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VFW Post 9397 presents donations

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM/HAMPDEN - VFW Post 9397 presented two \$500 scholarships to the Wilbraham Friends of Recreation and the Recreation Association of Hampden on June 16.

VFW Post 9397 Commander David Demers explained that these are annual, revolving donations used to support the kids of Wilbraham and Hampden.

"As it depletes, they'll let us know how much we need to fill that back up for the next year. If they use it all, then they get the \$500 again and it's going to the kids that need jerseys and instruments and whatever may be to help the children of the community," Demers said.

Mark Manolakis, chairman of the Wilbraham Friends of Recreation, shared the money will be put towards their scholarship foundation, "which goes towards the families who need some support in making sure that their kids can take part in our programming."

"One of our goals going into 2026 was to get the word



Turley photo by Kristin Rivers

From the left, VFW Post 9397 Quartermaster Jered Sasen, Wilbraham Parks & Rec Director Bryan Litz, Mark Manolakis, chairman of the Wilbraham Friends of Recreation, VFW Post 9397 Commander David Demers, Hampden Parks & Rec Director Dan Blanchard—who accepted the check on behalf of the Recreation Association of Hampden—and VFW Post 9397 Senior Vice Commander William McElroy during the presentation of the checks.

out about the scholarship and also find ways to build it up. We've seen over the last few years that more parents have reached out about opportunities to help financially. Make

sure that their kids can take part in all of our programming from soccer, baseball to even the day camp," Manolakis said. "This is a great opportunity to work with another

great organization like the VFW in Hampden to build out some funding and make sure that every kid has an opportunity to take part in our programming no matter what

their financial situation is." VFW Post 9397 Quartermaster Jered Sasen said one of the tenets of the organiza-

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HWP4Y shares federal funding concerns

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - The Hampden-Wilbraham Partners for Youth shared their concerns about federal funding with the School Committee on June 11.

Brianna Berneche, director of the coalition, explained how the funding concerns would impact the coalition, requesting the committee to continue supporting the organization.

As reported in the Times last month, federal funding for HWP4Y will end on Sept. 30, and the role of Jackie Hafner, community engagement/communications coordinator for the coalition, would also be impacted by the funding loss.

Please see **HWP4Y**, page 4



Turley photo by Noelle Hisgen

Tina Doran, volunteer and program coordinator at the Hampden Senior Center, welcomes attendees to the program.

HSC hosts 'Crazy Man of the Air' presentation

By Noelle Hisgen
Correspondent

HAMPDEN - The senior center got a visit from the New England Air Museum in Windsor Locks, Connecticut, and former air show pilot Bob Cipolli, the "Crazy Man of the Air," to talk about the history of aviation and stunting

on June 17.

Before and in between the programs, attendees were also able to enjoy light refreshments such as desserts, coffees, and teas.

Director of Operations and Programs at the New England Air Museum Tianna

Please see **CRAZY MAN**, page 8

Sima and Dylan Pariseau Memorial Foundation

officially launched

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - The Sima and Dylan Pariseau Memorial Foundation, which honors two beloved community members of Wilbraham, has officially launched.

The foundation went live on the two-year anniversary of when the Pariseaus were taken way too soon from their community, family and friends, whose memory and impact lives on to this day in all who knew and loved them. The mission is to raise awareness, educate, empower and bring individuals together through community-based events for domestic violence prevention, gun violence reduction and mental health awareness.

The foundation was founded by Founder and President Sophie Pariseau, with her father, Mark Pariseau, as co-founder. The board members are Board President Dan D'Angelo, president and CEO of the West Springfield Boys & Girls Club, Board Treasurer Francia Monteiro, who recently served as community development officer at Rockland Federal Credit Union, Board Secretary Laura Mangini, Esq., a partner at Alekman DiTusa LLC, Board Member Patricia Peters Martin, Ph.D. who specializes in trauma-informed counseling and has worked with domestic and sexual abuse survivors for over four de-

Please see **PARISEAU**, page 8



Photo courtesy of Sophie and Mark Pariseau

The Sima and Dylan Pariseau Memorial Foundation has officially launched to raise awareness for domestic violence prevention, gun violence reduction and mental health awareness.

Rick's Place celebrates new location in ribbon-cutting ceremony

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - Rick's Place celebrated the opening of its new location in Wilbraham with a ribbon-cutting on June 18.

Rick's Place is now located at 35 Post Office Park.

Executive Director Therese Ross said the ribbon-cutting marked "an exciting new chapter" for the nonprofit organization, with State Rep. Angelo Puppola Jr. (D-Springfield) and State Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow) also making an appearance to celebrate.

"This celebration provid-

ed an opportunity to recognize the many supporters, volunteers, donors, staff, and community partners whose commitment and generosity helped make this move possible," Ross said. "More than just opening a new location, the event celebrated our continued growth and our ability to serve more children, teens, and families who are grieving throughout Western Massachusetts and Northern Connecticut. It was a chance to honor the memory of Rick Thorpe, for whom we are named, and to celebrate how far we have come, and thank the community that makes our work possible."

Ross explained Rick's



Cheers and time to cut the ribbon.

Photo courtesy of Noah Green

Place provides free grief support for children, teens and their caregivers and was founded in 2007 in memory of Rick Thorpe, a Wilbraham native who died on 9/11. She added the organization "was created to ensure that no child has to navigate grief alone."

"Through facilitated peer support groups, youth ages 5-18 connect with others who have experienced a similar loss, thus reducing the isolation that grief can create. At the same time, caregivers participate in their own support groups, where they can share experiences and gain support while raising children who

Please see **RICK'S PLACE**, page 11

COMMUNITY

Selectboard presents WMS meeting update

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - The Selectboard presented a new Wilbraham Middle School meeting update during their June 22 meeting.

After Chair John Flynn explained about planning another meeting with the Wilbraham Select Board—both boards met again on May 5—Town Administrator Brian Domina shared he met with Superintendent Dr. John Provost, Assistant Superintendent for Finance, Operations and Human Resources Dr. Douglas Slaughter, Wilbraham Town Administrator Nick Breault, Wilbraham Facilities Director Sam Boyd, Wilbraham Building Commissioner John Walsh and WMS Principal John Derosia the last Wednesday before.

“We were having a discussion about the improvement plan that the Select Boards have asked the district to put together for Wilbraham Middle School. Put it into context. The district with the consent of the towns has applied for the CORE program to do either full-scale renovation for a new building or construct a new building for the middle school,” Domina said. “That’s on an optimistic timeline now. That’s probably the five, six, seven years, maybe all the way up to 10 years. If there’s approvals and there’s approvals by DESE, by the Mass School Building Authority and the town. So, we’re really looking for that building to last another five to 10 years.”

“But the difference not being the typical capital project being 20 years plus,” Flynn said.

“Right,” Domina said.

“So an abbreviated timeframe,” Flynn said.

Domina affirmed yes.

“So the idea is that they would invest the district to put together a building improvement plan to take the building from today through that period of time whether it’s seven years,” Domina said. “And we discussed that with the district and they’re going to be forming a smaller subcommittee of—I think it’s assistant superintendent, the facilities directors from both towns, building commissioner of Wilbraham, the principal—and they’re going to look in to see or what I suggest to them are the critical deficiencies within the building and what really needs to be done to make that a positive educational environment for the middle school students from Hampden and Wilbraham that are going to be going to that building for the next five to 10 years.”

Domina also noted the understanding that “the building is still owned by the town of Wilbraham.”

“There’s a certain understanding in the regional agreement about how quote unquote capital improvements are to be paid for,” Domina said. “And so there’s where we left it.”

He added how he left the meeting a little unsure “that what I think is a more limited scope of what we’re expecting in terms of the improvements.”

“So, I just wanted to get a sense of or have a discussion with the board in terms of what’s kind of our delineation in terms of capital versus non-capital improvements to the building,” Domina said.

For example, Domina noted mini split installations and if that was done, it would require an electrical upgrade to the building.

“There were no costs associated with these things but that was an example that was given. So, that’s a cost that depending on how we share it, that would kind of be a sunk cost into a building that’s going to last 10 years,” Domina said. “So, I think we’re going to need guidance in terms of what projects are acceptable to Hampden and which ones aren’t.”

Flynn agreed, noting upgrades “applicable to the educational experience and others that might be a CORE experience to the building.”

“If you did a roof upgrade, it would last the lifetime of a building event past the educational use of a building. So that’s something we might say, ‘That’s got nothing to do with the educational part per se.’ You could even make that argument for the mini-splits on what they want to repurpose the building for after that too. So, it does mean we need to see the list and then its relevance to—like you said and we all said in that joint meeting—making sure the educational experience for the transition time, if you will, is at this level or better and how are they going to accomplish that?” Flynn said.

Selectboard Member Erik Vanderleeden agreed.

“I think more details too also. I mean, what do they need? Do they need to put in a sub panel? They need a whole new wire, a wire from the street to come in because they need a bigger service. So, some more detail on that, probably a little more needed to actually make a kind of an informed decision. But, yeah I mean we’re not going to tear down walls and do major upgrades. We just need to make sure that the students and the staff are able to continue to do the job and learn in a safe

environment. I think that’s doing the kind of basics to need to get that done until we can hopefully get them into the CORE program.”

Selectboard Member Don Davenport considered the case scenarios of three years to bid and ready with documents and another two years for construction.

“What if the CORE program says you got to renovate that building? Didn’t we talk about a feasibility study that if they’re accepted into the CORE program, the next step is they have to do a feasibility study to see if they need to build a new school or renovate that school by adding on making the repairs and adding on rules,” Davenport said.

After Domina agreed that was the planning part, Davenport next asked about going to town meeting for the money.

“My understanding that they were going to borrow that money,” Davenport said.

