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Turley photos by
Kristin Rivers

WMS Robotics Club inspires love for robotics, creativity

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM/HAMPDEN - The Wilbraham Middle School Robotics Club is bringing together the next generation of robotics enthusiasts and creators.

The club meets at the former Thornton W. Burgess Middle School during the school year on Fridays from 6 to 8 p.m. and has competed in and won sumo-

bot competitions, advanced to the MA FLL WEST Championship in 2024 and more.

Nolan Carney, who joined the club this year, explained during the robotics season how a lot of teams, including the WMS team, compete in local competitions with robots in missions.

The mission the club demonstrated to us during our visit in April was water-themed, with the coding including making the robot move back and forth and

the claw picks up coral and then puts it back.

A "grade" portion has one half for mission performance and the other for an innovation project related to the theme.

"Usually, you win certain awards and if you won an award, there's a high chance you get to move on to the next round. It's also measured on how much points you score and we happen to score a lot of points with the way we strategized our move-

ment and attachments," Carney said.

After Reid Blanchard and Willis Lam explained the club's presentation focused on a 3D-printed life vest to make people more findable at sea, Carney added the life vest also had an LED panel.

"So, when the sensor detected there was a low-light level, it would display a red light be-

Please see **ROBOTICS**, page 7

A group shot of the members and coaches of the Wilbraham Middle School Robotics Club. WMS Robotics Club Coach Samuel Kar Kin Lam also thanks 7th Grade STEM Teacher Leni-Sarah Boucher and WMS Principal John Derosia for their support of the club.

Selectboard receives updates on water district

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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HAMPDEN - The Selectboard received updates on the Scantic Valley Water District during their May 5 meeting.

The Scantic Valley Water District is a registered community-based public water system with 16 active water services and providing drinking water to 13 homes in Hampden.

The conversation began with Town Administrator Brian Domina asking the Water District Commission how many houses were being tested, with the number being approximately 25 and three of them having letters sent out.

"One of those 25 is 129 Scantic Rd," Domina said. "That's the service line connection and that's like over and under 500 feet..."

Chair John Plaster explained for that property, the homeowner requested directional boring underground be done.

"The original quote was \$90,000 and we have yet to get any quotes back from any of the contractors that do that type of work because Baltazar does not do that. They contracted out to some," Plaster said. "We don't know what

Please see **UPDATES**, page 10

Wilbraham Sustainable Budget Committee identifies areas of opportunity

The group presented its executive summary to the Select Board

By Dalton Zbierski
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - Residents may wonder why the town owns hundreds of properties, and members of Wilbraham's

Sustainable Budget Committee presented before the Select Board on May 5 to provide some clarity.

According to the committee members, they excluded properties that the town shouldn't get rid of for different reasons. Then, they identified 14 properties to take a closer look at moving forward.

The committee does not know if they are all buildable, which makes a huge difference in terms of price, as if a parcel

is not buildable, it will have a significantly less price.

On Monday, committee members sought to move these properties to a next level of review that would include town entities such as the Planning Department and Department of Public Works.

Sustainable Budget Committee leader Xiomara Albán DeLobato discussed the process at length, as the group formally put forth its executive summary for review by the Se-

lect Board.

"The executive summary is very straightforward," she said. "The work that we were tasked to do last summer, or this past summer, was to go through the town owned properties."

DeLobato noted that the group learned a lot during the eight-month venture.

"It was a great conversation from start to finish where we decided to tackle this list of 221 town-owned parcels," De-

Lobato said. "In the matter that we decided to use this list was to utilize the Wilbraham GIS system. So, we quite literally went through the list, used the system to identify each of the parcels, look at the details of each of the parcels of land, and we had thorough discussion regarding each of the categories."

After analyzing more than 200 parcels of land, the committee determined that it would recommend further

investigation on 14 parcels to get back on the tax roll through sale or redevelopment.

Town residents will have the ultimate say, DeLobato added, noting that the committee's job was "strictly to identify which parcels of land we could explore further."

"That was the main objective of the committee - which parcels need to be investigated a little further to see what

Please see **BUDGET**, page 3

Meet the Planning Board Candidates for Wilbraham

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - As we wrap up this year's town election coverage, we have one more race to highlight.

Meet the three candidates running for the Planning Board, who are Tracey Plantier, Joe Cantalini and John McGrath.

Tracey Plantier

Plantier has been on the Planning Board for two terms and a resident for 27 years. Having volunteered to pull together data and publish a report for the Vision Task Force--Wilbraham's community study the town's future--along with her passion and multiple contributions to that committee led to the Planning Board asking her to join their ranks.

"I consider myself a continuous learner and the Planning Board requires active research and continuous learning as laws regarding zoning are changing all the time. I have not only enjoyed the challenge of this work, but I have really enjoyed working with my colleagues that all come to the board with a level of seriousness and commitment that is required of the position," Plantier said. "I also have a broad perspective of Wilbraham as I volunteer for several town and town-related committees, as well as attending Pioneer Valley Planning meetings. This gives me a unique opportunity to hear about broader changes occurring in the state. Volunteering on multiple committees allows me to have a broader perspective than just

Please see **CANDIDATES**, page 4

WPL Book Sale draws hundreds

Raises money for programming

By Danielle Muir
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - Hundreds of community members gathered at the Wilbraham Public Library during the period of May 7 through 10 for the annual Friends of the Library Book Sale, a popular event known for raising thousands of dollars to fund library programs.

Held at the library in the Brooks Room, the sale featured thousands of donated books at bargain prices. Organized by the Friends of the Wilbraham Public Library, the sale is the group's largest fundraiser of the year.

"We had almost 100 people in the first hour," Library Director Karen Ball said. "It was packed."

From the moment



Turley photo by Danielle Muir

Friends of the Wilbraham Public Library Board Member Marty Lyman and Member Jo Ayers pose for a photo.

the doors opened for the Friends' early access hour the day before on Tuesday, May 6, the library was bustling with energy with lines reaching outside the

doors. Long tables were stacked with books of every genre--children's picture books, young adult novels,

Please see **BOOKS**, page 8

Richard Green running for reelection

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - Richard Green will be running for reelection as the town moderator for this year's town election.

The town election takes place on Monday, May 19.

Green has a background in local town government spanning many years and varying roles, which he explained has helped him in his role as town moderator.

"This is my fifth year as moderator, prior to that I served on the Selectboard for eighteen years and the Planning Board for ten. All of

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Brodeur running for reelection to Planning Board

By Kristin Rivers
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HAMPDEN - Christina Brodeur is running for reelection to the Planning Board for the upcoming town election. The town election is on Monday, May 19. Also, to note, David Berson is running for the Planning Board as well, but for a three-year term to the board. Brodeur shared that when she first joined, she had no experience “that qualified me to serve on the Planning Board.” “I was appointed to one of two vacant positions at the time. I believe my enthusiasm to learn and be involved with my community lead, in part, to my appointment. I have

now been on the board for four years and have gained an enormous amount of experience through that time,” Brodeur said. “Of note, I have engaged in the amendment of three sections of our zoning by-laws and participated in a few fairly involved and complicated Special Permit applications.” Brodeur has enjoyed serving on the board in the last four years. “I wish to continue, as I find the work interesting and I appreciate the opportunity to engage with members of the community,” Brodeur said. On successes, Brodeur

said the newly revised Master Plan, which will be presented at the Annual Town Meeting on May 12. “Thanks to fellow board member Patrick Coyne and the Master Plan Committee’s hard work in coordination with VHB, we now have a more up-to-date and accurate vision for our town. In addition to this achievement, we will be proposing two amendments to our zoning by-laws that I believe position us very well in ensuring we are able to safely and reasonably oversee the land use within the town of Hampden,” Brodeur said. “Some proposed proj-

ects elicit a stronger response from the community, and I believe these by-laws address some of the concerns that come along with that.” On her vision for the board, she said this. “If we are able to successfully serve our citizens and preserve the character of our quaint hometown, I would consider that a great achievement,” Brodeur said. “My hope is that in my time as a board member, I am able to connect with members of our community and hear not just their concerns, but what they love about our home. There’s a certain pride that comes along with being a member of this community, and, in turn, it gives me great pride to serve it.”



Christina Brodeur

Other Wilbraham and Hampden Candidates

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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WILBRAHAM/HAMPDEN - With the town elections for Wilbraham and Hampden a few days away, here’s a final look at some of the other candidates that will be running this year. As a final reminder, Wilbraham’s town election will take place on Saturday, May 17, while Hampden’s town election takes place on Monday, May 19. In addition to the other candidates we’ve highlighted these past few weeks, here are a couple others residents will see on their respective ballots.

Wilbraham
Roger Roberge II for a three-year term for the Board of Assessors
There is no candidate running for the Cemetery Commissioner three-year term. Natasha Ayres, who we highlighted during our election

coverage, is running for a one-year term on the Cemetery Commission.
Hampden
Eva Wiseman for a three-year term as Town Clerk and, also, for a three-year term as Tax Collector
Philip Schneider Jr. for a three-year term to the Board of Assessors
Kathleen Hutchison for a three-year term as a Library Trustee
Michael Salemi for a three-year term as Park Commissioner
Dennis Hackett Sr., Andrew Netherwood and Adam Poulin for three-year terms as Constables
David Berson for a three-year term for the Planning Board
There is no one on the ballot this year for the Housing Authority, which would have been a five-year term.
Stay tuned for this year’s election results.

GREEN from page 1

this has given me a unique insight into our community, my fellow residents and what they would like to see in our town meeting,” Green said. Green cited the town’s history of town moderators setting a precedent of excellence as inspiration for running in the past and again this year. “Hampden has a rich history of having excellent moderators. They were very different from each other and made town meeting their own. I felt that I could draw from each of them and make our town meeting even better,” Green said. Green is proud of his successes in the role thus far. “I feel that I have given us an environment where all feel welcome and safe to express their opinion. We need to move the meeting quicker, while being sure to protect its transparency and integrity,” Green said. Green’s vision for his next term was this: continue to make town meeting better and more efficient. “We will improve the effi-



Richard Green

ciency of town meeting with the introduction of a Consent Agenda. Through the use of a Consent Agenda, we will package the most common articles, which are non-controversial and always receive a positive vote. These articles will then be voted as a block,” Green said. “Next, I will no longer read the articles, but will instead summarize what is being asked of the body. Historically, we have read the warrant article, which is immediately followed by a motion that mirrors the article. This is time-consuming, redundant and, quite frankly, dull.”

VFW Post 9397 announces Day of Service

HAMPDEN - Pat Ledoux VFW Post 9397 is proud to announce its participation in the VFW National Day of Service with a community cleanup effort on Saturday, May 24, 2025, to prepare for the town’s upcoming Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony. Volunteers will gather at VFW Post 9397, located at 190 Main Street, Hampden, MA 01036, at 9:30 a.m., with an expected start time of 10 a.m. Members of Post 9397 will begin at St. Mary’s Catholic Church and walk the Memorial Day Parade route, picking up trash and debris to ensure the route is clean, safe, and presentable for the solemn observances to come. The Hampden Police Department will provide an escort to ensure participant safety throughout the cleanup. The VFW Day of Service is a nationwide initiative highlighting the vital role veterans continue to play in serving and strengthening their communities.

BUDGET from page 1

we could do with them as another method to generate some revenue for the town,” DeLobato said. The committee also had a thorough talk regarding the identification of parcels of land that could potentially go for sale and develop into locations that could eventually be assets to the town. While this was spoken about briefly, DeLobato said it is a bigger conversation for down the road. In addition to the 14 parcels of land that have potential, the committee also identified six properties that need further investigation but “weren’t a hard no.” “There’s only six that have some potential, but it will require much more detail to just actually figure out what some of those restrictions are and if we are at liberty to explore something else with them,” DeLobato said. DeLobato added that it will require much more detail to actually figure out what the restrictions are on those six properties and if the town is at liberty to explore something else for them. “Overall, the committee, we came to the full conclusion that the town, the Select Board and whoever is assigned to continue this work... is to absolutely prioritize the due diligence on the 14 parcels of land that were specifically identified as areas of opportunity for us,” DeLobato said. Before finishing her presentation, DeLobato emphasized that the group’s work took several months and a lot of effort. She insinuated that some people oversimplified the

committee’s work and responsibilities. “I don’t believe that folks really saw or considered the amount of time this would have actually taken and, just to be frank, just based on the resources that the Planning Board has like the literal resource of time, with our limited staff, it would be very challenging for the town to do something like this on the regular,” DeLobato said. She noted that it gave her perspective on allocating for any type of resources that would be needed to continue this activity on a regular basis. “It did require a lot of time. It was tedious – like in the weeds type of work that a lot of folks just do not have the time to do. I just want to put it out there that it did take time,” DeLobato reiterated.

