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## School Committee discusses reductions

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - The School Committee discussed reductions in force and whether to notice additional staff—contingent upon the outcome of Annual Town Meeting—during their April 2 meeting.

Superintendent Dr. John Provost explained he met with the unions earlier that week to prepare the reduction in force notices based on the committee's approved budget.

The operating budget is \$59,848,182, inclusive of the debt service payment for Minnechaug Regional High School of \$1,910,150 for FY27 to HWRSD. The assessments are as follows: Hampden at \$9,901,966 and Wilbraham at \$33,094,675.

This budget was approved at the March 17 budget roundtable.

Along with identifying the staff who would be affected by the layoffs, Provost said a timeline was discussed—with respect to Unit A—with the language saying “30 days prior to the date of implementation.”

Please see **REDUCTIONS**, page 9



The ERC5 Chamber of Commerce's Senior Service Alliance held a panel discussion on technology for seniors at the Wilbraham Senior Center on April 10.

## Senior Service Alliance presents 'Technology for Seniors'

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
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WILBRAHAM - The East of the River Five Town Chamber of Commerce's Senior Service Alliance hosted a “Technology for Seniors” panel event at the senior center on April 10.

The panelists were Maura Lessard, RN, BSN, CCM, CDP, nurse advocate and Board Certified Case Manager, Aging Lifecare Advanced Profession & Certified Dementia Practitioner at Nurse Advocates LLC, Attorney David Carl-

son, Mary-Anne Schelb, director of Business Development, Western MA Market at JGS Lifecare, Katie Krupka, certified senior advisor at Assisted Living Locators, and Kimberly O'Connor, community liaison at Brookhaven Hospice.

Throughout the event, the group provided information on the services they provide in their specific fields and industries, how to avoid scams, power of attorney and health proxies, hospice care, how technology can help support seniors, such as Medical Alert systems, home health care, uti-

lizing Smart Home systems like Alexa, healthcare advocates and more.

Schelb said the Senior Service Alliance, through the chamber, “is a resource for the community in order to learn more about how to navigate the elder care process.”

“Today, in particular, was about technology, how it can be used, how it can protect the seniors and the trouble with it as far as scams are concerned,” Schelb said.

Krupka also emphasized education.

“The idea behind this

is to just educate people and let them know what is available out there. The ever-changing technology, but the ever-changing needs in general. So, we're here to kind of continue to do this monthly or every other month at different local senior centers to be able to provide this information out and spread awareness,” Krupka said.

O'Connor said an event like this shows the need, adding the alliance “is committed to ensuring that se-

Please see **TECHNOLOGY**, page 9

## Earth Day Eco Expo takes place April 25

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
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HAMPDEN - The library's Annual Earth Day Eco Expo will be taking place at the new town hall on Wilbraham Road from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on April 25.

Director Ellen Moriarty shared there's a lot to look forward to this year from useful recycling and gardening tips, educational eco-games for all ages to eco-friendly giveaways “to help the family live more sustainably” and many more.



Photo courtesy of Ellen Moriarty  
Hampden Free Public Library Director Ellen Moriarty, dressed as the Lorax, with a baby goat at last year's Earth Day Eco Expo event.

“This is your opportunity to ‘talk trash’ with industry professionals and local eco-enthusiasts. We'll cover all things sustainability including swapping single-use items for zero waste, recycling food scraps, propagating plants and more. You won't want to miss it!” Moriarty said.

Moriarty explained the highlights include the Bag Share Sewing Workshop with Talia, Captain Kindness with his kindness coins and making birdhouses, a recycled book hedgehog craft in the Sheila R. Flynn Teen Center, a display of the solar oven and solar generator—along with demonstrations— and the Buy Nothing Junk in the Trunk event.

“Those cars that pre-signed up will be along the side of the parking lot where the gazebo is and will open their trunk and you can swap or take or donate items to give away or things that you might be looking for,” Moriarty said.

For town departments, Moriarty said they include the Conservation Commission in the community room, the fire department, Mass Audubon with stick bugs, Parks & Rec who will also have information on summer camps, the Hampden Transfer Station and more.

Also, local vendors such as Mindy Meeker providing free massages, Kelly's Kreations, Honey Bear Tea, Richard Muise Woodwork who will also do caricatures this year, Cimicchi Olive Oil—who will also sell soaps and lotion—Farmer Clark's, Cloverbook Farm with baby goats, the local Girl Scouts, and the Friends of the Hampden Free Public Library with their Book Sale.

“Everyone can donate their lightly-used books, hardcover and soft cover to the library. When the library's

Please see **EARTH DAY**, page 10

## Selectboard discusses regional agreement update

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
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HAMPDEN - The Selectboard discussed a regional agreement update during its April 6 meeting.

Selectboard Member Don Davenport explained the

Planning Committee met the week before and what it entailed.

“The whole thing is around the middle school and how much money, the capital. We have children there. They talk about doing a cap saying, ‘Okay, we'll be able to spend x number of dollars per year

to do whatever maintenance, whatever is needed,” Davenport said. “Would you guys go along with that? I said I would have to check with the board. In Nick's memo, you'll see that he said like a million dollars over six years, so our share would be 20% of that million dollars. Divided

by six years.”

Davenport said Superintendent Dr. John Provost's main concern was about “they weren't intending to do a lot of expensive repairs because they're in the core program.”

“But, the question is that the core program may say, ‘Not this year. You got to ap-

ply again next year.’ and that may go on for three or four years before that happens, so that's the issue there,” Davenport said. “But, I think the people in both—in Wilbraham and Hampden—have to realize that that middle school

Please see **UPDATE**, page 8

## Changes in effect for Wilbraham Hill Climb

By Ben Hernandez  
Staff Writer

WILBRAHAM - Police Chief Edward Lennon outlined the operating plans for the upcoming 2026 Hill Climb with the Select Board on April 6.

The event, which will take place on May 9, is an annual car show, craft show and festival complete with food trucks and DJs. The main attraction, a one mile vintage car race taking place on Wilbraham Mountain, is a reenactment of a historic event in 1908 that showcased the future of the

automobile industry within the town.

All cars participating in the event must predate the 1970s and must pass technical inspection prior to the race.

“It's essentially the same as it has been all the other years,” Lennon said when outlining the plans. “I'll just note a couple of changes. The handicap parking's now going to be behind the old bank at 455 Main Street. It's now under the control of Wilbraham-Monson Academy and they are allowing it.”

Please see **HILL CLIMB**, page 3

## 'Six Pillars of Brain Health' session hosted at Wilbraham Library

By Natalie Proulx  
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - On Monday, April 6, the library hosted a session about the Six Pillars of Brain Health, presented by volunteer Steve Lanning from AARP or the American Association of Retired Persons.

This interactive lecture aimed to inform anyone on the importance of brain health in regards to aging, actionable steps to better brain health and tips to integrate the six pillars into everyday life.

The six pillars of brain health, as described by Lanning as a “tool-kit” of sorts, are social engagement, engaging your brain, managing your stress, ongoing exercise, restorative sleep, and eating right.

“I don't think you can separate the six pillars,” Lanning said.

Brain health influences every aspect of life in your everyday thinking and adaptation. All working coincidentally with each other, Lanning described incorporating the six pillars in your life as, “adding life to your years not just years to your



Turley photo by Natalie Proulx

The AARP presentation that was given by volunteer Steve Lanning.

life.”

The first pillar, social engagement, is arguably one of the most important pillars in society. Though sometimes we may not be able to get together in person, we have other options to stay connected and develop our engagement.

Lanning explained how having good social networks and minimal isolation add more meaning and independence to our lives, allowing for us to thrive in community and individually.

Lanning next brought up a study from AARP's 2020 study of how isolation

can lead to loneliness, and even though one may be introverted, they still need physical social engagement because it helps to expand our minds through noticing body language, facial cues, shift in tone, and so much more.

Alongside that, Lanning mentioned how face to face conversation, rather than over the phone interactions, is really effective for memory retention.

The next pillar, engaging your brain, is the role

Please see **BRAIN**, page 15



Turley photo by Patricia Sullivan

A shot of a car from last year's Wilbraham Hill Climb.

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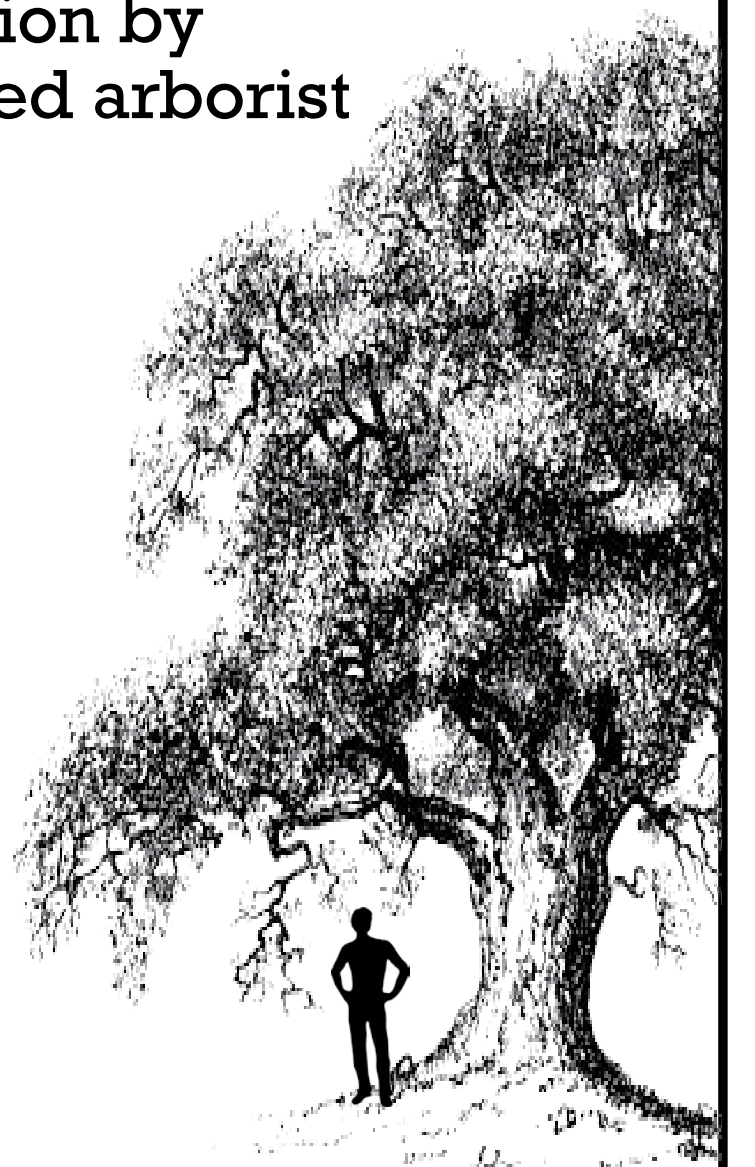


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# Keep Wilbraham Beautiful Earth Day Community Clean-Up takes place May 2

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
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WILBRAHAM - The Fourth Annual Keep Wilbraham Beautiful Earth Day Community Clean-Up will be taking place on Saturday, May 2 at Memorial School from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Keep Wilbraham Beautiful Committee Chairperson Megan Harrigan was joined by Tiffany Pryor, one of the newer committee members, to share what the community can expect from this year's event.

