

'How to Help Wildlife Thrive' presented at HPL

By Noelle Hisgen
Correspondent

HAMPDEN - Wildlife ecologist, author, and educator Brad Timm took a visit to the Hampden Free Public Library for his program, How to Help Wildlife Thrive on July 1.

Timm's program featured a presentation all about different kinds of wildlife in the Northeast, along with mentioning fun facts about each animal along with additional videos. He was also able to converse with attendees on all of their favorite animals and past experiences and interactions involving animals as well.

The program also discussed important ways that people can help protect wildlife in their own backyards.

The program surrounded the wildlife in the northeast region, common and uncommon, and discussed surprising aspects about these animals that most people don't realize.

Timm is an author who wrote two books: "Wildlife Out Your Window," which features facts about 100 commonly seen animals across the northeast region, and "America is Wild!," which features two animals and plants for each of the 50 states.

Timm, who has done wildlife research for over 20 years and got his Ph.D in wildlife, is also the founder of the Northeast Wildlife Team, which focuses on educating the general public on New England wildlife. Their mission is to empower people to take action around their area to help wildlife.

"I think a big part of it is enjoying the awe and wonder about wildlife and really those common animals that



A number of local animals are shown on the slideshow.



Turley photos by Noelle Hisgen
On display are Timm's books: "Wildlife Out Your Window" and "America is Wild!"

everyone sees, even if you live in a city. And really importantly, I really try to have people take home actions that they can take to help wildlife and the planet as a whole. They're really simple actions. And it's kind of an all hands on deck for us to help wildlife," Timm said.

Library Director Ellen



Bradd Timm talks about wildlife with the attendees.

Moriarty also spoke about Timm and his work.

"The theme of our summer reading is Plant a Seed, Read. And we love everything to do with nature. Brad Timm is a local wildlife ecologist and nature author, so we thought it was a perfect idea to have him come and talk about easy and creative ways you can help create pollinator friendly spaces, native plants and shrubs, and teach the kids all about nature and plants and all the animals, especially local ones," Moriarty said.

It was a good afternoon celebrating local wildlife and showing different ways we as a society can work together and help protect animals and plants on the planet.

For program offerings and inquiries by Timm, visit his website at www.braddtimmm.com.

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

HAMPDEN, MA - 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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- 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.

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.

Adult Crafternoon at the WPL

WILBRAHAM - Wilbraham Public Library is offering a Crafternoon for Adults on Friday, July 17, 2 to 3:30pm.

Join us for a unique crafting opportunity: making bee baths! Participants will each create a simple bee

oasis that can be set outside and used by any thirsty bees.

No experience is needed, and all craft supplies will be provided. But registration is necessary as space is limited. For more information or to register, please call the library at 413-596-6141.

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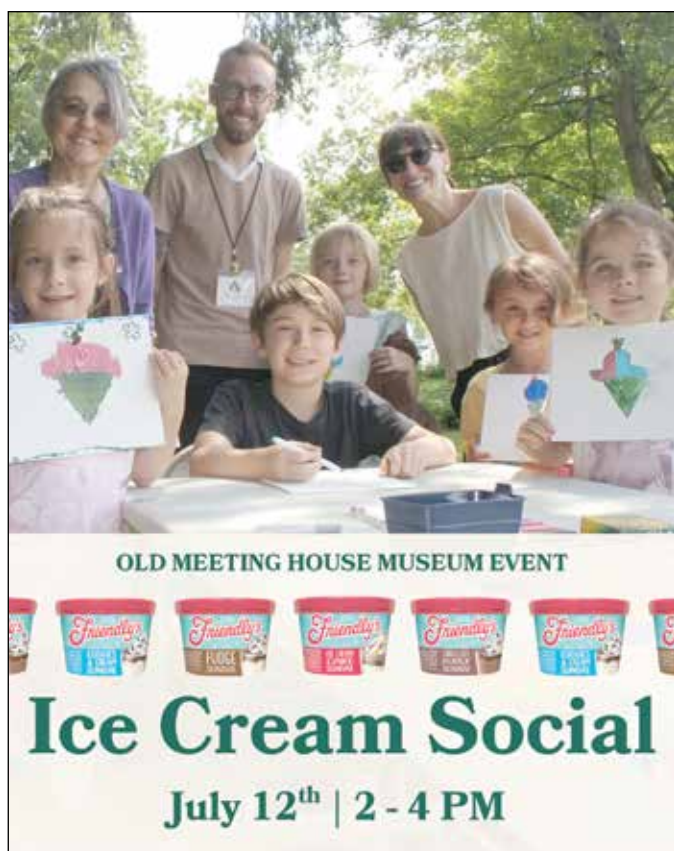
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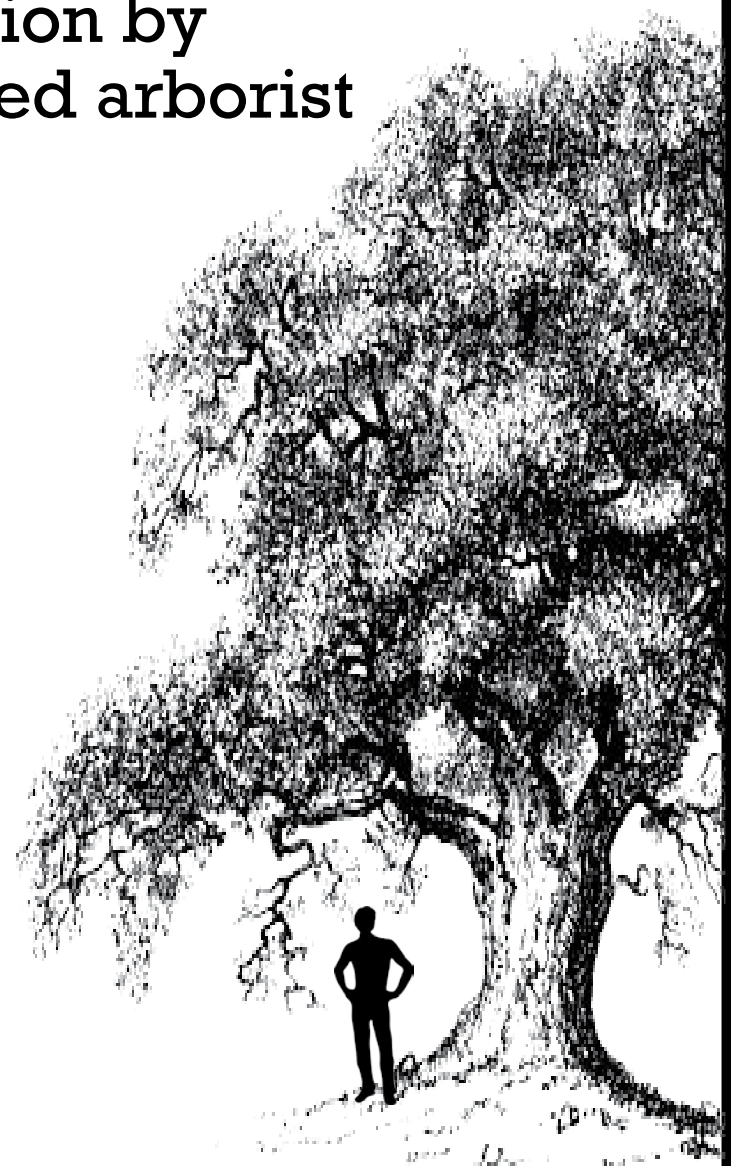


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Herpetologist and animal education Fern Reitman introduces herself to the children.

Reitman introduces the attendees to Flo the snake.



REPTILES from page 1

Reitman brought a few of her reptile friends to the library. She would take out each one by one and talk about fun facts about the animal and how they came to the Reptile Shows.

Then, children could ask Reitman questions about the animal before she would bring out the next one. Children were also given the opportunity to pet some of the animals as well.

Some of the reptiles that were brought to the library include Fireball the tortoise, Millie the monitor lizard, Flo the snake and Mr. Wiggles the alligator. There were also

smaller animals including geckos, frogs and much more displayed on a table for children to see as well.

Reitman, who is a herpetologist and animal educator, took a moment to speak about the program.

“The amount of times that I have seen people or kids go into this, being really scared, and then as I go on: I pull out the animal, there might be a big reaction. They might be scared and then as I go on, calmly holding and talking about the animal, and oftentimes at the end people will tell me like: ‘Oh, I’m not afraid of this animal anymore,’ and that feels really rewarding,” Reitman said.

Youth Services Librarian Kate Rumpalik also took a moment to talk about the reptile program.

“We’re really looking forward to the program today,” Rumpalik said. “We have a huge group, so it’ll be exciting. It’s our first big program at the new library, so we’re excited to try it out.”