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Annual Spec Pond Fishing Derby May 17

WILBRAHAM – The Annual Spec Pond Fishing Derby will be taking place at Spec Pond on Saturday, May 17 from 9 a.m. to Noon.

It is presented by the Friends of Recreation, the Parks and Rec Department and the MA Department of Fisheries and Wildlife.

No fishing license required: bait will be provided and trophies awarded to the first 30 kids -Free coffee, donuts, and water courtesy of Rices Fruit Farm

The Grand Prize: \$100 DSG gift card awarded to the largest fish caught by length, courtesy of DSG

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Cookbook Club at the Wilbraham Library

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Public Library Cookbook Club is meeting on Wednesday, June 4, at 6:30 p.m.

This month's selection is "Half Baked Harvest" by Teighan Gerard.

Please let the library know what you're bringing when registering so we do not duplicate recipes. Cooking is encouraged but not required for attendance. Copies of the book are available now at the Service Desk.

The Cookbook Club meets on the first Wednesday of every other month at 6:30 p.m.

This program is free and open to the public, and registration is required. For more information or to register, please call the library at 413-596-6141.

CANDIDATES from page 1

sitting on one board."

On what inspired her to run again for another term, Plantier explained the very challenging time for local zoning as the state "is in a known housing crisis."

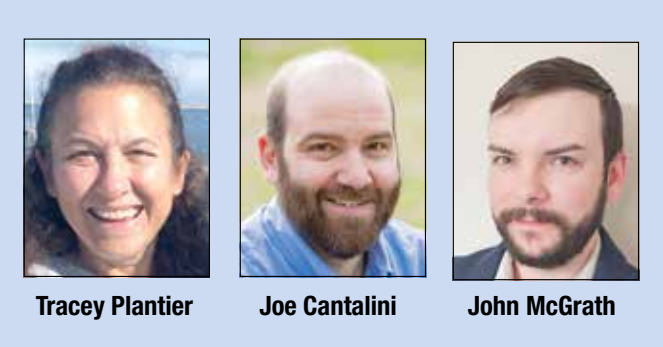
"The state has put together proposed approaches to the housing crisis that may take some local control of zoning out of the hands of our town. An example is the recent zoning law changes for Accessory Dwelling Units or ADUs. I would like to continue to evaluate these changes and determine the best approach for Wilbraham," Plantier said. "The Planning Board has also discussed initiating a possible master plan development and the experience I have in working on the Vision Task Force report, as well as the Open Space and Recreation Plans, are important to be in a position to help support these initiatives."

On the board's successes, Plantier noted there have been many during her time with the Planning Board.

"Some of my favorites are the positive changes in our beautiful Town Center that have brought a new vibrancy to our town. I smile when I drive through town and see our residents enjoying the new restaurant and brewery. I share the same pride seeing the changes at Wilbraham Monson Academy," Plantier said. "As the Planning Board Representative to the Community Preservation Committee, I also enjoy seeing the many improvements around town that residents are enjoying – playground equipment, ADA ramp at the Meeting House, recreational improvements in several locations, historical markers, etc."

On what she envisions if elected, Plantier summed it up this way.

"I'd like to see us look to the future in a practical and realistic way. Our needs are increasing and as a town we need to carefully consider our priorities. We were either born here or came to Wilbraham for our personal priorities - location to careers or family, schools, public safety, recreation and the beauty. I want to protect what residents value," Plantier said. "Change is inevitable, but the current



Planning Board, together with past Planning Boards and residents that approved zoning bylaws, created a town we are proud to call home. I say it all the time how lucky we are to live here. I want to continue to help build a community that embraces what residents value and love."

Joe Cantalini

Cantalini explained a motivation for service and "a belief that strong, principled governance is the backbone of a thriving community" inspired him to run.

"I have a deep appreciation for the building and maintaining of the shared agreements that allow a town—or a society—to function well for everyone. When it's done well—with care, integrity, and inclusiveness—it quietly helps a community thrive," Cantalini said. "Over the years, I've seen that I can be effective in this space: colleagues and officials have responded positively to my collaborative mindset and careful approach. That encouragement, along with a love for Wilbraham, inspired me to step forward and offer my time and skills in this role."

Cantalini said he would bring "strong listening skills, thoughtful problem-solving, and a practical, systems-oriented approach to decision-making," to the role, noting his career working closely with local and state agencies on public policy "sometimes as a contributor helping to shape policy, and always as someone navigating those same regulations."

"That dual perspective has taught me how important it is to make policy decisions that are fair, clear, and grounded in real-world impacts. I've been recognized for advancing realistic, collaborative solutions and for my ability to listen carefully, under-

stand, and consider tradeoffs and long-term impacts before making decisions," Cantalini said.

He added to deepen his understanding, he's attended Planning Board meetings in town and nearby municipalities "to learn from similar issues and best-practice approaches."

"I'm also completing a Sustainable Planning Specialization through Johns Hopkins University, which strengthens my long-term perspective on land use and development," Cantalini said. "Having grown up in Wilbraham, I care deeply about its future. I aim to bring a steady, inclusive voice to the Planning Board—one that values careful consideration, open-mindedness, and long-term thinking."

Cantalini said the Planning Board's successes are due to the "vision and steady stewardship" of those who have served.

"We benefit every day from their work—whether it's the thoughtful zoning map, the balance of development and open space, or their care in preserving the character of the town and its beauty. Our infrastructure, recreational spaces, and public facilities reflect long-term planning that's served the town well," Cantalini said.

For improvements, he emphasized adaption.

"I don't think Wilbraham needs to be changed, but like any healthy community, it does need, while respecting its history, to keep adapting—whether that's adjusting to shifts in how people live and work, evolving technologies, or responding to the needs of different generations. I want to support efforts that help older residents remain in the community they love while ensuring it remains attractive for younger families to put down roots," Cantalini

said. "That's how we keep our community and schools strong and sustain the spirit of Wilbraham over time. My goal is to help the town meet new challenges in a way that strengthens what already makes it a great place to live."

If elected, Cantalini's goal is to "serve as a thoughtful and constructive member of the Board—someone who listens well, seeks input, and helps make smart, balanced decisions that consider today's needs and are grounded in care for the long-term well-being of Wilbraham."

"If elected, I'd approach each issue with care and a commitment to preserving Wilbraham's unique identity. If I can do that while helping residents feel heard, I'll consider that a success," Cantalini said.

Other goals would be revisiting the Master Plan, updating zoning district requirements or exploring ways to encourage the types of businesses residents would like to see on Boston Road.

"These are important conversations. I don't presume to know the answers, but I do promise to listen, weigh potential tradeoffs and consider infrastructure, traffic, fiscal, and quality-of-life impacts along with Wilbraham's identity and charm before making any decisions," Cantalini said. "My goal would be to help ensure any future changes reflect the community's values and keep Wilbraham a welcoming, vibrant place for all who call it home."

He encouraged residents to learn more at cantaliniforwilbraham.com.

John McGrath

McGrath is currently studying Construction Management and runs his own property management company where he manages multiple commercial and residential properties throughout the Pioneer Valley, explaining he would bring a mix of education, real-world experience and community focus to the table.

"This hands-on experience with development, zoning, and property maintenance gives me practical insight into how planning decisions impact neighborhoods and communities. I have also spent the past six months or so attending Wilbraham Planning Board meetings to stay up to date on the new Acces-

sory Dwelling Unit (ADU) regulations and listening to both what the Planning Board has to say regarding these ADUs along with the residents and their concerns," McGrath said.

McGrath shared what inspired him to run for the Planning Board.

"I am running for the Planning Board because I believe in preserving Wilbraham's small-town character while also addressing the needs of young families, seniors, and small businesses that this town needs to thrive as a community. As someone who has grown up here and attended HWRSD schools from second to 12th grade, I would like to give back by helping shape thoughtful, long-term solutions to our town's Planning Board," McGrath said. "This board plays a crucial role in balancing growth with quality of life, and I would be honored for the opportunity to represent the people in these conversations. As the town grows and gets busier with commuter traffic brought by the new East/West rail line, the communities' voice is going to only grow in importance."

McGrath noted for successes community engagement and getting ahead of potential problems.

"There was an ADU being built by a local builder who came in multiple times for public hearings where concerned neighbors attended and made compromise for everything from fence height to the direction of exterior lighting. This kind of action prevents expensive alterations and potential confrontations between neighbors," McGrath said. "I would like to see more of that moving forward where the Planning Board can mediate community-based discussions regarding development here in town to make sure that everyone's voice is heard."

If elected, McGrath's goals would be "advocating for responsible development that fits Wilbraham's identity," ensuring developers participate in public hearings, and improving coordination between the Planning Board and residents.

"I also want to encourage investment into our Route 20 corridor to help offset residents' taxes, while encouraging smart residential planning that protects our neighborhoods, open spaces and our small-town charm," McGrath said. "Ultimately, I hope to create a planning environment that welcomes the next generation without losing what makes Wilbraham so special."



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Walkers walk hand in hand and side by side as they take part in the Walk, Run, Remember event.



Photos courtesy of Betsy Flores

The Walk, Run, Remember begins as the runners take off from the starting line.

Rick's Place holds Walk, Run, Remember



A family who took part in the event in memory of Jose "Puchungo" Santiago.

WILBRAHAM – On April 26, Rick's Place hosted their Annual Walk, Run, Remember event at Minnechaug Regional High School. The event was a 51.5M/5K event. Established in memory of Rick Thorpe, who died in Tower Two of the World Trade Center on 9/11, Rick's Place opened in 2007 and provides free grief support to youth (ages 5-18) and their families throughout the Pioneer Valley and Northern CT.



These attendees smile for a group photo.



This attendee wearing a Rick's Place t-shirt crosses the finish line.



Attendees also enjoyed face painting during the event.



This attendee smiles as he crosses the finish line, the time at 24 minutes, 59 seconds.

ABOVE: A group photo of attendees at the starting line for Walk, Run, Remember on April 26.



RIGHT: Therapy dogs greet attendees during the Walk, Run, Remember event, providing comfort and support.



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VIEWPOINTS

SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor

Applying for Social Security at 62 when should I enroll in Medicare?

Dear Rusty:

I am writing to ask for your advice on when I should sign up or enroll in a Medicare Plan.

I have submitted an early retirement application to request benefits to begin 30 days after my 62 birthday, in April 2025. I am a single lady with no dependents and currently rent my residence. Please advise.

Signed: Approaching Senior Citizenship

Dear Approaching:

I assume that when you say you have submitted “an early retirement application to request benefits to begin 30 days after my 62nd birthday” you mean you have applied for your Social Security retirement benefits to start in April 2025 and that you will be 62 in March. To be sure you are clear, you must be 62 for an entire month to start your Social Security retirement benefits.

Even though you are starting your Social Security retirement benefits at age 62, you will not be eligible to enroll in Medicare until you are 65 years old. Since you will be already receiving Social Security when you turn 65, you will be automatically enrolled in Medicare Part A (inpatient hospitalization coverage) and Medicare Part B (coverage for outpatient services), effective with the month you turn 65.

You will get a “Welcome to Medicare” packet about three months before your 65th birthday. Your Medicare Part A (inpatient hospitalization coverage) will be free, but there will be a monthly premium (\$185 for 2025) associated with your Medicare Part B (coverage for outpatient services), which will be deducted from your Social Security payment.

Note that Medicare does not cover all healthcare expenses so, when the time comes, you may wish to explore other private healthcare coverage (either a Medicare Supplement plan, or a Medicare Advantage plan). Also, Medicare Part A or Part B do not include coverage for prescription drugs, so you may wish to obtain such coverage separately. One way to explore all of this is by, shortly before you are 65, contacting AMAC’s Medicare department at 1-800-3349330 or www.amac.us/medicare. And until you are eligible to enroll in Medicare at 65, you may wish to seek regular healthcare insurance for those under 65 years of age.

Please understand that we are here to answer all your questions about Social Security and Medicare enrollment. However, at the AMAC Foundation, we are not insurance specialists, which is why I suggest contacting an insurance specialist as described above.

