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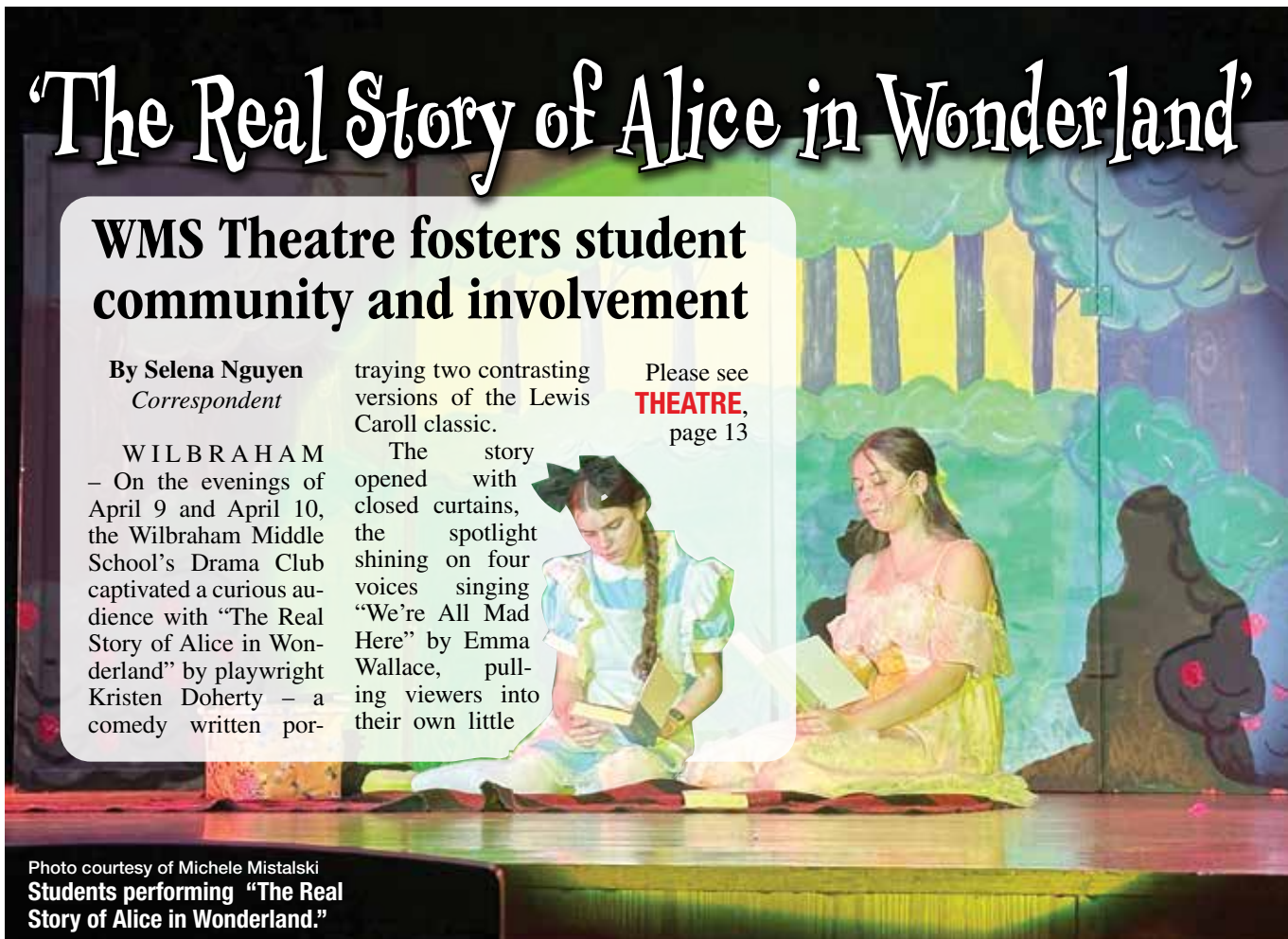
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APRIL 23, 2026

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COMMUNITY
Sourdough Event
Page 4

SPORTS
Chaug volleyball gets win
Page 11



'The Real Story of Alice in Wonderland'

WMS Theatre fosters student community and involvement

By Selena Nguyen
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - On the evenings of April 9 and April 10, the Wilbraham Middle School's Drama Club captivated a curious audience with "The Real Story of Alice in Wonderland" by playwright Kristen Doherty - a comedy written por-

traying two contrasting versions of the Lewis Carroll classic.

The story opened with closed curtains, the spotlight shining on four voices singing "We're All Mad Here" by Emma Wallace, pulling viewers into their own little

Please see **THEATRE**, page 13

Photo courtesy of Michele Mistalski
Students performing "The Real Story of Alice in Wonderland."

WEDC holds Village Center info session

Public feedback welcomed

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Economic Development Committee held a Public Information and Feedback Session on the Village Center at the senior center on April 9.

The information and feedback session centered on proposed pedestrian access and safety plans for the Village Center, providing information on the proposals so far and an opportunity for questions, comments and feedback from the community.

It was also clarified that there is no approved construction project, no immediate changes planned and all concepts are preliminary and for discussion purposes only.

For anyone who would like to submit comments, email wedc@wilbraham-ma.gov.

Readers can also check out the full discussion on the Video on Demand page on the town website.

After providing a background on what led to the proposed plans, Vice Chair Jeffrey Smith explained the purpose and goals of the study/plan were the following:

- Evaluate pedestrian safety and accessibility to the Village Center
- Create/Improve walkability in a more connected Village Center
- Explore Parking and Traffic Calming Measures
- Create safer pedestrian environment
- Provide continued support for local businesses
- Enhanced overall community experience
- Generate visual plan to solicit community feedback

"So, a lot of work has gone into the plan that is going to be presented to you tonight. Is it a perfect plan? No. By no means is it a perfect plan. However, it's a plan that addresses traffic safety, people moving throughout the center and it puts some ideas down on paper," Smith said.

For the funding sources, Smith said they comprise \$4.3 million in ARPA money and \$50,000 allocated by the Select Board in December 2022 after a presentation to the board to develop the plan and review the flow of people and cars in the center.

"To implement that process, we developed a comprehensive RFP, which was issued in 2023 and we didn't get any responses. It turns out we did too good of a job on the RFP. I spoke with an

Please see **WEDC**, page 5

'Chaug students express concerns over teacher contract negotiation stand-still

By Reese Magee
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - For the last 300 days, teachers in the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District have been without a contract-as negotiations between the Hamp-

den-Wilbraham Education Association and the district's School Committee remain unresolved.

Among other requests, teachers are fighting for a 3% salary increase. Yet, concerns over budget costs have led to a stalemate.

As a result of this ongoing standstill, union members began participating in what's called a "work to rule" in January. This union action requires that teachers only work during their contracted hours.

The purpose of work-to-rule is to highlight teachers'

value and the voluntary work they do beyond the regular workday.

Work-to-rule actions can lead to teachers not writing emails on the weekends, stay-

Please see **CONTRACT**, page 3



Turley photo by Kristin Rivers

The Hampden Selectboard will present a proposal to meet with the Wilbraham Select Board for a meeting on the regional agreement.

Selectboard to present proposal for regional agreement meeting

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - The Selectboard will present a proposal to meet with the Wilbraham Select Board regarding the regional agreement.

On April 13, Selectboard Member Don Davenport

explained how the Wilbraham Select Board wanted to reopen discussions on this topic and Superintendent Dr. John Provost wanted some direction as well.

"So, I'm suggesting that we send a letter to the Wilbraham Select Board saying that the agenda for this meeting would be several

things. Number one, we said we would send a joint letter to the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District which says that we're committed to the core program. That we're also committed to providing a safe and healthy

Please see **AGREEMENT**, page 13

Scantic River Artisans presents 'Hello Spring Hello Art' Show

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - The Scantic River Artisans hosted the "Hello Spring Hello Art" Art Show on April 11 and 12 at the senior center.

The two-day show featured acrylic, graphite, watercolor, oil, oil stick, textile and mixed media pieces, photography, sculptures, jewelry, pottery, pen art and design, painted signs and many more.

There was, also, a raffle to win an art piece.

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

Please see **ART SHOW**, page 9



Turley photo by Kristin Rivers

Danny DiFilippo smiles with one of his paintings called "Joy of Spring."

HISTORICAL WILBRAHAM

Card parties thrived in 1961

Lunchtime meetings. How did they have time to do their job?

By Charles F. Bennett
Times Editor Emeritus



Charlie Bennett

The month of April 1961 got off to an early start on Easter Sunday, April 2 with two Sunrise Services held on Wilbraham Mountain and all Wilbraham churches heavily attended.

The weather was a surprise though. Churchgoers found sunny skies at the early services and missed a freak blizzard during the 11 a.m. timeframe.

If you were a student of everyday suburban life in Wilbraham in April 1961, what pastime do you think would be the talk of the town? If you thought it was card parties, you would be correct.

If you were reading a copy of the Wilbraham news in the Springfield Morning Union,

you would hear about three upcoming card parties planned by one organization just in that one issue of the newspaper. The parties were planned for April sponsored by Group 10 of the Women's Guild of Wilbraham United Church. And there were many more card parties all over town. My source for all this information are news clippings left me by my mother, Ethel Bennett. She was the Wilbraham reporter at the daily newspaper, the Springfield Morning Union.

The first party was one planned by Mrs. Gilbert Stacey of Chestnut Hill off of Mountain Road who would

Please see **HISTORICAL**, page 10

Copies of School's First Yearbook Distributed



Minnechaug's first yearbook, "The Falcon", made history in 1961 when 265 copies of the yearbook were released under the guidance of its student editor Joseph (Joey) O'Neil. (Springfield Morning Union photo)

65 Years Ago

Underpass Mishap Damages truck

Here is a news clipping reported by my mom, Ethel M. Bennett, who was the Wilbraham correspondent for the Springfield. From the April 7, 1961 edition: "Misjudging the clearance of the underpass at Stony Hill Road. J. L. Hillman, 33, of Slocum. R. I., owner and operator of a tractor-trailer had the top torn off and sides considerably damaged early Friday morning, according to Patrolman John Chrzanowski who investigated.

The driver had a load of potatoes destined for the State Line Potato Chip Co."

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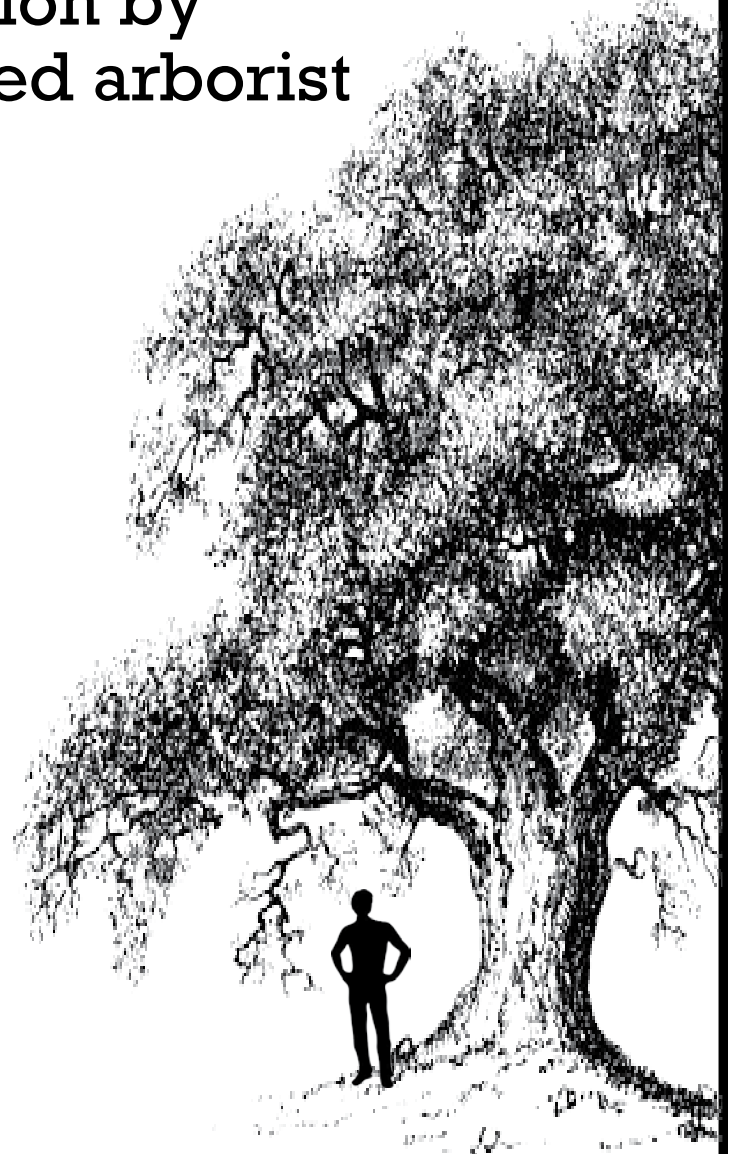


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Granby considering joining regional dispatch

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

WILBRAHAM – Granby is considering being added to the Wilbraham Regional Communications Center. The regional dispatch currently serves the communities of Wilbraham, Hampden, and Belchertown, fielding emergency calls for local residents.