Flynn said this was correct and after sharing what was done with Minnechaug, Davenport noted his other questions.

“Seems to me if you have \$105,000 in maintenance, you should have some plan other than maybe something will break, maybe we’ll fix it,” Davenport said.

He then suggested a memorandum of understanding because “the current proposal to me does not hold well when they’re talking about when they can’t even give me an example.”

Domina then said the subcommittee will set up a meeting soon in the next week and again reiterated he’d like to see project need, in terms of projects on the plan the improvements and repairs that would address critical deficiencies, a focus on repair as opposed to replacement in terms of equipment, a discussion of the alternatives discussed and project costs for solutions and the alternatives with real costs.

For timelines, Flynn noted the hope to have another joint meeting between the boards in August.

2nd Annual Rock Into Summer Concert featuring Acousticca set for July 11

HAMPDEN – Hampden Parks & Recreation and East Village Tavern is excited to invite the community to the annual Rock Into Summer Concert on Saturday, July 11, at 6 p.m. at Hampden Town Hall, 85 Wilbraham Road, Hampden, MA 01036.

This free community event will feature live music from Acousticca, delivering an evening of great entertainment to kick off the summer season. Residents and visitors are encouraged to bring lawn chairs, blankets, family, and friends for a fun-filled night of music and community spirit.

Attendees can also enjoy a variety of food and beverage offerings. Food vendors will be on-site, and beer and wine service will be provided by East Village Tavern.

“We are thrilled to bring the community together again for another summer concert event,” said Hampden Parks & Recreation. “Rock Into Summer is a great opportunity for residents of all ages to enjoy live music, local food, and a wonderful summer evening in Hampden.”

Hampden Parks & Recreation would like to extend its sincere gratitude to the event sponsors whose generous support has helped make this community celebration possible:

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9 Marketing, SCAGS Enterprises, Safco, Richard Green Insurance, Monson Savings Bank, Charlie Arment Trucking Services, Deer Park Recycling, Affordable Waste Solutions and East Meadow Enterprises.

Their commitment to supporting community events helps enhance recreational opportunities and strengthens the quality of life for residents throughout Hampden.

The event is open to the public, and admission is free.

For additional information, please contact Hampden Parks & Recreation at parks@hampdenma.gov.

Event Details

Event: Rock Into Summer Concert

Date: Saturday, July 11

Time: 6 p.m.

Location: Hampden Town Hall, 85 Wilbraham Road, Hampden, MA 01036

Entertainment: Acousticca

Food & Beverages: Food Trucks, Beer & Wine provided by East Village Tavern

Admission: Free

Hampden Parks & Recreation looks forward to welcoming residents and visitors for an unforgettable evening of live music, great food, and community spirit as we Rock Into Summer together.

Hampden celebrates 250 Years

HAMPDEN – The town of Hampden will celebrate 250 years with a free Band Concert on Friday, July 3, at 6 p.m.

Bring a lawn chair, bring a blanket, pack a picnic!



The concert will be at 85 Wilbraham Rd in Hampden at the Town Hall Gazebo.

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Hampden Performing Arts Center holds annual recital

By Noelle Hisgen
Correspondent

HAMPDEN - The Hampden Performing Arts Center had their annual recital on June 13 at Somers High School.

This was a huge milestone for the studio, celebrating 35 years of dance for their students in the Western Mass area. The studio features a variety of dance styles including tap, jazz, and ballet.

The studio also offers solo pieces to their graduating senior company members. This year, four company members who have been dancing at the center for 12-15 years were able to have a solo piece that celebrated their own individual dance personalities with their music, costume and dance style.

The process for PAC starts in early September with choosing the songs and costumes, then going on to work on the choreography. Company members challenge themselves with



A contemporary small group performs their piece.



One of HPAC's company members does a little twist in her performance.

choreography and by the time of recital they have become masters. Throughout the whole process, students learn that while things may be challenging, hard work and commitment will pay off in the end.

Studio Owner Sandy Wegrzyn spoke on behalf of the recital.

"Our studio stands out because we treat everyone like family," Wegrzyn said. "We

not only teach dance, but we also teach our dancers to respect their teachers, be kind to their peers and the most important lesson is seeing a commitment through. Attendance is important as it affects the entire class. I always tell our dancers 'it's not all about you.' Show up and be on time and ready to dance. If you don't want to dance next year that is fine—but don't let your class and ultimately yourself down. I'm big on dancers learning the commitment lesson, as once again, it will stay with them throughout their life."

Wegrzyn reflected on the milestone.

"35 years ago, I envisioned

the HPAC as a second home for our dancers and their families, a space where we could celebrate milestones and provide love and support during challenging times. Over the past 20 months, this vision has come full circle, with our dancers and their families showering my family with love and support during my mother's illness. I am deeply grateful for the outpouring of love & support. I am blessed beyond measure to be surrounded by such wonderful families," Wegrzyn said.



Photos courtesy of Deb Hanna
A group of HPAC company members finish off their group dance.

To celebrate the monumental 35th season, Wegrzyn's employees Gina Kiner and Jackie O'Keefe organized a special HPAC alumni dance, many of whom are parents of current HPAC company members.

Wegrzyn would like to give special recognition to Kiner and O'Keefe for being her "left and right

arms" when it comes to working at the studio.

It was a very special recital celebrating 35 years of teamwork, dedication, and family. The Hampden Performing Arts Center once again put on a phenomenal recital and looks forward to another amazing season for their company members.

For more information about the Hampden Performing Arts Center, check out their website at hpacdance.com.

Major traffic impacts this summer

WILBRAHAM - Travelers through the Springfield Street at Stony Hill Road intersection are advised to plan for major traffic impacts due to the intersection and sidewalk improvement project in this area this summer. Ludlow Construction and their subcontractors will start work on Tuesday, June 23. This project will run most of the summer, with substantial completion expected by Aug. 28. Travel lanes will be closed with alternating traffic from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. throughout construction. Travelers should use alternate routes to avoid delays.

The project includes several improvements including:

Widening the eastbound approach to improve the

alignment and visibility of the left-turn lanes on Springfield Street.

Installing a new concrete sidewalk along the north side of Springfield Street, extending from Town Hall to Stony Hill Road Grammar School.

Upgrading the traffic signal to include dedicated turning signals and pedestrian crosswalk signals.

Tonya Capparello, Director of Public Works and Town Engineer said, "Thanks to grant funding from the Massachusetts Gaming Commission Community Mitigation Fund and MassDOT's Complete Streets Program, along with local support from the Wilbraham tax payers and local boards and committees we are able to deliver meaningful up-

grades that will improve traffic flow, increase pedestrian safety, and enhance accessibility for residents, students, and visitors. The new sidewalk connection between Town Hall, the Senior Center and the Stony Hill Road Grammar School is especially significant providing a safer route for pedestrians while strengthening connectivity within our community. I would also like to recognize the residents and property owners who will be affected by this project. They have been terrific to work with throughout the planning process, and their cooperation, patience, and constructive feedback have helped us move this project forward."

For project updates visit: www.wilbraham-ma.gov.

Digital Art and Drawing Kids & Teens at WPL

WILBRAHAM - Join us on Wednesday, July 8 to create digital art on iPads with KevTech!

Join Kevin Figueroa to learn the basics of digital art creation with an iPad! In this class, we cover the basics of creating art in the Procreate app, the most popular app for making art on the iPad. We cover various features in Procreate like colors, brushes, layers, and more. The class includes an activity in which a piece of unique artwork is created. Kevin provides all the tools needed to learn!

Online registration re-

quired as space is very limited.

Program Details

Kids' Digital Art and Drawing, Wednesday, July 8, 1 to 2:30 p.m. For students entering grades 3-5.

Teens' Digital Art and Drawing, Wednesday, July 8, 2:30 to 4 p.m. For students entering grades 6-12.

For more information or to register, visit www.wilbrahamlibrary.org or call (413) 596-6141.

Sponsored by the Wilbraham Friends of the Library, Wilbraham Public Library, 25 Crane Park Drive Wilbraham, MA

DATA from page 3

down, and you see the numbers going down from a peak in 2019, it looks good, but then I don't see any data in here about ZYNs. From what I'm hearing from students who are willing to talk to me, the ZYN pouches are just littered everywhere," Kennedy said. "I mentioned this last year that we missed this in the survey, and I think we really need to add this because we're showing some great results. They're not vaping anymore, but they got something new that they're doing, and I feel that we're missing the boat on this."

Berneche agreed on including this in the survey and would double-check for it and share it with Kennedy once found and confirmed.

HWP4Y from page 1

Berneche and Hafner had also shared with the Times that they are actively looking for community support to help keep the coalition going and are also looking at opioid abatement funds in both Wilbraham and Hampden to possibly help with funding.

Anyone interested in learning more about what the donations would be used

for, to donate or learn more about HWP4Y can contact Brianna Berneche, director of HWP4Y, at bberneche@hwrds.org or Jackie Hafner, community engagement/communications coordinator for HWP4Y, at jhafner@hwrds.org.

When speaking with the School Committee, Berneche explained the coalition was applying for a no-cost extension, "which means whatever

funds you've accumulated over the years and carried forward, you can use for sort of an extra bonus year."

"However, when we were meeting with our grant program officer, they were not positive about the likelihood of that being approved due to the current administration, budget cuts, etc," Berneche said.

Referring back to her earlier presentation about data

from the Youth Behavioral Survey, Berneche said the YBS data is part of the coalition and has been collected for a long time, and losing funding would also risk the data not being able to be analyzed, distributed and used for information or resources.

She had noted there would be a 2026 YBS update in the fall, however.