"Basically, we're putting together groups that can be assigned to different areas around town to pick up trash. We're hoping that the community will kind of come together and help make this town beautiful again," Pryor said. "A lot of times after the snow melts, a lot of the trash shows up on the sides of the roads and so, we just to get the town looking as best as possible."

Pryor also expressed excitement for the event, sharing she learned about it through Harrigan on Facebook and wanted to learn more.

"I love living in Wilbraham. There's a sense of pride being a resident here and it's such a beautiful town," Pryor said. "Keeping the town beautiful is always on top of



my mind. Whenever I go anywhere I try to pick up trash, whether it's the beach or just on a walk or whatever."

Harrigan was thankful for the community's continued support.

"We have a lot of support from the Wilbraham Police Department and the DPW and that because it's our fourth year going, it's just been seamless and a continuation of what we've done in the past, and those relationships continue to grow and get stronger, so I feel like the town really has our back, which is great," Harrigan said. "All of the permits were approved and we're ready to rock and roll this year."

On the participation and volunteers, she said there was no limit and "the more the

merrier."

"I do want to say our big thank you to our largest sponsor who has our back once again, USA Waste Management. Has been phenomenal with access to the dumpster and anything else that we need. So, thank you for sponsoring again," Harrigan said.

Harrigan explained that the event, which is typically held at Fountain Park, is at Memorial School this year due to other events.

"Memorial School was happy to help us out, so it's a great location, a good building and during the event, there will be tours of Memorial because I think there are interested members of the community that haven't seen it or been through it, so the Rec Department and Bryan Litz

is working with us to give us that access as well," Harrigan said.

Harrigan added she was appreciative and humbled by the community getting involved and their care for the town.

"It's amazing to be able to start the year off with less concerns and know that this is going to continue to roll out and continue to improve our town in the future, and every year, if we get more and more support, there's more that we can do," Harrigan said. "We planted a tree last year in honor of the Keep Wilbraham Beautiful, but if we were to continue to grow, I can see us going into further projects and further development of a park, a cleanup or adding a bench or adding a birdhouse somewhere."

Pryor shared she took part in the event for the first time last year.

"It's really exciting to be part of the Planning Committee and helping to see this to fruition," Pryor said.

The Care metal art installation, which debuted last year, will also be back.

"It has been emptied and it is ready to be filled again this year, so we're going to fill it with nips to kind of make an

Please see **CLEAN**, page 8

## HILL CLIMB from page 1

The Wilbraham Public Library will be closed on the day of the event, which will allow vendor parking and "some overflow" for those seeking additional parking.

"Crane Park will be an alternate location for food trucks in case of rain," Lennon said. "That was an issue last year, which right at the end we had a rain event and we didn't know what we were going to do, but it ended up working out. This year, that contingency has been looked into."

Food trucks will be allowed to set up at the park one day before the event.

"What we found is the morning of, it's kind of like a fire drill trying to get everybody in and trying to get everybody placed was kind of tough. So, doing it the day before we think is going to really streamline the operation," Lennon said.

The starting and finish lines, he added, are going to be moved closer to Main Street, a decision to allow the participating vehicles "more time to end before they get to the top of the hill."

An additional feature new to this year will be an automat-

ed signal that will inform the racers when they reach the finish line. It will "set something up right in front of them that they've reached the finish line and that they can obviously stop."

"Also, there's going to be a slow-moving vehicle parade at 8 a.m.," Lennon said. "Basically, all the vehicles are going to slowly go up and just so that everybody can see them."

The parade, also, will be "just going up the hill" and will come back around "normally as if they were racing."

"But it's going to be just kind of an event where everybody can see all the cars," Lennon said. "My understanding is there's going to be some that aren't racing that will be in that parade just because they're not really race vehicles, but they're show vehicles that they're going to bring up in the morning. So those are essentially the changes. Other than that, it's going to be the same as other years."

After the Select Board approved the 2026 Hill Climb Operations Plans, Lennon next presented the proposed parking bans and road closure ban.

"It's the same one that we've proposed each year,"

Lennon said.

The parking ban will be in place on May 9 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. for the following streets.

- 1 Main Street between Tinkham Road and Wright Place Street
  - 2 Springfield Street between Main Street and Ripley Street
  - 3 Burt Lane
  - 4 Crane Park Drive
  - 5 Bolles Road
  - 6 Pomeroy Street
  - 7 Hunting Lane
  - 8 Miles Morgan Court
  - 9 Willow Brook Lane
  - 10 Woodland Dell Road
  - 11 Brookmont Drive between Main Street and Hilltop Drive
  - Mountain Road between Main Street and 509 Mountain Road
  - 13 Ridge Road between Monson Road and 200 feet north of Ridge Road
  - 14 Peak Road between Monson Road and 200 feet south of Peak Road
  - 15 Monson Road between Main Street and Ridge Road
- After this was approved, Vice Chair Marc Ducey next read these.
- "On Saturday 5/9/2026, between 7 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.,

the northbound lane of Main Street shall be closed to traffic between Tinkham Road and Faculty Street. Monson Road between Main Street and Ridge Road will also be closed to traffic due to the Hill Climb event," Ducey said.

After a clarification question from Chair Michael Squindo regarding a portion of Main Street open for the market being detoured through the high school, Lennon elaborated.

"The short answer is no, but I'll explain it. Essentially, Main Street Southbound is open all the way through the event, so it is open for that. If vehicles that are coming northbound on Main Street, once they reach Tinkham Road, they have to go westbound on Tinkham. They would have to cut through the parking lot and it becomes southbound again," Lennon said.

Signs will be put up throughout the area to inform traffic of the changes, which is another measure that's been added for this year.

Lennon clarified that though the traffic flow will be the same from last year, the new signage will "make it much clearer."

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# OPRO artists reflect on 40 years

By Patricia Sullivan  
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - The Old Post Road Orchestra will mark the end of its 40th season of making music with a free gala concert featuring Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's "Scheherazade" at Minnechaug Regional High School at 7:30 pm on Friday, April 17.

The evening will also include a selection from Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4, known for its dramatic opening fanfare showcasing brass and woodwinds. The anniversary concert will include a pre-concert reception, appearances by OPRO alumni, and more anniversary surprises.

"Scheherazade," inspired by the tales of the Arabian Nights, is one of OPRO founder's Malita Brown's favorite pieces.

Brown, a cellist, started the orchestra in 1986 after moving to Western Massachusetts from Albuquerque, New Mexico. Although people told her it couldn't be done, she rallied enough local musicians to form an ensemble they named the Old Post Road Orchestra for the historic route that runs through the region.

40 years later, Brown says, "Now it's a force going on its own with so many dedicated people. I'm feeling that I did something worthwhile that's going to last after I'm gone."

Brown still plays with the group as do two other original participants—French horn player Mike Sherman and principal tuba player Tom Greene.

OPRO now has between 45 and 50 musicians that come from all over Western Massachusetts with a few players traveling from Con-

necticut and even Rhode Island. The group is multi-generational—with participants ranging in age from 8 to over 100.

OPRO performs six concerts a year—playing pops, jazz, show tunes, orchestral, and classical music—at various local venues, including regular appearances at St. Cecilia's Church in Wilbraham, Minnechaug Regional High School and Monson's Memorial Hall.

At Brown's urging, violinist Elaine Gernux joined OPRO in 1992 and now volunteers as its "orchestra mother."

She serves on the board of directors, leads fundraising, and secures venues for performances, among other tasks.

"I really enjoy the camaraderie of the group," Gernux said. "So many people have been with us for so long that they have become like family."

The local community has been very supportive of the orchestra, Gernux added. Support comes from town cultural councils, longtime donors, and steady advertisers.

The April 17 concert is sponsored by Country Bank and the Wilbraham Cultural Council, which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

OPRO has worked with several different directors over its 40-year span, starting with Ray Drury, who helped the group get off the ground. Subsequent conductors included Paul Coffil, Neal Schermerhorn, and Juli E. Sansoucy. Alexandria Black took up the baton in 2021 after the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Our different conductors color who the orchestra is at

that time," Gernux said. "We are a reflection of what they choose for the repertoire and how they interact with the orchestra and the audience. Each conductor brings something different to the table."

She also offered praise to Black.

"Lexie Black, is taking us forward in quantum leaps," Gernux said. "Her knowledge of music is over the top. We have evolved into more mature musicianship. She challenges us and we seem to rise to the challenge."

Denise Sittler, a retired strings teacher from Westfield, joined OPRO a year ago and also enjoys working with Black.

"She is absolutely wonderful and encouraging," Sittler said.

She also reflected on her time with OPRO.

"The orchestra is a lot of fun and we get a lot of work done at the same time," Sittler continues. "It's a community orchestra, but we all take it seriously."

Deb Alm has been playing the clarinet with OPRO for 25 years.

"It has provided a really foundational opportunity to both expand my repertoire and expand my abilities as a very amateur musician," Alm said.

Alm looks forward to playing "Scheherazade" at the upcoming concert.

"I have always loved the music and the story behind it. Playing 'Scheherazade' has been a challenge and it's nice to see this orchestra rise to the challenge. Our conductor is very good to us and has a wealth of musicality that she shares with us."

Gernux concluded: "I'm proud of the group. What we have been able to do with amateur musicians is amazing.



Five OPRO trombone players are ready for an outdoor concert.



Photos courtesy of Elaine Gernux

String players practice for a performance.

We hope to be around for many more years."

The April 17 OPRO anniversary gala concert at Minnechaug Regional High School is free and open to the public. Donations are accepted.

For more information about OPRO, email the Board of Directors at [oprowilb@gmail.com](mailto:oprowilb@gmail.com); or stop by a rehearsal, held every Wednesday from 7 to 9 p.m. at Soule Road School.



OPRO members at a holiday concert.



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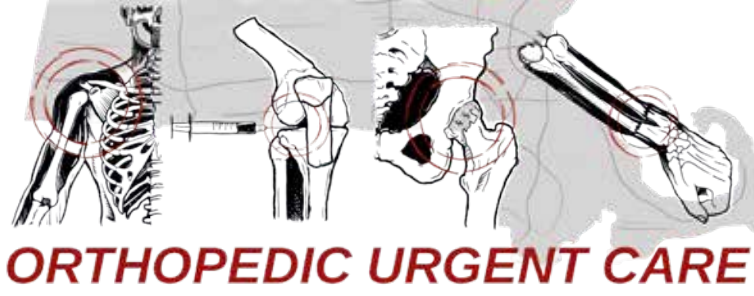
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## VIEWPOINTS

## SOCIAL SECURITY

## Matters

By Russell Gloor

## I'll be 65 soon and am working. Must I enroll in Medicare?

## Dear Rusty:

I will be 65 in October and I am working full-time. My goal is to work until age 67, which is my Full Retirement Age or until age 70.

I heard I have to apply for Medicare Part A only. Is this true or will I be penalized? And do I have to go to the Social Security office to do this or can I do it online? And then will they be still giving me my Medicare through the next five years of working or do I have to pay for something? I will have my own healthcare insurance. Thank you for your help.

Signed: Confused

## Dear Confused:

There are two things you should be aware of:

You do not need to claim Social Security benefits when you enroll in Medicare

You do not need to enroll in Medicare at age 65 if you have "creditable" healthcare coverage from your employer, "creditable" is a group plan with at least 20 participants.

