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COMMUNITY
Former resident honored
Page 16

SPORTS
Chaug lacrosse falls in finals
Page 11

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WFD holds pinning, recognition ceremony

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - The fire department recognized heroes and new members in a pinning and recognition ceremony on April 29.

The new firefighters are Re-

nee Forgues and John Monty and Nick Noto, Anthony Arventos and Colin Morse were honored for heroism.

Fire Commissioner Ed Rigney also received the David F. Bourcier Lifetime Achievement Award, which recognizes a citizen who has made significant contributions to the town of

Wilbraham and its people.

State Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow) explained how the state is supporting fire departments with equipment hazards.

"Two weeks ago, the State Senate actually passed legislation to create a pool of funds to provide equipment to municipalities for firefighters to

prevent any of the illnesses that are borne by PFAS that is in fire suits. We put in about \$25 million for that account, but going in that communities can access over time, something that's really important because we know even when you're

Please see **HEROES**, page 9

Turley photos
by Kristin Rivers

A group shot of the new firefighters and heroes recognized during the Wilbraham Fire Department's Pinning and Recognition Ceremony on April 29.

Hampden ATM rejects CPA repeal

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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HAMPDEN - Residents rejected the repeal of the Community Preservation Act during the May 11 Annual Town Meeting.

Listed as Article 14 on the Town Meeting Warrant, this would have been to see if the town would vote to revoke the town's acceptance of sections three through seven of Chapter 44B of the General Laws, the Community Preservation Act, or take any other action thereto.

Advisory Committee Chair Doug Boyd explained the committee recommended unfavorable action, calling it "rather unusual."

"This came about as a result of discussions about the taxes that we're all facing. This is one of the few taxes that we actually have some control over. This is an assessment that's placed on our real estate taxes. The first \$100,000 of valuation is exempted. There's a 1% tax on valuations over that. The town accepted the Community Preservation Act in May of 2001. We were one of the first towns in the state to adopt it after it was passed by the leg-

Please see **HAMPDEN ATM**, page 5

Three people resign from FinCom

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - Three people have resigned from the Finance Committee, with the announcement shared during the May 18 Select Board meeting.

The three members who resigned were Todd Schneider—who served as chair of the committee—Kevin Corridan and Xiomara Albán De-Lobato.

Chair Marc Ducey shared this information during the discussion of the 2026 Annual Town Meeting recap with

Please see **RESIGN**, page 2

Minnechaug holds annual Evening of Recognition

By Selena Nguyen
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - On May 13, Minnechaug Regional High School held their annual Evening of Recognition, dedicated to honoring students for their vast accomplishments through the presentation of various scholarships and awards.

"We have sporting events and music concerts that people go out and support. This is one of the opportunities that we have to celebrate students for their academic success and their good citizenship and leadership across our school," Principal Dr. Steve Hale



Photo courtesy of Kayla Smith

Allison Demetri smiling happily with her awards.

said, explaining the event's purpose.

Hale gave special thanks to Athletic Director Steven Burndrett and Assistant Principal Nicole Smith, who

served as the Masters of the Ceremony, reading out the names and awards of all the

Please see **RECOGNITION NIGHT**, page 8

Fishing Derby brings fish, community fun

By Noelle Hisgen
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Recreational Department and Friends of the Rec Department hosted their Annual Fishing Derby at Spec Pond on May 16.

This year, over 150 visitors showed up on a very sunny day to go out and fish. The top three winners received gift cards to Dick's Sporting Goods, The Local, and Pafumi's. Throughout the Derby, the department also raffled off prizes from Rocky's Ace Hardware.

The overall winner of the derby was Javier Go-

mez, with a prize fish of 15 inches.

During the derby, Parks and Rec Department Assistant Director Erin Carroll spoke about the event.

"It's a great community event," Carroll said. "We have a perfect day, so it's good to see how people come out from the winter, get some sun, and get some fishing. It brings the community together. It's simple and easy. Parents and kids and grandparents all working together and just having the same goal and just enjoying each other."

Please see **DERBY**, page 3



Turley photo by Noelle Hisgen

Grandfather R.J. Chapdelaine and his grandson, Leo, hold up Leo's fishing pole at the Fishing Derby.

HISTORICAL WILBRAHAM

Remembering the Sestercentennial from 2013

250th Anniversary was co-chaired by Kevin Moriarty and Patti Diotalevi

By Charles F. Bennett
Times Editor Emeritus

This might be a good time to look back at the busy goings-on of the 250th Anniversary of Wilbraham, which we celebrated 13 years ago in 2013. And it went by so fast. Its name was a mouthful, the Sestercentennial. Our town goes all the way back to June 13, 1763 when it was incorporated.

But starting this year, as a whole, the nation will

be remembering the start of the Revolutionary War and the Declaration of Independence leading up to it the response by the Minutemen, including those from Wilbraham, who traveled to the "Lexington Alarm" where the first shots were fired. (Remember "The shot heard round the world". And then the Declaration of Independence signing on July 4, 1776.

Celebrating the 250th Anniversary is "old news" for Wilbrahamites if you remember we already celebrated with all those activities that took place beginning with

its planning in 2010. Wilbraham historian and costumed reenactor Richard Howell gave a talk a year ago at an Old Meeting House Museum Open House after taking part in the large reenactment at Concord and Lexington in 2025. His topic was "The Genesis of Revolution: The Dawn of the American War for Independence". An overflow crowd filled the town-owned museum with history buffs as well as those interested in 18th century war and politics.



Charlie Bennett

Personal

Taking part in the anniversary committee was personal

Please see **WILBRAHAM**, page 13

Crumbling MRHS dump truck article creates debate

Passes in Wilbraham, fails in Hampden

By Reese Magee
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM — One interesting article that was voted on during this year's Annual Town Meeting was Article 21: Capital Projects for Minnechaug Regional High School from Free Cash.

While the IDF Switches and Network Upgrades and dump body truck/sander replacement capital projects passed by majority vote in Wilbraham, the items did not pass in Hampden, meaning this failed as a whole.

In Hampden, Advisory Committee Chair Doug Boyd had explained "we don't necessarily oppose the request," but had recommended it be pushed to the fall for consideration then instead, thus the unfavorable action recommendation. This was voted on together while in Wilbraham, the two projects were split up and voted on separately.

The dump body truck/sander project also sparked discussion in Wilbraham, which the Finance Committee did not



Photo screenshot Wilbraham Public Access
An image of the dump body truck/sander.

recommend approval 8-1.

In total, the dump truck was going to cost around \$95,000 for Wilbraham and Hampden combined. Wilbraham would pay \$75,119, while Hampden would pay \$19,881.

This is a 24-year-old F-450 truck that does a lot of things for the school district, including sanding, salting, snow removal, general repair and maintains the athletic fields and other areas.

The truck also plows all of the parking lots at Minnechaug and helps with field maintenance.

When Superintendent Dr. John Provost went to inspect the truck, he had said, "On both sides, when I opened the doors, rust fell on the ground. I said, 'how often does that

happen?' and the guys told me 'every time you open the door, rust falls.'"

"That's the truck we're looking to get replaced tonight. That's the status it's in," Provost said. "We don't have any reason to believe it will pass inspection, which is coming up in July."

Provost also provided images of the condition of the truck during the town meeting, which included additional holes and areas with rust.

Garrett Fortin asked, "are there no other assets in town that could be shifted at this point?"

"We bought a few trucks over the years, there's sanders in town, it's not snowing every single day. I understand that stuff needs to be replaced. Do

we have stuff with an existing inventory that could be shifted to cover that cost?" Fortin said.

Nick Manolakis, chair of the Capital Planning Committee, explained the vehicle is "actually like a school department vehicle."

"It's used on-site of Minnechaug, which is kind of like a regional property. So, these vehicles are owned by the school district and they're used to plow that particular property," Manolakis said. "It's been a vehicle that they've had in operation for over 20 years."

After Leanne Key asked about the Finance Committee's reasoning for not supporting the replacement of the truck, Finance Committee Chair Todd Schneider explained why.

"We got a report that it wasn't as bad as the pictures were saying through one of the conversations. Also, if it doesn't leave Minnechaug property, it doesn't need to pass inspection," Schneider said. "And it wasn't presented to us."

After Key next asked if it was possible "for any other trucks in the city to come in if it doesn't pass inspection and pick up the slack of the truck that it isn't able to do," Schneider replied it would have to

go through the town "and the town would donate it to the district."

School Committee Member Sean Kennedy commented "the 20-year-old truck does leave campus to go get things. It's used for so many different things."

"Also, depending on what happens with the middle school in the near future, it would also be plowing the middle school, so it would have to drive to there and back there. So, it would need to pass inspection," Kennedy said. "I understand that a hole in the floor isn't catastrophic and the rust isn't catastrophic if it's still rolling. It's been 20 years and I guess, likely, we wouldn't come back and ask for another one for, hopefully, another 20 years. But, it's something that is needed."

Dr. Michael Tirabassi, also a member of the School Committee, stated, "I think it's an interesting theory that maybe it can be kept on the property so it doesn't leave the property, doesn't have to pass inspection."

"But, as far as I'm aware, do we have a capacity to fuel the truck with gasoline on the Minnechaug campus—and as Sean pointed out, there are other reasons that the truck

does have to leave the property... I do believe things should be safe. And if there's rusted holes through the truck, I wouldn't want to see anyone get hurt," Tirabassi said.

Provost said they have the capacity to do diesel on campus.

"I think that's a gasoline truck but I'm not 100% sure on that, but I will say we don't have the capacity to do materials and supplies. We don't have the capacity to fill it with salt and sand on campus. We don't have the capacity to bring it for repairs on campus. In order for it to remain functional, it needs to be able to travel on roads," Provost said.

The final comments on Article 21 came from Kevin Magee.

"As a parent of three students in the district, I'm very concerned that we're even considering a truck that would not pass inspection around kids. We need to have a truck that passes inspection. Unless the town has a better plan with the truck then I'd love to hear. We need a truck to do this. I'm open to other plans, but we either need to pass this truck or have a plan that is safe for kids around, with brakes working and tires and passing inspection," Magee said.

'Let Freedom Ring' concert

WILBRAHAM - The Merrimack Valley Ringers return to Wilbraham United Church to present their 2026 Spring Handbell Concert, "LET FREEDOM RING! Celebrating 250 Years of Our Nation," at 7 p.m., May 30 in the Church Sanctuary, 500 Main Street, Wilbraham.

A free will donation will help defray MVR expenses to present the concert. Wheelchair accessible.

June Teen Programs at HPL

HAMPDEN — The following teen events are coming up at the Hampden Free Public Library.

Saturday, June 13 at Noon
Teen Silent Book Club

Bring your own book, audiobook, graphic novel, etc., or borrow one of ours! We will read quietly for the first 45 minutes and then talk about our books.

Thursday, June 25 at 4 p.m., Perler Beads

Make a fidget keychain, magnet, or traditional Perler Bead design!

Saturday, June 27 at Noon
Teen Spa Day

Self-care should always be a priority - embrace summer relaxation and make lip scrub, body scrub, and bath tea! There will be door prizes!

All programs are for grades 5-12. To see our upcoming programs, visit hampden-library.org/events.

RESIGN from page 1

Moderator Jane Clark when he expressed concern about specific attacks on volunteers, "which I found unacceptable to me."