It was a very successful first large event for the library, and a very interactive and fun one for the children.

The Hampden Free Public Library is looking forward to the rest of their children’s summer activities, which you can find more information about on their Facebook page at Hampden Free Public Library or their website at www.hampden-library.org

For more information about Rainforest Reptile Shows, check out their website at www.rainforestreptile-shows.com or give them an email at reptileman@rainforestreptileshows.com.

Semiquincentennial Quilt Project on exhibit through July

WILBRAHAM - The Semiquincentennial Quilt Project is pleased to announce that they will exhibit their quilted wall hangings at the Wilbraham Public Library July 2 through 30.

A reception will be held in the Brooks Room on July 14 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Each quilter was asked to create a quilt depicting a place or reason that they loved living in the USA.

The quilts are varied in technique and theme. The public are invited to view the quilts during the library opening hours.

If you would like more information, please contact Karen or Valerie at semiquincentennialquiltproject@gmail.com.

Teen Drawing Workshop at WPL

WILBRAHAM - On Thursday, July 28 from 5:30 to 7 p.m., grades 6-12 can join us for “Teen Drawing Workshop: Seashells” at the Wilbraham Public Library.

This workshop is an introduction to graphite sketching taught by Ellie Antonacci of Art Lessons with Ellie. Ellie will be teaching several drawing techniques as the group sketches seashells from observation.

Each artist will leave class with a small coastal still life. All supplies are included and all skill levels are welcome. Starting on July 13 at 9 am, on-line registration is required at wilbrahamlibrary.org or call 413-596-6141.

This program is sponsored in full by a grant from the Wilbraham Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

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VIEWPOINTS

SOCIAL SECURITY
Matters
By Russell Gloor

Why doesn't my Social Security record show all my military earnings?

Dear Rusty:

When I look at my earnings on my Social Security account, I see that in 1955 and 1956 have no earnings. I was in the U.S. Navy as a first officer and have my DD-214 paperwork, which shows my military service from Oct. 1954-Oct. 1958.

My Social Security earnings record shows that I had earnings in 1954, 1957 and 1958 but doesn't show that I was paid in 1955 or 1956. Shouldn't I have received Social Security credit for all my service years?

Signed: An Older Veteran

Dear Older Veteran:

First, I want to thank you for your military service.

Whether your earnings while in the military would provide you with any additional Social Security benefit depends on your career earnings after leaving military service. Here's why:

Your monthly Social Security benefit is based upon the highest earning 35 years over your lifetime with earlier years adjusted for inflation.

From those highest earning 35 years, SS develops your Average Indexed Monthly Earnings, your lifetime "AIME," which is the basis of the SS benefit you get if you claim for benefits to start at your Full Retirement Age So, if - after you completed your military service - you had at least 35 years of other employment where you earned more money than you did while serving, then your military pay won't affect your Social Security benefit.

FYI, Social Security payroll tax has been withheld from military pay since 1957, which is why your SS earnings record shows your military pay only for 1957 and 1958. Your SS record wouldn't show military pay prior to 1957 because you didn't contribute to SS from your military pay during those years.

The earnings you see in your SS earnings record for 1954 are likely from non-military employment prior to starting active duty in October 1954.

SS does provide older veterans with "special ex-

tra credits for military service," but those credits are only a supplemental earnings amount added to your military pay record during the years you served.

It is not a bonus amount added to your monthly Social Security payment; rather it is only an amount added to your military pay record used when calculating your Social Security benefit. For those who served prior to 1957, Social Security would have no record of your military earnings during those early service years.

But when you claimed Social Security later in life, they would have asked if you served in the military and given you "special extra credit" in the form of presumed earnings for your service years. They likely asked for a copy of your DD-214 and would have added \$160 to your military earnings record for each active-duty month from October 1954 through December 1956 and additional earnings credits for 1957 and 1958.

But that doesn't mean you get a special Social Security bonus for your military service. If you have at least 35 years of civilian employment after serving in the Navy, your service years would only affect your SS benefit if those military service years were among the highest paying 35 years over your entire lifetime. And, again, please accept our appreciation for your service to our country.

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.

Bad news and good news in this week's garden

My annual flower gardens were just starting to come into their own when I noticed some damage on the leaves.

They looked chomped on from the outer edge going in. Some leaves also had a watery brown residue on them.

Going by date, I knew the culprit already, even before digging around the base of the plant. The Asiatic Garden beetle is hard at work wrecking my plants.

Read on to learn more about this pest.

I've also got some good news. Blueberries and

peas are ready for harvest. Yippee!

The Asiatic Garden beetle is a bit smaller than the Japanese beetle and is chestnut brown in color. It feeds during the night, so look for chewed foliage in gardens or planter boxes under lampposts, street lights or other outside lights.

Cultivate directly underneath the affected plant during the day and you will likely see the culprits scurry back into the soil. Usually they snuggle up very close to the stems an inch or so below the soil surface.

Sometimes watering at the base of the plant will bring them to the top of the soil where they can be easily collected or squished. This is one pest you don't want to have around - send them swimming in a soapy bath or you may not have any plants left!

In my experience, two plants they particularly love are coleus and calibrachoa. This year they are decimating my blue salvia.

It's pretty amazing that I've found dozens a day in an 18-inch planter. If digging around in the soil isn't your style, go out near dusk with a headlamp or flashlight and pick them right off the plant.

around my house.

Now you may be thinking that I really know how to have fun, but to me, this is what summer is made of! I plant my peas the end of April, so typically they ripen almost on cue each year!

I plant three seeds deep a couple of inches apart up against the interior of my garden fence where they naturally climb up with their tendrils attaching to one another and the fence. I loosen up the soil prior to planting, but I never add any fertilizer - may-

be just a sprinkling of compost if I am feeling generous. Since peas are legumes, they "fix" their own nitrogen from the air.

I do soak the seeds in an inoculant prior to planting them, however, to make the fixation happen easily and to reportedly increase yield.

If you are going to try your hand at freezing your "shell" peas, as opposed to sugar snap or snow peas, be sure to pick, shuck and freeze in the same sitting, since peas begin to lose their sweetness within hours of being off the plant.

Like anything else, we take the good with the bad. As long as there is enough good, we won't throw in the trowel just yet.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 34 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.



Hand picking can significantly cut down on the damage.

One note of good news is that my blueberries are bearing great this year, really it's the first year that I've had a significant harvest since the bushes were given to me over a decade ago. I am pretty certain I owe it all to Organic Grower Supply through Fedco Seeds, (fedcoseeds.com), where I purchased "Blueberry Booster."

I ordered the fertilizer last year and applied 3 pounds per bush in the springtime. Lo and behold it worked.

I have enough to do it again this fall since I missed the opportunity this past spring. A blend of Granite Meal, sulfur, Tennessee brown rock phosphate, compost, and Azomite, the mix reduces the soil pH and provides the nutrients necessary for healthy blueberry plants and good fruit.

Fourth of July weekends over the last several years have been spent picking, shucking and freezing peas, and this year is no exception. It's technically a tradition



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I'm always appreciative for the people that trust me to share their stories. I'm also inspired by their humbleness, their life experiences, yet continue to show such compassion and generosity to others.

Kyle and Trish Peters who met in 2003, haven't had the easiest lives beginning in childhood, yet together have shown courage and resilience through their almost twenty-year marriage. Once they stayed in a trailer with 2-bedrooms and yet offered a homeless man struggling in the cold a safe haven, though it meant nine people living there. They've also lived in

Random Acts of Kindness

By Barb Turcotte

the garage of a friend, determined to start over to create a better life for themselves. They even lived in a shelter for a short time, but as they matured, they've dedicated themselves to improving their lives as well as the lives of their children.

Two young people with troubled pasts involving alcohol and drugs went down that path for a while. When they became young parents unfortunately, that didn't end their

self-destruction right away. After their 2nd child, it was discovered Trish has Anti E, a medical condition and both are RH negative, which explained why Trish suffered five miscarriages. Today they have three children in their teens. Their oldest, a son, graduated this month and their oldest daughter is a member of the National Honor Society. What great examples they are for their younger sister!

Together they've learned what unconditional love from a parent is all about and about the love of a child for their parent. They continue helping their parents when needed and others as well with

strength and determination.

Kyle as an adult, was diagnosed with bi-polar and anxiety that meds are life altering for him. While Trish suffers from hip dysplasia, both are hardworking individuals and valuable assets to their employers where they both work. Trish who has been a CNA for twelve years and Kyle is part of the Maintenance Department. Her dream is to further her education in nursing or social work.

