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Photo courtesy of Deb Trimble
The Young United Players comprising the cast of "Seussical Jr." in a group photo.

'Seussical Jr.' a jewel of laughs and smiles

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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WILBRAHAM - The Young United Players, a branch of the Wilbraham United Players, elicited laughs and smiles during their production of "Seussical Jr."

Directed by Deb Trimble, the production was a youth version of "Seussical the Musical," a musical containing several elements of classic Dr. Seuss stories, including "Horton Hears a Who!" and "Horton Hatches the Egg."

Set against a colorful backdrop that transformed

the Fellowship Hall Stage at Wilbraham United Church into the world of Seuss and its whimsical characters, the cast wowed the audience from the start, beginning with the opening number, "Oh, The Things You Can Think!" featuring dancing, singing, and very colorful costumes.

The audience was definitely not in the town of Wilbraham anymore after that number.

From there, we were introduced to Horton the elephant--played by Quinn Mutti--as the Cat in the Hat,

Please see **REVIEW**, page 3

School Committee discusses preparation for delayed or denied federal funding

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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WILBRAHAM - The School Committee discussed preparations in the event of delayed or denied federal funding during their July 9 meeting.

Assistant Superintendent for Finance, Operations and Human Resources Dr. Douglas Slaughter explained how although funding for some entitlement grants was approved, there was a recommendation by the Executive Branch "to withhold some of that funding."

"For our district, the impact would be about \$71,000 worth of impact. We use that funding for supporting part of the salary of an instructional coach. We use some for covering some of the mentoring of our new staff," Slaughter said. "And then for the Title III money--Title 2A is teacher improvement--Title IV, it's a

small amount, so we shift it into Title I. That's an allowable use and so we use it to support intervention work. So, our Title I intervention work is bolstered by the small amount of Title IV money."

Slaughter noted that a current opening for an instructional coach position was budgeted "at about that same amount of resource."

"So, as far as just a comparable, that's a comparable amount of funding and a potential way to mitigate the impacts of this," Slaughter said. "But at the same time, I think the thing to keep in mind is this is money that has been voted and approved by Congress. For it to not actually be given to us would be a violation of that authorization of funding by Congress, and so to change this would require Congress to take action as well."

Slaughter said, "what very may happen, however,

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Hampden Senior Center keeps cool with Ice Cream Social

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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HAMPDEN - The senior center kept residents cool during the summer's latest heatwave with an Ice Cream Social event on July 18.

The event was sponsored by Vantage Health and Rehab of Hampden.

In addition to the ice cream, the team at Vantage Health also held a blood pressure clinic and Laura Hicks, the newly crowned Ms. Massachusetts in the Senior America Pageant, stopped by for a visit.

Jennifer Rivera, director of business development, was excited to bring the team to the senior center for the event.

"We actually reached out to Tina, who's very involved with the senior center--we love Tina--and we're locat-

ed right down the street. Of course, we want to support and help our local senior center," Rivera said.

Rachel Somers, director of Nursing Services, explained Vantage Health offers a variety of services, including rehab and short-term care and long-term care.

The 94-bed facility is located on Main Street.

"That building has been a staple for that in this community for a long time and it's nice to be able to answer questions because sometimes they don't know exactly what we're doing at the facility and what we offer, so it's nice to get the word out there in the community that we serve," Somers said.

Rivera and Somers stressed the importance of helping the seniors in the community, with Rivera adding that attendees they met



Turley photo by Kristin Rivers

Attendees line up to get their ice cream at the Ice Cream Social at the Hampden Senior Center on July 18.

with learned about short-term care and plan to reach out after their surgeries.

"I think a lot of resour-

ces are not offered to the elder senior demographic, so I think whatever we can do to offer those resources or have

it easy at hand for them, because I know it's difficult for them to reach out and difficult for them to access that setup," Rivera said. "So, I think just being able to offer it upfront and it be very convenient for them is a real big goal for us."

Somers added the facility hopes to, also, expand their physical therapy gym in the future to help more people.

"And just to put information out there, because if they do have surgery, things like that come up so unexpectedly that maybe they'll recall what we have told them about our building and what we have to offer and it won't be as scary for them to find placement for things. Puts a face to it," Somers said.

Hicks enjoyed meeting the attendees, explaining the pageant is for women ages 60 and over and the winner goes on to the State National Se-

nior America in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in October.