"That's not how we should be doing business," Ducey said. "I mean, to be clear, since Town Meeting, we have had three Finance Committee members resign and that shouldn't happen—at least, in part—because of that, and that shouldn't happen at all."

Ducey later said during Select Board's Updates that he would like the board to have a joint meeting with the Finance Committee "in the very near future."

"I am concerned—very concerned—about what's transpired over the last week, I guess, it's been in the resignations and I think there may be more forthcoming," Ducey said. "We are entering into a very difficult fiscal year, I think—my understanding, it's portrayed as cloudy, at best—we need

people in place that have experience and knowledge. So, I would like to set up a joint meeting between us and FinCom at some point in the near future. I'm not sure how everybody else feels about that, but I just think that is important for us to figure out how we can forge ahead in a more productive way. I'm just alarmed by that and I'm very alarmed by that."

On May 22, Ducey also shared the following statement with the Times on behalf of the town and Select Board regarding the resignations.

"The Town's Finance Committee, which consists of 9 volunteer members, has experienced a high degree of stability over the past number of years. Historically, member resignations have often occurred following the completion of the annual budget cycle and Annual Town Meeting. This year is consistent with that pattern. Since Annual Town Meeting, several long-serving Finance Committee members have submitted letters

of resignation. The reasons provided have varied and include personal considerations, career-related commitments, and, in some cases, no reason was specified," Ducey said. "On behalf of the Select Board and the Town's Administration, we thank these individuals for their service and contributions to the Town during their tenure on the Finance Committee. Over the coming months, the Select Board will work to fill these vacancies. Residents interested in serving on the Finance Committee are encouraged to contact the Select Board/Town Administrator's Office at Town Hall at 413-596-2800 for additional information regarding the appointment process."

The Times has also reached out to Schneider for further information and is awaiting comment as of press time.

There will be more on the resignations in our next edition.



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Wilbraham, Hampden Election 2026 results

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

Wilbraham

The results of this year's town election are in.

For the Select Board, Michael Squindo was reelected after defeating challenger Ryan Costello. Squindo received 472 votes and Costello received 360 votes, a difference of 112 votes.

For the Board of Assessors, John Wesolowski was also reelected after defeating challenger Daniel Fernandes. Wesolowski received 509 votes and Fernandes received 317 votes, a difference of 192 votes.

For the School Committee, Dr. Michael Tirabassi was reelected after receiving 498 votes and William Metzger Jr. will also become the committee's newest member after receiving 582 votes. The committee had two open seats to represent Wilbraham after Sherrill Caruana announced she would not be seeking reelection.

There will also be a new Cemetery Commissioner af-

ter Walker Eaton presented his name for the one open three-year position and one open two-year position. Eaton received 80 votes for the three-year position and 10 votes for the two-year position.

Despite winning both positions, however, Town Clerk Deborah Brennan explained that Eaton declined the two-year open position and accepted the three-year position. A plethora of other named write-in candidates were received for the two-year position, she added, but none of them got more than two votes.

John Caltabiano was also reelected as Water Commissioner after receiving 676 votes. He ran unopposed.

For the Planning Board, there was one open five-year position, with two people throwing their hats in the ring at the last moment. The two candidates were Joe Cantalini—who unsuccessfully ran for a seat in last year's town election—and Stephen Holstrom.

Holstrom secured the seat after receiving 138 votes and Cantalini's 112 votes, a difference of 26 votes.

For the Library Trustees, we have a member reelected and a new member joining the ranks due to two open seats. Ronnie Haislip-Hansberry, who was seeking reelection, received 604 votes and Marylou Fabbo will now join the trustees after receiving 462 votes.

On the Wilbraham Housing Authority, Aaron Shepard was elected after receiving 615 votes. He ran unopposed.

Of the 12,050 voters registered in Wilbraham, there were 880 votes cast, a voter turnout of 7.3%.

Hampden

The votes have been cast and the results are in for the 2026 Town Election.

Richard Green has been reelected as town moderator after receiving 242 votes. He ran unopposed and was also reelected last year.

John Flynn was reelected to the Selectboard after receiving 213 votes. He ran unopposed.

Robert Makuch was reelected to the Board of Assessors after receiving 236 votes. He ran unopposed.

Richard Rediker, meanwhile, will continue to represent Hampden on the School Committee after defeating Maura Ryan. Rediker received 155 votes and Ryan received 126 votes, a difference of 29 votes.

Darryl Fidalgo was reelected as Cemetery Commissioner after receiving 238 votes. He ran unopposed.

For the Library Trustees, Jean Hall was reelected after receiving 245 votes.

There will now be two new Park Commissioners, with Julie Wickman and a write-in candidate, Heather Bean. Wickman received 228 votes and Bean received 45 votes.

On the Planning Board—the other contested race this election—John Quackenbush defeated Robert Howarth. Quackenbush received 170 votes and Howarth received 99 votes.

And finally, for the Hampden Housing Authority, Carol Collins was reelected after receiving 241 votes. She ran unopposed.

Of the 4,237 voters in town, 282 cast their votes, a voter turnout of 6.65%.

DERBY from page 1

Along with Carroll, Mark Manolakis, the chairman of the Friends of the Rec Department for Wilbraham, also spoke at the Fishing Derby.

"The Fishing Derby is one of our longest-running events. We've been doing it for a dozen years. And it's just a great event to get different people involved in our facilities and our programming. It's a community involvement event: We love running these types of events where people of all ages can come and get involved outside and enjoy this beautiful day," Manolakis said.

Attending the Fishing Derby, also, were members of the Angler Education Program, part of Mass Wildlife. Speaking on behalf of the program was Jim Legacy.

"We hope that people find some inspiration in the outdoors, in nature, and fishing is one of the easier ways to do it," Legacy said. "We were asked by Westfield Bank and

Wilbraham Parks and Recreation many years ago, and we usually do them as in-person education. Just being a Derby, we bring the education. So, we'll teach people how to fish that have never fished."

Many families came out to Spec Pond. One of those families was the Chapdelaine family. Grandfather R.J. Chapdelaine was helping teach his grandson, Leo, how to fish.

"It's nice, it's friendly," Chapdelaine said. "You get a trophy for catching a fish. He (Leo) thinks this is the greatest thing ever. He was so excited to come here. And the parks and recreation area is just beautiful."

It was a wonderful, sunny day for family members of the Wilbraham and Hampden communities alike to come together with the simple yet entertaining sport of fishing.

The Rec Department would also like to give a special shout out to Westfield Bank, their main sponsor for the derby.



Photo courtesy of Mark Manolakis and Erin Carroll

Fishing Derby winner Javier Gomez holds his winner's trophy for catching a 15 inch fish.



Turley photo by Noelle Hisgen

From the left, Don Vacon, Jim Legacy, and Gerry Wroblewski with the Mass Wildlife Angler Education Program hold up a giant stuffed fish.



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INSURED AND CERTIFIED

Multi-Family Rummage Sale May 29 and 30

WILBRAHAM – Evangel Assembly of God on 348 Stony Hill Road in Wilbraham will be holding a Multi-Family Rummage Sale from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on May 29 and 30.

There's a little bit of everything from small furniture, rugs, and home appliances to clothes, toys and books. The proceeds support the church's teenagers who will be going to do hurricane relief work in North Carolina this summer.

Paraeducators reject contract

WILBRAHAM/HAMPDEN - The Hampden Wilbraham Education Association is urging the school district to improve their contract offer to paraeducators after they rejected an earlier proposed settlement.

Teachers represented by the HWEA ratified a new contract after working for nearly a year under the terms of an expired and outdated contract.

But by a margin of nearly 3 to 1, HWEA paraeducators rejected the proposal presented to them. The union is

looking to get an offer that responds to the concerns about the specialized work of some paraeducators and a raise for all that makes significant progress toward a living wage.

A mediation session is scheduled for June 4.

The HWEA released the following statement:

"Paraprofessionals working in both regular and special education settings are providing crucial support to all students. The work they do is essential, not optional or supplement-

tal. The district needs to improve the compensation for paraprofessionals and offer wage packages better aligned with their value and responsibilities. The contract rejected by paraprofessionals sent a clear message that the district is not doing what is necessary to attract and retain skilled educators. The HWEA believes that the district can be both fiscally responsible and strategically responsive when it comes to protecting the quality of our public schools."

Hampden churches unite for tag sale to benefit community

HAMPDEN - Residents of Hampden are invited to come together for a day of bargain hunting and community spirit as LifeStream Church and the Federated Church host dual Tag Sales on Saturday, May 30, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The event will take place rain or shine, ensuring a full day of activity, regardless of the weather.

Located at 216 Allen Street and 590 Main Street, the two churches are joining forces to organize this community event, bringing together residents, families and visitors from across the area.

The tag sale will feature a wide variety of items, including household goods, clothing, furniture, books and unique finds-offering something for every shopper. More than just a chance

to score great deals, the event serves a greater purpose: all proceeds will go toward benefitting the Town of Hampden's Fire Department. Funds raised will provide scholarship monies for a candidate or candidates the department deems worthy to support in further education for First Responder training. This makes every purchase part of a meaningful contribution to our town.

Financial donations for the cause are welcome as well! Organizers encourage community members to attend, spread the word, and take part in a day that blends generosity with neighborly connection.

Whether you're searching for hidden treasures or simply looking to support a good cause, this tag sales' promises to be a worthwhile and welcoming event.

Puppolo announces \$16,675 grant awarded to WFD

BOSTON - State Representative Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr. is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety & Security and the Department of Fire Services has awarded the Town of Wilbraham's Fire Department a \$16,675.37

grant for the purchase of firefighter safety equipment. The grant will allow the department to obtain necessary personal protective and safety equipment that will make impactful improvements to the safety and long-term health of their personnel.

"I am pleased to support this funding which will help the Wilbraham Fire Department keep our dedicated firefighters safer," stated Puppolo.

The grant program, now in its 6th year, reimburses Massachusetts fire departments for a wide variety of equip-

ment to protect firefighter safety/health and bring fire departments into compliance with national standards as defined by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

HAMPDEN ATM from page 1

islature," Boyd said. "We did it specifically, at the time, to acquire Minnechaug Mountain. That was the motivation for joining the Community Preservation."

Boyd said since its adoption, the amount the town of Hampden is receiving "as a match from the state has declined."

"We have the assessment—it's called the local assessment—it's also the state match. When we first started doing it for the first six or seven years, we received a 100% match. Every dollar that was raised was matched a dollar by the state," Boyd said. "Since then, because more and more cities and towns have adopted the Community Preservation Act, there's now 201 cities and towns that adopted it. The percentage in the current year, I think, is 16.87%. The total amount that we have received over the years is \$571,812 is what we have received in state funds. That's against the local assessment, what we have paid on our real estate taxes of \$1,447,273."

He added this was brought forward was to "put it on the town floor for discussion."

"We think this is an issue that reasonable minds can differ on. Advisory recommended that we maintain the Community Preservation Act because even at the reduced match, it's still a substantial return," Boyd said. "It's simply to put it on the town floor



Screenshot courtesy of Town of Hampden
Parks & Rec Director Dan Blanchard shares his thoughts.

for discussion, so that if we retain the Community Preservation Act, understand that we're doing so voluntarily and knowingly."

Parks & Rec Director Dan Blanchard said the average cost per the average household per year to contribute to the CPA is \$48.