I hope this is helpful, but please don’t hesitate to contact us again at any time.

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

CHECK OUT ALL THE

Turley

Publications

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in my

BACKYARD

By Ellenor Downer



Eastern phoebe

A Worthington resident reported he saw an Eastern phoebe on April 18.

He said it is the first insect eater to show up around his house. He also said he hoped to see swallows and bluebirds soon.

The eastern phoebe is a plump song bird with a medium length tail, which it wags up and down while perched. It is about 5.5 to 6.7 inches long and has a small, thin beak. Phoebes are brownish gray

above with a white breast and belly. The head is the darkest part on the bird.

Phoebes prefer open woods such as yards and parks. They frequently construct nests on buildings or under bridges under the protection of an eave or ledge. They lay two to six white eggs speckled with reddish brown and raise one or two broods.

Flying insects make up the majority of their diet. They occasionally eat seeds and small fruits. They depend on low woody plants for foraging perches were they watch for insects.

Bald eagle

I saw the mature bald eagle at my hayfield again. When I first saw it on Thursday, April 24 he was perched in a dead tree by the beaver pond. Later in the day, the eagle was sitting in an old great blue heron nest constructed in a nearby tree.

A New Braintree resident saw a bald eagle at a small pond in that town. I wonder if it is the same eagle I’ve seen at my hayfield. The ponds are not that far apart.

Brimfield bird sightings

I received an email from a Brimfield resident on April 16. He said, “This week we had the first of the year brown-headed cowbird (three, one male and two females and towhee (one male) in the yard.” He said, “We hope the towhee isn’t the one that previously spent the summer attacking our windows. We had to put glass wax on the windows to reduce the reflection to get the bird to stop.” He read a recent newspaper column about a pileated woodpecker attacking and breaking side view mirrors on vehicles, 20 mirrors and one windshield.

This resident makes visits to local ponds to bird watch. He said, “Last week in Monson the rookery at Conant Brook had five nest, three with birds on or near the nests. In Warren the pond on New Reed Street continues to be a spot to see eagles. I saw two adult bald eagles there

yesterday in addition to seven common mergansers, all female and nine ring-necked ducks, one female and eight males.”

He continued, “The osprey in Warren are doing osprey things. I saw a bird bring two branches to the nest yesterday and also mating. There are four great blue heron nest at the pond on South Street in Warren. At least three are occupied. On Sunday we saw a pair of herons on the top of a broken off tree that is near the location where there was a nest last year, but the tree fell over during the winter. Yesterday the pair was at the same tree and it looks like they are building a nest. I wonder if this is the pair that had the nest in the tree that fell over?”

Other Brimfield report

On Monday, April 21 the Brimfield resident said, “A pair of broad-winged hawks nested between our property and a neighbor’s last year. They texted my wife that there was a pair of broadwings circling over our house recently.”

He continued, “In the yard there are still a few jun-

co, but no new arrivals since the towhee and chipping sparrows showed up. Two female turkeys are fairly regular and a male is following them sometimes. Last week in Warren there was a pair of buffle-head ducks and it looks like incubation has begun at the osprey nest. I was there for almost an hour recently and the bird sitting on the nest never left or moved out of the deep part of the nest.”

Flying squirrel

The Brimfield resident reported, “When I was cleaning out the nesting boxes the other day I disturbed a flying squirrel. That has happened a couple of times when I clean the boxes in the spring.” I had a similar experience years ago when cleaning out a nesting box.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.

Tasks for mid May

Last week’s column alluded to the fact that there was a lot to do in the herb garden. But, let me clarify: there is a lot to do everywhere I look.

Here are some of the tasks I will be working on. Maybe you can relate!

The daffodils put on quite a show this year. Now that the flowers have gone by, they will be “deadheaded” and a sprinkling of balanced fertilizer will be spread around the base of each clump of bulbs.

As the foliage “ripens” it will take in all of those nutrients, storing up wonderful energy for next years’ flowers. Leave the foliage in place until turns brown. The minor nuisance of old foliage is certainly worth the explosion of gorgeous flowers come spring.

It’s time to preheat the soil where your peppers will be planted. Peppers respond best when sunk into warm soil, so laying down black plastic or IRT plastic mulch now will get the soil warm and ready for planting come late May or early June!

Pepper plants should be planted about 12-14 inches apart. I like to unitize a wide row, installing the seedlings in a staggered pattern, so that when full-grown, the leaves of neighboring plants touch one another. They respond well to that, and the close spacing will help to prevent sun scald on ripening fruit.

I also give my pepper plants support by installing tomato cages over each plant, so that the heavy fruit doesn’t

cause them to fall over in a windy summer storm.

Lilacs are bursting into bloom. Their season is fast

ment and measure!

I will be harvesting spears for about eight weeks now, and doing my best to keep the bed weed-free, less they take over!

Be on the lookout for asparagus beetles and the horizontal eggs they lay going up the spears. I squish on contact! More squeamish folks may prefer to bring a cup of soapy water out to the garden and knock the bugs into it.

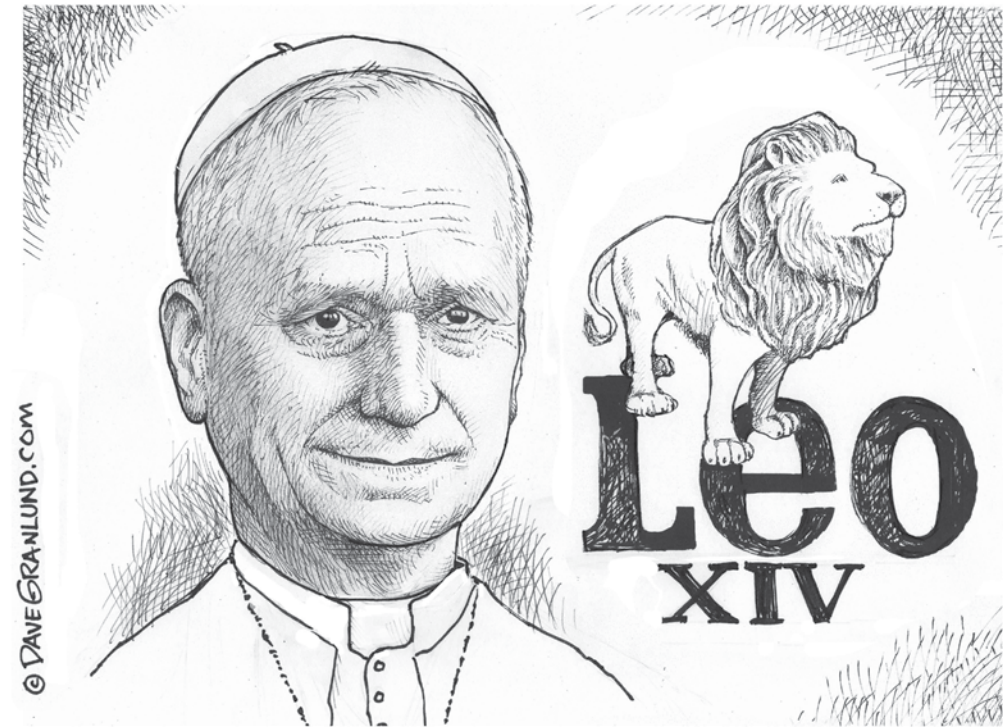
My strawberry patch was going on four years old. I decided turn it under, but I did move a few of the younger plants and started a smaller, new bed.

If you are experimenting with strawberries for the first time, be sure to remove the blossoms of June bearing types so that energy will go into making strong plants, not berries this first year. I know it is a sacrifice, but patience will lead to lots of strawberry shortcake next year.

Have fun doing whatever needs to be done in your garden! I know I will be having fun in mine!

Isn’t May just an awesome month?

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with “Gardening Question” in the subject line.



The Wilbraham-Hampden

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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.

WMS Robotics Club

ROBOTICS from page 1

cause that color is more easily found through fog and/or overall nighttime settings. So, if a survivor is ever lost out at sea, they can be easily found by Coast Guards or people trying to help them," Carney said.

The club shared with this project, they visited the Hampden Fire Department to present it, who then offered additional feedback on making the batteries waterproof, putting in the top halves and the light color.

The sumobots, meanwhile, were a fun idea the club came up with after competitions.

"We came in and Coach Kelly was like, 'Hey, you guys want to do a fun project?' and, obviously, we like fun that's why we're in here," Carney said. "And she told us that we had to make our own groups and build a robot that could--however way--just win against the other. It had to stay inside of a hollow circle--like a black ring--and what most groups decided to do was add a light sensor so that when the sensor would go over the black outline of the circle, it would detect that less light is reflecting off of the sheet. So, it would back up to avoid getting itself out."

Carney said the sumobots have sensors that look like red eyes.

"They are distance measurers and if they realize that an object--which in this case, the robot--is very close to them, you can program it to charge full speed into the other to get that advantage to push the other robot out and catch it off-guard," Carney said.

Blanchard joined the club the same year as Carney and learned about the first Lego League.

"I was really excited to get on to the competition and work with robots. I was really excited. I always liked technology like he said, coding is a very big part of it which I also learned a lot about," Blanchard said.

Lam has been in the club for two years and joined in sixth grade, sharing his brother was a part of it too.

"My family actually runs the Robotics Club--shout out to them--and my brother came before me. So, while he was gone off to Minnechaug, I had to step into his role," Lam said.

Quintis Saviengvong loves how club members bring different backgrounds and ideas.



Members of the WMS Robotics Club demonstrate one of the missions from this year's theme, which focused on the water and oceans.

"It's good to have people of different backgrounds coming in. Like for example, Willis, his parents run this, but Reid, this is his first year. So, having people with different ideas and different ways of thinking and learning how to work together with that is very important," Saviengvong said.

Carney and Lam stressed the importance of STEM and teamwork.

"I think clubs like this are extremely important, especially with how fast technology is evolving and progressing. So valuable skills, especially learning to work with a team on specific projects, technology, coding, even some of the physics I mentioned to get it the way you work and precision are some really valuable skills that I think a lot of people should learn," Carney said.

"Basically, clubs like this not only are good educational value, but you basically, also, become a better person. You basically learn how to be friendlier with others, work as a team because in the real world, teamwork is everything," Lam said.

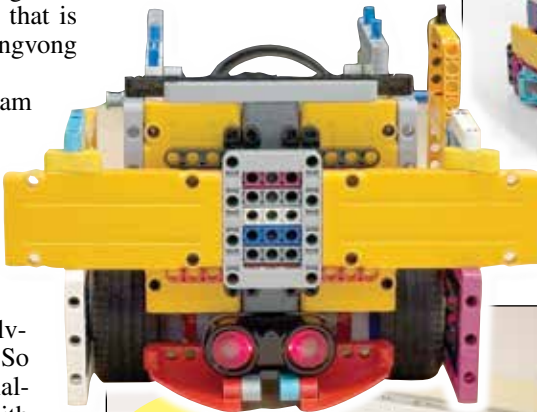
Saviengvong noted presentation skills and community engagement, citing two past trips to an Air Force base and Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

"Just seeing people in action, learning about the different trials and tribulations, but also learning the good things that come with working with the team and the social aspects and, also, learning how to present that's a very important skill to go into robotics," Saviengvong said.

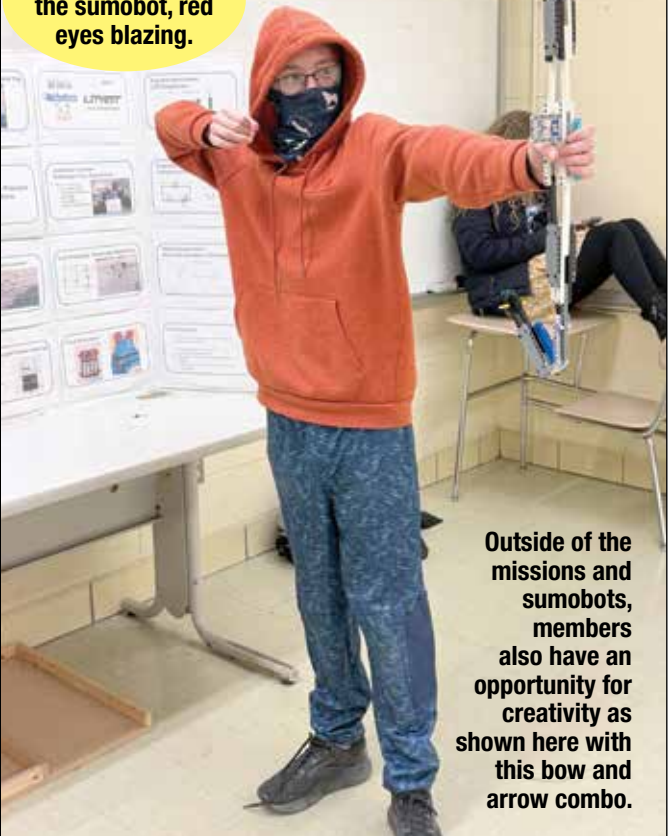
The club members en-

couraged anyone interested to join at any time and they're always looking for new members.