She said anyone interested in the pageant can reach out to her to learn more at 413-210-5973.

"As reigning queen, one of the things that we want to do as an organization is to inform other women who are 60 and older that this pageant exists. Because not only is it a fun project to do--which I just did it so I can tell you it was a blast--but the women who run it have been doing it for years and it's such a friendly group of ladies," Hicks said. "They meet every month at the Holyoke Senior Center, they have lunch together. It just becomes a community of women who are our age and who are interested in being out there and enjoying life."

Please see **ICE CREAM**, page 5



Turley photo by Patricia Sullivan

Muriel Dyas embodied suffragist Susan B. Anthony at the Wilbraham Senior Center.

Agitator comes to Wilbraham

By Patricia Sullivan
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - Susan B. Anthony, the famous tenacious fighter for women's rights, came to the Wilbraham Senior Center on July 16 with the message: "Organize. Educate. Agitate. And with that, failure is impossible."

Dressed in sober black like Anthony, reenactor Muriel Dyas of Lanesborough, Mass., depicted her in a vibrant hour-long presentation to an enthusiastic audience of about 50 people--mostly women.

Dyas strode into the senior center wearing Anthony's famous red shawl and holding an alligator

Please see **SUSAN B.**, page 2

WPL hosts annual Paint Sip Fun

By Noelle Hisgen
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - On July 15, the Wilbraham Public Library hosted one of their annual, very popular events, Paint Sip Fun, for teens and adults.

These programs were sponsored in part by the Wilbraham Friends of the Library, and, also, by a grant from the Wilbraham Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Mass Cultural Council, which is a state agency.

For this event, teens tried painting on mason jars, while adults painted designs on wine glasses. People were able to follow a tutorial, or paint whatever they wanted.

People lined up into the Brooks Room of the library to let their creative side show during the event. There were two segments of Paint Sip Fun for the day: Teens paint-



Turley photo by Noelle Hisgen

Emma Pafumi (left), Reese Lonczak (right), and Davida Ingman (back right) are hard at work working on painting their mason jars.

ed mason jars, while adults painted wine glasses. There were also refreshments available for a break for everyone

Founded in 2013, Paint Sip Fun's mission is to edu-

cate, empower, and inspire people of all ages to find their "inner artist." They always

Please see **PAINT SIP**, page 8

School Committee shares thoughts on federal funding cut concerns

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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WILBRAHAM - The School Committee shared their thoughts and questions surrounding a federal funding cut for a literacy coach position during their July 9 meeting.

To learn more about the cut, check out this week's edition.

After Michael Tirabassi asked clarification questions about the position, Rich Rediker said Assistant Superintendent for Finance, Operations and Human Resources Dr. Douglas Slaughter was correct in how it's "against the law for Congress not to spend the money when it's appropriated by Congress."

"However, unless Congress itself steps up or the Su-

preme Court seems inclined to, who knows if this money's ever going to come?" Rediker said. "I wouldn't count on getting this thing anytime soon."

After Timothy Collins asked Slaughter if the district receives Perkins funding--another category of funding that's been discussed for possible withholdings--he replied no Perkins money was received for this, thus no impact.

Superintendent Dr. John Provost added Perkins money usually supports vocational technical education, so shop classes would not qualify, answering Collins' other question.

After asking additional questions, Vice Chair Sean Kennedy said he understood the logic but noted how it was said "about how highly and how important these coaches

are to teachers."

"We do have some free cash here. I would suggest using this. I do not want to cut any positions. I don't want to cut any teachers and I don't want to cut those who support our teachers," Kennedy said.

Chair Michal Boudreau said this to Curriculum Director Lisa Curtin.

"Am I correct to say that the position has been vacant--the position has not been cut--it has been posted numerous times and you've been successful in filling the position?" Boudreau said. "And we're going in so far--as of today--going into the next school year with a vacant position for this coaching position?"

Curtin clarified it's going into the year with a vacant position, with no one to fill it at this time.

"We did not post last year until we knew that we had secured the funding. We posted in the spring before this coming year," Curtin said.

Provost explained one of the reasons for that evening's discussion was--recalling a memo when contemplating cuts--this coaching position was one of the identified cuts "and the School Committee gave us direction to go ahead and fill that."

"That's why we were in the process of trying to fill it. So, we wanted you to hear what our thoughts were about trying to deal with that now we have this federal cut on our hands to see if you're okay with it under these conditions or if you wanted to send us back to work for a different plan," Provost said.