"Some of the projects that we've been able to complete through CPA funds are the pavilion, pavilion construction at Memorial Park, play-scape construction at Memorial Park, baseball, softball field, scoreboards at Niccum and Veterans Field, shade umbrellas at the spray park. That doesn't include any of the Historical Preservation projects or open space land purchases that have been done," Blanchard said. "I'll just leave with the fact that no Massachusetts community that has adopted Community Preservation Act funds has stopped funding them."

Selectboard Member Don Davenport shared some additional context.

"The Selectboard has vot-

ed to recommend negative action on this article as well. The acceptance by the town meeting voters 25 years ago of the Community Preservation Act was a declaration that Hampden is committed to investing in its people, its environment and preserving the history and character of the town we all know, we all live in and we all love," Davenport said. "The surcharge is a small investment. Currently, it's 13 cents per day, 92 cents per week. It helps make Hampden what it is. Investments in open space, recreational opportunities for all ages, preservation of land and historic community properties as well as housing for our seniors makes Hampden a desirable place to live, attracts home buyers and increases the value of our properties."

Davenport said of the 201 cities and towns who take part in the CPA, 141 of them "have a higher surcharge than Hampden," and of the 141 cities and towns, 80 of them "have a surcharge of 3%,"

Hampden's surcharge is only 1%."

"Your 13 cents per day and our 13 cents per day combined with that of your fellow Hampdenites has leveraged \$571,812 in state funds. To date, a portion of that has funded 48 projects, 18 recreation, 11 open space, 12 historical and seven housing. CPA funds help us to honor our past, enjoy our present and to build for our community's future," Davenport said. "For those reasons, the Selectboard recommends no."

After a resident asked if there were any restrictions on what it could be used for and on what potential plans it could be used for, Boyd answered this question.

"Community Preservation has to be spent on three and a half categories now. Open space, conservation, affordable housing and historic preservation. After the act was passed, they added in recreation as part of the conservation requirement. A minimum of 10% of the assessed and matched amount has to be spent on each of those categories," Boyd said. "Other than that, it's within our discretion as town residents on how to spend that money, what projects qualify and that's what the Community Preservation Committee does is we review the applications that come in and we make the recom-

mendation whether or not it should go to town meeting for consideration."

After an additional question, Boyd said, "there's no requirement that we spend money in any given year."

"So if what we don't spend it, what we're supposed to do is encumber it. We don't do it every year because it's cumbersome, frankly, but periodically what we will do is we will verify that we are. If we haven't spent the required 10% in each of the categories, we'll encumber that amount so that we meet the requirement," Boyd said.

The article then failed by majority vote, keeping the CPA in place in Hampden.

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VIEWPOINTS

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor

Social Security's 'First Year Rule' and Withdrawing from SS

Dear Rusty:
I am 63 years old, and about to apply for my Social Security benefits.

I am self-employed but only working part time. I know about Social Security's annual earnings limit but recently I learned I must also be concerned about a monthly earnings limit of \$2,040. My questions are:

1) How do I find out if I will be subject to a monthly earning limit of \$2,040 per month? I thought it was only evaluated annually.

2) If I choose to cancel Social Security within the first year or after, what are the penalties? Would I have to pay them back for the whole amount for the whole time that they paid me? Which makes no sense, since I have been paid into SS since I was 13 years old.

Can you help me understand this?

Signed: Claiming Early and Still Working

Dear Claiming Early:

It can get tricky if you are still working after claiming your Social Security before your SS Full Retirement Age, especially during your first year collecting. I'm happy to answer your specific questions:

There is a special rule which applies during your first year collecting early Social Security benefits (e.g., before your Full Retirement Age or "FRA," which for you is age 67). What will happen is this: when the IRS provides SSA with your 2026 earnings (in 2027), SSA will review to see if your total 2026 net earnings from self-employment exceeded the 2026 annual limit of \$24,480.

If not, no further action is necessary. But if you did exceed the full year 2026 earnings limit, SSA will contact you and ask you to provide them with details about your monthly 2026 net earnings. If you have exceeded the monthly limit in any 2026 month after your SS benefit started, you will not be entitled to SS benefits for that month.

Essentially, if you have exceeded the annual limit, you cannot exceed the monthly earnings limit in any remaining month during your first year of collecting. If you exceeded the annual limit and also any monthly limit, SSA will send you an overpayment notice saying you must repay them for the benefits you were not entitled to receive because you exceeded the monthly earnings limit.

You can, within 12 months of applying for Social Security, ask SSA to withdraw your application for SS retirement benefits. They will do that for you, but you will also

be required to repay them all SS benefits that they have already paid to (or for) you.

This essentially would "wipe the slate clean" and enable your SS benefit to continue growing, allowing you to apply for a larger monthly benefit later. But if you wait longer than 12 months after you first apply for SS benefits, you can no longer withdraw your application for Social Security. Thereafter, you would be subject to the annual earnings limit (the monthly earnings limit would no longer apply).

FYI, after you reach your FRA, there is no limit on your earnings and you could choose to suspend your benefit payments and earn Delayed Retirement Credits (DRCs) to get a higher monthly benefit. Also at your FRA, if SSA withheld any of your benefits because you exceeded the earnings limit before reaching your FRA, you would get time credit for the number of months your benefits were withheld. Essentially, they would advance your benefit-start month by the number of months your benefits were withheld, yielding a slightly higher monthly amount after your FRA.

Finally, it's important to know that the contributions you made to Social Security from payroll taxes (FICA/SECA) over your lifetime are not what determines your monthly SS benefit amount. Your monthly SS benefit is based on two main factors: a) your average monthly earnings (indexed for inflation) for the highest earning 35 years over your lifetime as reported to the IRS, and b) the age at which you claim your SS benefits.

Your contributions to Social Security while working only provide you with eligibility to collect SS benefits; the contributions aren't put into a separate account for you and are not used to calculate your monthly SS benefit.

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

Letter to the Editor

Our State Representative who not only shows up but answers the call time and time again

To the Editor,

I am responding to the letter published on May 14, 2026, titled "For the 12th Hampden District, a public servant who shows up". The fact is that we already have a State Representative in Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr. who not only shows up but is always there when we need him. I recently had an issue with the Registry of Motor Vehicles, I could not get the answer or help that I needed. I emailed Rep. Puppolo and not only did he email me right back, but he fixed my problem and got results in less than a day.

That is not only showing but being there when needed.

The letter writer attacks Representative Puppolo and makes several false claims about Rep. Puppolo not having committee meetings and not showing up? I read that letter and did some of my own research which is all public records. I found out what was stated is not accurate and is simply not true. Rep. Puppolo's Committee has had several meetings and has three more meetings scheduled this year. Rep. Puppolo held committee meetings on July 15, 2025, September 15, 2025, October

14, 2025, November 3, 2025 and February 3, 2025. Rep. Puppolo also has meetings scheduled for May, 29, 2026, September 21, 2026 and October 20, 2026. These kind of lies and mudslinging is just the kind of things voters are fed up with.

Our district has a State Representative who not only shows up but answers the call time and time again. Rep. Puppolo does his job, is accountable and has earned our support and re-election as our State Representative this September 1.

Glen Carpenter, Wilbraham



in my BACKYARD

By Ellenor Downer

These yellow-rumped warblers, also known as Myrtle warblers, flitted around the edges of Lake Wallace in Belchertown, on April 22.

A Belchertown resident sent an email reporting he saw two yellow-rumped. He attached the above photos. The second photo a rear view of the warbler clearly shows the yellow rump of this aptly named warbler.

These warblers are about the size of black-capped chickadee and have a long bill and narrow tail.

They are gray with yellow on their sides, a small patch on the head and of course, the large patch on the rump. They have white on wings, throat and underneath. They have black and white streaking on the breast. Males have a large black patch around the eye. The female is duller.

In summer, yellow-rumped warblers inhabit open coniferous forests and edges and not as often deciduous forests. They primarily feed on insects in the summer. On migration and winter they eat fruit and berries particularly bayberry and wax myrtle. Their song is a series of high-pitched notes often described as "chewy" or "chip-chip."

When males court females, they fluff their feathers, raise their wings and hop from perch to perch, chipping. They may also make display flights in which they glide back and forth or fly slowly with exaggerated wingbeats. The yellow-rumped Warbler's flight is agile and swift and the birds often call as they change direction.

The female builds the nest



This photo shows a side view of a yellow-rumped warbler.

Photos by Doug Moore

This is a back view of a yellow-rumped warbler recently seen in Belchertown.

and sometimes uses material the male brings to her. The nest is a cup of twigs, pine needles, grasses and rootlets. The female also may use moose, horse and deer hair, moss and lichens. The nest takes about ten days to complete. She lays a clutch of one to six eggs speckled with brown or reddish gray.

Bluebirds

A Rutland couple say two bluebirds in their yard on April 25. They hope they will nest in the yard.

Great blue heron

I finally saw a great blue heron perched in a tree at the beaver pond, which abuts my hayfield. Every year, one or two are frequent visitors and even nested there.

Purple martins

A purple martin watcher spotted the first purple martins in Massachusetts for 2026 in Rehoboth on April 4. The largest species of swallow in North America, they wintered in Brazil and flew 7,000 miles to the United States and Canada.

Hummingbirds

Soon the ruby-throated hummingbirds will be back. It is time to get out the nectar

feeders. Instead of purchasing prepared nectar in powder or liquid form, avoid the harmful dyes and boil a one to four ration of sugar to water. I preferred to mix small batches, ¼ cup white sugar to 1 cup water on a more frequent basis to avoid spoilage. It can be stored in the refrigerator for about one week if making larger amounts.

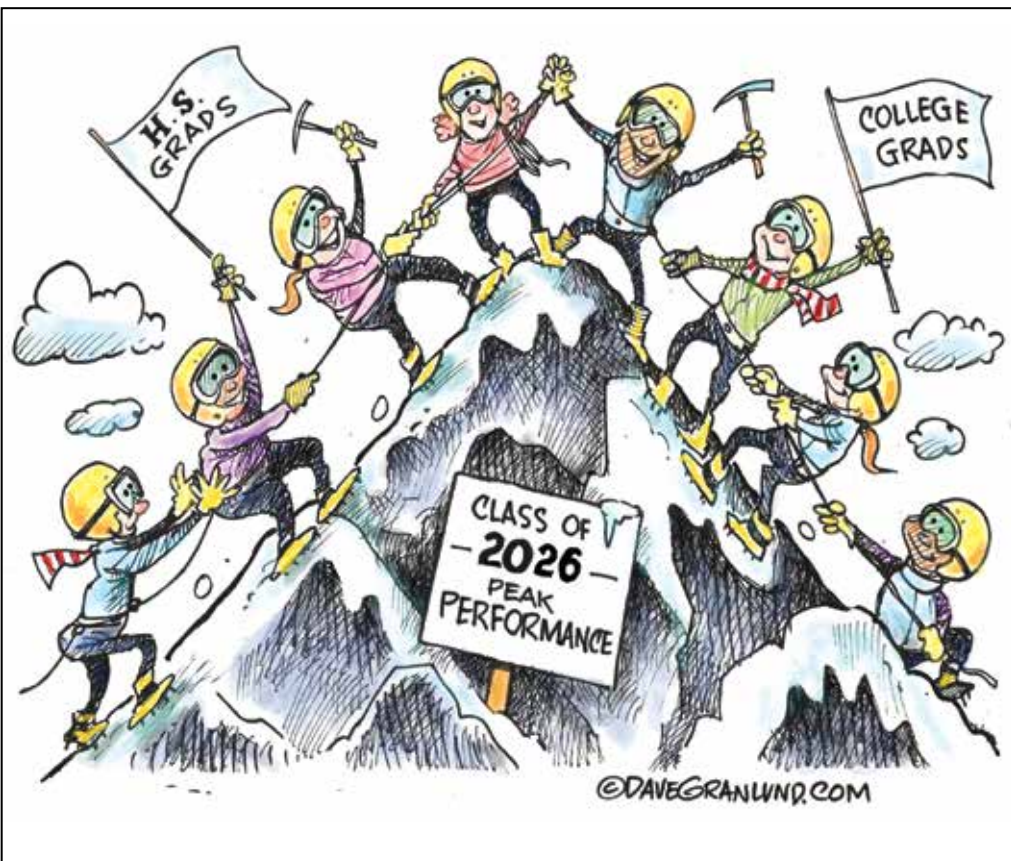
Tom turkeys

In my travelers, I spotted in three different locations Tom turkeys displaying their tail feathers for one or more hen turkeys. I noticed one Tom with two hens strutting about as the females kept on eating near him.

