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Craft fair at the car show

Minnechaug was abuzz with activity last Saturday

By Dalton Zbierski
Editor
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WILBRAHAM – Dozens of vendors participated in a student-coordinated craft fair at Minnechaug Regional High School on May 13, as a car show occurred there simultaneously.

The events coincided with the Wilbraham Hill Climb, which took place nearby on Monson Road. A fleet of buses was in constant motion during the morning and afternoon, shuttling people from one location to the other.

The craft fair behind the school featured paintings, ceramics, jewelry, photography, printmaking, woodworking, seasonal crafts, health and beauty products and more.

“It’s a lot of fun; a good environment with a bunch of cars if you like cars. You can see the old ones you can’t find and the newer ones. It’s a good mix,” said Alexis Derosier, a Longmeadow resident who arrived to sell anime-related items.

A group of Minnechaug students sold homemade items to benefit the school’s art department. Available were hand-crafted bowls, plates, necklaces, bracelets, key chains and earrings.

“You get to see what hard work people put into all differ-



Tessa Chambers, Ava Sheehan, Lindsay Labadorf, Gabriella Viruet, Victoria Harrington and Gay Straight Alliance advisor Kyle Garron at the Minnechaug Craft Fair. (Staff photo by Dalton Zbierski)

ent types of mediums and how much dedication they have to their craft. It’s a really good way to see what everybody has to offer,” Minnechaug junior Victoria Harrington said.

“It’s nice because we all have the same idea of how we feel about art, and it gives us a space where we can express that interest because I know a lot of people that go to our school are more academically focused. It’s just nice to have a little creative outlet,” she continued.

Deana Gore is a regular at Wilbraham craft fairs and was present last Saturday offering homemade candles, wax melts and room sprays. She was thrilled to see so many artisans and microbusinesses showcasing their talents, as the car show and hill climb also occurred.

“The atmosphere here today is electric. You can feel the energy with everyone coming through and just to have so much going on at one time here in one place I think really

brought the community together,” Gore said.

Sabrina Niedzielski arrived to present her handmade bath products, soaps, luxury lotions and candles. She appreciated being side by side with so many vendors who are passionate about their creativity and expressed her gratitude for the organizers.

“There’s everything. I mean you’ve got pottery, you’ve got

Please see **CRAFT**, page 9

Two candidates on the ballot for the Board of Selectmen

The town election takes place on May 20

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
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WILBRAHAM - Residents will consider two candidates for the Board of Selectmen when they head to the polls on May 20.

Voting takes place from 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. at Minnechaug Regional High School.

The two candidates are Michael Squindo and Carmela Blair, with the winner filling a vacancy after Chairman Carolyn Brennan announced it was her final year on the board.

Michael Squindo

Squindo has been involved in municipal government for the last 10 years, has a master’s degree in social work and is licensed in social work. He has an extensive background in community leadership and development as far back as his high school years, leading to a desire to invest in local government.



Michael Squindo

Squindo said this background has “prepared and projected me forward” in his work, including working on budgets and collaborating with colleagues in varying departments.

“I’ve always been interested in local government and having attended several meetings, I see an opportunity here for the Wilbraham process to better engage citizens in a way that works for them,” Squindo said.

Squindo has been pleased with several successes by the Selectmen, including the work on the new senior center, calling it “a significant success for the town.”

Additionally, he wants to continue moving forward on municipal broadband and the creation of Tax Increment Financing, or TIF, for the town.

TIF is an economic development tool geographically targeted to a community and supports investing in public infrastructure and other improvements.

“This will help support eco-

Please see **BOARD**, page 7

Beth Burger retires from library trustees after 36 years

A reception at the Hampden library was held in her honor

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
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HAMPDEN - The library held a reception in the Rochford Reading Room from 3-6 p.m. on May 11 to honor outgoing Library Trustees Chair Beth Burger.

Burger is retiring from the Library Board of Trustees after 36 years.

During the reception, attendees congratulated Burger and shared well wishes and memories. Additionally, they enjoyed refreshments provided by the Friends of the Library.

Joan Shea is on the Friends and said honoring Burger “means a lot to me.”

“I think she deserves a nice gathering like this. We’re holding it as kind of like an open

house. People will come in, grab a little bit of food, chat and then they’re able to leave or go to their next event,” Shea said.

Burger received two dedications for her commitment to the library from State Rep. Brian Ashe (D-Longmeadow) from the House of Representatives and Board of Selectmen Chair John Flynn.

Burger’s late husband, Bob Burger, also served on the Selectmen for two terms.

“For 36 years, she provided guidance and leadership to the Hampden Free Library as a library trustee. Her commitment to the library, as a volunteer for the betterment of our community, is an example of what makes Hampden a place we all love and call home,” Flynn said.

Flynn explained how Burger raised her three sons in Hampden, has been a resident for 54 years and served many years as caretaker of the gardens at St. Mary’s Shrine alongside the late Sheila R. Flynn.

“On behalf of grateful resi-



State Rep. Brian Ashe (D-Longmeadow), Library Director Ellen Moriarty, Library Trustees Chair Beth Burger and Hampden Board of Selectmen Chair John Flynn take a group photo during the reception honoring Beth Burger at Hampden Public Library. Burger was presented with two dedications from the Massachusetts House of Representatives and the town’s Selectmen. (Staff photo by Kristin Rivers)

dents, we thank Beth Burger for her wisdom, her spirit and her generosity of time,” Flynn said.

Trustee Kathleen Hutchinson shared a creative Dr. Seuss retelling to honor Burger and

presented a plaque.

Hutchinson said, “It’s going to be a big loss,” sharing Burger supported new library programs,

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Three candidates on the ballot for appointment to School Committee

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
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WILBRAHAM - Residents will have three candidates to choose from for appointment to the School Committee in the May 20 election.

Voting takes place from 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. at Minnechaug Regional High School.

The three candidates are Dr. Mike Tirabassi, Christina Beckel and Sherrill Caruana.

Caruana currently serves on the School Committee and is up for reelection to a third term.

Dr. Mike Tirabassi

Tirabassi has children in the district and has served on the Finance Committee for the last year. He is an Associate Professor of Surgery at UMASS - Chan Medical School and a "teachers' teacher" for Advanced Trauma Life Support.



Tirabassi explained how the school assessment has Wilbraham comprising nearly 60% of the town's budget and "quality education requires a quality investment and our school district is no exception."

"It is a great responsibility and vitally important to wisely

manage the town's investment. The children's education and, likewise, our future depends on it," Tirabassi said.

Tirabassi shared his experience working on the Finance Committee.

"Working on the team to help ensure our schools, and the rest of the departments in town, get the funding needed was fulfilling. This has given me a firm grasp on municipal finance. I also understand why having a good working knowledge of municipal finance is essential to be able to effectively advocate for the funding our children need both locally and at the state level," Tirabassi said.

Tirabassi cited declining student enrollment in the last 10 years and continued deficiencies in state financial support as his reasons for running.

"My greatest fear is that in a rush to reorganize and contain an ever-increasing school budget, student education is going to be compromised. I have always been a strong supporter of public education," Tirabassi said. "With the right leadership, I believe we can provide the children in our school district with one of the best educations in the region."

Tirabassi said the committee has succeeded in the school district implementing a strategic plan, a committee to improve curriculum and aligning educational content across the district.

The improvements would include regionalizing the middle school grades, correcting overcrowding at Wilbraham Middle School, consider regionalizing

the district for pre-kindergarten through Grade 12 and reviewing bus transportation to help students attend schools closer to where they live.

"First, this would allow for the most efficient use of the school buildings in our school district so we can provide the best possible educational experience to all the students. Second, it is difficult to predict what will happen to student enrollment in the future. This will leave the district in a great position to be adaptable to always be able to provide the best possible educational experience," Tirabassi said. "There are several students that spend nearly two hours a day on the school bus. This is far from ideal and I know we can do better."

If elected, Tirabassi wants to focus on the strategic plan, improve district advocacy at the state level and explore altering the regional school agreement.

"The plan gives us a clear vision for the future with curriculum improvements, growing educational programming, improving vocational/technical opportunities, and reorganizing building utilization. Advocating for the strategic plan will be challenging in these difficult financial times, but improved efficiencies like formally regionalizing the district at all grade levels and closing the under-utilized Thornton W Burgess building will make a big difference," Tirabassi said.

On district advocacy. "We have never once seen the 100% reimbursement for

regional transportation that the state once promised to all regional school districts. I believe these shortfalls in funding at the state level are major contributing factors for the rapidly rising cost of education in our community," Tirabassi said.

Finally, altering the regional school agreement.

"Operating a school district has both fixed and variable costs, and our current funding formula does not adequately account for the fixed costs. There are alternative methods for sharing the costs between towns in regional school districts, and we should explore other funding formulas that share the costs more equitably," Tirabassi said.

Christina Beckel

Beckel is a mother of three who has children who attend or are recent graduates from the school district.