They were separated for about a year and a half, both dating other individuals and on the verge of divorce. Trish said she remembers well the night Kyle came to her and her partner's house on a particularly hard day and said she looked like she needed a hug. She admitted she did, he reciprocated and right then both realized they loved each other and belonged together. That part of this love story is

as they say, 'the rest is history'.

Kyle at one time wrote songs and was a well-known performer. He explained he'd been in a dark place with his lyrics portraying that. As he looks at those writings now, he realizes just how somber they were and doesn't enjoy even reading them anymore.

One of Kyle's co-workers was always encouraging him while often reciting various scriptures. Kyle though being an atheist, was open to hearing another way of looking at life. His co-worker admitted that he'd also dealt with some tough things and how finding the Bible and religion helped him with those battles. Kyle said he never preached to him but rather shared with him out of concern.

Kyle explained when they were looking for a new

Please see **KINDNESS**, page 10

The Wilbraham-Hampden
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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 &

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

Rotary announces ‘Changing of the Guard’...

Submitted photo and caption Charlie Bennett

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham-Hampden Rotary Club announced its “Changing of the Guard”, new officers and directors for the next year, at its June 25 meeting at the Country Club of Wilbraham. Holding flowers is new president Ann Marie Ottoson, (from left) Charlie Bennett, director; Diane Ryan, director; Larry Ottoson, director and Brad Sperry, secretary. (Photo by Geo)



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Outsiders Day at WMS



Hot rodders came to Wilbraham Middle School on June 11 for a car parade at the school called “Outsiders Day.” The vehicles circled the school a few times as students stood outside to celebrate while dressed in character from the book “The Outsiders.” The event was co-created by Denise Moore, an eighth-grade English teacher at WMS, and Jo Mars, a web creator at Jo’s Footprints.

Submitted photos Brian McQuillan



Wilbraham Garden Club decorates gazebo for 250th/Fourth of July



Submitted photo and caption Anna Howell
Wilbraham Garden Club adds a festive patriotic touch to the gazebo at Gazebo Park!

Chapel Street Accident



Submitted photo Richard Scott

Richard Scott sent in a photo of an aftermath of an accident at the top of Chapel Street around Noontime on June 19.



Submitted photo and caption Samuel Kar Kin Lam

WMS Robotics

represents state at International Robotics Competition

WMS Robotics represented Massachusetts in the International Robotics Competition at Worcester Polytechnic Institute on June 13. From left: Riya Kar, Genette Fanning, Michelle Ohmeng, Joey Montano, Sam Castellano, and George Lam.

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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 east-bound 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 upgrades 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.

OMH from page 1

to realize you’re just the latest name on a very long list of people who have taken the time to care for it for over two centuries. We’re not the first to do this, and we—hopefully!—won’t be the last. We’re simply taking our turn, and that’s a privilege.”

Bourcier shared how this all came together, crediting the CPC, community and the Finance Committee for their work bringing this restoration to reality.

“Like anything built 233 years ago, the Old Meeting House needs regular care and upkeep. The exterior paint had cracked and peeled over time, and testing confirmed it contained lead. Birds were starting to make their way into the attic, so a proper restoration was the clear next step,” Bourcier said. “Our Society President, David Bourcier, gets credit for leading this charge. He researched the options, prepared the application, and secured a Community Preservation Committee grant, funding designed for exactly this kind of historic preservation. That meant the work could get done without adding to the town’s expenses. Win-win! From there, it was a community process. The CPC approved the request, the Finance Committee endorsed it, and Wilbraham voters approved it at the 2025 Annual Town Meeting. It’s a testament to what a community can accomplish when it decides its history is worth preserving, not just for us, but for everyone who comes next.”

She also emphasized the importance of preserving the town’s history for the years to come.

“The Old Meeting House isn’t just an old building; it’s a place that holds Wilbraham’s history...literally! Inside is a collection of local artifacts, each with its own connection to the families, industries, and traditions that shaped this town. When residents support the museum, they’re making sure those stories stay accessible to the next generation, so that kids can step inside and see where they come from,” Bourcier said. “History belongs to everyone, and a landmark like this is one of the few places in Wilbraham where you can actually stand inside it.”

Bourcier said she and the society have also appreciated the community coming out for their events, reflecting on their recent offerings.

“This season we’ve put time and energy into reimagining our events as experiences, and it’s been fun to see the

response. Our recent bridal exhibit is a great example. We paired an exhibit of dresses from the 1850s to the 1950s with on-theme cupcakes and sparkling cider in champagne flutes. Plus, guests made their own floral bouquets in the gardens. It turned a museum visit into an afternoon celebration,” Bourcier said.

There’s also more to come with the Ice Cream Social on Sunday, July 12 from 2 to 4 p.m.

“We have a lot more on the way. Our upcoming Ice Cream Social is shaping up to be a real ‘treat,’ with a tribute to all things art and summer, complete with free ice cream cups donated by Friendly’s, kids’ crafts, and live music from the Valley String Band,” Bourcier said. “We encourage you to bring your supplies and paint alongside members of the Wilbraham Art League, who will be in the garden.”

She added the fall will have some activities too.

“We know summer goes fast, so as we lean into ‘spooky season,’ we’re rolling out some great fall programming. Back by popular demand, we have a Grave-stone Art and walking tour of Adams Cemetery with local author Derek Strahan. Plus a look at the Springfield Witch Trials with Elizabeth Kapp, Curator of History at the Springfield Museums,” Bourcier said. “There’s something for everyone this year, and every event is free and family-friendly. The best way to keep up with the full calendar is through our new website, theomh.org. We’d love to see some new faces!”

Bourcier, who became the museum’s marketing director this year, shared what she enjoys about volunteering at the OMH.

“My favorite part of being the new volunteer Marketing Director is the event planning. I like thinking up fun new ways to bring the community through our doors and help them learn something new about their town,” Bourcier said. “The truth is, a lot of people drive past us every day and don’t even realize we’re a museum! So when we get someone in the door, spark a little excitement about what they saw, and send them home eager to tell their friends and family, that’s the part that means the most. Every visit is a chance to discover a piece of Wilbraham’s history and make a new memory.”

She also encouraged the community to get involved



Photos courtesy of Lindsey Bourcier

The Old Meeting House Museum with some red, white and blue bunting ahead of America’s 250th birthday.

and support the museum however way they can.

“Residents can get involved in a few different ways. They can become a member [theomh.org/membership]. They can donate, whether monetary [theomh.org/donation] or via an artifact [theomh.org/artifact-donation]. They can buy Wilbraham merchandise in our museum gift store. Or they can simply attend our free events and spread the word. We welcome anyone with an interest in Wilbraham’s history, whether you’ve lived here your whole life or just moved to the area,” Boucier said. “You can reach us at museum@theomh.org, or follow along on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube. Our full calendar is on our website theomh.org. We’ve got a great monthly lineup now through December, concluding with our annual Holiday Fest!”

Bourcier’s message was this.

“Thank you. Thank you to Town of Wilbraham Facilities Director Sam Boyd, Roy Brown Architects, New Generation Painting, Keith Isham Landscaping, our volunteer gardener Kate Belsky, and our very own Members and volunteer Board of Trustees. This local landmark looks its best because of you. And



The Hearse House was also part of the restorations.

we can’t forget the Wilbraham community. This project happened because volunteers stepped up and neighbors voted YES, and that’s exactly how it should happen,” Bourcier said. “When I look at the freshly restored Old Meeting House, I don’t just see an old building that’s been preserved. I see a list of people stretching all the way

back to 1793: the craftsmen, the caretakers, the volunteers, the donors, the voters, everyone who took their turn looking after it. We were lucky enough to add our names to that list this year, and we hope that we’ve made it a little easier for the next generation to add theirs. We’ll see you this season at The OMH!”

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Tag sale fundraiser a success for local fire department

HAMPDEN - Community members turned out in impressive numbers May 30 to support fundraiser tag sales for The Hampden Fire Department, making the event a resounding success.

Held at LifeStream Church on Allen St. and The Federated Church on Main St, the tag sale featured a wide variety of donated items, including household goods, furniture, tools, toys, books, and collectibles. Residents from across the community came together to shop, donate, volunteer, and show their appreciation for the firefighters who faithfully serve the town.

According to event organizers, the fundraiser exceeded expectations, raising \$3,000.00 to support training programs for departmental needs. Fire department officials expressed gratitude for

the overwhelming support received from the churches and individual residents. These funds will better help to serve and protect our community.

Volunteers and attendees noted that the tag sale not only raised money but also strengthened community connections and provided an opportunity for neighbors to gather and support a worthy cause.

Pastor Diane Gunn, event coordinator, said that there will be a Phase 2 support sale when furnishings are needed for the new firehouse.