Bird fact

Annually, over 50 million Americans purchased more than one billion pounds of bird seed and suet.

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



The Wilbraham-Hampden TIMES

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

The Wilbraham-Hampden TIMES is published every Thursday by Turley Publications, Inc. One year out of town subscriptions are available at \$45, out of state \$50 by calling 800-824-8458 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.

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

WILBRAHAM HAMPDEN



ANOTHER 1,000 BOOKS BEFORE KINDERGARTEN FINISHER AT WPL!

Submitted photo and caption Jaime Hageman

We have another 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten finisher, Nimue Ayres!



Submitted photo and caption Lisa Coolidge

Friends of Wilbraham Seniors hosts fundraiser at The Local

The Local supports fundraisers in our community, and this is a good thing. The event went from 5 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday May 12. As part of the fundraiser, we sold raffle tickets. Mike Squindo, a Wilbraham selectman, was having his dinner there and we invited him to do the drawing with Lisa Coolidge and Judy Cmero.

Thank you, Mike! The winner was a new Friends member - who donated her win back to the Friends! Thank you Debbie!!

We were selling tickets right up to the drawing. One man came back after having eaten and gone home, AND, the man who won last year came back and bought tickets. He said he still had his winnings in his wallet - his lucky money.

Wilbraham Garden Club Plant Sale



Submitted photo and caption Pat Serra

This is a picture of volunteers from the Wilbraham Garden Club who worked at our annual Plant and Bake Sale fundraiser on Saturday, May 16. We had a very successful sale on the grounds of the Wilbraham Library.

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

Happy Sweet 16, Harlowe!

Beauty, brains, kindness, and the best tanning-and-TV sidekick a mom could ask for. You light up every room and my heart. Wishing you the most amazing year yet filled with love, laughter, happiness, and all the magic you deserve.

xoxo, Mom

The Gardens of Wilbraham donates food to the Ludlow Vet Center Pantry

For the fourth year in a row, The Gardens of Wilbraham has collected non-perishables to donate to the Ludlow Veterans Center. Some 500 pounds of goods were delivered to the Food Pantry on Friday morning May 15.

Jean Moore headed up the food drive again this year and again received generous donations from many of the Gardens residents. "We thank each and every resident who donated to support our local veteran population" said Jean, who collected donations at her home and delivered them to the Vet Center Pantry

The Veterans Services Department launched a Food Pantry for those in need. Food insecurity has been one of the biggest issues facing our veterans' population in recent years, says Eric Segundo, Director of Veterans Services in Ludlow. This is another resource to support our veterans and their families. Included in the donations were canned soup, canned Stew and Chili, pasta, rice, pasta sauces, crackers, bottled salad dressings, and Jam/Jelly. Also, The Food Pantry also received donations of personal care items and bottled water from the Gardens residents.



Submitted photos and caption Rich Moore



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You never know when someone is going to cross your path or how. I met Cassidy Petersen (soon to be McGinnis) through her mom as Cassidy was preparing for her Jack & Jill. I make raffles where I work and was asked if I would make a couple for Cassidy, of which I agreed. When Cassidy and her mom came to pick them up, that's when I met Cassidy for the first time. Some people you just instinctively know are kind and I knew right away she was someone who would have a great story to share.

Random Acts of Kindness

By Barb Turcotte

with patients and loves being able to take a little extra time with them when needed. She said some times, people just need a listening ear and it feels good when she's able to offer that. Out of sixty applicants, she was one of twenty chosen for this program.

Cassidy worked as a Veterinarian Assistant for 2 years and then decided to go back to school to become a Medical Assistant. This program was offered through Baystate Medical Center where she did her internship at their cancer center. This internship was in exchange for an agreed two-year contract to continue to work for Baystate. She now works at Baystate's South Hadley's Adult Primary Care facility. Though she has fulfilled her two-year commitment, she plans on staying there as she loves working directly

Cassidy's grandmother, Bernice Peterson, was an anesthesiology nurse at Mercy Hospital where she always carried miraculous medals and gave them to patients before surgery to help them stay calm. Cassidy was impressed with the difference her grandmother made and wanted to follow in her footsteps. Cassidy has had patients compliment her on her calmness and how it helped them through difficult things. Sounds like she learned well from Grandma.

Cassidy credits her mom, who is a caregiver as well, for her empathy and making sure she had opportunities at a young age to help kindle her own. When she was young, she used to volunteer at the Forest Park

Zoo helping to feed all the animals. When she was just 8 years old, she went to Zoo Camp where she not only played with various animals but learned how to care for them. Her Dad was an animal control officer from whom she developed a love of snakes and other reptiles. During high school, she ran her own successful wild life rehab that her mom helped her with.

When she was a teenager her cat gifted her with a tiny mouse, that was so young it didn't even have its eyes opened. She nurtured that little creature, feeding it every couple of hours as it nibbled on bits of soft food. She explained that luckily, she was on school vacation so that doing that was a possible endeavor. She was devastated when he only lived about three months after she'd taken such vigilant care of him, but knew at that point in her life she wanted to help animals and people.

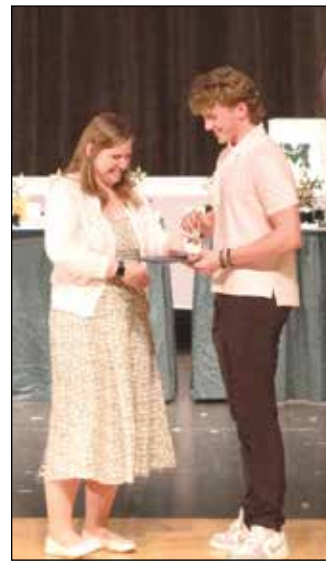
Cassidy and her fiancé have been together for six years and engaged for two. She said she wanted to enjoy just being engaged and not rush into planning

Please see **KINDNESS**, page 10



Photos courtesy of Kayla Smith

Class of 2026 President Anthony Cianflone posing with his awards.



Department Head Kristen Miracle presenting Aiden Dzierwinski the Senior Math Department Award.

RECOGNITION NIGHT

students. After the opening speech, Anthony Cianflone, Senior Class of 2026 President, led everybody in the Flag Salute.

Following that, several members of the Minnechaug Camerata performed the National Anthem. Afterwards, Hale gave a welcoming speech, crediting those present for embodying the "Vision of the Graduate" – also known as the school's core values.

"You have Challenged yourself, brought Honor for yourself and your family, you have Adapted to the expectations of our school, you have sought to Understand your peers and our world, and Grown during your time at Minnechaug physically, socially, emotionally, and academically," Hale said.

Several Juniors in the top 20% of their class were given "Book Awards" from colleges across all of New England,

some even receiving ones from Ivy League Schools.

Reflecting on her reaction to winning the Harvard Book Award was Naomi Griffin.

"I was very surprised to receive the award, but I felt an immense amount of pride for the faculty entrusting me with that honor. It was important to me because it revitalized my need to grow in my academic career especially after a hard junior year," Griffin said.

Most were also promised scholarships upon acceptance to the school, ranging from about \$4,000 to over \$100,000 over the course of four years. Other special awards included Department Awards – given for one student of each grade that displayed outstanding performance and interest in specific fields of study – and participation in outside opportunities, such as Leadership Conferences and Music Festivals.

In the Senior Ceremony's opening speech, Hale expressed great gratitude for the Wilbraham-Hampden Scholarship Foundation, who gave out 53 scholarships totaling \$95,000, exceeding \$1.6 million dollars in scholarships to graduating Wilbraham and Hampden residents since 1961. Among the numerous seniors who were able to receive several awards and scholarships at a time was Allison Demetri, recipient of seven awards in total.

"I applied to a lot of different scholarships. I tried to really branch out to do a lot of different things my senior year. So I'm proud I got recognized," Demetri said.

In terms of advice for students seeking scholarship opportunities, Demetri said, "Definitely get outside your comfort zone. Join clubs if you have free time, just be a part of your community, help whenever you can Apply to local scholarships."

Her words align perfectly



Lyric Nelson performing Louis Armstrong's "What a Wonderful World" to close the ceremony.

with Anthony Cianflone's – recipient of six awards – who said this.

"I would just say, continue what you're doing. Do what you're good at. Be passionate and be kind to everyone. It's your teachers and mentors awarding these awards," Cianflone said.

The evening was closed with a beautiful rendition of the Louis Armstrong classic "What a Wonderful World", performed by Lyric Nelson.

Hale also expressed great gratitude to the Awards Committee and their leaders for making the night possible. When asked what the evening meant to the students, Joanne White – Chairperson of the Awards Committee – expressed great sentiment in the importance of the event.

"Sometimes the kids who do all the right things and work really hard don't get enough recognition. They're overlooked and this is just to say, we are so proud of you. We have so much confidence in you, and we wish you the best because we know you're going to do really well out in the world when you leave us," White said.

Dine Out Day at Krazy Jakes is June 17

WILBRAHAM – The Wilbraham-Hampden Rotary Club will hold Dine Out Day at Krazy Jake's, 2537 Boston Road on Wednesday, June 17 all day according to Rotary Vice President Peter Salerno.

Krazy Jakes will donate 10 percent of their custom-

ers' meal check to the Rotary Club to support community services. The Dine Out event runs from 8 a.m. until 9 p.m.," said Salerno.

Diners must present a special coupon that they will receive upon entering the restaurant.

All proceeds from the

Dine Out will go for community services that benefit everyone from school children to senior citizens.

The Rotary Club's motto is "Service Above Self". For more information about the Dine Out Day call club Peter Salerno at 203-214-7954 or email PSalerno1@aol.com.

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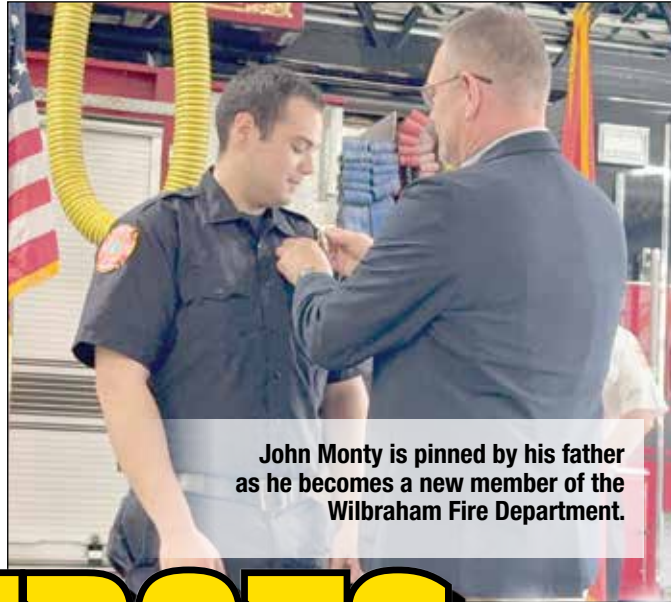
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SALE

REFRESHMENTS!