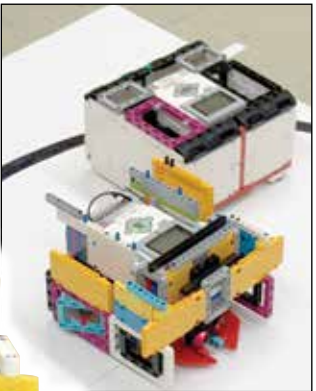
To learn more, contact Leni-Sarah Boucher at lboucher@hwsd.org.



A close-up shot of the sumobot, red eyes blazing.



Outside of the missions and sumobots, members also have an opportunity for creativity as shown here with this bow and arrow combo.



The sumobots compete with each other in the hollow black circle.



Puppulo congratulates Maloni family on 10 years owning Rice's

WILBRAHAM – State Rep. Angelo J. Puppulo, Jr. (D-Springfield) stopped by Rice Fruit Farm on Tuesday, April 15 to congratulate the Maloni Family on the celebration of their 10th Anniversary as the owners of Rice Fruit Farm in Wilbraham. As part of his continued support of local

entrepreneurs, their small businesses and their contributions to the community, Representative Puppulo presented Anthony Maloni with an official citation from the Massachusetts House of Representatives in recognition of giving new life to the Wilbraham landmark and family destination.

Travel expert to discuss natural disasters at the library

WILBRAHAM– Travel expert and professor Matt Davis will present "Life on an Unpredictable Planet: Coping with the Threat of Natural Disasters" at the Wilbraham Public Library on Monday, May 19 at 6 pm.

A significant percentage of the world's population lives with threats posed by various natural hazards. Although deaths resulting from natural disaster events have decreased over time, the economic impacts, social disruption, and effects on our infrastructure have steadily increased. Drawing examples from his research at Italy's Mt. Vesuvius and

Washington's Mt. Rainier, his experiences in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and his work on earthquake preparedness efforts in California, Davis will explore the reasons people choose to live in risky places, some of the psychological factors that affect their perceptions of risk and likelihood of preparing for potential disasters, and factors that help in disaster recovery.

This free event is sponsored by the Wilbraham Friends of the Library. Registration is encouraged but not required. Sign up at wilbrahamlibrary.org, or call the library at 413-596-6141.

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Turley photos by Kristin Rivers
Poster boards display past and current projects the Wilbraham Middle School Robotics Club has done



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This week in recreation



What to know about Spec Pond Beach

Dan Beauregard
Program Coordinator

WILBRAHAM - Summer is almost here, which means Spec Pond Beach will be opening soon. Here are some common questions we get about the Spec Pond Beach.

What are the hours for the beach? Spec Pond Beach will be opening on Saturday, June 14th with the beach season ending Sunday, August 17th. Beach hours are 11:00AM – 7:00PM June 14-July 27 and 11:00 AM - 6:00PM July 28 - August 17, and the beach is open seven days a week, weather pending.

What does Spec Pond Beach offer? Spec Pond Beach has Amy Sparkle Splash Pad, bathrooms, changing rooms, concession stand, a small pavilion, docks and certified lifeguards on duty during beach hours. Additionally, the water is tested weekly for quality and safety.

Where is the beach located? Spec Pond Beach is located at the Spec Pond Recreational Complex at 45C Post Office Park, Wilbraham off of Boston Road.

How much does it cost to enter Spec Pond Beach? Residents and non-residents can purchase season passes or a day pass for Spec Pond Beach. Day passes can be bought at

the concession stand at the beach (cash only). For residents a day pass is \$4 for adults and teens 13+ and \$3 for children 12 and under and senior citizens 62+. For non-residents a day pass is \$6 for adults and teens 13+ and \$5 for children 12 and under and senior citizens 62+. Season Passes can be purchased online until June 12th and in the WPRD Office or at the Concession Stand any time during the beach season.

Is fishing allowed? During open beach hours, fishing is not allowed from the shore or from the dock. Outside of beach hours (11:00 AM – 7:00 PM), fishing is permitted.

Can I use a kayak, canoe, or paddle board at the pond? During open beach hours, boating is not allowed from the shore or from the dock. Outside of beach hours (11:00 AM – 7:00 PM), boating is permitted.

Lifeguard Positions: As the beach season approaches we are currently looking to add a couple more lifeguards to our staff. If you or someone you know is interested please contact the Wilbraham Parks & Recreation Department at 413-596-2816.

For more information and to purchase your Season Pass online, please visit WilbrahamRec.com

Friends of Hampden Senior Citizens announce upcoming events

HAMPDEN - The Friends of the Hampden Senior Center would like to announce this event coming up - PLEASE SAVE THE DATE!!

Friday May 16, from Noon to 2 p.m. Pro Shred will be in the parking lot of The Hampden Senior Center, 104 Allen Street Hampden.

This event will be FREE to all of you. Please bring your documents and papers that need to be shredded and they will be taken care of on the premises.

The limit is five small boxes or five small bags from each car.

This event is sponsored by The Friends of The Hampden Senior Citizens and although it is free we will gladly accept any monetary donation. These donations fund the programs and events that are held at the center for all who attend.

Please feel free to contact Joan Shea at 413-566-8224 with any questions or concerns.

Once again thank you for your participation and generosity with all our events.

Run for Rice's 5K Road Race set for June 7

WILBRAHAM - The 13th annual "Run for Rice's 5K Road Race" will be held on Saturday, June 7, 2025 at 9 a.m.

This popular, family-friendly 5K road race begins at Christ the King – Epiphany Church, 758 Main Street, Wilbraham, MA, and winds through a flat, fast course in surrounding neighborhoods, ending at Rice Fruit Farm across the street from the start. Pre-registration fee for runners and walkers is \$20, while day-of-race registration is \$25.

Ages 18 and under registration is \$15 including day-of registration.

The first 150 registered runners by May 13, 2023 will receive our famous race t-shirt featuring the "Running Apple" logo, and all registered runners will receive a free Rice Fruit Farm ice cream with their bib number on day of race only.

Cash prizes will be awarded in several categories, and all proceeds benefit the Minnechaug Land Trust.

Race day registration will be open from 7:30 a.m. until 8:45 a.m. Online registration is available at Run-SignUp.com.

Upcoming HSC Trips

HAMPDEN - The following trips are being arranged at the Hampden Sr Ctr, 104 Allen St, Hampden; prices include the driver's tip.

Mon, July 14 - The Newport Playhouse, "It's Your Funeral" a traditional comical farce, All you can eat buffet, Show and Cabaret - \$132pp.

Tues, Sept 30 - Lakeside Turkey Train (Lake Winnepesaukee) Harts Turkey Dinner on board, Country Farm Store stop (on own) &

NH Liquor Store - \$140pp.

Mon, Dec 8 - The Aqua Turf Club "Rock This Town Orchestra" - Coffee on arrival, delicious family-style lunch, Swinging '50s and '60s tunes - \$127pp.

Flyers are available at the Senior Center or via email. Full Payment Deadlines are approximately two weeks before the event.

Questions/comments, please call Bobbi at 413-566-8271 or email bobbijg2@charter.net.



Turley photos by Danielle Muir
Cheryl Wesolowski checks out a book at the book sale.

BOOKS from page 1

cookbooks, biographies, poetry and more.

The least expensive book costs 25 cents, while the most expensive one is priced at \$1.

The annual book sale matters because it supports vital community services the library couldn't offer otherwise.

"The book sale is the biggest fundraiser that the Wilbraham Public Library has. We use it towards library programs for all ages," Ball said.

At a time when town budgets are tight, the sale provides critical support and gives residents a way to give back while encouraging a love of reading.

The sale is planned each year by the Friends of the Library, a volunteer group that exists to support the Wilbraham Public Library. If you wish to become a volunteer, you can get involved through their website.

"We're always looking for volunteers because we do other fundraising activities throughout the year as well," Marty Lyman, a member of the Friend's board said. "The job of the Friends is to support the library with programs and children's events and summer reading programs."

Community members donate gently used books throughout the year, and what is not sold will go to a bookseller, making the event environmentally friendly and cost-effective. Volunteers spend weeks sorting and pricing books ahead of the event.

A Wilbraham resident, Gabrielle Lange, was impressed with the offerings.

"This is really awesome. It's a great way to find children's books," Lange said.

Natalie Proulx, a frequent library user, added, "It brings connection to like-minded people searching for particular genres. I've connected with a couple of people through this."

Teachers, parents and casual readers combed through the selections with baskets in hand. Too.

"I'm a teacher, so I'm always looking for picture books," Cetera Moore said. "I think events like this encourage reading and are great for my budget."

Susan Bloomberg, a longtime supporter, summed up the spirit of the event: "It's great when people get organized and do things to help out their neighbors or the place they live."

With another successful year behind them, the Friends of the Library plan to continue the book sale tradition. Organizers hope to expand their outreach and attract even more volunteers next year.

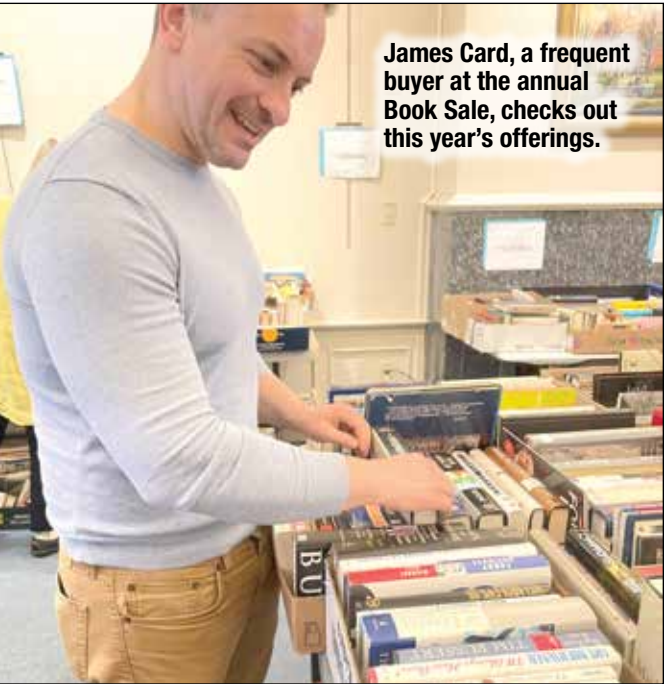
In the meantime, the funds raised will go directly toward enriching library services for people of all ages.

The library book sale is good since, "You find the books you love at a discounted price, and you're supporting the library as well—it's the best of both worlds," James Card mentioned.

To learn more about the Friends, visit www.wilbrahamlibrary.org/friends.asp.



Natalie Proulx peruses the selections for her next read.



James Card, a frequent buyer at the annual Book Sale, checks out this year's offerings.

Saturday, May 17, 2025
Gates open at 9:00am



Military Appreciation Day

Our mission is to give Veterans an unforgettable track experience.



Veterans are invited to join us for a day of racing fun as we celebrate Military Appreciation Day at PMP. Ride along in amazing race cars with Palmer Club drivers and experience the thrills of racing. There will be food and beverages, static displays, and so much more! Sign in with your valid military ID at 9:00am and let the fun begin.

Location: Palmer Motorsports Park
Address: 58 W Ware Rd, Palmer, MA 01069
Start Time: 9:00am
Event Signup: <https://palmermsp.com/vets/>



Life in &

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



Submitted photos Mary Bell

WPL thanks volunteers at annual Volunteer Breakfast

On April 27, the Wilbraham Public Library held their annual Volunteer Breakfast to thank volunteers for their time in supporting the library.



WILBRAHAM HAMPDEN

Times in the Bahamas



Submitted photo and caption Donna Croteau
Scott and Donna Croteau of Hampden Celebrated their 25 year Anniversary with daughters Ava and Leah during April vacation on a Royal Caribbean Cruise to the Bahamas.

