a lecture.

"It's not a lecture," Jack Luttrell, another one of the event's coordinators, explained that Hunter acted as, "a facilitator" of the discussion.

Hunter discussed all the content on the slide presentation, then opened it up to

the audience, or group, to talk over the key questions about the topic of Human Rights on a global scale.

The topic questions of that week's discussion group were: "As democracy and human rights retreat globally—and the U.S. pulls back—how can civil society and legal norms remain effective in a divided world? What is the role and force of international law in this era of impunity?" and additionally, "What are the consequences for us as US citizens?"

The group used microphones to be sure everyone was heard.

One member referenced Star Trek in how we may view problems that are "light years" away from us to be insignificant. Another explained the complexities behind migration and differing opinions on diversity, highlighting one perspective of diluting a country's culture and its implications.

Within our governmental

standards, members analyzed if we ourselves are violating human rights, and when we decide to use their standards or discard them when it's convenient for our nation. They also identified the shift in politician's promise of leadership in a country.

At the end of the Great Decisions discussion, the event facilitators showed two shorter videos to wrap up the eight weeks they had spent together. The first, a song by The Kingston Trio, released in 1959 called "Merry Little Minuet," a satirical song of protest that highlights global catastrophes and social unrest in a lighthearted melody.

The second, a humorous video for the crowd that replicated the feeling of the weight of all the content they have gone over in the last eight weeks, ending with a laugh.

Hunter mentioned that, "Although this is a little smaller crowd, all the parties are represented. There's Republicans in here, there's Democrats in here, there's Independents in here."

He explained that the program is not necessarily political, but some of the things might have looked a little political because of this year's shift and the events described in the Great Decisions articles.

Although almost everyone participated, and Luttrell explained how that alone was one of the biggest parts of having such great discussions.

If you'd like to find out more about Great Decisions and the mission of the Foreign Policy Association, you can visit: <https://fpa.org/about/>.

Rotary Club to hold Calendar Raffle

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham-Hampden Rotary Club is holding another Calendar Raffle throughout the month of April with prizes given out every day in May. The raffle will raise money for local community projects and scholarships. Calendars are on sale now through the end of April for \$10 each and are available from any club member.

The raffle is different from the one held last year in that, in addition to cash prizes, there will also be gift cards to many national chains with outlets in the Greater Springfield area, such as Home Depot and Dunkin. Thirty prizes will be awarded in the month of May. "There will be a winner every day. That gives every entry many chances to win," announced club raffle co-chairman Tim Tracy of Wilbraham. To purchase a calendar contact Ann Marie Ottoson at 413-530-5996. Proceeds will be given back to the community said Tracy.

For more information or to join the Rotary Club call Brad Sperry at 413-537-4171.

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FOOD DRIVE from page 1

said.

He added it makes his heart happy to do this event and give back to the community.

"It is nice. We know that there's a lot of food insecurity, so it's good to be able to help with this and it's good food and it'll make a nicer day for these people," Philip said.

Reflecting on Holy Week, he's looking forward to the Christ Mass along with Holy Thursday and Good Friday.

"It feels like you live at church this week, so I'm looking forward to it. Looking forward to see Father Nolte doing his first Easter with us, so that will be really nice," Philip said.

John Hegarty, who chairs this event every year along with the Thanksgiving Food Drive later in the year, said it was running very smoothly with a lot of help. He also thanked Big Y for their continued support.

"It's a great way to spread food out into the community to people that need it and the parishioners from St. Cecilia's really stepped up again this year. They are fantastic," Hegarty said.

Hegarty expressed his gratitude for the community support.

"It's very heartening. It really makes it all worthwhile," Hegarty said. "To know that the community has stepped up and donated and then we're turning around and sending that back out into the community. It's a good feeling."

Hegarty also sang praise to his fellow Knights.

"We have a great group of Knights here at St. Cecilia's and St. Mary's in Hampden is part of our group as well. They just do a great job with everything that we do. Whether it's the food drives, we have a Free Throw Contest, we have an Annual Road Race that funds our scholarships. We have two fundraising dinners each year with raffles," Hegarty said. "But, just being a Knight and



A shot of the boxes with the Easter holiday meal trimmings.



John Hegarty and Lucy Ramos share a hug as she arrives to pick up boxes from the Easter Food Drive.



Members of the Knights of Columbus 10195 assist Colleen Goodreau with boxes for families in the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District.

Turley photos by Kristin Rivers

having the camaraderie with the other guys who are in the Knights with us, it's not all work. It's also kind of fun. We have a good time together."

For Holy Week, Hegarty was looking forward to "seeing the community come together and celebrate the passion and rising of Jesus Christ."

"It's a very special time of year here at St. Cecilia's and other churches in the area and it's just great to see people come together," Hegarty said.

What also fulfills Hegarty is the feedback from the community.

"I got a letter this year for the food drive from a woman who said that she wanted to

donate \$100 to the food drive in memory of her late husband, who was always very generous and giving to other people," Hegarty said. "And so, when you read a letter like that, it just kind of makes your day. You say, 'We are doing the right thing.'"

He also encouraged the Knights and future members to check out their Tuesday meetings, which happen every third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

Philip encouraged his fellow Knights to get involved next year.

"If they can do this project, it is a good place for the younger people to meet some

of us that have been here for a while," Philip said. "This is one of the projects you can do that you see the people who are receiving it and you sometimes get a hug, and I like that. It is a good feeling."

Hegarty's message was this.

"My message to the town of Wilbraham is from what I've seen, it's a very giving community. So not just here at St. Cecilia's, but in your own church, in your own community organization, give what you can give and you'll get a good feeling of helping out your neighbors in need," Hegarty said. "Happy Easter to everyone!"

HPL to host Earth Day Eco Expo on April 25

HAMPDEN – The library will be hosting their Earth Day Eco Expo on Saturday, April 25, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The festivities include the Friends Book Sale, solar demonstrations, library giveaways, a book hedgehog craft in the Sheila R. Flynn Teen Center for all ages, Bagshare with Talia to help you create your own reusable tote bag and more.

Vendors include Mass Audubon who will bring stick bugs, Cloverbook

Farm with their baby goats, Kelly's Kreations, Honey Bear Tea, Richard Muise Woodwork who will also do caricatures, Camicchi Olive Oil—they will also have soap lotions too—Farmer Clark's, the Wilbraham Girl Scouts, the Hampden Transfer Station, the Conservation Committee, Hampden Park and Rec who will also provide summer camp information, Captain Kindness aka Richard Gonzales and much, much more.

Upcoming Hampden Garden Club Events

HAMPDEN – The Hampden Garden Club would like to announce the following events:

The Hampden Garden Club will be hosting Dan Ziomek from Sugarloaf Gardens on Thursday, April 16, at 7 p.m. Dan will be presenting his program BACKYARD ORCHARDS. The program will be at our NEW meeting location at the Town Hall (formerly Thornton W. Burgess Middle School), 85 Wilbraham Rd, Hampden, Room A7.

Guests are asked to use the Library Entrance. There is a \$5 fee for non-members of the garden club.

Dan will discuss growing fruit trees and other fruit bearing plants in our backyards. His talk will include tree selection, pruning, and pest control. This is Dan's 39th year in horticulture and he will share his experiences with fruit growing.

New members are wel-



come! Membership fee for the year is \$15 and includes admission to all programs.

Next up...

The Hampden Garden Club will be meeting at the Hampden Senior Center, 104 Allen St. Hampden, on Saturday, April 18, at 9 a.m. for EARTH PUTTER DAY. We will be weeding and sprucing up the gardens at the Senior Center and the Gazebo at the Hampden Town Hall from 9 to 11 a.m.

Club members are asked to bring their garden tools to the clean-up.

Rick Recor, 1952-2026

Founder • Leader • Mentor • Friend

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our founder and owner, Rick Recor. Rick devoted over 50 years of his life to Rick's Auto Body. It was his longtime wish that his company remain family-owned and operated. We are honoring his wishes by continuing

to serve our customers with a tradition of quality craftsmanship and outstanding customer service.

Thank you very much for your ongoing support.

The Team at Rick's Auto Body



Steve Nanton photo courtesy of The Republican



VIEWPOINTS

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters
By Russell Gloor

I'll be 70 on New Year's Day. When should I apply for Social Security?

Dear Rusty:

I was born on Jan. 1, 1958, so I believe Social Security considers me to be 70 as of December 2027. I'm planning on filing when I turn 70 to maximize the payment. I'm not sure if I should start in December, with the first payment in January 2028. Or should I start in January with the first payment in February 2028? I know I can start anytime, however I don't want to file before the maximum payment, even by one month.

Signed: Wanting Maximum Benefit

Dear Wanting:

You are correct that if your birth date is Jan. 1, 1958, you are entitled to your full age 70 benefit in December 2027. So, if you claim your SS benefit to start in December 2027 you will get your maximum benefit amount and you will receive that payment in January 2028 (on the second Wednesday). Basically, anyone born on the first of any month is considered to have been born in the previous month for SS benefit purposes.