Fire Commissioner Ed Rigney shakes hands with Local 1847 President Jeff Kristek as he's presented with the David F. Bourcier Lifetime Achievement Award.



John Monty is pinned by his father as he becomes a new member of the Wilbraham Fire Department.



Kevin Derosé shakes hands with Anthony Arventos and Colin Morse, two of the heroes recognized for saving his life in September 2025.

HEROES Honored

HEROES from page 1

off-duty, when you put on that uniform and you put on that protective gear, that protective gear has been known to provide hazardous illnesses later on," Oliveira said. "And so, we want to recognize that and here in Massachusetts provide the resources back so that the people that put on the uniform always get the support that they need and don't have to worry about putting on those uniforms that might be causing some hazardous things."

Chief Michael Andrews said the fire department also received two separate grants recently, including the S.A.F.E. and Senior S.A.F.E. grants, which provide fire safety education to children and seniors.

"Also, last month, we received an equipment grant that had expired; it was a five-year grant. It expired last year. There was questions about whether it was going to be renewed or not, but it was renewed for one more year and we just received that grant," Andrews said. "That allows us to purchase much-needed equipment to keep us ready to respond."

Select Board Vice Chair Marc Ducey said, "It is remarkable that with the fire-fighting crew and the paramedic crew we have, the email we receive, I can dare say is 100% positive."

"The residents are just so thankful of the work you guys do day in and day out and the



Turley photos by Kristin Rivers
Fire Chief Michael Andrews provides opening remarks.

lifesaving measures you take every day on our residents to save their lives. It is really noteworthy the amount of email we do get on their behalf and that needs to be acknowledged," Ducey said.

Rigney noted the work of everyone from the fire department and commissioners to the community and family support.

"We have an exemplary calvary, chief, deputy chief, captains, Jeff Witek, who's the EMS Coordinator. We have a lot of fire educators, they go out in the community and do senior citizens, schools, 200 kids in Minnechaug know first aid/CPR and how to use a defibrillator," Rigney said. "The medics that work here, I was asking them tonight, to become a medic, they have 600 classroom hours, 250 to 300 clinical hours and 300

hours of ride time to be certified as a medic...1,200 hours of medical attention to take care of people in this community."

Rigney also thanked the Finance Committee, Select Board and Andrews for all their work on getting new equipment.

"It's a big team effort coming out of this building," Rigney said. "So, it's appreciated by the commissioners, by the townfolks and we just want to make sure that we give them the accolades that they deserve."

Andrews then recognized the honorees.

Forgues came to the fire department in October 2025 from the Palmer Fire Department and graduated from the Mass Fire Academy Crew Program. She is currently pursuing her paramedic certi-



Renee Forgues poses for a family photo after becoming a new member of the Wilbraham Fire Department.

fication and will be assigned to A Group.

Monty, meanwhile, joined in March and is currently a paramedic with AMR in Springfield and a member of the South Hadley Fire Department.

"He will be attending the Mass Academy Crew Program beginning in June and is scheduled to graduate in August. Beginning next week, he will be assigned to B Group," Andrews said.

Arventos and Morse were recognized for saving Kevin Derosé, who suffered a heart attack in September 2025. The others who assisted were Capt. Daniel Corliss and Firefighter Dane George.

their quick and dedication, I would not have made it to the Baystate Cav Lab to receive life-saving treatment. Our town is incredibly fortunate to have such committed and well-trained first responders."

Lastly, Noto was recognized for assisting the Three Rivers Fire Department on a cardiac arrest call in September 2025. He also received Firefighter of the Year.

"When the Wilbraham medics arrived on scene, the CPR work had been initiated. After attempting to establish an airway twice, Nick realized that there was an airway obstruction that was unable to be cleared by normal means. At this point, Nick successfully performed a surgical cricothyrotomy, which is an emergency life-saving procedure to establish an airway by creating a surgical opening in the front of the neck. By Nick successfully performing this high-risk, low-frequency intervention, this patient was able to get to the hospital alive and have the best opportunity for a successful outcome," Andrews said.

Andrews ended the ceremony with this.

"Like Ed said, everybody has a role in this department, whether you're an officer or the newest person on the department, and it's very critical of what they do and the overall success of this department," Andrews said. "Just people that step up and take on projects that help us make the great department that we are."

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Ambulance billing assistance office hours set

HAMPDEN - Residents of Hampden will now have direct access to assistance with ambulance billing questions through newly established office hours at Hampden Town Hall.

Beginning May 12, 2026, an Action Ambulance Service representative will be available on a recurring basis—the second Tuesday of each month—from 9 to 10:30 a.m. These sessions are designed to provide residents with clear, personalized guidance on ambulance billing and related insurance matters and will be located at Hampden

Town Hall in the Large Meeting Room.

Ambulance billing can often be complex and difficult to navigate. These office hours aim to simplify the process by offering one-on-one support in a convenient, local setting. Residents will have the opportunity to ask questions, review bills, and better understand their insurance coverage and payment options.

Services available during office hours include:

- Assistance understanding ambulance bills
- Guidance on insurance

coverage and claims

- Explanation of payment options
- General billing support and questions

No appointment is necessary, and all residents are encouraged to attend.

This initiative reflects a continued commitment to transparency, education, and community engagement by making knowledgeable resources more accessible to the public.

For more information, please contact: Mr. Charles Coolidge at 866-678-3200, Action Ambulance Service.

KINDNESS from page 8

a wedding, but they've now set a June date this year. Together she and Morgan have two dogs and two cats and explained why she fell in love with him almost immediately. When they were at dinner, he saw a man wearing a Veteran's hat eating alone at the next table and anonymously paid for his meal. He told the waitress not to tell him who'd done that, but just to thank him for his services. She knew right then they had the same values and he was definitely a 'keeper.' Her grandfather had been in the Navy so seeing him do this meant a lot to her. Morgan's grandfa-

ther was a firefighter as well as Morgan's twin sister, so they've both come from families who know the significance of helping others.

Personally, as many, she's paid for that cup of coffee for the person behind her. She's also bought items to donate such as toothpaste, soap and other personal items for the homeless.

She said she tries to make a difference every day in someone's life. It could be with a compliment to a complete stranger or someone she knows. She said a simple genuine smile can make such a difference in someone's day. She explained the feeling of doing Random Acts of Kindness outweighs the need-

ed recognition of doing them. It creates an inner elation and happiness for you as well.

It was sheer pleasure meeting such an inspiring young woman! It's always such a joy to share the goodness of people, we just need to take a moment to notice them.

If you'd like to share a Random Act of Kindness story or if this one has touched you, please contact me at bdt514@aol.com or 413-575-9385. Who knows, you might see your story, 'Just 'Cause' you witnessed, you did or maybe received something nice being done for you. See you soon with another Random Act of Kindness! ~ Barb



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Falcons close regular season with Hopkinton

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WILBRAHAM—A tale of two halves.

That's probably the best way to describe the non-league boys' lacrosse match between the Hopkinton Hillers and Minnechaug Regional Falcons.

The Falcons saw their 5-3 halftime lead slip away, as the Hillers enjoyed their long bus ride back to Eastern Mass following an 8-5 road victory, last Saturday.

"You always need to play well for the entire 48 minutes to win a lacrosse game, especially against a very good opponent," said Minnechaug head coach Mike Delia. "I thought my team played well during the first half. We just didn't

play with the same type of energy in the second half. I'm very disappointed with our effort."

The Falcons entered the Western Mass. Class A tournament with an 11-5 overall record. They were scheduled to face third-seeded West Springfield in a home semifinal match on Wednesday. They've also qualified for the Division 2 state tournament.

While none of the Hopkinton or Minnechaug players knew each other, Delia and Hopkinton varsity coach Dan Norton were teammates on the Springfield College Men's lacrosse team 16 years ago.

Please see **FALCONS**, page 12



Turley photo by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Thomas Hutcheson looks to make a pass.



Tucker Derosia hustles up the field.



Richard Hale readies a long pass.



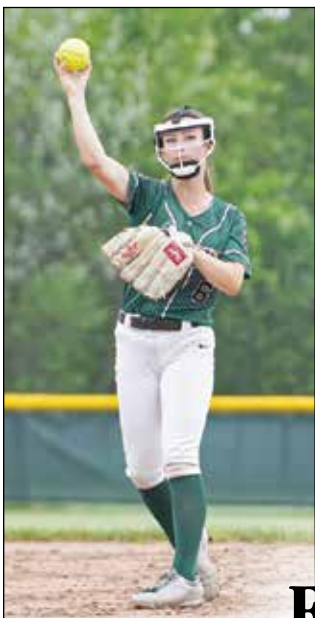
David Quinn dekes back as he sees pressure.



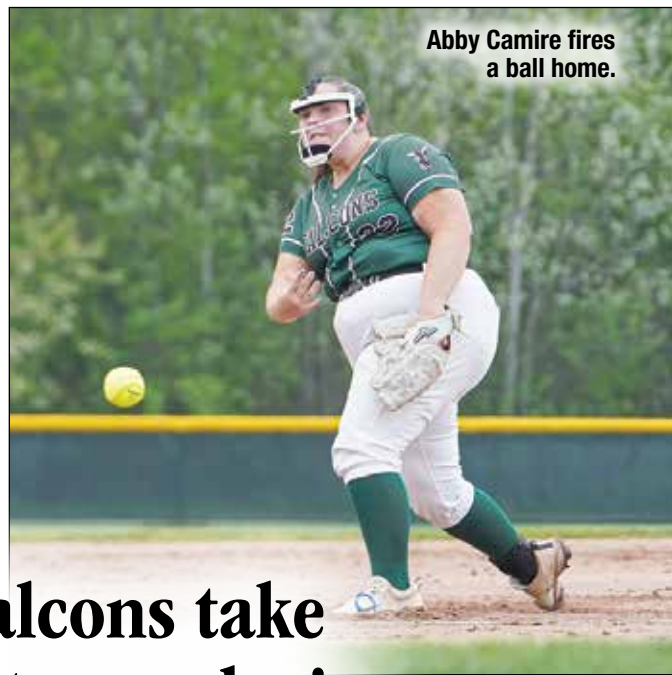
Andrew Dolaher heads for the goal.



Joey Woytowicz heads through the middle of the field.



Adrielle Sheridan makes a throw to first.

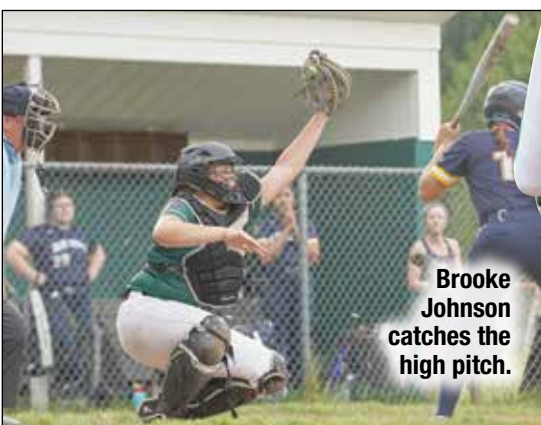


Abby Camire fires a ball home.