Additionally, she's served as a substitute teacher in the district, taught flight students as a certified flight instructor and grew up in other countries, giving her insight into the advantages and disadvantages of other educational systems.

For her, Beckel wants more parent representation on the

School Committee and to bring her knowledge in teaching, teaching styles including effective and focused teaching and other areas to the table.

Additionally, Beckel is focused on "ensuring that our schools always keep the best interests of our children in mind."

"As a partner in education, bringing the parent's perspective to their decision-making is important," Beckel said. "Having this knowledge will allow me to bring fresh ideas to our school district, improving the way we educate our children."

Beckel, also, was chosen to serve on the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District's Strategic Planning Committee last year.

"This experience offered a detailed understanding into the needs of our children and the desires of our community and gave our district a blueprint to follow in the years ahead," Beckel said.

Beckel's care "for the children in our community" inspired her to run, citing the steady decline of the level of education the district provides.

"I am concerned about the steady decline of the level of education in our schools. I want to make sure that our schools provide the education every child needs to reach their highest potential, whatever that may be. I hope to see our schools as places where our students can develop their intellect by respectfully exchanging a wide range of opinions and ideas and are taught to

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We Answer Your Call

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Greetings fellow residents of Wilbraham! My name is Carmela BLAIR and I am on the ballot for Board of Selectman for the May 20, 2023 Elections.

As a native of Western Massachusetts, My family and I moved to Wilbraham eight years ago. I have worked for Attorney Robert A. DiTusa in Springfield, Massachusetts for 19 years. He has mentored me through my professional career and entrusted me with managing his Springfield law firm.

I am well qualified to serve as a member of the Board of Selectmen, given my extensive education and professional experience. I manage and prepare monthly management meetings and am responsible for conducting interviews with potential candidates and develop and maintain policies and procedures.

My goal as a member of the board would be to work collaboratively as a team in order to achieve a common goal or to complete a task in the most effective and efficient manner possible. A vision cannot be successfully implemented until you have a clear focus and are able to make decisions that will enable the town to function in the present.

I would like to work collaboratively with the Select Board on the following important issues:

In order to encourage the establishment of new businesses, the plan is to work with local business owners, promote Wilbraham to potential investors, and create incentives;

Ensure that the town's infrastructure is well maintained and that public safety is a top priority. It's essential to find a solution to the infrastructure problems without increasing taxes;

Negotiating the cost of integrating Broadband;
Employees are expected to retire and adequate funding and development of a solid succession plan are required.

The above are just a few examples. In light of this, I respectfully request your vote for Board of Selectman on May 20, 2023.



PAID FOR BY THE COMMITTEE TO ELECT CARMELA BLAIR

Wilbraham residents cast votes on 51 articles during town meeting

Various articles stirred debate and questions

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
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WILBRAHAM - Residents gathered in the Minnechaug Regional High School auditorium on May 15 for Wilbraham's Annual Town Meeting.

Residents voted on 51 town warrant articles in a nearly four-hour meeting weighing questions and concerns on several issues concerning local town government and the community.

The meeting opened with Chairman Carolyn Brennan receiving recognition for her 12 years of service to the Board of Selectmen.

After voters favorably passed Articles 1 through 18 quickly, discussions lengthened for Article 19 onwards.

Article 19 focused on the Finance Committee's recommendations for the FY 2024 Budget with a presentation by Chairman Kevin Hanks.

After the presentation, voters asked questions regarding the stabilization fund and state funding support. The article was passed after all clarifications were made.

Another major topic of discussion was Articles 30 and 31 on the Zoning By-Law Amendments. Article 30 focused on the regulation of accessory buildings and structures by increasing the maximum size of accessory buildings from 144 to 240 square feet and reducing front setbacks for them to 240 square feet or less.

After some discussion on the kinds of accessory buildings affected by the proposal and what exactly qualifies as an accessory, the article was passed.

Article 31, however, led to a very long discussion concerning parking or storage restrictions for trucks and buses in residential districts. These concerned vehicles that are driven by small businesses including electricians or contractors.

A lot of voter questions concerned the weights varying for each kind of truck, distinguishing non-commercial versus commercial vehicles, allowing additional trucks by special permit



Residents hold up voting papers during an article vote during Wilbraham's Annual Town Meeting. Staff photos by Kristin Rivers



(L to R) Jim Jurgens, town moderator, leads the town meeting with the Finance Committee Chair Kevin Hanks, Vice Chair Marc Ducey, members Kevin Corridan, Pete Dufresne, Jeff Farnsworth, Mike Mazzuca, Joe Lawless and Todd Schneider seated behind him during the Annual Town Meeting in Wilbraham.



Board of Selectmen Chair Carolyn Brennan presents a motion on a town meeting article with Town Moderator Jim Jurgens during the Annual Town Meeting in Wilbraham.

from the ZBA and reducing signage limitations on commercial vehicles. This discussion led to additional

town council providing clarification, including John McCloskey, Planning Board chairman, and Building Inspector John Walsh.

The motion later passed. Article 34 concerned the McDonald Nature Preserve Land Acquisition Expansion. The concerns centered around titles for the acquisition and eminent domain and what those would look like.

Residents also asked about the costs and if that would affect the town, which was later confirmed to not be the case.

Attorney Brian Winner also helped provide additional information to the residents on the process and the role of eminent domain in acquiring property with title issues.

The article passed. Article 36 provided an interesting discussion, with some positive alter-

Please see **TOWN**, page 13

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'Run for Rice's 5K Road Race' returns

By Dalton Zbierski
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WILBRAHAM – The 11th annual “Run for Rice’s 5K Road Race” will occur this year on Saturday, June 3 at 9 a.m. and could feature approximately 200 runners.

The family-friendly 5K begins at Christ the King – Epiphany Church at 758 Main St., makes its way through a flat, fast course in the surrounding neighborhoods and ends at Rice Fruit Farm, across the street from the starting point.

All proceeds benefit the Rice Nature Preserve maintenance fund of the Minnechaug Land Trust, a collection of protected properties in Hampden and Wilbraham that are open for the pleasure of the public.

“If you go out there, you’ll see what we spend the money on,” Bobby Olsen, an event organizer, said. “We’ve funded some of the bog bridge building. There’s a couple granite benches on the property. We’ve funded poison ivy control in the fields among other things.”

The event began in June 2011, only days after the infamous tornado.

Olsen said the maintenance fund also collects money “in case of a future calamity that we need funding for.”

While the event missed two years due to COVID-19, during which many runners still ran the course each June, it is back and growing stronger than ever.

Olsen said the event was designed to provide a less expensive opportunity for families to participate in a 5K. The pre-registration fee for runners and walkers is \$20, and day-of-race registrations will cost \$25.

Individuals ages 18 and younger can participate for \$15, including day-of-race registrations. The first 150 runners registered by May 20 will receive a race t-shirt featuring the “Running Apple” logo.



This year's "Run for Rice's 5K Road Race" will occur in Wilbraham on the morning of June 3. (Photos courtesy of Bobby Olsen)

Cash prizes will be awarded to runners in several categories, and all runners will receive a free Rice Fruit Farm ice cream with their bib number on race day only.

“We get a lot of families and a lot of parents with children, which I think is great. One of the goals of this race is to make it a community event. That’s why after the race a lot of people will hang around for a while. They can get their ice cream, hang out, and people can catch up,” Olsen said.

Parking will be available at Christ the King – Epiphany Church, and the Wilbraham Police Department will provide a traffic detail, helping people cross the street from the church to the finish line at Rice Fruit Farm.

A group of volunteers will be present to help ensure the day runs smoothly.

Race day registration will be open from 7:30-8:45 a.m. on June 3. Online registration is now available at RunSignUp.com, and paper registration forms can be downloaded at the Minnechaug Land Trust website at www.minnechaug-landtrust.org.



Brother and sister, co-owners of Seasons Pool and Patio, Daniel Lemelin and Cheryl Lemelin were on hand to greet customers at their grand opening on May 6th.

Grand Opening

On May 6, Seasons Pool & Patio had their grand opening. They welcomed more than 100 people who stopped in to see the new store and what they have to offer for pools and spas. Seasons Pool & Patio is located at 3339 Boston Rd., Wilbraham.



Inside the Seasons Pool and Patio store you can find a wide assortment of pool and spa chemicals as well as fun pool toys and floats.



Turley Publications photos by Deanna Sloat
In the spa showroom many customers looked at the new spas available, some with state of the art technology that help with stress relief, sleep, injury recovery and hydration of your skin.