The topic was shared with the Select Board during their April 13 meeting.

“Late last week, I received an email from the interim town manager slash police chief of Granby,” Anthony Gentile, the director of WRECC, said. “They’re interested in joining the WRECC. Very early stages on. They wanted to gather some information. I did hold an executive meeting with our executive board and we discussed. The executive board and all the chiefs, are on board with Granby joining our regional center. Again, this is the beginning of the process. It wouldn’t be until probably 2027, July maybe even later.”

“Are they preferable to the other entity that’s approached us because of their size?” Sue Bunnell, the Wilbraham Select Board clerk, said.

Gentile confirmed that they would be.

“Granby would be a great fit for us here at the Wilbraham

Regional Communications Center,” Gentile said. “They do a lot of mutual aid with Belchertown, which you all know we dispatch for already. Smaller size, like the town of Hampden. Six-thousandish residents, 1,200 911 calls a year, so it would be a great fit for our regional center.”

Granby intends to sign a letter of attestation while seeking further information about the enrollment process. A letter of attestation informs the state that they are interested in joining. It would also let Gentile know if he “needs to apply for any type of grant funding” during the process.

“How does somebody like Granby fit into our current physical structure?” Marc Ducey, vice chair of the Wilbraham Select Board, said.

“Granby would be a good fit,” Gentile said. “Very smaller bedroom community, not a lot of calls for service, 1,200 911 calls a year. Hampden, before they came to, Wilbraham did 900. So, it wouldn’t be that much of a task to take them on.”

“I know physically we’re limited in the space we have, so there’d be no real issues around that,” Ducey said.

“No, nothing in the space we have,” Gentile said. “All of them have CAD, all of them have 911, all of them have radio, so all four posi-

tions are ready to go.”

Gentile went on to clarify that they have three with the potential to “up-staff to four” dispatchers to handle traffic issues, large disasters, or heavy winds coming through and stated that WRECC can have four dispatchers to cover the call spread.

“I don’t think I need to augment my staff too much for bringing on Granby,” Gentile said. “Since it is a smaller community where the call volume isn’t that heavy.”

“There was a technological communication issue where we wanted to transition some of the, I don’t know if it’s the way we communicate or the systems that we’re using with one of the, was it Belchertown?” Michael Squindo, the Wilbraham Select Board chair, said. “Is that going to be an issue with Granby?”

Gentile replied that the WRECC was waiting for the Massachusetts Executive Office of Technology Services and Security for additional details regarding the systems used to “run plates, people, et cetera.”

“They’re working with our IT department to get that up and running,” Gentile said. “Once that comes on, everything should be able to work together. Everything’s already set up on our end,

on their end it’s ready to go. We’re connected through fiber, so they’re talking to each other. It’s just, we’re waiting for that last component to bring it on to actually merge them together.”

After Squindo asked if the process would be more seamless should Granby be brought onboard, Gentile said this.

“Now we have 15 months if we want to start this July 1, 2027 to actually put this together,” Gentile said. “So, now we know what we need to do and it’ll be more seamless.”

“Is July 1 a reasonable time frame?” Ducey said.

Gentile confirmed that the time frame was reasonable and that he was submitting a grant request for the integration that Wednesday ahead of fiscal deadlines.

“That’s why, in this development grant that I’m submitting Wednesday, I’m going to ask for a certain amount of money to be put aside for us in case we need fiber, in case we need microwave links,” Gentile said. “Because if I wait until the next fiscal year, I won’t get that before July 1 of 2027. So, that’s why they want to sign the letter of attestation so we’re able to get that funding if needed. Again, this isn’t set in stone; it’s the beginning.”

Paranormal event hosted by Friends of Wilbraham Seniors, May 1

WILBRAHAM - Join the Friends of Wilbraham Seniors on Friday, May 1, for “Who Goes There” a paranormal event unveiling three area investigations of paranormal activity uncovered by presenter Rob Goff Sr., Director and Founder of Agawam Paranormal and his team.

This event will be held at the Wilbraham Senior Center, 250 Springfield St., Wilbraham; doors open at 5:45; presentation from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.; free of charge; contact the Wilbraham Senior Center at 413-596-8379 before April 27 to reserve your space.

As an added attraction, a raffle with three opportunities for each winner and their guest to participate in an actual new investigation. Local author Dave Bourcier will be selling and signing his books on Historic Tales of Wilbraham.

CONTRACT from page 1

ing after school, volunteering at events, writing letters of recommendation or advising clubs.

In Wilbraham, teachers have limited the many roles they take on outside of their paid hours.

To better understand how this is impacting the school system, a survey was conducted among teenagers at Minnechaug Regional High School.

Some students mentioned that due to work-to-rule, communication through email with teachers has become difficult.

Others mentioned that scheduling classes for the following year became challenging.

Another concern among students surveyed was the loss of some extracurricular activities and after-school help.

Still, other students bemoaned the possible cancellation of field trips and the loss of a popular dodgeball tournament.

Yet, some students are not suffering the impact as much. In the survey, some said the negotiations are not being felt

by them, although they did acknowledge their classmates’ concerns.

Many students, also, expressed concerns about not having as much academic support.

“I was pretty nervous about my Calculus midterm and I wanted to stay after with my teacher,” said high school senior Callan Blanchard, pointing out he was not able to get as much of that extra help because teachers have limited the amount of time they stay after to contracted hours only.

Other students expressed similar concerns about not having enough time with teachers.

“I am left to choose which AP Class I want to review for,” said high school junior Addison Derosia. “I have to prioritize one class over the other.”

During the March 17 School Committee meeting, Lucy Haile, the 2027 Class President, spoke about how this delayed contract is hurting education.

After the meeting, she said, “I felt like students weren’t really being included in the conversation, even though we’re the ones who are

directly affected.”

She went on to say student experiences need to be heard.

“I wanted to make sure our perspective was heard, especially as a junior during such an important year,” Haile said. “It wasn’t about taking sides, but more about advocating for students and making sure people understood how this situation is affecting us in real time.”

And it is not just about losing academic time with teachers. Students are also losing some of the experience of what it means to be in high school.

Blanchard spoke directly about the loss of the annual student versus faculty basketball game.

“This was an event I had been looking forward to since freshman year,” Blanchard said. “The excitement seemed to build every year as I met more teachers and saw my upper classmen lose over and over. I was convinced I was going to be a part of the grade that finally beat them, but now I won’t even have a chance.”

For now, negotiations continue as students--and the district--await what happens next.

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Sourdough Brandon visits WPL for workshop

By Natalie Proulx
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - On Monday, April 13, the library hosted a workshop for Western Massachusetts food blogger, recipe developer, and home baker, Brandon Cochran, who also goes by Sourdough Brandon.

Cochran explained how to create, maintain and bake with a sourdough starter, also providing those who attended with his very own sourdough starter that they could start feeding and making that night.

A sourdough starter is a symbiotic culture of bacteria and wild yeast that can leaven bread using basic biology and chemistry. Cochran mentioned in his presentation that for thousands of years, sourdough starters have been a main part of baked good recipes before baking powder and other fast acting and instant dried yeasts that we now have today to replace the maintenance of having a sourdough starter if one doesn't bake that often.

Cochran said that with lots of care and proper storage, a starter can last forever, explaining that many bakers online have heirloom sourdough starters that they sell.

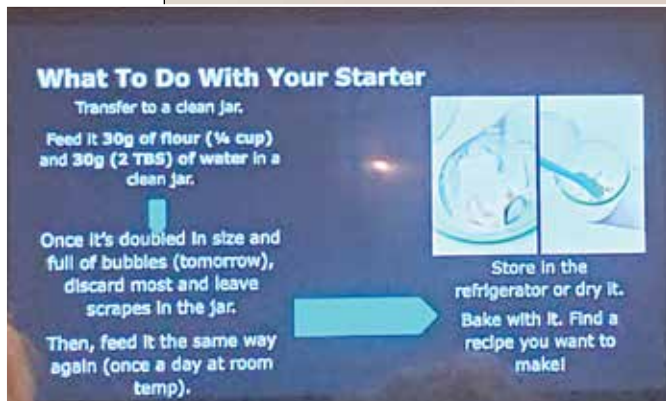
"There's a comfort in knowing that someone has been taking care of that for a very long time," Cochran said, adding how it's much more meaningful to make one.

Cochran recommends baking with a sourdough



Sourdough Brandon poses with the different materials used to make and maintain his sourdough starter.

Turley photos by Natalie Proulx



What to do with your starter part of the presentation.

starter not only to combat store additives of traditional baking soda, powder, or instant yeast, but also because of its health benefits in baking sourdough specifically, improving gut health and leveling blood sugar. Even if you're not a home baker, the process of tending to a sourdough is something for all ages, an experiment to learn from as well as adding an extra layer of depth to your baking hobby and increasing your patience.

Cochran's sourdough starter is used for more than

amples of rolls, buns, doughnuts, bagels, pizza dough, croissants, and braided loaves as just a few things that one's starter can be used with. But in the maintenance of a sourdough starter, he explained that before feeding your starter daily with rye flour or bread flour—the best flour options—and water, you need to discard some of your starter so it doesn't overflow. This discard can be used as its own separate leavener to reduce waste in started discard recipes.

just baking bread. Since sourdough starter is a natural leavener, it can be used in almost any recipe that calls for a leavener.

Cochran gave the extreme temperatures aren't great for the starter so storing it in 75 to 85 degrees is optimal.

Cochran explained all the little tips and tricks that he personally uses to get the best results in maintaining his starter.

"However you drink your water I would feed your starter," Cochran said, explaining the importance of high quality ingredients.

Extreme temperatures aren't great for the starter so storing it in 75 to 85 degrees is optimal.

If you have gluten allergies or want to make a gluten free starter, you can just use non-glutinous flour to feed and maintain your starter.

The optimal consistency for a starter should be a pancake-batter-like consistency. If you don't bake as frequently, Cochran mentioned that you can dry out your starter to rehydrate it later instead of letting it all go to waste.

Cochran has been surrounded by southern hospitality and baking since he was young, always baking to some capacity his whole life. He began sourdough baking six years ago as many people did in March of 2020.

"I just kind of fell in love with the process," Cochran said, "It was just one of those hobbies that I just kind of dove into and it eventually became part of my story, part of my life."

Cochran started "SourdoughBrandon" in 2022, and is now what he does full-time. He does lots of workshops around Massachusetts, getting to help individuals who have maybe tried making sourdough before but didn't have success.

"They end up telling me later," Cochran said, "that they followed my recipes and actually had success."

His main mission: to get home bakers to succeed, and to demystify the difficulties of sourdough.

For detailed recipes and instructions of how to start, maintain, or bake with a sourdough starter, you can visit Sourdoughbrandon.com.

Wilbraham Friends of the Library to hold book sale

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.

Rotary Club to hold month of May 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 Ottonson 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.

Hampden Public Library Earth Day Eco Expo April 25

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

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

Vendors include Mass Audubon who will bring stick bugs, Cloverbook

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

Mother's Day Specials

Appetizers

Prosciutto Wrapped Asparagus
balsamic drizzle

Sausage Stuffed Mushrooms
sausage stuffing, topped with cheese

Entrées

Haddock Francaise
rice pilaf, spinach

Baked Stuffed Shrimp
seafood stuffing, rice, asparagus

Mom's Petite Filet Mignon
6 oz filet, red wine demiglace, fingerling

Salmon Hollandaise
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Residents provide feedback on Village Center plan

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - When the Wilbraham Economic Development Committee's Public Information and Feedback Session on the Village Center took place on April 9, residents had the opportunity to share their concerns, questions and provide feedback.

For background on the proposed plans, check out this week's edition.

Also, it should be noted that there is no approved construction project, no immediate changes planned and all concepts are preliminary and for discussion purposes only.

For anyone who would like to submit comments, email wedc@wilbraham-ma.gov.

Readers can also check out the full discussion on the Video on Demand page on the town website.

Sherie Shaffer lives immediately across from Gazebo Park and had three requests, one observation and one suggestion. The requests were for a Parking Utilization Study, a study done on how the plan will impact residential house values and working with the town tax assessor to discuss the impact of noise, traffic and residential appeal of the area might affect house values and considering potentially doing adjustments to property taxes, such as abatements.

Her observation was driv-

ing down Springfield Street, especially at night, and seeing "this beautiful green and all the monuments and then you see the pretty brick building in the background," which gives the feeling of a small New England town, concerned this would be changed if the parking lot goes in.

"You can never get it back. Once you take green space away, it will never come back. That view will never come back, the feeling as you drive into that beautiful historic village will change forever," Shaffer said.

As for her suggestion—geared towards the attendees—if anyone was interested in being part of a Wilbraham Village Residents Association to make sure everyone gets communications on plans like this to share their contact information.

John Tousignant shared his family ties to the Village Store and the house given to his wife's grandparents in 1910, pointing out the house on the map, along with the driveway and property line.

Also, there was an agreement with the owners years ago to have delivery trucks come in and turn around there, too, and have the trash bins on the property.

"The way that you have this come through here, people sometimes go down our driveway to get out, so we have this, all of a sudden, they're going to be going out that way. This is going to be



Turley photos by Kristin Rivers

This board shows the proposed plans for the Village Center in Wilbraham and what it looks like right now.

a one-way? It's right against my property," Tousignant said.