Thus, it is perfectly okay for you to delay taking your Social Security benefits until age 67 (your SS full retirement age) or even until age 70 when you will get the maximum SS benefit you are entitled to. And if you now have "creditable" healthcare coverage from your employer, you can delay enrolling in Medicare until such time as your employer's healthcare coverage ends.

When you stop working, you will enter a Medicare Special Enrollment Period, during which you can enroll in Medicare without incurring a Late Enrollment Penalty.

Whenever you decide to enroll in Medicare or Social Security, you will not need to visit your local SSA office to do so. You can enroll in Medicare either online at [www.ssa.gov/medicare/sign-up](http://www.ssa.gov/medicare/sign-up) or you can call SSA at 1-800-772-1213 to make an appointment to enroll in Medicare on the telephone.

Similarly, when you are ready to claim Social Security, you can do so online at [www.ssa.gov/](http://www.ssa.gov/) apply or you can call 1-800-772-1213 to make an appointment to apply for SS over the phone. To apply online, however, you should first create your personal "my Social Security" online account at [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount). Creating your online SS account now at age 65 will facilitate later online enrollment and will also provide you with an estimate of your SS benefit amounts at various ages - e.g., now at age 65, at your FRA of 67 or at age 70. And that should help you decide when it is best for you to claim Social Security.

A few final points:

You should verify with your employer's health insurance provider that they don't require you to enroll in Medicare at age 65. Most employer plans don't, but some do.

You don't need to enroll in Medicare Part A or Part B now as long as your employer's coverage is creditable. And it's okay to enroll in Medicare a couple of months prior to your employer's creditable healthcare coverage ending when you stop working, requesting that your Medicare coverage starts when your employer's healthcare ends. This will ensure that there is no gap in your healthcare coverage. If your employer coverage is creditable, you will not suffer a Medicare Late Enrollment Penalty for enrolling after age 65.

If you claim Social Security benefits at any time prior to your FRA and are still working, you will be subject to Social Security's Annual Earnings Test, which limits how much you can earn before they take away some of your benefits. The AET lasts until you reach your FRA (67), after which you can earn as much as you like without your SS benefits being affected.

Whenever you claim your Social Security benefits, you will be required to take Medicare Part A, which is coverage for inpatient hospitalization services. Medicare Part A is free because you are also eligible for Social Security. But you don't need to enroll in Part A at age 65 unless you also claim Social Security.

Medicare Part B, which is coverage for outpatient healthcare services (doctors, medical tests, etc.), is optional if you have creditable employer coverage as explained above. You do not need to enroll in Medicare Part B, for which there is a monthly premium of \$202.90 in 2026 until your employer's creditable healthcare coverage ends, even if you claim Social Security earlier.

*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](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at [ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org). Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.*

## The ins and outs of forsythia

Each year as forsythia burst into bloom, I am reminded of my dad.

You see, this spring harbinger always blooms right around his birthday. This year would've been a monumental one, as he would have celebrated 100 years!

Although most landscape professionals aren't all that fond of forsythia, it holds a special place in my heart. When it is in full bloom our eyes are lifted away from the still drab lawn and the bare borders to bask at its branches of yellow flowers.

If you are lucky enough to have forsythia growing in your yard, perhaps you will find the following facts interesting, straight from the archives.

Forsythia can be forced into bloom indoors. While it is a little late in the season to fully appreciate this technique, it can easily be achieved now.

As long as temperatures are above freezing, you can harvest the branches. Simply prepare them as you would any other cut flower by removing side shoots that would be under water in the vase. Fill the vase with hot water and just prior to insertion recut the end of the stem on a 45 degree angle to expose as much surface area as possible.

We use hot water because it will move through the plant's vascular system quickly, hydrating it fully.

Place the vase in indirect, bright light, and change the water a couple of times a week. Expect blooms in a matter of days this time of year; if you harvest stems in early March it will take a bit

longer to enjoy the flowers.

Forsythia buds are tender. While the shrub itself is hardy to Zone 4, the buds are reliably hardy to only Zone 5.

After an especially cold winter you may see forsythia in half-bloom! The tops of the shrub may be devoid of blossoms, but the bottom chock-full. This generally happens because the lower portion of the shrub was insulated under a snow bank or leaf mound.

Likewise, the blossoms are also tender - sometimes reduced to mush the morning after a hard freeze.

Forsythia flowers are borne on the previous year's wood. With that in mind, prune as soon as possible after flowering.

Simply cut the oldest stems all the way down to the ground. You can safely remove up to one-third of the bush in a single pruning session. New growth will emerge over the summer and provide blossoms for next season.

While some books recommend cutting overgrown forsythias down to the ground completely, in my experience, this advice is drastic. The plant will need a couple of years to recover from that approach.

Sometimes you see forsythia pruned into balls or stiff hedges. While some



# the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



home-owners consider this look appealing, I like to see the bush a little less tame. It's also hard to guarantee

flowers throughout such a manicured shape; sometimes part will bloom and the rest will be just foliage. Kind of a weird look.

Propagating forsythias is easy! Do you want more of a good thing? Try layering your forsythias. Take a long, pliable branch and bend it to the ground a foot or so from the main plant. Cover the bend with soil and secure it with a brick or heavy stone. In a few months' time it will root, and by the following spring the new plant can easily be separated from its mother.

Forsythia is easily grown. Perhaps this is why we see so many forsythias in the landscape.

While it will undoubtedly bloom best in full sun, once established, it can tolerate all but the driest of soils and adapts to a range in pH. Also, it is bothered by few pests or diseases.

*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](mailto:pouimette@turley.com) with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.*

## in my BACKYARD

By Ellenor Downer



Eastern Phoebe

I saw an Eastern Phoebe on March 28, my first sighting of 2026.

The Eastern Phoebe is a plump songbird with a medium-length tail. It appears large-headed for a bird of its size. The head often appears flat on top, but phoebes sometimes raise the feathers up into a peak. Like most small flycatchers, they have short, thin bills used for catching insects. The Eastern Phoebe is slightly larger than a tufted titmouse.

The Eastern Phoebe is brownish-gray above and off-white below, with a dusky wash to the sides of the breast. The head is typically the darkest part of the upper parts. Birds in fresh fall plumage show faint yellow on the belly and whitish edging on the folded wing feathers.

The Eastern Phoebe generally perches low in trees or on fence lines. Phoebes are very active, making short flights to capture insects and very often returning to the same perch. They make sharp "peep" calls in addition to their familiar "Phoebe" vocalizations. When perched, Eastern Phoebes wag their tails down and up frequently.

These birds favor open woods such as yards, parks, woodlands and woodland edges.

Phoebes usually breed around buildings or bridges on which they construct their nests under the protection of an eave or ledge.

## Bring in bird feeders

The Allen Bird Club of Springfield reminds area residents that early spring means hungry bears. If people enjoy feeding birds during the winter, it's now time to bring feeders in at night or to put them away entirely until next December. Black bears have an excellent memory and will return to feeders where they find easy meals. When that happens, bears can become a nuisance. FYI, over 50 million Americans purchase more than one billion pounds of bird seed and suet annually.

An excellent way to feed birds year-round is by planting native fruit and seed bearing plants that provide food for wildlife. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's new citizen science initiative, Garden for Birds, offers regionally-tailored tips on the best plants to choose to help struggling wildlife to thrive. This program is free and participation can be cancelled at any time. Information on how to turn a yard into a bird-supporting habitat can be found by visiting [gardenforbirds.org](http://gardenforbirds.org).

## Common mergansers

My husband and I saw the male and female Common Merganser diving in cedar Lake Sturbridge in between the ice on Thursday, March 19. They were beautiful.

## Brimfield birds

I received an email from a Brimfield resident. He said, "In my last email I had reported a broad-winged hawk seen in the yard. I later was looking at some photographs I had taken of the bird and discovered I was wrong, the bird was a red-shouldered hawk. Also it would have been very early for a broad-wing."

He saw crows, blue jays and a red-shouldered hawk on his trail camera as well as raccoons and an opossum.

He also has eight goldfinch visiting regularly. He said, "For most of the winter we have only seen one or two at the feeders. One was starting to show some yellow plumage."

He puts out a coffee can of whole peanuts every day in a tray. He said, "Blue jays, titmice and an occasional red-bellied woodpecker take the peanuts that are usually gone within a couple of hours. Lately the peanuts have been lasting two or three days and I haven't seen any blue jays." He also noted it is "A sign of spring, the chipmunks are out and about and the daffodil leaves have started to emerge, hooray."

## Goldfinches

I received an email from a Worthington resident. He said, "Around mid-February each year my bird feeders are inundated by a flock or maybe flocks of goldfinches in their drab winter colorations. It's amazing how many flit in and out of my feeders. And, when the goldfinches come, they are joined by an equally large flock of pine siskins. They must travel together and they look somewhat similar since the goldfinches aren't yet sporting their bright yellow colors. They usually hang around for a month or so and then move on further North." He said, "I enjoy watching them at the feeders, the few who decide to spend

Please see **BACKYARD**, page 15

## The Wilbraham-Hampden TIMES

We Want to Hear From You

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## Correction Policy

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

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

## 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](mailto:krivers@turley.com). Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by noon Monday to be considered for that Thursday's newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the newspaper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election.

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

## Campaign news

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

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

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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.



Submitted photo and caption Jaime Hageman



Submitted photo and caption Wendy Cowles

In celebration of National Pet Month, the Hampden Senior Center welcomed Nancy Ronan and Comet(left), Lori Kellner and Tripp (right) from Bright Spot Therapy Dogs. Lori and Tripp have been coming to the Hampden Senior Center every Tuesday morning for the past four years bringing lots of smiles and love to our Center!

Another 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten Finisher!

WPL Children's Librarian Jaime Hageman was excited to share another child reach the milestone of 1,000 books before Kindergarten! Congrats to Cohen Boody!



Submitted photos and caption Patrick Renna



Renna honored at Thunderbirds Hometown Salute

Wilbraham's Department of Veterans Services Director Patrick Renna was honored at the April 4 Springfield Thunderbirds game as part of the Thunderbirds Hometown Salute program where they honor an individual who has gone beyond the call of duty. The experience was made possible through an anonymous nomination.

Here is what was read during the ceremony:

"Patrick Renna proudly served 24 years in the United States Air Force. As a Logistics Planner, he was responsible for coordinating the movement of fighter aircraft, personnel, supplies, and critical equipment around the world. Throughout his career, he led Airmen at every level and remained committed to the mission while always taking care of those who served alongside him. He achieved

the military's highest enlisted rank, retiring honorably as a Chief Master Sergeant in his role as the Senior Enlisted Leader of the 104th Logistics Readiness Squadron. Patrick is supported by his wife, Amanda, and their two daughters, Evie and Scarlett, who stood beside him throughout his years of service. Today, he continues serving as the Director of Veterans' Services for the Town of Wilbraham, where he fights every day to ensure veterans and their families receive the respect, recognition, and benefits they have earned through their service to our nation."

Friends of Wilbraham Seniors 50/50 raffle



Turley photo by Kristin Rivers

The Friends of Wilbraham Seniors held a 50/50 raffle drawing on March 31 at the Wilbraham Senior Center. It was the first fundraiser of the year for the Friends and had over 700 entries. The Friends also raised \$945.03, which will go to the Senior Assistance Fund which helps seniors who, as a last resort, need financial help to pay utility bills, heating bills, medical equipment, prescriptions, etc. The raffle winners were Mandy Greene (25%), Karen Belsky (15%) and Maria Cacela (10%). The Friends proceeds will go to the Senior Assistance Fund which helps our seniors who, as a last resort, need financial help to pay utility bills, heating bills, medical equipment, prescriptions, etc.