The fire department extends its sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to the fundraiser's success.

For more information about supporting the local fire department or upcoming fundraising activities, residents are encouraged to contact the department directly.

KINDNESS from page 6

place to live, he posted on Facebook to his family and friends that he could use a little extra financial help to obtain a new apartment. A friend from high school that he hadn't even talked to in fifteen years, came forward and offered to help him. He told Kyle it was a gift not a loan, but Kyle made sure to pay him back as he was so appreciative of the help when he needed it the most. They were amazed by the kindness and generosity of those who helped them. They now enjoy a beautiful apartment with each teen having their own space. The kids love it!

Kyle and Trish are filled with gratitude for how their lives have transformed and all the good things they are experiencing. They feel their new beliefs have helped them with this new life and were even baptized on Easter Sunday. Kyle again credits his co-worker for introducing him to this new way of living.

My vision is that he and his co-worker, who had also been a musician, write songs and perform them in their church. When I suggested that, Kyle's eyes lit up saying maybe in the future but he wasn't ready for that just yet.

Their story is truly inspirational about the human spirit and a love that refused to give up on each other. The day of this interview Kyle proudly stated he was 520 days completely sober. They'll definitely both be an inspiration to others! Thank you for sharing this very personal story.

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

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BLIND DATE from page 1

historical fantasy and more.

During the June 9 kickoff, Mary Grasseti explained the rules and how the group will work, with the first theme presented being "Summer Escape."

From there, the attendees received their book.

At the end of each session, the attendees will come together to discuss their blind date books and hear about the next theme and select their next book.

Also, if someone wants another book, they can do just that. They will just have to finish their first book and return it before receiving the next book.

The group is possible through Hampden Free Public Library Director Ellen Moriarty and her team, who helped choose



The books ready to be chosen.



This board explains to attendees what the club is all about.

and provide the selection of books for the book club.



Photo courtesy of Tina Doran

Refreshments to welcome attendees to the new club.

Also, to the late Cindy O'Sullivan, whose love for books, reading and education inspire everyone at the senior center every day.

To register for the next meeting, the community is encouraged to call the senior

center at 413-566-5588 before Aug. 14. You must register so there are plenty of books for everyone.

To learn more, contact the senior center or check out their monthly newsletter, The Scribe.



TOE JAM from page 1

this is their first time at the library's new location.

For over 26 years, the Toe Jam Puppet Band has been entertaining children across Massachusetts. Vinny Lovegrove and Tom Poitras spoke about their band, their history, and their love for performing for children.

"So, I play the music, and Vinny comes up with the activities, so it's a very energetic show. We have the kids up and doing something for every song," Poitras said.

"Tom's written a lot of the songs that we use. Like he said, I come up with the stuff to do with the kids. I think that we're both really wired for what we do. So the fact we get to travel around the state, make a living, have fun, meet new people, and support libraries is awesome," Lovegrove said.

Youth Services Librarian Kate Rumpalik also took a moment to talk about Toe Jam.

"They are super easy to work with, and they are a lot of fun," Rumpalik said. "They do so well with the kids, getting them all hyped up, and then they calm them down. They sing songs and dance, and then they sit down again, and it's a whole lot of fun."

ABOVE: Mr. Vinny brings out the bubble machine for the first time for the children.



Turley photos by Noelle Hisgen

LEFT: Mr. Vinny and Mr. Tom get everyone to join them for a musical game of "Red Light, Green Light."



It was a fun-filled afternoon filled with so many energetic skits and songs from the Toe Jam Puppet Band, and Hampden looks forward to Toe Jam's next performance in their town.

Toe Jam Puppet Band was sponsored by the Hampden Cultural Council: A local agency sponsored by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

For more information about Toe Jam, check out their website at toejampuppetband.com.

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LEFT: The field house near the Relics softball fields. ABOVE: The four teams involved in the DaSilva Memorial Tournament.

Relics host tournament to honor John DaSilva

LUDLOW – On Saturday, June 20, the Western Mass Relics, a longtime softball league for senior citizens, held their John DaSilva Tournament.

DaSilva, recently passed away, and was a huge member of the league. Members of the league had a lot of positive things to say about DaSilva.

DaSilva joined the Relics after retiring from the U.S.

Air Force having served 33 years, with 29 years of active duty. The day he signed up, they were in need of coaches, and he was talked into coaching. DaSilva was a coach every year he played in the league. He coached and played on the Diamond Dawgs.

For the league, he served as the registrar, treasurer, and chairman of the Silver Division and also was responsible

for field maintenance. When he wasn't at home he could be found at the field.

DaSilva was, by nature, a fixer and a problem solver with many members. He set-

tled many disputes. He ran the draft for picking teams in both divisions and created maintained many databases.

He, along with Pat Lombardo brought back the

league's yearly picnic and the annual Christmas party. There were many donations made for the picnic, which was a huge success with attendance and financially profitable to

the Relics.

The tournament consisted of four teams looking to honor DaSilva's contributions to the league.



Former players of the Western Mass. Relics softball league Don Holcumb and Ralph Becker.



The winning team for the tournament.

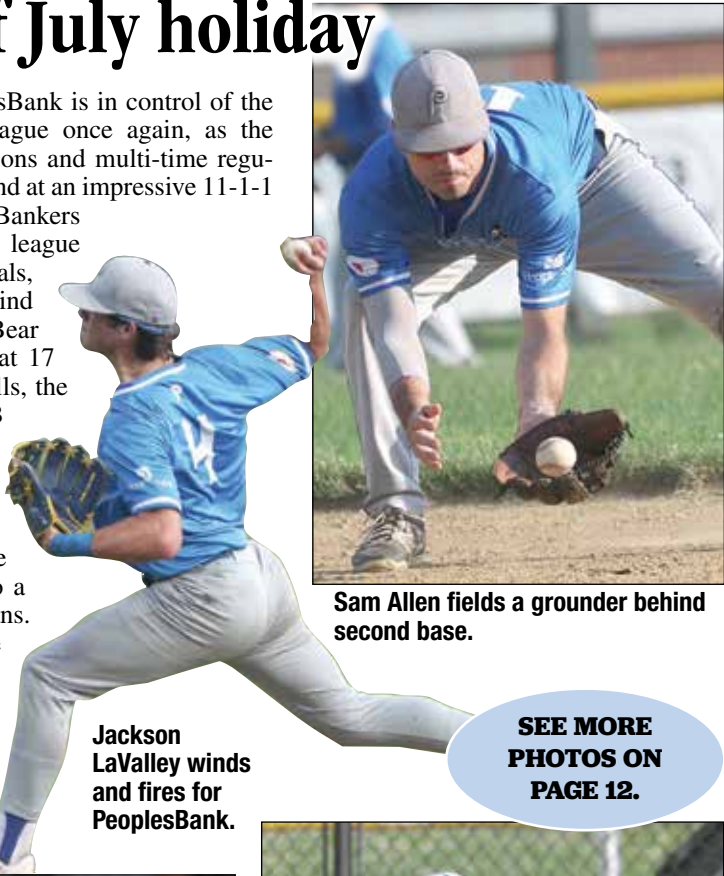


Joe Perla sends a pitch away.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Bankers in control following Fourth of July holiday

HOLYOKE – PeoplesBank is in control of the Tri-County Baseball League once again, as the longtime playoff champions and multi-time regular season champions stand at an impressive 11-1-1 so far this season. The Bankers have 23 points for the league lead with their main rivals, St. Joseph's, tugging behind with 22 points. Teddy Bear Pools holds third place at 17 points, while Turners Falls, the Spartans, and BankESB round out the standings, all with less than 10 points. Last Monday, PeoplesBank played to their only tie of the season as they battled to a 2-2 draw with the Spartans. The game was called due to darkness at South Hadley High School. Action resumed earlier this week with games scheduled on Wednesday, July 8.



Jackson LaValley winds and fires for PeoplesBank.



Sam Allen fields a grounder behind second base.

SEE MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 12.



Pete Hogan fires down to second to try and catch a base stealer.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Cam Rivest, of Agawam, swings and connects.

Pioneers, Black Rock battle to 1-1 draw

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—Just when it appeared that the Western Mass. Pioneers were set to close out a 1-0 shutout victory against Black Rock FC, a late lapse gave the visitors from Nashua, New Hampshire an opportunity to score the tying goal.

Black Rock FC converted a corner kick during the seventh minute of stoppage time and last Friday night's U.S. League 2 match-up held at Lusitano Stadium ended in a 1-1 draw.

The result all but ended the Pioneers' postseason hopes, eliminating them from the USL League Two playoffs for the first time since joining the league in 2019.

"I really don't know what happened at the end of tonight's game," said Pioneers head coach Federico Molinari. "Almost everything has gone wrong for us this season."