Tirabassi said he was not happy about the situation, but

thought Slaughter identified "a good plan."

"I might feel differently if, Lisa, you were sitting here saying, 'We just interviewed this person and we're so stoked. This person's got great energy, it's going to be so great.' But, I'm hearing that we're having trouble recruiting for the position anyway," Tirabassi said. "I don't like that the teachers aren't going to have support that I think they will probably benefit from, but I think this is the beginning of what's probably going to be several hard choices. I think this is probably nothing compared to conversations, unfortunately, we're going to be having in the fall and the next budget season, which just breaks my heart to say that, but it's just reality..."

He added based on what

he's heard, he would support not filling the position and if the funds are received, consider trying to recruit for the position next spring.

Boudreau asked about funds for consultants in the budget.

"Have we budgeted for that?" Boudreau said.

Curtin replied, "We haven't specifically budgeted for that" and they are going "to try and scrape some money together and see how much we can afford."

"We did apply for the Early Literacy Consortium Grant, which in the past has allowed us to include a consultant and this year did not. So, we're watching for some other way we can supplement her work," Curtin said.

Please see **FUNDING**, page 5

Henna Tattoos for kids and teens by Mandy Roberge

Fan-favorite summer programs return: Henna tattoos for kids & teens

WILBRAHAM - Two of the most anticipated programs of the summer are back at Wilbraham Public Library!

Join us for Henna Tattoos for Kids and Teens with the talented Mandy Roberge from Wicked Good Henna on Wednesday, Aug. 6.

Mandy will bring her expert skills and creativity to the library, offering a safe and fun way for kids and teens to explore temporary body art. Henna is safe for all skin types and lasts for 1-2 weeks. Participants can choose from a variety of beautiful designs, favorite characters, or even collaborate with Mandy to create a one-of-a-kind tattoo!

Event Details:
Kids' Henna Tattoos
Open to students entering grades two through five
Begins at 12:30 pm;
three separate 15-minute

time slots; 12:30, 12:45, 1 p.m.

Teens' Henna Tattoos
Open to students entering grades six through 12
Begins at 1:15 p.m.; five separate 15-minute time slots; 1:15, 1:30, 1:45, 2 p.m., 2:15

Registration opens Wednesday, July 16. These time slots fill up fast, so don't wait to claim your spot! Each participant may register for one 15-minute session.

Come be creative, express yourself, and enjoy one of the coolest summer experiences at the library!

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

About Wicked Good Henna:

Mandy Roberge is a professional henna artist known throughout New England for her engaging and artistic programs. She uses high-quality, natural henna and works with kids and teens to ensure a fun and safe experience for all.

SUSAN B from page 1

briefcase and wooden gavel, as Anthony did. The originals of the shawl and the gavel Anthony used in her speeches are in the Smithsonian Institution.

Speaking as Anthony, Dyas reflected on her early life. She was born in 1820 in Adams, Mass., and had a Quaker upbringing steeped in activism, including the antislavery movement. The Quakers believed that girls should receive an education equal to boys.

In 1839, the well-to-do Anthony family lost their cotton mill and home in a recession. Because Anthony's mother had no property rights, she too lost everything she had brought to the marriage.

"Once a woman got married, she technically no longer existed," explained Dyas.

Anthony became a teacher near Rochester, New York, earning only one-quarter the salary of male teachers.

She became involved in women's rights upon meeting Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1851. She then spent her life traveling the country speaking about abolition and women's suffrage.

Anthony's outspokenness put her in danger--she en-



Turley photo by Patricia Sullivan

Susan B. Anthony advocated for temperance and the abolition of slavery as well as for votes for women.

countered hostile mobs and was even burned in effigy.

After the Civil War, the limitations of the 15th Amendment, which secured the right to vote for African American men--but not women--was a great disappointment to Anthony.

"I was heartbroken and I felt betrayed," said Dyas.

But she continued to fight, and when she dared to cast a vote for president in 1872, she was arrested, jailed and fined by an all-male jury.

Still, she battled on, and gave her last speech and most important speech, declaring "failure is impossible," at age

86 a month before her death. The 19th Amendment, granting women voting rights, finally passed in 1920, 100 years after her birth.

Reenactor Dyas started her business, called Herstorically Speaking, when homeschooling her son.

"I wondered, 'Where are the women?'" she recalled.