"With our coalition, we are able to scale back if we

are able to get other types of funding. However, Jackie Hafner, our communications coordinator, her role is paramount to the work that is being done," Berneche said. "You can really see how involved Jackie is with regards to spreading awareness for mental health services, providing prevention education, encouraging students to be leaders and in prevention among their peers. She has really made strides in that in the last two years."

On the opioid funds, Berneche noted the Select Board had about \$34,000.

"Which is much better than nothing, but it's not enough to cover Jackie's position for the year. It would be a great amount of money, but again, they have other

programs that they are trying to use that money for as well. So, I don't think that we would get all of those funds," Berneche said.

She's also reached out to community organizations and businesses for support.

"I just really want to end this presentation by asking the School Committee and administration to please consider the importance of Jackie's role in this district. Although her position is part-time, she makes a very lasting and positive impact on the students and families here," Berneche said. "Without her position, I truly feel that the community of Wilbraham would be at a great disservice and not to have this coalition would be a disservice to the families here as well."

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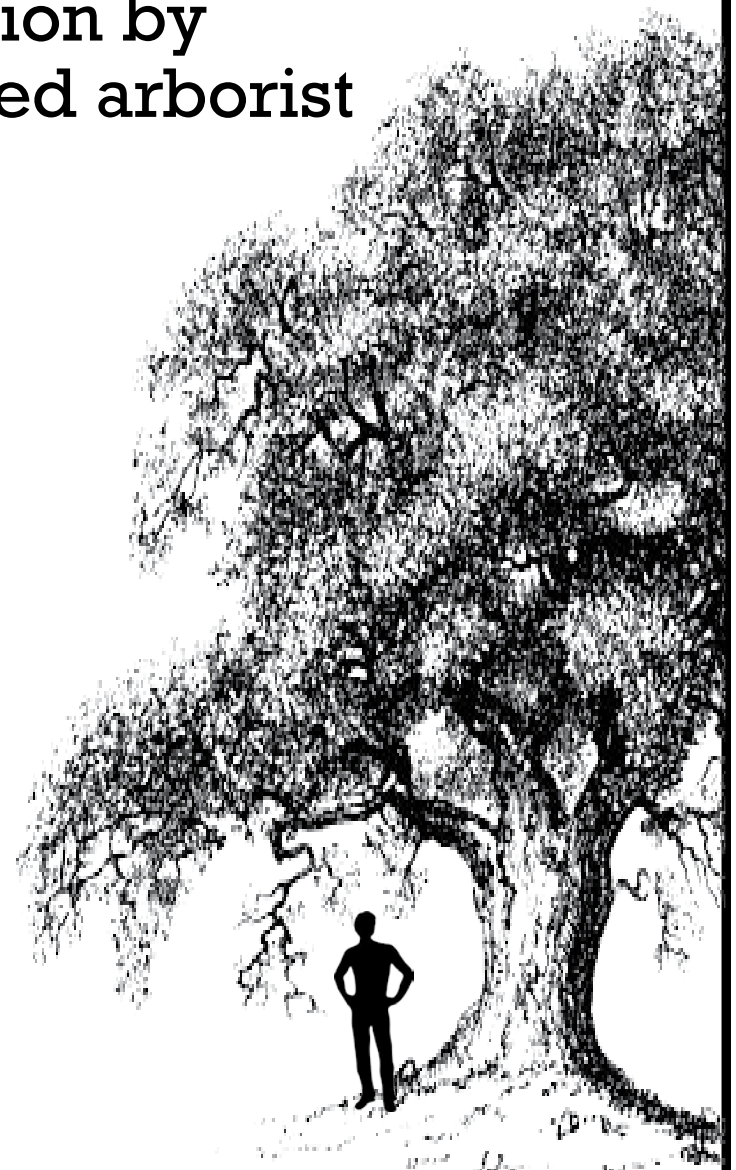


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INSURED AND CERTIFIED

VIEWPOINTS

SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor

When should my wife claim Social Security?

Dear Rusty:

We could use guidance on optimum dates for my spouse to begin taking Social Security.

She doesn't have enough work credits on her own, so she will be using mine for spousal benefits. I was born in 1955, and I now get \$3,886 in monthly SS benefits.

My wife was born in 1961. We currently receive about \$50,000 per year in royalties and VA disability payments that will stop upon my death.

So, with that in mind, can you suggest optimum dates for my wife to claim, based on my projected death in early 2027 or early 2030? My wife is very healthy and will likely live beyond 2040.

Of course no one can predict their own passing; these are just random dates I came up with based on probabilities with my health issues.

Signed: Planning Ahead

Dear Planning Ahead:

Life expectancy and financial need are primary factors for your wife to consider at this point, plus whether she is now working. Her Full Retirement Age for Social Security purposes is age 67 and, if she takes her spouse benefit before that, the monthly amount will be reduced by about 8.3% for each year early, and she will also be subject to Social Security's Annual Earning Test, which limits how much she can earn from working prior to reaching her FRA.

Statistically, your wife's life expectancy is about 87 that's average longevity for a woman your wife's current age. Even though she isn't eligible for her own SS retirement benefits, she can still get a spousal benefit while you are both living and will get an even higher surviving spouse benefit when you die.

That's because her spousal benefit while both living will be based on 50% of your Full Retirement Age entitlement, but your wife's surviving spouse benefits when you die will be based upon 100% of the benefit you were receiving at your death.

Generally, if you believe you will pass within the next few years and your wife isn't working, her best option would be to claim her regular spouse benefit now.

Although she will initially get less than 50% of your FRA entitlement, that amount will be replaced automatically by her higher survivor benefit when you pass. Depending on her age when you pass, she will get the full \$3,886 monthly amount you are receiving at your death plus any COLA yet to be

awarded.

If that happens before she reaches her full retirement age, her monthly survivor amount will be actuarially reduced based upon how far before her FRA it is claimed. Generally, the survivor benefit reduction will be about 4.75% for each full year claimed early about .396% for each month early.

So, to a large degree, your wife's options for spouse and survivor benefits are based on your expected longevity. If you have reason to believe you will pass within the next few years, then your wife should probably claim her spousal benefit now while you are both living.

Because she is a bit shy of 65 years old, her initial SS spouse benefit will be reduced she'll get about 42% of your FRA benefit amount, instead of the 50% she would get if she claimed at age 67.

She can collect that amount until you die, at which time she will receive her survivor's benefit as your widow. If she has reached age 67 when that happens, your wife's benefit will become the same as yours was when you died, the \$3,986, plus any COLA since awarded.

And she will collect that higher SS survivor benefit for the remainder of her life which, from what you've shared, would likely be about 20+ years. Assuming her life expectancy is at least average, that is how your wife would get the most cumulative Social Security benefits over her lifetime.

As you have said, no one can predict how long they will live, but from the information you've provided, I expect that the above would likely be your wife's best Social Security strategy. And, for the record, I admire you exploring your wife's options in advance. I hope this answers your question, but rest assured we are always here if you need any further information.

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

Scam Awareness: Old cons targeting Habitat community resurface

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

WEST SPRINGFIELD - Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH) continues to battle recycled scams that refuse to disappear. False claims using our name - including a "free roof" con that targeted homeowners over 50 first circulated in March 2025 - are still misleading people more than a year later.

The scam promised free roof replacements for older homeowners, often through social media posts and word-of-mouth advertisements that appeared legitimate at first glance. But the program has no connection to Habitat for Humanity. Other scams have offered free bathroom remodels and window replacements.

"These scams are especially troubling because they prey on people who genuinely need help," said Aimee Giroux, GSHFH executive director. "Families trust Habitat because of the work we've done in the community for decades. Scammers know that, and they exploit it."

Unfortunately, housing-related scams are becoming more common nationwide. Fraudsters frequently target older adults, veterans, and low-income homeowners by offering phony grants, free repairs, or urgent financial assistance.

These scams often reappear with slightly different wording, graphics, or social media posts, making them seem new and legitimate even when they are not. In many cases, scammers use the Habitat name, trusted branding, or misleading promises to gain attention and personal information.

Greater Springfield Habitat does have home preservation programs. Legitimate opportunities are announced directly through official Habitat channels, including verified websites, social media pages, and straight from staff.

- Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity encourages residents to:
- Verify any program through official Habitat channels



A screenshot of a circulating social media post advertising free roof replacements for seniors older than 50. Notice the post came from the account of "True Home Help," which is neither Habitat for Humanity International nor an affiliate like Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity.

- Be cautious of unsolicited phone calls or social media messages
- Never provide personal or financial information without confirmation

When in doubt, contact our office directly before sharing information or responding to offers online.

"Scammers count on urgency and trust," said Olga Calligos, GSHFH Homeowner Programs manager. "We want our community to know they can always call us directly to verify information."