It was the third consecutive tie between the two teams, who played a scoreless tie in the first meeting of the season on June 3. The two squads also played a 1-1 draw



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Santiago Blasco Gomez tries to keep the ball from going out.

at Lusitano Stadium a year ago.

The Pioneers entered the first week of the 2026 regular season sitting in third place in the Northeast Division table with a 7-2-3 (24 points) overall record.

The Western Mass. squad were scheduled to play at AC Connecticut on Tuesday night before hosting the first place and undefeated Vermont Green FC, who have already clinched a playoff berth, in the regular season finale on Friday night.

NEFC (10-2-0), who joined the league a year ago, is sitting in second place with 30 points. They only need a tie against either last place Boston City FC or the Albany Rush to officially lock up a playoff spot for the first time. NEFC defeated the Pioneers, 4-2, at Lusitano Stadium on May 23.

Black Rock FC (5-3-3, 18 points) has the chance to tie for third place if they can win their final three matches and the Pioneers lose a match.

Each soccer team earns three points for a victory and one point for a draw.

Just like in their first meeting of the regular season meeting a month earlier, neither Black Rock FC nor the Pioneers scored a goal during the first 45 minutes of last Friday's contest.

Geronnimo Gomes had two of the shot attempts for the home side during the opening half.

At the beginning of the

Please see **PIONEERS**, page 12

Blue Sox fall to Mystic

HOLYOKE – The Valley Blue Sox fell 11-2 to the Mystic Schooners on July 3 at Mackenzie Stadium. Mystic got in front early with four runs in each the second and third innings, never looking back en route to a dominant victory.

The loss is the Blue Sox’s sixth in seventh games and the seventh time they have allowed 10 or more runs in the 2026 season. The Schooners flipped the script on a Blue Sox team that beat them 11-3, largely driven by nine early runs June 12.

LHP Andrew Speranza (Marist) took the ball in his first Blue Sox start and lasted three innings, allowing eight earned runs in his debut on six hits. Blue Sox’s Head coach John Raiola said Speranza was put in a tough start for his first appearance.

“Not to make excuses, but in reality he drove two hours to get here in 104 degrees and didn’t know anybody, and here you go,” Raiola said. “... Obviously it didn’t go the way that he wanted, and kind of snowballed on us from there.”

Speranza was the third new Blue Sox’s player to join the team in the past week and make a start in his first appearance. However his start went south quickly and was essentially ended by a three-run home run into the Blue Sox bullpen. It was only the second home run hit at Mackenzie Stadium this season.

The Valley bullpen did

well cleaning up the mess, pitching the remaining six innings without allowing an earned run. LHP Mike Madigan (George Mason), RHP Lukas Jachens (SUNY Oneonta) and RHP Jason Pinsonnault (Western New England) combined for a line of zero earned runs, five hits, one walk and three strikeouts.

For Pinsonnault, who has been a frequent late innings pitcher for Valley, it was business as usual. Pinsonnault has not allowed an earned run since June 14, a span where he has thrown eight innings.

“Just been mixing well,” Pinsonnault said. “Everything’s felt good. I’ve been able to command everything. Being able to command and mix with all three has been the biggest thing for me.”

While the bullpen did not have any earned runs, Mystic did score three times after Speranza exited, largely due to some shaky defense from a Valley team that made five errors, a season high.

The Blue Sox are in their roughest stretch of play this season. They have lost six of their last seven games and dropped to fifth in the South Division.

Despite the tough run of games, Raiola is still optimistic that his team can grind their way out of a rut.

“One thing we just talked about is June is over,” Raiola said. “Be the best July hitter, be the best July pitcher that we have. Everyone should be striving for that.”

Rivet wins Firecracker 100 at Monadnock

WINCHESTER, NH - Kimmy Rivet captured the win at Monadnock Speedway, leading both early and late en route to victory in the annual Firecracker 100 Modified main event at the high banked quarter-mile.

Her victory in the decades-old top jewel of the summer 604 Modified division was worth \$3,000. It was Rivet’s first win of the 2026 racing season.

Other winners on the high banks on June 27 included Massachusetts Missile JD Stockwell, who struck late to score his fifth win of the summer in the Limited Late Models, Pure Stock blaster Michael Yeaton, who stormed to his fourth win in a row, and Pro 4 Modified ace Rob Richardi Jr., who boosted his championship points lead with his second win of the season.

Young Gun Dylan Stati won his track-high seventh 2026 feature race Saturday. Only Sofia Rego, who has since moved up to weekly Pure Stock competition, has also won in this season’s youth division.

With a huge crowd on hand, and a colossal fireworks display awaiting them at race’s end, the decades-old mid-summer Firecracker 100 was again a race that will be talked about well past the current season. Rivet and rookie Kyle Kenny sat up front as the 100-lap Minkler Paving and Painting sponsored main event went green.

With a potent field of

All States Material Group 604 Modifieds exploding into action behind her, Rivet quickly took charge. Ty Leclerc and reigning speedway Modified champ Tyler Leary were quickly at her bumper.

Leary rocketed up to second on lap 12, with his mirror soon filled by last week’s winner Eddie Gomarlo. Leclerc, stuck at the top groove in fourth, had no idea of giving up and, behind him, fast timer Brian Robie and previous winner Andrew Brousseau, from scratch on the starting grid, were zooming to the front.

Gomarlo stormed into second on lap 19 in his Robie Motorsports car, bringing Robie with him, as this time it was Leary stuck in the top groove. He, like Leclerc before him, wasn’t giving up the chase. At the halfway point - lap 50 - it was Rivet, Robie, and Leary sailing around the high banks nose-to-tail.

Robie’s all-out efforts in the low line finally paid off on lap 52, as the Sunapee speedster took the lead and set sail to repeat his Open Mod victory of two weeks earlier. A strategic mistake on a lap-62 restart, though, would prove to be his undoing.

Opting to re-fire from the top groove, he had to then watch Rivet charge back to the lead and hold the top spot until the checkers waved 38 laps later over her first-ever Firecracker 100 victory. With Robie a single length

back in second, Leclerc charged back up for third, Brousseau’s strong night’s work netted him fourth in the 100-lap main event, and Gomarlo in fifth.

Wesley Stedt may long remember Saturday’s Twin State Truck Service Limited Late Model feature as the one that got away. Gunning for his first career feature win in the fast full-fendered division, Stedt, who’d earlier topped his heat race, led for 23 laps in the main event before giving way with three to go..

Top points man JD Stockwell, again aboard the fastest car on the track, then took over and sped off to a five-length victory. Stedt stayed strong to score a career-best runner-up finish, and Robert Hagar, coming off a big night Friday at Claremont, was third.

Previous winner Hilary Renaud sailed under the checkers in fourth, with rookie Owen Zilinski, the early leader, fifth.

Micheal Yeaton may or may not go perfect on the summer in the Brattleboro Towing and Recovery Pure Stocks, but he’s certainly giving it his best effort. Saturday, the Amherst, NH hot shoe won for the fourth race in a row.

Top points man Jimmy Zellman took the early lead, giving way to Dylan Zullo, aboard the CJ Johnson ride, on lap six. Yeaton, blasting forward from tenth, was up to third a lap later and the

next go-round was at Zullo’s bumper.

Yeaton took the top spot on lap 16, then holding off the furious challenge of Kyle Begos to stay perfect at four-for-four in his new-found favorite division. With Begos finishing at his bumper in second, Zellman stayed atop the points parade with his third-place finish.

Rookie sensation Josh Brigham, who had to duck into the pits early for repairs, kept himself very much in the points chase with his fourth-place finish, and Zullo was fifth. Begos and Linsey Wenzel won the heats.

There was only one car capable of keeping Rob Richardi Jr. from taking another bow in victory lane Saturday in the LaValley Building Supply Pro 4 Modifieds, and that was the Ryan McPartland entry.

The Green Mountain State pilot stayed glued to Richardi’s bumper until abruptly exiting the track on lap 14. With McPartland suddenly done for the night, the leader then blasted off into another time zone, only to see his huge advantage evaporate with a lap-23 caution.

Still very much up to the task, Richardi again flat-footed away to score a two-length victory over steady Josh Badach. Fast Eddie, victorious a week earlier, was third in Saturday’s 25-lapper. McPartland and Fast Eddie topped the heats.

This week in recreation



Junior Team Tennis

Lilli DiGrande, Tennis Instructor

WILBRAHAM - My name is **Lilli DiGrande**, and I have been coaching tennis in the Hampden-Wilbraham area for the past five years. I was also the captain of the Minnechaug Regional High School tennis team before graduating in 2024.