After portraying Eleanor of Aquitaine, Marie Antoinette, Madame du Pompadour and other powerful women, she began depicting Susan B. Anthony last year and has found widespread interest in the suffragist.

The senior center audi-

ence had many questions for Dyas. How did Anthony support herself? By selling pamphlets and by paid speaking engagements. How many women voted in the first presidential election after suffrage? 33.3%.

Linda Okula of Wilbraham came to the Susan B. Anthony event to satisfy a love of history she's had ever since watching "Little House on the Prairie" as a child. She's worked as a park ranger at the Salem Maritime National Historic Site and as a costumed guide at the Boston Tea Party Museum.

Okula was impressed with how smoothly Dyas wove her stories together in character.

"I really feel like I met Susan B. Anthony today," Okula said.

Pat Mahoney of Westfield was mesmerized by the performance and "blown away" with how expertly Dyas embodied Anthony's spirit. Having marched for women's rights in Boston in 1986 and in other more recent demonstrations, Mahoney understood Anthony's frustration with the long fight for women's suffrage.

Mahoney said, "Sometimes history doesn't change. We relive it."



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Bletsos begins as Wilbraham's HR coordinator

The Westfield resident started in the position on July 14.

By Dalton Zbierski
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM – Wilbraham's new Human Resources Coordinator began serving the people of Wilbraham on July 14.

During the July 14 Select Board meeting, Town Administrator Nick Breault announced that Sophia Bletsos has officially filled the position left vacant by Herta Dane, who recently retired after several decades working for the town.

"I would report to the Select Board that Sophia Bletsos started today as our new Human Resources Coordinator. We threw a lot of names at her, and a lot of different policies and so forth, and she did pretty well with the quiz at the end of the day," Breault said. "She's onboard, and you're welcome to stop by and say hello at your convenience."

During the Select Board's meeting on May 19, Bletsos introduced herself to the town.

The Westfield resident was most recently the Human Resources Director for the town of Great Barrington in Western Massachusetts.

She began her career in the Human Resources sector working for the small town of Suffield, Conn. Then she spent time in the private sector before finding her way back to the public sector.

Bletsos also earned her graduate degree in industrial organizational psychology, which she said has suited her well for the role.

Her LinkedIn page reports that she has a strong background in people operations, recruitment and employee engagement.

Bletsos has also aided multiple organizations in the process of streamlining Human Resources practices and facilitating positive workplace environments and cultures.

One reason Bletsos moved on from her position in Great

Barrington was to work closer to home. Great Barrington to Westfield is nearly an hour-long drive, while her commute to Wilbraham will be less than a half-hour.

In Great Barrington, Bletsos gained ample experience that will benefit her in Wilbraham.

"Looking at the job description, and this is what I'm currently doing, presently in my role," Bletsos said on May 19. "And, I also have experience actually from working with some of the smaller towns in the Berkshires, working with the [town administrator] function rather than the [town manager] function, which is how Great Barrington is at the moment."

Bletsos also recently revamped Great Barrington's handbook before she moved on from her position there. She said she had to update several of the town's policies.

Bletsos said "I created a really great form to use," Bletsos said. "It was very user-friendly for folks that aren't used to having a standardized way of initiating

change or to payroll and HR. So far, it's been working really well. So, I'd say I'm proud of that," Bletsos said during her first appearance with the board.

Bletsos' philosophy on policymaking is to be user-friendly, which is meant to assist struggling employees and guide them.

She said in Great Barrington, she operated with a very tight budget. She hopes that Wilbraham's budget will allow her to be extra innovative when it comes to new initiatives.

Bletsos also has experience working with unions, dating back to her original position in Suffield.

In Great Barrington, she worked with unions for the Department of Public Works, police department and library in town.

"I [was] the point person for their stewards and their reps, so I [did] work heavily with the contract and interpretation as well, and I [was] at the table for negotiations also," Bletsos said to the board in May.

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played by Kayleigh Wray--who I'd dub the narrator of our story--and the Boy/Jojo, played by Fiona Johnson, opened the story of Horton and the many misadventures coming his way after he stumbles upon a speck containing the Whos in "Horton Hears a Who."

Then, the other colorful characters of Seuss World strutted their stuff including Gertrude McFuzz, played by Cecelia Potts, Mayzie La Bird, played by Noelle Hisgen, Sour Kangaroo, played by Tess Mutti and the Wickershams and Bird Girls crews, followed by the Jungle Citizens and later on, the Whos themselves.

