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JUNE 12, 2025

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## MINNECHAUG Class of 2025 GRADUATES



Full story and photos on page 15.

Salutatorian and Class of 2025 Communications Officer Antonia Mascaro leads the graduates as they walk into Symphony Hall in Springfield on Graduation Day.



Photo courtesy of Edward Kim

David Kim with his completed Eagle Scout project of a bench on the 12 Mile Brook Trail in Wilbraham.

### Kim completes 12 Mile Brook Trail bench for Eagle Scout project

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - David Kim, a member of Wilbraham Scout Troop 359, has recently completed his Eagle Scout Project of a bench installed at 12 Mile Brook Trail.

Kim explained the bench was to help hikers and walkers have a place to rest while on the trail, which there was not one before.

"We started off by getting this Eagle Project approved by the Eagle Board--which is basically the committee that usually says, 'You're okay to build this project' and allows you to go follow through with the project. So, after I got that approved, I fundraised all the money," Kim said. "I bought this bench, I cleaned it up, repainted it, cleaned off the rust and I restored it back and I was able to move those bench components to the trail and build it on the trail."

Kim also had reached out



Turley photo by Kristin Rivers  
David Kim in his Wilbraham Scout Troop 359 uniform.

to the Open Space Committee ahead of the project to find out their needs or what they needed help with, which led to the suggestion of the bench and later review of the

proposal by the troop and the committee.

He enjoyed the opportunity "to make something and help the community," having support from his friends, troop and parents of troop members to get the bench together.

"So, working together with my friends and building this actual bench was really fun. It was one of my first projects, so it was really nice and I had a really fun time building it," Kim said. "I also enjoyed the leadership opportunities it gave me and it helped me grow better as a leader. All of that was very enjoyable in my opinion."

The community support meant a lot to Kim.

"I helped out in previous Eagle projects too, so being able to have people come--especially with my friends who are in my patrol help me--it was really fun and it made me feel like I was being sup-

Please see **EAGLE**, page 11

### Meet the candidates for the Selectboard

Two to run in special election for open seat

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - There will be two candidates running for the open seat on the Selectboard in the June 23 special election.

The seat opened after the resignation of former Selectboard Member Craig Rivest.

The candidates are Erik Vanderleeden and Kathy Pessolano.

Erik Vanderleeden

Vanderleeden has a background in clinical engineering, explaining how the field "demands precision, systems thinking and cost-effective problem-solving."

"I am responsible for managing complex systems, ensuring compliance with rigorous safety standards and making high-stakes decisions that balance quality, performance and budgetary constraints. These are the same skills needed for sound governance," Vanderleeden said. "My work has trained me to analyze data, evaluate technology investments and manage long-term capital planning--experiences that directly translate into municipal financial stewardship. I understand how to prioritize resources, identify efficiencies, and plan for future needs without overburdening taxpayers."

For Vanderleeden, a commitment to "maintaining essential services while keeping taxes under con-

Please see **CANDIDATES**, page 8



Erik Vanderleeden



Kathy Pessolano

### 3.3 Miles for Change takes place June 14

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - The community will gather at Fountain Park, rain or shine, on Saturday, June 14, for the 3.3 Miles for Change Walk to remember Sima and Dylan Pariseau.

The inaugural event honors the memory of two com-



Photo courtesy of Sophie Pariseau

The 3.3 Miles for Change Walk on June 14 will honor the lives of two lifelong Wilbraham residents and pillars of the community, Dylan and Sima Pariseau.

munity pillars taken too soon and also supports survivors of domestic violence, with the proceeds benefiting the YWCA of Western Massachusetts and directly supporting its domestic violence assistance and awareness programs.

Registration opens at 9 a.m. with the walk kicking off at 10 a.m., with the registration fees at \$33 for indi-

vidual participants, \$12 for children 12 and under, Fenway's Friends (Dog Registration) at \$10 and Donation Only at any amount.

Also, participants will receive an exclusive 3.3 Miles for Change t-shirt, with the first 500 registrants guaranteed one. The first 100 dog participants, meanwhile, will receive a special 3.3 Miles for Change dog bandana.

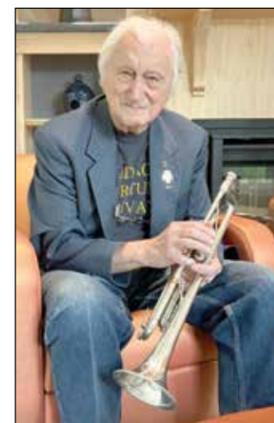
After the event, a community raffle will be held with cash and Venmo accepted.

Sophie Pariseau, Sima's daughter and Dylan's sister, organized the event and explained it will not only honor the legacies of her mom and brother, but raise awareness for domestic violence.

"We wanted to create something to memorialize Sima and Dylan, but we wanted it to be more than that. We wanted to use this opportunity to do what we could to prevent this from happening to someone else. Even if we can help just one person, it will all be worth it. Sima and Dylan would have wanted to help others, so that is what we are doing on their behalf," Sophie Pariseau said.

Since the loss of Sima and Dylan, the community has rallied around Pariseau, her

Please see **CHANGE**, page 4



Turley photo by Patricia Sullivan  
Ciccio Santucci with the trumpet he once loaned to his friend, American jazz legend Chet Baker.

### Maestro in our Midst

By Patricia Sullivan  
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - At age 86, trumpet player Francesco "Ciccio" Santucci still plays the music he loves for four hours every day in the Wilbraham home he shares with his wife, Susele Luzi.

"With the trumpet the most important thing is the muscles here," he says, gesturing toward his mouth. "I have to do it to keep in shape."

Please see **MAESTRO**, page 11

# MRHS Student Council hosts Pickleball Tournament

By Noelle Hisgen  
Correspondent

HAMPDEN - This May, the Minnechaug Regional High School Student Council hosted their first-ever pickleball tournament at GreatHorse.

It was an evening of competition and fun as people of all ages battled it out to win the bracket of 40 teams. There were also food trucks supplied by Rice's Fruit Farm and Thai Chili, raffle baskets, and various yard games to participate in when teams were not competing.

The winners of the tournament were Paul Diehl and Ethan Purcell, also known by their team name as "Paul Dill & Ethan Pickle." Second place was Kelly Balog and Matt Beaudin, also known as the "Bocheese."

Third place was Nick Fopp and Thomas Tetrault, also known as "The Kitchen Nightmares."

The Student Council raised over \$1,000 and all of the proceeds went directly to the CJ Cronin "Live for Others" Memorial Scholarship, named after Minnechaug Class of 2022 graduate CJ Cronin. Cronin was an active member of Student Council and also the Class of 2022 Council throughout his high school career.

"We wanted to give his scholarship to honor him and the time he gave to bettering his class and school community. CJ was a wonderful young man who always had a smile on his face," Abigail

O'Sullivan, one of the Minnechaug Student Council advisors, said.

The money raised from the tournament went to the scholarship, with the scholarship awarded to Minnechaug senior Taylor Labadorf. Labadorf will be continuing her education at Western New England University this fall.

It was a wonderful day for everyone to get outside and play some pickleball, as well as socialize with all of their friends in a competitive nature. Most importantly, it was all for an important cause, and was able to give back to others with a scholarship in honor of someone who has made such a large impact on the Minnechaug community.



Photos courtesy of the Minnechaug Student Council  
The Minnechaug Student Council stands together in front of a beautiful sunset at GreatHorse in Hampden.



Jordan Miller and Anna O'Toole talk to each other, excited for the next round of pickleball.



The winners of the first pickleball tournament, Ethan Purcell (Left) and Paul Diehl (Right), hold up their trophy prize.

## Kick Off School Vacation with Rock into Summer!

General Gist Live at Thornton Burgess Middle School

HAMPDEN - Celebrate the official start of summer with an evening of music, food, and family fun at Rock into Summer on Thursday, June 19, 2025, featuring a live performance by local favorite General Gist at Thornton Burgess Middle School.

Grab your blankets, lawn chairs, and friends for a community celebration under the open sky. Enjoy an energetic live show, delicious food offerings, and a great cause—all in one evening.

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Event Details: Location: Thornton Burgess Middle School, Thursday, June 19, 2025; Parking Lot Opens: 5 p.m. Live Music Begins: 6 p.m. Food & Refreshments: Ferrindino Maple, Batch Ice Cream, Mountain View Restaurant

Admission: Free to attend - donations accepted on site to support the Recreation Association of Hampden (RAH).

Note: Weather dependent. There are no rain dates for this event.

Don't miss this chance to kick back, enjoy the summer vibes, and support a great community cause. Whether you're coming for the music, the food, or the fun, Rock into Summer has something for everyone!

For updates, check us out on Instagram: hampdenparksma or Facebook: Hampden Ma Parks & Rec

### About RAH:

The Recreation Association of Hampden is the fundraising arm for all recreation programming for the Town of Hampden. The RAH helps support the mission of Hampden Parks and Recreation in promoting healthy, inclusive, and fun recreational opportunities for the Hampden community.

## History of Emancipation & Juneteenth at the Wilbraham Library

WILBRAHAM- Author & historian Christopher Daley will present The History of Emancipation & Juneteenth at the Wilbraham Pub-

lic Library on Monday, June 16 at 6 pm. This engaging presentation includes key events and milestones in the journey to emancipation, such as the

abolitionist movement, the election of Abraham Lincoln, and the Emancipation Proclamation. Daley will also trace Juneteenth's evolution from

a local Galveston celebration to its recognition as a national holiday.

This free event is sponsored by the Wilbraham

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




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## Hampden Community Garden accepting plot reservations

HAMPDEN - Hampden Community Garden is now accepting plot reservations for 2025.

The 20'x20' plots are tilled, staked, and ready for your flower and vegetable seeds and plants. For the \$20 fee, gardeners will enjoy having water and hoses on site, ample parking and easy access.

The garden is located beyond the parking lot at Green Meadows School on North Road. To secure your plot, contact Clark Kadis at ckadis13@gmail.com.

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The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph.

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

# Wilbraham Lions Club hosts food drive outside Big Y

By Angelina Acevedo  
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - On May 31, the Wilbraham Lions Club held a food drive at the Wilbraham Big Y.

This food drive gathered nonperishable food items for the Community Survival Center, located on Main Street in Indian Orchard. The Wilbraham Lions Club partnered with them and Big Y to bring food to people in the community who are in need.

Suggested donations included grain and multigrain cereal, canned vegetables, 100% fruit juice, canned proteins, canned fruit, peanut butter and soups.

Don Riddle, president of the Wilbraham Lions Club, explained how they are "world-wide, and one of the largest service organizations in the world," and how "there's a Lions Club in every country in the world, we are just one segment."

"This is our fourth time working with the Wilbraham Big Y to help the Community Survival Center. It's always been a generous turnout, it's worthwhile coming back, and it benefits Big Y as well. We put our heads together to try to come up with ways we can benefit the local communities," Riddle said.

Riddle then explains why the Lions Club started these food drives.

"Food has become more expensive, and some people just can't afford it, which is why we try to help. I just can't imagine a kid going to bed hungry, it makes me sad," Riddle said.

The Wilbraham Lions Club not only takes pride in helping hungry families, but also people who can't afford prescription eyeglass wear.

"People mostly know us for donating old eyeglasses. We have experts who refashion old glasses and we send them to Third World countries. It's our main feature," Riddle said.

There are boxes around Wilbraham at the post office, the Scantic Valley YMCA, the library, town hall and the re-



The Wilbraham Lions Club was out in full force on May 31 at Big Y for a food drive to support the Community Survival Center.

cycling center where people can drop off old glasses and make a difference.

The food drive was an overall success, with it being their most charitable yet and exceeded expectations.

"People come here thinking about groceries, which isn't the most exciting thing and is usually a chore. They come in grumpy, but then we ask if they would like to donate on the way out. When they donate, the grouchy people become full of smiles," Riddle said.

The Lions Club was able to collect many non-perishable food items that Saturday, including pasta, red sauce, canned vegetables, soup, canned tuna as well as toothbrushes, toothpaste and men's and women's deodorant. There was also the option of cash donations, but food was preferred for this drive.

"Anytime we do events like these, it's great to get together with fellow club members. It's also great to strengthen the community spirit," Riddle said.

The Lions Club was at Big Y from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. col-



The donations coming in from the community to support the food drive.

lecting donations for the food drive.