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DON'T FORGET TO VOTE ON SATURDAY, MAY 20 CHRISTINA BECKEL FOR SCHOOL COMMITTEE

My name is Christina Albacete Beckel and I would love to have the opportunity to serve on the HWRSD school committee. I am a mother of three, and all of my children are either currently enrolled in or have recently graduated from the district, so I care deeply about ensuring that our schools always keep the best interests of our children in mind. I am an immigrant who grew up in Venezuela and Spain and I have been living in the U.S. for the past 31 years. Ever since I became a U.S. citizen, I have been very civically active. I have worked as an election poll worker for the past several years and I recently served on a jury. We are a military family and my husband was in the Air National Guard for 21 years. I am a rated Commercial Pilot and received a B.S. in Aeronautical Science with a Minor in Aviation Safety and a Minor in Meteorology from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. After graduation, I worked as a flight instructor at the University, and I still have an instructor’s license to this day. I have lived in Wilbraham for more than 15 years and I have always loved the smalltown feel of this community. More recently, I have gotten back into education, this time, serving in our school district. I have been working as a substitute teacher in all of the schools in Hampden and Wilbraham for the past five years and I served on the Steering Committee to create a 5-year strategic plan for our school district. I believe this gives me uniquely valuable insight concerning not only the parents’ concerns, but those of the teachers and students as well. I believe there are many great things about our schools, but there is also significant room for improvement, and I would like to be the voice of the parents, students, and teachers in exploring new possibilities for the betterment of education in our school district.

To learn more about my platform or if you wish to contact me directly, please visit my website at <https://electbeckel.wixsite.com/christina-beckel>

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'Walk for Partnership to End Addiction' will occur this Saturday

By Dalton Zbierski
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WILBRAHAM – Minnechaug Regional High School's Above the Influence Club is proud to coordinate the sixth annual 'ATI Club Walk for Partnership to End Addiction' on May 20.

The event will occur at the Minnechaug Outdoor Cross Country Trail between 9 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Participants can park in the Minnechaug teacher's parking lot.

All donations will benefit Partnership to End Addiction, the nation's leading organization dedicated to addiction prevention, treatment and recovery.

A number of Minnechaug students involved in the club recently weighed in on this Saturday's walk and the club, which works with the community to prevent substance abuse in Hampden and Wilbraham.

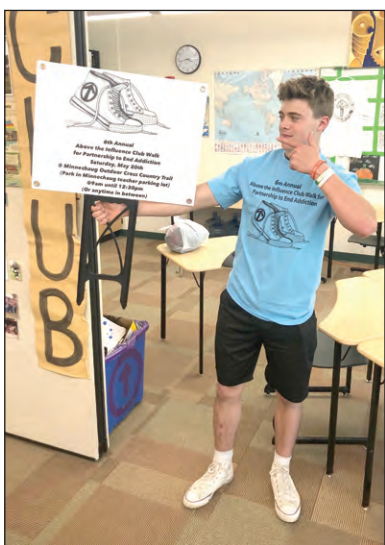
"Above the Influence Club is so impactful with the events they host like this walk. It is so important to raise awareness about addiction, especially for high school students. This walk does a really great job raising that awareness," Mia Hickson said.

Anna Lucarelle said the walk is important for anyone who knows someone who is struggling with or recovering from addiction, noting that the experience can be valuable for individuals in the process of recovery themselves.

Nicole Hisgen said the event is critical because it raises awareness for those who are struggling with addiction and their families.

"It shows that there is a community in Wilbraham/Hampden and other surrounding towns that are supporting one another," she said.

Vinny Chiarizio spoke on the



The Above the Influence Club's 'Walk for Partnership to End Addiction' will occur this Saturday. Submitted Photo

in our schools to hopefully take that next step in ending addiction," he said.

Maddie Rooney acknowledged that people who struggle with addiction are often struggling in silence and that the walk allows them to know they aren't alone.

"(It lets them know) that there is a community of people who are willing to help them," she said.

David Borawski noted that addiction is a significant problem facing society. He hopes the walk raises awareness that the struggles exist.

"I believe that addiction is an important issue in society today. The community remains an important part in battling such an issue, and so I believe that an event to bring people together is a good way to raise awareness for it," he said.

Abby Haile said the walk is one of the most significant events that the club oversees and explained why this Saturday will be special.

"It's so great seeing so many of our community members come together to support the fight against substance abuse - it really draws the whole "all in" element if what Minnechaug is all about," she said.

Jason Dalessio, a special education teacher at Minnechaug, oversees the club. He is proud of the students and confirmed that all donations will go to Partnership to End Addiction.

"We always enjoy seeing members of the community coming together to show support for those dealing with addiction or for those who know someone dealing with addiction," he said.

amount of effort club members have exerted into organizing the walk and why it is worth the work.

"We put a lot of effort in this event and want to help spread awareness about addiction throughout our community," he said.

Sofia DiGrande elaborated on the sense of community that is vital to the event.

"The sense of community that this walk brings, seeing everyone together bringing awareness to such an important cause, is something that all parties benefit from. No matter the reason you are there, everyone is so welcoming and everyone truly understands the importance," she said.

Jack Straut is participating in the event for the first time. He explained what inspired him to join this year.

"This walk has become important to me because I would like people to have the support and to bring awareness to the things that are happening

Candidates Night to take place at Wilbraham Middle School

WILBRAHAM – In partnership with student moderators from the Minnechaug Model Congress club, the Board of Trustees of the Wilbraham Public Library is pleased to announce a Candidates Night on Friday, May 19. The event will take place in the Wilbraham Middle School auditorium at 7 p.m. Viewing access will be available on YouTube under the event name Wilbraham Meet the Candidates Night. If streaming difficulties occur the event will be uploaded to the channel for viewing afterwards.

Interested residents are encouraged to submit questions ahead of time by emailing the student panel at askthecandidates2023@gmail.com Attendees planning to submit written questions the evening of May 19 are asked to arrive before 6:45. Members of the Board of Trustees will not be involved in the receipt or review of questions.

Please frame questions around the specific office being sought instead of addressing an individual candidate. This year's contested positions are on the Board of Selectmen, the HWRSD School Committee, the Planning Board and the Cemetery Commission.

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VIEWPOINTS

Mid spring questions for the Garden Lady

Lisa, who has a beautiful daffodil collection in Palmer, wrote in with this question for the Garden Lady: "I planted a Rugosa rose bush that has encroached on a planting of 'Barrett Browning' Daffodils. For the first year in over a decade, I had no blossoms at all! I want to move them out of the way of the rose bush but I don't know if it is the right time or not. Can I lift and divide them now or should I wait?"

Thank you for your question! It is the perfect time to move your daffodils!

One thing to keep in mind, however, is that the bulbs will likely be in the ground deeper than you think. I actually use a spade when I have to dig mine up, so that is it a straight, up and down slice.

I start four or five inches all the way around the clump and then carefully lift it out entirely, foliage intact.

Usually, it is pretty easy to tease the bulbs apart by hand, separating them by size. The biggest ones I replant at the same depth they were planted prior, with ground level at the point where the foliage turns pale.

The general rule of thumb for distance from one another is twice the width of the bulb apart. This can vary depending on the variety.

A sprinkling of balanced fertilizer mixed in with the soil in the planting hole and thorough watering will get them off to a great start, hope-



fully with flowers for many years to come!

A question about sowing annual flowers came in from Melinda, who is introducing her young daughters to flower gardening. "I have never had much luck planting flower seeds directly in the ground. Either the rain washes them away or they come up too close. Is it too late to start a few easy flowers indoors?"

I love that you are sharing your love of gardening with your children! My mom did that with me and it shaped my career path, for sure.

I would so eagerly anticipate planting our garden every year! (Happy Mother's Day, mom!) Certainly it isn't too late to get a head start. I would recommend sowing easy to handle annuals, plants like zinnia, marigold, calendula and bachelor's button.

They don't take long to germinate and would be a manageable size by the end of the

month, ready to be moved into the garden after the danger of frost has passed.

Generally, I fill up six-packs with moist potting soil and press two seeds per pack into the soil and cover slightly.

I like to keep them warm to start, but once the seeds sprout, I try to have them outside for most of the time, so that they don't get too leggy in the house. If both seeds sprout, I'll separate them at planting time.

One variety that does not need to be started indoors is the sunflower, if you try, usually the plants will end up spindly and tall and difficult to transplant. Simply sow these in place, thinking to at least a foot apart.

My friend would always allow the seeds to mature on the plant and let them fall where they may, creating a colorful and eye-catching vegetable patch!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 31 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.



Should octogenarians tell Social Security they married?

Dear Rusty: We were married two years ago at age 78 and 81. Do we need to do anything with Social Security?

Signed: Blissfully Happy

Dear Blissfully Happy: Congratulations on your fairly recent marriage and, yes, there are some things you should do. Specifically, you should contact Social Security to inform them of your marriage, see whether any additional benefits are available and to make any changes needed to your contact information. Here are some things to consider:

If a name change has occurred for one of you, that person should contact Social Security to report the change. A copy of your marriage certificate and other ID will be required, and a new Social Security card will be issued.

If a change of address has also occurred for one or both of you, that must be reported. It's important that Social Security has the correct mailing address, email and contact phone number for every beneficiary.

If there are any other changes to the contact information on file with the Social Security Administration for either of you (e.g., your banking information), the affected person should inform Social Security of the changes needed.