You can apply for your benefits up to four months prior to your birthday month and SS usually suggests applying about three months in advance to give them time to process your application. When you complete the application, you will specify the month you wish your benefits to start, so applying early does not present a problem. You can either call SSA at 1-800-772-1213 to make an appointment

to apply over the phone or you can apply online at www.ssa.gov/apply.

The one thing you might want to do is put the following in the "Remarks" section of your application for SS benefits: "I do not wish to receive any retroactive Social Security benefits. I want my benefits to become effective with the first month of my age 70 eligibility (December 2027 because I was born on the first of January)."

Including that remark will ensure that your benefit will be the full maximum amount you are entitled to at 70 years of age, without any reduction. And I congratulate you on choosing a strategy which maximizes your monthly benefit and will likely provide you with the most in cumulative lifetime Social Security benefits.

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 ssadvisory@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

Nature is our Cathedral

By Julie Midura

I belong to two churches. One is brick and mortar-built by human hands. There is a large sign out front. A foundation. Walls. A ceiling. Padded chairs are lined up in rows. Carpeting covers the floor.

A worship team plays music. Guitars, a keyboard and drums. A harmony of voices blend with my own, ringing out in praise. The lyrics speak to me. Words which stir my emotions and feel more like a spiritual encounter than mere singing.

My other church is a cathedral. There is no sign out front. No doors or windows. No foundation. No floor or walls or ceiling. At least not in the man-made sense.

Gravel, granite and earth are the floor. The vast canvas of blue sky is the ceiling. The sentinel of trees lining the path form the walls. The foundation is made from mountains rather than poured cement, but they hold me up and give me far more strength than concrete ever could.

In my church, I listen to our pastor preach words of truth, faith and hope. Inspiring me. Redirecting me. Providing spiritual nourishment.



Leading me along the path to a life of purpose.

In my cathedral, I listen to nature preach to nature in a language all its own. No words are needed, but it speaks to me nonetheless. Giving my life meaning and purpose. Deepening my faith. Restoring my soul.

The melody here is different. The music does not reach my ears from a speaker in the corner of the room, but through a tapestry woven from rustling leaves, cascading streams and roaring wa-

terfalls. The sounds blend together, proclaiming God's glory not through spoken words, but through something equally powerful.

This place is no less sacred than the church where I worship every Sunday. It is a sanctuary created by the hands of God himself. Built out of unfailing love. When I am standing in the quiet stillness and immense grandeur of Creation, I bear witness to God's profound greatness.

There is a sacredness in this cathedral of earth and trees and sky which transcends human understanding. A peace which contradicts life circumstance. A gratefulness in spite of the many trials and challenges.

Out here, I experience deeply personal moments of connection. As though there is a thread joining heaven to earth. A yarn woven of reverent awe and immeasurable joy linking my human heart to the Divine.

My worship is not restricted to the confines of a building. It flows from me in equal measure out here in the wild places... where the wind dances and the water flows and the heavens themselves declare glory.

My soul is fed at both my church and my cathedral. But some days, I can hear God speaking to me louder in the church that was *not* built by human hands.



Pruning your hydrangeas

It was encouraging to see so many gardeners out in force this past weekend, regardless of the fact that it remained a little chilly.

I got outside too, mainly to clean up some leaves and debris from a bed near the front door. While I was there, I began pruning my pink flowered Hydrangea (H. paniculata), mainly by removing last year's blooms.

I often get questions about blue hydrangeas and how to prune and what to do to coax it into bloom. So, before you

get the pruners out and have at it, read on.

Most established hydrangea bushes, the "Mophead" types (Hydrangea macrophylla) say those older than 15 years or so, flower on "old" wood, in other words, from buds made on the previous season's stems. That is why they are not pruned in the fall or in the spring for that matter, unless the stem is dead or partially dead.

An early autumn frost, a hard winter, or a late spring frost can kill buds or even en-

tire stems. If the stem does not leaf out at all the further we get into spring, it is likely dead, and you should cut it down to the ground.

Usually the plant's roots are not harmed, and new growth will emerge from the base of the plant.

However, with these older cultivars, you will be left with just foliage in summer because the buds made the previous year will have been cut away.

in the Garden
by Roberta McQuaid

Sometimes a stem is only partially winter killed and it may leaf out midway down the stem.

In that case, just prune away the portion that is dead and leave the rest. Don't worry that you may remove flower buds in the process; more occur further down the stem and will bloom if they too haven't been eliminated by Old Man Winter.

Perhaps you have one of the newer cultivars such as "Endless Summer," "Penny Mac," or others that bloom on new growth as well as old growth. In that case how much you cut away is not as critical. You should get flowers even if last season's stems are cut to the ground because soon enough new stems will produce new buds.

Sometimes people complain that they still don't get flowers and this is very perplexing. I've been to forums where everything from proper siting (morning sun, dappled shade) to fertilization is discussed (not too high in nitrogen, please).

One complaint was that our growing season is just borderline long enough for flowers to appear on new growth and reportedly some of these



early repeat bloomers are being phased out because of it. If that's the case, I am sure they are breeding more dependable cultivars as we speak.

I had always wanted a hydrangea and finally bought one as a Mother's Day gift to self maybe four years ago. It is a newer generation and so far I have been very happy. It's filled out nicely and had well over two dozen flowers last year.

Hopefully the harsh winter will not effect my hopes for a repeat performance this summer. I wish you much success and many blooms on your hydrangeas!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 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.

The Wilbraham-Hampden TIMES

We Want to Hear From You

EDITOR
Kristin Rivers
krivers@turley.com

ADVERTISING SALES
Jocelyn Walker
jwalker@turley.com

SPORTS EDITOR
Greg Scibelli
sports@turley.com

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WEB
wilbrahamhampden.times.turley.com

PHONE
(413) 283-8393

ADDRESS
24 Water Street
Palmer, MA 01069

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www.turley.com

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

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Election letters to the editor welcome

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

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

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

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



Life in &

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

WILBRAHAM HAMPDEN

Tiny Art Show
AT WPL

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

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The Wilbraham Public Library is currently showcasing artwork submitted by the community for the Tiny Art Show. Adult Services Librarian Emilie Lang explained how it came together.

"We handed out 4"x4" canvases in March for community members of all ages and abilities. They were able to decorate their canvases using any subject or medium or their choice, and all canvases will be on display in the library's lobby for the month of April," Lang said.



Submitted photos Emilie Lang



Wilbraham Firefighters Team Up with Wilbraham Senior Center for CPR Training



Firefighters from the Wilbraham Fire Department were at the Wilbraham Senior Center today conducting a CPR training session. This initiative is part of a broader effort to ensure that our community remains heart-safe and well-prepared for emergencies.



Photos and caption courtesy of Wilbraham Fire Department

Palm Cross Making



Submitted photo and caption Sue Agnew

22 members of the St. Cecilia Women's Club participated in a Palm Cross making workshop. The blessed crosses were made for the club's homebound members, club members and their families, and parishioners. Thank you to Denise Fiedler for organizing this fun and meaningful activity. Well over 300 crosses were made!

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Input sought on Old Town House future

HAMPDEN - The Hampden Old Town House Committee announced it has launched a survey to assess resident sentiment regarding the future of the Old Town House which was recently vacated when Town Offices moved to the former Thornton W. Burgess School.

Residents can share their thoughts about the future of the building by completing the survey which is available on the Hampden Town Website or by picking up a paper survey at the Hampden Free Public Library, the Hampden Senior Center, or at Hampden Town Hall.

Professional engineering studies determined it would cost more than \$7 million to remove hazardous materials, modernize the heating, plumbing and electrical systems, make structural repairs and bring the nearly 100-year-old Town House into compliance with accessibility codes. It was determined that should those costly renovations be undertaken the Old Town House building would still not provide enough suitable space to accommodate the current and future Town Hall offices' needs and to service the public adequately.

On behalf of the Old Town House Study Committee, I urge residents to participate in the survey, attend one of the planned Community Forums and submit any thoughts, comments or ideas they may have regarding the Old Town House's future."

Survey deadline is April 10. Check the Town Website for further information on Community Forums to be held April 7 and April 24. Comments can be directed by e-mail to townadminstrator@hampdenma.gov.

BREAKFAST from page 1

me a lot...and we had volunteers to do the raffle prizes." The event offered pancakes, sausage, drinks like apple juice, coffee, and water, as well as fresh fruit for families. But, the Bunny Breakfast is more than just a breakfast, it offers plentiful amounts of activities and raffle baskets for the interest of the whole family.

This year, the Junior Women's Club offered 10 different raffle baskets.

The sponsors of this year's annual Bunny Breakfast were The Joseph and Anna C. Dias Jr Family Foundation and LUSO Federal Credit Union, whose support made the event more impactful for families. Alongside sponsoring the purchasing of food and materials, for the last couple years, LUSO Federal Credit Union came with gifts for all the kids as they were leaving.

Families were able to take plenty of photos with the Easter Bunny and children received coloring books, crayons, and stickers. The sponsors also helped in the funding of different activities that were present during the event besides the breakfast and the Easter Bunny.

During the Bunny Breakfast, the Junior Women's Club also offered free face painting, temporary tattoos and a variety of arts and crafts activities for families to enjoy.