"While the summer is our slower season in terms of events, we were glad to see so much participation from the community. It really makes a difference for people in

need," Riddle said.

The Community Survival Center later thanked the Lions Club for their support in a Facebook post on June 2, sharing 1,025 pounds of food was collected.

# Wilbraham Walk Turns Tragedy into Action:

## 3.3 Miles for Change Honors Sima and Dylan Pariseau

WILBRAHAM - The community is invited to participate in the inaugural 3.3 Miles for Change walk, an event honoring the lives of Sima and Dylan Pariseau, and supporting survivors of domestic violence.

The walk will take place on Saturday, June 14 at Fountain Park, 883 Tinkham Road, Wilbraham, MA, with registration opening at 9 a.m. and the walk commencing at 10 a.m., rain or shine.

Sima, 56, and her 27-year-old son, Dylan, tragically lost their lives on June 16, 2024, in an act of domestic violence. This event aims to honor their memory by raising awareness and funds to support others affected by similar tragedies.

Across the United States, nearly one in two women and more than 2 in 5 men have reported experiencing intimate partner violence at some point in their lives. All proceeds will benefit the YWCA of Western Massachusetts, directly supporting its domestic violence assistance and awareness programs.

Sophie Pariseau, Sima's daughter and Dylan's sister, is hopeful the event will raise awareness and help other families.

"This walk is my way of standing up, not just for my mom and brother, but for every family, every survivor, and every victim who has not yet found their voice, and every life we still have the power to protect," said Sophie Pariseau. "I am not naive enough to think that we can change the landscape of domestic violence, but I do know that by coming together, raising

awareness, and sharing Sima and Dylan's story, we might help even just a few find a way out, or avoid the heartbreak that my family has faced. My hope is that this walk becomes and is remembered as a symbol of hope, support, and change in our community."

Event Details:

- Date: Saturday, June 14, 2025
- Time: Registration at 9 a.m.; Walk begins at 10 a.m.
- Location: Fountain Park, 883 Tinkham Road, Wilbraham, MA
- Distance: 3.3 miles
- Registration Fees:
  - Individual Participant: \$33
  - Children 12 and Under: \$12
  - Fenway's Friends (Dog Registration): \$10
  - Donation Only: Any amount

The 3.3-mile distance and \$33 registration fee hold special significance, representing Dylan's beloved baseball jersey number, 33. This symbolic gesture underscores the personal connection and the community's commitment to honoring his legacy.

Participants will receive an exclusive 3.3 Miles for Change T-shirt, with the first 500 registrants guaranteed a shirt. Additionally, the first 100 dog registrants will receive a special 3.3 Miles for Change dog bandana.

Attendees are encouraged to stay after the walk for a community raffle, with both cash and Venmo accepted for participation.

By joining the 3.3 Miles for Change Walk, participants contribute to a cause that ex-

tends beyond remembrance. The event seeks to provide crucial support to survivors of domestic violence and to raise awareness about the pervasive issue affecting countless individuals and families.

About the YWCA of Western Massachusetts:

The YWCA of Western Massachusetts is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. Their domestic violence programs offer shel-

ter, counseling, and advocacy services to individuals and families in need.

Registration and Donations:

To register for the walk or to make a donation, please visit: <https://milesforchange.redpodium.com/33-miles-for-change>

For more information, media inquiries, or general questions, please contact Sophie Pariseau at 3.3milesforchange@gmail.com.

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## Fire Station renovation/expansion on special election ballot

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - Voters will have an opportunity to vote on the proposed renovation/expansion of the fire station during the June 23 special election.

This comes after voters approved moving the project forward by a two-thirds vote during the May 12 Annual Town Meeting. This special election vote is the second step in moving the project forward and would approve the Proposition 2 1/2 debt exclusion override.

The overall project cost is \$8.3 million.

Residents can view the project schematic plans, construction cost estimates and the project presentation on the fire department's page at [www.hampdenma.gov/210/Fire-Department](http://www.hampdenma.gov/210/Fire-Department).

Lt. Mark Barba, chairman of the Fire Department Building Committee, appreciated the town's support on the project.

"We were just happy to see the support that we got and we're just looking forward to getting people out there to support it on June 23 so we can get the project underway," Barba said.

Barba said the fire station is also open for anyone to stop by and take a tour to learn more about the proposed project plans. There will also be a video out soon to provide a virtual tour option.

"Stop by during the day, there's always somebody there, plus when we're on a call. Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. or they can certainly call the station and arrange a time that we could always have someone come up," Barba said. "Whether it's one person or 10 people, we're happy to spend as much time with anybody that wants to go through and let us show them the current station."

For those who weren't able to attend the Annual

Town Meeting, Barba provided an overview of what the project will entail, explaining the current station measures 5,000 square feet comprised of an original station with two small additions over time.

"The renovation/expansion project would be adding another approximately 5,000 square feet on the first level for apparatus space, adding decontamination area, bigger training area, separate area for gear to be stored and then an unfinished second area--second-floor level--for future needs of the department and will be used as storage, for now, is the plan," Barba said. "But, trying to be proactive and come up with a project that takes what the needs are for today but also look at the needs for the future."

On the design the committee came up with, Barba added it "lends itself to an upper area just for geometry and structural reasons."

"So, it's like an attic, so it's a perfect spot to have storage/potential for future use," Barba said.

With the decontamination area, Barba explained it creates a separate space for firefighters when they return from a fire that is away from the work area.

"As you know, cancer in the fire services is high and everything and anything we can do to keep that bad stuff away from where you have to work is good," Barba said.

Another huge part is space.

"Current fire apparatus is twice the size of what fire apparatus was when (the) station was built in the mid-60s. So, we don't have any room between vehicles and it's an extremely dangerous place to work, so clearance around the apparatus that will all be accomplished with building the new addition--if you will--and remodeling the existing station," Barba said.

Barba also noted call volumes have increased since the 1960s.

"The town had somewhere

around 750 houses. In 2022, we've got over 1,900 houses. In the mid-'60s, we had average around 60 to 70 calls a year. We're up to around the 500 calls a year now," Barba said.

Safety is also a component of this project, including bringing it up to ADA compliance and proper building codes along with getting rid of asbestos.

"Nothing is ADA-compliant at all in that building whatsoever. It's really just bringing it up to today's standards," Barba said.

He's also aware of the cost.

"We're very conscious of the cost. We know it's a lot of money, it's a big project. But again, it's a town building that hasn't seen any upgrades or any monies towards it in many, many years," Barba said.

On the firefighters, Barba explained after the 8 to 4 shift, the fire department relies on volunteers to keep the department running.

"We need to recruit people, we need to get people in there, we need to have (a) safe place for people's gear to be stored and we don't really have that right now. Attracting new members is certainly critical and important to our department," Barba said.

If approved on June 23, Barba said the next steps would be putting together an RFQ to get an owner's project manager or OPM, followed by the plans finalized and putting it out to bid.

"That might take us certainly through the rest of this year, so in an ideal world, we would be able to start construction in the spring which is seven or eight months away from today," Barba said.

The building committee, he added, will also meet with the Selectboard for their direction and to share the next steps.

"We're ready to go to hit the ground running if does get passed," Barba said.

## Old Post Road Orchestra holding summer shows

WILBRAHAM - Under the musical direction of Alexandria Black, the Old Post Road Orchestra will present our summer program titled, "The 100 Best Movies of All Time."

You'll hear lots of favorite movie themes as well as some less familiar ones. Also featured with the orchestra is a young vocal soloist, Jerome Begley (age 8). We are excited to have him with us!

OPRO will return to Memorial Hall, 198 Main St, Monson at 7:30 pm on Friday, June 20. This concert is in collaboration with the Monson Arts Council and sponsored in part by a grant from the Monson Cultural Council, a local agency, which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

On Sunday, June 22 at 3 pm, OPRO will return to

Loomis Lakeside at Reed's Landing, 807 Wilbraham Rd, Springfield. This concert is dedicated to the memory of longtime OPRO member and Reed's Landing resident, Helen Kiddess.

Generously supported in part by Loomis Communities, the concert will take place outdoors and is therefore weather dependent with no rain date.

### CHANGE from page 4

father Mark and their family through the "Follow Your Passion" Science Scholarship in Dylan's memory and Sima's friends honoring her in a Memorial Toast and Vigil. That community support then and since means everything to her.

"This is something my dad and I talk about all the time. We are moved by our community day in and day out. It feels like every single day since this nightmare, we have learned of someone doing something to honor them or help support us. Whether that be donating to their causes, sharing a story about them, creating a story in their honor, and so much more. Not only does the community respond to our asks for support, but they create their own ways, as well," Sophie Pariseau said.

One of those ways, she shared, was the Doyle Family awarding her brother the Ryan J. Doyle Award posthumously at the Western Mass Baseball Hall of Fame induction on June 5.

"We have been absolutely floored by how this community just keeps giving. I don't mean to say that I am shocked, as I know how supportive this community is, but going through something like this, you just become extra grateful. I say it almost every day, but I do not know where I would be in all this without this community," Sophie Pariseau said.

Mark Pariseau shared he was proud of his daughter for

organizing the walk.

"This walk for me represents the amazing things that Sophie is capable of. Since she was a young child, anything she has done has been done at 100%. Her efforts and courage are fully on display," Mark Pariseau said.

The community support also touched his heart.

"Community is everything be it 600 people or your close-knit group of people. Everyone I think needs to feel like they belong somewhere," Mark Pariseau said.

On what daughter and father miss most about Sima and Dylan, they shared this.

"Honestly, I don't think I can answer this one," Sophie Pariseau said. "I just don't even know where to begin. And maybe that's a cop-out. But how can you fit into a few words, what you miss the most about two people who meant more to you than anything in this world? My dad and I have never loved anything as much as we love them, and we never will."

"My thoughts about Sima go back to our children. A fantastic mother and friend and her unwavering faith in people. What I miss most about my beautiful son Dylan is his presence in my life, a large part of me is missing," Mark Pariseau said. "They say when a wife loses her husband, she is a widow, a husband loses his wife he's a widower. There isn't a name for losing a child, it's the harshest dose of reality any parent can face."

Sophie Pariseau also stressed the importance of raising awareness for domestic violence.

"I remember last year when the news broke, I heard a lot of people make statements such as, 'things like this don't happen in Wilbraham.' I thought to myself, domestic violence doesn't care what town we're in. It doesn't care what our names are. How old we are. Domestic violence doesn't discriminate. The real issue? Domestic violence is (often) silent. That's why you hear incredulous people wondering how such a thing could happen in this town or that town or to this person or that person," Sophie Pariseau said. "The reality of it is, it's happening everywhere. At a terrifying rate. Most of us could probably list at least a few signs of domestic abuse if we were to be asked. Yet, there is something more important than recognizing the signs - and that is recognizing what could happen because of those signs. It's not so simple to walk away. It can take a person nine times, on average, to fully leave a volatile relationship."

She added the YWCA of Western Massachusetts is one resource people can turn to for help.

"The YWCA of Western Massachusetts is here not only to support survivors coming off of escaping domestic abuse, but to also proactively teach our community's children what healthy relationships look like. Our community needs these resources, because the truth is, things like this do happen in Wilbraham," Sophie Pariseau said.

Mark Pariseau also stressed education.

"For me, I think the biggest takeaway is for people to be more educated in recognizing the signs of abuse," Mark Pariseau said.

Sophie Pariseau said

outside of this event, there are other ways to continue honoring Sima and Dylan's memory.

"The town knew my mom as 'the town walker.' Think of her as you walk the sidewalks in Wilbraham. Especially on Main Street. Think of her as you go to Rice Fruit Farm, where my mom went to get an ice cream every Sunday night. Her loved ones aptly nicknamed her, Sunday(ae) Sima. Think of her as the hydrangeas bloom, for everyone knew the TLC my mom put into her beautiful home, especially her flower beds," Sophie Pariseau said. "Think of my brother, Dylan, as you look out at the baseball diamond at Spec Pond or Minnechaug, where I swear my brother spent more time than home. Think of him as you play pickleball. Don't be afraid to dive into the bleachers just to get that one more point. Think of Dylan as you think of courage and of bravery. My brother protected my mother through the very last seconds of his life, and there is no better way to honor him than to remember him for the hero that he is. If you think of one, think of the other, as they will always be together, souls intertwined."

Mark Pariseau shared this.