Historic Trio...

Times photo and caption Charlie Bennet

Wilbraham historians Dave Bourcier (left), President, and Charlie Bennett (right) trustee, of the Wilbraham Atheneum Society, welcomed guest speaker Rich Howell to the Old Meeting House Museum Open House May 4. Howell talked about the 250th anniversary of the Battles of Concord and Lexington and when the Green Mountain Boys took over Ft. Ticonderoga. (Karen Geaghan photo)



Photos and caption courtesy of Hampden Police Department

HPD looking to identify driver

The Hampden Police Department is looking to identify this individual in regards to a larceny at Monson Savings Bank which took place on May 4. Anyone with information is asked to contact Detective Roath: 413-566-8011 x6212.



COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

Send us in your announcements! Happy Birthdays, Anniversaries, etc.

We will pick one each week to run here free of charge, please keep it to less than 50 words. Please send to krivers@turley.com

WFD wishes good luck to Special Olympics participants



Photo and caption courtesy of Wilbraham Fire Department
Congratulations to all the amazing students across the district who participated in the Special Olympics events today! While conducting our year-end fire drill at Soule Rd School, we had the opportunity to join the staff in the welcome back parade as athletes returned from their events.

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SCHOOLS

Wilbraham Middle School Honor Roll

WILBRAHAM - The following students received Honor Roll status for the Term 3 marking period at Wilbraham Middle School. Distinguished Honors is all A's in all subjects; Honors is all A's and/or B's in all subjects.

Distinguished Honors Grade 8

Teddy Acquah, Zakaria Ardolino, Alison Aucoin, Sireen Awkal, Ariana Balwa, Thomas Brogle, Bailey Burgmyer, Jason Cao, Nolan Carney, Juliana Coffey, Ryan Criscitelli, Sadie Dos Santos, Grace Falzone, Charlotte Fitzgerald, Kathryn Fulton, James Gallagher, Olivia Gaudreau, Aviana Gomez, Olivia Goodrow, Teaghan Haluch, Isabel Horne, Tyler Hoskinson, Jackson Hulseberg, Alexandra Jaslanek, Elizabeth Jourdain, William Kern, Jillian Lajeunesse, Willis Lam, Griffin Litchfield, Owen Lucarelle, Ashley Manning, Michael Murray, Owen Piquette, Lara Riberdy, Logan Richard, Sierra Rocha, Jackson Rust, Quintis Saviegvong, Kayla Smith, Ian Stratton, Sean Tillberry, Nathaniel Tirabassi, Maya Usher

Honors – Grade 8

Goudy Abuata, Margaret Babbs, Kenneth Bagley, Evan Barcome, Olivia Barnett, Charlotte Beaulieu, Lauren Beaulieu, Joshua Branham, Nicholas Bretta, Nolan Burke, Benjamin Butts, Charlotte Castellano, Xavier Catellier, Emilia Connors, Oliver Cunha, Madelyn D'Amore, Nathan Demetri, Amelia DePace, Kayla Dool

ey, Owen Downey, Keeley Doyle, Liam Doyle, Azariy Eskandarinejad, Dina Ferrentino, Jack Ford, Austin Fortune, Eva Gagliarducci, Nicole Grabowski, Judah Gunn, Lily Guo, Tegan Haluch, Max Harrigan, Syed Hashmi, Lauren Hoar, Ted Holt, Collin Kennedy, Aurora Kirtan, Kaitlyn Labadorf, Sophie Laliberte, Ella Landry, Christie Lang, Daniel Lareau, Lucas Lawrence, Johanna Lewis, Jackson McCullough, Summer McInnes, Madelyn McNabb, Joy Mendonca, Noah Metzger, Emily Meunier, Gavin Meunier, Louis Morin, Charlotte Moses, Cohen Nelson, Evan Niemi, Brielle Nieves, Ethan Nunlist, Ava O'Connor, Madeleine O'Sullivan, Brayden Pacifico, Jack Parastatidis, Ava Pelloso, Megan Pronovost, Mason Quintana, Camden Rodrigues, Colton Rogers, Annelyse Roszko, Ava Rowe, Mallory Sample, Marcello Severino, Emmett Shattuck, Liam Shattuck, Adrielle Sheridan, Abigail Stachowicz, Kyle Stebbins, Peyton Sullivan, Liam Sutherland, Stepan Syrota, Carolena Tangredi, Nicholas Tracy, Addison Trosky, Joseph Twarog-DeJura, Grace Tzoumas, Annelise Waldron, Mason Waskiewicz, Caitlyn Wetherbe, Shannon Wietecha, Mia Yvon, Jacob Zanetti

Distinguished Honors Grade 7

Cassandra Alvarez, Aubrey Appleby, Molly Baroni, Dylan Bean, Reid Blanchard, Brenna Bryan, Rose Christensen, Emery Dyer, Maycie Eldridge, Peyton Eusebio, Cody Feit, Nora Fontaine,

Ryenne Fountain, Martin Garcia, Jada Haqq, Oliver Hart, Gavin Hisgen, Jasper Hulseberg, Rieland Kearney, Nicholas Kennedy, Bree Kiernan, Andrew Kmelius, Jack Lapalm, Madeline Lee, Adeline Look, Julia Magee, Logan Mangar, Vivian McIntyre, Zahra Minhaj, Joseph Montano, Kristina Monteiro, Maeghan Morris, Andrew Mullen, Mia Newman, Desmond O'Brien, Shana Oguku, Sunmi Oh, Mya Pafumi, Abigail Patterson, Logan Pryor, William Roberts, Alexan Robles-Blasenak, Jaxson Rogers, Christopher Romano, Grace Romano, Greta Rust, Epi Sanchez, Jamie Scliopou, Jackson Shanley, Madelyn Smith, Cole Thomas, Ashley Wetherbe, Brenna Woytowicz, Kylie Zamorski

Honors – Grade 7

Aruneesan Anurathan, Mason Axiotis, Alaina Bailey, Brielle Bailey, Dante Bontempo, Jayden Bortz, Madelyn Boudreau, Alianna Brandoli, Madeline Britt, Jack Christofori, Annastazia Claudio, Jacob DeGray, Isabella DePace, Leo Deziel, Joseph Dickson, Cooper Donovan, Julian Dugan-Costa, Timothy Euber, Alaina Giombetti, McKinley Jaeger, Brynn Kennedy, Delaney Kinsman, Daide Kupis, Oliver Lamb, Emma Lewis, Siobhan Mahoney, Therese Mathias, Sophia Mazzaferro, Ryan Minns, Vivian Mirisis, Josiah Morales, Sebasti Morales-Garcia, Emily Mumper, Michelle Ohemeng, Joshua Pelletier, Ryleigh Picard, Kennady Raymond, Lyla Raymond, Gage Ring, David Roberts, Garrett Roberts, Jake Salemi, Natalia Savlick, Oscar Schmidt, Hayden Senft, Louise Shaughnessey, Caitlyn Sheehan, Jessica Soukup, Clara Steele, Maxwell Sylvester, Lucas Tassinari, Alanna Thouin, Jaxson Walker, Samuel Webster, Caitlin Weichselbaumer, Carter Witruk, Owen Wright

Distinguished Honors Grade 6

Logan Abdelmaseh, Amber Antunes, Tia Assaf, Aria Balwa, Oliver Bergeron, Olivia Beston, Matthew Brogle,

Sophia Cantalini, Angelica Capatina, Sadie Casella, Olivia Chen, Nathaniel Chinski, Philip Costello, Mary Dos Santos, Honora Farrell, Natalie Fol, John Guerin, Zoe Harrigan, Sawyer Haugh, Nora Hegarty, Grayson Householder, Emma Howland, Enzo Imbriglio, Emily Jourdain, Eva Kellogg, Gavin Kern, Brooke Kmelius, Jessica Kwajewski, Leo Langone, Anthony Lapomardo, Claire Lareau, Jayden Lopez, Katherine Lotterer, Ella Luszc, Molly MacEachern, Caroline Maziarz, Lucas Morrow, Olive Reed, Ava Ricketts, Taesha Rowe-Singleton, Mia Santos, Sophia Schott, Audrey Scott, Nicolas Siciliano, Paige Smith, Anna Steele, Kayla Vanderleeden, Allie Whittier, Caira Williams, Eviana Wright

Honors – Grade 6

Alexis Adames, Pheobe Babineau, Amalia Baltazar, Owen Benninger, Avery Blume, Margaret Brannigan, Bella Brown, Cassidy Bryan, Emily Burke, Jackson Chappel, Ella Coviello, Aaryis Crespo, Cameron DeForest, Audriana Desousa, Quinn Folli, Jack Ford, Maxwell Gawron, Taleya Gunn, Carter Hanks, Sophia Haygood, Charlotte Hemingway, Gavin Hoar, Brennan Hoey, Lucas Inguagiatto, Grace Keith, Hayden Kelley, Noah Kelly, Liam Knowlton, Michael Lafield, Eli Laravee, Jayden Lewis, Rylee Lopes, Zara Lotterer, Amyr Ly, Caroline Maserati, Savannah McNabb, Cole Michael, Adriana Monteleone, Ellis Nelson, Meriah Nguyen, Joelky Nunez De Jesus, Nora O'Connor, Adriana Pafumi, Betty Pagoaga, Colin Paige, Lilly Peltier, Stella Petit, Austin Piquette, Axel Reed, Madison Riker, Brayden Rivest, Audrey Roach, Taishla Rowe-Singleton, Summer Saleh, Damien Sassen, Anthony Soto-Tovar, Samantha Strange, Vivian Stromwall, Connor Sullivan, Malaysia Tessier, Juliany Torres, Kayson Twarog-DeJura, Jake Vanderleeden, Carter Verteramo, Justina Wojtowicz, Ella Wrisley, Samuel Zanetti, Ariel Zhou

Wilbraham-Hampden Scholarship Foundation annual raffle

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham-Hampden Scholarship Foundation has mailed raffle tickets to every home and business in the town of Wilbraham and Hampden. You should have received your golden tickets in the mail last week! All proceeds go to our scholarship fund which benefits the seniors of Minnechaug Regional High School. Tickets are \$25 and are tax-deductible as our organization is recognized under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. Prizes

include a \$1000 gift certificate to Manny's TV and Appliance, a 1-year Family Membership to the YMCA, Red Sox tickets, \$300 Big Y gift card and other fabulous items and gift cards, donated by local businesses. If you didn't receive a ticket in the mail or would like to purchase more, please email wilbrahamhampden-scholarship@gmail.com. For more information, please visit our website at wilbraham-hampdenscholarshipfoundation.org.

Thayer Academy Middle School Second Term Honor Rolls

BRAINTREE - Thayer Academy in Braintree - an independent coed day school for grades 5-12 - recently announced its Middle School grades 5-8 Hon-

or rolls for its Second Term. Students include:

From Wilbraham:
Honors
Solwazi Browne-Vargas

Representative Puppalo announces \$12,300 in Grant funds awarded

SPRINGFIELD - State Representative Angelo J. Puppalo, Jr. (D-SPRINGFIELD), is pleased to announce that the Town of Wilbraham has been awarded \$8,300 grant for the Student Awareness of Fire Education (SAFE) program and a \$4,000 grant for the Senior SAFE program for a total of \$12,300.

"I am pleased to have supported this critical funding to help Wilbraham continue these life-saving programs," stated Puppalo.

Since 1995, the Department of Fire Safety's (DFS) SAFE grant program has supported firefighter-educators who deliver age-appropriate fire safety education to kids and teens across Massachusetts, providing students with firsthand knowledge of the dangers associated with fire and

age-appropriate information on fire safety, prevention, and protection. In that time, the SAFE program has been linked to a 79% decrease in child fire fatalities.

In 2014, the DFS launched the Senior SAFE program, which is geared toward another vulnerable population - older adults, who face a disproportionate risk of death or serious injury in a fire. Senior SAFE programs support fire, carbon monoxide, and other life safety education programs, particularly at senior centers, councils on aging and through home visits.

The S.A.F.E. and Senior SAFE programs are among the reasons Massachusetts ranks as one of the most fire-safe states in the nation. Both programs are funded by the Legislature and administered by the DFS.

UPDATES from page 1

the cost is. We've been over to that resident's home at least two times. He's really concerned about how his property is going to be impacted by this."

After Selectboard Member John Flynn noted that the residence had no detection for PFAS and is the farthest from the district, he made this suggestion.