Social Security will evaluate whether any benefit increase is available as a result of your marriage, which may be the case if one of you is entitled to a "spousal boost," an additional amount from the other now that you're married. A spousal boost may be available if one has a monthly Social Security payment which is more than twice the other's benefit. Social Security can answer that question for

Please see **RUSTY**, page 7

Letters to the Editor

Tirabassi for School Committee

Hello Wilbraham! I'm Dr. Mike Tirabassi and I'm asking for your vote for the HWRSD School Committee.

As a father and a pediatric surgeon, I am a fierce advocate for children. I am also a strong supporter of public education. My five children have all been educated in the HWRSD. Personally, I am a product of NJ Public Schools. Volunteering in our school district has left me with many impactful experiences. Some of the most memorable were working science day with the Mile Tree PTO, building a new Hootie sponge toss, and chaperoning the high school marching band at the BIG E with the Minnechaug Music Association.

To help you get to know me better, I'd like to share some fun facts about me that you may not know. First, my experience in government goes back a little more than 30 years. In high

school I was selected to participate in the American Legion's Boys State program where participants became part of the operation of local, county, and state government. While this experience sparked my interest in government and leadership, my commitment to my medical career has held me back from pursuing this interest until recently. Second, beyond my role at work as a pediatric surgeon and educator, I am also a scientist. I have done work ranging from basic science with beakers and pipettes to large statistical computer modeling of patient outcomes. So, it should come as no surprise that I value STEM and would like to see an increase in STEM opportunities for our students. Third, I am also a musician. In high school and college, I studied violin and chorus, performing competitively in both. I will never forget that school is more than math and history, we are preparing students to

be productive members of our society. Experience in the arts is an essential part of this mission. So is excellence in vocational and technical education. Not every student is college bound, and as a society we are observing severe shortages in the vocational and technical skilled work force. As a school district, we cannot ignore the needs of our community.

As a member of the school committee, I know we can all work together to make sure every student has the opportunity to meet their full potential, whether their goal is higher education, the arts, or a vocational technical field.

I offer my unique set of skills in service to the children of our community as a member of the HWRSD School Committee, and I am ready to roll up my sleeves and get to work!

Sincerely,
Mike Tirabassi



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Correction Policy

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

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BOARD from page 1

conomic growth,” Squindo said. If elected, he would focus on bettering engagement between the Selectmen and the community.

“I would love to see changes in some procedures and policies for the agendas and minutes, including the policy (that items are) posted online in a timely manner,” Squindo said.

Squindo added he also noticed a change in efforts to connect since the pandemic, explaining how town forums were regularly held in the past.

“This is an opportunity to correct that course with some simple ways to do that,” Squindo said.

Squindo also wants to do a review of the 1963 master plan.

“The demographics and realities have changed, so we need to understand and make the connection of plans in reflecting today’s reality,” Squindo said.

Additionally, Squindo wants to invest in making communities more affordable by addressing housing needs, with average home prices significantly high.

“If we don’t make significant adjustments, we will be pricing out our lifetime residents and our future residents,” Squindo said. “Making more affordable communities will present an opportunity to provide a workforce to the town, including local businesses.”

Squindo said supporting local businesses with local employees will also help provide “many options” for housing so “those employees can reside in Wilbraham and help sustain the economy in Wilbraham.”

Squindo’s biggest goal, again, is bettering engagement between the town and the community.

“I would establish the town website as our official posting source, work with colleagues to look at plans I’ve outlined,” Squindo said. “My biggest accomplishment I want to achieve in the next three

years will be innovating and creating ways to engage the public so they are part of the process. I want to help people feel recognized.”

Carmela Blair

Blair has worked for Attorney Robert A. DiTusa for 19 years, manages a Springfield law firm and has an extensive education and professional background.

Blair has performed duties including maintaining accounting balance sheets, supporting employee culture and morale and developing and maintaining policies and procedures.

“Throughout my career, I have been required to consider and apply the applicable law in a wide variety of situations,” Blair said.

Her community and employers inspired her to run for the Selectmen as they taught her the importance of teamwork, giving back and helping others.

Blair cited DiTusa for his mentorship throughout her career.

“Attorney DiTusa played a significant role in my accomplishments, my team-building skills, and my compassion for being part of the community I live in. I want to give back to the Town of Wilbraham, as I feel it has given my family and I so much more,” Blair said.

Blair emphasized teamwork and collaboration as one of her main goals if elected to the Selectmen.

“My goal as a member of the board would be to work collaboratively as a team in order to achieve a common goal or to complete a task in the most effective and efficient manner possible. A vision cannot be successfully implemented until you have a clear focus and are able to make decisions that will enable the town to function in the present. This is

not a position with a singular vision, but one that involves a team of individuals,” Blair said.

Blair added despite the challenges of implementing a vision, “working together will assist in overcoming these obstacles.”

“In order for a vision to remain focused over the long term, it must be transformed into a structured plan. There is no such thing as an overnight success when it comes to anything valuable,” Blair said.

Blair would focus on several issues including, maintaining essential services in town for public safety, infrastructure and education, creating jobs and establishing businesses, moving forward on broadband and adequate facilities for seniors, families and children.

“As Wilbraham’s benefits become more widely known, new families will be inspired to relocate to the community,” Blair said.

Blair also wants to tackle inflation, explaining “it does not exempt the Town from its effects.”

“It is important to keep in mind that taxpayers cannot be burdened with high local taxes while also experiencing inflation at home. Furthermore, it is essential to find a solution to the infrastructure problems of the town without increasing taxes, and the cost of materials is also a major concern,” Blair said.

Blair, lastly, wants adequate funding and a succession plan in place as “a significant number of employees are expected to retire in the near future.”

“In order to implement this process effectively, it is important to engage people who have never participated in it before, yet have the ability to see things differently and bring new perspectives to the process,” Blair said.



Carmela Blair

RUSTY from page 6

you when you call.

You can call either your local Social Security office (find the number by visiting www.ssa.gov/locator) or call the national number at 1-800-772-1213 and tell them you need to inform them of your marriage and update your contact information. If you have or if you create an online “my Social Security” account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount, you can initiate changes to your contact information online, but you will need to call Social Security directly via phone to record your marriage and see if any changes to monthly benefits are available. All of this can likely be done without requiring a visit to your local SS office.

It is very important that Social Security be made aware of your new marital status and to ensure that they have the correct contact information for both of you. Even if the contact information is unchanged for one of you, the other should contact Social Security as described above to update their contact information and to determine if any changes to monthly benefits are appropriate as a result of your marriage. Doing so now will avoid future issues and will make sure you are both getting the correct monthly Social Security payments as a married couple. And if one of you is entitled to a higher spousal amount, you should ask for the increase to be applied retroactively (SS will pay up to six months retroactively). I suggest you call Social Security as soon as possible to inform them of your marriage and make any necessary changes to your contact information.

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Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

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OBITUARIES

Death Notices

Lizotte, Gisele J.

Died May 10, 2023

Funeral May 23, 2023

Gisele J. Lizotte 1934 – 2023

WILBRAHAM—Gisele J. Lizotte died peacefully on Wednesday, May 10, 2023, the day after her 89th birthday. Born to the late Joseph and Alexina (Asselin) Bernatchez, she was raised in Thetford-Mines, Quebec, Canada. She immigrated to the U.S. in 1957 at the age of 23, where she met her husband Robert M. Lizotte, late of 2001. Gisele lived most of her life in Chicopee before moving to Wilbraham six years ago. She worked as a machine operator at National Blank Book for many years and was a faithful communicant of Nativity Church and St. Rose de Lima Parish in Chicopee and St. Cecilia's Church in Wilbraham.

Gisele loved to play cards with family and friends, was in a bowling league with her husband Bob, and she enjoyed working and playing Bingo at Nativity Church for many years. Her greatest gifts in life were her grandchildren and great grandchildren. Gisele loved to plan large Sunday meals with the whole crowd; the best was her boiled dinner. There were never too many, and everyone was welcome to attend.

In addition to her parents and her husband, Gisele was also predeceased by her six siblings and her beloved son John M. Lizotte in 2018. She will be sadly missed by her two devoted daughters; Carole J. Tardif and her husband Hughie of Wilbraham and Sandra M. Nadeau and her husband Mark of Chicopee and Daughter-In law Dina of Chicopee, six grandchildren; Heather (Terry), Stephanie (Al), Mandie, Nikki (Dennis), Alex (girlfriend Krysii) and Samantha, extended grandchildren; Andy, Krissy and Andrew and eight great grandchildren; Karlee, Everett, Emma, Jaxon, Parker, Ava, Nina and Valerii, three extended great grandchildren Gwyneth, Bella and Azatelle. Gisele's Funeral Mass will be Tuesday, May 23 at noon at St. Cecilia Church, 42 Main St., Wilbraham, followed by burial in St. Rose de Lima Cemetery, Chicopee. Visitation will precede the Mass from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. at Wilbraham Funeral Home, 2551 Boston Road, Wilbraham. Memorial contributions may be made to TJ O'Connor Animal Control & Adoption, 627 Cottage St., Springfield, MA 01104.