Photo and caption courtesy of Wilbraham Fire Department

MRHS juniors, seniors participate in CPR training

On March 26, another 200 juniors and seniors participated in hands-only CPR training at Minnechaug. A huge thank you to the HWRSD health services, nursing staff, and the physical education department for making this vital training possible.

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# Old Meeting House Museum opens for the season during Wilbraham Hill Climb

Free admission, local history, and a full calendar of community events ahead

WILBRAHAM — The Old Meeting House Museum will kick off its 2026 season on Saturday, May 9, opening its doors during the Wilbraham Hill Climb.

Located in the heart of the event on Main Street, the museum invites visitors to step inside and explore local artifacts, while browsing a freshly stocked gift shop featuring new items and Hill Climb merchandise.

### Museum Highlights:

- Open House: May 9, 8 a.m. to close.
- Free admission for all visitors
- Access to one of Wilbraham's most historic buildings
- Exclusive Wilbraham Hill Climb t-shirts and local merchandise available for purchase

### A Season of Free Community Events

The Hill Climb also marks the beginning of a full season at the Old Meeting House Museum. From May through December, the museum will

host a series of free, family-friendly events rooted in local history and community connection. This year's programming includes returning favorites alongside new offerings designed to bring the region's past to life through presentations and opportunities to connect with local history.

"We're especially excited about this year's programming," said Lindsey Bourcier, Director of Marketing & Communications. "It features community favorites like our Ice Cream Social alongside entirely new events. It's shaping up to be our strongest season yet."



The full calendar of events is available at: [www.theomh.org](http://www.theomh.org)



## 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.

## Auditions for 'Gypsy' taking place April 22, 23

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.

### UPDATE from page 1

is not conducive to learning and it has a number of physical defects that have been there for a number of years that have not been addressed and that we're headed down the road to spend tens of millions of dollars either in renovation and addition or a new middle school."

He added the question was "what do we do for the kids between now and the new middle school."

"And that's where the hang-up is. I think we're pretty adamant in the fact that we don't want to pay for capital, things that should have been taken care of 10 years ago and never were," Davenport said. "But, I do think that we do have some obligation to take care of the maintenance things to keep it running properly in the meantime."

Davenport said this year, \$105,000 was put into maintenance for the middle school and "it's in the regional budget, so we're paying 21% of that anyhow."

"Is that the way to go? That's the issue. The bottom line is Wilbraham—Select Board—wants to meet with us again and see if we can't hash it out," Davenport said.

Selectboard Member Erik Vanderleeden said, "I don't think much has changed," but was open to a meeting.

"Absolutely, let's have a meeting, but I think kind of to reiterate, I think we're unanimously agreeing that anything that was kind of pre-existing, we shouldn't be responsible for," Vanderleeden said. "Whereas, if anything, from that date we come to an agreement forward. If it's a crack in the wall we need to repair, then

that's on both towns to repair that. Obviously, just a hypothetical situation. I think we're kind of okay with that. It was just pre-existing stuff that was identified from before. It should be on Wilbraham to take care of that, but also, I get that you didn't want to spend millions of dollars on a sinking ship, essentially, and I get that, but we also have an obligation to keep the teachers, staff and children safe and ventilation and whatnot. So, I definitely think that there should be some repairs done, and I think that's what we'll have to come to an agreement on."

Chair John Flynn said this.

"I mean, you made the point before about endless meetings where nothing changes, which is very valid, but we have an obligation to at least get some conversation going on it," Flynn said. "So, if there's something new we can talk about and really get off the dime, let's make it happen."

Flynn then suggested to offer the Wilbraham Select Board a date to meet, with the other members suggesting to meet in Wilbraham as the previous meetings were held in Hampden.

"We can go either place," Flynn said.

"We can go, let's go there," Davenport said. "I did suggest to them that if the core program did have a new middle school, we need a new middle school that we have some nice property out back here that we'd be very happy to donate to them so they could build a new middle school."

After further discussion, the board agreed to work on arranging a date to be determined to meet with the Wilbraham Select Board.

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**CLUES ACROSS**

- Greek goddess of marriage
- Tropical American blue jay-like bird
- Abba \_\_, Israeli politician
- Dark olive black
- Light, crinkled fabric
- Notre Dame has a golden one
- Leaked blood
- Confronted
- Negligible amount
- Facilitated
- Hill or rocky peak
- Minneapolis suburb
- Songs to one's beloved
- Brake horsepower
- Angry
- Children's game
- Spelling is a type of one
- Obtained in return for labor
- Indicates center
- Chinese dynasty
- Old World buffaloes
- Slang for time off

**CLUES DOWN**

- Greek cupbearer of the Gods
- Ancient Syrian city
- Small Eurasian deer (pl.)
- Range of mountains
- One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)
- Spoke
- City in Georgia
- Theatrical
- CNN's founder
- Icelandic poems
- Bjorn \_\_, tennis player
- Bowfin genus
- One point north of northeast
- Political divisions in ancient Greece
- Electroencephalograph
- Cool!
- Male parent
- Where some gymnasts work
- Capital of Vietnam
- Sailboats
- Shelter (Scottish)
- Completed

**CLUES ACROSS**

- Fabric
- Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
- Defunct regional economic organization
- Philly footballers
- Female sibling
- Peter Griffin's daughter
- Digital audiotape
- Insecticide
- Scientific instrument
- Pages may be dog-\_\_
- Israeli city \_\_ Aviv
- Type of sword
- Middle Eastern military title
- Wise individuals
- French Polynesian island
- Bora \_\_
- Popular shoe type
- One of 50
- Divulge a secret
- Dish of cooked meat mixed with potatoes
- Actress Zellweger
- Romanian city

**CLUES DOWN**

- Discharge
- Arrest
- Partner to cheese
- Coffee receptacle
- Stagnate
- Satisfies
- Snakelike fish
- Consume food
- Type of school
- Erase
- Inform
- Girl's given name
- Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
- Every one of two or more things
- Northern India city
- Seventeenth stars in a constellation
- Weapon
- Amounts of time
- Isodor \_\_, American Nobel physicist
- Soviet Socialist Republic
- Witness

### CLEAN from page 3

art statement around town that we do care and we don't want the nips on the side of the road," Harrigan said.

Pryor emphasized getting the younger kids and next generations involved as well.

"Not only will they be helping to make our town nicer, but they'll also see. 'Wow, look at all this trash that people just toss out their windows' and they'll take that going forward and won't be taking part in that," Pryor said. "They'll learn from that and see there's no need for that anywhere."

"Educating the young so that it doesn't continue and it isn't a yearly thing would be fantastic, and letting them know it's not okay, it's unacceptable," Harrigan said.

The goal, she added, is that there's no trash on the roads in town.

For volunteers, they will also receive thank you gifts of donuts as a welcome with registration and popcorn, ice cream and a tree sapling per family upon their return.

The message was this.

"Get involved. Come on out on May 2!" Pryor said. "Even if you're just driving by and you see the sign, pop on in. You don't have to sign up in advance, but we would like you to."

"We need people there," Harrigan said. "And we'll be passing out the typical safety information along with the trash bags, safety vests, grabbers, buckets and gloves."

The committee is also selling yard signs this year. They cost \$50 and can be put on

the side of the road in front of your house to give information out to the community about the event.

"It's a small sponsorship level to get a yard sign at your home and we'll also mention you at the event as well," Harrigan said. "You can contact any of the committee members or shoot us an email or a call through our website or Facebook page."

To learn more, visit <https://sites.google.com/view/wilbraham-earth-day-cleanup/home>. A link can also be found on the town website or the Keep Wilbraham Beautiful Facebook page.

To register, visit [docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScRyld\\_LLAnYX-gESj2KOWrNe\\_YOgNiH-Ma3odhNSOHd\\_akfIXTQ/viewform?usp=dialog](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScRyld_LLAnYX-gESj2KOWrNe_YOgNiH-Ma3odhNSOHd_akfIXTQ/viewform?usp=dialog).

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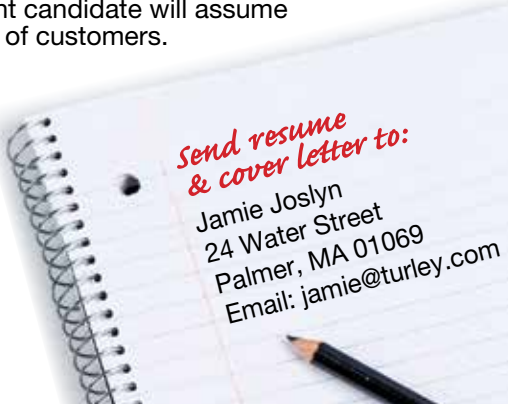


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**TECHNOLOGY** from page 1

niors have information about resources, care options, services that are available to them in the community as they're navigating their golden years."

Also, an opportunity for collaboration between her and her fellow members.

"So, the more opportunity to be able to talk with folks, share information, answer their questions and point them in the direction of those who might be able to make some connections for them to help with their quality of life. That's what our goal is," O'Connor said.

She hopes attendees took away that hospice care is "quality of life, compassionate care."

"It's for seniors specifically. It is a Medicare benefit that, if they're eligible, they are entitled to. They can be received for six months and possibly longer," O'Connor said.

She also encouraged the community to visit the chamber of commerce website, [erc5.com](http://erc5.com), to learn more about future events.

Lessard was thrilled with the audience engagement, noting the interactions during and after the event.

"That is so important. We have so much to give, but we really try to leave a lot of time, and afterwards, people can stay because they have specific issues that they're struggling with, and that's the



**Katie Krupka, certified senior advisor at Assisted Living Locators, was one of the panelists.**



**Maura Lessard, RN, BSN, CCM, CDP, nurse advocate and Board Certified Case Manager, Aging Lifecare Advanced Profession & Certified Dementia Practitioner at Nurse Advocates LLC, discussed nurse advocates.**



**Mary-Anne Schelb, director of Business Development, Western MA Market at JGS Lifecare, provided information on home healthcare options available to seniors.**



**Attorney David Carlson focused on important documents including health care proxies and powers of attorney.**



**Kimberly O'Connor, community liaison at Brookhaven Hospice, shared how the community can connect with anyone who's part of the ERC5 Senior Service Alliance for resources and information.**

whole goal is to be connected so they feel comfortable reaching out to us for those specific questions," Lessard said. "Or, something happens in six months, they say, 'Oh, wait. I know I have resources. Who am I going to call?' They can call any of us, they can call the senior center. They are not in this alone."

Lessard noted the importance of the chamber's executive director, Grace Barone, who came from the healthcare industry, for having events like this through the ERC5.

"She was at Keystone Commons, so as a business development person, she has a much more global understanding of healthcare, what our roles are," Lessard said. "So, she recognized that when she got in the role of executive director for the chamber. She recognized this niche

of people with expertise, and that's how we came up with the alliance with the goal of being able to give this education."

Carlson elaborated on the importance of health care proxies and power of attorney and why seniors should have these as tools.