"Is there a way that we can talk to DEP and have this location removed from the list?" Flynn said.

Plaster explained the commission has tried.

"We asked if we could take some of these homes off the consideration list and

they were reluctant to support that," Plaster said.

Water District Commission Member Paul Garwacki confirmed this was correct.

"(They) don't seem ready to make any kind of changes," Garwacki said.

Garwacki then passed out a document to the board highlighting three options for residents who do not want to hook up to the water district, explaining he and Plaster looked at that residence.

"Going on site, it's a lot more work than I think anybody realized," Garwacki said.

Selectboard Member Craig Rivest said this.

"I thought from conversations prior, he didn't want to hook up originally," Rivest

said.

"Well, he feels like they're between a rock and a hard place. He's worried that if he passes up on this and down the road, they have a hit, he's going to be on the hook for the whole thing himself," Garwacki said. "So, he doesn't want to pass it up but he's concerned about--what is it, 900 feet?"

After Plaster affirmed yes, Garwacki said this.

"It's a long way up and we walked it," Garwacki said. "There's two streams, there's boulders everywhere."

"So, when engineering went in there to lay all the plans, did they account for any of that?" Rivest said.

Garwacki was unsure.

"Quite honestly, I think

those were estimates because John and I have walked on other properties and the prints and reality are two different things. But, the impact is minor..." Garwacki said. "The estimate right now we have is \$90,000 and I think there's significant upside on that. We met with the Baltazar crew and they walked it with us and they're scratching their head going, 'We got to get some numbers on this.'"

Flynn asked about option one, which was to do no remediation but continue to test.

"Is option one a real option? Can we do nothing?" Flynn said.

Garwacki said yes.

"That's the option I would recommend is option one," Garwacki said.

"We can do nothing and we'll just be on the hook for testing," Rivest said.

"Yeah, you would just have to continue testing. We don't have to hook up," Garwacki said.

Garwacki reiterated how the water had no detection when tested.

"He's happy with the water," Garwacki said.

"He really would support option one," Plaster said. "As long as he knows that if we all of a sudden we start detecting PFAs or any of the VOCCs."

After Chair Don Davenport suggested that's when a filter could be put in, Plaster agreed.

"We'll take care of it," Plaster said. "We could go to option three."

"Option three is what he would like to do if option one wasn't available," Garwacki said.

The testing cost for option one would be \$2,100 a year.

When Domina noted the testing costs for option three "were the same as well," this was also confirmed to be correct.

"The test would stay the same. If you are at the expense over 10 years, it's a third of hooking up. We're looking at 30 years," Garwacki said.

Rivest recalled from the meeting with DEP if filtration would be required for positive hits.

"If it's coming up clean time and time again, they wouldn't require filtration," Rivest said.

"Correct," Plaster and Garwacki said.

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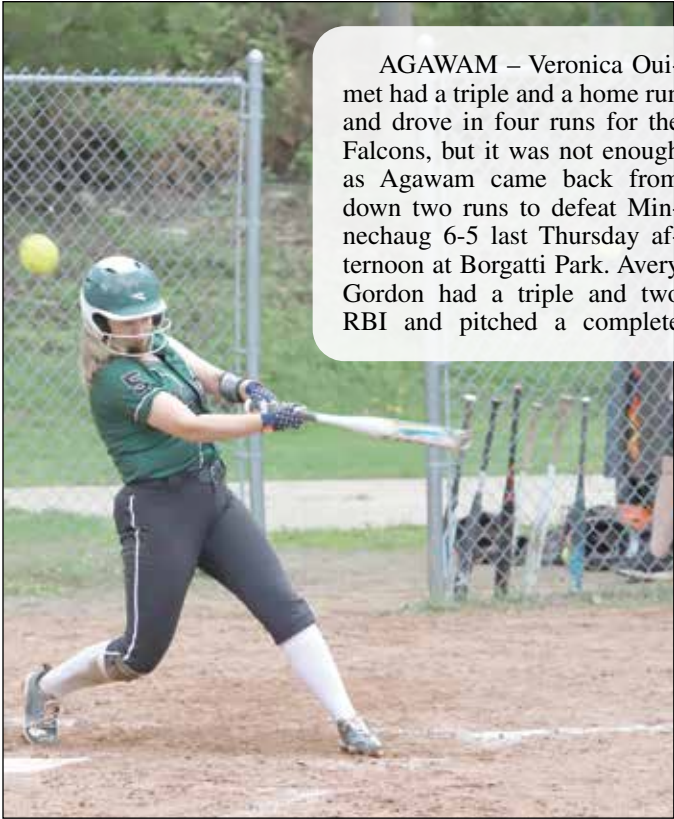
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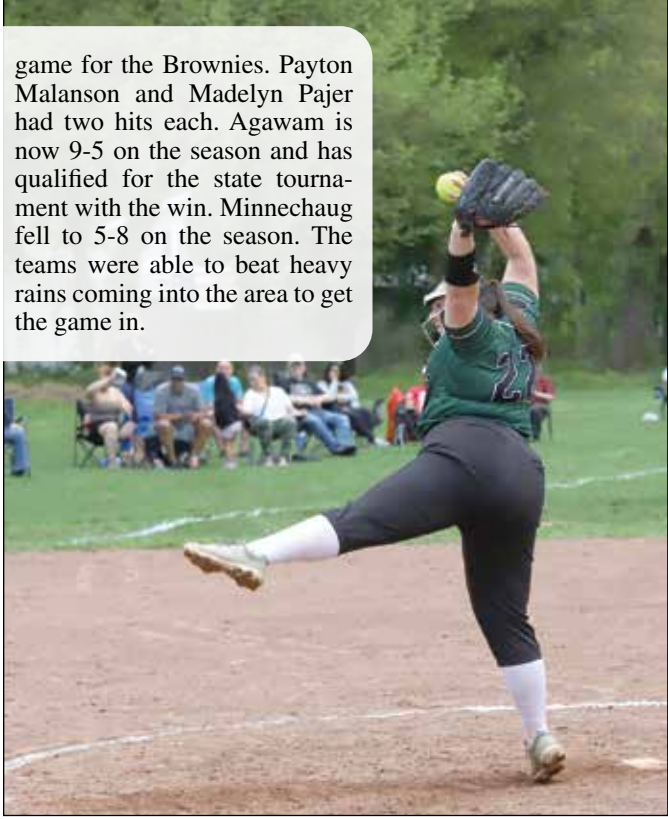
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Agawam softball comes back to beat Chaug



Ava Peabody fouls off a pitch.

AGAWAM – Veronica Ouimet had a triple and a home run and drove in four runs for the Falcons, but it was not enough as Agawam came back from down two runs to defeat Minnechaug 6-5 last Thursday afternoon at Borgatti Park. Avery Gordon had a triple and two RBI and pitched a complete



Abigail Camire sends a pitch home.

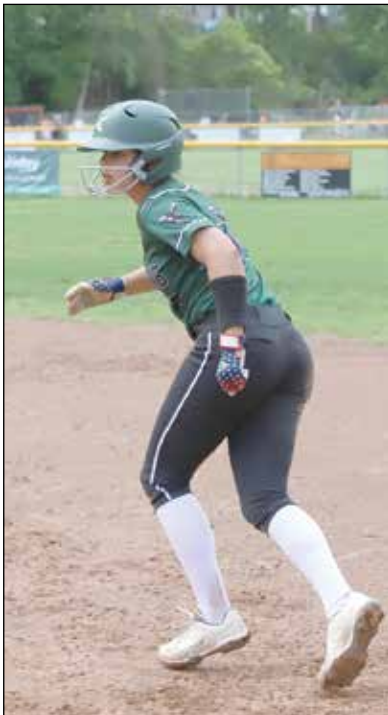
game for the Brownies. Payton Malanson and Madelyn Pajer had two hits each. Agawam is now 9-5 on the season and has qualified for the state tournament with the win. Minnechaug fell to 5-8 on the season. The teams were able to beat heavy rains coming into the area to get the game in.



Veronica Ouimet puts a charge into this swing for a triple.



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Kaelyn Dionne throws to first.



Brooklyn Rosas shuffles off first base.

Pioneers test team in ‘Friendly’ game, look forward to season opener

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—Even though there are a bunch of first-year players listed on the Western Mass. Pioneers roster, the main objective remains the same. The Pioneers will be looking to qualify for the USL League Two playoffs for the sixth time since 2019. “We do have a lot of new players this year,” said Pioneers head coach Federico Molinari following his team’s 8-0 victory in a friendly against Southwest FC at Lusitano Stadium last Saturday night. “We’re going to try our best to compete during the regular season and we’re hoping to make the playoffs

again. Six or seven more players will be arriving next week.” Molinari, who has been coaching the Pioneers since 2012, will be coaching the New England Mutiny once again this year. He’s also the Director of Coaching for the Western United Pioneers. “Federico is one of the best soccer coaches that I’ve been around,” said Pioneers General Manager Joe Ferrara. “He does an outstanding job of making adjustments during each match. He also communicates very well with the players.” The Pioneers, who were founded in 1998, finished in second place in the Northeast Division a year ago with an 11-1-2 regular season record.



Jared Smith returns to Western Mass. this season.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Kawame Adu-Gyamfi is among the returning players for the Pioneers this season.

After defeating FC Motown STA, 3-1, in extra time in an Eastern Conference qualifying round match, they lost to Lionsbridge FC, 2-1, in the conference quarterfinals. “We’ve made the playoffs during the past six years, but we haven’t won the championship title yet,” Ferrara said. “We do have one of the toughest schedules in our

conference this year.” The Pioneers are scheduled to open the 2025 campaign with a pair of road matches against Boston City and the Albany Rush before hosting league rival the Seacoast United Phantoms in the home opener at 7:30 p.m. Please see **PIONEERS**, page 13



Brenan Rost sets up a possible spike.



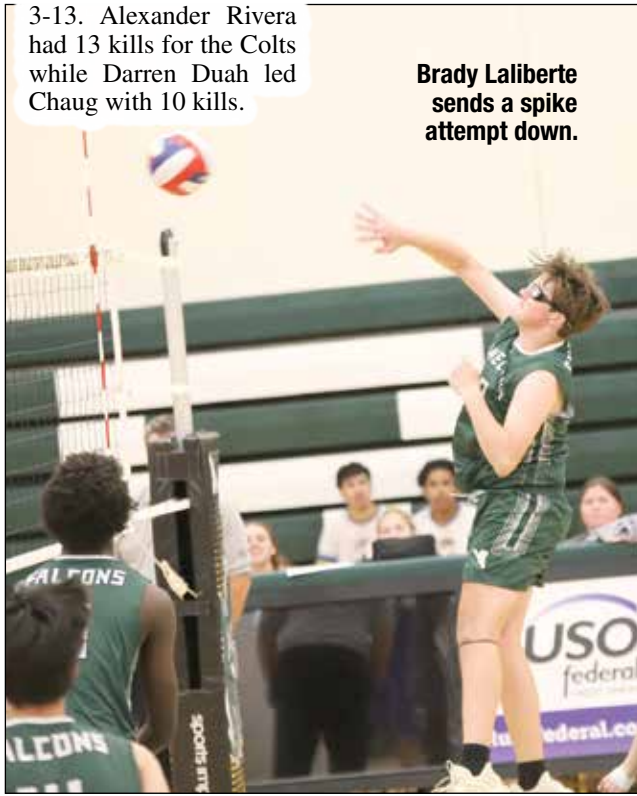
Andon Cordova sends a serve away.

Falcons fall to Comp

WILBRAHAM – The Minnechaug Regional High School boys volleyball team fell at home last Tuesday night to a powerful Chicopee Comprehensive team 3-1. After winning the first two sets, Comp fell to Chaug 25-13 in the third set. The momentum did not carry for the Falcons as they lost 25-14 in the fourth set to give Comp a win. Comp improved to 9-7 for the year while the Falcons are 3-13. Alexander Rivera had 13 kills for the Colts while Darren Duah led Chaug with 10 kills.



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Kevin Cordova gets a spike.



Brady Laliberte sends a spike attempt down.