Garden Club seeks donated plants

HAMPDEN – The Hampden Garden Club is looking for donated plants for their upcoming Memorial Day Plant Sale. They will dig those plants that need to be thinned out or need a new home. Please contact Lil Fedora at 413-566-1137 or email her at Stonemeadowfarm@charter.net. Please call before May 20.

Haiti Meal Re-Packaging event to occur May 19 at St. Cecilia Parish

WILBRAHAM – Saint Cecilia Parish of Wilbraham's outreach committee, called the "Hope Committee", which stands for "Help Our Parish Expand" is again sponsoring the third annual Haiti Meal Re-Packaging event.

The community is invited to participate on Friday, May 19. Registration is at 3 p.m. at the parish center at 42 Main St. and meal re-packaging will conclude around 7 p.m.

St. Cecilia Parish members raised just over \$12,000 to bulk purchase each of the 100-pound bags of the several types of meal ingredients, which when re-pack-

aged, will result in producing just under 30,000 family-sized meals, which will feed a family of four for one day. The value of each family-sized meal is about \$.35 each.

All volunteers must be at least 18-years-old and there are both standing and sitting jobs available. For more information about the event, please call Katy Reed at 413-495-2547.

Run for Rice's 5K Road Race set for June 3

WILBRAHAM – The 11th annual "Run for Rice's 5K Road Race" will be held on Saturday, June 3 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 20 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 Rice Nature Preserve maintenance fund of the Minnechaug Land Trust. Race day registration will be open from 7:30-8:45 a.m. On-line registration now available at RunSignUp.com, and paper registration forms can be downloaded at the Minnechaug Land Trust website www.minnechauglandtrust.org.

Rotary Club is holding a Calendar Raffle

WILBRAHAM – The Wilbraham-Hampden Rotary Club is holding another Calendar Raffle throughout the months of May and June to raise money for local community projects. Calendars will be on sale now through the end of June for \$10 each and are available from any club member.

The raffle is different from the one held last fall in that only cash prizes will be awarded. Prizes will be awarded every day of the month of June. "There will be a winner every day. That gives every entry many chances to win," announced club president Tracey Perry of Country Bank. To purchase a calendar contact Perry at 413-627-2571 or email Happytr16@gmail.com. All proceeds will be given back to the community through various service projects and scholarships.

SCHOOL from page 2

think for themselves. I would like to be the children's, parents' and educators' personal connection to the School Committee's decision-making process," Beckel said.

Beckel cited the implementation of new math and literacy programs for Kindergarten through Grade Five as "the greatest success of our school district over the past year," explaining how children should be proficient in reading, writing and math by Grade Six.

"Moving forward, I would like to see a streamlined education process from Kindergarten to Grade 12 where there is more communication between all of our schools. This will result in more effective learning and will allow each student to reach their individual goals," Beckel said. Beckel explained the School Committee needs a change that "will provide fresh insights and ideas."

"Our schools cannot continue to underperform, or our children will be left behind.

We need to deliver on the commitments of the Strategic Plan that I helped to draft. If implemented effectively, this plan will

improve the vertical and horizontal alignment of our curriculum, which will result in a more seamless learning experience for our children," Beckel said.

Beckel had this message for voters.

"If you elect me, I will support our amazing, hard-working teachers, while also striving to improve curriculum and our children's educational experience," Beckel said.

Sherrill Caruana

Caruana explained why she is seeking a third term on the School Committee.

"In the last six years, I have worked in various roles and served on various subcommittees and ad hoc committees. The most challenging time of my tenure as Chair of the Committee was during the COVID outbreak. I worked hard to keep our students safe during very difficult times," Caruana said.

Caruana shared the other roles she's held: Curriculum Subcommittee Chair, the Pol-

icy Subcommittee, the Superintendent Evaluation Committee Chair and the liaison to the district's Partners for Youth Coalition.

"I know the job, I've done the job, and I love the job!" Caruana said.

Caruana has an extensive background in teaching, having taught all grades from pre-Kindergarten to community college, explaining "In my heart, I am a teacher and always will be one."

She was also appointed principal of Stony Hill Elementary School and enjoyed that role even more.

"Upon retirement, I realized that I wasn't ready to leave the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District. And so, believing I could add a different voice to the committee, I ran for office and won. After two terms and with the advent of a new superintendent, I would like the chance to keep working for the continued improvement of our district," Caruana said.

Reflecting on the School Committee's successes, Caruana cited the appointment of Dr. John Provost as the superintendent for the district, the implementation of the five-year strategic plan, the completion of the equity audit and the number of grants secured by the administrators to "make our curriculum the best it can be."

"All of these accomplishments were facilitated by the work

of our new superintendent. He led the effort to get everyone to claim ownership of the Strategic Plan and the Equity Audit utilizing steering committees from every sector of our two towns. What is left to do now is to complete the Equity Plan based on what we have learned from the audit," Caruana said.

Caruana also elaborated on funding and grants to help support the district.

"The grants that the administrators have been able to secure has led to both systemic changes in professional development for teachers and also new reading curricula and math curricula at the elementary and/or middle school levels. These changes in pedagogy and content will have a profound effect on our students' academic growth and achievement," Caruana said.

If re-elected, Caruana wants to focus on these topics.

"A thorough examination of options on how to alleviate overcrowding in our schools without moving the eighth-grade to Minnechaug, create the role of Legislative Liaison to advocate with our elected officials on the town and state governmental levels as to our needs, situations and budgets and encourage more communication throughout the year between the HWRSD Finance Subcommittee, the Wilbraham Finance Committee and the Hampden Advisory Committee in the area of budget decisions and capital planning," Caruana said.

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Paulina Chlopecka sold jewelry, crafts, art, t-shirts, acrylic paintings at the May 13 craft fair.



Deana Gore sold handmade candles, wax melts and room sprays at the craft fair.



Alexis Derosier sold anime-related items at the craft fair. (Staff photos by Dalton Zbierski)



Sabrina Niedzielski and Matt Niedzielski had a successful outing at the May 13 craft fair.



Grace Ward, Bryson Busiere and Briea Busiere represented Bryson's Maple Syrup last Saturday.

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CRAFT from page 1

candles, soaps, jewelry; there's a huge variety here today," she said. "This is definitely one of the most organized events I've been to. It definitely was very well thought out. They worked very hard to plan it."

Bryson Busiere came from Monson to sell pure maple products ranging from syrups to maple candy to maple sugar. His syrup comes from any one of 1,200 trees.

Busiere said the craft fair was one of the best he's ever been to and pledged to return next year if another is to occur. He described how the events brought the community together.

"It was nice to have kids, adults, grandparents, everyone of all ages. You have the car show with the classic cars right across from us so that helped out with the clientele. Having all the students run the event (was also great)," he said.



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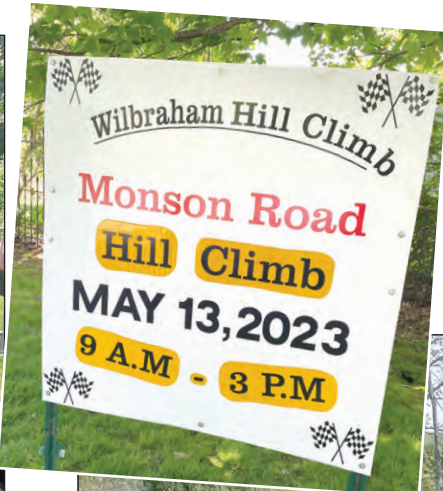
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A COMMUNITY GALLERY



(Staff photos by Dalton Zbierski)




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Life in & **WILBRAHAM**

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WILBRAHAM



WILBRAHAM HAMPDEN



Community Bulletin Board

*Happy 12th
Birthday
Ali Aucoin!*

*Love Mom, Dad, Danny
and the whole family XOXO*

**HAPPY 95TH
BIRTHDAY**
on May 16 to
Chet Grondalski

*from his Loving family.
Sto lat Dad and Papa!*

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 dzbierski@turley.com



WILBRAHAM – Wilbraham became the automotive capital of New England for one day last weekend, on May 13. A car show was held in the parking lot of Minnechaug Regional High School, while the historic Wilbraham Hill Climb returned to Monson Road.

Shuttles were available to transport attendees from the high school to the base of Monson Road on Main Street. Hundreds, if not thousands, of people made their way to Wilbraham to participate in and enjoy the day's festivities.

The car show at the high school featured more than 400 cars, both new and old.

The hill climb included vintage million dollar vehicles from seven New England auto museums.

Those on hand last Saturday came from all across the country to experience what Wilbraham has to offer. To say the least, it was a memorable day.



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Wilbraham Middle School honor roll

WILBRAHAM – The following honor roll students from Wilbraham Middle School were not featured in last week’s paper. Sorry for the inconvenience.