Even though scammers may misuse the Habitat name, Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity remains committed to what has always defined its work: building trust, stability, and safe housing in our community. To learn more about GSHFH programs, visit habitatspringfield.org

How to Spot a Scam

Scammers often use trusted names and urgent promises to trick people into sharing personal information or money. Here are a few warning signs to watch for:

Red Flags

- Promises of "free" home repairs or grants with no application process

- Requests for payment upfront
- Pressure to act immediately
- Requests for Social Security numbers, banking information, or insurance details over the phone or online
- Social media posts that cannot be verified through an official organization website

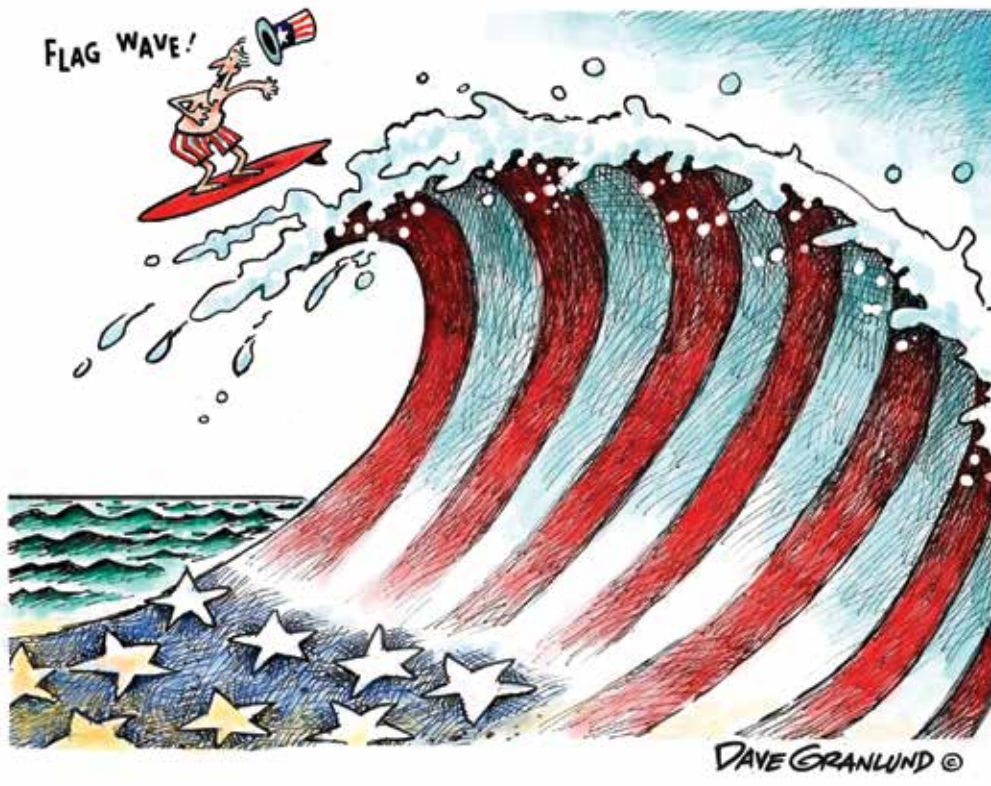
Protect Yourself

- Contact organizations directly using official phone numbers or websites
- Verify programs before sharing information
- Be cautious of unsolicited calls, texts, or messages
- Ask questions and request written information

Remember

Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity will always share official program information through:

- Our website
 - Verified social media accounts
 - Direct communication from Habitat staff
- If you are unsure whether a program is legitimate, call GSHFH directly at (413) 739-5503.



DAVE GRANLUND ©



By Ellenor Downer

Northern yellow warblers are small, evenly proportioned songbirds with medium-length tails and rounded heads. They are 4.7 to 5.1 inches long. For a warbler, the straight, thin bill is relatively large.

Northern yellow warblers are uniformly yellow birds. Males are a bright, egg-yolk yellow with reddish streaks on the underparts. Females are also yellow but appear slightly duller.

Both sexes flash yellow patches in the tail. The face is unmarked, accentuating the large black eye.

People may look for these warblers near the tops of tall shrubs and small trees.

They forage restlessly,

with quick hops along small branches and twigs to glean caterpillars and other insects. Males sing their sweet, whistled songs from high perches.

Northern yellow warblers breed in shrubby thickets and woods, particularly along watercourses and in wetlands. Common trees include willows, alders and cottonwoods across North America

In winter these warblers inhabit a variety of wooded habitats including mangroves, deciduous forests and tropical evergreen forests, as well as gardens, town plazas, second growth, brushy pastures,

hedgerows, agricultural lands and plantations.

Their song sounds like "sweet-sweet-sweet, I'm so sweet."

Yellow warblers usually build their nests in shrubs or small trees, typically 3 to 10 feet above the ground. The nest is often placed in dense foliage, making it difficult for predators to spot.

They commonly select willows, alders or other shrubs near water. The surrounding leaves provide cam-



John Kunhardt of Belchertown took this photo of a northern yellow warbler near Lake Wallace in Belchertown.

Please see **BACKYARD**, page 13

The Wilbraham-Hampden **TIMES**

We Want to Hear From You

EDITOR
Kristin Rivers
krivers@turley.com

ADVERTISING SALES
Jordan Conrad
jconrad@turley.com

SPORTS EDITOR
Greg Scibelli
sports@turley.com

The Wilbraham-Hampden Times is published every Thursday by Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069. Telephone (413) 283-8393, Fax (413) 289-1977.

WEB
wilbrahamhampden.times.turley.com

PHONE
(413) 283-8393

ADDRESS
24 Water Street
Palmer, MA 01069

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Correction Policy

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

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

Election letters to the editor welcome

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

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

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

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

Life in
**WILBRAHAM
 HAMPDEN**

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

WILBRAHAM HAMPDEN

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

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

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



HPL Summer Reading Kick off
 Submitted photos Ellen Moriarty
 The Hampden Free Public Library hosted their Annual Summer Reading Kickoff Party on June 20 with programming for all ages, visits from Bright Spot Therapy Dog, super-sized lawn games and signing up for summer reading.



HAMPDEN GARDEN CLUB FLOWERS FOR SRA
 The Hampden Garden Club donated flowers from their gardens to create eight table floral displays for the Scantic River Artisans' Juried Art Show held at the Hampden Senior Center on June 13-14.
 Submitted photo/caption Susan Austin

Another
1,000 BOOKS
before kindergarten reader!

We have another 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten finisher, Hazel Boody!

Submitted photo and caption Jaime Hageman

St. Cecilia Women's Club scholarship recipients

The Saint Cecilia Catholic Women's Club awarded two \$1,500 scholarships at a dinner at the Saint Cecilia Parish Center. Michael McGrath, son of Carolee & John McGrath, will attend Holy Cross College in Worcester majoring in Economics & Political Science. Therese Testa, daughter of Diane & Patrick Testa, will major in Psychology & English at Franciscan University of Steubenville in Steubenville, Ohio. Pictured left to right are Club President Darlene Willey Sliwa, Michael McGrath, Therese Testa, and Jackie Pahl, Scholarship Chairman.



Strings and Friends hold final shows of year

The Strings and Friends program held the final performances of the year in the three elementary schools of the Hampden Wilbraham Regional School District over the past two weeks. The Soule Road students performed on Monday June 8 at 9 a.m. The Stony Hill students performed on Wednesday June 17 at 9:15 a.m. And the Green Meadows students performed on Thursday June 18 at 9:20 a.m. The Strings and Friends program was founded by Elaine Holdsworth in 2006, who has volunteered with the program for the past 20 years. The program is directed by Denise Gendron, who has managed the program for the past 17 years, starting in 2009.



Submitted photos and caption Elaine Tyron Holdsworth



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Ice cream, art, and live music take over the museum garden July 12

WILBRAHAM - The Old Meeting House Museum invites the community to a sweet afternoon of ice cream and art at its annual Ice Cream Social on Sunday, July 12, from 2 to 4 p.m.

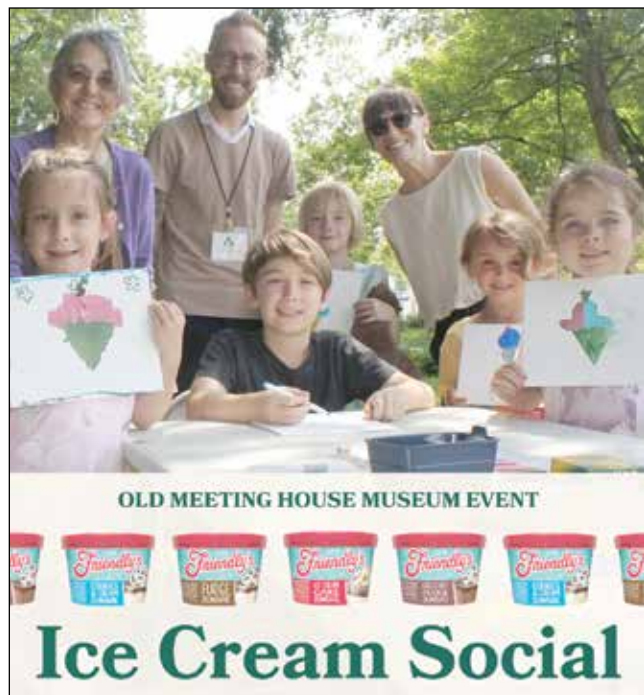
This family-friendly event celebrates summer with free Friendly's ice cream, live music, and good company in the museum garden. Guests can watch a live art demonstration, dig into hands-on kids' crafts, and enjoy an afternoon of live music with their neighbors.

Event Details:

Sunday, July 12 | 2 to 4 p.m. | 450 Main Street, Wilbraham

- Free Friendly's ice cream
- Live music by Valley String Band
- Hands-on kids' crafts
- Live art demonstration
- Free & family-friendly

"With a six-piece string band, plain air painting, kids' crafts, and free ice



cream generously donated by Friendly's, this year's social is shaping up to be our most fun yet. We're so grateful to Friendly's for their contin-

ued support," said Lindsey Bourcier, Director of Marketing.

More information is available at: www.theomh.org.



Tianna Darling aids her presentation with a slideshow.

Turley photo by Noelle Hisgen

CRAZY MAN from page 1

Darling started the segment to speak upon programs such as this involving senior centers and local areas. Darling also spoke about early stunt pilots and aerialists in the early 20th century. Provided were also videos in the presentation of old air pilots courtesy of the museum's archives.

"We've been here before and they (the senior center) are amazing," Darling said. "We love to bring our programs to the public, and share our love of aviation with ev-

eryone in the community."

The program followed with Cipolli and his experience as a retired stunt pilot. His program finished with a Q&A segment where attendees could ask him all kinds of questions regarding his time as a stunter.