A special shoutout to the Bird Girls played by Jillian True, Natasha Santiago and Aubrey Stephen as the trio brought sass, fun and excellent choreography whenever they were on stage with Hisgen, Potts or in their own scenes. It felt like a mini-show every time the girls were on stage.

I especially enjoyed their performances of "The One Feather Tail of Miss Gertrude McFuzz/Amaying Mayzie" and "Amaying Gertrude (Part 2)."

And I would be remiss if I did not, also, highlight the Wickershams, comprised of Audriana Stasio, Rylee Santiago and Emmeline Gallerani, with their tough attitudes, mischief and hilarity every time they were on stage. I got a clear picture of how mischievous Wickershams are

and will make sure to elude them if I should ever come across one or a trio of them in my everyday life.

My favorite performance with them was "Monkey Around/Chasing the Whos" when they stole the speck and even went into the audience to hide from Horton, which made us all feel like we were part of the production at one point. But let's be real, every time this crew showed up, you knew trouble was at hand and laughs would follow.

The Mutti siblings in their respective roles were scene-stealers, with Tess Mutti's Sour Kangaroo bringing trouble, authority and a sense of power every time she was on stage and some of the high notes she hit during her numbers were mind-blowing. She definitely commanded the room--and realm of Seuss--with her singing alone.

Her brother Quinn as Horton exuded the misunderstood, shy and compassionate elephant, with his priceless facial expressions at certain moments and his singing capturing the more melancholic and contemplative moments of the show, grounding the Seuss world in a bit of reality that is sometimes hidden behind the colors, excitement and mischief. His performance and reprises of "Alone in the Universe" and "Solla Sollew" with Johnson's Jojo and the Circus Animals were my personal favorites.

Another scene-stealer, of course, was Hisgen's Mayzie La Bird, who also hit some pretty high notes during her numbers and her dancing entranced the audience every

time she made an appearance. "How Lucky You Are" and "Amaying Mayzie" and "Amaying Horton" were the standouts because they were so fun and captured Mayzie La Bird's flair of drama, love of self and desire for fun.

For Potts' Gertrude McFuzz, I sensed a yearning to be loved and noticed and wanting to feel beautiful, with her journey an underrated lesson in being yourself and staying true to who you are. Potts captured this arc with tenderness, passion and rage--in some instances--when she was trying to get Mutti's Horton to pay attention to her.

"All For You" was the favorite for her arc.

Another lesson was found in Johnson's Jojo, feeling misunderstood by his parents Mr. Mayor and Mrs. Mayor--played by Sheamus Miller and Savannah Schaeffer, respectively--until he meets Horton and has his imagination opened by Wray's Cat in the Hat during the "It's Possible" numbers, another motivating part of the show that expels disbelief and makes you believe anything can happen. I especially enjoyed the glow-in-the-dark fish for that number.

The lesson, though? As said in the production, "A person's a person, no matter how small," which Jojo proves to everyone during the climax of Act II.

As I write this on the morning after opening night on my back porch, I thought about my preview article for this show, where the cast members I met with emphasized that no matter your role--

from principal actor to ensemble--everyone had a part to play and their parts mattered. No matter how old or young, your part was a piece of a grand production.

That message was clear after watching "Seussical Jr." because no matter the role--big or small--everyone captured the world of Seuss and their pieces created a completed puzzle that made you smile, laugh, tear up or reflect and see how even in the world of animals or other fantastical creatures great and small, there is something for you to learn there too.

The Youth United Players truly are stars in the making, and I hope to see them all in more productions very soon. A true 10 out of 10.

Minnechaug's Ultimate Party takes place Aug. 2

WILBRAHAM – Gather your friends and family for an evening out to benefits our local students!

Minnechaug's Ultimate Party takes place on Saturday, Aug. 2, from 4 to 8 p.m. at Fern Valley Farms.

Fern Valley's Summer Concert will be making a generous contribution.

The event will have a Cornhole Tournament, a raffle table, face painting, great music and an amazing view.