After mentioning his grandson and the impact on the Village Store parking and

delivery trucks, Tousignant also noted the crowds that come for the Veterans Day and Memorial Day ceremonies.

"This entire green is filled



Town Administrator Nick Breault provided background on the town's Traffic Safety Committee.

with people, so if you put a parking lot there, where are they going to be? Sure, you have the Memorial stuff over here, but where are they going to stand? In the parking lot?" Tousignant said.

Liz Pacosa-McEvoy said she supports the Historical Commission's request for review and noted the Crane Park area's historical and civic significance, but also supports "thoughtful improvements" such as reorganizing the monuments "into a more meaningful layout would enhance the space."

"However, I was flabbergasted to see this proposal framed as a safety plan. As it stands today, a person can walk from Main Street all the way down to the library without crossing any traffic. Under this new proposal, that same person would need to

cross multiple traffic paths or walk through a parking lot with through traffic," Pacosa-McEvoy said. "I think this prioritizes automobile movement over pedestrian safety."

Pacosa-McEvoy also noted the financial reality impacting essential services including schools, roads and the library.

"In that context, we have to ask, is this the right investment? Is additional parking even necessary, and what are the long-term costs?" Pacosa-McEvoy said. "I stand here to support improving Crane Park, thoroughly and respectfully, there are elements of this plan really worth exploring. We must preserve this special space. I counted there today, there are 153 parking spaces including the Village Store, Pafumi's, the commons where The Sugar Chalet is and the 12 spaces that are reserved for the Village Store across the street in that parking lot, so that gives us 153 and I was thinking, isn't that enough? So, let's keep Crane Park a park, not a parking lot."

Town Administrator Nick Breault is also part of the Traffic Safety Committee and appreciated hearing the comments on the parking, the park and the specific issues residents face with commercial traffic coming in. He suggested that these comments also be presented to the Traf-

Please see **FEEDBACK**, page 13

WEDC from page 1

engineer after we put it out and said, 'Why didn't we get any responses on that?' They said, 'What you're asking for is like a \$250,000 product to output. You have to bring the scope of what you're asking way down,' so we did that. We reduced the scope and eventually, in collaboration with the town Engineering Department, engaged with VHB," Smith said.

From there, outreach efforts were made in the spring and summer of 2025 to abutters within 300 feet, followed by abutters within 600 feet this spring. The plan was also posted online and information was shared through the Parks & Rec Department and social media.

Also, presentations to the Select Board, the Planning Board and the Traffic Safety Committee on multiple occasions during plan development.

"The Traffic Safety Committee is an interesting committee. It's an ad hoc committee that is comprised of representatives from the fire department, the police department, Engineering Department, DPW, Planning, Select Board. It's essentially a group of people that have interest in all of the things traffic related in town. They had some fantastic feedback as we developed this plan and we incorporated some of their changes," Smith said.

Other boards included were the DPW, Engineering Department and Historical

Commission.

For the Memorial Area—which Smith noted is where the Veterans Memorials are located—he explained the Veterans Agents were consulted and provided feedback.

"Essentially, ended up reconfiguring the monuments for accessibility, so the centerpiece being the Civil War Memorial that we all see when we're coming up Springfield Street and you hit Main Street, the large memorial in the middle," Smith said. "It wouldn't make any sense to move that anyways, but everything has been kind of reconfigured so that it's centered around that in a semi-circular pattern."

Through that concept, sidewalks access is added to each monument, arranged closer ADA parking to the park, addition of bike racks, improving visibility of the monuments through arranging in a more symmetrical pattern, down lighting for each monument area and adding a second flag pole to flank the Civil War monument.

Other enhancements included signage providing uniform descriptions of the monuments, the history of the park regarding the Crane Family and the donation of the land to the town and landscaping improvements of sidewalks with lighting, shade trees and plantings and benches/tables.

John Furman, office manager for VHB, explained the preliminary concepts for traffic focused on these items.

- Improved pedestrian access and safety

- Parking improvements
- Better traffic flow and pedestrian/vehicular visibility

- Traffic calming strategies
- Pedestrian access improvements across Village Center

For traffic calming strategies, Furman said this involves speed tables at the Springfield Street and Main Street intersection to reduce vehicle speeds and minimize noise impacts for residential abutters.

"What a speed table does it takes that up and down movement and spreads it out," Furman said. "The speed table has a ramp on all approaches and then the flat area is even with the top of sidewalks, so that whole area is pedestrian-friendly. You don't have any tripping hazards."

Other strategies were narrowing the roadway, which would reduce the roadway width on Main Street, slow traffic speeds, increase sidewalk widths, create additional green space, Furman explained, and extend the chain fence, which would have the granite column and chain fence extend from Burt Lane to the Village Store driveway.

"We eliminated some sidewalks and then we created green space and so the sidewalks are actually set back from the roadway and there's a green space corridor between the pedestrian walkway and the curb line," Furman said.

For traffic safety, this focus was truck turning radius adjustments, meaning adjusting the roadway to accom-

modate large trucking capacity.

As for parking improvements, Furman said that was to address limited public parking adjacent to Crane Park, limited ADA-accessible spaces, existing parking subject to changes, predominantly private parking inventory, existing businesses retain "Grandfathered" parking conditions which means "non-conforming but allowed to continue their use."

"The existing parking is subject to change. So, right now, you could park on the private parking, but if a new owner comes in and signs that not for public use, that won't be available to you. So, it be-

came important to basically increase the amount of public parking that we had to us, so that visitors to the park and to the businesses had a place to park and from there, created that walkable downtown," Furman said.

After Furman and Smith explained the map with the proposed changes, Smith shared that the feedback received would guide future decisions, with the next step being the WEDC presenting findings to the Select Board and taking the lead from them on what to do next.

"If the project does advance—if some part of it advances—it's likely going to

be taken over by the DPW and the town of Wilbraham Engineering. Should that happen—again, should any part of this be implemented—there will be formal review processes, there will be many public hearings, ample opportunities for public input. Ongoing updates will be provided and everything will be well-advertised so you would know about it ahead of time," Smith said. "So, again, the purpose of tonight is to say here's the possibilities, what are your thoughts, what's your feedback."

For the resident comments, check out this week's edition.

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VIEWPOINTS

What I did last weekend

I was so looking forward to last Saturday, a day in which I did not have to drive anywhere. I could simply stay put and work on getting the yard in shape.

have a few bulbs and biennials at the base of the Redbud.

I was able to give the canes a strong yank and to hold I have three new black-berry bushes free



Boy, was it a long winter, and there was proof of that no matter where I turned.

Read on to learn which outdoor and indoor gardening activities kept me busy.

First I decided to tackle the perennial and shrub borders that I walk by the most often. Half of the reason we garden is because we like to stand back in admiration, so I figured if I cleaned those up I'd have something to feel good about on my way to the car or the chicken coop.

I leave many perennials standing through the winter, especially those with seed heads the birds might like to dine on.

So, before I got out the rake, I went plant by plant with my hedge clippers, cutting the dead and brown stalks to about "fist" height from the ground. Hedge clippers make fast work of this task. After that came the rake, with which I carefully cleaned the bed of matted leaves and the plant parts I just cut back. As I was working, I weeded out clover, and some perennial grasses that appeared within the bed, and although I am nowhere near ready to apply bark mulch, I got out the spade and did my best to put a crisp edge on the border with the lawn. Looking good.

While I was putting tools away I found (gasp) some hyacinth and daffodil bulbs that never got planted in the fall. I cannot even believe that there were green tips on these bulbs that sat in a empty pot in my unheated subarctic garden shed over the winter months.

I figured that after that torture they deserved to be planted. I sunk them twice their height deep and watered them in. Say a prayer.

My "Redbud garden" shares a stone wall with some thornless blackberry bushes. It may not have been smart on my account to have an ornamental garden opposite plants that like to sucker like crazy but such is life when you want to squeeze in as many plants as you can into the space you've got...Anyway, ten foot long canes jumped the wall into the bed where I

for the taking. I separated them from the mother plant, potted them up and will delight a friend with them, just as my friend Kelly's husband had done for me some years back.

These berries are so wonderful. Even with a small patch I am always able to freeze a couple of quarts for use in the off-season. Yum!

With stems cut back, leaves raked, weeds and suckers removed and the beds given a crisp edge, I felt good enough about leaving outlying gardens for another day. It was time to turn my attention to tomato seedlings that had long since outgrown the seed packs the seeds were sown in the third week of March.

Typically we transplant when the first true leaves form. I am maybe a week late.

Carefully I lifted out the clumps of seedlings and gently pried the roots apart. Tomato seedlings can be sunk deeply, almost up to their leaves; new roots will form on the stems.

After a gentle watering they will go back under the grow lights they until they are big enough to be moved from the six packs to a four inch pot. Probably by May 1.

What is next on the agenda? Next weekend I have to assess my potato patch. I'll probably pull up old red raspberry canes nearby to expand the bed.

Blueberry bushes need some fertilizer. Asparagus could use lime and compost, probably some weed-wash as well.

There is never a dull moment this time of year, and I am not sure I'd want it any other way.

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

Same payment, different future:

How homeownership builds more than a place to live

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

WEST SPRINGFIELD - At first glance, renting and owning can look surprisingly similar. A monthly payment is made. A living situation is secured for a month. Life goes on. But over time, one small difference changes everything. Homeownership is about more than just paying for a place to live. It's about building something of your own, one payment at a time.

Homeownership also gives something many renters don't always have: stability, control over the space, and the ability to put down roots in their community. Over time, it can open the door to something even bigger – building generational wealth.

"A crucial trend people should understand about homeownership and wealth is that homeowners are, on average, roughly 40 times wealthier than renters," said Dawn Creighton, Liberty Bank Community Outreach officer. "It's a wealth gap that has reached historic highs."

A big part of that difference comes from equity.

Simply put, equity is the portion of your home that you own. With each mortgage payment, you're not just paying to live somewhere — you're increasing your ownership. And as home values rise over time, that ownership can grow even more.

For example, a home purchased at \$210,000 with a small down payment starts building equity right away. As payments are made and the home increases in value, that equity can grow significantly — sometimes reaching tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars over time.

Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH) makes the purchasing process more affordable for the limited income population by offering low, fixed interest rates; a minimal or no down payment, and waiving mortgage insurance.



A Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity home in Springfield.



Pedro signs mortgage documents for the Holyoke home he will share with his wife, Damaris.

"After 10 years, equity grows more noticeably while the home value increases. After 20 years, more than 50% of the principal (the amount still owed) has been paid off. After 30 years, the family owns it outright," said Olga Callirgos, GSHFH Homeowner Services manager. "This creates more financial freedom as there is now no monthly mortgage payment. The home is now a family asset that can be lived in long-term and passed down through generations."

That piece makes a difference to many families, particularly those who previously faced housing instability.

"When a family can stay in one place, they can finally stop reacting to housing cri-

ses and start pouring their resources into long-term goals like education or career growth," said Beata Gosselin, Housing Counselor program manager at Cambridge Credit Counseling. "The extra breathing room in the budget allows families to build up an emergency fund and handle life's unexpected curveballs without the constant fear of losing their housing."

Greater Springfield Habitat has built 77 homes in Hampden County since opening its doors in 1987. The most recent home was sold in early April to a couple in Holyoke.

In June 2025, GSHFH sold a Springfield home to a couple with four school-age children. In addition to building equity, the kids now have a stable and reliable place where they can grow and thrive.

"Children growing up in a home their parents own, generally experience greater stability, leading to improved educational outcomes, better physical/emotional health, and higher high school graduation rates (up to 25% higher) compared to renters," Dawn said.

Anne Eisenman agreed. She is a longtime GSHFH supporter, volunteer, and former board of directors' president.

"Living in the same home and attending school in one district throughout childhood provides stability and community. Seeing parents caring for their home and property teaches children life skills such as problem solving, prioritizing projects, and managing finances," she said.

To learn more about Greater Springfield Habitat and stay up-to-date on open application cycles, visit habitat.springfield.org



Driss (far left) and his children pose in an upstairs bedroom of their new Springfield home.

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters
By Russell Gloor

When a spouse dies will the other get a Social Security Survivor Benefit?

Dear Rusty:
I am 79. My husband is also 79 and we both receive Social Security benefits. We were both married before and we married each other at the age of 58. Am I to understand correctly that when either of us dies, the surviving spouse is not eligible to collect the deceased spouse's Social Security benefits? Please correct me if I am wrong.