Cipolli was invited to the senior center to speak on behalf of all air show pilots. He spent 18 years in the business and retired in 2011.

In retirement, Cipolli continues to teach aerobatics and compete as well.

"It's always nice to give

back," Cipolli said. "Aviation for me has been such a big part of my life and I feel like giving back is important."

Cipolli also showed videos in his presentation of himself and his past stunts that he has done in the air.

The New England Air Museum also gave attendees a special gift for their attendance at the event: A 10% off discount to their ticket to the museum.

It was a great showcase celebrating the success of aviation and how far it has come since its beginnings.

PARISEAU from page 1

acades, Board Member Dr. Stephen Hale, principal at Minnechaug Regional High School, and Board Member Kaitlin Welsh, M.Ed., RN, CCLS, a certified life specialist and registered nurse.

There will be a Meet the Board Ice Cream Social event on Monday, July 6, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Rice Fruit Farm to give the community an opportunity to meet the board, learn more about the foundation, ask questions, share ideas and connect with one another. Furry friends are also encouraged to attend, as there will be vouchers for free pup cups.

More events are also in the works.

Sophie Pariseau explained she's been working on the foundation for a while, noting the overwhelming amount of community support, positive feedback and many people wanting to learn how to get involved and lend their support after the 3.3 Miles for Change Walk in Fountain Park last year. The walk raised \$112,000 for the YWCA of Western Massachusetts to support its domestic violence assistance and awareness programs.

"Just with how many people were reaching out and singing their praises, it just felt like it was something that we should build off that momentum. If people want to help, why not give them a way to help? So that's kind of where the idea and the inception of the foundation came from," she said. "A couple of months later is when my dad

and I really decided we're going to do this and let's figure out the next steps, and since then, we have just been working behind the scenes to get everything in order to get it established."

She handpicked the board members, calling it "a labor of love" and considered the areas she wanted the members to have expertise in and serve the community. The focuses included trauma-informed care, youth, the law, financial and nonprofit expertise and experience with gun violence prevention.

D'Angelo and Hale will have the youth focus, Mangini covers the legal side, specifically violence against women, Martin is the expert on mental health and trauma-informed care, Welsh's focus is also trauma-informed care along with gun violence prevention and Monteiro is the financial and nonprofit expert.

"I'm really, really happy with who we have on board. They're all extremely passionate. They all have very vastly different backgrounds, but all backgrounds that are going to be so tremendously helpful as we carry out our mission, and so, I'm really, really excited to have them all on board. They just really have their own area where each of them are excelling and we've only really just begun," she said.

Other tasks in the last year have been working on the website, mission statement and vision, the bylaws and more.

Her biggest goal would be

raising more awareness.

"We're hoping to invest in programs that assist those affected by violence, empower individuals and neighborhoods through things like education, action, that sort of thing. We want to really focus on creating environments where safety, understanding and well-being can thrive. That's a huge part of our mission," she said. "In doing that, we're hoping to provide resources for survivors. Like I said, early intervention, positive community development."

Making sure the youth have the tools and resources they need is also important to her.

"A lot of these systemic issues start with the youth. We want to be proactive, not reactive. Obviously, being reactive is always necessary—we need to have those supports in place for those who need it—but being proactive is really key," she said.

She also emphasized that this foundation is for the community.

"As much as this foundation is in memorium of Sima and Dylan and in their honor, this foundation is really for the community. It's for survivors, it's for victims, it's for family members, for friends, it's for the community. It is in honor of my family, but I'm doing this because I want to help others," she said. "It's for the community, it's for our people, it's for the people who have showed up for us and we want to show up for them."

She encouraged the com-

munity to come out on July 6 to meet the board, thanking Rice's for their support.

"July 6 felt like the perfect opportunity. It's actually Dylan's 30th birthday," she said. "Really just a way for the community to come together and for them to learn more about our board members, whether that'd be about their background or whether that'd be how they plan to help the foundation or whether that'd just be learning about the foundation in general, learning about Sima and Dylan. It really can be whatever the community wants it to be. The board is there to answer any and all questions and provide any information that we can. We also want to really get to know our community and the members of the community that will be serving."

She expressed gratitude for the community's continued support since last year's walk and to now with the foundation, calling it "surreal."

"I wouldn't be able to do this without any of them. If this walk wasn't so successful, I may not have started this foundation and the walk was so successful because of the community," she said. "I can only take so much credit because, honestly, the community is what has built this foundation and it built this walk. I might be doing the behind-the-scenes, the nitty-gritty, but the people who really make this thing run and make the wheels turn is the community. Our board is going to be playing such a big

part and our board is part of our community. So, as much as I would like to take credit, I honestly have to credit the community. The community are the ones who really built this foundation, honestly."

Mark Pariseau also encouraged the community to attend the Meet the Board event and get involved, sharing his thoughts on the three pillars.

"I think we all know that there was a mental health issue that caused this whole thing. We all know it's at the forefront of, really, kind of what's going on in the world today. That we need to open some eyes and, really, people need to just start just getting help and talking to somebody when they realize they're having any kind of issues. The second pillar—domestic violence—my stance on that is no one—absolutely no one—has to be—what I would call it—up in your wheelhouse. Controlling you, abusing you emotionally or physically. That's just off-limits to me," he said.

On gun violence reduction and prevention, he emphasized the focus here is on gun safety and more education, adding Sima was raised with guns by her parents and her brothers shot guns, hunted, target shot and competed in pistol weeks, he had a shotgun for hunting, Sophie took part in pistol weeks and his kids grew up with guns and were used to them.

"I think what we really need to talk about is the locking up of guns, the access that people have," he said. "Education, I'm not looking to take anybody's guns away. I believe in the Second Amendment, but it's really just about education. Gun violence is just a terrible way to go. There's no barriers. It's not you got to grow up in the inner city to be a victim of gun violence. It's everywhere."

He expressed his excitement for the board members.

"I'm most excited about just continuing in Sima and Dylan's honor of trying to accomplish something positive going forward. I'm just hell-bent on not their names just being a number and associated to gun violence and mental health. I want their names to mean something," he said.

He explained the community's support at last year's walk and establishing the foundation "is a testament to who Sima and Dylan were as individuals."

"They were just very well-liked and respected by their peers, their friends, their family, and to me, it just goes to show that community, if you're in it, you're involved in it. It takes care of itself and the community is taking care of their legacy. Helping to take care of their legacy for them," he said.

In addition to raising more awareness, he hopes any and all money raised at future

events "is helping that one person get out of a bad situation for them or for them and their children."

"Other than awareness, the biggest thing for me is just helping people. One person, two people, however many it is," he said.

Like his daughter, he also emphasized educating the youth.

"A lot of kids see things and hear things when they're small and they don't really know what to do. They don't know how to deal with it, and obviously they don't know a lot of the signs. They're not mature enough yet to realize that there's a bigger issue here and that all goes to the awareness portion of it," he said. "The teens. I want to say girls and boys are getting together at 15, 16 years old. They need to know at that age. I'm going to just say guys because I'm a guy, but guys can be controlling and the jealousy, you notice things like that. It's got to raise up a red flag for you, because that's just not a healthy relationship."

He also offered this advice: if you see something, say something.

"Outside of that person's circle of friends, there's little things that once you become a little bit educated, you can start to pick up on. Just little signs here and there. You have to say something. You have to speak up. Everyone has a voice and what these domestic violence people do is they want to take your voice away from you, because that's your first weapon, your first badge of honor that you have," he said. "If they take your voice, they've succeeded and it's going to get worse from there."

On the legacy of Sima and Dylan, he said this.

"I would hope their legacy would be in creating an environment where you feel safe at home, you're allowed to ask questions, you have the wherewithal, the education, the basics of just realizing that there's a problem and we need to do something. We need to act on it," he said.

Sophie and Mark Pariseau again thanked the community for their support, hoping more people can get involved, there are resources available and they are not alone, that they know they can play a role in helping others and organizations and the community continues to support each other.

Also, gratitude to the board members standing up and showing up to support their efforts to change and save lives.

To learn more, visit sdp-foundation.org and check out their Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram pages. The community is also encouraged to continue sharing their memories of Sima and Dylan on the website's Community Tributes page, along with exploring the website to learn how they can get involved in future events.

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Falcons fall at home to Granby



Brenna Woytowicz chases down the ball.



Mia Newman heads up the field.



Molly Mahan pops the ball up.

WILBRAHAM – Last Thursday evening, Granby girls soccer, in B Division action, kept their perfect season going with a 4-2 win over the Wilbraham Falcons B. While Granby is now a perfect 6-0 on the season, the Falcons are right in the mix in fifth place with a 2-3-1 record overall this season. The two teams will be back in action following the Fourth of July break.



Sydney Saltmarsh runs through the middle of the field.



Emerson Letendre dribbles up the field.



McKinley Jaeger lunges for the pass.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Playoffs hopes still alive after Pioneers shutout

By **Tim Peterson**
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—Had the Western Mass. Pioneers failed to secure a victory in last Friday night's match against AC Connecticut, their playoff hopes would have vanished for the first time since they entered USL League Two in 2019.

The Pioneers kept their postseason dreams alive a little bit longer thanks to a hard-earned 1-0 shutout win at Lusitano Stadium.

"We didn't get the result that we wanted in our last match on Tuesday night, and we had a tie here last week," said Pioneers assistant coach Tomas Duben. "It was very important for us to get the three points and the win in tonight's game. We're still battling for a postseason berth."

Duben took over the head coaching duties from long-time Pioneers head coach Federico Molinari, who spent last weekend coaching a Western United Pioneers U-16 girls' team at a tournament in Virginia.

Since 2024, Duben has a 3-0-1 record as the Pioneers interim head coach.