Distinguished honors 8th grade.
Angelina Bontempi

Katherine Britt
Abigail Camire
Philip Castellano
Katie DeGray
Catherine Dickson
Jonathan Dyer

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This Week in Rec

**Daniel Beauregard,
Program Coordinator**

My name is Daniel Beauregard and I am the new Program Coordinator for the Wilbraham Parks and Recreation Department. I am extremely excited to be joining a great parks and recreation staff and I can't wait to work with the Wilbraham community.

I am from South Hadley, where I grew up playing soccer, hockey and baseball.

After high school I attended Castleton University (Vermont) where I received my Bachelor's in Sports Administration and later my Master's in Athletic Leadership. While at Castleton I was a member of the club ice hockey team and president and captain of the rugby club. After Castleton, I returned home and started working for the South Hadley Recreation Department. After a couple of years in South Hadley, my career in recreation lead me back to Vermont and later over to New Hampshire.

While working in recreation, coaching has been a big passion of mine. I have coached a few college rugby clubs and multiple youth teams in soccer, softball, basketball, hockey, baseball and track and field.

Outside of work you can find me still involved with recreation as a majority of my hobbies fall under recreation. I enjoy being around mother nature as much as possible, whether it's snowshoeing or skiing in the winter or hiking and kayaking when its nice out. Along with playing in an

adult ice hockey league I am also a member of the Springfield Rifles Rugby Club.

REMINDER: You can visit wilbraham-rec.com for details on all of the programs and activities offered, and to register. Program information is posted as registration dates approach, so keep an eye on the website and watch for our monthly e-newsletter, The Wilbraham Whistle, and for our email blasts that are both sent out to those with accounts in our wilbrahamrec.com database.



(L to R) Library Trustees Chair Beth Burger is presented with a plaque in her name by Trustee Kathleen Hutchinson during the reception honoring Beth Burger at Hampden Public Library. (Staff photos by Kristin Rivers)



A poster board on display highlighting Beth Burger and her accomplishments as library trustee chair during the reception for Beth Burger n at Hampden Public Library.



L to R) Library Trustee members Cindy Bailey, Kathleen Hutchinson, Library Trustees Chair Beth Burger, Library Trustee members Kathleen Rochford, Elaine Kingsbury and Library Director Ellen Moriarty take a group photo together during the reception honoring Beth Burger at Hampden Public Library.

LIBRARY from page 1

expanded programs and introduced computers to the library.

"She has always been so calm and thinking things through and really supporting the library so much," Hutchinson said. "Going to events, going to the State House; Beth has been the steady rock for the library all these years."

Fellow Trustee Kathleen Rochford agreed and said holding a reception for

Burger is wonderful.

Rochford shared what she'll miss.

"Her knowledge and her love. She has a good thought process to throw out ideas if we bring something up. She is going to be missed," Rochford said.

Burger was overwhelmed by the honor, adding "It's bittersweet."

"You don't do something for 36 years unless you really love to do it," Burger said.

Burger explained when her late husband was on the Selectmen, she "got to know the

people in town."

After late trustee Ann Byron passed away, Burger was encouraged by a good friend to run for the position.

"I did not have any academic knowledge of libraries, but as she was saying, it's just more an overseeing the running of the library and not the actual running like hiring a director," Burger said. "They needed somebody so I just said, 'Okay I'll run.'"

Burger will miss the people.

"People have to make an effort to come

and do this, and that was so, so kind of them and that means a lot. It really does," Burger said. "It's a lovely little town."

Burger had this message: the library is "a very welcoming place for any of our citizens" and "is for everybody."

"Come and check us out. The staff is wonderful and is very welcoming. They would stop whatever they're doing and take care of you and things like this, so come and see us and it will continue, hopefully, for a long, long time," Burger said.

TOWN from page 3

natives to consider. Here, \$10,000 would fund the restoration of power for lighting the flagpole at Bruuer Pond and install lighting for the flagpole at Glendale Cemetery.

If passed, the town would follow the state law of requiring the American flag to be on display at night.

While the cost was a concern, voters discussed other ideas, including installing solar lighting instead, a teaching opportunity for local civic groups including the Boys and Girls Scouts to learn about raising the flag and more.

The article later passed.

Article 38 concerning fencing for the Wilbraham Children's Museum also led to some debate. The article would transfer \$21,400 to provide additional fencing to enclose the playground at the museum.

Questions included the kind of fencing to be used, the safety of children and the purpose of the funding.

The article, also, later passed.

Article 43 concerned adding pickleball courts to a Wilbraham recreation location. Here, \$300,000 would be transferred from the Community Preservation Undesignated Fund Balance to create four to six pickleball courts.

Voters loved the idea of having pickleball courts as the town has a group. However, the biggest concern was where to put the courts and the cost.

It also led to additional questions about previous funding approved in 2021, for which Town Administrator Nick Breault provided a timeline and additional context.

The article later passed.

Article 46 provided another big discussion and debate. Here, voters reviewed whether to change the Town Clerk from an elected position to an appointed position.

If passed, the bylaw would be put on the May 2023 ballot for voter consideration.

Throughout this article discussion, a lot of debate rose over voting rights concerns, with residents pointing out the Board of Selectmen having a body of three members.

Residents were afraid of losing their

ability to vote on roles, raised questions on voting on qualified candidates and why to change what's been already working well for an elected role and more.

The discussion did have a bright spot, as residents all agreed that the Town Clerk should receive the proper benefits, including vacation, sick time and unemployment for all the work they do for the community.

Appointed roles receive these benefits, whereas elected do not. The idea posed thoughts for a future discussion, but the article was later defeated.

Article 47 tackled the ongoing issue of blighted properties in the area. Police Chief Ed Lennon led the presentation for this article.

In his presentation, Lennon highlighted what the bylaw does including specifying responsibilities for owners, identifying blighted or vacant properties. The bylaw does not create new conditions not reasonably covered by sanitary or building codes or local regulations.

Here, residents asked for clarification on the exemptions and where the model to address blighted properties came from. Additionally, the timing of taking care of blighted properties in town.

Vice Chairman Theresa Goodrich later explained the bylaw would help speed up the process of cleaning up blighted properties in town. Additionally, there were recent successes of taking care of two blighted properties on Boston Road.

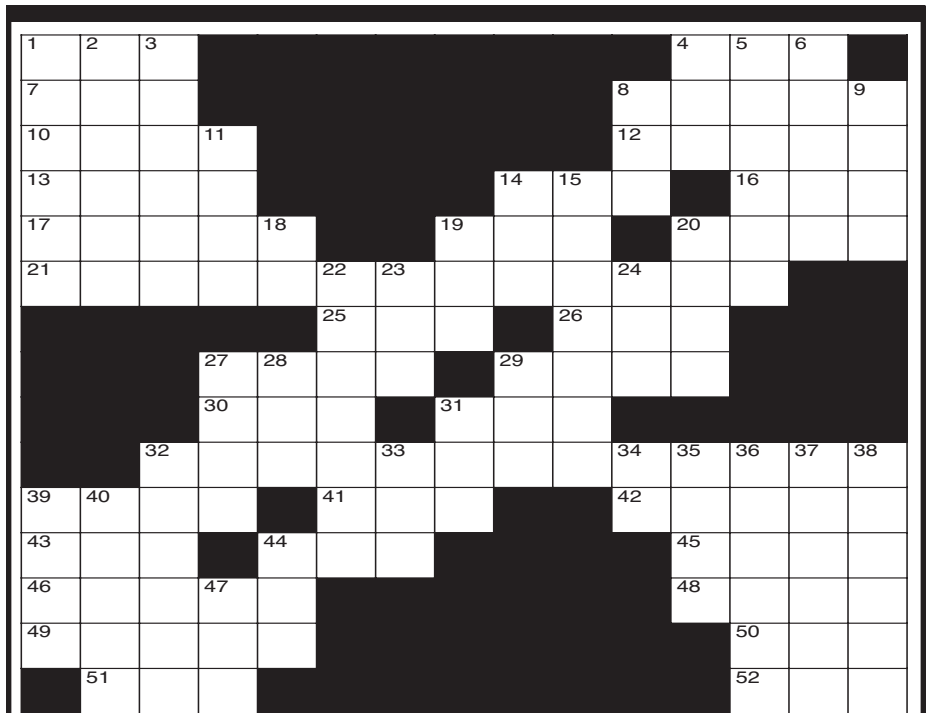
After discussion, the motion was amended to delete sections C and D around the definition of blighted properties including the terms "illegal activity" and "fire hazard."

The amended article was later passed.

Article 51, the final article, did not receive a motion at all. The article concerned changing the name of the Board of Selectmen to the Select Board.

It was presented as a petitioned article. Due to the petitioner and other parties not being present at the meeting, however, the motion was not raised, leading to the meeting's adjournment.

More on the Annual Town Meeting to follow next week.