"This is a difficult one for me because life just keeps moving, so I would say, try to do something positive every day, even if it's just something small, it can build a bridge to possibly something bigger," Mark Pariseau said. "Try and win a challenge every day. Plant something beautiful and think of Sima, play catch with your son or daughter no matter what age it can be a cathartic experience."

On what she wants the community to know ahead of the event, Sophie Pariseau said this.

"I just want to thank everyone for donating, sponsoring and participating. It feels like we have the whole town participating, and seeing the eagerness to be involved has meant the world to me. Please come ready to walk, to enjoy some live music, to eat a delicious lunch, and to participate in our raffle! We will also have a flower truck selling fresh-cut flowers, and Kendra Scott will be present at the event for custom jewelry pieces or purchases from our 3.3 Miles for Change signature collection," Pariseau said. "We hope that residents are able to see this event as a happy day where they can contribute to positive change in our community, whether that be through walking, buying a bouquet of flowers or a pair of earrings or just through sharing a story. There are so many ways to help! Every cent will go to the YWCA of Western Massachusetts, and every cent helps!"

Mark Pariseau's message was this.

"Give the walkers a toot of the horn, give a shout-out to them as they walk by your house. Mostly, just recognize this was their community and they will always be here, they loved unconditionally and as they look down on the beautiful work their daughter and sister has accomplished they can be proud of her and their community," Mark Pariseau said.

To register or donate, visit: <https://milestoneforchange.redpodium.com/33-miles-for-change>

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**SUNDAY, JUNE 22 | 3:00 PM**  
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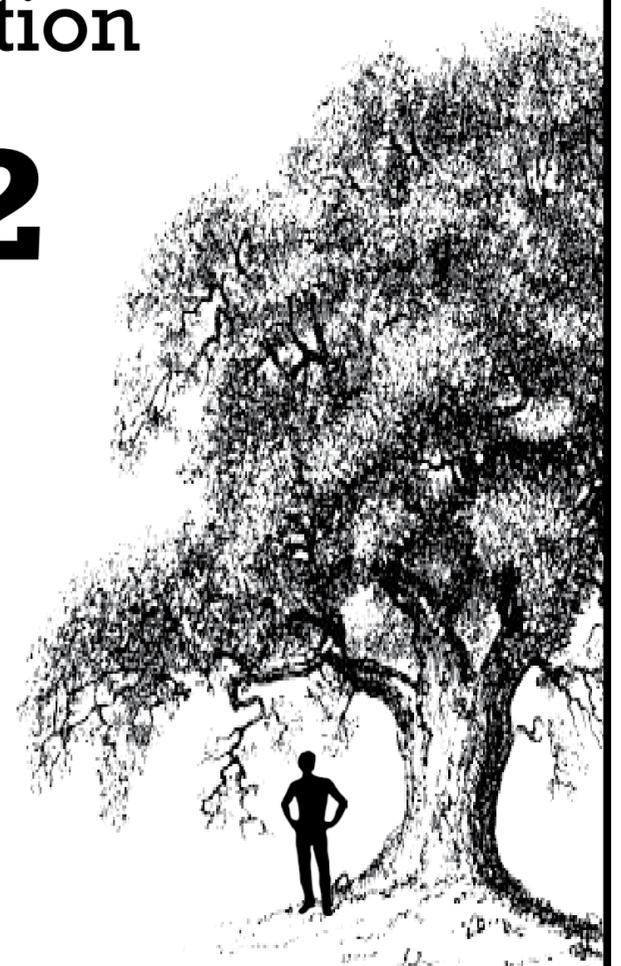
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# VIEWPOINTS

## Letters to the Editor Support Erik Vanderleeden for Selectboard

**To the Editor:**

I have been a Hampden resident for nearly 60 years and have raised seven children here. I serve on several town boards.

What I have come to appreciate is the importance of citizen participation that brings new ideas, a fresh perspective, renewed energy and a deep commitment to guiding Hampden's future.

That is why I am pleased to see Erik Vanderleeden step up and run for Selectboard in the Special Election to be held June 23. Erik has raised five children in

Hampden, he understands the need for good schools, safe streets and the need to make fiscally responsible decisions that serve all the residents in town.

He has the background and experience to serve Hampden well. I'm all for fresh ideas, thoughtful planning and a deep commitment to Hampden's future.

I urge all Hampden residents to vote for Erik Vanderleeden on June 23.

Hampden matters. Your vote matters.

**Dianne Melcher,**  
Hampden

## SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor

### Social Security questions asked over coffee

**Dear Rusty:**

My coffee conversations among a group of friends have resulted in several questions about Social Security.

1. What happens to the Social Security account of someone who dies before retirement age. What happens to that money and where does it end up?
2. How does the decreased birth rate of the USA affect future Social Security benefits?
3. Is a person, who has never contributed to the Social Security System entitled to any benefits from the Social Security Administration?
4. Is there a central location online that a person can access that explains the history and current status of the Social Security System, that explains all of it in simple terms. I would like to be able to give this location to people I talk with about Social Security.

Most of the articles we read are like slogging through mud. I enjoy AMAC articles and am college educated, but the average reading level in the U.S. is less than sixth grade. Thank you for considering these questions.

Signed:  
Curious Reader

**Dear Curious:**

Thank you for your readership and I'll be happy to tackle your "over coffee" questions about Social Security.

1. Social Security is a "pay as you go" program, where all money collected from workers is used to pay benefits for all those, who are currently receiving Social Security. In other words, all money contributed is used to pay benefits to others already receiving benefits. It is not put into a separate account for each person and that is a good thing. Most people get more from Social Security than they ever contributed, but benefits are paid for life, regardless of how long one lives. The specific answer to your question is that if someone dies before retirement age, the money contributed has already been used to pay benefits to others. Keep in mind though, that a surviving spouse or minor or disabled adult child may also collect benefits on a deceased person's Social Security record.

2. The decreasing birth rate in the U.S. hurts Social Security. That's because fewer babies mean fewer future workers contributing to the Social Security program. FYI, in 1950 there were about 15 workers contributing to SS for every one person collecting benefits,

but today there are less than three workers for each SS beneficiary. That problem is exacerbated by the steadily increasing U.S. life expectancy. Beneficiaries are now often collecting SS benefits for decades from a program designed to pay benefits for only a few years.

3. Only those who have worked and contributed to Social Security through payroll taxes for about 10 years (40 quarters of SS credit) are eligible to collect SS Retirement benefits. However, some dependent spouses and/or dependent minor or dependent disabled children who have never worked might also be eligible for benefits from the worker's Social Security record. Along with each U.S. state, the SSA also administers another program, known as Supplement Security Income, on behalf of the federal government. However, federal "SSI" benefits are not paid with Social Security funds. "SSI" is a separate government benefit program, with federal benefits paid from the general U.S. Treasury.

4. There are lots of places to get information about Social Security, but I suggest you start at our AMAC Foundation Social Security information website, which can be found at [www.socialsecurityreport.org](http://www.socialsecurityreport.org). Here you will find numerous articles about Social Security, retirement, Medicare, etc., as well as all the Ask Rusty articles I have published weekly over the last 8 years. You can also find excellent Social Security information on our AMAC Foundation main website, [www.amacfoundation.org](http://www.amacfoundation.org). And, of course, you can always ask any questions you have via email to [ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org). Or, if you prefer, you can just call us on 1-888-750-2622 if you have questions about Social Security or about Medicare enrollment.

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



Yellow bellied sapsucker

A Brimfield resident reported a yellow bellied sapsucker pair in his yard.

He said in an email, "I began seeing a male yellow-bellied sapsucker at a dogwood tree in front of the house. The bird was there every day last week. On Saturday, I saw a female on the same tree. I'll try to find a nest, I did find a sapsucker nest in the Brimfield State Forest a few years ago." He also has a mountain ash in his yard with lots of sapsucker holes.

Yellow-bellied sapsuckers lap up the leaking sap and any trapped insects with its specialized, brush-tipped tongue from holes they makes in a variety of trees especially birch and maples

Like many of the woodpecker family, it has barred black and white feathers with a red cap. The male also has a red throat. They sit still on tree trunks for long intervals while feeding. To find one,

listen for their loud mewing calls or stuttered drumming.

Sapsuckers inhabit young deciduous forests.

To find a sapsucker's territory, people should keep an eye out for their distinctive, neatly organized rows of sap wells. They cling motionless to trees while calling, birders should look closely at the trees around the for their sharply contrasting black-and-white face stripes and the bright-red patches on their heads.

The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker makes two kinds of holes in trees to harvest sap. Round holes extend deep in the tree and are not enlarged. The sapsucker inserts its bill into the hole to probe for sap. Rectangular holes are shallower and must be maintained continually for the sap to flow. The sapsucker licks the sap from these holes, and eats the cambium of the tree too. New holes usually are made in a line with old holes, or in a new line above the old.

The sap wells made by yellow-bellied sapsuckers attract hummingbirds, which also feed off the sap flowing from the tree. Other birds as well as bats and porcupines also visit sapsucker sap wells. Although a few individuals remain throughout much of the winter in the southern part of the breeding range, most head farther south, going as far south as Panama. Females tend to migrate farther south than do males.

**Other birds**  
The Brimfield resident

reports the return of the rose-breasted grosbeak, catbird and great crested flycatcher. His wife saw two great crested flycatcher near the nest box a pair used last year.

**Eagle nests**

The Brimfield resident also reported a tree with a bald eagle nest at the Stebbins Wildlife Refuge in Longmeadow fell down and the fire department rescued two chicks. They have been placed in the care of a local raptor rehabilitator. The chicks look to be fully grown, but unable to fly. He will care for the birds until they are old enough to release.

In Ludlow there is another eagle nest and there are two chicks in that nest also but they are still very young, their heads are just visible above the rim of the nest.

**Solitary sandpiper**

The Brimfield resident reported seeing a solitary sandpiper at one of the ponds in Warren. He said he has seen spotted sandpipers there, but this was the first time he saw a solitary sandpiper at that location.

**Black bear**

Saturday, May 24 I saw a black bear walking down the side of my road about 4:30 p.m. I slowly followed him in my car. He left the road and went up a steep path leading into some woods. At the top of the hill, he turned and looked toward the road. He had a healthy, dark black coat of fur.

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

## 10 ways to prevent medical errors from happening to you



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN  
Guest Column

You count on doctors and hospitals to protect your health. But unthinkably, sometimes the opposite happens. Medical error is now the third leading cause of death in the U.S., according to a study by Johns Hopkins Medicine.

Cancer and heart disease are still the leading culprits. But 250,000 Americans die each year as a result of preventable medical mistakes like post-surgical infections and medication mix ups. What can you do to make sure it doesn't happen to you?

### 10 Tips for Guarding Against Medical Errors



1. Prepare a proactive medical summary of your health conditions, allergies, physicians and all medications. Show your family where it's kept. In the event of an emergency or hospitalization, it can provide the medical staff with crucial information fast.

2 Consult a trusted health-care professional for recommendations when looking for a new doctor. Don't rely on word of mouth, online reviews or advertisements. Your best path to a quality provider is another provider you know and trust.

3. Avoid hospitalizations if possible...really! Especially if you're elderly. Infections run rampant in hospitals. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), on any given day, one in 25 hospital patients has

a hospital-acquired infection.

4. Organize shifts among relatives to ensure the patient is always accompanied if hospitalized. Don't let loved ones go it alone. But only enlist those who are observant and communicate well.

5. Pay attention, be observant, take notes and provide information readily while in the hospital. Ask questions, but courteously. Keep a record of the name and shifts of nurses and doctors.

6 Don't hesitate to "speak up for clean hands," to quote the CDC. Cleanliness helps prevent infection. Ask the medical staff to wear gloves or use foam hand sanitizer before touching you. Wash your own hands frequently; make sure visitors, too. And ask cleaning staff to regularly sanitize objects that others touch.

7. Speak up—politely—if you think something is wrong. Listen to your gut: doctors and nurses are human

Please see **HEALTH**, page 12

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**Correction Policy**

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

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

## Election letters to the editor welcome

The Wilbraham-Hampden Times welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to Wilbraham-Hampden Times, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to [krivers@turley.com](mailto:krivers@turley.com). Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by noon Monday to be considered for that Thursday's newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the newspaper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election.