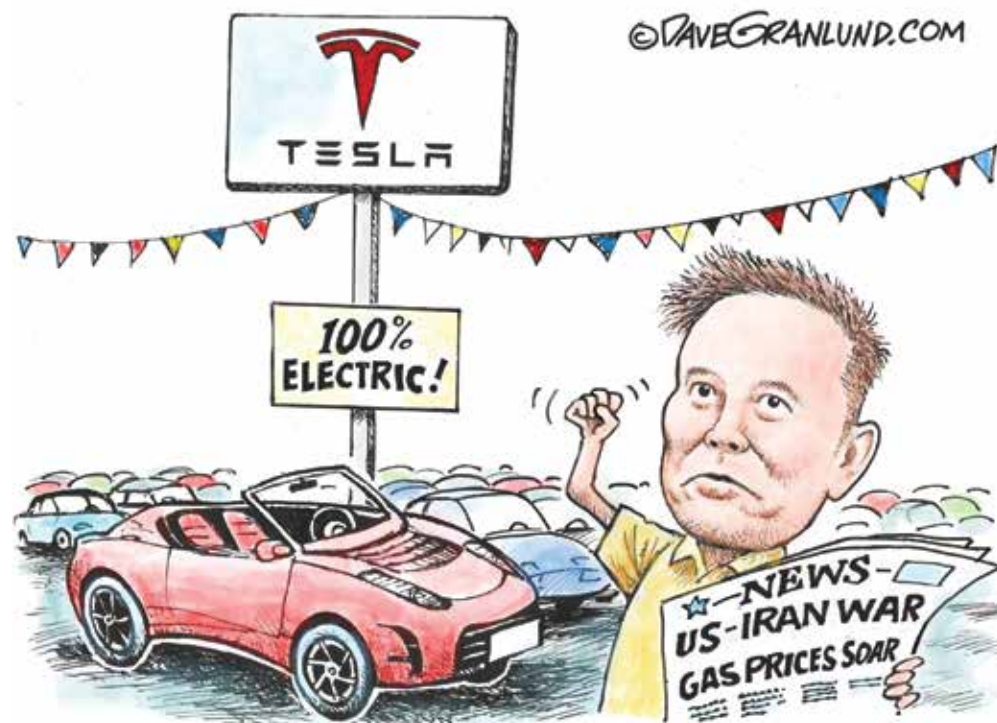
Signed: Curious Spouse

Dear Curious Spouse:
A surviving spouse only gets one benefit - either their own SS retirement amount, or their de-

ceased spouse's amount, whichever is more. So, the Social Security benefit that the deceased was receiving at death will be paid to the surviving spouse, replacing any smaller SS payment the survivor was already collecting. To be sure you are aware, the surviving spouse will also be eligible for a one-time lump sum death benefit of \$255 (I know it isn't much, but it should be claimed anyway).

Also, unless the surviving spouse was already receiving a spousal benefit while both partners were living, the surviving

Please see **SSI**, page 13



The Wilbraham-Hampden TIMES

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

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

Campaign news

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

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

Life in &

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

WILBRAHAM HAMPDEN



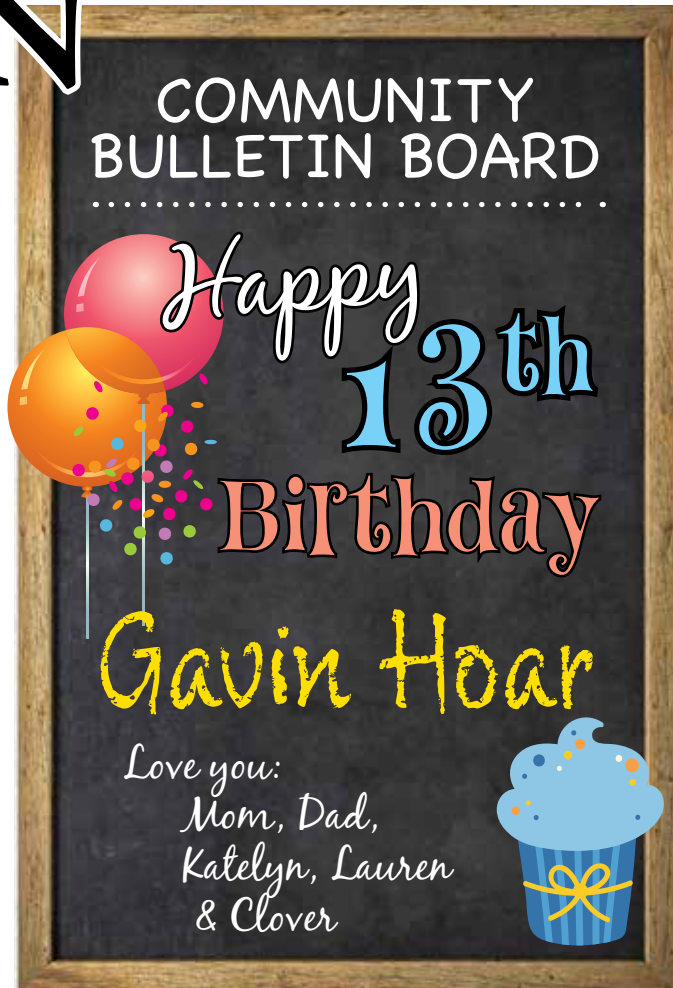
Submitted photo and caption Cheryl Phillips

Red Hatters celebrate Easter...

The Wilbraham Red Hatters met in March to celebrate Easter with a fun game of bingo. The next meeting will be April 30 at the Wilbraham Senior Center. Join Caro Munoz, Director of Public Programming and Research at Norcross Wildlife Foundation. The program title is: Where do pollinators go in the winter? Explore how pollinators survive New England's harsh winters and learn practical ways to support them throughout the year. This hands-on experience includes engaging discussions and a close up look at curated specimens that fascinating adaptations and behaviors. This presentation is open to everyone. Come join us!



Local students beautify Wilbraham



COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

Happy 13th Birthday Gavin Hoar

Love you: Mom, Dad, Katelyn, Lauren & Clover



SPRING HAS SPRUNG

Turley photos by Kristin Rivers
Enjoy some photos of flowers blooming outside the Wilbraham Town Hall. Spring has, finally, arrived!



A group of local high school students spent time this past weekend (April 11 and 12) giving back to the community by picking up trash in Wilbraham. The students are part of a program through the District Attorney's Office known as YABES-a creative extension of

the Youth Advisory Board (YAB), with "ES" representing Environmental Sustainability. Six students participated in the cleanup effort, representing several area schools: one senior from Chicopee Comprehensive High School; Ryan Cooley from Wilbraham & Monson Academy; Rylee San-

tiago from Palmer High School; Kendall Allen and Karissa Coppolo from East Longmeadow High School; and Simone Darden from Springfield Honors Academy. Together, they stepped up to make a difference and contributed their time and energy to help Keep Wilbraham Beautiful.



Submitted photos and caption Megan Harrigan

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Post Computer celebrates 35th anniversary

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - Post Computer, a computer repair company on Boston Road, is celebrating 35 years in business.

They are open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and there's always someone available to pick up the phone. Also, open on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to Noon.

Aristeo Torres said the business "is not sales-driven, although we do a lot of that."

"But, the idea here is that we started the business 35 years ago to fix computers, and things have changed a lot in that time. We've seen several generations of computers and the idea is that we like to keep them running," Torres said. "Along the way, we started taking care of viruses. That's kind of our motto: 'Viruses and Worms and Trojans, oh my!'"

Other items added along the way included virus removals, tune-ups and upgrades.

"We were drawn into selling computers because, in the retail world, computers were just so-so. Always built to last two to three years and



Aristeo Torres and Jan Macon take a photo inside Post Computer on Boston Road.

be thrown away and people would come to us and say, 'I don't want to throw it away.' Guess what? We'll fix it," Torres said.

On what fulfills him most, Torres said it's the people.

"It's very fulfilling to keep machines running, and then what happens, they get too old and the client says, 'Sell me a computer.' It's a good thing. We fix them as long as we can fix them and then, at some point in time, it's up to us to say, 'Well, maybe you should buy a new one,'" Torres said. "That's the good part about the job, it's a lot of

fun." Torres shared he and Jan Macon have been at the company since its inception and it started over "a cup of coffee and a joke."

"Her and I were having lunch and I blurted out that someday I would find someone that had some money and would invest in me, because I had the knowledge, didn't have the money. So, she put up her hand, I fell on the floor and we're 35 years into this," Torres said. "She's been my partner since that time."

His time in the Navy working on electronics also

inspired him going into business.

"I spent four years in the Navy working on aircraft radar systems, so that was my inspiration. We had a nice leap into the electronics world after I got out of the military. I went to fix electronic typewriters, so I went into that industry and that's kind of down the road where I met Jan and got coffee and then we started this business," Torres said. "We had our bumps, ups and downs. Business, COVID, but we managed to keep the doors open."

On the lessons learned, it was "the bad guys are better than the good guys."

"A lot of what we do now is helping people who have been compromised," Torres said. "A gentleman walked out who got a phone call from a bad guy and got into his computer and then last Saturday, similar scenario. So, that's one of the toughest lessons we've had to learn. It's what we do. We've been cleaning up computers since the early days and now it's just gotten more of a problem."

Torres said the business has been in Wilbraham all this time, up and down Bos-



Turley photos by Kristin Rivers

The Post Computer sign on Boston Road in Wilbraham.

ton Road in different places and moved to its current location about a decade ago.

"It's a good spot being right across the street from the police station," Torres said. "We want people to know that we're here to help with computers, phones, pointing them in the right direction. What they need to do when they're compromised, like the gentleman that was here just a few minutes ago, and we want people to know that they can walk in with a phone and ask for help. There aren't too many people doing what we do when it comes to cleaning up phones. Even the carriers don't want to do it, so we've learned to clean up

phones." Torres thanked the community for supporting the business over the last 35 years.

"We have to say thank you to the community, the small businesses, families, independent professionals, lot of salespeople. We're just very grateful," Torres said. "Even though there's been people that have come and gone, we have 10,000 names in our database of people that we've taken care of over the years, and I'm very, very grateful."

To learn more, call 413-596-5177, visit www.pocosys.com or check out their Facebook page.

Community Forum to be held on Hampden Town House future set for April 28

HAMPDEN - Hampden's Old Town House Study Committee has announced that a Community Forum on the future of the former Hampden Town House will be held April 28 at 6:30 PM, at the new Town Hall at 85 Wilbraham Road.

The Committee will present an overview of the current options under consideration for the former Town House, present the survey findings, seek resident input and answer questions.

Ad hoc Committee Chairperson Donald Davenport stated, "The most important aspect of the Forum is to hear first-hand from as many residents as possible their

vision for the future of the former Town House which has played such an important role in the history of Hampden. This forum will give residents a chance to express their thoughts in the context of the financial, zoning, construction and Town Master Plan considerations."

The Committee has identified four fundamental decision paths; Wait and Do Nothing, Town Retains Ownership, Sell to Private Owner, and Demolish the Building. Each decision path carries different cost profiles, risk exposure, timeliness and implications for the Town. Within each decision path specific options are evaluated against

financial costs, the Master Plan, zoning feasibility, construction feasibility and timeliness. Attendees at the Community Forum will be able to review and comment on the various decision paths and the specific options under each one.

Committee member Tad Brown stated, "While a Town Meeting will make the final decision the Forum is an opportunity for residents to have input into what the final recommendation will be and what the Main Street corridor will look like economically and aesthetically for years to come. I encourage folks to attend. It's your Town, your future."

Plow Day 2026

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Community Garden proudly announces the 15th Annual "Plowing the Community Garden" event.

This event will take place on Saturday, May 2 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Wilbraham Community Garden located at 700 Monson Road in Wilbraham. There will be several teams of Draft Horses including Mainely Drafts and Cedar Knoll Farm preparing the soil the slow old fashioned way utilizing walking and riding plows. I

f you missed this event in the past, don't miss it this year as this may be



the last one. The list of local vendors grows every day including Little Oak Farm, Kaits Creatures, and Sokol Coffee Roasters. Hot Rod Doggs from Monson will be on-site with lunch items for sale and the musical entertainment will be brought to you by The Murpys.

Bring your camera and a chair and join us for a wonderful event. This is a shine only event.

If there is inclement stormy weather, this event will be cancelled. For more information or to be a vendor, please call Melissa Graves in the Conservation office at 596-2800, ext. 204.




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ART SHOW from page 1

Hampden Senior Citizens. Monson Savings Bank also brought waters and a cheese and fruit platter for the show.

Danny DiFilippo has been part of the SRA for many years and had three acrylic paintings featured in the show he hadn't showed before. He, also, was part of the Wilbraham Art League in the past.

"One is more like an impasto. It's very thick paint," DiFilippo said. "The frame is also man-made. It's made with white birch bark."

His "Poppy Love" painting, DiFilippo explained, features poppy flowers and was created using acrylic paint, and his other piece, "Jewel of the Desert," has a unique setting.

"It's flowers that do grow in the desert but not in any place else, and that's also done with brush only and it's acrylic paint also," DiFilippo said. "The frames I don't make. I make some frames, but not all of them."

DiFilippo shared he's done art since grade school and began with pencil. Over time, he got into Impasto and painting.

"Never went to school. Did it on my own," DiFilippo said. "I love doing it. It gives me great pleasure when I do that, when I create something and I like to do things a little different. I like to create something than just regular painting."

He shared what he enjoys about the art shows.

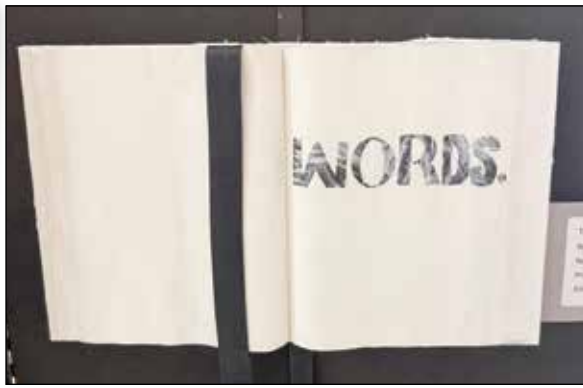
"First off, I like all the people here. So, it's like a day out," DiFilippo said. "It's a beautiful couple of days here with a lot of people."