Rain hampers schedule, leads to extension of cutoff date for playoffs

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

Rainouts are a part of every spring, especially for baseball and softball. But some seasons are more excessive than others. As it stands, the spring season is the shortest regular season during the school year, starting in the first week of April and only last until the third or fourth week of May. The new state playoff system implemented in 2021 further shortened the spring season, as the sectional playoffs now take place a week earlier. While there has already been a lot of rain this spring,

this past week has been the worst of it, with some areas of Western and Central Mass. getting between four and six inches of rain combined throughout the week. While sports like lacrosse, which is played on artificial turf in many places, and boys volleyball which is played indoors, have been largely unaffected, other sports have not been so lucky. Baseball, softball, tennis, and track have taken big hits, with lots of games, meets, and matches needing to be rescheduled. And time is running out. Andy Rogers, who has the tall task of scheduling Please see **RAIN**, page 12

SPORTS

Thunderbirds make big impact on community in 2024-2025 season

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds had another prolific season as a community partner to numerous organizations and causes in the Western Mass region. Through the franchise’s “Together We Can” Community Partnership with M&T Bank, the Thunderbirds made more than 400 player and mascot visits in the area during the season while also raising more than \$100,000 for charity.

“As we approach our 10th anniversary, our commitment to being a true champion for the Western Massachusetts community has never been stronger,” said Thunderbirds President Nathan Costa. “That core principle continues to guide everything we do. Partners like M&T Bank, who share our passion for local impact, have been instrumental in helping us expand our reach and deepen our efforts across the Pioneer Valley. Each year, we’re inspired by the remarkable generosity and spirit of giving throughout the 413, and we’re honored to play a meaningful role in lifting up those who call this region home.”

“M&T Bank is proud to partner with the Springfield Thunderbirds’ “Together We Can” campaign and honored to play a role in strengthening the communities in the Pioneer Valley in such a meaningful way,” said M&T Bank Senior Vice President Maureen Picknally. “We are deeply committed to our community partners and strive to make a positive impact in peoples’ lives and in the communities we serve.”

The 2024-25 season further showcased the T-Birds’ dedication to remaining a pillar of the Springfield community, with an average of more than one visit per day by players, staff, and team mascot Boomer. The scope of those appearances has been wide-ranging, from youth hockey program visits to corporate partner appearances

and charitable presence at staple community events like the Rays of Hope Walk.

Long before the puck even dropped on the season, the T-Birds had already made their mark in the community thanks to a second successful summer of the team’s Community Caravan, with support from MassMutual. The program made stops in three neighboring towns throughout the summer of 2024, creating a fun atmosphere for T-Birds fans in the offseason months with activities ranging from the inflatable shooter tutor to face painters and balloon artists. Furthermore, the program made its mark on the towns they visited, as each Caravan benefited a local non-profit organization. The team collected food, baby supplies, and school supplies and generated over 400 pounds of food donations and more than \$500 of donated goods.

A highlight of the early season schedule, the annual T-Birds School Day Game on Nov. 6 brought more than 6,000 school students to the MassMutual Center for a one-of-a-kind educational experience, complete with a T-Birds-themed workbook that spanned several school subjects and morphed the classroom with the hockey rink. This tradition has been continually supported by longtime T-Birds partners Fontaine Bros. Construction and MassMutual.

The T-Birds and their fans continued to show their love for our four-legged friends during the annual Pucks & Paws game on Nov. 15, thanks to their partners at Pet Supplies Plus and the Foundation for TJO Animals. The pups who made their way into the Thunderdome were treated to a T-Birds dog toy and water dish, while every “dog ticket” sold benefited the Foundation for TJO Animals, which provides funding for treatment and care for animals at the TJO Animal Shelter.

The third year of the T-Birds’ partnership with the Rock 102 Mayflower Marathon proved to be the most successful yet. The team’s home game on Nov. 22 provided an opportunity for fans to donate canned goods ahead of the 31st annual drive the following week at MGM Springfield. Thanks to the generosity of T-Birds fans in the region who donated throughout the month at the Thunderdome, the Mayflower Marathon takeover provided a springboard to a record total of over \$236,000 in food and monetary donations, all of which benefited Open Pantry in Springfield, providing Thanksgiving meals to families in need.

T-Birds forward Sam Bitten continued the team’s fight against cancer for the club’s annual Hockey Fights Cancer game on Nov. 30. For a third straight season, Bitten collaborated with the T-Birds front office for a new line of Bitsy’s Army merchandise, aimed at raising money for brain tumor cancer research in memory of Bitten’s cousin, Martin Piche, who passed from the disease four years ago. The team sported specialty lavender jerseys, which brought further fundraising for local cancer charities (Baystate Children’s Hospital, Sister Caritas Cancer Center, CHD’s Cancer House of Hope, Survivor Journeys, etc.).

As the holidays approached, the T-Birds’ annual Teddy Bear Toss, presented by Teddy Bear Pools & Spas, showcased the heartfelt nature of the season on Dec. 7. After a record 7,162 stuffed animals were collected, more than 15 local organizations received donations from T-Birds players, Boomer, and staff. Those donations, in turn, provided countless smiles for underprivileged youth at the holidays. Some of the high-lighted beneficiaries included Square One, CHD, Ronald McDonald House of Springfield, the Springfield Boys & Girls Clubs, and MLK Family Services.

Massachusetts Pirates fall in Tucson

TUCSON, AZ – In a battle of ball carriers named Williams, Pirates running back Pooka Williams Jr. rushed for a career high 145 yards on 15 carries with two touchdowns, but it was not enough as the Tucson Sugar Skulls (3-3) defeated Massachusetts 47-26 at the Tucson Convention Center. Sugar Skulls running back Jamyest Williams rushed for 121 yards with three touchdowns on 12 carries for the victors. The Pirates fall to 2-4 on the season as new Head Coach Tom Menas sees a setback in his first game.

Defense ruled from the outset as neither offense would score on the first five possessions. Pirates’ defensive backs Matt Elam and Destin Mack intercepted Sugar Skulls quarterback Jorge Reyna on Tucson’s first two drives. Yet, the Skulls took the lead as Ahmad Lyons intercepted a Kenji Bahar pass and returned it six yards for a touchdown. Kevin Macias added the point after, and with 3:42 remaining in the opening quarter, Tucson led 7-0.

The Pirates answered with a five-play, 42-yard drive with Pooka Williams Jr. capping it off with a 15-yard touchdown run. Josh Gable’s extra point closed the scoring with the first quarter tied at seven.

The second quarter saw both teams finding their

rhythm offensively. Tucson took a 13-7 lead as Jamyest Williams scored on an eight-yard run. Massachusetts then took its first lead of the game as Bahar finished a six-play, 30-yard march with a six-yard touchdown run. Gable added the PAT for a 14-13 advantage.

Tucson regained the lead with 54 seconds to play in the half as Williams scored his second rushing touchdown from 14 yards out, and the Sugar Skulls had a 19-14 halftime advantage.

The lead expanded to 26-14 as Jerome Buckner took the second-half kickoff 48 yards to the house for a touchdown. The Tucson defense then stopped the Pirates inside the ten-yard line for the second time in the game and took over at their own seven. Six plays and 47 yards later, it was Williams scoring on a five-yard run as his third rushing touchdown gave the Skulls a 19-point, 33-14 lead with 5:34 remaining in the third quarter.

Williams Jr. brought the Pirates back with a 16-yard touchdown run, and with 16 seconds left in the third, Massachusetts trailed 33-20.

In the final quarter, the Sugar Skulls got their first passing touchdown of the game as Reyna found Larry Harrington on a four-yard route, pushing the lead to 40-20. Bahar notched his second rushing touchdown with 6:47 remaining. His five-yard run put the Pirates

down by 14, 40-26.

Drew Dixon caught a 19-yard touchdown pass with 60 seconds to play to give the Skulls their largest lead and their final points of the night, 47-26.

For the Pirates, Bahar was 7 of 27 passing for 107 yards and an interception. He ran three times for 49 yards and two scores. Williams Jr. was the game’s leading rusher with 145 yards on 15 carries with two touchdowns. He also had two receptions for six yards. Teo Redding led Massachusetts with 39 yards on two receptions. The defense was led by Marquis Waters, who had five and a half tackles with three sacks for 18 yards. Matt Elam and Tye Smith each had five tackles. Elam added an interception.

For the Sugar Skulls, Reyna was 9 of 16 passing for 130 yards with two touchdowns and an interception. His top target was Harrington with four receptions for 67 yards and a touchdown. Williams had three rushing touchdowns and 121 yards on 12 attempts. Defensively, Jalen Perkins had five and a half tackles, and Lyons added a “pick-six” and a fumble recovery.

The Pirates will continue their road trip playing on Sunday, May 18, in Prescott Valley against the Northern Arizona Wranglers.

Pioneers release 2025 schedule

LUDLOW – For several years, the Western Mass. Pioneers have been a mainstay in spring-summer soccer and have entertained the early on many Fridays and Saturday nights with great semi-pro action.

The Pioneers will return to the field at Lusitano Stadium in Ludlow for another round of games in 2025.

One thing missing from the Pioneers schedule is an

appearance in the Open Cup. The Pioneers have done that in late March or April the past two seasons, but it does not appear on their schedule this season.

The season opener for the Pioneers is against Boston City on the road on Thursday, May 15 at 7 p.m. They will play the Albany Rush on Monday, May 19 after that, then gear up for their home opener on Friday,

May 23 at 7:30 p.m. against league rival Seacoast United Phantoms. The Pioneers have a total of seven home games on their slate.

They also usually schedule a “friendly” game prior to the start of the season, though that has not been scheduled as of press time.

For more information on the 2025 Pioneers, go to www.wmpioneers.com

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CLUES ACROSS	European plant	66. Speak indistinctly	25. Electrical power unit
1. Two-person German submarine	33. American state	67. Soviet Socialist Republic	26. Destitute
6. 60-minute intervals (abbr.)	36. Some are made by rabbits	68. Between-meal sustenance	27. Drags forcibly
9. Database management system	38. Express with a head movement	CLUES DOWN	29. Impropriety
13. Vertical position	39. Affair	1. Not soft	30. Word forms
14. American jazz singer Irene	41. Cured	2. Sharp-pointed dueling sword	32. Equal to 10 meters
15. Ancient Greek City	44. Youth organization	3. Line a roof	34. Neither
16. Former Senate Majority Leader Harry	45. 18-year astronomical period	4. Greek god of the underworld	35. Computer language
17. Japanese seaport	46. Automobile	5. Software	37. Practice of aging film or TV characters (abbr.)
18. Self-immolation by fire ritual	48. Focus a shot	6. Large-headed elongated fishes	40. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
19. Assigns tasks	49. The NFL’s big game (abbr.)	7. Shag rugs	42. A promise
21. Beloved type of cigar	51. Mouth	8. Type of whale	43. Challenges
22. Discounts	52. Infections	9. Lacking a plan	47. Official
23. Cambodian communist leader Pot	54. Curved pieces of a horse collar	10. Spill the beans	49. People living in Myanmar
24. Important football position	56. Shameless	11. Some is “heavy”	50. Notable tower
25. Kilometers per hour	60. Assist in escaping	12. One who has been canonized	52. Type of sword
28. Lentil	61. Capuchin monkey genus	14. Indicate times	53. Vaccine developer
29. Extremely angry	62. Cold wind	17. Greeting	55. Listing
31. Yellow-flowered	63. Retired Brazilian NBAer	20. Broadway actor Josh	56. Summertime insects
	64. Tropical Old World tree	21. Seashore	57. Concluding passage
	65. Bulgarian city	23. Indicates before	58. Guitarist Clapton
			59. Damp and musty
			61. Central nervous system
			65. Against

RAIN from page 11

umpires for high school baseball in Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin counties, said while he has a lot of games to get rescheduled, experience matters, and he is ready to through the task of getting umpires to all the needed games.

“There are a lot of moving pieces with umpires. One of the big challenges is I have over 10 college umpires on staff, and they are in their playoffs now,” Rogers said. “They get their games the day before for college, and come off of high school games and they are working very competitive games for me. Youth leagues are also fully going, so when I take an umpire to work a high school game, the youth assignors then struggle to cover their games. It’s all connected. Same with the adult leagues that are out there. With the rain, I just continue to adjust and do the best I can. I want to credit our umpire staff for staying on top of so many changes. With the geography that I cover (Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin), I have to look at how far I send umpires, how many times they see the same teams, etc.”

The state tournament has had a minimal impact on Rogers’ ability to schedule, but said there have had to be some adjustments.