"My playing career ended a couple of years ago because of a knee injury," he said. "I really enjoyed playing for this soccer team. I'm very grateful that Federico gave me this coaching opportunity and I'm still learning."

The Pioneers improved to 6-2-2 (20 points) following the home shutout victory, solidifying their hold on third place in the Northeast Division. They trail first place Vermont Green FC (10-0-1, 31 points) and second place NEC (10-

1-1, 30 points). Only the top two teams in the Northeast Division qualify for the league playoffs.

Western Mass. finished at the top of the Northeast table in both 2019 and 2021. They made it all the way to the National Semifinals in 2021. They've finished in second place during the past four seasons.

Between 2010 and 2018, the Pioneers only qualified for the USL PDL playoffs once.

AC Connecticut (1-10-0) had several scoring chances during the first twenty five

Please see **PIONEERS**, page 10

Jaiden Williams goes for the throw-in.



Alfred Baafi makes a backwards pass.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com



Trinity Clark collects a pass.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Mutiny shut out by Vermont Green FC

By **Tim Peterson**
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW— Even though the New England Mutiny had already been eliminated from the USL W playoffs, they still had a chance to influence the race for first place in the Northeast Division entering the regular-season finale.

Had the Mutiny pulled off an upset victory against Vermont Green FC, the Hudson Valley Crusaders would have finished at the top of the Northeast Division table.

However, it was Vermont Green FC players and their rowdy supporters doing all the celebrating following a 3-0 shutout win over the Mutiny at Lusitano Stadium last Saturday night.

"We wanted to play the spoiler role in today's match," said New England Mutiny midfielder Avery



Goalie Chloe Lazier sends a free kick away.

Klingensmith, who's from Belchertown. "We were hoping to make the playoffs in our first season playing in this league, but it's always a lot of fun trying to impact another team's season."

Vermont Green FC captured the inaugural USL W League Northeast title with a 6-0-4 overall record.

Please see **MUTINY**, page 10

Blue Sox drop third straight game, falling to Danbury

HOLYOKE – The Valley Blue Sox dropped their third consecutive game after suffering a 5-2 loss to the Danbury Westerners on Saturday night. The Blue Sox had won their two previous matchups against Danbury but struggled to get on base early in tonight's game, which contributed to the outcome.

The top of the first inning came and went for the Blue Sox as Danbury's starting pitcher, Cole Gibson, retired the batters in order, giving the Westerners a chance to set the tone. For Valley, Andrew Oppenheimer made his season debut, joining the team due to personnel changes in the Blue Sox's bullpen.

Postgame, head coach John Raiola touched on having players come onto the team in the middle of the season, but made it clear that he has to rely on those who have been here from the beginning.

"It does take some guys here and there to come in and replace some guys that we lost," said Raiola. "Our core is our core [and] they are all here for a reason... they know what it takes to be successful at this level."

Oppenheimer began the bottom of the inning by walking the lead-off hitter, Jack Lutte, who advanced to second when Kyle Garbowski grounded out. Collin Mowry then hit an RBI double with Lutte in scoring position, giving Danbury an early 1-0 lead.

Gibson continued his impressive start in the second by retiring the batters in order once again, but this time Oppenheimer followed suit, quickly regrouping from his first inning.

Valley still had trouble finding a way on base in the third, and Danbury kept capitalizing on the Blue Sox's shortcomings as Noel Rivera got walked, advanced to second, and scored on a wild pitch, putting Valley behind 2-0.

The fifth inning had Valley getting two men on base when Eddison Esquivel hit a single out to center field, and Nick Tomasetto was walked. Unfortunately, the next three hitters were retired by Gibson, ending Valley's chance at a scoring opportunity.

Danbury did not waste any time starting the bottom of the frame as Peter Link hit a long homer out to center field, extending the deficit to 3-0. However, Anthony Grabau responded with a home run of his own during the sixth, leading the team in the home run category and getting Valley their first tally of the game.

The Blue Sox finally got the momentum on their side with Trevor Harmon getting walked and moving to second off another Esquivel single. Nick Tomasetto hit a single of his own and sent Harmon home, bringing Valley within one run of a tie game.

Owen Basso replaced Oppenheimer in the bottom of the sixth and ended up loading the bases after hitting Ronan Donohue with a pitch and walking Michael Delph and Gavin Donohue. Basso then threw a wild pitch that allowed Ronan Donohue to score Danbury's fourth run.

There were no runs scored in the seventh, and unlike Danbury, Valley was not able to get on the board in the eighth. The final run of the game was another home run from the Westerners as Gavin Donohue hit the ball out of Rogers Park, putting a late Blue Sox comeback out of reach.

Valley's focus now shifts to their next game, and Coach Raiola spoke about what he hopes to see from his team when they play the Sharks.

"More compete, more fight, more energy," said Raiola. "Tomorrow's a new day...and [an] opportunity to put together a more complete game."

MUTINY from page 9

They're scheduled to host the Eastern Conference playoffs this weekend

One of the Vermont Green's ties came at Lusitano Stadium against the Mutiny (1-1) on May 26.

Vermont Green squeaked out a 2-1 home win in the second meeting between the two squads at the beginning of June.

The Mutiny finished their season with a 2-6-2 overall record.

"We lost a couple of close games this season," Klingensmith said. "We also had a lot of new players, and it was a rebuilding year for us. We always tried to do our best in every game."

Kate Howarth and Megan Cunningham made their first starts of the season in last Saturday's match.

"I played with both of them in the past and it was a lot of fun having them back on the field again today," Klingensmith said. "They're a big part of this organization."

Howarth, who also played for the Orlando Pride of the National Women's Soccer League, is the Mutiny's all-time leading goalscorer and point-scorer.

Klingensmith is also one of the Mutiny's veteran players. She joined the squad after graduating from Belchertown High School in 2022.

"It has been a great journey playing for this team," said Klingensmith, who graduated from American University in May. "I only live about 15 minutes away and this

place is very special to me. I'm hoping to play for this soccer team again next year."

Klingensmith is planning to play for a professional soccer team in Greece beginning in August.

The other players from Western Mass. listed on the Mutiny roster are Mila Dillard (Chicopee), Hope Santiniello (Agawam), and Tennessee Murphy (Monson). None of those players played in the final match of the regular season.

During the opening half of last Saturday's match, the Mutiny had two free kicks, but both attempts were saved by Vermont Green goalie Olivia Shippee.

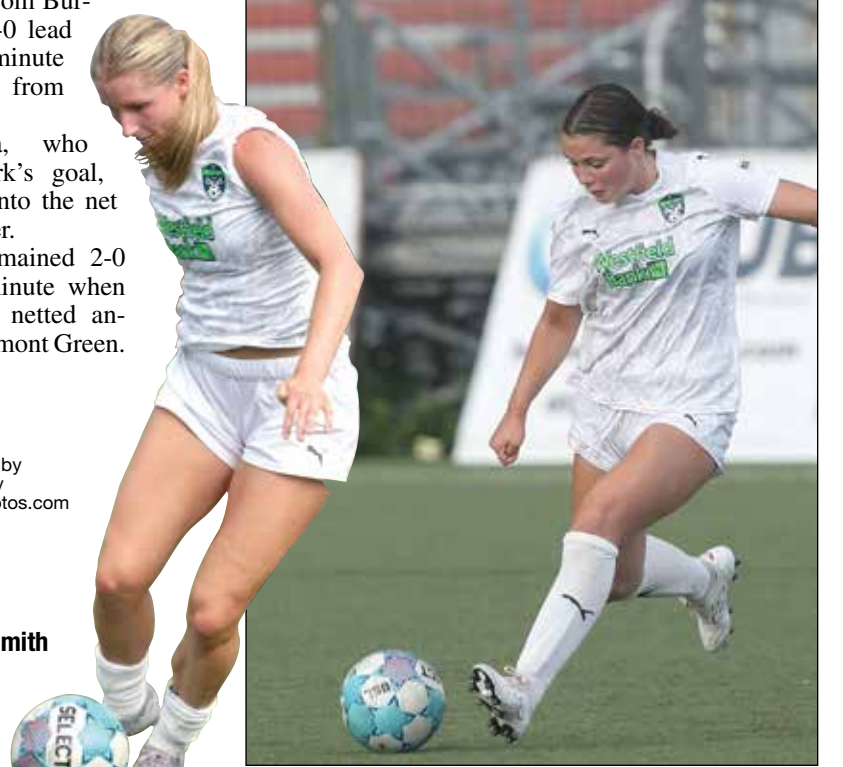
The visitors from Burlington took a 1-0 lead during the 28th minute following a goal from Georgina Clark.

Emily Mara, who assisted on Clark's goal, booted the ball into the net three minutes later.

The score remained 2-0 until the 73rd minute when Lauren DeGroot netted another goal for Vermont Green.



Brigid Moore winds up for a free kick.



Avery Klingensmith is closely pressured by an opponent.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Sadie Mathis brings in a pass while on the run.

My Friend Joanie

Written by Ellen J Pilch and Rylee Balicki, Illustrated by Juan Carlos Colla

WARE/WILBRAHAM - It's a show-and-tell day at school and 6-year-old Rylee can't wait to tell her classmates about her best friend, Joanie. The more she talks, however, the more confused her classmates and teacher become. Joanie, it seems, is one bizarre little girl. Will the class ever figure out why Rylee's friend is so unusual?

Ellen J Pilch lives in Ware, Massachusetts with her husband and 12 cats. She received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Elementary Education/Psychology from Assumption College

(now Assumption University) in Worcester, MA. For the past twelve years, she has written the blog 15andmeowing.

Rylee Balicki (Ellen's great-niece) is 10 years old and currently a student at Soule Rd. School in Wilbraham, Massachusetts. In addition to writing, Rylee enjoys singing in her school chorus, basketball, dancing and acrobatics.