Falcons take first-round win over N'Hamp



Alexa Sherman sends a throw toward second.



Brooke Johnson catches the high pitch.

WILBRAHAM - Last Tuesday afternoon, Minnechaug softball defeated Northampton 5-0 to advance to the semifinals of the Western Massachusetts Class A Tournament. The Falcons scored three times in the third inning to pace the win. Ella Ferrentino and Brooke Johnson recorded two hits each, all doubles. Abby Camire pitched a complete game, scattering three hits in the shutout.

Turley photo by Sofia DiGrande
Brooklyn Rosas makes some contact.
LEFT: Veronica Quimet makes a long throw.

Chaug girls lacrosse defeated in WMass finals

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

SPRINGFIELD—Brian Calandrucchio has served as a Special Education teacher at Minnechaug Regional High School for the past fifteen years. Calandrucchio usually encounters the members of the Lady Falcons lacrosse team during the school day as they make their way through the hallways. Calandrucchio is also the first-year head coach of the East Longmeadow girls' varsity lacrosse team.

After splitting a pair of games during the regular season, the Valley Wheel League rivals faced each other for the third time this spring in the Western Mass. Class A finals.

The second-seeded Spartans captured the Western Mass. title for the third consecutive year following a 10-6 victory over the top-seeded Lady Falcons at Berte Field located on the Springfield Central campus,

last Tuesday night.

"I'm a Special Education teacher at Minnechaug and I do know about half of their players," Calandrucchio said. "There has been a friendly banter between us this spring, which has made this a fun rivalry game. Winning the Western Mass. title just feels unbelievable."

Calandrucchio, who hadn't been a varsity coach prior to this season, replaced Katie Moses, who's currently an assistant coach for the UMAss women's lacrosse team. Moses compiled a 52-13 overall record at East Longmeadow between 2019-25.

The final score of the two regular season meetings between East Longmeadow and Minnechaug was 12-10.

The Lady Falcons (12-6) won the first contest, which took place on their turf field at the end of March.

The Spartans celebrated a home win in the regular season finale.

Minnechaug advanced into the Class A champion-

ship match for the first time since 2023 after dispatching fourth-seeded Northampton, 15-4, in a home semifinal game held on May 17.

"The girls have worked very hard all season, and we just didn't play our best game tonight," said first-year Minnechaug head coach Thomas Brennan, who took over the reins from Luke Jenne. "This was our first time playing in the finals in a few years and East Longmeadow was the better team in tonight's game. We just need to clean up our mistakes."

The only remaining member of the Lady Falcons 2023 squad, which lost to Longmeadow in the Class A finals, is senior Aubrey Stachowicz.

The other seniors listed on this year's Minnechaug's varsity roster are Ava Luszczyk, Nolah McConnell, Lauren Rucki, and Nina Semanie, who's the starting goalie.

"The seniors are a little

Please see **GIRLS**, page 15

Thunderbirds win Game 4

Force deciding fifth game

SPRINGFIELD - The Springfield Thunderbirds staved off elimination for a third time this postseason, picking up a 2-0 shutout win over the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins last Thursday night at the Mass-

Mutual Center. Springfield win ties the series, 2-2, and forces a deciding Game 5 last Saturday at Mohegan Arena at Casey Plaza.

Early indications were that neither team's red hot goaltender was going to give up anything easy, as the Penguins' Sergei Murashov turned away 13 first period shot attempts from the

T-Birds. In turn, Georgii Romanov went a perfect 7-for-7 in the opening period for Springfield.

The Penguins appeared to take a 1-0 lead just past the 6:00 mark of the game when Harrison Brunicke jumped into a rush on the

Please see **T-BIRDS**, page 12

Former Wilbraham resident receives Life Saving Medal

WILBRAHAM – Bonnie Germain shared that her son, Matthew Drumheller, a Wilbraham resident and a graduate from Minnechaug Class of 2014 was recognized for heroism.

“On Wednesday May 13, my son, a Nantucket Police Officer, was awarded a Life Saving Medal for his quick action in executing lifesaving CPR and defibrillator,” Germain said. “My son is also an Afghanistan War Army Veteran. He received a medal for working with NATO during his deployment to Kabul Afghanistan in 2021. Matt is also a 2018 Cum Laude graduate with a bachelor’s degree in Law Enforcement from Westfield State University.” Germain lives in Chi-



Submitted photo
Nantucket Police Ofc. Matthew Drumheller, a resident of Wilbraham pictured in the center of the group photo, was recognized for heroism recently.

copee and her husband, Michael Drumheller, Matthew’s father, is a resident of Wilbraham.

T-BIRDS from page 11

right side and snapped a shot over Romanov into the top shelf. However, after officials gathered to converse, it was ruled that Romanov could not properly play his position, and the goal was disallowed.

The scoreless deadlock carried well past the midpoint of the game, with Springfield surviving a pair of Wilkes-Barre/Scranton power plays in the opening half of period two.

The T-Birds’ power play then made its presence known, snapping an 0-for-15

drought when Dillon Dube fielded a pass in the slot area and chipped a forehand shot over Murashov’s glove to make it a 1-0 Springfield lead at 16:14 of the middle stanza. It was Dube’s team-leading fifth goal of the postseason and third in the series.

The T-Birds continued to make life miserable for the Penguin offense as the game shifted into the third period. With Wilkes-Barre/Scranton unable to register more than seven shots in any period, Springfield took advantage to gain some insurance at 6:48 of the third when Akil

Thomas fired a pass in the slot to Thomas Bordeleau. Bordeleau’s shot deflected back to a trailing Marc-Andre Gaudet. The defenseman’s one-time attempt knocked a stick out of a defender’s hand, and the puck slowly elevated and trickled over the head of a perplexed Murashov, making it a 2-0 Springfield lead.

From there, Romanov took care of the rest, securing a Game 4 shutout for a second consecutive round and moving the T-Birds to a perfect 4-0 record following a loss in these playoffs.

FALCONS from page 11

“It’s always a lot of fun playing against one of my college teammates,” said Delia, who grew up in Wading River, N.Y. before moving to Western Mass. “I keep in touch with Coach Norton. We always exchange different ideas to help our programs grow. I’m 2-2 against him now.”

The series between the two high schools was set-up by former Minnechaug head coach Kyle Cloutier in 2022.

“Kyle was a senior at Springfield College when I was a freshman. Mike is two years younger than me,” said Norton, who has been coaching the Hopkinton boy’s lacrosse team for the past ten years. “Mike was a four year starter at Springfield and was an All-American. It’s always a great battle whenever we play Minnechaug.”

The two squads faced each other in a Division 2 round of 32 match two years ago. The Hillers pulled out an 8-4 home win in that contest.

They won’t be meeting again in this year’s state tournament, as Hopkinton (12-4) will be competing in the Division 1 tournament for the first time.

The Falcons, who were ranked 19th in the Division 2 state power rankings, held a 2-0 lead after the first three minutes of last Saturday’s game.

A little more than a minute into the opening period, Minnechaug junior Jake Hisgen received a pass from sophomore Thomas Hutchenson before firing a shot into the cage past Hopkinton junior



Turley photo by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Devin Purchas sends a pass away.

goalie Nate Spinale.

Hisgen added an unassisted goal less than a minute later.

With 8:26 remaining in the opening period, the Hillers broke the ice when Matt Lotti put a shot into the cage past junior goalie Richard Hale (9 saves).

The trio of sophomore Drew Jennings, junior Liam Faneuff, and Hutchenson scored the Falcons second period goals.

The Falcons held a 5-3 halftime advantage, as Ryan Dacey and Will Iantosca netted the two second period goals for the visiting team.

The only goal of the third

period was scored with 38.7 seconds left by Dacey, which cut Hopkinton’s deficit in half.

The Hillers tied the score a minute into the final period following a man-up goal from Lotti, which was unassisted.

Chase O’Donnell put a bounce shot into the cage giving the Hillers the lead for the first time at 6-5 with 9:50 left in regulation.

Hopkinton’s final two goals were from Will Bouvier and Lotti.

The Falcons had a couple of days off before beginning their journey in the postseason tournament.

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WILBRAHAM from page 1

and Times golf writer ran the 250th Anniversary Golf Tournament at the Country Club of Wilbraham.

Joan Paris, who was also a feature writer and the undercover gourmet for the paper, wrote a fourth history of Wilbraham with the long title "Wilbraham History and Culture Volume IV – 1963-2013, the Sestercentennial Edition – 250th Anniversary". The last time a history had been written was our town's Bicentennial, in 1963, covering the previous 200 years.

Richard Howell is just the latest Wilbraham historian to vividly explain colonial history. According to the "Historical Address at the Centennial Celebration in 1863" by Rufus Stebbins, Wilbraham sent a contingent of 34 "Minute Men" to what they called "The Lexington Alarm", led by Capt. James Warriner, Lt. William King and Lt. John Hitchcock.

Howell took part in the celebration starting April 19, 2025. When he got back to Wilbraham to talk at the Museum, he had a lot to say about the experience.

Howell has been very busy for the last year taking part in many historical events and there would be lots more to come. You can see that Wilbraham has a meaningful experience understanding and appreciating the importance of history. Just look at the popularity of historian Dave Bourcier's recent book "Historic Tales of Wilbraham" published last year.

The 250th Co-Chairs

The Wilbraham 250th Anniversary Committee at one time was made up of a whopping 17 members. We could barely all fit in Conference Room #1 at the Town Hall where we met for years ahead. Many took on sub-committee chairmanships of various events. Overseeing all those folks were the co-chairs former Selectman Kevin Moriarty and Peach Pageant head Patti Diotalavi, who are now retired but still active.

In her book, Joan Paris highlighted the committee which was originally formed by the Board of Selectmen in 2010. After the retirement of Moriarty and Diotalavi, some moved away, others have passed on and some are still active around town. They are Wendy O'Rourke, Jean Dirico, Roberta Albano, Virginia and Dave Barry, Mary Bell, Charlie Bennett, Steven DiNoia, Bernice Dixon, Richard Eisold, Nancy Haryasz, Chuck Higgins, Patricia O'Connor, Gary Petzold, Helene Pickett, Diane Testa and Donald Williams.

They came from all walks of Wilbraham life. Some were teachers and classmates from Minnechaug, others active at St. Cecilia's Parish, some worked on the Peach Festival Pageant, Parade and Fireworks. Some were history professors at Western New England University and Springfield Technical Community College. And some were experienced fundraisers.

Volunteers came from local schools, churches, the library, fire and police, Public Access TV, Wilbraham & Monson Academy, Masons, local legislators and just plain folks.

250th Events

I will quickly list the various 250 projects and events in no special order. The 2010 Annual Town Meeting appropriated \$10,000 to cover expenses. Before we got started Jennifer Guidara won the contest that established the identifying logo that was used all through 2013 and was applied to all kinds of promotions. Some items incorporated in the logo were cannons from the Knox Trail, a peach from the Peach Festival and berries representing Minnechaug.