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

**Campaign news**

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

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

*Life in &*

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

# WILBRAHAM HAMPDEN

## COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

*Happy 12th Birthday*  
**Jake and Kayla Vanderleeden!**



Submitted photo and caption Alison Vanderleeden  
**We are so proud of you!**  
**Love you to the moon and back,**  
*Love, Mom, Dad, EJ, Niko, Aleks, Maisy and family*



Submitted photos and caption Melissa Nelson

### Mile Tree School collects school supplies for a cause

Mile Tree School collected school supplies and filled 300 school kits for refugees, orphans and other marginalized children in Bangladesh. During April and March, school supplies were collected and sorted into 300 school kits. Mile Tree students made inspirational notes and pictures to go in each kit. Kits were flown to Bangladesh on March 12 with Compassion Takes Action, a nonprofit cofounded by a Wilbraham resident. CompassionTakesAction.org works in Bangladesh to provide equitable education for all, clean water access, menstruation education and other sustainable projects to break the cycle of poverty.



### Wilbraham Women's Club Scholarship recipients announced

Submitted photo and caption Sue Agnew

The Wilbraham Women's Club was pleased to present three \$1,500 scholarships to the pictured Minnechaug Regional High School seniors at a luncheon at Ludlow Country Club on May 22. Left to right are: Victoria Gonzalez, daughter of Lemuel & Idealis Gonzalez, will major in Neuroscience/Biology on a pre-med track at Bowdoin College; Ryan Oldread, son of Rosemary & David Oldread, will attend UConn majoring in Political Science/Government with an interest in law; and Antonia Mascaro, daughter of Sue-Ane & Anthony Mascaro, will be in the Honors Program at UConn with a double major of Allied Health and EMI training. The Wilbraham Women's Club appreciates the community support of its fundraisers which enable the club to award scholarships each year.



Photo and caption courtesy of Hampden Police Department

### HPD welcomes new police officer

Congratulations to Jeffrey Beattie becoming the newest Sergeant with the Hampden Police Department at the Selectboard meeting on May 27. In attendance; Selectboard members John Flynn, Donald Davenport, Chief of Police Scott Trombly, Sergeant Thomas Yvon and Sgt Jeffrey Beattie and family.

### WFD welcomes Girl Scout Troop for special visit

Photos and caption courtesy of Wilbraham Fire Department

Recently, the Wilbraham Fire Department had the pleasure of hosting a local Girl Scout troop that learned about first aid to earn their First Aid Badge. Wilbraham firefighter paramedics guided them through the essentials of basic first aid and bandaging.



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# HWRSD One Book One Community reveals 2025 book and summer programming

WILBRAHAM/HAMPDEN - On Friday, May 23, HWRSD One Book One Community revealed its 2025 book selection – “The Fourteenth Goldfish,” by Jennifer L. Holm.

Students in grades K-Four were shown a short video that both revealed the book and highlighted summer programming. Following the video, teachers passed out copies of the book to every student and a guest reader read the first few chapters of the story.

Throughout the summer, community members are invited to read the book and participate in various activities happening throughout Wilbraham and Hampden. Starting in mid-June, there will be a story walk at the Wilbraham Public Library and a story trail at Thayer Brook.

Families can partake in a scavenger hunt to find painted fish around the two towns and enter their completed forms at LUSO Federal Credit Union for a chance to win one of four prize baskets. Completion of a Bingo game entitles children to a free kiddie size ice cream at Rice Fruit Farm.

Wilbraham Public Library invites families to attend a family puzzle night on July 9.



Hampden Public Library is hosting a Buildwave building challenge on July 10 (registration required).

HWRSD One Book One Community will have a booth at the Wilbraham Farmer’s Market on July 30 and welcomes people to stop by and share their impressions of the book.

On September 5, Fern Valley Farm will host a STEM and movie night; community members are invited to participate in science activities and watch an outdoor showing of



Honey, I Shrunk the Kids.

In the fall, the author of the book, Jennifer L. Holm, will send a recorded video of

herself answering questions about the book that community members submit through the One Book One Commu-



nity website. HWRSD One Book One Community wishes to thank LUSO Federal Credit Union for generously donating copies of this year’s book selection to every district student and teacher in grades K-4, as well as all raffle basket prizes for the scavenger hunt.

We are also grateful for the support of Hampden Engineering Corporation, Wilbraham Friends of the Library, NEPM, Wilbraham Public Library, Hampden Public Library, Wilbraham

Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee, Fern Valley Farms, Wilbraham Cultural Council, Hampden Cultural Council, and Mass Cultural Council.

For a full list of summer activities, the reveal video, more information on One Book One Community, and a summary of The Fourteenth Goldfish please visit One Book One Community’s website: <https://sites.google.com/hwrdsd.org/onebook>.

## CANDIDATES from page 1

“I believe in transparent budgeting, proactive planning and building financial resiliency through long-term thinking—not just reacting to crises. By applying engineering discipline to fiscal policy, I aim to ensure our community remains both financially stable and forward-looking,” Vanderleeden said.

“Serving on the Selectboard, I will advocate for responsible budgeting, infrastructure investments that deliver long-term value and policies that balance affordability with sustainability. My goal is to help guide our town with a steady hand, informed by both technical expertise and a deep respect for the people who live and work here.”

Vanderleeden shared his “deep personal connection to the community” inspired him to run for the position.

“As a parent of five children, I care deeply about the future of our town. Three of my children have already gone through our local school district, and that experience has shown me just how important strong, stable leadership is when it comes to protecting the quality of life for families and planning for the next generation,” Vanderleeden said.

There are, also, several

funded projects on his mind including the Town House, improvements at the fire station, addressing issues at the former Thornton W. Burgess Middle School and the future of the senior center.

“These decisions will shape our town’s identity, function and values for years to come. We need leadership that listens, asks the right questions, and keeps the public interest at the center of every decision,” Vanderleeden said.

Other topics include protecting open land and natural resources in Hampden.

“Clean air, safe water, and preserved green space aren’t just environmental concerns—they’re essential to our health, well-being, and community character,” Vanderleeden said.

On supporting the seniors, he said this.

“Our senior citizens—who have helped build and sustain this community—deserve thoughtful support, access to resources and a voice in our town’s future. I want to ensure they are not only respected but prioritized,” Vanderleeden said. “That’s why I am running: to help guide these important conversations with integrity, balance, and a real commitment to the people who call this town home.”

Reflecting on the successes and improvements of the

board, Vanderleeden said they have done “a commendable job maintaining essential services, investing in infrastructure and keeping taxes stable—all while managing the town’s budget responsibly.”

“These efforts reflect a strong commitment to both fiscal responsibility and the well-being of Hampden residents,” Vanderleeden said. “Looking ahead, I believe we can improve by strengthening community engagement. That means better communication, more opportunities for residents to participate, and making town government more accessible and responsive. By actively listening and involving the community, we can build trust, make more informed decisions, and ensure Hampden continues to thrive—without placing unnecessary financial burdens on taxpayers.”

If elected, Vanderleeden envisions a couple goals. First, working “to strengthen the town’s long-term stability while keeping taxes in check.”

“I will use my background to bring a practical, analytical approach to budgeting, infrastructure planning, and resource management,” Vanderleeden said.

Next, improving communication between town leadership and residents, expand opportunities for public input

and foster “a stronger sense of community.”

“I am also committed to supporting a stronger regional school district, addressing the needs of our senior citizens, preserving Hampden’s open space and protecting natural resources like clean water and air for future generations,” Vanderleeden said. “Hampden is fortunate to be a community of strong, talented, innovative individuals. My goal is to help harness that expertise, talent, ideas, energy and community spirit to build a better future for our Town and all its residents.”

### Kathy Pessolano

Pessolano has lived in Hampden for 38 years, married for 42 years and has an undergraduate degree in Government from Smith College and a law degree from Western New England University, later working in administrative law for 20 years for a private company until it was sold in 2002.

From there, she took four years off to care for her children, two daughters who were educated in the school district.

“During those four years, I became very involved at the schools. I was on the building study committee for the expansion and remodel of Green Meadows, I was president of the PTO, organized

Honor Roll Breakfasts at TWB and volunteered my time in the classroom,” Pessolano said.

“In 2006, I decided to pursue my second love which was teaching. I passed my tests for teacher licensure and I began my teaching career in the Springfield Public School District as an eighth grade U.S. History teacher for 10 years. I am licensed to teach History/Social Studies for grades five through 12.”

Pessolano also has been involved with the town’s Advisory Committee.

“Over the past 20 years, I’ve been on the Advisory Board for three different tenures, serving as chairman during my second tenure. I have been currently serving on the Advisory Board for the last four years as well as the HWRSD Finance Subcommittee for the last two years,” Pessolano said.

On why she decided to run for the Selectboard, Pessolano shared it was not an easy decision.

“I have been privileged to be a member of the Advisory Board with four dedicated, intelligent people. But over the past few years, I’ve witnessed attempts to change the structure of our town government. Hampden is a ‘direct democracy,’ and Town Meeting the purest form. The voters at Town Meeting are the Legislative Branch. They decide the budget, they decide where the funds will be spent, they decide which warrant articles will pass and which will not. They ask intelligent questions, debate on the merits of each article. That’s the way it should be,” Pessolano said.

She added how voters “have an additional important role” through electing the town clerk, the tax collector, the treasurer and members “to various boards who are willing to devote the time.”

“These people are elected, not appointed and not hired as town employees reporting to the Selectboard,” Pessolano said. “They are independent, autonomous and answerable to the voters who put them in office.”

Pesslano noted the board has “achieved some notable accomplishments during their tenure.”

“Navigating the Town throughout the COVID pandemic, the implementation and continued use of Zoom meetings so that any resident with a computer can watch and participate in Selectboard meetings,” Pessolano said.

“The hiring of a town administrator has been a huge benefit for the Town. Brian Domina, the current town administrator, is doing a great job and he has earned the respect and confidence of town

officials and employees.”

For improvements, she emphasized in-person interactions.

“Moving forward, although technology has been a huge asset, I think it is important for members of the Selectboard to meet personally with voters more often, rather than through a computer. Direct communication with residents is very important. Perhaps attending a few lunches on a monthly basis at the Senior Center to meet with community members to hear their concerns, thoughts and solicit their advice. “With age comes wisdom.” Oscar Wilde,” Pessolano said. “Schools hold open houses each fall. Perhaps attending those types of events would give parents the opportunity to speak with Selectboard members directly. I believe community outreach is an essential part of being a Selectboard member.”

If elected, Pessolano said her goals and vision focus on several areas.

“First, I must congratulate the members of the ‘Master Plan’ Committee for the comprehensive and very thoughtful plan they put together. I read it. My first objective would be to reconcile what recommendations can we act on given the budget constraints the Town will be facing over the next few years,” Pessolano said. “State funding shortfalls for the Regional School District, the expanded Water District, the renovations/expansion of the Fire Station, the relocation of town hall to TWB and the future use of the Town House property. Supplementary Report and Recommendations of the Hampden Advisory Committee are a few.”

Other goals are these.

“As a Selectboard member, I believe it is important to recognize and maintain the autonomy of elected boards and officials. I also believe it is important to keep our structure of government: a direct democracy. I believe the hard work and dedication of all town departments and employees should be recognized,” Pessolano said. “Finally, I would like to explore whatever legal recourse the Town may have to rid ourselves of the eyesore on Main Street that has sat empty for years. It has trees growing out of the roof, it’s a health hazard and one can only imagine what sort of wildlife have taken up residence there.”

She ended her thoughts with this. “The above are just a few of the things I hope to accomplish if elected. I appreciate any consideration you may give to my candidacy,” Pessolano said.

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# SPORTS

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## Bankers grab win as Tri-County opens season



Cam MacDonald comes up throwing home.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com  
Dave Clark fields a ground ball to second.



Cam Rivest catches a fly ball to right.



Catcher Pete Hogan slides safely into third.

HOLYOKE — The Tri-County Baseball League, which still contains the best quality adult baseball in the region, was back in action last week. Multi-time champion Peoples-Bank opened up their season last Thursday at Holyoke's Mackenzie Stadium and defeated Hilltown Tents 15-5. James Flahive got the win while catcher Pete Hogan homered for the Bankers.



RIGHT: Johnny Gegetskas is safe at home.



Lefty James Flahive delivers home.

## Mutiny return home to record win over Eagles

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW — Even though the weather was miserable, it was still an enjoyable evening for the New England Mutiny players and their faithful supporters.