I am excited to introduce myself and let everyone know that I will be taking over the **Junior Team Tennis Program** this summer from Coach Toby Coffin. Having coached in his program, I have enjoyed meeting the players and watching them develop their skills over the years.

Coach Toby introduced the Junior Team Tennis Program (Grades 6–12) five years ago to help players improve their skills and become more competitive and confident in both singles and doubles matches. The program was designed to prepare players for participation on a high school

tennis team, and it has been a tremendous success.

Over the years, we have competed against teams from surrounding communities, including Ludlow and Longmeadow. On the final day of last year’s program, many parents joined their children for a variety of activities and games during our annual **“Jam-boree Day.”** Some of the favorite games included Ring-Ring, Around the World, Touch the Fence, Defender, Olympic, and many others.

It was wonderful to see participants of all ages involved in the clinic and having fun together. I look forward to continuing this outstanding tennis program and providing a great opportunity for young players in our community to learn, compete, and grow.

NOTE: To register for all of our programs and for more information, please visit WilbrahamRec.com.

PIONEERS from page 11

contest, Jackson Gould lined a shot from outside the top of the box that sailed wide of the net.

The Pioneers, who had four corner kicks in the first half, best scoring chance came during the 36th minute. That’s when a shot taken by Vasco Teixeira clanged off the post keeping the match scoreless a little bit longer.

Down at the other end of the field, Western Mass. goalie Ben Alexander didn’t have to make any saves during the first half.

The Pioneers finally ended the scoreless drought with a free kick goal in the 65th minute.

The duo of Ronan O’Brien and Shun Murasawa, who stepped onto the pitch together during the 60th minute, produced the Pioneers goal.

O’Brien sent the ball into the box from the right side

where Murasawa headed into the right corner for his first goal of the season.

“I just focused on the ball, and I managed to score my first goal as a member of this team,” Murasawa said. It was a great feeling, but we lost our focus on the last play.

Murasawa was born in Kawasaki, Japan before moving to Franklin, Tennessee with his family as a sophomore in high school. He’ll be a sophomore member of the UMass Amherst men’s soccer team in the fall. He was recruited by UMass volunteer assis-



Geronimo Gomez socks a free kick away.
AT LEFT: Riley Priddy dribbles up the field.

tant coach Takehiko Nakamura.

Murasawa’s roommate at UMass as a freshman was Thomas Wadas, who’s also a member of the UMass soccer team. Wadas also plays for the Pioneers and was an outstanding soccer player at Ludlow High School.

“Thomas was my college roommate and teammate last year,” Murasawa said. “He told me about the Pioneers,

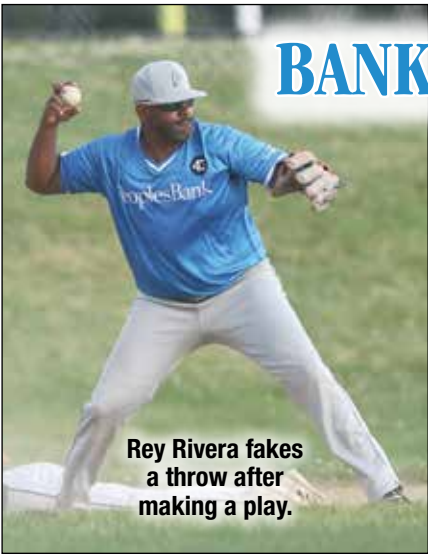
and I wound up playing here. It’s been a lot of fun and it’s a great atmosphere here.”

The score remained 1-0 until stoppage time.

With ten Black Rock players standing inside the box on a corner kick, Juan O’Neill booted the ball from the right corner and goalie Christian Herluf Braae-Anderson put a shot into the net, which spoiled the Pioneers night.

The Pioneers supporters are hoping to celebrate a victory in the regular season finale on Friday night against the undefeated Vermont Green FC.

Turley photos by David Henry
www.sweetdogphotos.com
Jackson Gould hustles up the field.



Rey Rivera fakes a throw after making a play.



Brian Hungerford tries to keep a throw from getting to the outfield.



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Monthly Highlights for July at the Hampden Senior Center:

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

Lunch is provided by Greater Springfield Senior Services daily at 12:00 noon. Suggested donation is \$3.00 per meal. You must reserve lunch by 11:00 am one day prior. Feel free to schedule reservations for the month.

Join us for National Blueberry Muffin Day and a special Summer Lobby by Learning with The Overlook

Thursday, July 9, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Stop in for a delicious blueberry muffin and learn about The Overlook and all they have to offer.

Thanks to The Overlook for sponsoring this event.

It's National Hot Dog Day, and we're celebrating!

Wednesday, July 15, at Noon

Come and enjoy a delicious hot dog provided by Friendly's American Restaurant of East Longmeadow, macaroni salad, chips, and Ice Cream Sandwiches provided by The Reserve at East Longmeadow.

There is NO COST to attend, but you do need to sign up to let us know you're coming.

Lunch & Ice Cream Social

Friday, July 17 at Noon

Join us for a delicious pulled pork lunch provided by Greater Springfield Senior Services (suggested donation of \$3.00 per person) and stay for an Ice Cream Social sponsored by Vantage Health and Rehab of Hampden.

While you enjoy your ice cream, you're in for another treat with Rick Gilday providing musical entertainment for the afternoon.

PUZZLE PALOOZA:

Tuesday, July 21 from 1 to 3 p.m.

Join us for another fun afternoon of Puzzles! Work in randomly assigned teams to see which team can finish a 300-piece puzzle the fastest. Prizes will be awarded!! Puzzle making is good for you! It can help improve your memory and reduce stress.

A visit from the Hampden Assessors: Real Estate Tax Exemptions

Wednesday, July 29 at 10:30 a.m.

The Town of Hampden offers Real Estate Tax Exemptions for those who qualify. Applications are currently being accepted by the Assessor's Office for FY2027. The deadline to apply for an ex-

emption is April 1, 2027.

Please contact the Assessor's Office for more information at (413) 566-2151 ext. 106. The Assessor's office hours are Monday – Thursday from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.

MEMORY CAFÉ

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

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

The Memory Café is a welcoming place for individuals with memory challenges, along with

caregivers, family, or friends, to gather in a safe, supportive, and engaging environment.

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

July 17 – Rhythm & Motion with Sara

July 24 – Ukulele with Amy

July 31 – Music with Renee

Lobby Learning

Lobby Learning is taking a break for the summer. Stay tuned for a great lineup coming in September.

Is there an organization you would like us to invite? We'd love to hear your suggestions.

Beginner Summer Themed Watercolor Classes with Trish Pilon

Wednesdays, from 9:30 a.m. to Noon. Two 4-week sessions.

Cost is \$40 per session if paid in full or \$12 per class.

Weekly projects will be posted in the lobby. Signups are required.

Session 1 – July 15, 22, & 29

Session 2 – August 5, 12, 19, & 26

All materials will be provided. You are welcome to bring your own supplies; however, the class fee remains the same. Pre-registration is required.

Greeting Cards with Ellie

Monday, July 27, from 1 to 3 p.m.

Cost is \$3.00 per person. All materials are provided.

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

Blind Date with a Book is in full swing

We hope you are enjoying your "blind date" and remember, if you finish your current book before the next session, you can stop in to pick up another book and go on another "date".

Next Meeting: Tuesday, Sept. 1, from 10 a.m. to Noon

The theme for the next date is: "Walk Down Memory Lane"

Thanks to Ellen Moriarty and her team at the Hampden Public Library for their participation in choosing and providing an abundant selection of books for our fun new book club.

Also, thanks to the late Cindy O'Sullivan, whose love of books, reading, and education inspires us daily.

And thank you to Mary Grassetti for providing a fun and engaging experience while learning new things in a very different kind of book club. Let's see what she does next! Don't wait to sign up.

Please register for the next session by calling the Senior Center at 566-5588 before Aug. 14.

You must register so we have an ample selection of books.

Interested in being part of the fun? You are welcome to join at any time. Call for more information.

Pickleball at Thornton Burgess, 85 Wilbraham Road

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

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

Pickleball Clinics with Mary Grassetti will resume in September.

Thanks to the Hampden Parks & Rec Dept. for making this time available for the Hampden Senior Center.

Monday Ukulele with Amy Scott

Drop-ins are welcome

Current 8-week session runs through July 27.

Beginner Ukulele – Mondays, 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Cost is \$7 per class.

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

Cost is \$80 for the session.

"African Drumming" with Jason

Fridays from 2 to 3 p.m.

Current session runs through July 31.

Cost is \$7 per class for drop-ins. All are welcome! No previous experience is necessary.