The new logo was used to identify various keepsake items including calendars, pen and ink illustrations of locations such as The Village



The 250th Anniversary Committee spent almost three years organizing its events in 2013.
(Times photos by David Miles)



Co-chairs of the Wilbraham 250th Anniversary Committee Kevin Moriarty and Patti Diotalavi.

Store, Wilbraham & Monson Academy, United Church and historic Main Street. The Quinn family jewelry store sold many of those items.

Here is a short description of some of the more memorable 250th events.

Memorable Events

A town-wide tag sale took place in 2012 to get things started as a fundraiser. It was coordinated by Nancy Haryasz and Patti Diotalavi and was repeated in 2013. Participants received a map outlining each tag sale location throughout town.

One popular item that sold quickly was the 250th Anniversary Cookbook. And you don't see hometown cookbooks any more. The book was co-chaired by Virginia Barry and current Historic Commission Chairwoman Roberta Albano. Since Wilbraham's early days were dominated by family farms; many of them contributed to the book including my grandmothers Turkey Stuffing recipe.

Other local farm family recipes were included. Like the Rice's and the Greene's apples and peaches recipes. That cookbook was included in the new 2013 time capsule that was buried in front of the Civil War statue, while the 1963 capsule was dug up, displayed and sealed up again and buried behind the statue.

There is a well-documented photo taken by Dave Miles that shows Patti Diotalavi holding up a copy of the Springfield Daily News that was in the 1963 capsule that was opened in 2013 where the headline reads: "President Kennedy shot in Dallas". It was a good example of "living history". Western New England University History professor Don Williams was in charge of the Time Capsule Committee.



Wilbraham's birthday cake in Crane Park.

For folks to keep track of all the events that year Helene Pickett, a veteran of the Peach Festival, and her daughter Nancy Pickett produced a calendar for 2013 that features photos from Greg The Barber's window, Nine Mile Pond, Fountain Park Gazebo and the war memorials at Crane Park.



John Lovejoy

First Night

The year got off to a start with a bang with fireworks coordinated by Chuck Higgins on Dec. 31, 2012 with the selectmen Bob Boilard, Jim Thompson and Bob Russell providing messages of goodwill in our 250th year. While a birthday cake provided by Jim and Patti Diotalavi was on display in Crane Park a number of officials spoke until former selectman John Lovejoy came to the podium.

It was a cold night and I wrote the following for the next issue of the Times:

"Lovejoy was the keynote speaker in the kickoff of the town's observance of its 250th birthday as a town on a frigid New Year's Eve, 2013. By the time his speech was over he was almost frozen solid. A hundred years from now Lovejoy will still be remembered."

After Lovejoy's talk, Main Street was blocked off and everyone gathered in front of Rich Hall of the Academy and watched the fireworks.

For a fireworks evening, it was a very quiet event and even a little "creepy" for New Year's Eve. As soon as it was over everyone left to get warm.

On May 3, 2013 many townies put on their dancing shoes to the music of the Lester Lanin Orchestra as Rodney LeBreque and his wife Shirley hosted a dinner dance for the town in the Academy dining room along with a seven-course meal.

The Time capsule events took place next on May 5. Not surprising the container for the 1963 capsule was a stainless steel ice cream canister provided by Friendly's welded shut. Officials tried to pry it open to no avail so the Fire Department was called in and they cut through it with an electric saw.

The late Dave Barry was a popular selectmen and Minnechaug history teacher. The ideal person to chair the Golf Tournament May 20. He was the Minnechaug Golf Coach and wrote the column, "From Tee to Green" every other week in the Times. There wasn't much he didn't know about the game.

Barry organized the tournament and since the selectmen (Thompson, Russell, Boilard and Town Counsel Mike Hassett) in those days were golfers they made up an unofficial town foursome. Over 132 golfers took part and a good meal was enjoyed.

In keeping with the historical theme, the Wilbraham United Players performed the musical "1776", an account that led up to the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It was produced by Stacy Gilmore and Patricia Colkos and directed by long-time theater virtuoso Deb Trimble.

The Queens

Two students from Minnechaug, Diane Gerberich, Queen and Franchesca Parfumi, Queen Regent, were crowned at the 250 Anniversary Pageant. The girls were judged by out of town judges and reigned during the year's festivities.

Over 270 Wilbrahamites trekked over to Agawam to attend the Dinner Dance on June 1. It started with a cocktail party and evolved into a gourmet dinner and dancing to the Heritage Pops Orchestra.

As the emcee I had the opportunity to tell some of my bad jokes to the captive audience. St. Cecilia's Fr. Joseph Sorrano forgave me and gave the invocation. Dignitaries included Sen. Gale Candaras and Rep. Angelo Puppolo. They both presented the town with a copy of the original charter of incorporation of the town dated June 15, 1763.

Parade

The 250th Anniversary Parade was held June 23 from the center of town to Fountain Park with myself and Llewellyn Merrick the Grand Marshalls. If you remember the days of Greg the Barber, it was fitting that he should be the Town Crier of the Parade walking along Main Street ringing the bell in full costume initiating the appearance of the grand marshalls the Queen Diana Gerberich, Queen Regent Franchesca Parfumi and town officials.

59 Years Ago...

Memorial Program

Here is a news clipping reported by my mom, Ethel M. Bennett, who was the Wilbraham correspondent for the Springfield daily newspaper The Morning Union from the 1940s through 1970s. From a May, 1967 edition. "A Memorial Day Program will be held at the regular meeting of Wilbraham Grange tonight at 8 p.m. in Grange Hall.

Applications for membership will be accepted for the special degree to be conferred on Jun 12 at the New England Grange Building on the Exposition Grounds, West Springfield on June 16."



Grand Marshalls Charlie Bennett and Llewellyn Merrick.

Along came the police and fire chiefs, guest marchers, representatives from schools, churches and the Rotary Club drove Corvettes of different styles and years. The Minnechaug band took part and other pipe and kiltie bands, The stars of the show was the colorful Philadelphia Mummers, and then came the Melha Shriners and clowns. The reviewing stand was at Fountain Park where a Tanglewood-style picnic spread out and live music played all afternoon.

Hill Climb, Hunt, Road Race

Antique car collector George Holman and Wilbraham DPW staffer Paul Maguire, helped by Joan Paris were the organizers of the Wilbraham Hill Climb reenactment as part of the 250th Anniversary Celebration. Pre-World War I and II vehicles raced up Monson Road, part of the Vintage Sports Car Club of America. They expertly negotiated the 20 percent grade up the road. A rainy mist did not spoil the day. For "Foodies" it was a good day for there was The Taste of Wilbraham to show off town restaurants.

On August 11 committee member Diane Testa organized a Historic Scavenger Hunt that included 120 participants at staggered start times beginning at Mile Tree School. Participants had to follow clues to find important historic landmarks and answer questions about the sites.

A variety of locations were Adams and Glendale cemeteries, Grace Union Church, Sykes Tavern, The Old Meeting House, the bridge where the Knox Trail went through town, the Little Red School House and the Tinkham Road location of where the first church in town was built. First Place was awarded to the Lisowski Family and second place went to the Tessicini Family and third place to the Walting Family.

A five K road race was held on August 18 was renamed from the Peach Road Race to the 250th Anniversary event. It was sponsored by the Knights of Columbus and started at Soule Road School and looped around back to it. After the race runners and spectators continued on to Spec Pond to attend the Town Barbecue with Kevin Moriarty in charge.

Like they did every year for senior citizens the Rotary Club prepared and cooked the Town Barbecue at Spec Pond. Friendly Ice Cream Sundaes were served for dessert. The weather was perfect. The band Changes in Latitude entertained.

Homes Tour

Town Historian Carol Albano and the Historic Commission conducted an Historic Homes Tour on September 8 with about 100 people touring through Crane Park and north on Main Street through Rich Hall and the Headmas-

ter's House at Wilbraham & Monson Academy.

A second tour took place on October 13 along historic Maple Street starting at Grace Union Church.



Holding the newspaper that was buried for a half century.

Burying the Time Capsule

Ending the activities took place on November 17, 2017 when the new time capsule was buried where the previous one was ensconced. It took place at Crane Park with the Selectmen on hand. Kevin Moriarty and Patti Diotalavi thanked townsfolk for their support at events throughout the Sestercentennial Year. Entertainment was furnished by the Wilbraham & Monson Academy Chorus and the Minnechaug Jazz Band.

Sampsons Funeral Home provided a burial vault of Minnechaug-green as the container that stores 21st century artifacts in the time capsule to be opened in 2063. Its lid had a color photoengraving of the Civil War Monument in Crane Park and the American Flag.

Items from the last 50 years were stored inside. They included items from Wilbraham schoolchildren, photos from Dave Miles and souvenir items. I had the honor of enclosing the 250th Anniversary program booklet that appeared in The Wilbraham-Hampden Times.

Note: The best way to recall all the events that took place for the 250th Anniversary is to read the chapter, word for word, called "Sestercentennial 250th Anniversary Celebration" written by committee members Patti Diotalavi and Roberta Albano and edited by Joan Paris in the history book with the long name mentioned at the beginning of this column. My thanks to them for reminding me on behalf of my readers of how much we all appreciate this great town.

Editor Emeritus Charles F. Bennett is a member of the Historic Commission and a trustee of the Wilbraham Atheneum Society. Readers can contact him with comments or ideas for the column at cbennet4765@charter.net.

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GIRLS from page 11

bit disappointed because it's their final time playing in the Western Mass. tournament," Brennan said. "They've been a very good group this year, but we're a young team. We're now looking forward to playing in the state tournament."

The only time that the Lady Falcons held the lead in the championship match was at 1-0 following a free position goal by sophomore Sophia O'Connor two minutes into the opening period.

Six minutes later, the Spartans (13-4) tied the score with a free position goal from freshman Ava Pellegrino.

After winning the ensuing draw, East Longmeadow junior McKenna Witwer weaved between a couple of defenders before giving her team the lead for the first time with an unassisted goal.

In the closing seconds of the opening period, sophomore Kylie Marino made a steal before sprinting the length of the field. She passed the ball to junior Julia Illingsworth, who scored a goal with one second remaining on the scoreboard clock giving the Spartans a 3-1 advantage.

Minnechaug began the second period with another free position goal from sophomore Lillian Sergienko, which cut their deficit in half.

With the help of three more goals by Witwer and one each from senior Sabina Mackechnie and Illingsworth, the Spartans held an 8-2 halftime lead.

The Lady Falcons began the second half with an unassisted goal by sophomore Anna Taylor.

It turned out to be the only goal scored by either team during the third period.

The Spartans, who held possession of the ball for most of the last twelve minutes of the match, final two goals were scored by sophomore Lucy Parsons.

The Lady Falcons answered with goals from sophomore Peyton Lee, Taylor, and Stachowicz, but they couldn't get any closer than four points.

The two squads could possibly meet for the fourth time during the Division 2 state tournament, which begins this week.

Monthly Highlights for May at the Hampden Senior Center

Please call 566-5588 to RSVP for all events or register for classes at the senior center.

Lunch is provided by Greater Springfield Senior Services daily at 12:00 noon. Suggested donation is \$3 per meal. You must reserve lunch by 11 a.m. one day prior. Feel free to schedule reservations for the month.

May is Older Americans Month! Celebrate with us!

The theme of Older Americans Month 2026 is Champion Your Health, which focuses on prevention, wellness, and personal responsibility as cornerstones of healthy aging. It encourages taking an active role in managing your own health, advocating for yourself, accessing preventive care, and making informed decisions that support independence. Join us in highlighting the importance of evidence-based approaches, self-management, and community partnerships that empower individuals to lead their healthiest lives.