The Mutiny, who scored a pair of second half goals, defeated the Ole' Eagles, 2-0, in front of a large crowd on a rainy night at Lusitano Stadium last Saturday

"It's always nice to win at home," said Mutiny head coach Federico Molinari. "I thought we played very well tonight, especially during the second half."

The Mutiny (2-0) began the regular season by posting a 4-1 home win over Maine Footy two weeks earlier. That match was stopped by the referee in the middle of the second half due to a thunderstorm.

The Ole' Eagles (0-1), who are from Trumbull Connecticut, is a first year member of United Women's Soccer, which is celebrating



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com  
Chloe Laizer gets ready to send the ball away.

its tenth season.

A couple of the Mutiny players saw their first action in the second home match of the regular season.

Chloe Laizer, who's graduating this week from West Springfield High School, was the starting goalie.

During the second minute of the first half, Alexa Pino fired a shot from the left side of the box, but Laizer made the diving save keep the visiting team off the scoreboard.

Please see **MUTINY**, page 10



Laci Lewis looks to deke out an opponent.



Taylor Jenkins tries to outrun an opponent.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com  
Several outgoing seniors were honored at a recent Pioneers game.

## Western United Pioneers celebrate 37 graduating seniors

By Abigail McCoy  
Staff Writer  
amccoy@turley.com

LUDLOW — The evening of May 31 was filled with pride, emotion, and celebration as the Western United Pioneers Football Club honored 37 graduating seniors during a special halftime ceremony at historic Lusitano Stadium. Held under the lights and light rain, the event brought together families, coaches, alumni, and soccer fans to recognize the achievements of student-athletes who have helped shape the club's legacy.

"These individuals have been more than just players on the field," said Western United Pioneers FC President Carlos Chaves in his opening remarks. "They have been ambassadors of the club and pillars of our community. Their dedication, passion, and sportsmanship have left an indelible mark on our organization."

The evening's recognition ceremony honored graduating players from the club's junior

academy, many of whom are continuing their athletic careers at the collegiate level. Chaves emphasized that the event was more than a send-off, it was a celebration of personal growth, commitment, and the role these players have played in the club's success.

Among the honorees were standout players such as Chloe Laizer, Abigail Toomey, and Hudson Manzolini. One graduate, Chloe Laizer, was even the starting goalkeeper for the night's match with the New England Mutiny, the region's senior women's professional team that shares a deep connection with the youth academy.

"Most of the women on the Mutiny roster are NCAA Division I collegiate athletes," Chaves explained. "And Chloe, a high school senior, started in goal tonight. That tells you what kind of talent and commitment we're celebrating."

Founded with the mission of developing young talent, the Western United Pioneers program today serves around



Players will be moving on to college and other interests.

800 athletes, half boys and half girls, from ages 4 through high school. The program has

Please see **PIONEERS**, page 10

# SPORTS

## PIONEERS from page 9

grown into a vital part of the regional soccer landscape, nurturing talent and fostering community spirit.

“Tonight is about all 37 of our graduating seniors,” said Chaves. “Whether they’re going on to play in college or moving forward in life in other ways, we’re proud of them. We want to recognize the dedication and passion they’ve shown not just to the sport, but to our community.”

Names of all the graduates were read aloud during the halftime ceremony, receiving enthusiastic applause from the packed stands. The full list includes:

Katelyn Gilhooly, Calleigh Foley, Avery D’Amour, Allison Morris, Mia Carvalho, Evan Costa, Sophia Scyocurka, Brianna Ribeiro, Robert Bustamante, Ethan Sousa, Eleanor Leland, Colette Thayer, Taylor Colberg, Taryn Carrière, Madeline Hockman, Parker Tunley, Gabriella Fialho, Lillian Barkyoub,



Those honored had been part of the Pioneers youth program.

Derke Lonczak, Ryan Baublitz, Madison Rathbone, Norah Walsh, Nicholas Byrnes, Matthew Ryan, Loretta Petrashewicz, Carlos David, Thomas Wadas, Otis Chuan, Pasquale D’Ascoli, Helen

Vissas, Casimir Pierre, Chloe Laizer, Joey Borelli, Abigail Toomey, Ryleigh Remillard, Fallon Clancy, and Hudson Manzolini.

The evening also marked a confluence of tradition and

celebration. Lusitano Stadium, one of the nation’s oldest soccer-specific stadiums, served as a fitting venue for such an occasion. Built in the 1920s, the walled stadium is home to both the Western

Mass Pioneers (USL League Two) and the New England Mutiny (United Women’s Soccer), both of which maintain strong ties to the junior academy.

“What makes this place special is the culture,” said Chaves. “It’s intimate, it’s family-driven. You’ve got volunteers in the kitchen and at the bar. You’ve got local beer and Portuguese sandwiches being served. It feels like home.”

Despite dreary weather earlier in the day, spirits remained high following the club’s spring picnic held before the match. Over 450 players, families, and supporters turned out for the event, which blended the grassroots spirit of the club with the professionalism of a matchday experience.

“Our kids had their picnic in the rain, and then they stayed for the game,” Chaves said. “That’s what community looks like.”

As the Pioneers look to

the future, leadership remains committed to fostering talent through experienced coaching and mentorship. The junior program’s Director of Coaching, Federico Molinari, brings professional playing experience from Argentina and Italy and also serves as head coach for both the Mutiny and the men’s pro team.

“We’re a nonprofit, and what sets us apart is the soccer-specific culture and family atmosphere,” Chaves said. “We’re not just building players...we’re building people.”

As the night concluded, seniors posed for photos, hugged their teammates, and soaked in the applause one final time as youth players of the Western United Pioneers FC. The send-off was not only a tribute to past accomplishments but a call to future greatness.

“You will always be part of our family,” said Chaves. “And we look forward to seeing the amazing things you’ll accomplish next.”

## MUTINY from page 9

“This was my first start with the Mutiny, and I was a little bit nervous before the game. I had a lot more confidence after making the early save,” said Laizer, who’ll be a freshman on the St. Michael’s College women’s soccer team in the fall. “Playing a game in the rain and wind is very challenging, especially as a goalie.”

Pino, who’ll be a freshman at the University of South Carolina in the fall, is the two-time Connecticut Gatorade Player of the Year.

The Mutiny back-up goalie was Maddie Riley, who’s a member of the girls’ varsity soccer team at Ludlow High School.

Both teams had several corner kicks during the first half, but the match was still scoreless at halftime.

The Mutiny finally broke the ice with a corner kick goal in the 56th minute.

Avery Galante sent the ball into the box from the left corner where Maya Mathis, who’s a defender, sent a shot



Avery Klingensmith sends the ball deep.

into the back of the net past goalie Emily Robinson for her first goal as a Mutiny player.

“Avery and I are best friends. We used to play on a club soccer team together,” Mathis said. “My younger sister, Sadie, was also on the field when I scored my goal, so it was very exciting shar-

ing that moment with them.”

Maya Mathis, who graduated from Acton Boxboro Regional High School, was a member of the UConn women’s soccer team during the past two seasons before entering the transfer portal. She’ll be joining the University of Kansas women’s soccer team this fall.



Maddy Theriault, of Palmer, makes her Mutiny season debut in their most recent home game.

“I just wanted to make a change and go to a part of the country where I’ve never been before,” Maya Mathis said. “I’m really excited about playing soccer at Kansas.”

Sadie Mathis will be playing soccer at Boston College.

About twenty minutes later, the Mutiny were given a penalty kick following a foul inside the box.

Taylor Jenkins, who also plays at UConn, put the PK into the right corner making the score 2-0.

A couple of local players who played in the home match are Maddy Theriault (Palmer), Tennessee Murphy (Monson) Kylie Ray



Olivia Crespo makes her way up the field.

(Minnechaug), Bella Meadows (Pope Francis/Chicopee) Olivia Crespo (Ludlow), and Avery Klingensmith (Belchertown).

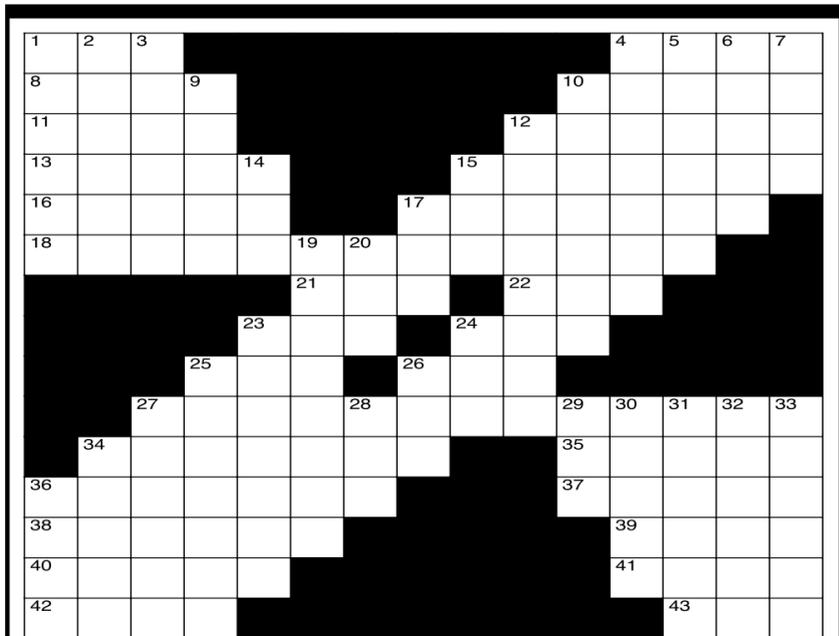
The New England Mutiny will be one of the four teams competing in the inaugural Brandi Chastain Cup. The Mutiny will be facing Richmond Ivy of the USL W-league at City Stadium in Richmond, VA. On Thursday night.

“It’s really special for us to be regarded as one of the top teams in our league,” said Klingensmith, who’s a member of the American University women’s soccer “We’re very exciting about

playing in that game. The team that we’ll be playing has some quality players, so it’ll be a challenging match for us.”

If the Mutiny defeats Richmond Ivy, they’ll be hosting the finals of the Brandi Chastain Cup on June 18 at Lusitano Stadium. The California Storm beat Pan World Elite, 4-1, in the other semifinal, which was held in May.

The Mutiny will also play two regular season road matches against NJ Alliance and the Ole’ Eagles before returning home to face Racing Power FC on June 14.



### CLUES ACROSS

1. Racquet sports association
4. Places to sleep
8. Native American tribe
10. Small platforms
11. Egg shape
12. Running out
13. French painter
15. Some are “of the Caribbean”
16. Painful intestinal problem
17. More irritated
18. Prove yourself
21. Catch
22. Supplement with difficulty
23. American automotive giant
24. Form of “to be”

### CLUES DOWN

25. Boxing’s GOAT
26. Peyton’s little brother
27. Eli’s big brother
34. Capable of producing
35. Reproductive structures in fungi
36. Allowed to go forward
37. Smiles
38. Arteries
39. VVV
40. Win a series without losing a game
41. This (Spanish)
42. Opposites of beginnings
43. Germanic mythological god

### CLUES DOWN

1. Consisting of uncombined atoms
2. Island country
3. Heavenly body
4. Caribbean island
5. Copyread
6. A place to eat
7. Drops down
9. Native group of Alaska
10. Engage in
12. “Desperate Housewives” lane
14. Thyroid-stimulating hormone
15. Foot (Latin)
17. A place to bathe
19. Animosities

### CLUES DOWN

20. Partner to cheese
23. Venus \_\_, plant
24. A donation
25. Pokes holes in the ground
26. Midway between northeast and east
27. Looked into
28. Not young
29. Annoy constantly
30. Something one can strike
31. Most glacial
32. Ten less than one hundred
33. Idle talker
34. Has moved through the air
36. Container for shipping

## HEALTH from page 6

and can make mistakes. (If all else fails, go up the hospital food chain—ask for a meeting with “risk management” and a hospital care team to discuss your concerns.)

8. It’s best not to chat with the nurse when he or she is dispensing your meds; distraction can lead to medication mistakes. Take care to know your pills in every way possible. Ask the nurse to review each pill with you before you swallow it.

9. Exercise vigilance especially during the admission and discharge process. The potential for errors is most likely to occur during the transition process to get you admitted or discharged.