SRA President Laura Salerno said over 90 people entered pieces in this show and within the opening at 10 a.m., a woman came in and bought a piece three minutes later.

"We have quite a bit of photography in this show, which is fantastic. We also have a lot of sculptural,



A pastel painting called "Blossoms" by Demi Busky brought a touch of spring.



An acrylic art piece called "Words" was created by Demi Busky.

two-dimensional pieces," Salerno said. "We have another artist who just came back to us, Audrey Safford, and she's got some sculptural pieces. She's got the carousel horse out there, so it's very interesting. People are really stepping outside of the box and trying new things. We got one woman, she painted a whole picture on top of old newspaper right at the end here. Very interesting. It's this old gentleman cradling a donkey, like a baby donkey. It's adorable."

Salerno was happy to see people she hadn't seen since last year come out for the show and buy artwork.

"So, new faces and some old faces returning to us," Salerno said.

Coming up on May 14 is the next Interactive Learning Through Art program called "Impasto," led by Nan Hurlburt. It takes place from 6 to 8 p.m. at the senior center and costs \$20 to sign up.

Registration is through May 8 and people can pay online at scantcriverartisans.com.

"Impasto is almost like a three-dimensional, it's almost like a thicker kind of paint you're using basically," Salerno said. "This is a three-dimensional piece but she's going to add twigs and pine cones and rocks and sand. All



Tess Ahlberg of Tessimals Celestial Creations was back at the Spring Art Show.

sorts of stuff into it. It's a very interesting technique, so I'm looking forward to trying this one."

Reflecting on her first year plus as president of the SRA, Salerno was pleased with the way things have been going.

"Our artists, they kind of know the routine now, they're excited about it. Our setup was quick and easy. We all know what's expected, we all know what we're striving for. We're looking to create a classy environment for the artist with a little cafe setting here with the food and everything," Salerno said. "And for artists to sit and mingle with each other because, as an artist, you get inspired by talking to other artists and you want to have those peo-

ple in your community. You want to know their opinions, sometimes, on art, so the setting here is just wonderful for that that we've created."

DiFilippo's message was this.

"Thank you everyone for coming out. It's good to see you every time we do a show here and it makes me and everybody else happy because if they don't come back, it means they don't like it. But if they come back, they must like it," DiFilippo said.

Salerno encouraged the community to attend the next show, which is the Juried Art Show on June 13 and 14.

"It's worth seeing. Absolutely worth seeing," Salerno said.



Attendees check out Tangled Vine Jewelry, wine-inspired jewelry, at the art show. Nan Hurlburt oversaw the table.



Turley photos by Kristin Rivers. These dragonfly-themed glasses were created by Penny Goodman.

NEWS BRIEFS

Register by mail to be included in town voting

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Annual Town Meeting will be held on Monday, May 11, 2026, 6:30 p.m. and the Annual Town Election will be held on Saturday, May 16, 2026, from 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., both at Minnechaug Regional High School.

If you are a Wilbraham resident, but not a registered voter and would like to vote in the meeting or election, you must register by Friday, May 1, 2026, 5 p.m. The Wilbraham Town Clerk's office would like to remind voters that Vote by Mail Applications for the town election are available

on the town's website and at the Town Clerk's office. Alternatively, you can apply for a vote by mail ballot online at <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/MailInRequestWeb/MailInBallot.aspx>, to have a ballot mailed to you.

The last day to request a vote by mail ballot for the Annual Town Election is Monday, May 11, 2026, 5 p.m. The ballot will be finalized Tuesday, April 14, 2026, 5 p.m. A sample copy of the ballot will be posted to the town's website and at the Town Hall. Any questions can be directed to the Town Clerk's office, (413) 596-2800 x 200.

Wilbraham-Hampden Scholarship Foundation announces upcoming raffle

WILBRAHAM/HAMPDEN - Dear Hampden and Wilbraham Neighbors, Since 1961, the Wilbraham-Hampden Scholarship Foundation has been awarding scholarships to graduating seniors of Minnechaug Regional High School residing in Hampden and Wilbraham.

Last year, we proudly awarded 53 scholarships totaling a record \$101,750. To sustain our ongoing work, the Foundation depends on the generosity of people in our community. Our biggest fundraising initiative each year is our "Annual Spring Raffle."

This year we are again offering the convenience of two enclosed raffle tickets for \$25 each.

For a chance to win one of our wonderful prizes which have been generously donated, complete the ticket stubs and return them with a check payable to WHSF using the enclosed pre-addressed envelope prior to our Facebook Live drawing on Wednesday, May 27, 2026.

You can also enter by making a payment through PayPal using the QR code

below or by visiting wilbraham-hampdenscholarshipfoundation.org/donate. Be sure to include your name, phone number and email address in the note field so that we may complete and enter your raffle tickets on your behalf.

If you would prefer to donate to the Wilbraham-Hampden Scholarship Foundation in lieu of purchasing the raffle ticket, we will be most grateful for your contribution. Use the enclosed envelope to mail your donation or donate online at wilbraham-hampdenscholarshipfoundation.org/donate.

The Foundation is recognized under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code, making your contribution tax deductible.

We appreciate your support of our mission to assist the Minnechaug seniors from Hampden and Wilbraham in furthering their education. Please help us give a great send off to the deserving 2026 graduates of Minnechaug.

Sincerely,
The Board of the Wilbraham-Hampden Scholarship Foundation



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USDA INSP. FRESH PORK SIRLOIN CUTLETS.....	\$2.19 lb	USDA INSP. GROUND FRESH DAILY 80% LEAN GROUND BEEF 7 LB BAG	\$4.28 lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN POPEYE'S PIEROGIES POTATO & CHEESE or POTATO & SOUR CREAM 13 OZ	\$2.49 ea
USDA INSP. DOMESTIC HAM.....	\$3.99 lb	USDA INSP. IQF FROZEN SNOW CRAB CLUSTERS.....	\$9.99 lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN COAST TO COAST KITCHEN MINI EMPANADAS PIZZA, HAM, CHEESE, CHEESEBURGER.....	\$2.99 ea
USDA INSP. PROVOLONE CHEESE.....	\$4.44 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH GOAT MEAT.....	\$6.99 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BEEF OXTAILS.....	\$9.99 lb

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HISTORICAL from page 1

hold a luncheon card party on Wednesday, April 12 from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the home of Mrs. Warner B. Sturtevant of South Main Street. (Oldtimers might remember that Gil Stacey was a well-known antique car collector.)

The second event would be a dessert card party at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 18 at the home of Mrs. Richard Ramsey of Brooklawn Road. The final card party in April put on by the Guild was also a dessert party at 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 26 at the home of Mrs. Stacy.

In today's world would you ever see three social events from the same group taking place in the same month? Let alone, at lunchtime?

Sometimes the news of the day would also be talked about in between the card tricks. Also happening in world news, in 1961, newly inaugurated President John F. Kennedy was planning to meet with Russian Premier Nikita Khrushchev in Vienna to discuss disarmament, while the Berlin Wall was being constructed in Germany.

Minnechaug Band

Meanwhile, members of the Minnechaug Regional High School Band were rehearsing with guest artist Armando Ghilialla, the First Trumpet with the Boston Symphony and the Pops Orchestra, for a concert planned for April 14. They were rehearsing in their brand-new cream and green-colored uniforms.

The town's police force

was excited to be presenting the 1961 Policeman's Ball, also at the new Minnechaug which was about to graduate their first class in June of 1961. The Ball's chairman, Sgt. Wellington Rose, announced that a \$100 scholarship would be awarded and a donation made to the Lions Club Spec Pond recreation project from the proceeds of the Ball.

The Morning Union reported a very successful Policeman's Ball with over 950 people who "Danced under an attractive decorated netting sprinkled with stars Saturday, April 8. A color scheme of blue and silver," wrote the Union, "was carried out with other arrangements in the gym and the bandstand was lined with large potted plants. The Grand March was led by Police Chief and Mrs. William Pollitt, Sgt. & Mrs. Wellington Rose, Patrolman John Chranowski and Patrolman & Mrs. Gardner Files.

Fashion Show

The Evening Guild at United Church kept busy in April drawing a big crowd at their Fashion Show Thursday April 13 in the Memorial School Auditorium. Mrs. Frederick W. Prater, General chairman, was commentator for the models who displayed new spring fashions in pastel colors. A highlight of the entertainment was the Wilbraham Academy Glee Club under the direction of the headmaster W. Gray Mattern.

The Catholic Women's Club of St. Cecilia's also planned a fashion show five days later on Tuesday, April

18 in the church Social Center. Of course, the Catholic women also held a card party. They expected so many women that they asked the women to bring their own playing cards.

Minnechaug's first yearbook, "The Falcon", made history when 265 copies of the yearbook were released under the guidance of its student editor Joseph (Joey) O'Neil. O'Neil stays in touch with his old classmates and attended the 50th reunion at the Country Club of Wilbraham a few years ago.

Back in 1961 when a new minister came to town, his installation was a major social event. So, Grace Union Church planned a special occasion April 23 when they installed Rev. Henry Edwin Green as pastor of the church in North Wilbraham. The Ecclesiastical Council of the Hampden Association of Congregational Christian Churches met at the event.

Members and friends were invited to dinner under the dining tutelage of Arthur D. Tripp (known for his excellent talent in the kitchen over the years).

Other social activities often took place in conjunction with local churches.

In what is known as a "Pulpit Exchange" Rev. Kenneth Teed of East Longmeadow Congregational Church swapped pulpits with Dr. Walter T. James at Wilbraham United Church. At the same time Dr. James will be filling in for Rev. Teed in East Longmeadow. The exchange was arranged as a way for both churches to become better acquainted.



Tree Warden Gordie Long, standing next to The Mile Tree, helped the Girl Scouts plant 2,000 trees at Spec Pond in 1961. (Times file photo)

Things have changed a lot since clubs and organizations held their regular meetings at lunchtime. When did they have time to do their work? Like, the April luncheon meeting of Women's Guild of United Church held their meeting at noon on April 13. The speaker was Rev. Donald R. Smith, former pastor of United Church who was to talk on "Studying in Switzerland."

The United Church Women were very busy on April 13. Under the leadership of Mrs. H. S. Putnam, chair of

the Art Committee, she had planned that portraits, scenes and sketches will be displayed in the hallway of the Parish House by 26 artists.

Those who remember Bob Swallow will remember how active he was in the Lions Club. Swallow was also the Scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 177 for many years including as an organizer that April when a Camporee was held for 177 and two other troops at the special camping area just south of Soule Road. Over 250 scouts attended a full schedule of activities mapped out including Scoutcraft competition and basic skills and a campfire ceremony at night.

Literature and Film

It was a sad month in literature as Ernest Hemingway (born in 1898) died. Dashiell Hammett, famous crime writer who invented the private detective character Sam

Spade, and creator of the Maltese Falcon, also passed away.

But Joseph Heller wrote "Catch 22" and J. D. Salinger wrote "Franny and Zooey".

On the silver screen that year was "West Side Story", "Judgment at Nuremberg" and "The Hustler".

A Flock of Geese

I wonder if they are still there? Seventeen Girl Scouts of Troop 17 planted 2,000 spruce and red pine seedlings at the Spec Pond Recreation Area April 12.

A sign of Spring that showed up over the town on Thursday, April 6 at noon was a flock of geese in perfect v-formation was seen winging its way north according to a Bruer Ave., resident Mrs. Albert Collette who saw the birds heading over North Wilbraham. "The flock was said to have 200 geese - a good sign that Spring is here," read the Morning Union article.

Another sign of Spring was the April Rummage Sale at the Wilbraham Grange Hall April 29. The hall was open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. for the sale which was their major ways and means project. There was always clothing and knickknacks for sale including a Hudson seal fur coat and an electric hot dog cooker.

Sources: "History of Wilbraham Bicentennial Edition 1763-1963" edited by Charles Merrick; "The History of Wilbraham, 1731, 1763-1913 by Chauncey E. Peck "Sources: Various issues of the Springfield Morning Union. "Timeline of History" by Bernard Grun, Touchstone Publishing.

Editor Emeritus Charlie Bennett enjoys providing town history for our readers. He is a member of the Historical Commission and liaison to the Atheneum Society. Readers can contact him with comments or ideas for the column at cbennett4765@charter.net.

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.