"Health care proxy allows you to designate somebody to make your medical decisions when you're no longer able to make or communicate your own decisions, and then the financial durable power of attorney allows you to designate someone to make your financial decisions, pay your bills, access retirement accounts, sell real estate. Very

broad document," Carlson said.

He also cautioned seniors to be careful of scams and make sure their medical and financial affairs are in place.

"In terms of scams, hopefully, to be very cautious about any inquiry that they might receive and then, also, to make sure that they get their health care proxies and powers of attorney in order," Carlson said.

Krupka shared what she enjoys about being part of the alliance.

"All of these people on this panel, we really built a strong relationship with each other to support the people in our community, whether it's the town of Wilbraham or throughout the chamber

of commerce in the area," Krupka said. "It's really just an opportunity to connect, but we all really care about each other too. We love each other and we love that we're able to provide the information to the community as well."

Schelb advised residents to be mindful of technology and, also, to have conversations before a crisis occurs so all are prepared.

"Technology is great, but it can't replace personal, hands-on care. So, think about it as integrative, not a replacement of," Schelb said.

Carlson's message was this.

"Get their documents in order, take advantage of the resources that are available and make sure you attend the next event," Carlson said.



Turley photos by Kristin Rivers  
**Attendees also had the opportunity to ask questions during the panel event.**

**REDUCTIONS** from page 1

"Since teachers and paraprofessionals work on a school year contract rather than a sort of ever-going contract that just rolls from year to year, that 30 days prior to the end of the year brings us to April 24, which is during April vacation," Provost said. "It is best practice to do this in person with staff. You don't want to just have them receive a notice in the mail saying they're subject to a reduction in force, which means that we want to have the opportunity to meet with staff prior to April vacation. So, that backs up our timeline a little bit more."

The unknown, he added, is what if the budget isn't approved by one or both towns, which is where the notice to additional staff would come in.

"Because by the time those town meetings come around, we will be beyond the known estate for teachers and paraprofessionals, for sure, possibly some other units as well," Provost said.

After a review of the process and options available if a budget isn't approved, Secretary Lisa Murray said this.

"So, John, if the budget isn't approved, if we hadn't notified these other people, we haven't met the obligation of notifying them in an appro-

priate amount of time," Murray said.

"That's correct," Provost said.

"So, we're obligated to notify everybody in a certain amount, at an appropriate time," Murray said.

Provost then explained the issue of fiscal exigency, which is a formally declared state of severe financial crisis in a district. It allows drastic actions including reductions in force and discontinuing or merging programs to ensure a district's stability.

This is, also, a formal and public declaration made by a district's board of trustees.

"I don't know exactly what the legal parameters or qualifications are to declare fiscal exigency. I guess there is some question right now around whether or not the budget will be supported in both of the towns, and so I think a reasonable person could argue you might want to cover yourself at least a little bit in case it doesn't pass," Provost said.

"I would think if it doesn't pass, we would want those people to know ahead of time, because that's the right thing to do for those staff members," Murray said.

On Vice Chair Dr. Michael Tirabassi's question about the number of proposed additional notifications, Provost said he imagined two approaches.

"One would be to say to include all of the reductions in that sort of two-tiered list of cuts that I had brought, even though I know that you rejected many of them. Because those would probably be the ones we'd be talking about again if the budget didn't pass in one of the communities. That, I think, brought it down to a number that, I believe, from what I heard probably would be sustainable under all of the scenarios," Provost said. "The other way would be to say, 'We don't know. Let's just really be sure and reduce, send layoff notices to everyone who was hired last year.'"

He added "about 10 elementary school teachers" and "a number of secondary" were hired last year.

Tirabassi said, "Since we have no idea what the funding gap is, I think that that might be reasonable."

"I have confirmation that Wilbraham FinCom voted to support the full budget that we proposed," Tirabassi said. "And that's passed, so we at least know that little piece of the puzzle."

On Rich Rediker's question if either town needs a 2 1/2 override to fund what was proposed last time, Tirabassi replied, "I don't think so."

"However, I think that Hampden will have to make some hard choices to be able to fund it," Tirabassi said.

Chair Michal Boudreau then clarified that Hampden's Advisory Committee has not voted on the budget yet, as their public hearing did not take place. This is scheduled for April 21.

"I think that they have to look at all the departments, and so, we fit in as the School Department that they have to look at," Boudreau said. "My understanding is that the budget we put forth would impact what they are able to do for all the different departments. I know they have not made a decision."

Murray again emphasized notifying the people who would be impacted.

"It's not right to not notify people. They have a right to know. I would want to know. I would feel like everybody here would want to know," Murray said. "And it is appropriate that they talk about it with their building administrators and not receive it in a different way. So, we want to do that before vacation."

Tim Collins agreed with Murray on sending the notices out "based on worst-case scenario."

"So, that should the worst-case scenario happen, these people have notifications, they have time to plan their lives and the schools have time to plan their adjustments because when you lose a staff member, that's going

to change the whole makeup of the school and that takes some time as well," Collins said. "So, my recommendation would be to when you're talking to people, you can say, 'Hey, here's the budget we passed and these are the only cuts that will be required. But, worst-case scenario, we might have to cut this many, this many, this many and for those, this is why you're getting the notice because we have to notify you and it's only fair to you and to your schools that they know this potential is there,' and maybe it'll wake some people up too."

On the notifications, Provost said there's two separate groups.

"The first group, that you were talking about, staff who were impacted by the list of cuts. Those are really two-step processes. Those are like the ones that were included in many of the reductions that were included in the School Committee budget. Because many of those were professional status teachers who had the ability to—what we call—bump other teachers, which means those whose position was being reduced were notified that they have the opportunity to claim someone else's position, and the person whose position is being claimed is notified," Provost said. "So, you have one person who ends up without a

job, but you have two people who are being notified. So, in those reductions that were on a list, many of those are PTS, so those would be two, like, double notifications. When you're talking about people who were hired in the last year, none of those would be professional status teachers, so those would be single times you would be notifying just those."

Referring back to Collins's earlier comments, Provost said as this process was being envisioned, "we were kind of thinking of them as two separate conversations."

"One, like, this position is not on the School Committee's budget. This is a definite cut, and then other types of conversations like, we don't know this position is in the School Committee's budget. If it passes at town meeting, we'll be coming to you right after the town meeting and saying, 'Come back,'" Provost said. "But, right now, we're just notifying you because we're uncertain about the status of the town meeting."

After further discussion, the committee approved notifying additional staff about the possibility of reduction beyond the passed budget, including teachers hired in the last year.

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## JURASSIC Floral Display

SPRINGFIELD – The 13th annual Festival of Flowers filled the galleries of the fine arts, history, and science museums with stunning floral arrangements. The interpretations designed by florists and garden club members included paintings, sculptures, vehicles and even dinosaurs. Theodore Metayer, Jr. from Heavenly Inspirations Flowers & Gifts participated in the event bringing a stegosaurus to life with this unique floral display.

## Wilbraham Friends of the Library to hold Book Sale May 5 - 8

WILBRAHAM - Wilbraham Friends of the Library (WFOL), are delighted to announce their annual book sale will be held May 5-8, 2026!

The WFOL Annual Book Sale is a major fundraiser providing funds for programs for children, teens, and adults as well as museum passes, furnishings, and other library equipment.

While the sale is a little way off still, this is a great time to collect your old books. How would we have a sale without donated books? We know many folks in our community are avid readers and have been accumulating books throughout the year. We are happy to once again offer the ideal opportunity to recycle these books, stock up on new ones and fund library programs. Start your spring

cleaning now and box or bag up your extra books, CDs, and DVDs for us. Children's and adult books, fiction or non-fiction, hobby books etc. in good condition are all welcome. Due to space restrictions, we cannot accept encyclopedias, magazines or Readers Digest condensed novels.

As a thank you for their support, donors will receive a coupon good for two books of their choice from the sale when donations are dropped off. Donations of books and materials will be accepted at the library from Friday, May 1 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, May 2 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Monday, May 4 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

On Tuesday, May 5, from 4 to 6 p.m., we'll show our appreciation to those who support us throughout the

year, with a preview sale and reception for WFOL members ONLY. Come enjoy some refreshments with fellow WFOL members and get a chance to shop the book sale ahead of the general public.

The Book Sale hours are:

- Tuesday, May 5 from 4 to 6 p.m. for WFOL members ONLY
- Wednesday, May 6 from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Thursday, May 7 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Friday, May 8 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The library will be closed Saturday, May 9.

For more information on the Wilbraham Friends of the Library visit them on the web at <http://wilbrahamlibrary.org/friends.asp>, on Facebook or via email at [friends@wilbrahamlibrary.org](mailto:friends@wilbrahamlibrary.org).

### EARTH DAY from page 1

open, you can bring your donated books to the front desk. We'll be collecting them through April 23 and we'll have the book sale at the Earth Day Eco Expo," Moriarty said. "Keep in mind that we would like books with no damage, rips or yellowing pages. You can also bring DVDs and CDs and children's picture books, youth and YA books and learn about the Friends of the Hampden Public Library."

She added Green Up Day would also be taking place

the same day, where residents pick up trash throughout the community.

"That will be happening earlier in the day at TWB," Moriarty said.

Other vendors include local farmers, local community organizations and local authors, with Moriarty sharing that there is something for everyone from the little kids to teens and adults.

"And much much more!" Moriarty said. "If you have any questions or would like to be a part of it, please contact Ellen Moriarty at [emori@cwmar.org](mailto:emori@cwmar.org).

Stop by the library, call the library, check out our website [hampden-library.org](http://hampden-library.org). Follow us on Facebook."

Moriarty encouraged the community to come out and get ready to "go green" for the environment, adding that the event has gone on for many years and she looks forward to seeing everyone.

"Each year it gets bigger and better and so, go green!" Moriarty said. "Go green and go local!"

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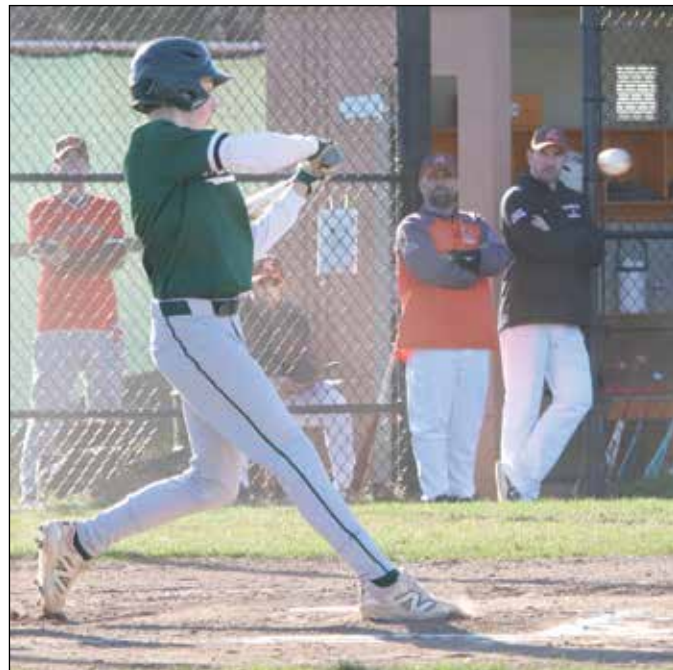
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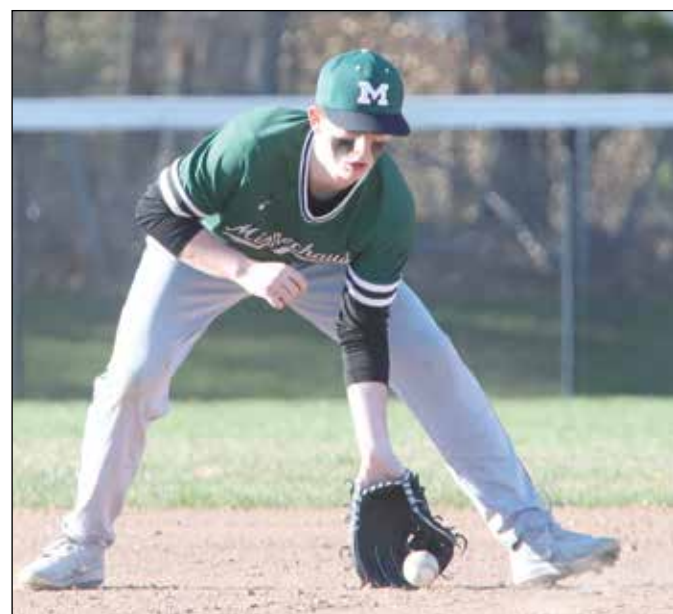
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## Falcons baseball blows out Agawam



Peter Langone socks a base hit.