We have a lot of great programs for you this month.

Attend any of the Older Americans Month programs listed in our newsletter, and your name will be entered into a raffle prize drawing for a \$100 Big Y Gift Card, sponsored by Loomis Lakeside at Reeds Landing. The winner will be chosen at the end of May. The more events you attend, the more chances you have to win!

Drumming Concert

Friday, May 29, at 12:30 p.m. FREE!

The Hampden Senior Center Drumming Group will provide an energetic performance of music they have been learning over the past several months. Come and enjoy this wonderful performance.

Light refreshments sponsored by Bluebird Estates.

Lobby Learning

Don't have time to come in and sit for a long presentation? We understand! Lobby



Learning is aimed at welcoming businesses and organizations to provide helpful information to you. You are welcome to stop in to pick up information and speak one-on-one with representatives in the senior center lobby and stay for as long as you need to get your questions answered. Perhaps there is an organization you would like us to welcome? Please let us know.

May 28 - Hampden County Sheriff's Department

MEMORY CAFÉ

EVERY FRIDAY AT 10:15 a.m. Please call Wendy for more information.

Sponsored by: Friends of Hampden Senior Citizens & private donations.

The Memory Café is a welcoming place for individuals with memory challenges, along with caregivers, family, or friends, to gather in a safe, supportive, and engaging environment.

Here's what's happening at the Memory Café in May:

May 29 - Ukulele with Amy

Crafts with Kim:

Lighted Jar or Lantern with Fairies or Gnomes, your choice!

Registration is required. Tuesday, June 9, from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm.

Cost is \$7.00 for a jar or \$15 for a lantern. All materials will be provided.

Greeting Cards with Ellie - No class in May.

Next class will be Monday, June 22, from 1 to 3 p.m. Cost is \$3 per person. All materials are provided.

Come and discover endless possibilities for creating your own personal greeting cards. Learn new techniques each month. Class will meet on the 4th Monday of every month.

PWR! Moves Group Exercise Classes with Lisa Kern, OT, Reiki Master/ Holistic Therapist

Mondays from 9 to 10 a.m. Purchase 8 classes for a prepaid rate of \$65 or pay \$10 per class.

A Parkinson-specific exercise class that "makes function exercise" to keep you moving and doing more of what you want to do! As you practice, you will be challenged physically and cognitively while working on fitness goals: strength, balance, agility, aerobics, and flexibility. Exercises are designed to improve your fitness, counteract your PD symptoms, and increase your daily activity. This whole body, function-focused exercise class will push you to do more than you think you can in a fun, empowering, and enriched environment!

Shuffleboard - outside, or Cornhole - inside if the weather is bad.

Mondays at 10 a.m. All are welcome! No experience necessary!

Monday Ukulele with Amy Scott - Drop-ins are welcome!

Next 8-week session begins June 1 - July 27. Beginner Ukulele - Mon-

days, 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Cost is \$50 for the session if paid in full or \$7 per class.

Advanced Ukulele - Mondays, 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Cost is \$80 for the session or \$10 per class.

Common Threads Led by Joan Tompkins, PhD

Mondays, from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

Come and join this friendly group... to share memories and learn new coping skills of how to deal with loss, loneliness, and adapting to life changes. There is no charge to join.

Pickleball at Thornton Burgess, 85 Wilbraham Road

Wednesdays, 8 to 9:30 a.m., 9:30 to 11 a.m., or 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

This program is for anyone 60 and older who is new to the sport or at the beginner-to-advanced beginner level, who wants to learn the rules and practice playing.

"Come What May" Boutique... is open in our lobby for all to shop during normal business hours,

Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

We accept donations of new or gently used clothing, outerwear, accessories, and footwear.

All proceeds from Boutique sales will benefit the needs of the Senior Center.

HELP US STOCK OUR SHELVES with Hand Soap.

Thank you to those who donated tissues last month. Every month, we will target a different item to help fill monthly Personal Needs Bags.

Due to space constraints, please refrain from purchasing warehouse-sized items.

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Anyone is welcome to schedule appointments for these services.

Please call 566-5588 to schedule your appointments.

Coming in June:

"Blind Date with a Book" Tuesday, June 9, from 10 a.m. to Noon

Join us for a Kick-off meeting with Mary Grassetto to go over the rules. You will choose a book wrapped in brown paper, with only a simple description. You'll have an idea of the topic or genre, but that's all!

Thanks to Ellen Moriarty and her team from the Hampden Public Library for their participation in

choosing and providing an abundant selection of books for our fun new book club.

Please register now by calling the Senior Center. You must register so we have an ample selection of books.

The New England Air Museum (NEAM) will be here once again to present "The Crazy Man of the Air" Wednesday, June 17 at 10 a.m.

This engaging program explores the thrilling history of stunt pilots—from the first international air shows through the barnstorming era—while highlighting a local New England stunt pilot, Charles K. Hamilton of CT.

We also have a special guest, Bob Cipolli, a modern-day stunt pilot, who will share his experiences of competing in airshows.

Attendees will receive a discounted pass to visit the museum at a later date. In addition, NEAM is generously donating a pair of museum passes to be raffled off as a door prize for one lucky winner and their guest.

This program is FREE to attend. Sponsored by Pat Sherman from Edward Jones Financial.

Please call to reserve your spot today.

PUBLIC NOTICES

TOWN OF WILBRAHAM PUBLIC HEARING: VARIANCE REQUEST

(Posted 5/11/2026) The Wilbraham Select Board, serving as the Board of Health, will hold a hearing at Wilbraham Town Hall, 240 Springfield Street, Wilbraham, MA in the Select Board Meeting Room on Monday, June 15, 2026 at 7:05 p.m. to hear a Title 5 variance request from Zachery & Jessica Carr regarding their property at 6 Hitching Post Lane. The hearing will consider allowing a variance from the requirements of section 310 CMR 15.223 to permit the use of a single-compartment tank for a multifamily facility. All those wishing to comment will be heard. This hearing will be conducted in person and virtually (virtual meeting access info. available on Select Board's meeting agenda).

WILBRAHAM SELECT BOARD Board of Health 05/21, 05/28/2026

Town of Wilbraham WILBRAHAM HIGHWAY MATERIALS 2026 Notice of Invitation for Bids

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

Bid packages can be obtained from the Department of Public Works, Town Hall, 240 Springfield Street, Wilbraham, MA 01095 (413-596-2800 x208) on Tuesday, May 26, 2026. Bids in sealed, opaque envelopes shall be marked "Wilbraham Highway Materials 2026 Bid" and delivered to the above address by 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 11, 2026 where they will be publicly opened and read aloud by

the Chief Procurement Officer. All bids must be submitted on the official Standard Bid Form, included in the bid packages. Bids must include the signed Non-Collusion and Non-Discrimination paperwork. No bidder may withdraw his bid for a period of forty-five days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays, after the actual date of opening of the bids.

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

Tonya L. Capparello, P.E. Director of Public Works/ Town Engineer

05/28/2026

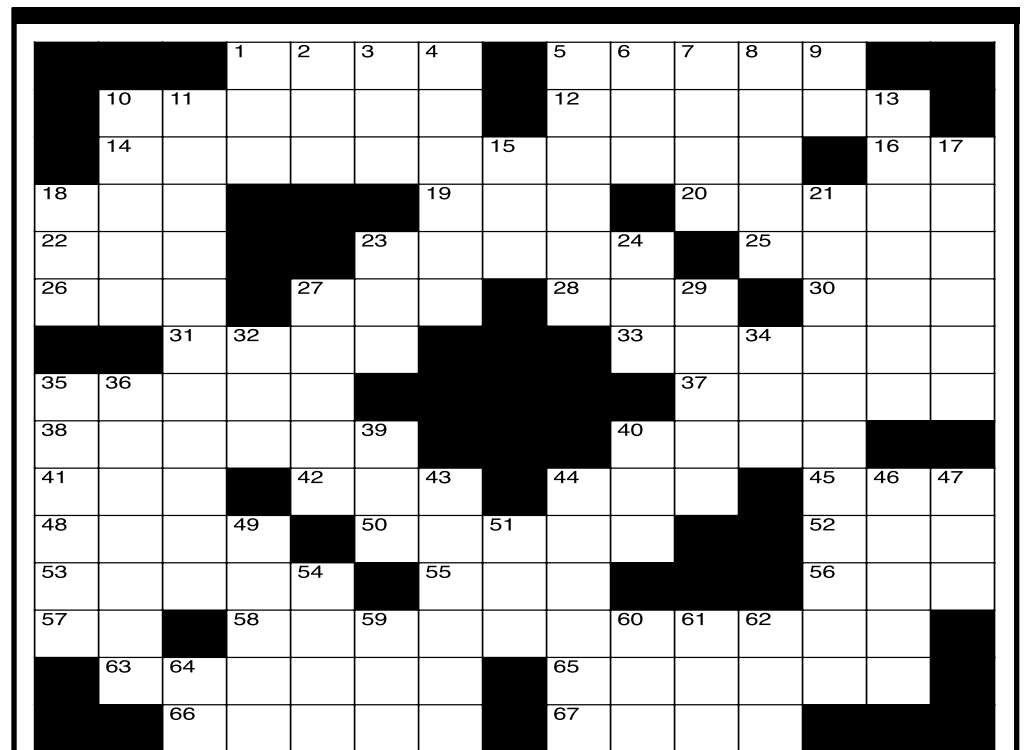
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5. Take ___ of it!
10. SW Asia peninsula
12. Beating wings to escape from a perch
14. One who revitalizes
16. Indicates position
18. Dishonorable man
19. Singer King Cole
20. Short-tailed marten
22. One point east (clockwise) of due north
23. The god of the underworld in ancient mythology
25. Dirt
26. Superconducting super collider
27. Not good
28. A way to sink
30. Unwell
31. Follow orders
33. Deep ravine

CLUES DOWN

35. Perfumery practice
37. Indian film director
38. Member of U.S. Navy
40. Wing-like
41. Very fast airplane
42. Slang for cigarette
44. Most cars still need it
45. Political war chest
48. Cools down
50. Diminish toward one end
52. Indigenous person of Thailand
53. Combined
55. Container
56. Expression of satisfaction
57. Thou
58. Return a favor
63. Go over once more
65. Removed
66. "Silence of the ___"
67. Comedian Rogen

1. Children's game
2. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
3. Own (Scottish)
4. Female follower of Bacchus
5. Subsidies
6. Protects from weather
7. Spanish municipality
8. Supermarket chain
9. Domain name
10. Semitic peoples
11. Designs anew
13. City associated with Jesus
15. Cool!
17. Bank employee
18. Central nervous system
21. Standardized piece of text
23. A type of fever
24. Baglike structure in a plant or animal

27. Threaten persistently
29. Aspirations
32. Baby's eating accessory
34. Actress Thurman
35. Turn into bone
36. One who saves you
39. Consume
40. Swiss river
43. A part of a river where the current is very fast
44. Categories
46. Expressed amazement
47. It's important in respiration (abbr.)
49. Greek war dance
51. Bland, semi-liquid food
54. Regard in a specified way
59. Taxi
60. Naturally occurring solid material
61. Feline
62. Post-burning residue
64. Elevated railroad



HOMETOWN

▪ EXTERIORS ▪

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