\$12.99, ISBN 978-1-61225-407-4

My Friend Joanie will be available through Amazon and Barnes and Noble. Bookstores, libraries and other small and or large volume purchasers can order through Ingram Distributors.

PIONEERS from page 9

minutes of the opening half, but Pioneers goalie Ben Alexander made the saves which kept the match scoreless.

"Ben played very well in tonight's match," Duben said. "The defense also gave him a lot of support back there."

Alexander returned to action after missing a couple of games due to an injury.

It was the Pioneers' fourth 1-0 win of the regular season. They also played a scoreless draw in a road match against Black Rock FC at the beginning of June.

The Pioneers, who have a 3-1-1 home record, took advantage of a mistake made by AC Connecticut goalie Asger Hemmer-Hansen to take a 1-0 late in the first half.

Alfred Baafi put a shot into the back of the net giving the Pioneers a 1-0 lead at the end of the first half.

"The goalie attempted to clear the ball, but I stole it away from him," said Baafi, who scored his third goal of the season. "Then I put a shot

into the wide open net, which felt really good. We're still hoping to make the playoffs"

Baafi, who's from Techiman, Ghana, is a first-year member of the Pioneers.

"The atmosphere at this stadium is always outstanding," he said. "We get plenty of support at our home games."

Baafi is also a member of the men's soccer team at High Point University in High Point, North Carolina.

Two years ago, Baafi was a member of the Seacoast United Phantoms, which captured the USL-League Two National Championship title.

"It was an amazing feeling after my team won the championship game two years ago," said Baafi, who's going to be a senior in the fall. "I just needed a change and decided to play for the Pioneers this year. I'm also hoping to

be drafted by a MLS team."

The Pioneers had an opportunity to score another goal at the start of the second half.

Martin Echarren sent a pass into the box to Juan Galindrez, whose shot attempt skipped wide of the goal.

The Western Mass. squad also had several more chances to score, but the score remained 1-0.

The Pioneers are scheduled to host Black Rock FC at 7:30pm on Friday night.



Matiwos Rumley goes to meet the ball.

William Fauth watches his pass move away.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com



Riley Priddy makes a quick pass.



Martin Echarren looks up the field.



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The Wilbraham Junior Women's Club announces 2026 scholarship winner

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Junior Women's Club has awarded its 2026 scholarship to Allison Demetri, daughter of Philip and Lynette Demetri of Wilbraham. The \$1,000 scholarship was presented during the Senior Awards Night in May, recognizing Allison from a highly competitive pool of applicants for her outstanding commitment to community service.

Allison's record of volunteerism spans several local organizations, including the National Honor Society, the MRHS Key Club, Saint Cecilia's Church, the Wilbraham Public Library, and the Girl Scouts of America. She also led the effort to design and paint the mural on the side of a building along Main Street in Wilbraham, a project that has become a vibrant focal point in town. In addition, she contributed to the mapping and documentation of trails at McDonald's



Jr. Women's Club Scholarship Committee from left to right are: Brenda Willard (Jr Club President), Ann Mathews, Barbara Croteau, Allison Demetri, Lynette Demetri, and Kathy Fuss. Absent from photo was Katy Reed.

Nature Preserve, helping create resources for public use and outdoor exploration.

This fall, Allison will attend Quinnipiac University to study marketing and business in the university's accelerated 3+1 program,

earning both a bachelor's and a master's degree. To celebrate her achievement, she joined members of the Wilbraham Junior Women's Club at their annual picnic, accompanied by her mother.

The Wilbraham Junior

Women's Club supports local programs, charities, and community events in Wilbraham and surrounding towns through fundraising and volunteer initiatives. For more information, visit www.WilbrahamJuniorWomens.org.

State Rep. Puppulo secures \$600,000 for Wilbraham sidewalk construction

BOSTON — State Representative Angelo J. Puppulo, Jr. announces that \$600,000 has been allocated for the Town of Wilbraham to support the construction of a new sidewalk along Stony Hill Road, enhancing pedestrian safety and improving community connectivity.



Rep. Angelo Puppulo Jr.

The funding, secured through an amendment filed by Representative Puppulo and passed by the House of Representatives, was included as part of a broader environmental bond bill focused on modernizing environmental laws, strengthening climate resilience, supporting agriculture and food systems, streamlining permitting processes, and improving the Commonwealth's natural resource management. The legislation advances these priorities through a series of

infrastructure investments that enhance public spaces across Massachusetts.

The \$600,000 allocation will support the design and construction of a new sidewalk to provide safer access for residents, students, and families traveling along the corridor. The project addresses longstanding safety concerns and aims to improve walkability in the surrounding neighborhood. "Investing in basic infrastructure like sidewalks has a real and immediate impact on public safety and quality of life," said Representative Puppulo. "This funding will help ensure that residents especially pedestrians can travel more safely along Stony Hill Road. I am pleased to support this important project for the Town of Wilbraham."

RICK'S PLACE from page 1

are grieving. All services are provided at no cost to families," Ross said. "In addition to its on-site programs, Rick's Place partners with schools throughout Western Massachusetts to offer school-based grief support groups and professional development opportunities for educators and youth-serving professionals. The organization also provides community outreach and grief education to help build greater understanding of the impact of loss on children and families. At its heart, Rick's Place is a compassionate community where children, teens, and families who are grieving can share their experiences, remember the people who have died, find connection with others, and learn that they do not have to face their grief journey alone."

In addition to the ribbon-cutting celebration, Rick's Place also recently received a \$10,000 grant from the Alternatives for Youth Foundation (AYF) to aid its ongoing grief supports.

"This funding is especially meaningful because all of Rick's Place's services are provided free of charge to families. The grant will help sustain the peer support groups, family-centered programming, special events, and community outreach efforts that make it possible for youth and caregivers to connect with others who understand their experience. As the need for grief support services continues to grow throughout Western Massachusetts and Northern Connecticut, the AYF grant helps ensure that Rick's Place can continue to provide a welcoming and supportive environment where participants can share their experiences, build meaningful connections, and develop tools for navigating life after a loss," Ross said. "The grant also helps strengthen Rick's Place's long-term ability to serve the community by providing reliable support for its core programs at a time of organizational growth and expansion. Most importantly, the funding ensures that children, teens, and families who are grieving can continue to access compassionate support and a caring community at no cost to them. We are deeply



Executive Director Therese Ross provides remarks at the ribbon-cutting.



Board President Bill Scatolini, State Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow) and Executive Director Therese Ross with the citation from the Massachusetts State Senate.

grateful to the Alternatives for Youth Foundation for recognizing the importance of grief support and for investing in the well-being of the youth and families we serve."

On June 20, the Third Annual Summer Kickoff Party hosted by Steve Nagle of Rock 102 took place at Vanished Valley Brewing in Ludlow, raising \$13,192.61 for Rick's Place according to Nagle's Facebook post. Ross expressed her gratitude to the community for coming out for this event as well.

"The incredible turnout and support for the Third Annual Summer Kickoff Party on Saturday was about much more than just the money raised. While the more than \$13,000 generated through the event will help Rick's Place continue providing free grief support services to children, teens and families who are grieving, the event also sends a powerful message to everyone in the wider community. For our staff, volunteers, board members, and the families we serve, seeing so many people gather in support of Rick's Place is a reminder that our community understands the importance of grief support and believes in the work we do. It demonstrates that families facing loss are not alone and that

there is a network of people who care deeply about ensuring they have access to no-cost support when they need it most," Ross said. "Events like this also help raise awareness about grief and the resources available through Rick's Place. Every person who attends, sponsors, donates, or shares information about the event becomes part of our mission and helps us reach more families who may not yet know support is available. We are especially grateful to Steve Nagle, Vanished Valley Brewing, Dave Miner, the sponsors, volunteers and everyone who attended. Their generosity and enthusiasm not only help sustain our programs but also strengthen the sense of community that is at the heart of everything we do. The success of this event reflects the compassion of our region and the shared commitment to supporting youth and families who are grieving."

At the heart of it? Supporting people and keeping Thorpe's memory and legacy alive.

"Rick's Place serves two deeply important purposes in our community. First, it provides a safe and supportive space for children, teens, and families who are grieving the death of someone significant



State Rep. Angelo Puppulo Jr. (D-Springfield) also presented a citation on behalf of the Massachusetts House of Representatives at the ribbon-cutting.



State Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow) with one of the children at Rick's Place.

in their lives. Grief can be an isolating experience, especially for young people who may feel different from their peers or struggle to find others who understand what they are going through. At Rick's Place, we get it," Ross said. "At the same time, Rick's Place carries forward the memory and legacy of Rick Thorpe. What began as a way to honor a remarkable man who lost his life on September 11, 2001, has grown into an organization that has touched hundreds of lives over almost two decades. Every young person who feels supported, every caregiver who feels less alone, and every family that walks through our doors is part of that legacy. Rick's Place is a living tribute to Rick's life and the values he represented - kindness, connection, and caring for others. His memory lives on through the impact that Rick's Place has on families every day. That is what makes Rick's Place so special. It honors the memory of one individual

while creating meaningful opportunities for countless others to find connection, support and understanding as they navigate life after loss."

Ross thanked the community for its ongoing support.



A child and State Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow) check out some drawings created at Rick's Place.