The president of the club, Brenda Willard, helped in coordinating all the crafts and fun activities that laid the foundation for the day to be such a success.



Representatives from LUSO Federal Credit Union.

Additionally this year, Willard brought in Legos for families to play with for another option of a hands-on activity. Noticing that some children were standing in line to wait for certain activities, Willard explained that having a separate activity to do while waiting would manage attention spans and give parents something to do as well.

The benefits from this event, though not the largest event that the Wilbraham Junior Women's Club holds, goes back into different things in the community.

Mariani explained that the club has made comfort pillows for Baystate patients with breast cancer, so the club needed to purchase the material to give back to that part of the community.

With the Bunny Breakfast taking place at St. Cecilia's Church Parish Center, Mariani described the importance and its connection to the



The trophies presented to the winners of the Snowman Contest.

Wilbraham Junior Women's Club.

"We've been having it here for so long," Mariani said. "it's kind of a central part of Wilbraham."

Being that the parish center is so large, Mariani explained that it can accommodate the club's needs and help

accomplish what they were looking to do for families. Even though it's not a direct event of St. Cecilia's, they're willing to help the club set up their space and give them the opportunity to host it every year.

"They do a great job for us," Mariani said. "It's a good partnership even though it's not affiliated with the church."

Additionally, the Junior Women's Club invited their Snowman Contest winners and their families to the Bunny Breakfast to give out their first, second, and third place trophies. A transition from the colder Winter season to welcoming the Spring.

"Some folks celebrate going to church and some don't," Mariani said. "But being that it's the first week of spring...it's a great event to open the season."

Theatre Guild of Hampden to hold 'Gypsy' auditions

HAMPDEN - The Theatre Guild of Hampden is holding auditions on April 22 and 23 for their upcoming production of "Gypsy."

The auditions take place at 7 p.m. at the Hampden Town Hall, formerly Thornton W. Burgess Middle School, at 85 Wilbraham Rd. in Hampden.

They are, also, looking for two little girls between the ages of 12 to 14, must sing and dance, and four young boys between the ages of 12 to 14, must sing and dance.

For more information, call Mark Giza at 413-204-5333.



The raffle prize table, all set for attendees to browse.

Photos courtesy of Michele Mariani

VETERANS from page 1

Veterans feel isolated across the country, but also in places somewhat more suburban like Wilbraham and Hampden," Bonilla said. "So, it's incredibly important to do that. Building this organization has been really great these past couple of months. We've gotten a lot of traction and there is a want and a need to build on that fellowship, build on that community and that's what we're hoping to do here. I mean, something as simple as getting coffee and breakfast with people and breaking bread with people is literally the best way to get to know one another and really build on that."

Gregory was thrilled with the turnout.

"New people we've never met, which is awesome, and we're hoping we do get to

meet more and more people as the meeting goes on and we have more events scheduled," Gregory said.

She encouraged Veterans to come out for events like this.

"Getting the Veterans out of the house is great," Gregory said. "This is our way of coming to meet people and to get out and to get the inbound people out, so this is a way of starting. Like Joseph said, a simple practice. Come grab a coffee, come get a donut. Just come sit and chat. Even if you sit by yourself, you're with everybody. So, I think that benefits everybody in the area."

Bonilla added the goal is to continue hosting events like this.

"It's building that fellowship, not only for Veterans of Veterans, but also community members with our Veterans because we are stewards of

our community and it's incredibly important," Bonilla said.

Renna said the catalyst for the group was how many Veterans in the communities "want to have a part of" and take part in "some more Veteran-related events and looking for different ways to support Veterans."

He also noted the VFW's relationship with Wilbraham and Hampden with bringing this event together.

"The two of us talked a lot about this, probably the whole first year I was here, and we finally got the ball rolling in January and thankfully, we've had three meetings. I think no less than 15 people have showed up at each meeting, and they wanted to do something right off the bat and this was a nice, easy event to start with, kind of in commemoration of Vietnam War Veterans Day," Renna said. "The great

part is I'm a Post Member and Jered's the Quartermaster of the Post and, one of the first meetings, somebody brought up, 'Hey, should we include Hampden too?' and we're like, 'Absolutely. Let's get these two together.' So, it went from a Wilbraham-only group, probably talking at the first meeting, to rolling into getting them together at the second meeting."

Sasen credited Renna for bringing the group to fruition, sharing that this was something he always wanted to do and, given the VSOs are one-person offices, groups like the Friends can also help bring community events together and support the officers.

"I think this is something that I'd like to see more and more across the Commonwealth, but I'm beyond proud that something I attempted—and kind of fizzled—that Pat

kept pushing for it," Sasen said. "It's open to everybody. You're a Veteran, non-Veteran, you're a family member of a Veteran, friend of a Veteran, you like Veterans, you just feel passionate about Veterans."

"You want to get involved in the community and you're just looking for that spot, it's a good spot," Renna added.

"Absolutely. You could never have had a Veteran in your entire family lineage, but you just really, truly care about Veterans. Come on out, come see what we're doing," Sasen said.

Hampden VSO Jason Burgener was ecstatic about the event bringing everyone together, including the opportunity to meet two fellow Coast Guard Veterans.

"One was stationed where I was stationed and he was just there, we'll say 15 years before I was, but it was nice

to reminisce and talk," Burgener said. "It was good to see a bunch of people talking with each other and being social. Lot of us go home and deal with our issues and it's nice to be able to talk to people about it."

Burgener's message was for all Veterans to check out any and all events whenever they can.

"I would love to meet you, Wilbraham would love to meet you, all the towns. They would love to meet you," Burgener said. "Your input goes a long way in us helping you."

Also, get involved and reach out.

"Without the volunteers, we couldn't make these events happen. Volunteers are definitely important. Veterans helping Veterans. We know what we went through, so let's help each other out," Burgener said.

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OPRO from page 1

grew in both size and reach, performing regularly across Ludlow, Monson, Palmer, Wilbraham, Longmeadow, East Longmeadow, and West Springfield.

Over the years, OPRO has been guided by several musical directors, including Neal Schermerhorn (1996–2007), Juli E. Sansoucy (2008–2019), and most recently, Alexandria Black, who took the helm in 2021, and brought the orchestra back to life following the COVID-19 pandemic. Under Black's leadership, the orchestra has significantly expanded its repertoire, embracing more ambitious and varied programs. Audience numbers have climbed in response, including a capacity crowd at Memorial Hall in Monson this past June.

"OPRO is a very special orchestra right here in Western Massachusetts, with passionate and dedicated musicians who lift each other up, and make each rehearsal better than the last," Black shared. "There has been an amazing 40 years of music making history, and there will no doubt be at least another 40 years after my time. It's a privilege to be the Music Director and Conductor for OPRO and I am elated to share our 40th season with you all starting in October."

Tom Greene, founding member, longtime principal tuba player, and former President of the Board of Directors, reflects on the group's journey: "I would like to say that it has been a pleasure to be with the group all these years and I am extremely



A group shot of the Old Post Road Orchestra.

grateful for all our music directors. Their passion for music and willingness to rehearse the group to perform pieces that were both satisfying and challenging have continually led to many thrilling and fulfilling performances."

Today, OPRO's heart remains rooted in community. With musicians ranging in age from 14 to 103, and four different programs across six concerts each season, the orchestra offers something for everyone. Since 2001, OPRO has operated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, offering free concerts and educational programs for the community. This spring, OPRO will perform the Scheherazade for the first time – a tribute to Brown, who counts the work among her all-time favorites. Brown, along with Greene, and French horn player Mike Sherman, have been present and active members for all 40 years of the orchestra's existence.

For more information



Photos courtesy of Elaine Gernux

The passion of music on the stage.

about OPRO, please visit <http://www.opro.org>; email the Board of Directors at oprowilb@gmail.com; or

simply stop by a rehearsal, held every Wednesday from 7 to 9 p.m. at Soule Road School starting Aug. 27.



A league of passionate musicians in a group photo.



The next generation of performers are also part of the group.

REVOLVING FUND

from page 1

servation purposes and the \$5,000 payment that's part of the conservation payment as part of the solar project on the landfill," Domina said. "I think what the board had discussed in the past was doing away with the \$1,000 annual appropriation because the budget's tight this year and, really, because we're getting the \$5,000 conservation payment from the solar project on the landfill."

After discussing this with the town accountant, "about how to properly account for that money that's coming in through the lease payment", Domina said the recommendation was to establish a second departmental revolving fund to collect the \$5,000.

"It would be under the control of the Conservation Commission and the advantage of having a Revolving Fund is that those funds don't require an additional vote for appropriations. So, it fulfills the purpose of that annual \$1,000 appropriation," Domina said. "Really, the point of that was to have money readily available to act quickly if opportunity arose. So, that revolving fund would still keep that option available and it would account for that \$5,000 payment. Really, how it should be."

After Geromini asked how much was in a conservation fund, it was noted as approxi-

mately \$24,000.

"So, that would provide money for a purchase, a matching towards something. Maybe you found a property that the state would give you 80% towards and this would make up the other 20 or something like that. Which, I think would still require town vote because you're buying real property the town has to agree with," Flynn said. "But at least you have money in the bank to cover your part."