10. Obtain copies of your written discharge instructions. Make sure you completely understand your follow-up plan after a doctor’s visit, emergency room visit or hospitalization. Know what medications you’ll be taking and how often, and when to follow up with your physician. It sounds obvious, but in one recent study, 54% of discharged patients couldn’t accurately recall their follow-up instructions!

## Why Medical Errors Happen

The modern healthcare system is remarkably complex, and patients are no longer held firmly at its center. Various factors have contributed to an environment where mistakes are more likely to occur.

For example, hospitals are trapped between tight financial constraints and attending to patients. Often, they’re under pressure to discharge patients quickly—sometimes too early—to free up beds. Many hospitals are chronically understaffed with regards to nurses (the patient’s primary point of contact!) and support staff (like janitors, charged with the very important job of keeping the hospital clean).

It’s no better for physicians, who are continuously pulled in multiple directions. Today’s doctor spends hours documenting health records and completing insurance forms—time that once was directly devoted to patients. At the same time, they’re reimbursed by health insurers at ever-shrinking rates, even as their malpractice insurance premiums soar.

This is why many doctors are increasing their patient load or relying on less-qual-

ified Physician Assistants to handle their caseload. End result: less one-on-one time with patients and a greater risk of something falling through the cracks.

For all these reasons, patients and their families need to take a more active role in managing their healthcare. They need to be informed and vigilant. They need to be ready to advocate for themselves whenever necessary.

Of course, it’s impossible to eliminate 100% of your risk of becoming a victim of medical error. But by paying attention and speaking out, you can vastly improve your odds.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate, is the founder of Northshore Patient Advocates LLC (NShore). She is also founder and CEO of Nurse Advocate Entrepreneur, which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. Teri offers a free phone consultation to newspaper readers as well as to nurses interested in becoming advocates. Reach her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com.

# Rock 102's Steve Nagle hosts Family Fun Event to support Rick's Place

WILBRAHAM - Steve Nagle and Rock 102 are hosting a lively, family-friendly fundraiser on Saturday, June 21, from Noon to 3 p.m., to benefit Rick's Place, a non-profit organization offering free grief support to children, teens, and their caregivers.

It's a chance for families, friends, and neighbors to enjoy time together while making a meaningful difference in the lives of those who've experienced deep personal loss.

Organized by Rock 102's Steve Nagle, and supported by Arrha Credit Union, Aqua Pump Co, and Dave Miner Exterior Home Improvements, with a generous donation from listener Steve "the Hawkman" Hawk, the event features activities for all ages, including: Free Face Painting, Tie-Dye Station, A Magician, Raffle Prizes, Live Music, Mad Eat Food Truck and Moolicious Ice Cream.

Tickets are just \$10.21 (plus a small processing fee), and food and beverages will be available

for purchase from Vanished Valley, the Madd Eatz food truck, and Moolicious. Proceeds go directly to Rick's Place to help keep its peer grief support programs free for families across Western Massachusetts.

"This event is a chance for our community to show up with joy, generosity, and compassion," said Therese Ross, Executive Director of Rick's Place. "We're so thankful to Steve Nagle and Rock 102 for creating an opportunity to raise awareness and support for children and teens who are grieving the death of someone important in their lives."

If you're unable to attend but would still like to support the work of Rick's Place, donations can be made at <https://ricksplacema.org/donate/> Every gift helps sustain programs that offer connection, hope, and understanding during one of life's most difficult experiences.

Join us on June 21 - bring your family, bring your friends, and be part of something meaningful!

## EAGLE from page 1

ported and had people have my back," Kim said.

Reflecting on his growing leadership skills, Kim shared he took the ILST, a leadership program that qualifies scouts to take the national version while having learning opportunities for leadership, and he's currently a Senior Patrol Leader, the highest-ranking position in his troop.

His past leadership opportunities throughout his scouting journey were Assistant Patrol Leader, Den Chief—which is a liaison for the Cub Scouts—and Assistant Senior Patrol Leader.

"That means I have to lead all of these kids and being able to help them and getting helped back. It felt like we were working together as a team and kind of have a team that is supposed to function and being able to use all the leadership opportunities I learned about in ILST and other merit badges and other ranks. It really helped me in this project," Kim said.

Kim got into scouting as a Cub Scout when he used to live in Maryland and a friend of his, Jacob Daniels, came to school one day wearing his uniform and asked about it. When he later came to Wilbraham, Kim continued scouting through Cub Scout Pack 177.



Photo courtesy of Edward Kim

A photo of David Kim with his friends and fellow troop members that helped him complete his Eagle Scout project.

"It's a good opportunity to learn about all these different things to do. If you like wilderness, camping, cooking, all of those different types of things, having adventures, it's a really great opportunity," Kim said.

Kim's advice for his fellow scouts and aspiring ones on their Eagle Scout projects was this.

"Instead of building something monumental and huge or something that you want to do that doesn't really benefit the community, I don't think that should be considered as an Ea-

gle project. That's something out of your personal benefit." Kim said. "The Eagle Project—the whole point of it—is to benefit the community and to dedicate your service, so I'd think for best. Reach out to local communities, see what the community needs, discuss your options, narrow it down to the ones that you want to do and things that'll help your community the most and I think go from there."

Kim encourages the community to check out the bench the next time they're on the 12 Mile Brook Trail and also en-

joy the hike. "If you ever have the time, check it out. The bench is seated in a nice area where you can see the creek and all these different types of wildlife," Kim said.

Also, to have more join the troop, thanking fellow scout Jaden Desmarais, Scoutmaster Dr. Thomas Wadzinski and Assistant Scoutmaster Perry Bechtold for their support on his project.

"I'd like to help other kids like it had helped me, find friends that also have a similar interest," Kim said.

## MAESTRO from page 1

"He rarely misses a day," confirms Luzi.

It's this dedication and his passion for music that gave Santucci a spectacularly long and successful career as a trumpeter in his native Italy. He's played with many all-time jazz greats, recorded extensively for film and television and performed all over the world—even in Siberia. He's now rehearsing for two performances with the Old Post Road Orchestra of Western Massachusetts. OPRO will play music from the top 100 films of all time at June shows in Monson and Springfield.

Santucci, who studied composition for seven years, arranged music from "The Godfather" for the upcoming shows. He has a personal connection to the score, having played for "Godfather" composer Nino Rota on several film scores in Italy. OPRO Conductor Alexandria Black was enthralled by Santucci's take. "He presented it in a jazzy way I've never heard before," Black said.

"In our first rehearsal, Cicci was ready to go and ripping the most amazing ad libs and runs," Black continued. "As an ensemble musician he's been incredible to work with and brought a lot of pizzazz to the orchestra. As a soloist, he blew me away." After the June performances with OPRO, Santucci will return to Italy to play with his musician friends, as he does several times a year. This summer he'll perform in and around Rome with jazz pianist Luca Jacovella. An Early Ear for Jazz

Santucci's lifelong love of jazz began when he was a toddler. After World War II, the American Army had an

encampment on his family's property in the Abruzzo. The soldiers would come to the family's home every night to play records on the Santucci's wind-up gramophone.

Jazz was little-known in Italy then. Sitting on his mother's knee, four-year-old Cicci was enraptured by Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman and Louis Armstrong. "I started my life hearing this kind of music," he says, and hums a few notes of Miller's "Moonlight Serenade."

At age 12, after watching back-to-back screenings of Kirk Douglas in the film "Young Man with a Horn," Santucci asked his father to buy him a trumpet. "It was a horrible instrument," he recalls. "When I began to play seriously I sold it to a guy who made a lamp out of it." He was soon playing with a group of boys in his hometown of Lanciano. The young musicians piled into a hearse owned by one of their fathers to get to a gig in a neighboring town.

### Cicci Goes Pro

At age 17, Santucci performed in Rome's first jazz festival; his professional career took off quickly. He played in many festivals and recorded records with The Modern Jazz Gang. He recorded and toured the world with musician Romano Musolini—yes, the dictator's son. "He was a wonderful pianist," recalls Santucci. Through the years, Santucci's talent also brought him work with jazz greats Lionel Hampton, Archie Shepp, Dexter Gordon and many others. In 1970, Santucci became the trumpet soloist for the Italian broadcasting network RAI, where he worked for 22 years. "In those days, I was very,



Turley photo by Patricia Sullivan

Pins from Italy adorn Santucci's lapel.

very busy," he recalls. "I was on the radio every day from 10 am to 2 pm. After that we'd go to the studio and record for movies, television or pop songs, everything." And in the evening he'd often jam with friends, among them jazz legend Chet Baker. Santucci remembers the time Baker asked to borrow his Martin trumpet. Baker promised to return the instrument in a couple of months, but kept it for three years. "The only satisfaction was that Chet Baker was playing my horn," Santucci says. He still plays that trumpet today.

### Movie Music

Santucci's versatility and skill at improvisation brought him decades of work on movie scores. He worked with his friend, Ennio Morricone, one of the world's greatest film composers, on several projects, including "The Legend of 1900" and "The Mission." He has a haunting flugelhorn solo in Morricone's score for "Bugsy."

Santucci recalled that on one film, "I arrived in the studio and Morricone gave music to everyone but not to me. He said 'Look at the screen. Play what you want!' And I did. It was all improvising." His trumpet can be heard on "Life is Beautiful," "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" "Malena," and more films than he can name.

### Life in America

Santucci met his wife, Wilbraham native Susele Luzi, in 1997 at a jazz club while she was teaching English in Rome.

"He asked me for a lesson and since I had a crush on him I said I'd do it in exchange

for dinner," Luzi recalls. "He took me out to dinner every night for three months and that was it."

They moved to Western Massachusetts to be near Luzi's family shortly after they married 20 years ago. Santucci is happy to split his time between their apartment in Rome and home in Wilbraham. "For us musicians the United States was a dream," he says.

He's also content when he reflects on his long career. "The music gave me a lot of satisfaction and even the esteem of the top conductors in Italy," he says. "I feel like I never worked."

You can hear Santucci on

the trumpet at two upcoming free family-friendly OPRO performances: June 20, 7:30 pm, at Memorial Hall on Main Street in Monson and June 22, 3 p.m., at Loomis-Lakeside at Reed's Landing in Springfield.

The Monson concert is supported in part by a grant from the Monson Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. The Loomis-Lakeside concert is supported in part by Loomis-Lakeside at Reeds Landing.

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All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination. This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development " HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

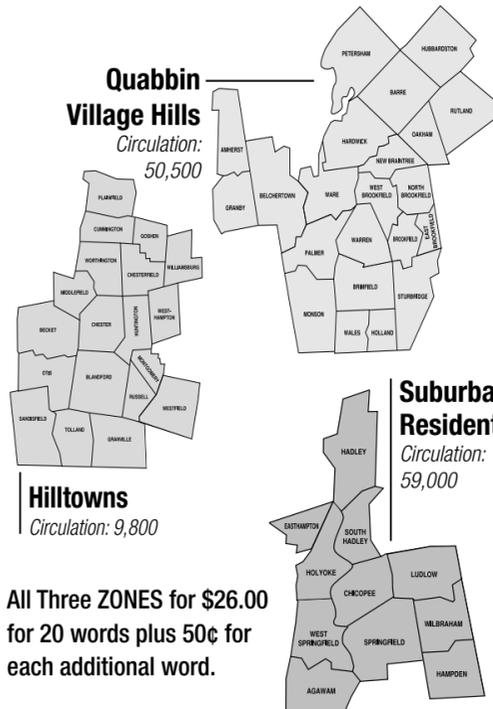
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 WARE RIVER NEWS



# HFD hosts bingo event at Hampden Senior Center

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - The fire department stopped by the senior center on May 25 to host a bingo event with the seniors.

The event was part of the senior center's Older Americans Month programming during the month of May and also included a lunch of Chicken Cordon Bleu and a delicious piece of cake.

The bingo prizes comprised oven mitts, coozies and other fire department-themed items.

During this event, attendees enjoyed rounds of bingo along with education on fire safety and preparation along with the programs and resources offered by the fire department.

Deputy Chief Patrick Farrow--who also serves as Captain for the Wilbraham Fire Department and is a Fire & Life Safety Educator--was joined by HFD Lt. Nick Bertrand for the event, explaining how it all came together.