Common Threads led by

Joan Tompkins, PhD

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

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

"Come What May"

Boutique... is open in our lobby for all to shop during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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

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

Need a button sewn? Pants hemmed? Fix a rip? Help is on the way!

Fridays, July 24 from 10 a.m. to Noon

The senior center welcomes seamstress extraordinaire, Georgina Hamilton, on the second and fourth Fridays of every month to help with your tailoring needs and more.

This service is FREE, but donations will be accepted for senior center programs and services.

HELP US STOCK OUR SHELVES with Toothpaste.

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

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

Summer Puzzle Pacs are back and are available in the lobby at the Senior Center.

Return your completed Puzzle Pac by October 1st for a chance to win a gift card.

Congratulations to our Spring Puzzle Pac Winners: Chris Dodd, Dianne Melcher, and Terry Anderson

Do you have a financial planning question or concern? Pat Sherman from Edward Jones will be here

Wednesday, July 22. This is a FREE service.

Pat will be here on the third Wednesday of every month by appointment to discuss retirement planning, Social Security, investments, financial goals, and more. Call to schedule a 30-minute

appointment

Did you know we offer the following services....

FREE Blood Pressure Clinic – Walk-in 9:15 am to 10:45 am.

Tuesdays with Ann Maggio, RN, or Ruth Haley, RN

Thursdays with Karen Blair, RN

Chair Massage with Mindy – by appointment

Wednesdays, July 15 and 29 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

\$10 for a 10-minute appointment.

Infinite Hair by Katie – by appointment

Thursdays, July 22, from 9 a.m. to Noon.

The 2nd & 4th Wednesdays of every month

Services offered include:

• Dry (Spritz) Cut—\$15.00

• And Style—\$5.00

• Men's Cut—\$12.00

• Waxing Services Available:

• Brow, Lip, and "Nose Detail" - \$5 per service.

A fast, low-discomfort wax to keep the stray hairs at bay.

Gift Cards make great gifts and are available for purchase at the Senior Center!

Anyone is welcome to schedule appointments for these services.

Please call 566-5588 to schedule your appointments.

The Hampden Senior Center is pleased to welcome Red Fire Farm as our new provider of the Farm Share Program. SNAP/HIP and CASH Shares are available.

Located in Granby, MA, Red Fire Farm is a year-round local source for high-quality food and garden plants using organic principles that result in safe food and a healthy environment. If you are interested in participating in the Farm Share Program, please contact Wendy for a new Membership Agreement that is required for your enrollment into the program.

Shares will be available twice a month on THURSDAYS starting June 4 and ending Dec. 15. Local deliveries in Hampden & East Longmeadow will still be available. Call 566.5588 to speak with Wendy about any questions or for enrollment paperwork.

Tanglewood bus trip

WILBRAHAM – The senior center is offering a bus trip to seniors in the area to go to Tanglewood on Aug. 2 to watch Violinist Joshua Bell perform.

The cost is \$99 per person and all gratuities included.

Arrive by 10:45 a.m. for an 11 a.m. departure with the expected return time at 7 p.m.

Picnic on the Lawn 12:30 to 5 p.m.

This is a rain or shine event. Seats are available under the sheet or on the lawn, your choice! Enjoy a prepared box lunch before the show, included with your admission.

The concert begins at 2:30 p.m. and runs for approximately two hours, plus a 20 minute intermission.

Limited space available, payment due in full at registration. Call 413-596-8379 to reserve your spot. Make checks payable to the Wilbraham Senior Center.

Hampden Garden Club to hold August event

HAMPDEN - On Thursday, Aug. 20 at 7 p.m., the Hampden Garden Club will be hosting Chris Ferrero, a writer and consultant, who will be presenting her program "All About Hydrangeas".

Chris trained as a Cornell Master Gardener in New York. For ten years, she led demonstration garden teams, plant propagation workshops, alternative-to-invasives work groups, and children's programs. The program will be at our NEW meeting location at the Town Hall (formerly Thornton W. Burgess Middle School), 85 Wilbraham Rd, Hampden, Room A7.

Guests are asked to use the Library Entrance. There is a \$5 fee for non-members of the garden club. New members are welcome! Membership fee for the year is \$15 and includes admission to all programs.

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Email:jamie@turley.com

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HELP WANTED

Town Administrator Town of Russell, MA

The Town of Russell seeks a **Town Administrator** with strong communication and collaborative skills to oversee and manage day-to-day operations for our Town. Russell is a small rural community (pop. 1643) in the Southern Hilltown's of the Pioneer Valley region in Hampden County. Led by a three-member Select Board, and Open Town Meeting form of government, the Town relies on the Town Administrator to be responsible for the oversight and management of daily operations of the Town.

Responsibilities include scheduling, developing and implementing town projects, assisting with the preparation of budgets, coordinating with various town boards and committees, supervising and coordinating overall operations of Town government and managing day-to-day affairs under the general direction of the Select Board. The Town Administrator will support the Select Board, ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, interface with government agencies and the public and manage municipal operations for the Town. Attendance at certain evening meetings is required.

Candidates should have knowledge and competence in municipal finance and budgeting, project management, human resource/personnel administration, Massachusetts municipal law, and intergovernmental and community relations.

The successful candidate should possess five (5) years of municipal management and leadership experience, or similar responsibilities in a public or government agency. A degree in public administration or a related field is preferred. An equivalent combination of education, training and experience which demonstrates possession of the required knowledge, skills and abilities may also be considered. This is a full-time position with benefits. Starting salary range of \$70,000 – \$85,000 commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Submit resume and cover letter as a pdf attachment to

nboersig@townofrussell.us

Applications must be received by July 16, 2026.

The Town of Russell is an equal opportunity employer.

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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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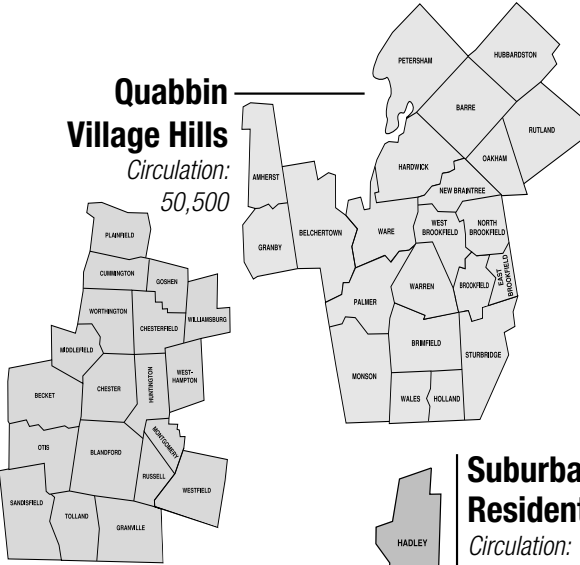
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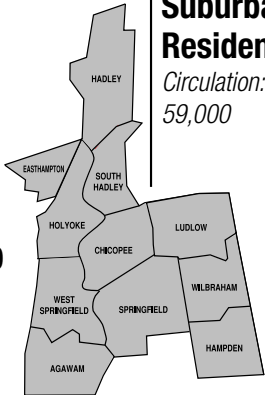
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COLLEGE NEWS

Wadzinski graduates from College of the Holy Cross

WORCESTER - Luke Wadzinski of Wilbraham received a bachelor of arts degree Cum Laude from College of the Holy Cross.

Wadzinski is among 803 bachelor of arts degree recipients Holy Cross celebrated at its 180th Commencement held on Friday, May 22 at the DCU Center in Worcester.

Kertenis of Hampden graduates from SUNY Potsdam

POTSDAM, NY - Jaidan Kertenis of Hampden, MA, is set to graduate cum laude from SUNY Potsdam with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration.

The State University of New York at Potsdam will honor Jaidan and the other candidates for graduation at Commencement 2026, on Saturday, May 16.

Elms College announces Dean's list for Spring 2026

CHICOPEE - Elms College has named the following students to the dean's list for the spring 2026 semester. Congratulations to all the students who are named to the list.

WILBRAHAM

Joseph Aguiar, Marlayna Labbe, Donovan Neiford, Nicholas Pagano, and Joseph Picard.

HAMPDEN

Chloe Sullivan

Area residents named to Dean's list at Univ. of New England

BIDDEFORD AND PORTLAND, MAINE | TANGIER, MOROCCO - The following students have been named to the University of New England's Dean's List for the spring semester 2026. Dean's List students have attained a grade point average of 3.3 or better out of a possible 4.0 at the end of the semester.