Nicholas Nordstrom cleanly fields a grounder to short.

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

AGAWAM— One of the aspects that makes baseball truly unique is the opportunity to experience something different every time you watch a game. No two games are ever exactly alike, and each contest presents its own set of surprises and special moments. Whether it's an unexpected play, or a remarkable individual performance, baseball consistently delivers new experiences for players and fans alike.

When the Minnechaug varsity squad visited Agawam's Gerald "Gerry" Smith Field last Wednesday afternoon, the Falcons defeated the Brownies for the fourth consecutive time by the final score of 25-0.

The non-league contest ended after five innings due to the 10-run mercy rule.

"What I love the most about baseball is that you can see something new in every game," said Minnechaug head coach Mike Netkovick "I never imagined that we would score 25 runs in today's game. Agawam is a very strong offensive team. They did hit a couple of balls hard, but we played well defensively. My guys were ready to play today."

The previous most runs scored by the Falcons (2-3) was when they defeated East Longmeadow, 20-5, on April 24, 2015.

The Brownies (1-2) were looking to beat the Falcons on

the baseball diamond for the first time since the 2019 regular season when they celebrated a 5-3 home win.

It turned out to be a very memorable afternoon for Minnechaug senior Evan Liverseidge who nearly hurled his first career no-hitter in a varsity game. He also led the way offensively with two base hits and nine RBIs.

"We came out with a chip on our shoulder and started scoring runs," said Liverseidge, who's a three-year varsity player. "The team was definitely in it today, and I hope it carries over into our next few games."

It was the first time that Liverseidge, who's planning to play college baseball at Franklin Pierce University next year, made a start at Smith Field. He didn't allow any runs on just one base hit with four strikeouts and one walk.

"Evan has been pitching for the varsity team since he was a sophomore," Netkovick said. "He ended last season really strong. Everything came together for him in today's game both on the mound and at the plate."

Agawam junior righthander Matt Machos didn't experience the same amount of success on the mound as Liverseidge did.

With one-out in the top of the first inning, Liverseidge and senior centerfielder Ian Angelica were both hit by pitches. Then an infield hit by junior third baseman Sam Przybyl (2-for-3) loaded the



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

Ian Angelica leads off second.

bases. Following a strikeout, Liverseidge scored the first run of the game on a wild pitch. Two more runs crossed the plate when junior second baseman Peter Langone singled to right.

The Falcons exploded for ten runs in the following inning.

Liverseidge brought home the first run of the inning with a bases loaded walk. The bases were also loaded when he came up later in the same inning. This time, Liverseidge blasted a three-run double to the gap in left center.

Please see **BASEBALL**, page 12



Gianna Fusco runs to first on a base hit.

## Chaug softball falls to rival Ludlow

Veronica Quimet comes up throwing to first.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

LUDLOW – Last Monday afternoon, Ludlow High School softball kept its perfect record with a 5-2 win over visiting Minnechaug. Both teams traded a pair of runs in the first inning, but Ludlow was able to finally

take the lead for good with two runs in the third and an insurance run in the fourth. Olivia Slatton had a 2-for-4 day with two singles and a run scored. Abby Monette would have an RBI in the contest. Madison Goncalves

pitched and got the win for Ludlow. Minnechaug got two hits from Megan Pronovost. She also had both of Chaug's RBI. Minnechaug is 2-4 while Ludlow is 5-0 this season.



Adrielle Sheridan lifts a long fly ball to center.



Kaelyn Dionne sends a pitch to the plate.



Kevin Cordova gets a great hit over the net.



Jacob Gilmartin sends a spike down.



Andon Cordova gets a backwards hit.

## Falcons boys volleyball gets above .500

SPRINGFIELD – Last Wednesday evening, Minnechaug Regional High School boys volleyball defeated Central 3-1. The Falcons are now 4-3 on the sea-

son and are looking to try and get their way back into the state tournament this year. In the 3-1 win, Minnechaug won three impressive sets, keeping Central below 20

points with the exception of the one set the Golden Eagles won. Brennan Rost had 32 assists while Darren Duah finished with 10 kills for the Falcons.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com  
Domenic Fantone tries to get the spike between a pair of defenders.



Brennan Rost sets up a hit.  
LEFT: Darren Duah tries to hit the ball past a blocker.

## T-Birds suffer tough loss against rival Hartford Wolf Pack

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (30-30-6-2) unleashed 37 attempts at the net of the Hartford Wolf Pack (25-35-5-3) but were kept in check in a 3-1 defeat at the hands of their Braman I-91 Rivalry Series opponents in front of a sellout crowd of 6,793 inside the MassMutual Center on Saturday night.

The T-Birds were sluggish out of the gates, and despite a seven-game losing streak coming into the game, the Wolf Pack took advantage of early mistakes, beginning with an Anton Blidh goal off a cross-crease setup by Bryce McConnell-Barker at 7:58 of the first.

A Springfield penalty set the stage for Hartford's first and only power play of the game, and just 1:03 after Blidh's goal, Brendan Brisson made a highlight-reel play, putting the puck between his legs and chipping a forehand past Vadim Zherenko at 9:01 to make it a 2-0 score.

Thunderbirds head coach Steve Ott called a timeout to try to quell Hartford's momentum, but even that proved futile as Scott Morrow blasted a slapper that squeezed through Zherenko 39 seconds later to make it a 3-0 score.

The T-Birds finally got one back at 13:28 when Zach Dean sauced a perfect 2-on-1 pass to Hugh McGing, who elevated a shot through Callum Tung to cut the lead to 3-1.

From that point, Zherenko's night was relatively quiet, with Hartford only registering 13 shots for the remainder of the game after their three-goal blitz in the opening period. The Springfield power play had a half-dozen chances to try to cut into the deficit, but the Hartford penalty killing in front of Tung held the fort, and the rookie backstop finished his night with 36 stops for his sixth win of the season and second in three starts against Springfield.

## Roster spots remain open in the QVBL

SOUTH HADLEY – While the new player draft has come and gone in the Quabbin Valley Baseball League, there are still several open roster spots for players age 28-and-up. The regular season is set to get underway in a little more than a week and the six teams in the are still looking to add more players.

Players can go to the league website and fill out the registration form so they can get placed on a team immediate in front of the season opener.

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

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

Those elements will return along with a 16th game

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

The season is currently slated to start on Sunday, April 19 and following the success of the six-team fall league last year, the league will also have a fall league in September and October this season.

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

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

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

### BASEBALL from page 11

Sophomore shortstop Nick Nordstrom also had an RBI and the Falcons other runs in that frame scored on either walks or fielding errors.

Machos was replaced on the mound by senior righty Dominic Chriscola during the second inning.

Agawam junior first baseman Gavin Cruz drew a walk with one out in the bottom of the second. Senior designated hitter Joe Wilkinson was also hit-by-a-pitch before Liverseidge retired the next two batters on a flyball and a strikeout.

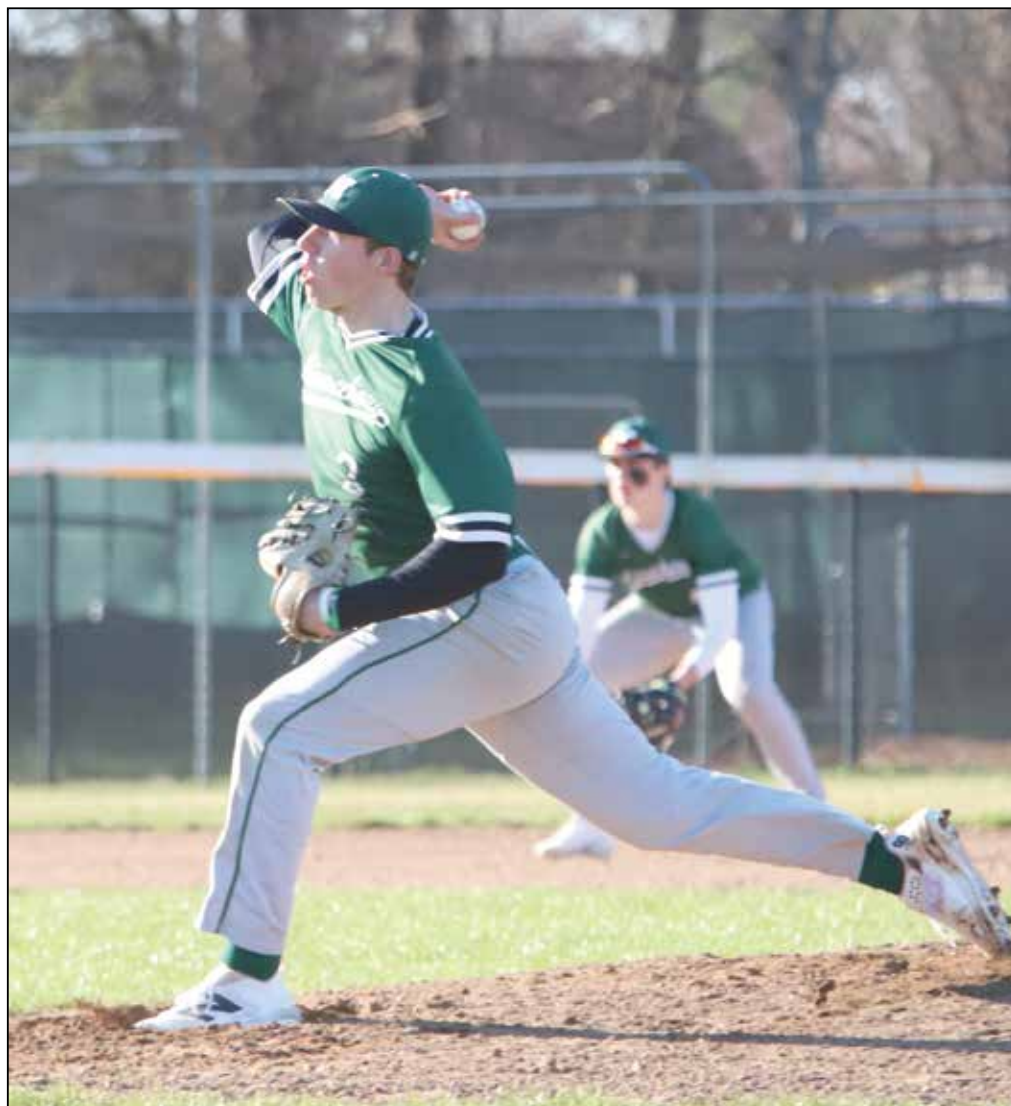
Liverseidge had another three-run double to left in the third, which was a part of a five-run inning.