CLUES ACROSS

1. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
4. Chinese philosophical principle
7. Branch
8. Jewish spiritual leader
10. Slang for requests
12. "So Human An Animal" author
13. Rocker Billy
14. British Air Aces
16. Type of tree
17. "Tough Little Boys" singer Gary
19. State attorneys
20. Goddess of fertility
21. Localities
25. Beloved singer Charles
26. Clue
27. Ridge of jagged rock below sea surface
29. Helsinki neighborhood
30. Farm resident
31. Ocean
32. Where ballplayers work
39. Unable to hear
41. Cool!
42. Cape Verde capital
43. One point north of due east
44. Kilo yard (abbr.)
45. Middle Eastern nation
46. It yields Manila hemp
48. People operate it (abbr.)
49. Regenerate
50. Not healthy
51. Chinese sword
52. Mild expression of surprise

CLUES DOWN

1. Unit of angle
2. Headgear to control a horse
3. Clots
4. Follows sigma
5. A woman who is the superior of a group of nuns
6. Greek units of weight
8. Radio direction finder (abbr.)
9. Systems, doctrines, theories
11. Stony waste matter
14. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!
15. Hostile to others
18. U.S. State
19. Not wet
20. Something one thinks up
22. Where beer is made
23. Clumsy person
24. Belonging to us
27. Canadian flyers
28. Greek goddess of the dawn
29. Snakelike fish
31. Unhappy
32. Fruit
33. Not good
34. Zero degrees Celsius
35. Goo Goo Dolls' hit
36. Crawls into the head (folklore)
37. Legally responsible
38. Move in a playful way
39. Regarded with deep affection
40. Partner to flowed
44. Native American tribe
47. Head honcho

SPORTS

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Last week crucial for girls lacrosse



Rylee Welch tries to defend against an opponent.



Ainsley Sheehan heads up the field for the Falcons.



Alexia Patrakis gets ready to make a save.



Maira O'Brien sprints for the goal.

WILBRAHAM – Last Friday evening, Minnechaug girls lacrosse defeated Northampton 16-1 to get to 6-6 for the regular season. The Falcons must have a .500 record to make the state tournament or rank in the top 32 in the state. The Falcons season ends with matchups with Longmeadow, Wachusett, and Northampton.



Kaelin Cerasuolo shoots as the defense tries to stop her.



Jayme Cerasuolo looks to pass through a defender.

Chaug softball needs win for tourney berth



Aby Peyman takes a pitch.

Photos by Sofia DiGrande



Ava Peabody fields a grounder to second.



Angelina Cross gets the slow roller to third.

WILBRAHAM – With a 17-5 win over West Springfield paired with a 2-0 loss against South Hadley, Minnechaug softball enters the final week of the regular season at 8-8. A win over either Westfield or East Longmeadow will

guarantee the Falcons a spot in the state tournament. Earlier this season, Minnechaug lost to Westfield 14-0 but beat East Longmeadow 6-3. The Western Mass. playoffs follow next week.



Mackenzie Blair makes a big wind and fires to the plate.



Agawam's Hope Santaniello controls the ball.



Jenna Kalwa sends a pass forward.



Photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Laci Lewis breaks away from a defender.



Alexis Legowski, of South Hadley, goes after the bouncing ball.



Avery Klingensmith of Belchertown gets set to pass.

Mutiny offense shines in opener

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—The United Women's Soccer National semifinal and final matches were held at historic Lusitano Stadium in Ludlow last July. This year's U.W.S. championship weekend is scheduled to take place 3,000 miles west in Los Angeles, California.

The New England Mutiny players didn't get to compete for the championship trophy on their home turf last summer. They're hoping to make the six-hour plane ride to the west coast in July.

The Mutiny didn't have very much trouble dispatching Worcester Fuel FC, 7-1, in the season opening match before a large crowd at Lusitano Stadium, last Saturday night.

"All of the players worked very hard, and we got the result that we wanted," said Hope Santaniello, who graduated from Agawam High School in 2021. "Our hope for the future is to win the championship title this year. We really want to bring home the trophy for Joe (Ferrara)."

Ferrara, who's the Mutiny General Manager, has put together a roster full of talented soccer players. Santaniello is one of 13 players from Western Massachusetts.

Other players from the region include Julia Robak (Chicopee), Brianna Romaniak (Belchertown), Ela Kopec (Ludlow), Alexis Legowski (South Hadley), Avery Klingensmith (Belchertown), Brooke Samborski (Chicopee), Calleigh Foley (Ludlow), and Sophia Syocurka (Ludlow).

Foley and Syocurka will be juniors on the Ludlow girls varsity soccer team in the fall. The duo normally play for the academy team, but they were called up to the U.W.S. team for the season opener.

Laura Gouvin of Monson is also listed on the Mutiny roster. She did not play against Worcester.

Before the start of the regular season, Ferrara named Mauricio "Toto" Coimbra as the Mutiny head coach.

"Everyone is a little bit nervous before the first game of regular season, but we got off to a great start tonight," said Coimbra, who's a former member of the Western Mass. Pioneers. "I've coached at the youth level, but it's very special to win my first game at this level. I think it's going to be a very exciting season."

Coimbra took over the coaching duties from Brian Linnehan, who was hired as an assistant women's soccer coach at Bryant University.

Coimbra is aided by assistant coaches Jill Kochanek, Ciro Viviano, and Federico Molinari, who's also the head coach of the Western Mass. Pioneers.

Santaniello, who's a forward, scored a pair of goals during the first half, which gave her team a 2-0 half-time lead.

During the 24th minute, Santaniello lined a shot over the head of Worcester Fuel goalie Lilliana Manton into the back of the net.

About 15 minutes later, Cat Berry sent a forward pass into the box and Santaniello finished off the play by shooting the ball into the left corner.

"I'm very happy for Hope," Coimbra said. "I think she's a great soccer player, and she has a very bright future. She shoots the ball mainly with her right foot, but she scored one of her goals in tonight's match with her left foot."

After playing soccer for two seasons at the University of Rhode Island, Santaniello has decided to enter the NCAA

transfer portal. The portal allows Division 1 athletes the opportunity to transfer to another school without having to sit out a year.

"I decided to leave U.R.I. for personal reasons," Santaniello said. "I just want to keep growing as a soccer player. In order for me to do that, I felt like the best thing was transfer to another school. I just want to find the right school, which will help me get to the next level."

Berry, who's from Hingham, will be a senior on the University of South Carolina women's soccer team in September. She'll be heading back to Columbia, South Carolina in the middle of June to train with her college soccer team.

"Cat is a great soccer player and she's going to have a successful career in the future," Coimbra said. "We're very lucky to have her on our team. We enjoyed watching her play in tonight's match."

Ferrara is hoping that Berry will be able to return to Ludlow if the Mutiny do make the playoffs.

"The atmosphere at the stadium is always great," Berry said. "I just love playing soccer with this group of girls. It was a great way to start our season."

Berry, who's the fifth all-time leading goal scorer at the University of South Carolina with 24 career goals, took over the spotlight at the second half. She finished last Saturday's match with a total of four goals. A couple of her goals came on amazing shots that not very many goalies would be able to stop.

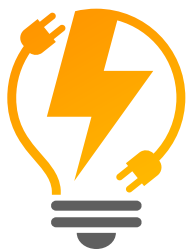
"We definitely could've scored a few more goals in the first half," Berry added. "We just wanted to come out at the start of the second half and put the game away. I took advantage of my opportunities. Hearing the roar of the crowd here at Lusitano is very special."

Berry, who has two more years of eligibility remaining at South Carolina, will most likely be drafted by a N.W.S.L. team after she graduates.

"Playing at that level is something that I've dreamed about my whole life," Berry said. "It would be awesome to play for a professional soccer team in the future."

Chandler Pedolczyk also scored a second half goal for the Mutiny. Jenna Kalwa, who's the women's soccer coach at the University of Saint Joseph in West Hartford, Connecticut, was credited with the assist.

VITALIY PANCHENKO
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Pioneers prevail in preseason match

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—With only a handful of returning players, it'll probably take a couple of matches for the Western Mass. Pioneers players to jell.

The Pioneers kicked off the 2023 campaign with a 5-1 victory in a friendly match against KO Elites FC before a large gathering at historic Lusitano Stadium in Ludlow, last Friday night.

"We had a lot of turnover from last year's team, so we're in the rebuilding process this year," said Federico Molinari, who's beginning his 12th season as the Pioneers head coach. "We do have some youngers players and a couple of returning players. It's probably going to take us some time to jell."

A year ago, the Pioneers finished in second place in the Northeast Division table with an 11-3 regular season record. They lost to the Seacoast United Phantoms, 1-0, in extra time at home in the Eastern Conference semifinals.

It marked the second year in a row that the Pioneers (11-3) faced Seacoast United, who finished at the top of the Northeast Division table, in the Eastern Conference semifinals.

The Pioneers were scheduled to play their first regular season match at the Boston Bolts on Tuesday night before hosting the Pathfinder FC in the home opener at 7pm on Saturday night.

The first meeting of the reg-

ular season with league rival Seacoast United will take place away from the friendly confines of Lusitano Stadium on May 25. The second meeting between the two squads is slated to take place in Ludlow on June 23.