After Flynn asked what kind of account the \$1,000 was in right now, Domina said he believed it was a conservation trust.

"That was the label of it," Domina said.

"And the \$5,000, sometimes, goes into the revolving fund, sometimes the trust fund," Flynn said.

"It was treated inconsistently in the past, so we're trying to treat it consistently," Domina said.

Flynn then asked this. "So, is your proposal that we establish a second revolving fund?" Flynn said.

Domina replied yes. "You'd sweep the other numbers into it," Flynn said.

"We could," Domina said. "You could, and then the \$5,000 would go there and then any year that the town votes the \$1,000, it would go in there as well?" Flynn said.

"Yes, we could write it that way," Domina said.

Domina added that the revolving fund that exists,

currently, "is really limited in its description in terms of its purposes."

"It's only intended to pay for fees from a specific project. Similar to the Planning (Board) revolving fund where an applicant pays \$2,000 to pay for a wetland study or something," Domina said. "So, it's really not the appropriate place to put the \$5,000. Really, the law is that any revenue comes into account that's not directed otherwise through local bylaw, regulation of statute needs to go to the general fund. It really needs to have a place to go or it should get swept into the general fund."

On Selectboard Member Erik Vanderleeden's question on how long that \$5,000 from the solar project would come in, Flynn said "as long as the

lease is active."

After Selectboard Member Don Davenport asked if this would become a warrant article for the upcoming Annual Town Meeting, Domina said yes as a vote would be required to establish the fund.

A warrant article to amend the general bylaw one time to make this revolving fund part of the list would also be needed.

"Now, you have that money now. Technically, we could authorize the revolving fund now because we have that opportunity. We have the right to do that inside the fiscal year, and then have it reauthorized at the town meeting," Flynn said. "If you're looking to clean up the money and put it in some account right now. You're saying, 'Look, it's not going anywhere. We can wait

the two months until Town Meeting takes action."

"Yeah, I don't think there's any urgency to it," Domina said.

Geromini recalled when the project was initially built, a "certain portion of land fell under the Conservation Commission for NHSP and for wetlands."

"So, the Ameresco, we allowed that to happen for a lands swap. So, they found another parcel of land the same size or it may have been a bit larger. I don't quite remember that," Geromini said. "So, like a replication thing?" Flynn said.

"Yeah. They gave it to the commission and I don't know because Audubon has a CR—conservation restriction—at the backyards of the new houses on Chapin.

That land has to be watched every three to five years not with just the conservation members, but with a wetland scientist to make sure that that land remains in its natural state," Geromini said. "Audubon gave us \$6,000 to cover two of those site inspections. They said it would cost about \$3,000 a piece to have the wetland scientist spend the day there walking all that property and recording everything that they find. So, I don't think that the land swap that was involved with Ameresco, I don't think that land was under a conservation restriction."

The discussion concluded when Geromini provided the board with information on the revolving account along with the guidelines.




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Fandoms assemble at Anniversary Sale



By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - Pop culture enthusiasts gathered at HasBeen Collectible Toys & Comics on March 28 for the store's Second Anniversary Sale.

The anniversary event, which ran from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., featured the first and only fan-built replica of the Optimus Prime truck from "Transformers: Age of Extinction," the G1 Bumblebee Car, the 2007 Movie Bumblebee Car, K.I.T.T. from "Knight Rider," the "A-Team" van, a "Ghostbusters" tribute car and many more.

Also, an eight-foot Optimus Prime robot and the opportunity to meet Transformers Comic Book Artist Casey W. Collier.

Owner Rik Alvarez was moved by the turnout.

"I wasn't expecting this. I thought maybe we'd get 200 people here. We had someone come all the way from Oregon here. Every time someone shouts out over the walkie-talkie, the line gets bigger. It goes to 79, it goes to 80; we're at, I think, 89 right now, people waiting in line just to come into the store," Alvarez said.



Rik Alvarez, owner of HasBeen Collectible Toys & Comics, and his buddy, Oscar—decked out in full costume as Optimus Prime—pose for a photo. The store opened in 2024.

Alvarez said Collier is one of his favorite comic book artists, and while working at Hasbro and looking at his work, he said to himself, "I got to work with this guy. I got to meet him

somehow."

"So, being the creative manager for Transformers, I reached out and I said hey. I introduced myself. 'Would you mind doing some work for



The Optimus Prime robot made an appearance at the event.

internal use for Hasbro?' and he was game and we've been friends ever since," Alvarez said.

His goal, he added, is for HasBeen to be a "destination

Please see **HASBEEN**, page 15



Here is K.I.T.T. from "Knight Rider."



The "Ghostbusters" tribute car.



LEFT: Here, we have the first and only fan-built replica of the Optimus Prime truck from "Transformers: Age of Extinction." This was organized and self-funded by the Fiduccia Family, consisting of Joe, Ania and Ryan, who also travel across the country with the replica.

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Falcons stay perfect with win over Brownies

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

AGAWAM— If the Minnechaug Regional girls' varsity lacrosse team can continue to perform like they did in the first three games of the regular season, it should be a very successful spring.

The Falcons improved to a perfect 3-0 after dispatching Valley Wheel League rival Agawam, 11-4, on a gloomy afternoon at Harmon A. Smith Field in Agawam, last Thursday.

"We've started the season off strongly and I'm hoping that we can keep it going," said Minnechaug senior tri-captain Aubrey Stachowicz, who has been a member of the girls' varsity lacrosse team since she was a freshman. "I'm very excited because this is our best start since I've been a member of the varsity team. We're hoping to win a championship title this year."

Under the direction of first-year head coach Thomas Brennan, Minnechaug Regional began the 2026 cam-

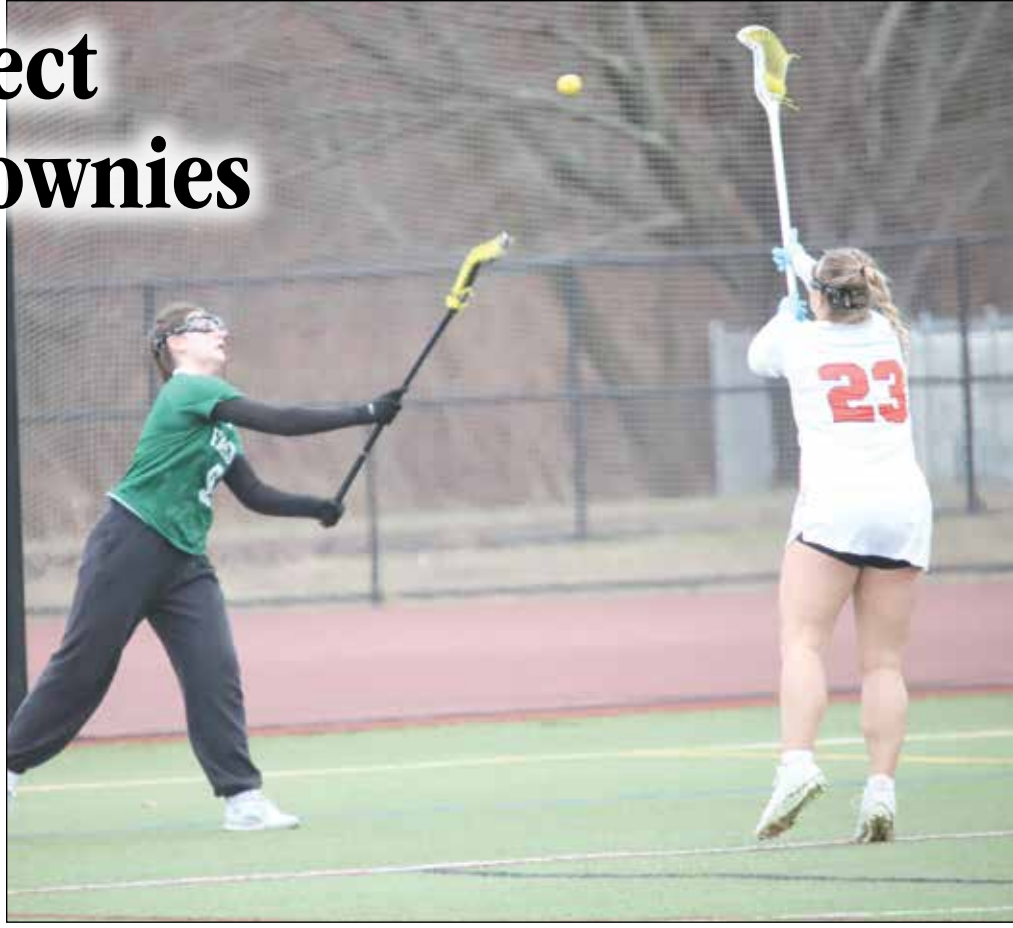
paign with home victories against Amherst (15-1), and East Longmeadow (12-10).

"I've watched these girls play lacrosse during the past couple of years, so I'm not very surprised that we're 3-0," said Brennan, who was an assistant coach a year ago. "We're still trying to put the pieces together, but I'm very proud of how well the players have performed so far this season."

Stachowicz contributed a goal and two assists in the Falcons first road game of the season. She's planning to attend the University of Alabama in the fall.