Photos courtesy of Noah Green

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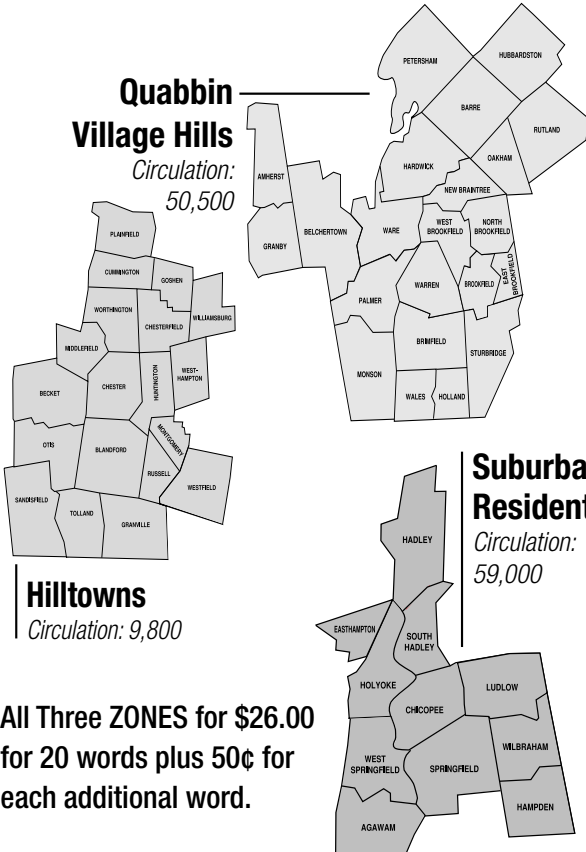
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BACKYARD from page 6

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A typical yellow warbler clutch contains about three to five pale greenish or bluish white eggs with small brown or gray speckles.

The female incubates the eggs for roughly 11 to 12 days, rarely leaving the nest except to feed. Once the chicks hatch, both parents help feed them.

Feeding mealworms

After seeing a pair of bluebirds, I started putting out mealworms on the picnic table every day. I figured black bears would not bother with mealworms.

I was right and the birds

ate them up quickly. Yes, the bluebirds came for the mealworms, but so did two catbirds and a male robin.

The other day the pair of catbirds landed on the table as I spread out the mealworms. I've noticed them check the table for mealworms before I put them out.

Red-shouldered hawk

A woman in Montgomery reported a red-shouldered hawk in her yard. It's one of the most distinctively marked common hawks with broad reddish-peachy underparts and a strongly banded tail.

Wild turkey encounter

My daughter, Paula, was walking her dog, JoJo on the rail trail in Gilbertville along

the river. A hen turkey was hidden on the side of the trail. She states, "When JoJo and I ran by, she flew up. One of the babies panicked and started running after mom flew off, which caused mom to charge at us making a bunch of noise."

She states, "JoJo and I sprinted a good 20 feet before she decided we weren't a threat anymore."

She continues, "But this was definitely the closes encounter we've ever had. JoJo now ranks turkeys in the 'scary' category along with Canada geese."

Brimfield birds

A Brimfield resident emailed, "A pair of yellow-bellied sapsuckers spent

a few days visiting a native dogwood tree in the yard awhile back. And we have seen a few warblers, a common yellowthroat checked me out when I was working in the garden yesterday. We have at least two male hummingbirds visiting the yard and feeders and at least one female."

He stated, "I saw a female rose-breasted grosbeak collecting nesting material so I'm going to look for a nest. Several years ago I found a grosbeak nest near our shed."

Osprey

The Brimfield resident stated in his email, "The Osprey nest in Warren looks like the chicks have hatched based on the behavior of an adult at the nest yesterday. In the past

it is usually mid June before I see chicks in the nest. When they are very young osprey chicks mostly lay down in the nest waiting to be fed."

He reported four great blue heron nests at the pond I visit in Warren where the Ospreys nest.

Bird count

The Brimfield resident also stated, "The Allen Bird Club of Springfield does a spring bird count each year in mid May. We use the Christmas Bird Count circle, I have covered Ludlow since 1989. I only managed 50 species this year, partly because my hearing isn't what it use to be."

He stated, "I did manage to find a Tennessee and

Parula warbler, about a dozen yellow-rumped warblers, two common loons, one each solitary and spotted sandpiper and a black-billed cuckoo. I hadn't seen a cuckoo in a few years."

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

PUBLIC NOTICES

Hampden Conservation Commission Notice of Public Hearing

In accordance with the Wetland Protection Act, Chapter 131, Section 40, a Public Hearing will be held by the Hampden Conservation Commission on **July 15, 2026 at the Hampden Town Hall at 6:00p.m.** (85 Wilbraham Rd.). This is for a **Request for Determination of Applicability** filed by Michelle LeDoux. The property is located at 420 Main Street. It is for removal of 5 dead trees within the Riverfront Area. The meeting will be held in the Selectboard meeting room. For more information contact Conservation@HampdenMa.gov. 07/02/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD26P1354EA
Estate of:
Joshua Markham
Date of Death: 02/24/2026
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION
To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Juanita Markham of Hampden, MA** requesting

that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that **Juanita Markham of Hampden, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 07/20/2026. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.**

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any

matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. **Claudine T. Stoudemire**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: June 24, 2026
Rosemary A Saccomani, Register of Probate
07/02/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD26P1311EA
Estate of:
Robert M Pietryka
Date of Death: 12/14/2012
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Late and Limited Formal Testacy and/or Appointment** has been filed by **Shannon A Pons of Charlotte, NC** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that **Shannon A Pons of Charlotte, NC** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain

a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 07/14/2026. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.**

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. **Claudine T. Stoudemire**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: June 16, 2026
Rosemary A Saccomani, Register of Probate
07/02/2026

SALE OF MOTOR VEHICLE

This ad is pursuant to MA Gen. Law Ch.255, Sec. 39A as of **July 3, 2026** the following motor vehicle will be for sale to satisfy a garage keepers lien:
Vehicle: Hyundai Sonata
VIN#: 5NPEB4AC3BH045889
LKO: Zachari Zayas-Damiam
519 Homestead Ave
Holyoke MA 01040
R & S Assoc. Inc
PO Box 543
Wilbraham MA 01095
413-596-4374
06/18, 06/25, 07/02/2026

Town of Hampden Notice of Public Hearing

The Hampden Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, July 22, 2026 at 7 PM** in the Town Hall, 85 Wil-


braham Road, Hampden, MA on the application of Samantha Edge for a Special Permit with Site Plan Approval under Section 6, Table of Use Regulations Code 4.20 – Business or Professional Offices or Banks of the Zoning Bylaw for Velour Laser Boutique within the Business District located on Parcel 12-096-000 East Longmeadow Road (13 Allen Street) owned by MJCEL LLC. Information related to this application is on file in the Town Clerk's Office and is available for review by the public during normal business hours. For the Board, Patrick Coyne, Chair of the Hampden Planning Board. Published in the Wilbraham-Hampden Times July 2 and 9, 2026.

07/02, 07/09/2026

PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

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

Public notice deadlines are Friday at 3 p.m.
visit www.publicnotices.turley.com



Send Us Your Community Autumn Events

Turley Publications will print your Autumn event **FREE OF CHARGE** in our **Autumn Fest Supplement** which will be published **September 9, 2026**. Total circulation of **85,000** which reaches over **200,000** readers in the Pioneer Valley. **Event Should Be Non-Profit & Open to the Public**

FREE Calendar Listings Reaching over 200,000 Readers in the Pioneer Valley

Event Name _____

Date/Time _____

Location _____

Description _____

Cost _____

Contact name & phone number for more information _____

Deadline for Calendar submissions is August 19.

MAIL YOUR LISTING INFORMATION TO: Turley Publications, Attn: Jamie Joslyn, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069 or email* them to: jamie@turley.com *Be sure to indicate "Autumn Event" in the subject line of your email.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. ___ chat

5. Statue near the Pyramids

11. A process to change the look

14. Herb

15. Think about excessively

18. Bass vocal part

19. Supreme Allied Cmdr. of NATO

21. A major division of geological time

23. New Zealand parrot

24. Cognitive contents

28. Lump of yarn

29. Atomic #109

30. Let go of

32. Indian title of respect

33. Whereabouts unknown

35. Electronic data processing

36. Drivers' licenses count

39. Snakelike fishes

41. They precede C

42. Popular personal computers

44. Intermediate community stage in ecological succession

46. Wings

47. Indicates position

49. Pleasantly smooth or soft

52. Jeweled headdress

56. In slow tempo

58. ___ Falls

60. Reassertions

62. Eras

63. Hyphen

CLUES DOWN

1. Corporate executive

2. A plant used for flavoring food

3. Opinion or belief

4. Sheep in their second year

5. Intensities of sound

6. Indicates support for

7. Expression of laughter

8. OJ trial judge

9. Pointed ends of pens

10. True bugs genus

12. Lawyers argue theirs

13. Body parts

16. Closes tightly

17. World Heritage site in Nigeria

20. Islamic calendar month

22. Commercial

25. "Westworld" actor Harris

26. They ___

27. Religious guilds

29. Woman (French)

31. Parts per billion (abbr.)

34. Brew

36. Spiritual leader

37. Indigo bush

38. Burn with a hot liquid

40. Older citizen

43. Scad fish genus

45. Morning

48. Line passing through the center (abbr.)

50. Double S-shaped curve

51. Small, thin person

53. Older

54. Mars crater

55. Humanities

57. Word element meaning ear

58. To the ___ degree

59. Residue

61. It cools your home

THE
KITCHEN &
BATH CO.
DESIGN
BUILD
LIVE



Your Private Sanctuary

Start and end your day in a space designed for serenity and superior functionality at every stage of your life. We transform dated bathrooms into luxury spa retreats that evolve with your lifestyle. Using premium materials like Corian® and Wilsonart®, we create seamless, easy-to-clean surfaces that stand the test of time. From smart storage solutions to accessible walk-in designs, experience the perfect blend of elegance, safety, and long-term durability.

LOCAL.
FAMILY-OWNED.
IN-HOUSE CRAFTSMEN.

OUR FAMILY OF COMPANIES