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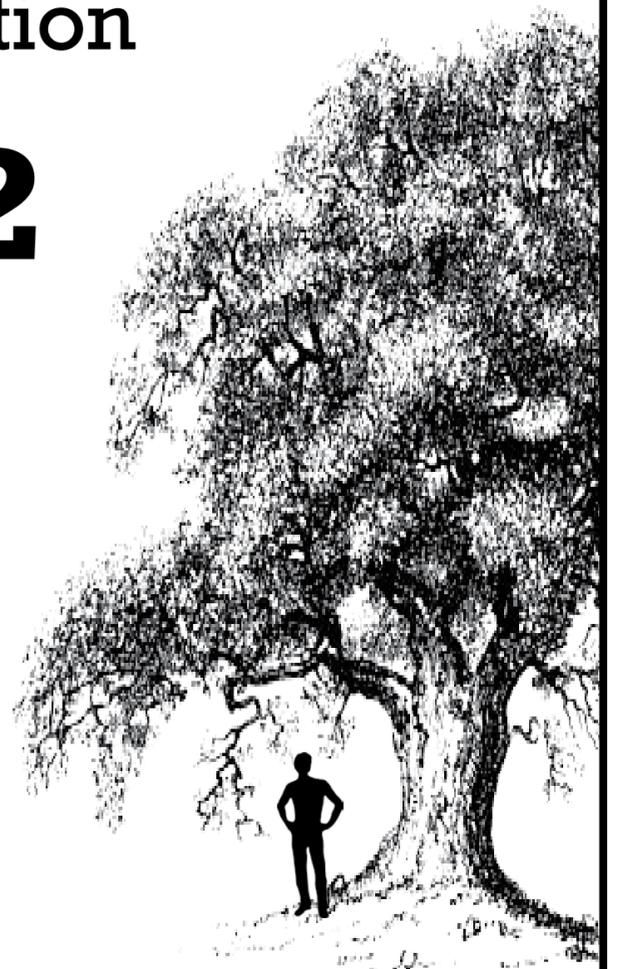
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INSURED AND CERTIFIED

ICE CREAM from page 1

Hicks was looking forward to getting ice cream herself and emphasized events like this bring seniors out into the community.

"By coming to a senior center or to a community event, it gets you out of the house, you're socializing with other people," Hicks said. "So, it's important for seniors to be out and about. It's not only good for their physical health, but good for their mental health."

Tina Doran, the senior center's Program & Volunteer Coordinator, said the event was "a huge success" and thanked Vantage Health for their support from bringing volunteers to providing the ice cream.

She also expressed excitement for Hicks coming by.

"This was a celebration for us. It's our Ice Cream Social and I think everybody had a really good time. I think it was very organized. The variety of ice cream, I didn't expect it!" Doran said. "Everybody working together, it was nice."

Doran said the summertime is also a great time to hold the event to bring out the seniors.

"It's hot out, so this is just a good way to get people together," Doran said. "Again, if you feed them, they will come, especially if it's ice cream in the summer!"

Hicks encouraged the community to attend events happening at the senior center, praising the staff for the warm welcome.

"I think that Hampden has always did a good job of having events where a large number of people come out," Hicks said. "They are offering not only wonderful events, but wonderful opportunities to meet a lot of different people."

Doran's message was this. "Know that we're here. The doors are open, everyone is welcome," Doran said. "That's our message. Everyone is welcome, please come."



Rachel Somers, director of Nursing Services, Elle Somers, Taylor Selmon and Jennifer Rivera, director of business development, comprise some of the team at Vantage Health and Rehab of Hampden, posing in this group photo. Vantage Health sponsored the Ice Cream Social at the Hampden Senior Center.



Turley photos by Kristin Rivers
Jim Dupuis with his ice cream.



Tina Doran, the Program & Volunteer Coordinator at the Hampden Senior Center, and Laura Hicks, the newly crowned Ms. Massachusetts in the Senior America Pageant, pose for a photo.



A shot of attendees enjoying their ice cream.

Hand-Stitched Felt Pillows Program at the WPL

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Public Library Children's Department is pleased to announce that it will be holding a "Hand-Stitched Felt Pillow" program on Saturday, July 26, 2025 from 10 to 10:45 a.m.

This program is intended for children in Grades one through five and requires no prior experience. All materials will be provided.

Children can come in and join in the fun, learn how to hand stitch and create their own unique pillow! Registration is required and can be done online at the Wilbraham Public Library's Website, www.wilbraham-library.org.

This program is sponsored by the Wilbraham Friends of the Library.