Troop 359 Mother's Day Plant Sale

WILBRAHAM - Wilbraham Troop 359 will have their annual Mother's Day Plant Sale on Sat, May 9 in St. Cecilia's Church parking lot from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sales and donations help pay for camping equipment, supplies,

program materials, registration and activity fees throughout the year. Thank you from Troop 359. The generous community support is greatly appreciated. For more information, contact John Guerin 413-388-3545.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Egyptian bull-god
5. Romanian monetary unit
8. Will Ferrell holiday film
11. "It Ain't Half Hot Mum" actor
13. Error-related negativity
14. Volcanic crater
15. Boston Herald columnist Margery
16. True market value
17. Italian term for exchange rate
18. Informal loan clubs
20. Men's fashion accessory
21. Children's craft supply
22. Extra benefits
25. In an early way
30. A judge has one
31. Soviet Socialist Republic

CLUES DOWN

32. Tractor unit
33. Defunct supercomputer developer
38. Promotional materials
41. A forgetful state
43. One who beheads
45. Photographers
48. Small, rich sponge cake
49. Clergy's vestment
50. Expressed pleasure
55. Abba __, Israeli politician
56. Zero
57. Ancient Greek word for "earless"
59. Nigerian governmental area
60. Mild expression of surprise
61. Places to hang things
62. Keyboard key
63. Make a mistake

CLUES DOWN

64. One-time president of Republic of Korea
1. Bridge building degree
2. Expression of sorrow or pity
3. Large, stocky lizard
4. Romanian river
5. Communication
6. Stoats
7. Showcases
8. Bird of prey
9. King of Thebes
10. Cleaving tool
12. Large African antelope
14. Three are particularly notable
19. Meet one's needs
23. C. European river
24. Dictator
25. Indicates how much out of 100 (abbr.)
26. The 17th letter of the Greek alphabet
27. Consume food
28. Woman (French)
29. Scrape a surface
34. Green vegetable
35. Pacific Standard Time
36. Capital of Brazilian city
37. Paddle
39. Cause to become insane
40. Drier and flakier
41. Mimic
42. ESPN personality
44. One who moves slowly
45. Secret political clique
46. Behind the stern of a ship
47. Supernatural force
48. Sanctuary
51. Swiss river
52. Grayish white
53. Engrave by coating
54. North Carolina university
58. Midway between south and southeast



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Falcons get better of Lions in volleyball action



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Kevin Cordova goes for a spike.



Jonathan Correa and Jacob Gilmartin go for the block.



Brennan Rost sends a set straight up.



Jonathan Correa gets the spike away.

WILBRAHAM – Last Thursday night, Ludlow and Minnechaug boys volleyball continued their long rivalry as the neighboring schools met for the first time this season. The Falcons had the edge in the matchup, winning three straight sets, though Ludlow gave them a good run in the final set, though the Falcons were able to finish off the sweep with a 25-22 win. Minnechaug's Brady Laliberte had seven kills and Brennan Rost added 24 assists. Nick Deroin had eight kills for the Lions, who are 2-5 on the season. Minnechaug is now 6-4.

Strong second half leads Brownies over Falcons



Ricky Hale sends a pass away from the goal position.

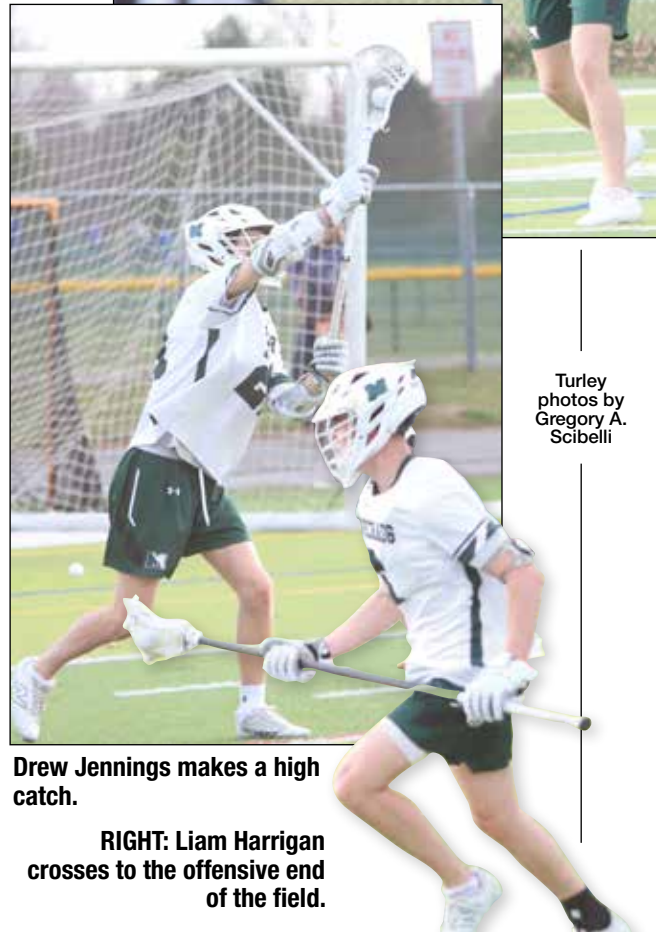
WILBRAHAM – After a great start to the regular season, Minnechaug Regional High School boys lacrosse has run into a few tougher opponents. Last Monday afternoon, Agawam outscored the Falcons 6-1 in the second half for a 9-4 win. Both teams battled in the first half hard with Minnechaug scoring a late goal to make it 3-3 at halftime. But Agawam's offense came alive in the second half with the Falcons not able to answer back. Agawam got three goals from Casey Thomas while Cam Faneuff scored two goals for the Falcons. Agawam is a perfect 5-0 while Minnechaug is now 5-3.



Liam Faneuff looks away to make a pass.



Liam Metzger tries to clear the ball out of the defensive end.



Drew Jennings makes a high catch.

RIGHT: Liam Harrigan crosses to the offensive end of the field.



Jake Hisgen looks for a path around a defender.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

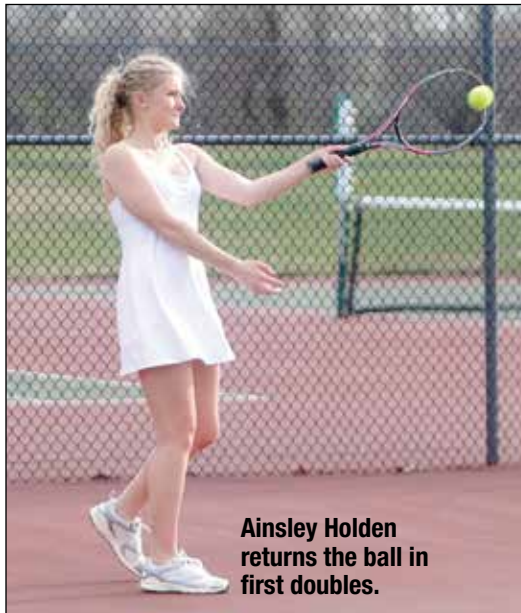
Hurricanes break up Chaug's win streak



Katelyn Hoar goes underhand for the hit.



Ellie Gaudreau gets the return.



Ainsley Holden returns the ball in first doubles.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Chloe Robins squares up a hit.

WILBRAHAM – Last Thursday afternoon, Minnechaug Regional High School girls tennis was defeated by Amherst 4-1. The lone win on the match for Minnechaug was Ellie Gaudreau at first singles. She won straight sets against her opponent 6-1 and 6-3. Minnechaug had won three straight prior to that, defeating Belcher-town, East Longmeadow, and Ludlow. They are now 3-3 on the season.

SPORTS

T-Birds defeat Wolf Pack, await playoff opponent

SPRINGFIELD - The Springfield Thunderbirds (32-32-6-2) overcame another hard charge from the Hartford Wolf Pack (26-38-5-3) to emerge with a 4-3 win on Saturday night before a sell-out crowd of 6,793 inside the MassMutual Center.

After a disheartening third period on Friday, the T-Birds came out with a clear purpose to their game in the opening 20 minutes, outpacing Hartford on the shot board, 18-4. Despite that disparity, it took until the 14:14 mark and the club's 16th shot of the period to find the back of the net. Dillon Dube did just that, deflecting an Alek Kaskimaki shot past Callum Tung's glove to make it a 1-0 lead for Springfield.

Dube's work was not done, either, as the veteran forward cranked a one-timer through Tung at 19:07 off a pass into the high slot from Calle Rosen, giving him 20 goals in just 46 games this season and joining Chris Wagner and Kaskimaki as 20-goal scorers for this season's T-Birds squad.

Juraj Pekarcik helped buoy the lead further when he stole a puck from two defenders and quickly chipped a forehand shot past Tung at 5:45 of the second to make it a 3-0 lead for the home team.

However, for a second straight night, the Wolf Pack refused to go away quietly, as Brendan Brisson's second goal in two nights got Hartford on the board at 7:56 of the second. Then Aidan Thompson stole a puck off the right wing wall and quickly funneled a forehand shot through Will Cranley on the stick side to cut it to 3-2 at 12:48 of the period.

From there on, though, the T-Birds' rookie netmind-

er was monstrous, as Cranley would make 37 saves by the time his night was done.

Just 33 seconds after Thompson's goal, Springfield got a much-needed response when Hugh McGing put a shot off a defenseman's stick and past Tung's shoulder, giving the T-Birds a two-goal cushion heading into the third.

Controversy made an appearance 3:46 into the third when Brisson poked a puck, along with Cranley's pad, across the line on a power play to make it a 4-3 game. The T-Birds argued heavily, but the officials stayed with the goal call on the ice, and the margin was down to one heading down the stretch.

McGing appeared to have Springfield's fifth goal of the night moments later, but after video replay, he was deemed to have kicked the puck over the line, so the 4-3 score was upheld.

Despite a furious push of 36 shots over the final 40 minutes of play, the Wolf Pack wound up finishing one goal short.

By virtue of their win and Hershey's regulation loss to the Islanders, Springfield now awaits the final outcome of the Bears' Sunday contest with the Rochester Americans to determine who their first-round opponent will be.

If Rochester defeats the Bears, Springfield will secure the 5-seed and face the Bridgeport Islanders, who locked in the 4-seed with their win over Hershey on Saturday.

If the Bears defeat the Americans, Springfield will be the 6-seed and face the Charlotte Checkers, the 3-seed who would host all three games of the best-of-three series.

Railers get win in penultimate game

WORCESTER - For the Railers' loyal fans, the 2025-26 hockey season has gone from being "wait till next year" to "we can't wait for next year."

The home team increased its winning streak to five games with a wonderful 3-2 overtime victory over the Adirondack Thunder Saturday night. Drew Callin, assisted by Anthony, got the winner at 4:05 of OT.

The game went into extra minutes thanks to a late goal by the Thunder.

Adirondack, though, carried no momentum into overtime. The Railers outshot the visitors, 4-0, in the fourth period. At times it looked like Worcester was playing with a two-man advantage.

The winning goal came via a short pass from Anthony to Drew in close. The older Callin had a tap-in, although a minute earlier he had missed what looked like a gimme from in close on a similar play.

The goal was Drew Callin's 25th of the season. He is merely the fifth Railers player to reach that plateau and has two of Worcester's eight overtime goals this year.

"We love that OT," he said, adding, "We came into the weekend knowing it was the last weekend and we wanted to go out the right way. We wanted to get the first one and do it again (Sunday)."

MacAuley Carson and Max Dorrington had the other Railers goals, both in the first period. Dylan Wendt and Grant Loven scored for the Thunder. Loven's goal came with only 2:09 left in regulation and just six seconds after a delay of game penalty on Adam Samuelsson had expired.

Parker Gahagen was the winning goaltender with another great performance. He made 23 saves to improve his record to 20-11-1. Gahagen is only the second individual Railers goalie with a 20-win

season. Mitch Gillam won 20-plus in the team's first two years as members of the ECHL.

It is Gahagen's second personal 20-win year as pro, at least with the same team. He was 20-10-3 with the Florida Everblades when they won the Kelly Cup in 21-22. Gahagen has been beyond good at the DCU Center. He is 10-4-0 at home with a 1.96 goals-against average and .930 saves percentage.

The Railers got ahead early on Carson's goal at 4:41 of the first period. He received a neat pass from Riley Piercy along the left boards and beat Thunder goaltender Tyler Brennan along the ice from about 20 feet out. It was Carson's seventh goal of the season and third in the last five games after he endured an 11-game drought.

Worcester retained its 1-0 lead for about 14 minutes. Dorrington made it a 2-0 game at 18:26 His goal came

on a bad angle shot from the right of the net with Gleb Veremyev and Adam Samuelsson picking up assists. The goal was Dorrington's seventh and he has four in the last five games.

The Railers kept Adirondack off the scoreboard for more than half of the second period but Wendt got his team a goal at 10:41. It was a very nice play all around as Thunder defenseman Connor Hutchison slid a diagonal pass from the left point to Wendt between the circles.

He re-directed it over Gahagen's glove into the top corner.

Worcester nearly regained its two-goal lead shortly after that as Lincoln Hatten had the puck and some space about 25 feet out but was denied by Brennan.

Adirondack's tying goal came from in close, set up by a shot from Kevin O'Neil.

Roster spots still 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 week-night 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 regular season was scheduled to get underway on Sunday, Apr. 19, but games were postponed due to rain, pushing the start of the season to Sunday, Apr. 26. Therefore, anyone who is able to sign up before that date will be able to participate in the full season.

The registration is live at www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org. Players must register and then pay the league dues via Venmo or contact

the league leadership if an alternate form of payment is needed.

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

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

Monson Savings Bank welcomes Jacob Johnson as Assistant Branch Manager of Hampden branch

MONSON - Monson Savings Bank is pleased to announce that Jacob Johnson has joined the Bank as Assistant Branch Manager of the Hampden Branch.