"The University of Alabama has been my dream school since I was in the sixth grade," said Stachowicz, who has only played lacrosse in high school. "They don't have a women's lacrosse team there, but I'm planning to try out for their club lacrosse team. One of my teammates will also be attending Alabama."

That will be Ava Luszc, who's also a senior tri-captain.



Ava Scatolini sends a pass away from behind the goal.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

Luszc anchors the defensive unit, along with sophomore Oksana Dobronski, sophomore Kendall Placzek, and junior Ava Scatolini.

The Falcons' other senior tri-captain is Nolah McConnell, who didn't play in the game against the Brownies

because of an injury. She's planning to play lacrosse at Worcester State University.

The Brownies (0-2), who won their first meeting against Minnechaug a year ago, suffered an 11-10 non-league loss at Tantasqua Regional in their first game of this season.

Agawam head coach Taylor DeGeorge praised the performance of senior tri-captain Lucia LaRocque defensively. "We're a very young team

Please see **FALCONS**, page 12

Hot streak continues for Chaug boys lacrosse

WILBRAHAM – The Minnechaug Regional High School boys lacrosse as they defeated both Grafton and Amherst Regional this week in order to get to 4-0 on the regular season.

The Falcons would beat Amherst 10-1 in a blowout last Friday.

Then, Grafton hosted Minnechaug with the Falcons scoring a 7-3 win thanks to three goals each in the first and second quarters.

Cam Faneuff had three goals to lead the Falcons. Kelly Balog, Liam Metzger, Jake Moore, and Liam Faneuff had single goals for Minnechaug.

Coming up, the Falcons will travel to Westfield High and then face off with Agawam on Monday, Apr. 13 at 5 p.m. at home.



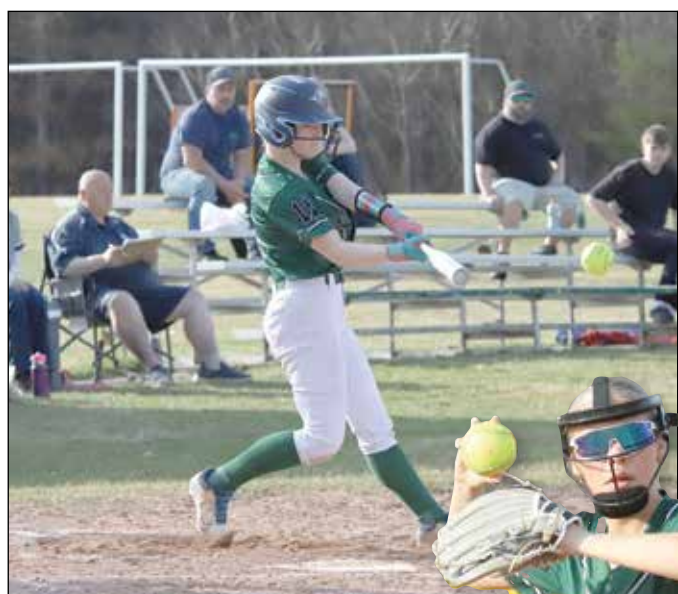
Anna Taylor looks for an opening to make a pass.



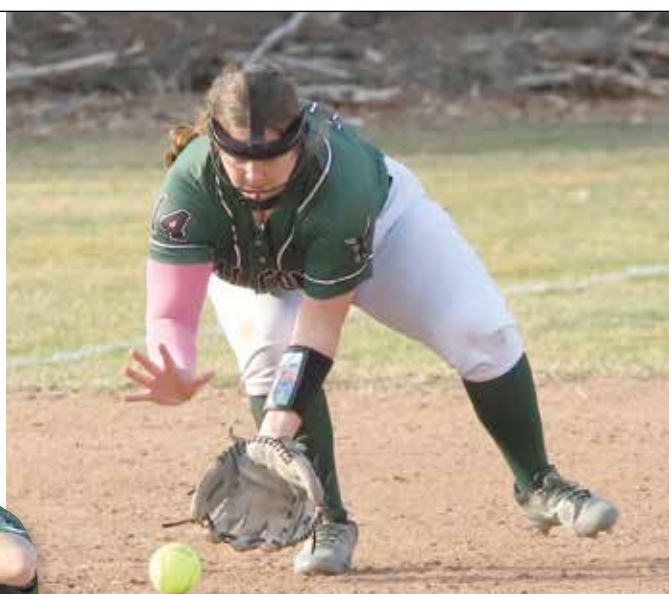
Olivia Gaudreau heads toward the Agawam goal.



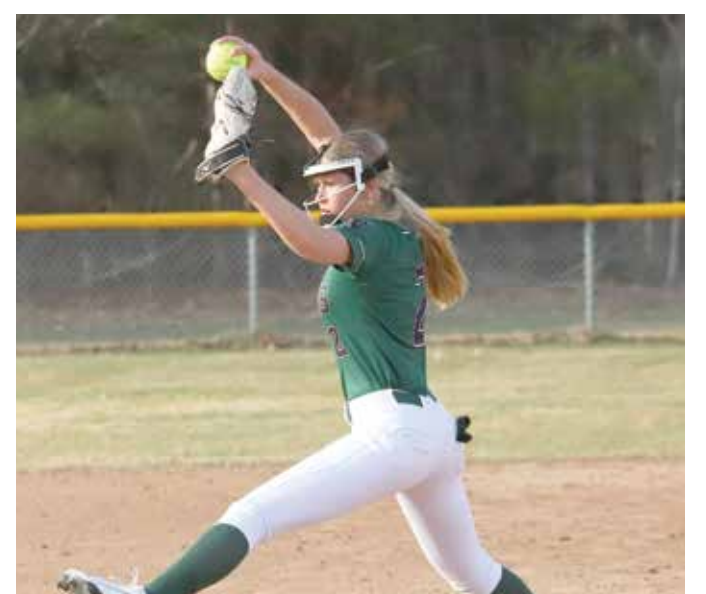
Peyton Lee is pursued by the Agawam defense.



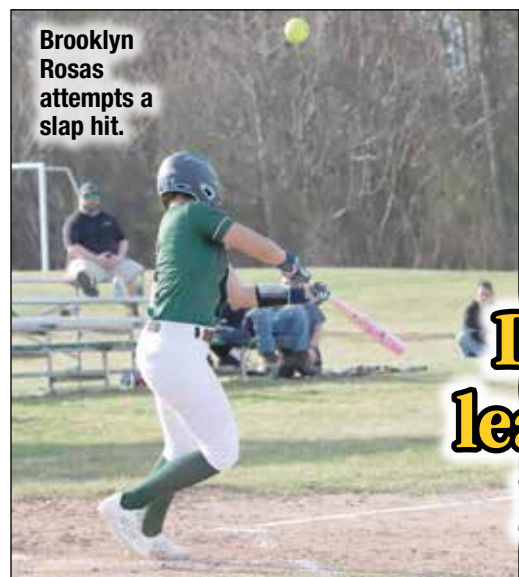
Gianna Fusco swings and makes contact.



ABOVE: Alexa Sherman cleanly fields a grounder to third base.



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Kaelyn Dionne fires a pitch from the circle.



Brooklyn Rosas attempts a slap hit.

Dionne, offense leads Falcons past Franklin Tech



Megan Pronovost hustles down the line.

WILBRAHAM – Last Tuesday afternoon Minnechaug Regional overcame a four-run deficit early to score 13 unanswered runs and defeat Franklin Tech 15-6 for the Falcons first win of the season. Kaelyn Dionne pitched and defeated the Eagles and also had three hits and two RBI. Brooklyn Rosas, Veronica Ouimet and Mylie Mittler had two hits each. Minnechaug is 1-2 to start the season.

SPORTS

Falcons close in on playoff spot with win

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (29-29-6-2) withstood multiple comeback bids from the Syracuse Crunch (39-21-3-4) en route to a 4-3 shootout win on Saturday night inside the MassMutual Center.

The T-Birds forced veteran goaltender Brandon Halverson into early work as Springfield generated two power play chances in the first period, along with 12 total shots on the target. While the Crunch held the fort shorthanded, they could not keep Springfield off the board, as Alek Kaskimaki whistled a high-rising wrist shot over Halverson's glove at 10:34 to give the T-Birds a 1-0 lead. Akil Thomas picked up a point for a third straight game on the lone assist.

At the other end, the T-Birds made life easy for their starter, Will Cranley, who needed to make just five saves in 20 minutes to begin his evening.

Syracuse had difficulty generating a high quantity of shots through the course of the evening, but they were opportunistic as Ethan Samson slipped down the slot, received a pass from Ethan Gauthier, and wristed it past

Cranley at 8:07 of the second to tie the score.

Less than two minutes later, the T-Birds' special teams rose to the occasion again, killing off 1:15 of 5-on-3 Crunch power play time en route to a perfect 4-for-4 penalty killing effort in the period.

As the period entered its closing minutes, Springfield earned its own two-man advantage opportunity, and Thomas Bordeleau took full advantage, ripping a shot past Halverson's blocker at 18:20 to send the game to the third with the T-Birds holding the 2-1 lead.