“The state tournament really hasn’t impacted me that much,” Rogers said. “What is tough is the Western Mass tournament week, you have



Turley photo by Gregory A. Scibelli
While this week was likely the worse, rain has been an issue all spring.

a lot of games scheduled the day before that I have to cover including the non-playoff matchups which can still be important for teams trying to get into the state playoffs. Two years ago, I had a Palmer/Smith Academy game with 3-16 Palmer Playing 9-10 Smith Academy and Smith needed that game to get into the states. It was the same day as the high school semifinals.

Knowing the matchups is very important during those times.”

One help for the tournament is that the cutoff date for baseball and softball has been moved from May 15 to May 19, which will give teams more time to make up games. Several teams were preparing to play 4-5 games this week and next in order to catch up with their schedule.

PIONEERS from page 11

on May 23. The Phantoms are the defending USL-Two champions. They defeated Peoria City, 3-2, in extra time in the championship match.

“Vermont and Seacoast always have very good players,” Molinari said. “I also think NEFC, who’s a new team in our division, has signed some very good players.”

Two of the players who didn’t return this season are Alec Hughes and Scott Testori, who combined for a total of 28 goals last summer.

Hughes, who scored a team-leading 17 goals, was selected by LAFC with the 22nd overall pick in the 2025 MLS Super Draft.

Testori (11 goals) also had a try-out with a West Coast MLS team. He was the leading goal scorer on the 2023 UConn men’s soccer team.

Oskar Kaufmann, who’s a newcomer from Sweden, scored the first two goals of the second half in last Saturday’s match. He’s expected to be one of the Pioneers leading goal scorers this season.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Mamadi Jiana, of Chicopee, will be a Pioneers again this season.



Aiden Kelly was among those who played in the Friendly game last Saturday.

Last fall, Kaufmann scored 12 goals for Coker University, which is a Division 2 school in South Carolina. He’ll be transferring to South Carolina Upstate, which is a Division 1 school.

The Pioneers other goal scorers in the Friendly were Luke Hanchar, Austin Bush, Matt Cence, Robbie Lyons, Aidan Kelly, and Austin Murawski.

Kelly, who’s a defender from UMass-Amherst, re-

placed Nicholas Oberrauch as the team captain.

“Aidan is a second-year player for us,” Molinari said. “He was one of the leaders on last year’s team.”

A couple of other returning players are Austin Rocke, Jared Smith, Augustine Boadi, Ali Taleb, Kwame Adu-Gyamfi, and Mamadi Jiana

The Pioneers starting goalie was Cam Hall, who’s another newcomer from Bentley University.

Thomas Wadas, who’s a senior at Ludlow High School, saw some playing time in the second half. He will be practicing with the Pioneers and will be playing for the Academy team.

Dennis Gomes and Jay Willis are returning as the Pioneers assistant coaches.

The tickets prices for all the Pioneers regular season home matches are \$10.

Children 6 years old and younger are free.

It should be another exciting season at the 107-year-old soccer stadium located on Winsor Street in Ludlow.

Unico Celebrity Bartending Event

WILBRAHAM – Unico of East Longmeadow and Wilbraham will be holding an Unico National Celebrity Bartending Charity Fundraising event at Pafumi’s on Main on June 4.

The event will take place from 4:30 to 8:30 p.m.

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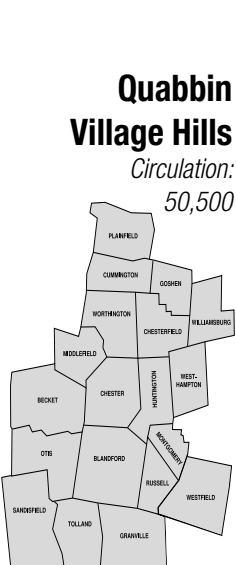
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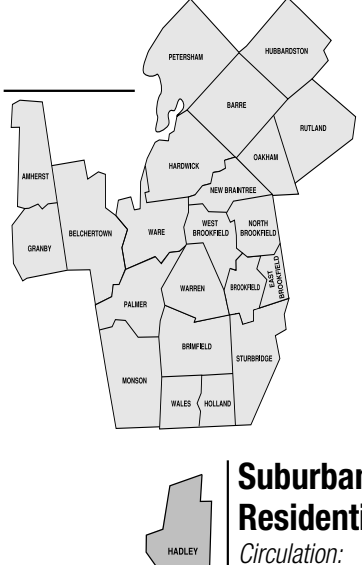
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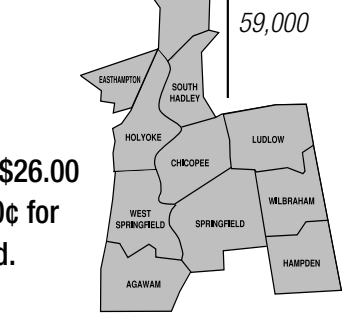
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Events & announcements schedule

Hampden Garden Club May Meeting May 15

HAMPDEN – The May meeting of the Hampden Garden Club is at Academy Hall, Main St at 7 p.m. on May 15. Program presented by Bonnie Power on “Good Bugs/Bad Bugs.” This presentation describes some of the common beneficial & pest insects that gardeners encounter in New England.

Spring Fundraiser Workshop at Hampden Senior Center

HAMPDEN – Come join on May 16, 2025 from 6 to 8 p.m. for a program of working with polymer clay to create a unique—everyone will be different—pendant. Class will be conducted by artist Nan Hurlburt. \$25 includes class and supplies. All ages are welcome. Call the Hampden Senior Center at 413-566-5588 for more information. Proceeds of this event will benefit the programs offered at the senior center.

Wilbraham Friends of the Library to hold Spring Plant Sale

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Friends of the Library (WFOL) is holding a plant sale featuring three varieties of annuals. The sale will be pre-order only through May 14 with plant pick up on Saturday, May 17 from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Wilbraham Public Library, 25 Crane Park Drive, Wilbraham. The WFOL is excited to once again offer summer blooming annuals to beautify your garden and benefit the Wilbraham Public Library. We are offering annuals - Begonias (pink or white), Petunias (blue) and Texas Red Salvia. These are large plants in 5-inch pots that are ready to plant and show off. Plants are \$6 each and available by pre-order only. Deadline for orders is May 14 and orders

will be available for pick up Saturday, May 17 from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Wilbraham Public Library, 25 Crane Park Road, Wilbraham. Pick up an order form at the library or download from the library’s website - www.wilbrahamlibrary.org. You can also request an order form by emailing WFOL.info@gmail.com. Return your order with payment to the library during regular business hours. The sale is sponsored by the Wilbraham Friends of the Library which was established in 1973. The Friends of the Library fund programs for children, teens, and adults, as well as the library’s popular Museum Pass program, furnishings, and other library equipment. For more information, contact the WFOL at WFOL.info@gmail.com.

Wilbraham holding Memorial Day Ceremony May 25

WILBRAHAM – The town will hold its Memorial Day Ceremony on Sunday May 25 at 11 a.m. at Crane Park Veteran Memorial. Join the Wilbraham Veteran Services to remember and honor our fallen.

Hampden Parks & Recreation Dept. announces Spring programs and registration Deadlines

HAMPDEN – The Hampden Recreation Department is proud to announce an exciting lineup of current and upcoming programs for children and adults. From life-saving CPR training to fun-filled athletic activities, there’s something for everyone this season. With multiple registration deadlines approaching, now is the time to sign up for programs designed to engage, educate, and inspire. Current Programs: • Wildlife Programming at Laughing Brook Registration: Ongoing Connect with nature through engaging wildlife

programs at Laughing Brook. Learn about local wildlife species, their habitats, and the environment. Programs are designed for all ages and offer opportunities for outdoor learning in a fun, interactive way. • Healthy Kids Running Registration: Ongoing Encourage kids to get moving with the Healthy Kids Running program! This initiative promotes physical activity and healthy habits while helping young runners build confidence and improve their fitness. Registration is open for participants of all skill levels. Upcoming Programs: • Hampden Memorial Park Summer Program Activity 2025 Registration Opens: Mar 10 Make your summer memorable with activities and events at Hampden Memorial Park. The summer program will offer a variety of fun outdoor experiences, and registration details will be available soon! Closing Soon: • Recreation Baseball Grades K-8 - 2025 Still seeking players for grades (3-4) and (5-6) Time is running out to sign up for the 2025 Recreation Baseball season! If you have a child in grades 3-4 or 5-6, there are still spots available. Don’t miss the opportunity to be part of a fun, competitive baseball league! Don’t miss out! Register today to secure your place in these incredible programs and enjoy a spring full of learning, fun, and physical activity. For more information and to register visit: <https://hampdenma.myrec.com>.

Hampden Memorial Day and Celebration May 26

HAMPDEN – Hampden VFW Post 9397 invites you to this year’s Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony on Monday, May 26. The festivities kick off at 10 a.m. stepping off from St. Mary’s Church, traveling down Main Street to the center of town. At 11 a.m., there will be a Memorial Day ceremony at Veteran’s Memorial. Also stop by the VFW Post 9397 for some light refreshments and pizza.



Wilbraham United Church holding Handbell Concert

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham United Church will be the hosts of a Handbell Concert on Saturday May 31 at 7 p.m. featuring the Merrimack Valley Ringers, a nationally-known handbell group. Currently celebrating their 23rd season, the Merrimack Valley Ringers are an auditioned community handbell ensemble devoted to sharing the art of handbells and handchimes with everyone. MVR’s members delight audiences with their infectious joy, and make it their goal to capture their audience from the first note with their gusto and warmth. Considered partners in each performance, audiences are drawn in by the ensemble’s personality, spontaneity, and unflappable spirit. This spring, the Merrimack Valley Ringers Celestial Light program will take listeners “Up and Away” on a musical trip through time and space. They will “Fly [You] to the Moon” so you can “Moondance” and then be “Walking on Sunshine”, on the “Fairy Hills”, all before the “Morning Light.” The concert featuring five octaves of handbells and chimes and 17 ringers, led by founding Artistic Director Karen Leonard begins at 7 p.m. in the church’s

Sanctuary. The church is located at 500 Main Street in Wilbraham. Parking is available in the rear parking lot and the church building is accessible. There is no charge for admittance, but a free-will offering will be accepted. Prior to the concert during the afternoon, the Ringers will be offering a workshop to local handbell ringers. Ringers interested in attending the workshop can register at <https://area1.handbellmusicians.org/state-and-local-events/western-ma-ringing-skills-workshop/>

Relay for Life looking for participants

BELCHERTOWN—Quaboag Valley Relay for Life is looking for more teams to join our Relay on May 31 on the Belchertown Common from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Everyone has been affected by cancer so now is the time to form a few friends and family so you can fundraise and spread awareness of this dreaded disease. You do not have to have a large team or lots of money collected. A few new teams getting in some donations is a big help to the American Cancer Society. After we are done doing all our fundraising, the Relay is a way to unwind and celebrate our accomplishments. The teams can be in honor or in memory of a loved one or friend. Any questions please feel free to email ctellic@juno.com

Arthritis Foundation’s Walk to Cure Arthritis

REGION—Gather your friends and family to join Walk to Cure Arthritis in Westfield on Sunday, June 1, 2025 at Stanley Park. This fun mile walk raises money for scientific research to find better treatments and to get closer to a cure for the #1 cause of disability in the U.S. Community members come together to celebrate the people living with arthritis in their lives and learn about the Arthritis Foundation’s resources and services. Register today www.walktocurearthritis.org/westernMA for Walk to Cure Arthritis, create or join a team and be there June 1.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Wilbraham Conservation Commission Notice of Public Meeting
The Wilbraham Conservation Commission will hold a public meeting on **Monday, June 2, 2025 at 6:30 PM** at the Town Office Building, 240 Springfield St, Wilbraham, MA on the Request for Determination of Applicability filed by CSX Transportation, Inc. under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Wilbraham Wetlands By-Law. This Request is to determine the boundaries of Wetland Resource Areas within their right-of-way thru Wilbraham for Vegetation Management Plan to control vegetation on the railroad to ensure the safe passage of trains. Information relating to this application is on file with the Commission. Chairman, Christopher Brown
05/15/2025

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

EARLY DEADLINES

In observance of Memorial Day, the Classifieds have an **EARLY AD DEADLINE.** To advertise, place your ad no later than **NOON Thursday, May 22**

Thank you!

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EARLY DEADLINES

In observance of Memorial Day, **PUBLIC NOTICES** EARLY AD DEADLINE Place your public notice no later than **NOON Thursday, May 22**

– Thank you!

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 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.

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