Johnson brings a strong background in customer-focused relationship management and financial services to Monson Savings Bank. In his role, he supports the day-to-day operations of the Hampden Branch, assists with staff development, and works directly with customers to provide a full range of personal and business banking solutions. He is focused on delivering personalized, attentive service that fosters

trusted, long-term customer relationships.

"We are happy to welcome Jacob to the Monson Savings Bank team," said Dan Moriarty, President & CEO of Monson Savings Bank. "His strong customer service background, financial experience, and dedication to community values make him a great fit for our Hampden Branch and the customers we serve."

Prior to joining Monson Savings Bank, Johnson spent six years locally with Balise Ford of Wilbraham, most recently serving as a Finance and Insurance Manager. In that role, he developed extensive experience assisting

customers with financing options, financial products, and relationship-based service—skills that align with the core of Monson Savings Bank's community banking approach.

A resident of Hampden, Massachusetts, Johnson is actively involved in the community. He and his family support the YMCA of Greater Springfield, where his children participate in youth programs. He is also a dedicated supporter of Empty Arms Bereavement Support, participating annually in the organization's Syrup Stampede 5K to raise awareness and funds for families experiencing pregnancy and infant loss. In addition, Johnson has quickly become engaged in Monson Savings Bank's outreach initiatives focused on strengthening customer and community relationships.

"I am thrilled to join Monson Savings Bank and serve the community where I live and am raising my family," said Johnson. "I value being part of a bank that truly puts people and community first. I look forward to building lasting relationships with our customers, helping them achieve their financial goals, and contributing to the Bank's proud tradition of giving back to the neighborhoods we call home."

Johnson holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Westfield State University.

To contact Jacob Johnson, NMLS ID 2779374, for your banking needs, please email jjohnson@monsonsavings.com or call 413-267-1299.

To learn more about Monson Savings Bank and its team, visit www.monson-savings.bank.

Pitching still needed for PVBL

SOUTH HADLEY - The Pioneer Valley Baseball League, an adult baseball league for players who are age 18 and over, still has open roster spots for 2026 season.

The league is especially in need of some additional pitching for a couple of its teams. The season is just one game in and there are 21 games remaining through the summer with playoffs taking place in August.

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

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

The league is a wood-bat only league utilizing playing under regular baseball rules though all players do bat. The league operates on a Saturday-Tuesday schedule. Games are played on Satur-

day mornings with 10 a.m. starts typical and on Tuesday evenings with start times in the 5:30 to 6 p.m. range. The league will start play in late April and run through the end of August. There are slots open for both full-time players and part-time players. The fee for full-time players will be \$260 with part-time players getting up to 11 games for \$130. Fees paid go toward the operation of the league, paying for insurance, umpires, fields, and baseballs. No one profits in any way. Those who sign up after the season begins will pay a prorated fee for the season.

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

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

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

Wilbraham Garden Club monthly meeting, May 7

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Garden Club will hold its monthly meeting on Thursday, May 7th at noon in the St. Cecilia Parish Center on Main Street.

The guest speaker is Chris Ferrero, a Cornell Master Gardener. Her presentation, "Gardening for Baby Boomers: 10 Ways to Garden Smarter as We Get Older," will focus on ways to reshape

our garden design, change the plants we use, and modify how we work in our garden as we age. She will inspire us to maintain our love for gardening as our bodies slow down!

A light luncheon will be served and is open to all members. Guest fee will be \$5.00. Please call Anna Howell at (413) 537-5788 with any questions and to register.

Searching Your Family History with Ancestry Library Edition

WILBRAHAM - Assistant Library Director Mary Bell will give a hands-on demonstration of Ancestry Library Edition at the Wilbraham Public Library on Wednesday, April 29 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

She will give a brief introduction of how to use the online resource in the Brooks Room, followed by time in which participants use library computers or their own laptops to access the database and search for themselves. All participants will be given a starter kit with forms and tips for researching genealogy.

"Ancestry Library Edition includes records of the U.S. Census from 1790 to 1950, military records such as World War I and II draft cards, and other records worldwide. International

records available include particularly good coverage in Canada and the United Kingdom," said Bell.

Images of original records, including immigration records and town records of births, marriages, and deaths can be saved to a flash drive or sent to your email from Ancestry Library Edition. It is accessible in-library only, but can be used through both library computers or personal devices connected to the library's Wi-Fi.

This program is free and open to the public. Space is limited, and registration is going on now.

For more information, contact the Wilbraham Library at 413-596-6141 or visit the Event Calendar online at www.wilbraham-library.org.

Seeking donations for Memorial Day Plant Sale

HAMPDEN - The Hampden Garden Club is looking for perennial plant donations for their Memorial Day Plant Sale.

If you are looking to

thin out your perennials, garden members will come and dig the plants you want to donate. Please contact Lil Fedora at 413-566-1137 to set up a dig day.

Senior Center collecting 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.

FEEDBACK from page 5

fic Safety Committee too. "I tell you that, on a monthly basis as we meet, we get complaints and concerns—very real concerns—about traffic in that particular area, about vehicular traffic. So, one of the things that is part of this plan is to eliminate the parking in front of the store because, right now—as everybody knows—I believe it's angled, and you're backing out and with the size of vehicles, it can be very difficult. It's a congested area," Breault said.

Breault noted the orange bollards there today, for example, came from concerns the Traffic Safety Committee heard from residents that walk through that area.

"It is a congested area, so if there are any comments that people can make that might help us or complaints about that area, we'd like to hear those as well," Breault said.

Historical Commission Chair Roberta Albano explained how the commission is tasked with "the preservation of our historic resources and landmarks," including the town center, the soldiers' monument, the park and, also, "the beautiful corridor of our historic homes that align the Main Street area."

"That has created our historic Wilbraham center. That is something that we treasure, that really is what Wilbraham is all about. Gives our town our wonderful character. That is something that if any part of it is taken away—we've said it a million times tonight—we'll never gain it back," Albano said. "So, with that, you have to look at what exists there."

Albano next said this, noting her earlier questions to



Mark Pafumi, owner of Pafumi's on Main, also spoke at the session.

Jeff White, the property manager for Crane Park.

"The space that exists, Mr. White, was designed during that time. I understand you can kind of strip that all away. All those businesses can still have those parking places that they should have. But however, there may be gains that come from that because with new technology and the ways things can figure out from our engineer here, I'm sure maybe that can be tested out or researched, so that's another possibility here and, perhaps, a resolution to some of this issue of parking, because parking is one of the problems," Albano said.

She ended her comments with this.

"The other thing is, we need to slow down at this center. People walk there, people are walking their dogs and it is hazardous. They've slowed us down at the Academy. We need to slow down at the center, so whatever way that has to happen is a good thing," Albano said. "Please don't take away any of our beautiful park area."



Turley photos by Kristin Rivers

Jeff Smith, vice chair of the Economic Development Committee, explains the study area of the Village Center.

SSI from page 6

spouse will need to contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 or at the local SS field office to make an appointment to apply for their survivor benefit.

One other thing to be aware of since you were both married before: if either of you die, and your first marriage lasted at least 10 years and your ex-spouse has also died, the surviving spouse will have a choice to collect a survivor benefit from either the ex-spouse or the most recently deceased spouse, whichever amount is more. But, again, you can only collect one benefit payment as a surviving spouse either from

your ex-spouse or from your recently deceased spouse, whichever benefit is higher.

FYI, survivor benefits are a confusing area of Social Security, so you might also find informative this article I recently published, as it goes more deeply into surviving spouse benefits including benefits for surviving minor children and surviving adult disabled children. Read the article titled "Demystifying Social Security Survivor Benefits" at www.amacfoundation.org/demystifying-social-security-survivor-benefits/. Of course, if you have any further questions, please contact us at 1-888-750-2622 or email us at SSadvisor@amacfoundation.org. There is

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AGREEMENT from page 1

environment for students and staff during transition," Davenport said. "And then we request that the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District reconsider moving the eighth grade to the high school again, which I suspect they will say no, but at least we'll know what the firm position is. Then we asked them to provide a five-year maintenance plan."

Davenport said the interesting thing was there's, currently, \$105,000 for maintenance for Wilbraham Middle School, and Hampden pays 21% of that share.

"So, if they're going to say we're going to do \$150,000 each year and we're going to use it to fix six doors, take the asbestos out or whatever like that we would pay that share. It wouldn't be a capital (item)," Davenport said. "So, this would be the joint letter

that the two committees (are) sent and then asking to replace the regional agreement amendments on the Fall Town Meeting. It's too late now, I don't think either town they have it ready, and then the rest of the agenda would be we discuss the maintenance repair cost cap because you don't want \$500,000 in repairs. You want reasonable (amounts)."

He added an amendment could also be created to say that "if a new school is built or significant renovations over x number, then it's a regional middle school."

"We would share the cost like we did with the new school," Davenport said.

He also suggested people in Wilbraham and Hampden need to be told that "this big expense is coming down the line."

"You're either going to get an expensive remodel or a new school," Davenport said.

Selectboard Member Erik Vanderleeden agreed.

"It has to be done at this point," Vanderleeden said. "It has to be done. At some point, everybody's got to take a bite every now and then. It's not the most ideal of times...it's an investment."

Chair John Flynn noted the board consensus "that this needs to be a separate meeting," and not happen during a regular meeting.

"I mean, obviously, both boards are into a time of year where we're committed to town meeting and stuff like that. So, it may be more difficult, but we can't keep kicking this can down the road," Flynn said.

After an agreement to suggest April 30 for the meeting date, Davenport said he would work with Town Administrator Brian Domina to draft the letter, with plans to meet with the Wilbraham Select Board in Wilbraham.



The cast takes a bow.

Photos courtesy of Michele Mistalski

THEATRE from page 1

world. The play was outlined by two witty narrators called Pip and Squeak, played by Caira Williams and Brynn Kennedy, who kept watchers engaged with their humorous lines and riveting stage presence.

"Nice Alice", played by Grace Romano, was narrated by Squeak to tell the more "heard of" innocent version of the story while a bold, karate-knowing "Mean Alice", played by Camilla Long, was narrated by Pip. The production not only brought out a creative side of the students but also formed a deep, tight knit community after school.

"I think it's a great way for kids to express themselves. Like, if you have a bad day at school, you can just come to theatre and you have a community. You have a family that cares about you," Caira Williams said, expressing her heartfelt experience on having a theatre program at WMS.

This family-like aspect has become one of the many reasons why the three club advisors — Katrina Madden, Michele Mistalski and April Nicotera — are extremely enthusiastic about continuing running the program, even having aspirations to hold two shows in one school year in the future.

Originally, there was supposed to be no show this year due to the program's long-time advisor stepping down. Mistalski recalled feeling personally devastated upon finding out.

It was until Mistalski and Madden approached Nicotera with the idea of directing the play all together that



Members of the Wilbraham Middle School Drama Club on stage.

the hope for a show was restored.

Nicotera expressed her strong gratitude to the other two, saying she couldn't have taken it on without them. Despite the process of "The Real Story of Alice in Wonderland" script being chosen without student input, the directors described deep respect for the kids' effort to be as involved as they could be in order to make the production the best it could be while strengthening connections.

In the past, most shows held by the club had been musicals, such as "Mean Girls Jr." and "Disney's The Little Mermaid Jr."

Although the original script did not include any music written in, the students expressed a strong wish to put their own twist on things

in order to highlight their singing voices.

April Nicotera described the audition process as highly competitive, being over 100 kids auditioning for 23 available roles.

"A lot of the students who auditioned ended up helping in other ways. It was pretty much all made by kids for kids," Nicotera said. "Props were made by kids. The vocal arrangements were arranged by the students themselves, they planned the harmonies. So, it was very much a community driven event. We all pooled our things that we were good at, kids and adults included. And we made it. The kids helped to design the tickets, the programs, the t-shirts, everything."

Looking past painted props and sound mics are young students finding their

own ways to lead, shine, and build connections. Discovering passion. Developing their voices. When asked what was most fulfilling about the production, Mistalski said this.

"Watching the kids shine, in ways that you don't always get to see them shine. I have so many students who can be a completely different student on stage, and you see a side of them that is just remarkable," Mistalski said.

On these evenings, it is clear that the audience did not just enjoy a good show. This audience was made up of families and loved ones being able to see these young students' dreams being built through a love of theatre and an eagerness to pursue passion.

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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. 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. HD26P0750EA Estate of: Paul Emile Bureau Also known as: Paul E Bureau, Paul Bureau Date of Death: 12/08/2025 CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons: A Petition for Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Diane Dooley of Huntington, NY requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that Diane Dooley of Huntington, NY 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 05/08/2026. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a 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.

WITNESSED, Hon. Claudine T. Stoudemire, First Justice of this Court. Date: April 14, 2026

Rosemary A Saccomani, Register of Probate 04/23/2026

Town of Wilbraham WILBRAHAM HIGHWAY MATERIALS 2026

Notice of Invitation for Bids

The Town of Wilbraham invites sealed bids for the purchase of Wilbraham Highway Materials 2026. Bids must be made in accordance with all applicable Federal, State and Town laws and regulations and must comply in all respects with the instructions, conditions, specifications and other requirements in the Invitation for Bid packages.