'Commotion In the Ocean' family program

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Public Library Children's Department is pleased to announce a Family Fun Event, "Commotion in the Ocean" on Saturday, August 2, 2025 from 10 to 10:45 a.m.

Please join Mrs. B as she reads some ocean-themed books, sings some great songs, plays with the parachute and makes an

ocean-themed craft. This is a Family Program and all children must be accompanied by an adult.

This program is sponsored by the Wilbraham Friends of the Library. No prior registration is required.

Please visit the Wilbraham Public Library website at www.wilbrahamlibrary.org for information.

Wilbraham United Church Vacation Bible Camp

WILBRAHAM - Registration is now open for Wilbraham United Church's Vacation Bible Camp. Join us for a week of fun, learning, music, service!

This year's theme is Messengers of God. Campers will learn about God's messengers from the Bible and what it takes to bring God's message to the world today.

VBC will run July 28-August 1, 2025 from 9 a.m. to Noon. Registration is open to children age four through rising sixth graders.

Cost per child is \$50. Please visit <https://wilbrahamunitedchurch.org/vacation-bible-camp/> or call the Church Office 413-596-2511 for more information and to register!

Upcoming Polish food sales

INDIAN ORCHARD - Polish Food Sales will be held on Saturday, August 23, 2025 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Immaculate Conception Church Hall, 25 Parker St. Indian Orchard, MA. Golabki (3) \$12 Kapusta

(Large); \$10 Pierogi (12); Cabbage, Potato & Cheese \$14; Sweet Cheese, Blueberry \$15
Payable by Cash or Check. No Credit Cards accepted.

FUNDING from page 2

Curtin expressed she too was not happy about the situation.

"But, I think part of the issue of trying to find people, we have some great potential candidates within our district. It's hard to see a position that comes up on the chopping block every so often and the security is not there," Curtin said. "So, I don't blame people for being a little bit wary of taking a leap into something that could potentially not be a long-term position for them."

After Kennedy asked questions on the numbers--which were estimated between \$20,000 and \$25,000--he said, "Consultants can be great, but they can also be a crutch."

He then noted with federal grants, the district had roughly \$1,120,000 coming, but the number is now down to

\$1,049,000.

"I would say let's keep going for that position. Let's keep shooting for it, let's not use consultants, let's have our own people be the consultants," Kennedy said.

After Tirabassi disagreed, asking where money would be pulled from, Kennedy noted free cash or END and a rainy-day fund.

"I would say let's try to stay afloat and offer what we can for as long as we can and when we have to make the really tough decisions, then we're going to make really tough decisions," Kennedy said. "But until that time, I don't think we should stop picking away at little pieces of it. This is the system that we have, this is what's been approved. Let's make it work, let's find somebody."

Secretary Lisa Murray favored keeping the position vacant "until we find out how much money we have" and

noted the three instructional coaches the district still had after Curtin confirmed this.

"Until we can find out how much money we actually have, we still have coaches," Murray said.

Murray also stressed finding the right candidate for the

role and the funding concerns playing a role in scaring off potential candidates.

After further discussion on funding sources to make sure a full-time person was hired over a consultant, Provost summarized what he heard from the committee and

said this.

"Any change that we would make that could allow this to happen would require, I think, affirmative action of the committee because we would be changing our budget. So, what we could do is continue to look to see if

there is anything," Provost said. "I'm not truly optimistic about that, but if we find something else that allows us to fund the position, we can bring that back to you for your permission to make some modifications with the budget."

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VIEWPOINTS

SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor

Can I switch to a taxi driver job without hurting my Social Security?

Dear Rusty:

I opted to draw my Social Security retirement benefit early and work part time. The company I work for has decided to pull me from field work due to my age and health. Although they are great keeping me at 20 hours per week running for parts and doing office work, I'm not sure how much longer it will last. I'm thinking of taking a taxi driving job to keep my income enough to live on. The way it would work, I would lease the cab for some amount of dollars per day, set my own hours to work and collect anywhere from \$1.40 to \$4.00 per mile, depending on what type of fare. My question is: how does Social Security look at that type of employment? Would I be held to the 15 - 45 hours a month standard? I could never come close to making the \$1,200 to \$1,300 a month I need by working so little. Any advice is greatly appreciated.

Signed: Seeking Advice

Dear Seeking:

If you go ahead with your plan to lease a taxicab instead of continuing your current employment, you would, in effect, be considered "self-employed" and would submit your income tax return to the IRS accordingly. Social Security would get your earnings information as reported to the IRS and it would be your net earnings from self-employment after deducting all your business expenses that is reported to SSA by IRS.