The University of New England is Maine's largest independent university, with two beautiful coastal campuses in Maine, a one-of-a-kind study-abroad campus in Tangier, Morocco, and an array of flexible online offerings. In an uncommonly welcoming and supportive community, we offer hands-on learning, empowering students to make a positive impact in a world full of challenges. We are the state's top provider of health professionals and home to Maine's only medical and dental colleges, physician assistant program, and pharmacy school, in addition to a variety of other interprofessionally aligned health care programs and nationally recognized programs in the marine sciences, the natural and social sciences, business, the humanities, and the arts.

Wilbraham: M Derek Semanie

Wilbraham student named to James Madison University Dean's List

HARRISONBURG, VA - Wilbraham resident Anna Lucarelle has been named to the Dean's List at James Madison University for the spring 2026 semester. Students who earn Dean's List honors must carry at least 12 graded credit hours and earn a GPA of between 3.5 and 3.899. Lucarelle is majoring in Hospitality Management - BS.

Ibrahim earns Dean's List recognition at Norwich University

NORTHFIELD, Vt. - Norwich University is pleased to announce that Imani Ibrahim, of Wilbraham, MA, has earned Dean's List honors for the Spring 2026 semester. Founded in 1819, Norwich University is recognized for its emphasis on experiential education and leadership development. Dean's List recognition is awarded to full-time undergraduate students who achieve a semester grade point average of 3.4 or higher, acknowledging sustained academic achievement and dedication to scholarly success.

Elms College Spring 2026 graduates

CHICOPEE - Elms College congratulates 279 students who graduated in Spring 2026.

WILBRAHAM	HAMPDEN
Alba Albo, Anthony Desantis,	Cheryl Avezzie and Ann Bianchi.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Sale of Motor Vehicle

Notice is hereby given by Langonet Towing pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c.255, Section 39A, that on **July 24, 2026** at 63 Ramah Cir S, Agawam the following Motor Vehicles will be sold at private sale to satisfy the garagekeeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicle.

2005 Buick Lesabre
VIN: 1G4HP52K25U276668
Alfred Dimauro
4 Colony Drive
Hampden, MA 01036
07/09, 07/16, 07/23/2026

WILBRAHAM BOARD OF APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING

The Wilbraham Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on **Thursday, July 23, 2026 at 5:30 PM** on the application of YMCA of Greater Springfield, for a special permit (ZBA26-02) under section 3.4.5.11 of the Wilbraham Zoning By-Law to allow construction of a 60' x 60' fully fenced pickleball court and reduction of 16 parking spaces on the north-western side of the building located at 45 Post Office Park as further specified in the application on file in the Planning Office and posted for public viewing on the Zoning Board of Appeals page of the Town of Wilbraham website at www.wilbraham-ma.gov/135/Zoning-Board-of-Appeals. This meeting will be conducted in person and virtually (see meeting agenda for details).

Edward Kivari Jr., Chairman
07/09, 07/16/2026

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 Wilbraham 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

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

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Public notice deadlines are Friday at 3 p.m.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Mended
7. Hymns
13. Commercial transport of goods
14. Poked holes in the ground
16. They precede C
17. Branch of knowledge concerned with wealth
19. Larry and Curly's pal
20. Injured
22. Popular type of dance
23. Moon crater
25. American state
26. Places to lock valuables
28. Stalk that supports the capsule
29. Keyboard key
30. '___' death do us part
31. A type of cage
33. A place to sleep
34. Annual music awards show
36. Made over

CLUES DOWN

1. Hard things to kick
2. Collective of countries
3. Letter of Hebrew alphabet
4. One-time Alabama running back
5. One's sense of self-esteem
6. Of the teeth
7. Treat with care
8. Type of whale
9. Curved structure
10. Emits coherent radiation
11. One of the Gospels (abbr.)
12. Smallest interval in western music
13. Netherlands seat of government
15. Gives to charitably
18. Lout
21. Pastas
24. Release from restrictions

CLUES ACROSS

38. Hard, stony substance
40. Incantations
41. Long-legged, wading bird
43. Breathe noisily
44. Congressman
45. Rip off
47. Golf score
48. Popular pickup truck
51. Where infants sleep
53. Music term
55. Small opening in a surface
56. Musical term meaning "very"
58. Soviet Socialist Republic
59. Treats with powder
60. Email subject line feature
61. A British lawyer
64. Expression of laughter
65. Farmer's calendar
67. Seeds used as food
69. Eurasian shrubs
70. Periods of inactivity

CLUES DOWN

26. Female sibling
27. Title of respect
30. Silver coins
32. Region in India
35. Partner to cheese
37. Dark or dusky
38. Pacific Northwest tree
39. Exaggerate
42. Toddler
43. Touch lightly
46. Fundamentals
47. Jeopardies
49. Curved structures
50. Isolated, flat-topped hills
52. Forming the bottom layer
54. Reciprocal of sine
55. Genus of Old World birds
57. New York college
59. Cloak
62. Kawhi Leonard's team (abbr.)
63. Vietnamese offensive
66. "The Great Lakes State"
68. "___, myself and I"

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 _____

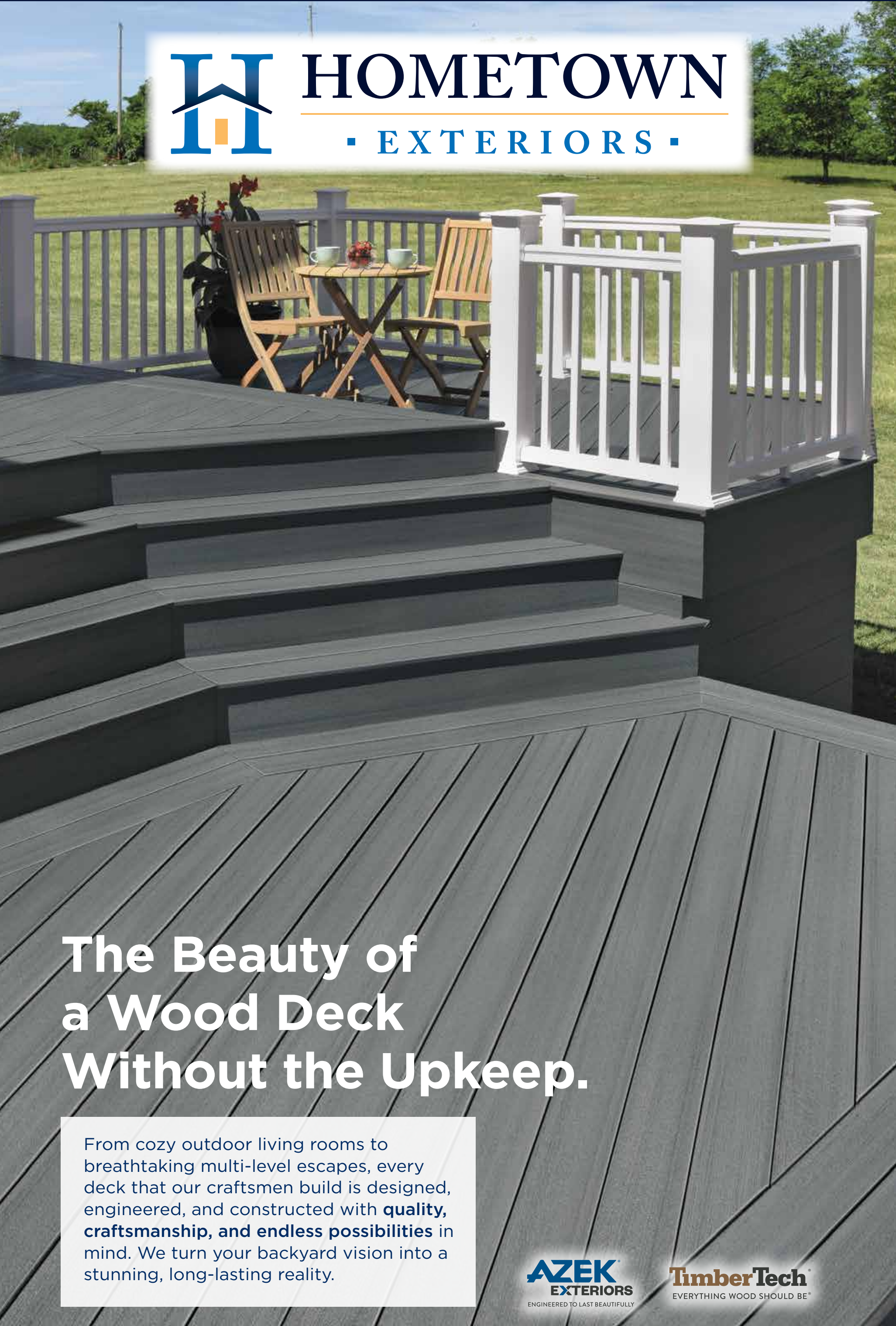
Deadline for Calendar submissions is August 19.

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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