The T-Birds' power play began the third period seeking an insurance goal, but instead relented a shorthanded tally to AHL points leader Jakob Pelletier just 1:55 into the frame, which tied the score, 2-2.

However, Syracuse committed a high-sticking infraction less than half a minute later, and 10 seconds onto the ensuing power play, Dillon Dube crashed the blue paint to jam a rebound past Halverson to restore the lead, 3-2, at 2:34. Kaskimaki picked up his second assist and third point on Dube's 14th goal of the season.

The visitors still refused

to go away quietly, and Nick Abruzzese again tied matters at 8:38 when he cleaned up a bouncing puck off Cranley's pad to equalize the game, 3-3.

Neither team could solve the other through the closing minutes, setting the stage for 3-on-3 overtime. Cranley and Halverson both stood tall on four combined shots in the extra frame, and the shootout's first three rounds also produced no offensive successes.

Finally, in the top of round four, Akil Thomas calmly slipped a forehand shot through Halverson's legs, and when Dylan Duke missed the net on his attempt, Springfield secured its fourth consecutive win.

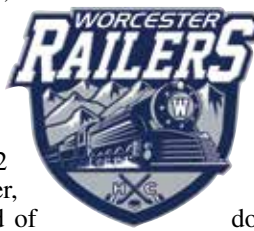
By virtue of Springfield's win and Lehigh Valley's regulation loss, the T-Birds' magic number to clinch a Calder Cup Playoff spot now sits at 6. That number decreases with every point the T-Birds earn in the standings, as well as every point the Phantoms fail to earn.

The T-Birds continue their four-game homestand on Friday, April 10 when they host the Rochester Americans inside the Thunderdome for a 7:05 p.m. puck drop.

Worcester Railers fall to Reading

WORCESTER — The Worcester Railers HC (29-30-5-2, 65 pts) fell to the

Reading Royals (35-23-7-2, 79pts) on Sunday, April 5th, with a final score of 3-2 at the DCU Center, in front of a crowd of 2,788. The Railers will take on the Greensboro Gargoyles at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, April 10th at First Horizon Coliseum in Greensboro, NC.



Reading's Hunter Johannes (1-0-1) scored 58 seconds into the first for Reading to give them an early lead. Ben Meehan (1-0-1) doubled the Royals lead with a four-on-three power-play goal ten minutes later. Worcester's Case McCarthy (1-0-1) and Reading's Yvan Mongo (1-0-1) traded goals in the second

to keep it a two-goal lead for Reading entering the third. The Royals took a quick 1-0 lead into the pivotal Sunday game. Hunter Johannes (12th) finished a two-on-one rush down the ice off a feed from Mikael Robideaux. He placed a shot perfectly over the glove of Parker Gahagen in net for Worcester for the early lead. The Royals wound up on a four-on-three man-advantage later in the period and capitalized to open their lead to 2-0. Ben Meehan (12th) received a perfect feed from Carson Golder and blew a one-timer past Gahagen for the power-play goal. Shots in the first were tied at six apiece. Worcester cut into Read-

ing's lead early in the second. Case McCarthy (4th) scored his fourth goal of the weekend on a shot from the right circle to beat Carson Bjarnason in net for the Royals. Reading retaliated and regained their two-goal lead on a bid from Yvan Mongo (4th) that made it a 3-1 lead for Reading. The Railers kept the Royals to just four shots in the second period while taking 12 themselves.

Worcester notched the only goal of the third period when Anthony Repaci scored with 8.9 seconds remaining to cut the deficit to 3-2. The ensuing faceoff was won into the Worcester zone and Worcester was unable to return the puck down-ice to score in time as they lost 3-2 in regulation to Reading.

Worcester cut into Read-



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Aubrey Stachowicz gets ready to shoot.



Sophia Kozub sends a pass out from behind the Brownies' goal.

FALCONS from page 11

this year, but Lucia controlled our defense very well," DeGeorge said. "When you play defense for more the 75 percent of the time, you're going to get tired."

Agawam's other two senior tri-captains are Makayla Rosario, and Finnola Mahoney.

Last Thursday's contest was scoreless for the first eight minutes of the opening quarter.

Minnechaug junior Sophia Kozub finally broke the ice by scoring the first of her three goals with 3:44 left in the quarter.

Junior Caelan Luszc, who assisted on Kozub's goal, netted an unassisted goal a minute later giving the Falcons a 2-0 advantage.

"Scoring the two goals in the first period gave us the momentum," Stachowicz said. "It's always very im-

portant to take the lead in every game. We do have a very strong offense this year."

With 6:04 left in the first half, the Brownies cut their deficit in half following a free position goal by Rosario.

Then three consecutive goals from Luszc, Kozub, and sophomore Peyton Lee extended the Falcons lead to 5-1 with a little more than two minutes left in the second quarter.

The duo of Kozub and Lee finished with hat-tricks, while Luszc added two goals.

The Brownies second goal was scored by sophomore Bella Santaniello, who's older sister, Hope, was an All-American soccer player in high school.

Santaniello's goal was assisted by junior Gianna Godrow.

After holding a 6-2 half-time lead, Minnechaug outscored Agawam, 4-0, during the third quarter.

The Falcons' first two goals of the second half were scored by sophomores Lillian Sergienko and Anna Taylor. Kozub scored her third goal of the match with 4:37 left in the quarter before Stachowicz's goal gave the visiting team a commanding 10-2 advantage entering the final twelve minutes of the contest.

With no shot clock, the Falcons took their time whenever they held possession of the ball during the final quarter.

Lee fired a shot into the cage with 2:37 left in regulation.

The Brownies responded with goals by Santaniello and Rosario during the last two minutes, but the outcome had already been determined at that point.

Agawam will be looking to split the rivalry series for the second consecutive year when they travel to Wilbraham on April 27.

This Week in Rec

WILBRAHAM - Spring is officially here and spring sports are underway. Softball, baseball, and lacrosse teams have hit the fields for practices developing skills and good sportsmanship. Track and field and tennis will be starting soon and the outdoor pickleball courts are open for the season. Additionally, the Wilbraham Parks and Recreation Department offering some exciting spring events including the Falcon Trail Race and Fishing Derby.

In partnership with Friends of Recreation, the 11th Annual Falcon Trail Race will be on Sunday, April 12 at McDonald Nature



Alex Soares
Recreation Clerk

Preserve. The race starts at 10 a.m. and you can pre-register online at Active.com or register the day of at the race. All proceeds from the race will be used for improvements at the Wilbraham Recreation Facilities. We are thankful for LUSO Federal Bank for sponsoring this event.

The Annual Spec Pond Fishing Derby presented by the Friends of Recreation,

Wilbraham Parks and Recreation Department, and MA Department of Fisheries and Wildlife will be on Saturday, May 16 from 9 a.m. to Noon. This is a great event for all ages. No fishing license is required, instructors will be onsite to help, and bait is provided. There is a \$2 donation per person with a \$10 maximum per family.

Whether you are out enjoying a sport, a game, or an event we hope you enjoy the outdoors and the wonderful facilities here in Wilbraham.

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Democratic Caucus in Hampden

HAMPDEN - The Democratic Party in Hampden will be holding a caucus in

the Town Hall, 85 Wilbraham Rd, Hampden, on April 10, 2025 from 5 to 7 p.m.

for the purpose of nominating candidates for the 2026 Annual Town Election.

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Love, Mom & Dad

OBITUARIES

Stanley Wilfred Witkop, Jr.

Stanley Wilfred Witkop, Jr., a lifelong resident of Hampden, passed away on March 25, 2026, at Mercy Medical Center in Springfield, surrounded by his family. He was 88 years old.



Witkop (Amy Scrutchfield) of New Gloucester, Maine, his two daughters, Christine Crombie (David) of Hampden, and Lisa Burt and her husband Gregory of Longmeadow. He also leaves his stepchildren, Jeffrey Flood (Jami Wilson) of East Longmeadow, and Laura McMahon (Stephen) of Hampden. Stanley is further survived by his brother, Irving Witkop (Beverly) of Hampden; his sisters, Geraldine Washington of Wylie, Texas and Florence McEwen (William) of Balboa Island, California, and many cousins. He leaves 8 grandchildren, Tyler Witkop of Hampden, Kathryn Witkop (Zachary) of Hampden, Emma Szumowski and Clare McMahon of Hampden, Joshua Crombie of Hampden, Nathaniel Burt of Longmeadow, and Miranda Flood of East Longmeadow. He leaves 3 great-grandchildren, Madeleine, Hudson and Hallie O'Sullivan of Hampden, and several nieces and nephews. In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his son, Bruce Witkop, and a grandson, Nicholas Crombie.

Born in Stamford Springs on March 14, 1938, he was the son of the late Stanley and Florence (Scotfield) Witkop. He was educated in the Hampden and Springfield schools. Stanley was a dedicated and hardworking man who spent over 60 years employed at Hampden Engineering Corporation in East Longmeadow. His strong work ethic and commitment were evident throughout his long career. Stanley was a member of Saint Mary's Church in Hampden and served as an assessor in Hampden for many years. Stanley was known as a man who could fix anything from tractors to motorcycles. He spent many years working on his farm, but he was passionate about his family. In later years, he enjoyed hosting his family every Sunday and turned his attention to becoming "the world's best" grandfather. He could always be counted on to fix bikes, ride-on toys, and swing sets. He gave them driving lessons and dispensed advice as they became teenagers.