The Falcons, who only had eight hits in the game, scored five more runs in the fourth, which gave them a comfortable 23-0 advantage.

Liverseidge capped off his offensive performance with another bases loaded walk in the fifth. Senior catcher Alex Savlick also drew a bases loaded walk during that same frame.

Liverseidge's no-hit bid came to an end following an infield hit by Wilkinson leading off the fifth inning.

Senior pinch hitter Noah Bushnik also reached base on a fielding error. After Liverseidge struck out the next two batters, senior left field-



Evan Liverseidge sends a pitch to the plate.

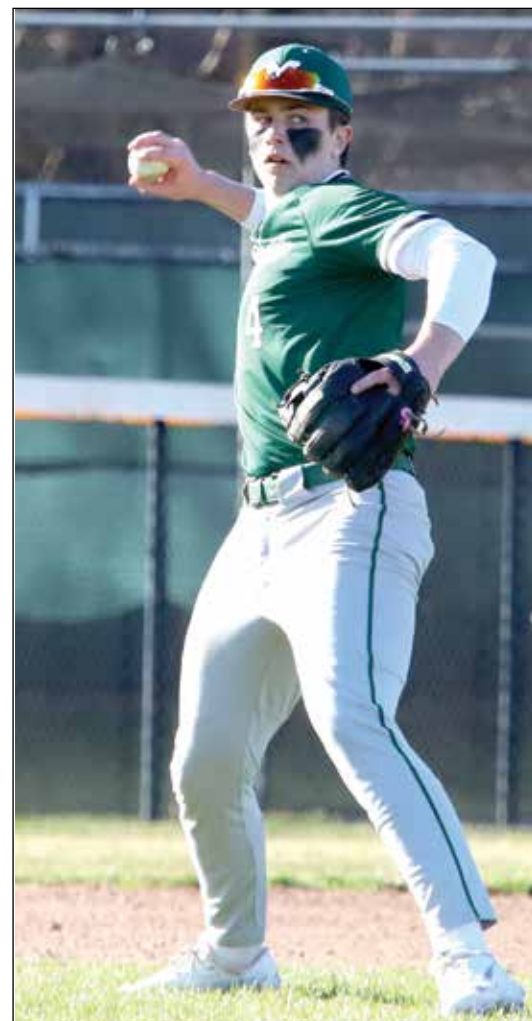
Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

er Parker Bean was hit-by-a-pitch, which loaded the bases. The next batter lined out to Langone, which ended the

only meeting of the regular season between the two teams a couple of innings early.



Jacob Fahey hustles to beat out a grounder.



Sam Przybyl sends a throw to first.

## EDUCATION

# Wilbraham Middle School announces its second term honor roll

WILBRAHAM – The following students received Honor Roll status for the Term 2 marking period at Wilbraham Middle School. Distinguished Honors is all A's in all subjects; Honors is all A's and/or B's in all subjects.

### Distinguished Honors Grade 8

Cassandra Alvarez, Aria Balwa, Molly Baroni, Reid Blanchard, Rose Christensen, Ivan Dong, Emery Dyer, Cody Feit, Nora Fontaine, Gavin Hisgen, Jasper Hulseberg, Bree Kiernan, Delaney Kinsman, Julia Magee, Siobhan Mahoney, Therese Mathias, Sophia Mazzaferro, Vivian McIntyre, Calla Minahan, Joseph Montano, Sunmi Oh, Mya Pafumi, Luiza Paiva, Abigail Patterson, Ryleigh Picard, Garrett Roberts, Alexan Robles-Blasenak, Grace Romano, Greta Rust, Jackson Shanley, Madelyn Smith, Cole Thomas, Caitlin Wechselbaumer, Ashley Wetherbe, Brenna Woytowicz.

### Honors – Grade 8

Aruneesan Anurathan, Aubrey Appleby, Mason Axiotis, Alaina Bailey, Brielle Bailey, Kegan Bailey, Dylan Bean,

Lillian Blair, Dante Bontempi, Madelyn Boudreau, Aliana Brandoli, Madeline Britt, Colin Broderick, Brenna Bryan, Jack Christofori, Marcus Cotto, Emma Cristino, Ceanna Cromartie, Jacob DeGray, Leo Deziel, Maycie Eldridge, Timothy Euber, Peyton Eusebio, Rylene Fountain, Alaina Giombetti, Lukas Gregson, Oliver Hart, Kareem Ibrahim, McKinley Jaeger, Jacob Johnson, Brynn Kennedy, Andrew Kmelius, Daide Kupis, Chloe Lawless, Logan Mangar, Zahra Minhaj, Emily Moraru, Maeghan Morris, Andrew Mullen, Ella Mylonakis, Mia Newman, Desmond O'Brien, Shana Oguku, Michelle Ohemeng, Kennady Raymond, Gage Ring, Kaylie Ritchotte, David Roberts, William Roberts, Jaxson Rogers, Wyatt Sackrider, Jake Salemi, Epi Sanchez, Natalia Savlick, Oskar Schmidt, Sonhae Senez, Hayden Senft, Louise Shaughnessey, Kate-Lyn Sheehan, Harper Spring, Clara Steele, Violet Straitiff, Arianna Sundheim, Maxwell Sylvester, Lucas Tassinari, Alanna Thouin, Devdutt Vijay, Jaxson Walker, Samuel Webster, Owen Wright, Kylie Zamorski.

### Distinguished Honors

### Grade 7

Amber Antunes, Tia Asaf, Oliver Bergeron, Olivia Beston, Emily Burke, Angelica Capatina, Sadie Casella, Olivia Chen, Audriana DeNarso, Honora Farrell, Natalie Fol, Quinn Folli, Maxwell Gawron, John Guerin, Taleya Gunn, Zoe Harrigan, Sawyer Haugh, Nora Hegarty, Emma Howland, Enzo Imbriglio, Emily Jourdain, Grace Keith, Eva Kellogg, Gavin Kern, Brooke Kmelius, Jessica Kwajewski, Michael Lafeld, Claire Lareau, Jayden Lewis, Katherine Lotterer, Ella Luszc, Molly MacEachern, Caroline Maziarz, Savannah McNabb, Cole Michael, Adriana Monteleone, Lucas Morrow, Austin Piquette, Ava Ricketts, Taesha Rowe-Singleton, Mia Santos, Sophia Schott, Audrey Scott, Nicolas Siciliano, Paige Smith, Anna Steele, Vivian Stromwall, Connor Sullivan, Kayla Vanderleeden, Camdyn Vazquez, Caira Williams, Evianna Wright, Samuel Zanetti.

### Honors – Grade 7

Logan Abdelmaseh, Alexis Adames, Pheobe Babineau, Owen Benninger, Avery Blume, Margaret Brannigan, Matthew Brogle,

Bella Brown, Cole Cantalini, Sophia Cantalini, Maddox Carreira, Jackson Chappel, Nathaniel Choinski, Mya Conselino, Philip Costello, Ella Coviello, Rea DeNardo, Mary Dos Santos, Jack Dubord, Anna Fletcher, Jack Ford, John Gralia, Abigail Haygood, Preston Hebert, Brennan Hoey, Lucas Inguagiato, Hayden Kelley, Noah Kelly, Helena Kudryk, Anthony Lapomardo, Rylee Lopes, Jayden Lopez, Zara Lotterer, Amyr Ly, Caroline Maserati, Alexander Maxwell, Ellis Nelson, Parker Noonan, Justin Nowicki, Nora O'Connor, Adriana Pafumi, Betty Pagoaga, Colin Paige, Stella Petit, Axel Reed, Olive Reed, Madison Riker, Brayden Rivest, Jua Rodriguez-Gonzalez, Taishla Rowe-Singleton, Summer Saleh, Damien Sasen, Anthony Soto-Tovar, Daniel Soto-Tovar, Samantha Strange, Micaela Stremel, Dominick Tangredi, Juliany Torres, Kayson Twarog-DeJura, Carter Verteramo, Hailey White, Allie Whittier, Jemel Williams, Jaxen Wright, Ella Wrisley.

### Distinguished Honors

#### Grade 6

Logan Arbour, Mary Catherine Babbs, Sophia Bennett,

Ethan Chalero, Maya Chenciek, Violet Chiarizio, Ryan Deziel, Liam Downey, Daniel Duah, Louis Duong, Reed Edgar, Elise Falzone, Madelyn Fontaine, Jack Fulton, Genevieve Gaudreau, Maximilian Guberow, Lily Harrigan, Colton Hersman, Davida Ingman, Cynthia Keen, Alexander Keeping, Caden Knowles, Nolan Krupka, Reed Libbey, Henry Luttrell, Caitlin Mastroianni, Veronica Metzger, Natalie Moretti, Finlay Oguku, Aria Osorio, Emma Pafumi, Mark Pafumi, Nora Parastatidis, Harold Patterson, Jackson Pelletier, Harmony Rioux, Weston Salvador, Emma Sheehan, Katherine Souza, Robin Straitiff, Sophia Sutter, Macie Taylor, Ashlen Thomas, Sadia Vasta, Jordan Wong-Vallejo, Daniel Zhou.

### Honors – Grade 6

Breydan Ackley, Olivia Adams, Madeline Alvarez, Luke Armstrong, Jonathan Balaur, Claire Barriault, Gabriella Barroso, Alaina Bertelli, Caleb Bosworth, Aubrey Boudreau, Aiden Brown, Drake Cafarelli, Samuel Castellano, Carson Childress, Callen Coffey, Emerson Conway, Emerson Couture, Logan Cruz, Dylan DaCruz,

Bradley Dangleis, Brooke Dean, Liam Devine, Cora Dooley, Gabriella Dos Santos, Raymond Downey, Joshua Ekong, Parker Ence, Lincoln Eusebio, Gavin Fallon, Genette Fanning, Emersyn Frisk, Sofia Gonzalez, Emma Griffith, Andrew Griguoli, Peter Harrington, Harper Hatch, Hunter Houle, Liam Jurkowski, Jacob Kearns, Elijah Kwajewski, Grace Langone, Ava Lee, Layla Lynch, Evelyn Magill, Liam Mahoney, Declan Maloney, Vincent McIntyre, Sheamus Miller, Evie Minahan, Alex Monteleone, Gavin Morales, Cameron Moran, Lucas Nascimento, Madison Nitri, Ethan Noonan, Arabella Nunes, Brynn O'Brien, Hudson O'Sullivan, Etienne Pelletier, Riley Pelloso, Evangeline Perkins, Vincent Pitzer, Jack Powers, Kailey Proulx, Savannah Pryor, Sophia Quinn, Fernando Rodrigues, Makena Rodrigues, Brittyn Rogers, Charlotte Rust, Drew Salemi, Lilly Sample, Ryleigh Shepard, Autumn Sheridan, Jaxon Smith, Aubrey Stephen, Jack Swain, Eli Thomas, Mila Tsim, Jayco Vargas, Nolan Witek, Kennedy Wright, Lucas Zheng.