Bid packages can be obtained from the Department of Public Works, Town Hall, 240 Springfield Street, Wilbraham, MA 01095 (413-596-2800 x208) on Tuesday, April 21, 2026. Bids in sealed, opaque envelopes shall be marked "Wilbraham Highway Materials 2026 Bid" and delivered to the above address by 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 14, 2026 where they will be publicly opened and read aloud by the Chief Procurement Officer. All bids must be submitted on the official Standard Bid Form, included in the bid packages. Bids must include the signed Non-Collusion and Non-Discrimination paperwork. No bidder may withdraw his bid for a period of forty-five days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays, after the actual date of opening of the bids.

The Town reserves the right to reject any and all bids, to waive minor informalities or irregularities in any bid, and to make an award in any manner consistent with the law and deemed to be in the best interest of the Town of

Wilbraham. Tonya L. Capparello, P.E. Director of Public Works/Town Engineer 04/23/2026

TOWN OF WILBRAHAM DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS WILBRAHAM, MASSACHUSETTS ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

Sealed Bids for the construction of the "Miller Street Water Main Replacement Project - Phase 1" will be received by the Engineering Department at Wilbraham Town Hall, Engineering Office, 240 Springfield Street, Wilbraham, MA 01095 until 2:00 p.m. local time on May 21, 2026, at which time the Bids received will be publicly opened and read. Sealed Bids must have outer envelope marked as "Miller Street Water Main Replacement Project - Phase 1".

The work consists of replacing approximately 2,300 linear feet of 10-inch cast iron water main with 16-inch ductile iron water main on Miller Street in Ludlow, MA, as well as installation of valves and hydrants, service reconnections, surface restoration, and abandonment of the existing water main. Bids shall be on a unit price basis, with additive alternate bid items as indicated in the Bid Form.

All Bids for this project are subject to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws 30, Section 39M as amended.

Bidding Documents may be obtained electronically from the Tighe & Bond website at: http://www.tighebond.com/Projects_Out_to_Bid.php

Prospective bidders must complete a one-time registration process on the web site in order to receive log-in credentials. Bidders must log in to the web site to download bidding documents for the project. Bidders will be added to the "planholders" or prospective bidders list upon downloading the bidding documents for the project. Bidding documents may also be examined at the office of Tighe & Bond, Inc., 53 Southampton Road, Westfield, Massachusetts between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, legal holidays excluded.

A bid deposit of 5% shall be furnished in accordance with the Instructions to Bidders.

This Contract contains price adjustments for hot mix asphalt mixes, diesel fuel, and gasoline. See Section 01270 for payment procedures and base prices for this Project.

Construction contractors and subcontractors shall make positive efforts to achieve: (1) a

minority employee work force hour goal of 15.30 percent, (2) a woman employee work force hour goal of 6.90 percent, (3) a goal of 7.24 percent participation of Minority-owned Business Enterprise(s), and (4) a goal of 3.60 percent participation of Woman-owned Business Enterprise(s) within the project contracts.

Minimum Wage Rates as determined by the Commissioner of Department of Workforce Development under the provision of the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 149, Section 26 to 27D, as amended, apply to this project. It is the responsibility of the Contractor, before Bid opening, to request if necessary, any additional information on Minimum Wage Rates for those trades people who may be employed for the proposed Work under this Contract.

Bidders must provide with their bids a signed certification form found in the Bid Proposal, which

certifies the Labor Harmony, OSHA training, Non-Collusion, Non-Discrimination and Tax Certifications.

TOWN OF WILBRAHAM, MASSACHUSETTS Consulting Engineer: Tighe & Bond, Inc. 53 Southampton Road Westfield, MA 01085 413-562-1600 04/23/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 Docket No. HD19P0591GD In the interests of Christopher Mole Of Wilbraham, MA RESPONDENT Incapacitated Person/ Protected Person CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR TERMINATION OF A GUARDIAN OF AN INCAPACITATED PERSON

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by

Frank Mole of Wilbraham, MA Ann Mole of Wilbraham, MA

in the above captioned matter requesting that the court: Terminate the Guardianship of the Respondent.

The petition asks the court to make a determination that the Guardian should be allowed to resign; or should be removed for good cause; or that the

Guardianship is no longer necessary and therefore should be terminated. The original petition is on file with the court.

You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of 05/12/2026. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

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

one may be appointed at State expense.

WITNESS, Hon. Claudine T. Stoudemire, First Justice of this Court Date: April 13, 2026

Rosemary A. Saccomani Register of Probate 04/23/2026

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: 3FCM53G5VJA05173 LKO: Noemi Souza 222 Allen St. Springfield MA 01105 Wayman Rainey 126 Valley Rd. Springfield MA 01119

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

PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

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

Public notice deadlines are Friday at 3 p.m.

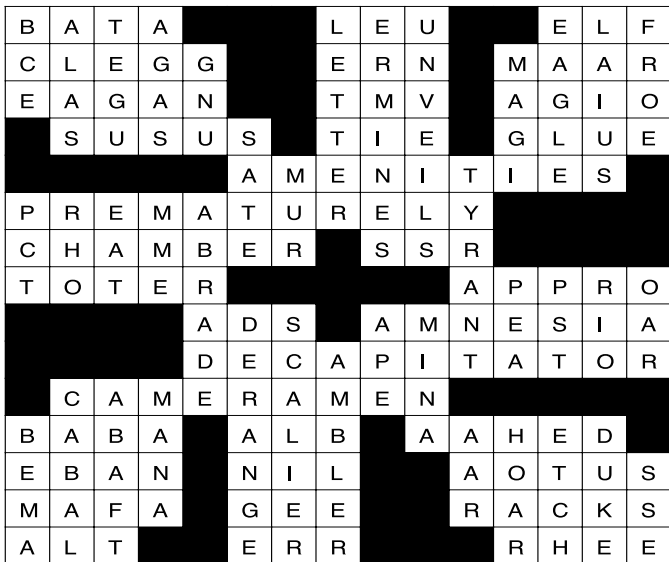
visit www.publicnotices.turley.com

Wilbraham-Hampden Times OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief Death Notice listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a Paid Obituary, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph. Death Notices & Paid Obituaries should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

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



Job Connection

HELPING YOU FIND HELP

PART-TIME CLERK / TREASURER SOUTH HADLEY FIRE DISTRICT NO. 2

South Hadley Fire District No. 2 seeks a qualified professional to fill the part-time (19-24 hour) position of Clerk/Treasurer. The Clerk/Treasurer maintains oversight of the District's financial health, under the policy direction of the Prudential Committee. The Clerk/Treasurer is responsible for receipt and disbursement of district funds, payroll processes, employee benefits, debt management, cash flow, the annual district election, ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations and reporting requirements.

Municipal financial experience with a working knowledge of municipal procedures and state and federal laws is highly advantageous. Minimum qualifications include: three years of progressive experience in financial management, administration of payroll, employee benefits and other human resource functions, and the demonstrated ability to utilize multiple financial software platforms. The successful candidate must be bondable, and must attain Certified Massachusetts Municipal Treasurer (CMMT) status within four years.

Desired qualifications include a bachelor's degree in finance, business administration, accounting or public administration, previous municipal experience and SoftRight software experience. CMMT, MMAAA or MCPPO designation additionally advantageous. A combination of experience and education will be considered.

The successful candidate will work under a three-year, renewable memorandum of agreement. The hiring range is \$35.00 to \$39.00 hourly. The top step exceeds the hiring range. Visit the District website shdistrict2.org for the full job description. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Review of applications will begin immediately.

Send cover letter and resume to: Barbara Miller, Clerk/Treasurer, South Hadley Fire District No. 2, 20 Woodbridge Street, South Hadley, MA 01075 Electronic submissions in PDF format BMiller@shdistrict2.org

South Hadley Fire District No. 2 is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender

CLERK / TREASURER SOUTH HADLEY FIRE DISTRICT NO. 2

South Hadley Fire District No. 2 seeks a qualified professional to fill the fulltime (40 hour) position of Clerk/Treasurer. The Clerk/Treasurer serves as the District's Financial Manager. The Clerk/Treasurer is responsible for district funds, accounts payable, payroll, employee benefits, debt management, cash flow, the annual district election, annual district meeting, budget preparation, publishing the Annual Report of Officers and ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations and reporting requirements.

Municipal financial experience with a working knowledge of municipal procedures and state and federal laws is highly advantageous. Minimum qualifications include: three years of progressive accounting and financial management experience, experience managing a budget of 2.5 million; payroll processes, auditing and the demonstrated ability to utilize multiple financial software platforms. The successful candidate must be bondable, and must attain CMMT designation within four years.

Desired qualifications include a bachelor's degree in finance, business administration, accounting or public administration, previous municipal experience and SoftRight software experience. CMMT, MMAAA or MCPPO designation additionally advantageous. A combination of experience and education will be considered.

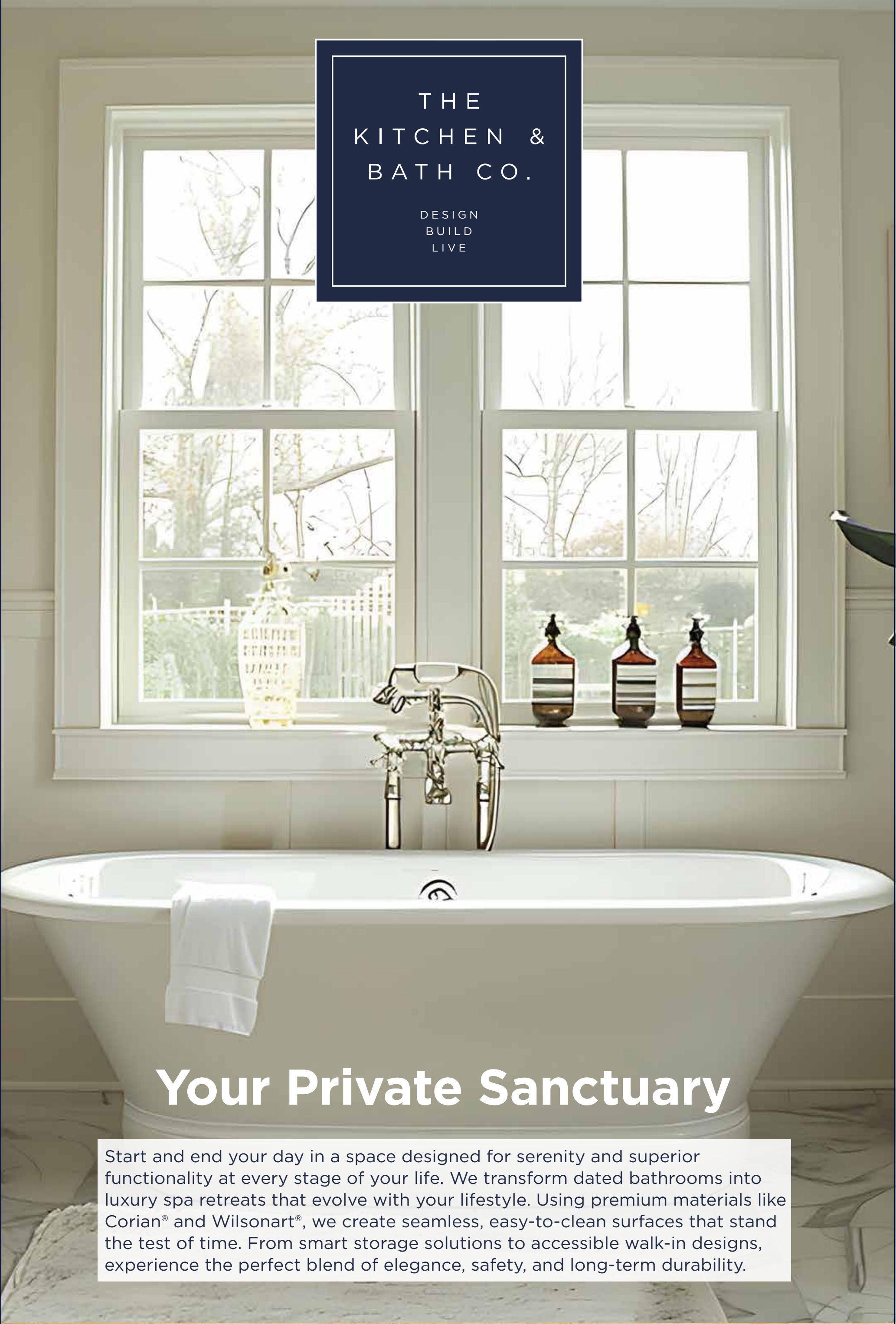
This fully benefited position works under a three-year, renewable memorandum of agreement. Hiring salary range is \$75,000 to \$82,000. The top salary step exceeds the hiring range. Visit the District website shdistrict2.org for the full job description. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Review of applications will begin immediately.

Send cover letter and resume to: Barbara Miller, Clerk/Treasurer, South Hadley Fire District No. 2, 20 Woodbridge Street, South Hadley, MA 01075 Electronic submissions in PDF format: BMiller@shdistrict2.org

South Hadley Fire District No. 2 is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability or veteran status.

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