All services will be private. Arrangements are entrusted to Byron Keenan Funeral Home and Cremation Tribute Center, 1858 Allen Street, Springfield, MA 01118. Memorial Contributions may be made to The Parkinson Foundation New England Chapter, Donor Services 5757 Waterford District Drive, Miami FL 33126.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Marcia (Carrere) Witkop of Hampden; his three sons, Stanley Witkop III (Tammy) of Monson, Stephen Witkop (Kathleen) of Hampden, and Peter

DEATH NOTICES

Cynthia M. Crum
Died March 31, 2026
Wilbraham Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.

Stanley W. Witkop, Jr.
Died March 25, 2026
Services were private.
Byron Keenan Funeral Home and Cremation Tribute Center

Janet P. Duncan Earle
Died March 10, 2026
No funeral will be held.

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.



A photo from the Big Art Show of Small Works in February.

Spring Art Show at Hampden Senior Center

HAMPDEN - The weather is warming and flowers are beginning to appear, a perfect time to get to the Hampden Senior Center to see what beautiful art is blooming in the Spring Show of the Scantic River Artisans. The show will be held in the Community Room of the Hampden Senior Center on April 11 and 12. Hours on Saturday are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Sunday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will be a reception with music and refreshments from Noon to 2 p.m. on Sunday, with awards presented at 2 p.m. The Senior Center is located at 104 Allen Street.

available for purchase. One of the artists whose work will be on display is Jean Zampiceni from East Longmeadow. Jean's artistic



Jean Zampiceni is one of the featured artists.

ing. Her business keeps her busy but she still finds time to paint for fun. About six years ago she joined Scantic River Artisans. She is a very active member and exhibits in most of the shows. She says she prefers oil paints because, "It's more alive." Jean took third place in oils at a recent SRA juried show. You will get to see a number of her works at the April show.

career began with a degree from Massachusetts College of Art. She returned much later to take a sign painting course. In 1986 she founded Painted Sign where she creates custom signs for commercial and private clients. While she uses vinyl and digital printing, when necessary, she still prefers hand paint-

Scantic River Artisans mission is to connect the community through diverse, dynamic, and creative experiences. SRA is dedicated to providing opportunities for local artists of all ages and skill levels to explore, develop, and market their creations. The group has over 65 members from Wilbraham, Hampden and surrounding towns.

For more information about the Scantic River Artisans visit their website at <https://www.scanticriverartists.com/>

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Health care pros
4. A person inhabiting Benin
7. One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)
10. Split pulses
11. Frozen water
12. Small constellation
13. Perennial mountain rice
15. Pick up
16. Japanese historical period
19. Suggesting the horror of death and decay
21. Unattached
23. Fishing port in SE France
24. Products for dogs
25. One point south of southeast
26. Having the skill or resources to do something
27. Involve oneself deeply

30. Immobile
34. ___ pai dong: Hong Kong food stall
35. Move quickly on foot
36. Gathered
41. A way through
45. Another name for Thor
46. Sharp dueling sword
47. The supreme commander of a fleet
50. Seasoned sausages
54. Path
55. Christian hermit
56. Ancient region of Asia Minor
57. Where wrestlers go to work
59. Roman statesman
60. Explosive
61. Licensed for Wall Street
62. Where golfers start
63. Grow old
64. Autonomic nervous system
65. No seats available

CLUES DOWN

1. A legally binding command
2. General feeling of discomfort
3. Dribble
4. Soft touch
5. South American plant
6. Clouds of gas and dust in space
7. Warm-blooded vertebrates
8. Lines created by folding
9. Strong belief
13. Senior officer
14. Adult
17. Joint entrance examination in India
18. Passports and drivers' licenses are two
20. Those who go against an accepted authority
22. One point east of northeast
27. Journalist Tarbell
28. One's mother (British)

29. Nowhere to be found
31. A way to save for old age
32. Fall behind
33. Midway between northeast and east
37. The work of a sailor
38. Mark with striae
39. Energy, style and enthusiasm
40. Sticky situation
41. Monetary units of Spain
42. Three-banded armadillo
43. Chooses
44. More disreputable
47. Defensive nuclear weapon
48. "The Partridge Family" actress Susan
49. Livestock owners assn. in Spain
51. Duplicating machine (abbr.)
52. OJ trial judge
53. Politician
58. Airborne (abbr.)

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Decks, porches, repair service, roofing and siding contractor.
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HELP WANTED

CANNABIS CULTIVATION AND PRODUCT MANUFACTURING FACILITY (HOLYOKE)
Holyoke Wilds, a licensed cannabis cultivation facility in Holyoke, MA, is seeking reliable individuals for general cultivation and product manufacturing positions. Duties include assisting with plant care, trimming, cleaning, product manufacturing and other general tasks within the facility.
Start Date: Within the next few weeks to months
Pay: Varies based on experience. Ranges from \$16 to \$20 per hour.
Requirements: Applicants must be 21 or older and eligible to work in the United States. Background checks are required under state cannabis regulations.
Interested candidates should email **holyokewilds9@gmail.com** with their contact information and brief work history.

Holyoke Wilds is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or veteran status.

SEASONAL FACILITIES CREW
wanted at Norcross Wildlife Foundation.
For a full job description, please visit **www.norcrosswildlife.org** or email **info@norcrosswildlife.org**

The Town of North Brookfield is looking for a **part-time Program Assistant** for the Council on Aging. Please submit a resume with a letter of interest to the **Selectmen's Office, 215 Main St., North Brookfield, MA 01535**; or by email to **selectmen@northbrookfield.net**.

WANT TO WORK THIS SUMMER part or full-time? Help wanted for assisting in landscape maintenance and installation projects. Liberty Orchards Landscape, **413-283-6408**.

REAL ESTATE

FOR RENT
AGAWAM APT. FOR RENT. 2 bed, 2 bath, gas heat, private basement washer/dryer hookup. \$1600 mo. No utilities. No pets. Call **413-789-6206**.

LAND WANTED

Seeking 8-20 peaceful acres in Central MA for pet memorial sanctuary. Especially interested in lease-option, phased sale, or seller financing. Respectful, serious inquiry. Patrick | **508-735-3232** | **founder@rainbow-meadow.org**

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MAIL TO: Classifieds, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069 DEADLINES: **FRIDAY AT NOON**
or call: 413-283-8393

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PUBLIC NOTICES



Turley photos by Kristin Rivers

Casey W. Collier, comic book artist for Transformers comics, meets with fans.

HAS BEEN from page 10

event.”

“I definitely need a bigger spot. Long-term, I’d love to continue writing books. I’ve written several books on Transformers. I have another book coming out in September. The end goal is to open a museum: a toy museum,” Alvarez said. “I like that people can drive by and see the cars and they go, ‘What’s that?’ It brings attention to the store and it creates buzz in the community. So, even if people aren’t here, someone will tell them about it and they’ll go, ‘You know, I got to go down there and check it out.’”

Coller, who’s been a comic book artist since 2008, was excited to meet Transformers fans and show off his artwork.

“It’s a mix of artwork that I’ve done for IDW Transformers comic books and some stuff, like this one here I just did for fun. ‘The Usual Suspects’ homage poster featuring Transformers instead of humans,” Coller said. “So, it’s all just cool Transformer artwork that people usually appreciate for one reason or another.”

Colle always liked drawing and loved comic books, sharing fans enjoyed the “The Killing Joke” homage poster at the event, which was also his first official job.

“I hoped to be a comic book artist as a job right out of high school and that didn’t quite work out, but a little while later, I got a decent-enough portfolio and I always loved Transformers when I was a kid too, so I made a portfolio of Transformers work. I got involved in the online forums for the comic book company, which their editors would actually go on to and look at people’s work,” Coller said. “I entered a contest on the forums, which I wound up winning an art contest and that got my work directly to the chief



John Dowd, in full Mandalorian garb, poses with his 1986 DMC DeLorean.

editor, and not too long after that, they offered me my first job.”

Coller expressed his gratitude to everyone who supports his work.

“I don’t like to say that I have fans, but I like that people appreciate the work that I do and it’s really cool. Transformers fans are a cool community. Everybody seems very supportive of each other,” Coller said. “Any fandom can have some clashes here and there, but for the most part, it’s a very inclusive fandom. It’s just awesome to be a part of.”

SteelBeltedRadials, a TikTok, did other events with Alvarez at the store and was there to take videos, noting the used Transformers she hadn’t seen before.

“I was really excited about seeing the selection. Also, it’s just a really lovely collectibles shop that has a great and very welcoming environment. As a queer woman, I never felt uncomfortable being in this shop and I really appreciate it,” she said.

Her TikTok account, she explained, focuses on media analysis for Transformers content and reviews of knockoff figures.

“Because times are tough. People’s budgets are strapped and a lot of knockoff figures are much cheaper than the originals, but also they can have some quality issues, and so I make them to give people a more informed decision

about their purchases so that they don’t end up wasting their money,” she said. “And, it’s really important to me to better the fandom, to be a positive force in the fandom and then, also, to offer resources and help other people as best that I can.”