## Rotary Club to hold another 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.

## Teen Mindful Doodling Workshop happening April 21

WILBRAHAM– The Teen Department at the Wilbraham Public Library is excited to announce a Mindful Doodling Workshop during spring vacation.

On Tuesday, April 21 from 4 to 5 p.m., teens in grades 6-12 can join cartoonist and author Cara Bean for a relaxing and creative experience!

This session will help teens reconnect with their inner creativity and feel a sense of community through art. In Cara's workshops, she emphasizes the therapeutic benefits of drawing, helping teens to relax, focus, and express themselves through drawing and comics. She provides practical techniques and

exercises to develop drawing skills and boost creativity. At the end of the workshop, three copies of Cara Bean's graphic novel "Here I Am, I Am Me: An Illustrated Guide to Mental Health" will be raffled off to participants.

This workshop is for students in grades 6-12 and registration is required as space

is limited. No experience necessary and all supplies are provided. To sign up, please contact the library at 413-596-6141, or visit the Event Calendar at [www.wilbraham-library.org](http://www.wilbraham-library.org). This program is sponsored by the Wilbraham Friends of the Library.

## Healthy Kids Day at the Scantic Valley YMCA set for Saturday

WILBRAHAM - The YMCA sets kids up for a safe, healthy and fun summer at Healthy Kids Day.

This annual event features a day of fun-filled activities to

celebrate kids being kids.

The Scantic Valley Y is hosting the Y's annual Healthy Kids Day® on Saturday, April 18 from 10 a.m. to Noon located at 45 Post

Office Park in Wilbraham.

This free event features a variety of family-friendly activities to encourage healthy kids, healthy families, and a healthy start to the summer

season.

Healthy Kids Day at the Scantic Valley Y is sponsored by Country Bank. For more information, contact the Y at 413-596-2749.

## Collecting donations for National Pet Month

HAMPDEN – The senior center is collecting donations in honor of National Pet Month for both TJO and 2nd Chance.

TJO will be at the senior center on Tuesday, April 28 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. and 2nd Chance will be there on Wednesday, April 29 from

9 a.m. to Noon offering free service with an appointment. Donations can be dropped off throughout the month of April.

Donations include cat nip, liquid laundry detergent, dryer sheets, Cheez Whiz, hot dogs, wet canned dog food, turkey or chicken wet cat food, bleach,

paper towels, high quality items for big dogs to chew and monetary donations are, also accepted.

Donations can be left at the front desk.

To learn more, call 413-566-5588.

## Boston Road sidewalk, road project 2029

WILBRAHAM - On behalf of the Town of Wilbraham's Department of Public Works, Residents and business owners on Boston Road are strongly encouraged to review the new sidewalk location and proposed modi-

fications to their driveway access (curb-cut) on Boston Road.

Project inquiries regarding the proposed undertaking may be submitted to Carrie E. Lavallee, P.E., Chief Engineer, via e-mail to

[massdotmajorprojects@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:massdotmajorprojects@dot.state.ma.us) or via US Mail to Suite 7210, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Major Projects, Project File No. 608489.

Contact DPW for assistance reviewing the plans.



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*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.*

### HELP WANTED

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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](mailto:selectmen@northbrookfield.net).

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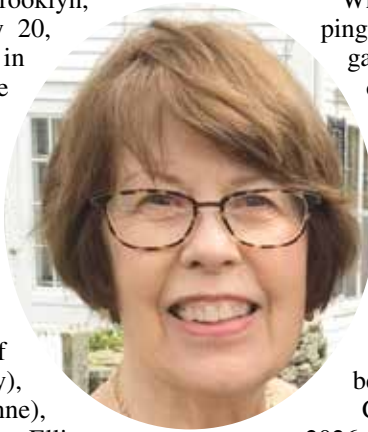
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**OBITUARY**

**Annabelle Mary (Hunt) Turley**

1941 – 2026

PALMER – Annabelle Mary (Hunt) Turley, of Palmer, Massachusetts, passed away peacefully, surrounded by family, on April 3, 2026. Born in Brooklyn, New York, on May 20, 1941, and raised in Rhode Island, she was the only child of the late Horace and Mary Hunt.



Annabelle was the beloved wife of Patrick Turley for nearly 64 years. She was also the loving mother of Keith Turley (Holly), Doug Turley (Jeanne), and Beth Turley Ellis (Cory), and a proud grandmother to seven: Robert Turley (Bethany), David Turley, Andrew Turley, Gordon Turley, Connor Turley, Carter Ellis, and Althea Ellis.

A gifted artist, Annabelle expressed her creativity through watercolor painting and the pieces she created as a member of a national tole painting guild. She was also an avid gardener who filled her yard with vibrant, carefully tended flower and herb gardens, and she delighted in preparing delicious meals for family and friends. Her passion for history and lifelong learning shaped her work in museum education at Old Sturbridge Village, her famous “10-cent tours” of King Brook Farm, and the papers she presented as a member of Tuesday Club.

Annabelle was deeply committed to her community where she served on the Board of Directors of the Palmer Public Library and helped found the Library Loft, a used bookstore whose proceeds support library programs. She also touched the lives of many through her dedicated service at Trinity Episcopal Church. Her inclusive nature made her

home a gathering place full of warmth, love, and laughter, and her generous spirit ensured that everyone felt welcomed and valued.

Whether playing tennis at the Farm, stepping in as goaltender during pond hockey games when her children were young, or searching the woods for the perfect Christmas tree, Annabelle was game for anything. A good sport in every setting, she valued the company of others over competition itself. She cherished time sailing in Maine and visiting Grand Cayman Island with friends and family, but her greatest joys were often the simplest moments: sharing good food, laughter, and the beauty of nature with loved ones.

Calling hours will be held on April 23, 2026, from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Beers & Story Palmer Funeral Home, 1475 North Main Street, Palmer, MA 01069. Her funeral will follow on April 24, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church, 20 Park Street, Ware, Massachusetts, 01082.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Palmer Public Library or Trinity Episcopal Church in her memory.

Annabelle will be deeply missed and remembered for the love, warmth, and joy she brought into all of the lives she touched.

**DEATH NOTICE**

**Turley, Annabelle Mary (Hunt)**

Died April 3, 2026  
 Calling hours April 23, 2026 from 4 to 7 p.m., Beers & Story Funeral Home, Palmer  
 Funeral April 24, 2026 at 11 a.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church, 20 Park St., Ware.

**PUBLIC NOTICES**

**WILBRAHAM PLANNING BOARD**

The Wilbraham Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, May 6, 2026, at 5:45 PM** in the Town Office Building, 240 Springfield Street, on the application of Jessica and Zachery Carr for Site Plan Approval (SPA26-02) under Sections 3.4.2.8 and 4.10 of the Wilbraham Zoning Bylaw to allow a 609 square foot Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) within the existing house on property owned by Jessica and Zachery Carr located at 6 Hitching Post Lane as shown on plans on file in the Planning Office and posted for public viewing on the Planning Board page of the Town of Wilbraham website at [www.wilbraham-ma.gov/123/Planning-Board](http://www.wilbraham-ma.gov/123/Planning-Board). This meeting will be conducted in person and virtually (see meeting agenda for details).  
 James Rooney, Chair  
 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.  
 HD26P0742EA  
 Estate of:  
 Genevieve M. Gibeau  
 Date of Death: 12/21/2025  
 CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION**

To all interested persons:  
 A Petition for Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Michelle G. Da-

vis of East Longmeadow, 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 **Michelle G. Davis of East Longmeadow, 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 05/05/2026**. 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. Stouedemire**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: April 07, 2026  
**Rosemary A Saccomani**,  
 Register of Probate  
 04/16/2026

**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 Rodriguez  
 215 White St.  
 Springfield, MA 01108

1997 Fleetwood Bounder  
 VIN: 3FCM53GSVJA05173  
 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



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

**Public notice deadlines are Friday at 3 p.m.**

**visit [www.publicnotices.turley.com](http://www.publicnotices.turley.com)**

**BRAIN** from page 1

that curiosity and challenge play in learning. Lanning explained that challenging the brain creates new neural pathways through stimulation. New interests and hobbies are one of the best ways to develop your brain health. Lanning brought up the example of learning a new instrument, asking the audience about their hobbies. He explained that everything is online nowadays and how you can learn almost about everything if you wanted to.

Managing your stress, the third pillar, may seem easy to do but may be difficult to some. Lanning explained again the importance of community and confiding in friends or having those social interactions.

A strategy he mentioned was to do your best to silently sit still and let everything flow. Alongside that, limiting screen time exposure and taking physical stretch breaks are huge benefactors to managing stress. Lanning

also asked the audience what they do to unwind, with all forms of answers from crocheting to watercolor painting.

The next pillar, ongoing exercise, is the foundation of constant movement that gets difficult especially when you get older. Lanning explained that there's more ways to move other than running a marathon to be active.

Just getting 150 minutes of exercise outside of regular movement each week increases circulation, improves sleep, reduces risks of diabetes, heart disease, depression, and stroke. The building of physical endurance as well as mental endurance is what makes your brain healthy.

The final two pillars, restorative sleep and eat right, affect each other the most. A sleep schedule can easily be manipulated and set off track due to change in diet, a day pattern changing, or too much screen time.

Lanning recommended exposing yourself to outdoor light during the day to im-

prove sleep as well as maintaining a regular schedule throughout the day. Though there is no diet that has been proven to increase brain health, Lanning explained that eating less sugar, salt, and meat, and focusing on incorporating more of the foundations of the Mediterranean Diet like fish, seafood, nuts, grains, vegetables, and healthy fats like olive oil, can increase brain health significantly and reduce foggy.

Lanning added that only about 30% of physical aging is genetic. He told the group that it's never too late to focus on brain health, build habits, or incorporate the six pillars into your daily life.

"It's important to do what we can to hold it at bay for as long as we can." Lanning said.

Regardless of age, you can always do things to improve your cognitive health through challenging yourself, learning, being curious, and developing new neural networks through your habits.

**BACKYARD** from page 6

the summer in Western Massachusetts."

**Bluebirds**

I received an email from a Hampden resident, who shared video from a blink camera she installed inside her bluebird house in 2025. She placed the camera in the birdhouse to keep track of activity and this resulted in two broods of bluebirds successfully hatching and fledging a total of eight

young. She said, "The camera helped to keep the sparrows from establishing a nest and gave us close ups of the bluebird families." She also said, "Once September rolled around, it was time to clean and sanitize the birdhouse. However, a downy woodpecker found it was a fine place to spend the night. He has continued arriving at sundown and leaving at sunrise the next day. The bluebirds sometimes stop by during the day possibly checking it out for their future nest." She said, "Our

hope is the bluebirds return this spring and don't have issues with the woodpecker as well as the sparrows."

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

**Job Connection**

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Messages Edit

**JOB ALERT**

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[www.turley.com](http://www.turley.com)

Send writing samples with resume to:

**GREG SCIBELLI**  
 24 Water Street  
 Palmer, MA 01069

or email directly to [gscibelli@turley.com](mailto:gscibelli@turley.com)

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**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](mailto:Highway@newbraintree.gov).**

A.A./E.O.E.

**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.**



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▪ EXTERIORS ▪

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