The Pioneers other home matches this season will be against Black Rock FC (June 3), Boston Bolts (June 7), Albany Rush (June 30), Vermont Green FC (July 7), and AC Connecticut (July 15). All of their home matches are scheduled to start at 7pm.

One of the returning players is Khalid Rose, who has been a member of the Pioneers squad since 2018.

"I have the most service time on this year's team," said Rose before signing some autographs following the match. "I always come back here every year for the fans. I just love playing this beautiful game."

Rose, who played college soccer at Central Connecticut State University, assisted on the Pioneers first two goals in last Friday's friendly match. Newcomer Alec Hughes scored both goals during the first ten minutes of the first half. Hughes came out of the match with a minor injury during the 25th minute.

"Alec is a new player this year," Molinari said. "Hopefully, he'll be able to play in our first game on Tuesday night."

Hughes, who's a forward from Glastonbury Conn, is also a member of the UMass men's soccer team. He finished his junior season last fall with a total

of 10 goals, including a hat-trick in a 4-1 victory at George Washington. He also had two assists and led the A-10 conference with a total of 22 points.

Following the 2022 college season, Hughes was selected to the United Soccer Coaches All-Region Second-Team squad.

Hughes is one of the players looking to replace Braudilio Rodrigues, who led the Pioneers with ten goals last summer. Rodrigues recently signed with the Tacoma Defiance, which compete in the MLS Next Pro league. The Defiance is the reserve team for the Seattle Sounders FC.

The other returning players listed on the Western Mass. Pioneers roster are Chaney Nash-Gibney, Jared Smith, Ignacio Albo, Lucio Berron, Tomas Duben, Nicholas Oberrauch, and Connor Hicks, who graduated from Monson High School six years ago.

Hicks, who graduated from AIC, didn't play in the friendly match because of an injury.

Oberrauch is the Pioneers captain and he assisted on the third goal, which was scored by Duben during the 21st minute.

"It's an honor for me to be the team captain again this year," Oberrauch said. "I really enjoy being the team leader."

Thomas Quiterio, who's wrapping up his junior year, and Thomas Wadas, who's finishing his sophomore year at Ludlow High School, saw some playing time during the second half. They'll be practicing with the Pioneers and be playing games

for the USL Academy team.

"The academy team prepares the players to play for the USL team," Molinari said. "A couple of them had an opportunity to play in tonight's game, but they just need to continue working hard."

Wadas had the chance to play in a couple of regular season matches for the Pioneers a year ago.

"I normally play for the USL Academy team and it's a big jump playing for the men's team. The game is much quicker at this level," Wadas said. "It's also a lot of fun playing with one of my high school teammates."

Quiterio, who's also a member of the Ludlow boys' volleyball team, played for the Pioneers for the first time in last Friday's match.

"I was a little bit nervous at first, but I did feel comfortable after a few minutes," Quiterio said. "I grew up watching the Pioneers play and it's a dream come true to have an opportunity to play for them. It just feels amazing."

The Pioneers scored two more goals during the second half, including a penalty kick by Simba Peltier.

The Pioneers assistant coaches are Dennis Gomes, Jay Willis, and John Voight.

The Pioneers faithful supporters are hoping to have a lot more enjoyable evenings at Lusitano Stadium during the next couple of months.

Run for Rice's 5K Road Race set for June 3

WILBRAHAM – The 11th annual "Run for Rice's 5K Road Race" will be held on Saturday, June 3 at 9 a.m. This popular, family-friendly 5K road race begins at Christ the King – Epiphany Church, 758 Main Street, Wilbraham, 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 20 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 Rice Nature Preserve maintenance fund of the Minnechaug Land Trust. Race day registration will be open from 7:30 a.m. until 8:45 a.m. On-line registration now available at RunSignUp.com, and paper registration forms can be downloaded at the Minnechaug Land Trust website www.minnechauglandtrust.org.

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Blewett scores the wins in modified event

STAFFORD SPRINGS, CT – Stafford Speedway hosted the 51st Annual NAPA Spring Sizzler on Saturday, May 13 with feature events for the SK Modified, Late Model, and SK Light divisions along with two 15-lap last chance qualifiers for drivers to earn starting positions in the NAPA Spring Sizzler 100-lap main event. Jimmy Blewett scored the checkered flag in the 40-lap SK Modified feature his second career win at Stafford and first since the 2005 NAPA Fal Final. Tom Fearn was the winner of the 30-lap Late Model feature and the SK Light feature saw a photo finish with Brian Sullivan making a last lap pass on Tyler Chapman and winning the race by inches or .005 seconds. Matt Swanson won the 15-lap Last Chance Qualifier for the NAPA Spring Sizzler.

In the 40-lap SK Modified@ feature event, Jimmy Blewett led the field to the green and he began to set the early pace with Michael Christopher, Jr. going around Cory DiMatteo to take

second behind Blewett. Chris Jones was fourth in line in the early going with Keith Rocco quickly moving from seventh at the start up to fifth. Christopher made a move to the inside of Blewett on lap-6 but wasn't able to make the pass. Christopher then came under attack from DiMatteo on lap-7 but he was able to hold off that challenge.

With 10 laps complete, the order was Blewett in the lead followed by Christopher, DiMatteo, Stephen Kopicik, and Rocco. Anthony Bello was sixth followed by Jon Puleo, Noah Korner, Mikey Flynn, and Todd Owen. Bello was black flagged on lap-15 and he had to report to pit road for dumping fluid. David Arute was shown the black flag on lap-20 for fluid also while Blewett and Christopher were still the tow lead cars with DiMatteo, Rocco, and Kopicik giving chase. Marcello Rufrano was the car on the move in the first half of the race, taking 11th on lap-22 after starting shotgun on the field in 28th. The

caution flew with 24 laps complete for a spin by Rich Gautreau that collected Rufrano, who pulled off the track and behind the wall, ending his great run.

Blewett took the lead back under green with Christopher in second. Kopicik and DiMatteo were wheel to wheel for third place with Rocco and Korner right behind them. Kopicik took third on lap-26 with Rocco taking fourth and Korner fifth as DiMatteo slid back to sixth. Christopher's car dropped off the pace on lap-29 and he pulled on to pit road just as the caution flew for spins in turn 4 by Dylan Kopeck and Tom Bolles.

Blewett took the lead back under green with Rocco moving up to second, but before a lap could be completed the caution came out for Rich Gautreau, who hit the wall in turn 4.

Blewett took the elad back under green with Rocco in second. DiMatteo and Kopicik ran wheel to wheel for a lap before DiMatteo got clear into third place. Korner took fourth with



Submitted photo

Jimmy Blewett wins the SK Modified event at Stafford Speedway last weekend.

Kopicik sliding back to fifth while up front, Rocco was applying heavy pressure to Blewett for the lead.

Korner's car dropped off the pace on lap-37 and he limped back to pit road after running in fourth place. This promoted Kopicik to fourth and Mikey Flynn to fifth as Blewett was

still in command over Rocco and DiMatteo. Blewett slowly stretched out his advantage over Rocco in the closing laps and he picked up his second career SK Modified win at Stafford, his first since the 2005 NAPA Fall Final. Rocco came home second with DiMatteo, Kopicik, and Flynn rounding out the top-5.

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This ad is pursuant to MA Gen. Law Ch.255, Sec. 39A as of **May 12, 2023** the following motor vehicles will be for sale to satisfy a garage keepers lien:

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Wilbraham & Monson Academy places second in state finance competition

WILBRAHAM — Wilbraham & Monson Academy has some future CEO's in the Class of 2023.

The Titan team of Maddie Stoltz '23 (Somers, CT), Kylie Bignell '23 (East Longmeadow), Julia Besse '23 (Longmeadow) and Iva Radevic '23 (Montenegro) placed second in the high school division at the 2023 Massachusetts Personal Finance Challenge.

The statewide competition, sponsored by the Massachusetts Council for Eco-

nomics and Personal Finance Education, asked questions in the field of Income and Money Management, Spending and Credit and Saving and Investing. The students had 35 minutes to answer 30 multiple-choice questions.

"Last spring, I entered a Middle School and Upper School team in the Massachusetts Economics Challenge (and the Middle School team finished in first place)," said Jim Irzyk, Chair of WMA's Center for Entrepreneurship, Economics & Fi-

nance department. "This year, I noticed there was a Personal Finance Challenge so I organized four teams, with an all-female team by design. This all-female team comprises some of the best female CEEF students in recent WMA history. They are smart, determined, well-rounded business students and represented WMA extremely well in the competition."

"None of us were expecting to do well on the test that we took," said Kyle Bignell. "This just goes to show how well our

CEEF Department prepares us for opportunities like this.

"I wanted to participate in the PFC because I am really passionate about business and finding new ways to challenge myself. Not to mention, I was also looking forward to applying all of the skills and knowledge that I had learned from the CEEF courses here at WMA."

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