Her favorite Transformer is Knock Out from Transformers Prime, with Optimus Prime a close second.

She emphasized how “fandom is an amazing place that can bring a lot of people together.”

“It’s a wonderful community, and I think, right now more than ever, community is such a valuable and powerful thing,” she said.

Alvarez’s message was this.

“Thank you for all of the support from my regulars, from the new people. Has-Been is a place where we accept everyone. All are welcomed. We are super friendly and we love hearing where people are from and what they collect and I love telling stories about my time at Hasbro working on Transformers and G.I. Joe,” Alvarez said. “Collecting and being a part of pop culture, you’re going to meet people from all walks of life. You’re going to meet people from all over the country, the planet and we may be very different and believe very different things, but we all share a love for collecting and nostalgia and it’s a very accepting community.”

SALE OF MOTOR VEHICLES

This ad is pursuant to MA Gen. Law Ch.255, Sec. 39A as of April 24, 2026 the following motor vehicles will be for sale to satisfy a garage keepers lien:

2007 Ford Edge
VIN: 2FMDK48C27BB34174
LKO: Eliel Rodriquez
215 White St.
Springfield, MA 01108

1997 Fleetwood Bounder
VIN: 3FCM53G5VJA05173
LKO: Noemi Souza
222 Allen St.
Springfield MA 01105

Wayman Rainey
126 Valley Rd.
Springfield MA 01119

R & S Assoc. Inc
PO Box 543
Wilbraham MA 01095
413-596-4374
04/9, 04/16, 04/23/2026

**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.
HD26P0665EA
Estate of:
Raymond A. Recor
Date of Death: 01/21/2026
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 **Mari E. Tarpinian of Wilbraham, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition. The Petitioner requests that **Mari E. Tarpinian of Wilbraham, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 04/27/2026. 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 CODE (MUPC)
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. Stoumire**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: March 30, 2026
Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
04/09/2026

Town of Hampden Notice of Public Hearing
The Hampden Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, April 22, 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 of the Hampden Planning Board. Published in the Wilbraham-Hampden Times on April 2 and 9, 2026.
04/02, 04/09/2026

INVITATION TO BID TOWN OF WILBRAHAM WILBRAHAM SEWER PIPE LINING SERVICES

The Town of Wilbraham invites sealed bids for the contract entitled **“WILBRAHAM SEWER PIPE LINING SERVICES”** until 1:00 PM on Friday April 24, 2026 at the Engineering Department, Town Office Building, 240 Springfield Street, Wilbraham, MA 01095 where they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids must be enclosed in a sealed envelope plainly and legibly entitled **“WILBRAHAM SEWER PIPE LINING SERVICES”**. The project consists of the installation of approximately 142 linear feet of Cured-In-Place-Pipe (CIPP) lining of 8-inch asbestos concrete (AC) gravity sewer pipe.

Bids shall be accompanied by a bid deposit in the amount of 5% of the bid price. The bid deposit must be in the form of a Bid Bond, a Certified Check, or a Treasurer’s or Cashier’s Check issued by a responsible Bank or Trust Company having office in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Bid Deposit shall be made payable to the Town of Wilbraham.

Prevailing State Minimum Wage Rates must be complied with as per MGL Ch 149 section 26-27d. These wage rates are contained within the contract documents.

Bidders must provide with their bid a signed “Contractors Certification” found in the Invitation to Bid, which certifies Labor and Harmony, OSHA training, Non-Collusion, Non-Discrimination and Tax Certifications.

The Invitation to Bid documents will be available beginning on Wednesday April 8, 2026 at 9:00a.m. via email to **Tonya Capparello** at **DPW@wilbraham-ma.gov**.

The lowest qualified responsible bidder shall be awarded the contract. The Town reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive informalities, to advertise for new proposals, as deemed in the, interest of the Town.

Tonya L. Capparello, P.E.
Director of Public Works
04/09/2026

INVITATION TO BID TOWN OF WILBRAHAM 240 Springfield Street, Wilbraham, MA 01095 SPRINGFIELD STREET AT STONY HILL ROAD INTERSECTION & SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS

The Town of Wilbraham, Massachusetts invites sealed bids for **“Springfield Street at Stony Hill Road Intersection & Sidewalk Improvements”**, in accordance with the Contract Documents prepared by **BETA Group, Inc., Consulting Engineers**, 315 Norwood Park South, Norwood, Massachusetts, 02062. The Select Board will receive sealed bids until 1:00 PM on Thursday April 30, 2026 at the Engineering Department, Town Office Building, 240 Springfield Street, Wilbraham, MA 01095 where they will be publicly opened and read aloud.

Bidders must provide with their bids a signed forms found in the Bid Proposal, which certifies the Labor Harmony and OSHA training, Non-Collusion, Non-Discrimination and Tax Certifications.

To bid on this project, Contractors must be prequalified in accordance with 720 CMR 5.00. MassDOT prequalification of contractors with the class of work as, **“Highway-Construction”**, for the project with an estimated total value of **\$1,400,000**.

Bidders must email **Tonya Capparello** at **DPW@wilbraham-ma.gov** to obtain digital copies of the documents. Documents will be available April 8, 2026, after 9 a.m.

All bids shall be submitted to the Wilbraham Engineering Department Office at 240 Springfield St, Wilbraham, MA 01095 prior to **Thursday, April 30, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.**

There will be no pre-bid conference.
Bids shall be accompanied

by a bid deposit in the amount of 5% of the bid price. The bid deposit must be in the form of a Bid Bond, a Certified Check, or a Treasurer’s or Cashier’s Check issued by a responsible Bank or Trust Company having office in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Bid Deposit shall be made payable to the Town of Wilbraham.

Complete instructions for filing Bids are included in the Instructions to Bidders.

Minimum Wage Rates as determined by the Commissioner of Department of Workforce Development under the provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 149, Section 26 to 270, as amended, apply to this project. It is the responsibility of the Contractor, before bid opening, to request if necessary, any additional information on Minimum Wage Rates for those tradespeople who may be employed for the proposed work under this Contract.

The Town reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive informalities, to advertise for new proposals, as deemed in the interest of the Town.

Tonya L. Capparello, P.E.
Director of Public Works
04/09/2026

ADVERTISEMENT

The **Wilbraham** Housing Authority, the Awarding Authority, invites sealed bids from Contractors for the Housing Type: **Elderly 667-1** Development for the Wilbraham Housing Authority in Wilbraham Massachusetts, in accordance with the documents prepared by **N3 Architecture, Inc.**

The Project consists of: **Interior renovations of one apartment unit at 5 Miles Morgan Court, Wilbraham, MA**

The work is estimated to cost **\$53,471**

Bids are subject to M.G.L. c.149 §44A-J & to minimum wage rates as required by M.G.L. c.149 §§26 to 27H inclusive.

General Bids will be received until **2:00 pm, Wednesday, April 22, 2026** and publicly opened, forthwith.

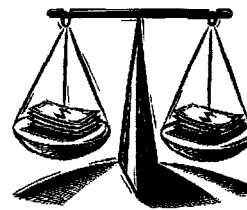
This project is being Electronically Bid (E-Bid). All bids shall be prepared and submitted online at **Projectdog.com** and received no later than the date & time specified above. Hard copy bids will not be accepted by the Awarding Authority. For assistance, contact **Projectdog, Inc.** at 978.499.9014.

General bids shall be accompanied by a bid deposit that is not less than five (5%) of the greatest possible bid amount (considering all alternates) and made payable to the Wilbraham Housing Authority.

Bid Forms and Contract Documents will be available in electronic form and without cost or charge at **Projectdog.com**, project code **873508**, beginning Wednesday, April 1, 2026. Persons desiring hard copies of the documents shall be solely responsible for all printing costs.

The job site and/or existing building will be available for inspection between 9:00 A.M. and 9:30 A.M. on Wednesday, April 8, 2026.

For an appointment call **Tricia Bouchie** (413) 543-1700.
04/09/2026



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

Job Connection

HELPING YOU FIND HELP

Highway Dept. Skilled Laborer / Truck Driver

The Town of New Braintree Highway Dept. is seeking qualified applicants for the immediate full-time position of Skilled Laborer / Truck Driver. Applicants must have a valid Massachusetts Driver’s License, Class B (CDL) with DOT Medical Examination Certification and a Hoisting Engineer License Class 2B with DOT Medical Examination Certification. Interested applicants should submit a letter of interest and an employment application to: Highway Department, 110 West Brookfield Road, New Braintree MA 01531.

Highway Dept. Seasonal Laborer

The Town of New Braintree is seeking a qualified candidate to perform seasonal work in the maintenance of town commons, roadways, grounds and cemeteries. Applicants must have a valid Massachusetts Driver’s License (Class D). This is a seasonal position for 20 hours per week with a flexible schedule, May through October. Interested applicants should submit a letter of interest and employment application to: Highway Department, 110 West Brookfield Road, New Braintree MA 01531.

For further information, please contact Richard Ayer, Highway Superintendent, at 508-867-2451, or via email at Highway@newbraintree.gov.

A.A./E.O.E.



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