"Earlier this year, the Hampden and Wilbraham Fire Departments applied for a regional grant through the Department of Fire Services for our Safe and Senior Safe programs. These programs aim to promote community risk reduction through prevention and education on fire and life safety topics relevant to the communities," Farrow said. "In April, we were awarded the grant, which allows us to expand our fire and life safety education efforts between both departments and in both towns. Fire department educators aim to visit senior centers twice a year for presentations. This was our first presentation as a regional education program, using musical bingo to draw in attendees."

Farrow also shared the education program's mission statement, which is this.



Attendees get into their bingo game during the Bingo with the Hampden Fire Department event at the Hampden Senior Center.



Hampden Fire Department Deputy Chief Patrick Farrow calls out a song for the musical bingo games during the Bingo with the Hampden Fire Department event on May 25.



HFD Lt. Nick Bertrand checks a bingo card; it was later declared a winning card.



Hampden Fire Department Deputy Chief Patrick Farrow talks with attendees about fire safety and how the fire department supports the community.

"The mission statement of our education program is to improve the life and safety of older adults in the Commonwealth through education and to address the unique fire risks for this age group. We aim to enhance the safety of older adults' homes by providing education and informing senior residents about the

services available to them," Farrow said.

Farrow hopes attendees enjoyed the event and walked away with useful safety tips along with a better idea of resources the fire departments offer for all.

"We hope attendees took away our safety tips, learned about our fire education and

life safety program, and recognized that both the Hampden and Wilbraham Fire Departments are resources to utilize when in need of assistance," Farrow said.

With the summer months approaching, Farrow's number one safety tip was this.

"As the summer months approach, many people will enjoy barbecuing. We ask that all grills be placed at least 10

feet away from the side of any building. Grills cannot be used on a porch, balcony, or deck with a roof or overhang.

Keep all matches, lighters, and lighter fluid away from children, and ensure that children stay at least three feet away from the grill," Farrow said.

Farrow encourages the community to reach out on future presentations the fire

departments--whether Wilbraham or Hampden--can do and they'll be happy to do them.

"To the communities of Hampden and Wilbraham: if your group would like a fire and life safety presentation or to learn hands-only CPR, please email safe@wilbraham-ma.gov, and we can customize a presentation for your group," Farrow said.

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### INVITATION TO BID HVAC Replacements Mile Tree School Wilbraham, Massachusetts

The Hampden Wilbraham Regional School district is seeking proposals for HVAC Replacements at the Mile Tree School, 625 Main Street, Wilbraham, MA.

Mechanical GC Bid will be due, **Wednesday, June 18, 2025, at 2:30 p.m.** in the Superintendent's Office, Minnechaug Regional High School.

Bids must be addressed to David Rogers, Manager Facilities & Maintenance, Hampden -- Superintendent's Office, Hampden Wilbraham Regional School District, 621 Main Street, Wilbraham Ma. 01095, securely sealed, showing the name and address of bidder. All bids must be clearly marked "HVAC Replacements, Mile Tree School" on the outside of the envelope. Proposals received after the due date and time will not be accepted under any conditions.

The project consists of providing a replacement air handling unit with remote condensing unit and an add alternate to replace a roof top unit serving the office area.. The air handling system serves the Library Area

The estimated cost of the work is \$50,000 for base bid Each Bid-

der may obtain sets of bidding documents from Robt. W. Hall Consulting Engineers by emailing Robert Griffiths ( rgriffiths@rwhall.com).

**A Prebid Conference will be held on Wednesday June 11, 2025, 3:00 PM at the School.**

A 50% Payment Bond will be required of the successful bidder.

Attorney-in-fact who signs Payment Bonds must file with each Bond a certified and effective dated copy of their power of attorney. Prevailing Wage rates have been established for this project by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Hampden Wilbraham Regional School District reserves the right to waive any informalities, to reject any and all bids or any part thereof, and to take whatever action it believes to be in the best interest of the Town.

06/12/2025

### Sale of Motor Vehicles

This ad is pursuant to MA Gen. Law Ch.255, Sec. 39A as of **June 13, 2025** the following motor vehicle will be for sale to satisfy a garage keepers lien:

2005 Chevy Trailblazer  
VIN: 1GNDT357252150461  
COLOR: Gray  
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Amherst, MA 01002  
2002 Chevy Avalanche  
VIN: 3GNEK13T52G170856  
Color: Orange  
LKO: Jonathan Medina  
62 Draper St.  
Springfield, MA 01108

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05/29, 06/05, 06/12/2025

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Centerline Communications LLC is proposing to modify an existing wireless telecommunications facility on an existing Building located at 763 Longmeadow Street, Longmeadow, Hampden County, Massachusetts 01106. The modifications will consist of the collocation of antennas at approximately 79 ft above ground level (measured to the center of the antennas) on the 106 ft tall building. Any interested party wishing to submit comments regarding the potential effects the proposed facility may have on any historic property may do so by sending comments to: Project 053692-PR, EBI Consulting, 21 B Street, Burlington, MA 01803, or at (617) 715-1822.

06/12/2025

### TOWN OF HAMPDEN CONSERVATION COMMISSION NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act,

(MGL CH 131, S 40), it's implementing regulations (310 CMP 10.00) and the Town of Hampden's Wetlands Protection Bylaws, the Hampden Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, June 18, 2025 at 6 PM** at the Town House, 625 Main Street, Hampden, for a Request for Determination of Applicability, (RDA), submitted by Eric and Nicole Ainsworth for the property known as 308 Somers Road. Additional information relating to this request is on file in the Conservation Commission office and available for review by the public by contacting the Commission. Anyone interested in or wishing to be heard on the request may appear at the time and place designated.

Hampden Conservation Commission  
06/12/2025

### TOWN OF WILBRAHAM PUBLIC HEARING: PROPOSED INCREASE TO WATER RATES

The Wilbraham Board of Water Commissioners, will hold an open public hearing on **July 18, 2025 at 9:15 a.m.**, at the Town Office Building, 240 Springfield St, Wilbraham, MA to hear public comment on the proposed increase to water rates, as recommended by the Water Commissioners, to be effective November 2025.

### CURRENT WATER RATES

\$4.12 Commercial Rate  
\$4.12 0-10,000 Cubic Feet (Single Family Home Residential)  
\$4.32 10,001-20,000 Cubic Feet (Single Family Home Residential)  
\$4.52 20,0001 Cubic Feet and Greater (Single Family Home Residential)

### PROPOSED WATER RATES

\$4.80 Commercial Rate  
\$4.80 0-10,000 Cubic Feet (Single Family Home Residential)  
\$5.25 10,001-20,000 Cubic Feet (Single Family Home Residential)  
\$5.50 20,0001 Cubic feet and Greater (Single Family Home Residential)

**All those wishing to comment on the proposed updated water rates will be heard. This hearing will be conducted in person only.**  
Board of Water Commissioners

05/29, 06/05, 06/12, 06/19, 06/26/2025

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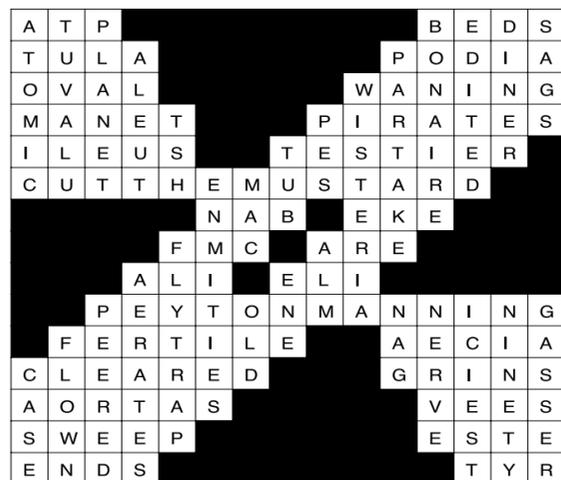
## Wilbraham-Hampden Times OBITUARY POLICY

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# WMA graduates 83



The Wilbraham & Monson Academy Class of 2025.

WILBRAHAM - Wilbraham & Monson Academy graduated 83 seniors and postgraduates on May 24 at its 221st Commencement Exercises.

The Class of 2025 hailed from 7 states (Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Virginia) and 22 countries (Bangladesh, Bra-

zil, China, Czech Republic, India, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Nigeria, United Kingdom, Angola, Russian Federation, Spain, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United States, Vietnam and Zimbabwe).

The following students graduated from local towns in Western Massachusetts and

Connecticut:

From Belchertown: Kayla Makkiya

From Brimfield: Ludmilla Venades

From East Longmeadow: Abigail Brunelle, Ryan Clark, Lauren Garvey, Sophia Najeebi, Regan Zhao

From Ellington: Rose Marie Sadlak

From Fiskdale: Ally Orquiola

From Hampden: Jason Forerster, Mark Tobias

From Longmeadow: Emma Landry, Alexander Torres

From Ludlow: Rebecca Kakule, Benjamin Presz

From Somers: Ashley Birkenshaw, Cooper Dwyer

From Springfield: Malena Donovan, Ashley Li, Isabelle Rivera

From Wilbraham: Kayden Chhoun, John Crocker, Seamus Dineen, Mariana Mujica, Oliva Tierney, Breslin Grozio, Katherine Healy, Gabriel Enrico Cruz, Elena Baltazar



Submitted photo

2025 Rotary Scholarship recipients at the Country Club of Wilbraham. (from left) Andrew Fyntrilakis, Jayden Beck, Ethen Purcell, McKenna Hale, Victoria Gonzalez, Ryan Oldread, Bryan Beckel, Breslin Grozio, Quinn Symington. Not pictured: Tiffany Nguyen.

## 2025 Rotary Scholarship winners presented

WILBRAHAM - The Rotary Club of Wilbraham-Hampden presented its 2025 Scholarship winners at the club's May 7 Recognition Dinner meeting at the Country Club of Wilbraham. Each student received \$2,000.

Rotary Scholarship Committee chairman Brad Sperry said the club was glad that the honors were spread out among Wilbraham and Hampden students at three different high schools.

A total of \$20,000 in scholarships was given to ten outstanding seniors from Minnechaug Regional High School, Wilbraham & Monson Academy and Pope Francis High School.

In the past 11 years, the Rotary club has granted nearly \$160,000 in post-secondary scholarships to graduating high school students from Wilbraham and Hampden.

The scholarships were presented as follows:

The Isaac C. Wilbour Memorial Scholarship is named in memory of the 5th president of the club. The award is given to a student pursuing a four-year degree in the physical sciences or engineering.

Awarded to: **Ethan Purcell** of Minnechaug Regional High

The A. Davis Baker Social Service Scholarship is named in honor of the 3rd president of the club. This award is made to a student

who will pursue a degree program in social services or a helping profession and who exemplifies the Rotary motto of "Service Above Self"

Awarded to: **McKenna Hale** of Minnechaug Regional High

The Technical Education Scholarship is awarded to an outstanding student interested in continuing their education in a vocational or technical program at a post-secondary institution.

Awarded to: **Jayden Beck** of Minnechaug Regional High/LPVEC Career and Technical Education Center

The Daniel E. Koziol Memorial Scholarship is named in memory of the Club's 24th secretary. It recognizes a superior student with an interest in the visual or performing arts.

Awarded to: **Quinn Symington** of Minnechaug Regional High

The Gregg M. Sapere Memorial Scholarship is named in memory of the Club's 33rd president who was a highly successful businessman and ardent promoter of Rotary activities. The award recognizes an outstanding student pursuing a post-secondary degree.

Awarded to: **Tiffany Nguyen** of Minnechaug Regional High

The Economics and Business Scholarship was established to encourage promis-

ing students to enter the areas of economics and business.

Awarded to: **Andrew Fyntrilakis** of Pope Francis Prep

The A. George Mallis and Dorothy Wunk Scholarship was created as the result of a bequest to the Wilbraham Rotary Memorial Foundation from the estate of A. George Mallis, the Club's 24th president. The award is made to an honor student in the sciences.

Awarded to: **Victoria Gonzalez** of Minnechaug Regional High

The Elaine M. and Walter F. Markett, Jr. Scholarship is named in memory of the late Elaine M. Markett, longtime elementary school teacher in Wilbraham, and her husband Walter, the 4th president of the Club. This award is made to promising students seeking to enter the fields of education or engineering.

Awarded to: **Bryan Beckel** of Minnechaug Regional High

The General Scholarship is awarded to outstanding students planning to attend an accredited post-secondary institution.

Awarded to: **Breslin Grozio** of Wilbraham and Monson Academy and Ryan Oldread of Minnechaug Regional High.

For more information about the Wilbraham-Hampden Rotary call Brad Sperry at 413-537-4171.

## ConGRADulations

# BRESLIN GROZIO

on graduating with highest honors from Wilbraham & Monson Academy! We are incredibly proud of you and can't wait to see you excel at Hamilton!

Love, Mom, Dad,  
Taryn & Harlowe

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# Congratulations Minnechaug Regional High School Class of 2025

Class of 2025

## Minnechaug Regional High School 2025 class celebrated at graduation

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - Minnechaug Regional High School's class of 2025 was celebrated on graduation day on June 6 at Symphony Hall in Springfield.

The ceremony included remarks from Principal Steve Hale, Superintendent Dr. John Provost, School Committee Chair Michal Boudreau, 2025 Class President Ian Wall, Ryan Oldread--who served as this year's graduation speaker--and performances of the National Anthem and the songs "Adoration" by Florence Price and "Rainbow" by Kacey Musgraves by the Minnechaug Regional High School Choir and Band and select graduating members.

This year's valedictorian is Marissa Bontempi with a 4.87 GPA and who will be attending Clemson University and the salutatorian is Class of 2025 Communications Officer Antonia Mascaro with a 4.81 GPA and who will be attending the University of Connecticut.

Anthony Cianflone, the 2026 Class President, served as this year's Class Marshall.

In his speech titled "Pride," Wall encouraged classmates to reflect on how far they've come this year and the varying ways people have shown and found strength from the athletic field to under "stage lights, in front of easels, behind the screen of a camera or with an instrument in hand."

"As we stand here tonight,

dressed in caps and gowns, surrounded by friends, family and the people who've shaped us-- it's easy to think this is the end of something. And in a way, it is. It's the end of early morning alarms, lunchroom drama and walking the same halls we've grown so familiar with," Wall said. "But more than that, this is a beginning. A beginning built on every late night, every hard practice, every performance, every small win and every moment we chose to keep going."

Boudreau reflected on the class's resilience and perseverance, weathering challenges big or small, adapting to the unexpected and finding footing "in a world that doesn't always offer clear or easy answers," all of this done with heart, courage and each other which is something "no diploma can capture -- but we see it."

"During your time at Minnechaug, you've supported one another, challenged norms, stood up for what's right and brought creativity and strength to our school community," Boudreau said. "That's the kind of leadership the world needs--more than ever. Be bold. Be compassionate. And be yourself--fully and unapologetically. And remember--what you do matters--especially when it's done with intention and integrity."

Oldread's speech was titled "Fueled By Doubt," focusing on how the class was "constantly reminded how we would not live up to the expectations set by those ahead



From the left, on stage, Class President Ian Wall, Vice President Tiffany Nguyen, Secretary Victoria Gonzalez, Salutatorian and Class of 2025 Communications Officer Antonia Mascaro, Graduation Speaker Ryan Oldread and MRHS Graduating Senior Joseph Butts.

of us and soon would be replaced by those behind us."

But in facing those criticisms head-on, Oldread said, "We were able to turn these criticisms into our own internal strength."

"As I stand here today and look at this incredible class, I see us. I see friends and classmates. I see teammates and hard workers and I see people who are passionate about what they do. I see our future as well. I see athletes and I see artists. I see attorneys and I see authors. I see

Please see **GRADS**, page 16



Minnechaug Regional High School Principal Steve Hale provides remarks.

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# Minnechaug Regional High School



Graduation Speaker Ryan Oldread leads the "Roll Tide" rally cry one last time after giving his speech.



Anthony Cianflone, the 2026 Class President, served as this year's Class Marshall, standing in position as he gets ready to welcome the 2025 Class of Minnechaug Regional High School.



Class of 2025 President Ian Wall shares his speech titled "Pride."

**GRADS** from page 15  
teachers and I see therapists. I see military heroes, I see tradesmen and I see risk-takers," Oldread said. "I see a class that will take advantage of the opportunities presented to them. I see people who will continue to prove those who doubt and underestimate them wrong. Put yourself in a position where you're responsible. Take control of your life before life takes control of you. Reach for the stars, 2025, because if you fall, at least you'll land on the clouds."

After Oldread ended with a "Roll Tide!" rally cry with his teammates in the audience, Hale reflected on the parents and their love for their children throughout the years.

"They look through that camera lens, that phone lens, and they don't see you as you are right now. They see you with your Doc McStuffins backpack, your Spiderman backpack with the little star name that says, 'I take Bus Three!' That's how they remember you, but that memory's fading and being

replaced by the beautiful people you've become," Hale said. "And so there are a lot of mixed emotions tonight for us old people. See the tears that we're fighting back behind the smiles and hugs for you, and remember you will be old someday too."

Hale then brought up Ryan Ice, Gabriella Viruet, Felix Zayas, Johanyliz Torres, Lucas Dzierzowski, Caeli Whitcomb and McKenna Hale on stage alongside their respective parents to showcase how children will later become their parents through dancing to music from their respective generations.

Provost emphasized how "change is not easy" and the need to adapt with AI on the rise, the search for mentors as retirements come in varying industries and what it means to be human when we take the time to be still.

"For a long time, we have said that what makes us human is what sets us apart from the animals, mainly our intelligence and all of its manifestations. In moments where I am able to be still, I start to sense that maybe what makes



From the left, Ryan Ice, Gabriella Viruet, Felix Zayas, Johanyliz Torres, Lucas Dzierzowski, Caeli Whitcomb and McKenna Hale bust a dance move during Principal Steve Hale's fun portion of his speech to the graduates.

us most human is actually that we share with our fellow creatures," Provost said.

"That we have bodies that feel good or bad, that we experience emotions that can be

positive or negative, that we enjoy roughhousing with our siblings in childhood and get-

Please see **GRADS**, page 17

**Congratulations Class of 2025!**

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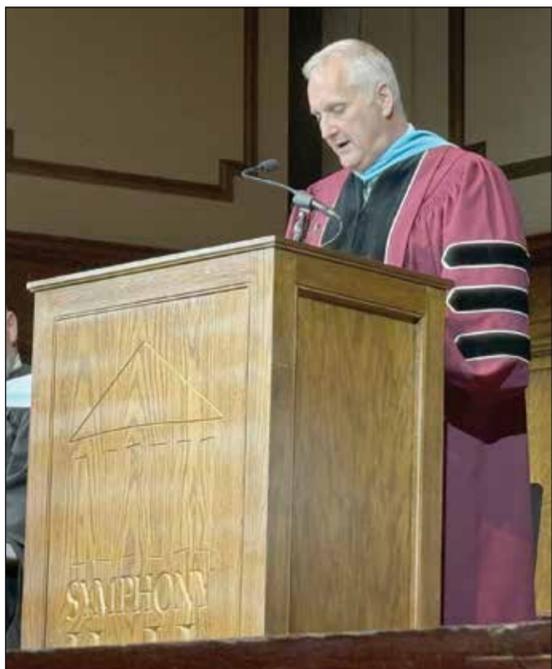
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# Minnechaug Regional High School



Superintendent Dr. John Provost shares his message to the graduating class.



A graduate shakes hands with School Committee Vice Chair Sean Kennedy.



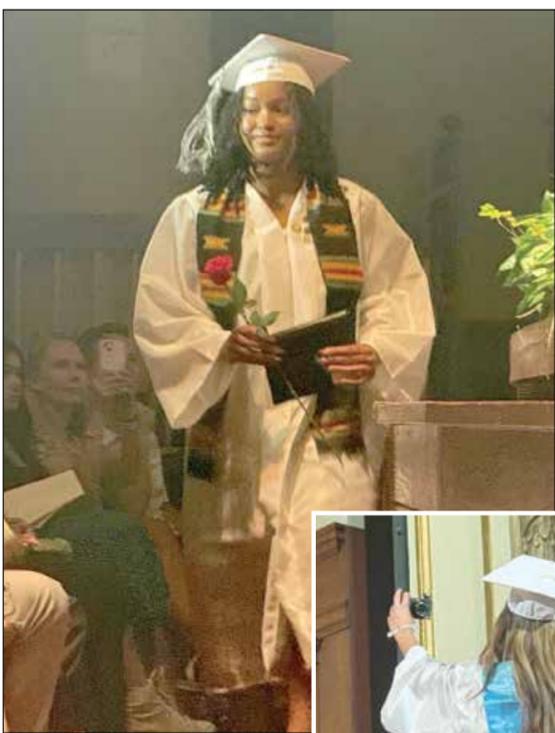
London-Reighn Anna Gates waves to her family, classmates and friends.

### GRADS from page 16

ting in over our heads in adolescence and that we just find it a little easier to leave if we know that someone who cares has left some food for us out there. We are excited to send you out into the world.”

After the diplomas were handed out with tears shed, selfies taken, cheers and applause, Hale ended the ceremony with this.

“We hope you enjoy the celebration of the Class of 2025. We keep it focused on the kids, we have a little fun and we keep to the tradition of the ceremony,” Hale said.



Saniyah Dawkins reflects as she walks back to her seat after receiving her diploma.



RIGHT: It wouldn't be a walk to get the diploma without posing for a selfie first to commemorate the moment!



Valedictorian Marissa Bontempi stands in line as she awaits receiving her diploma upon graduating from Minnechaug Regional High School on June 6.

Turley photos by Kristin Rivers

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# Minnechaug Regional High School



School Committee Secretary Lisa Murray shakes hands with one of the graduates.



Vice President Tiffany Nguyen, Secretary Victoria Gonzalez, Salutatorian and Class of 2025 Communications Officer Antonia Mascaro and Graduation Speaker Ryan Oldread celebrate with smiles, applause and reflection after receiving their diplomas.



MRHS Principal Steve Hale hugs one of the graduates for the final time as the students receive their diplomas.



School Committee Member Dr. Michael Tirabassi smiles proudly as he hands his daughter, Isabella, her diploma upon graduation from Minnechaug Regional High School.

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# Minnechaug Regional High School



Principal Steve Hale gets the audience to sing along during the fun portion of his class message.



Principal Steve Hale hugs his daughter, McKenna.



School Committee Chair Michal Boudreau beams as she congratulates a graduate.

The 2025 Minnechaug Regional High School Graduation was an exciting milestone for graduating students as they received their diplomas on June 6.



**Congratulations Class of 2025!**

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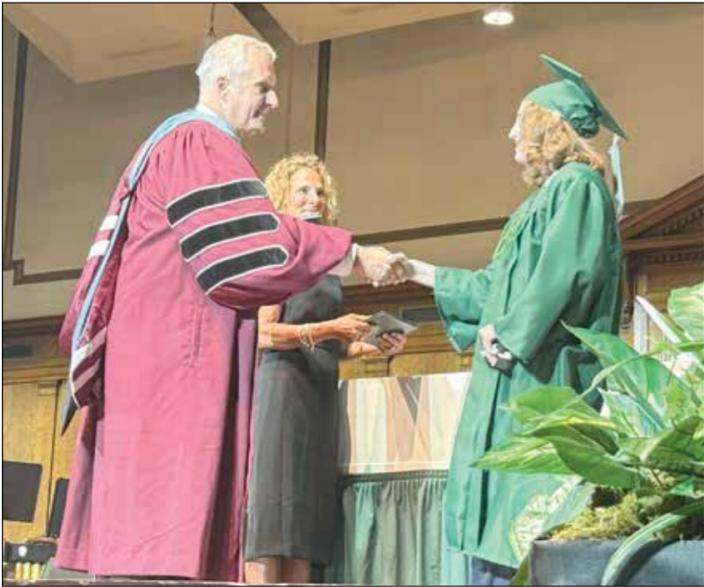
# Minnechaug Regional High School



The graduates of the Minnechaug Regional High School celebrate after tossing the caps in the air inside Symphony Hall.



Felix Zayas dances to the music with his mom on the other side of the white curtain, showing off how children later become their parents.



Superintendent Dr. John Provost handed each graduate their diploma during the ceremony, congratulating each student on their success.



Jose Ferreira holds back tears as he walks to receive his diploma on graduation day from Minnechaug Regional High School.



School Committee Chair Michal Boudreau speaks to the graduating class about resilience.

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CONGRATULATIONS & A HAPPY NEXT CHAPTER to all the graduates, especially our own Jack, Jojo, Lilliana, Sofia, Chris, Ava & Nikki

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