There is, however, a special rule which would apply to you in your first calendar year of self-employment while collecting early Social Security benefits. Since, in your first year, some of your earnings would be as a part-time employee paying SS FICA payroll taxes, Social Security would first look at your earnings as an employee to see if you exceeded the annual earnings limit (\$23,400 for 2025).

Then, upon starting your self-employment, Social Security would look at the hours you spent performing "substantial gainful activity" (e.g., driving your taxi) each month and, if you spent more than 45 hours per month in that capacity, you would not be considered "retired," and thus, not eligible for Social Security in any month you exceeded that amount of hours.

If you earned less than the annual limit in total both as an employee and while self-employed, you would get benefits for all months of the year. But if you earn more than the

annual limit, you will get no benefits for any month you exceeded 45 hours as a self-employed person. Again, this only applies during the first calendar year of self-employment - in the following year only your net earnings from self-employment would count toward the annual earnings limit.

In effect, SSA would use the hours-worked standard to see if you are truly retired or actually working. If the latter, they would withhold SS monthly benefits for any month you exceed 45 hours working while self-employed (up to and including December of your first calendar year of self-employment), and only if your total income (as an employee and while self-employed) exceeds the annual limit.

So, if your goal is to net \$1,200 - \$1,300 per month as a self-employed taxi driver, that would be well within the limits of the annual earnings test (\$23,400 for 2025 but changes yearly). But there may, or may not, be a reduction in your Social Security benefits during your first year of self-employment, depending on when you start as self-employed. Note that SSA will ask about your work plans when you apply, and if you expect to stay under the annual limit (working part time in both capacities), you should get full SS benefits. Just be careful to stay under the annual earnings limit for those collecting early Social Security benefits. FYI, earnings from before your SS benefits started don't count toward the earning limit.

Note, too, that your monthly Social Security benefit will be actuarially reduced according to how far in advance of your full retirement age you claim SS. Whenever SS benefits are claimed prior to one's full retirement age, those benefits are permanently reduced.

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.

Letters to the Editor

Rebuttal to Responses of my 'Letter to the Editor' 'What's Going On at the Wilbraham Senior Center'

To the Editor,

To those who disagreed with my letter I truly appreciate your passion for the new Wilbraham Senior Center (WSC) and am very glad that they are enjoying it. However, every letter missed my point which was - promote, be proactive and reach as many as possible!

One letter focused on the fund-raising aspect, totally missing my point and clearly focusing on the Friends of Wilbraham Seniors agenda. While others said "go to the WSC and stop by" where all activities are posted and read the Wilbraham Senior News. This is precisely the argument that I presented. Just pick up the weekly The Wilbraham-Hampden Times and you will see that the Hampden Senior Center (HSC) has their

events, trips and activities clearly featured and presented. You do not have to go to the HSC to find out what is going on. They go to you. All this information is in your mailbox every week. This is a clear example of the proactive nature I am and have been writing about.

Unfortunately, there are many seniors who do not have access to the internet, nor the ability to drive to the center. To the staff at the WSC these are the people who you are missing.

I did visit the WSC internet portal and did see mentions of how to get information and the newsletter but again, if you don't have internet access this information is not available to you. To the staff at the WSC these are the people who you are missing, add them to your list.

There are a significant number of seniors that still work and possibly cannot stop by during the WSC operating hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. to see what is happening. To the staff at the WSC these are the people who you are missing. Add this segment of seniors to your list.

I want to be clear; I am not attacking any person or group. I am asking that the WSC be as proactive as possible so that every person who wants to visit, participate, and take advantage of this new facility. A quote from the movie 'Field of Dreams' - "If you build it, they will come!" Possible not in this case.

Respectfully,

Kevin B. Davis,
Wilbraham

Wilbraham Senior Center's statistics prove otherwise

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to Kevin Davis' recent TIMES Letter to the Editor with misinformation in his comparisons of the Hampden and Wilbraham Senior Centers.

Mr. Davis asked that someone tell him "we haven't been bad stewards with Wilbraham taxpayer's monies." I am writing to refute that "nothing is going on" at the new Wilbraham Senior Center. I have volunteered for 11+ years as a WSC receptionist at both the old Senior Center and our beautiful new Senior Center. Here are some documented statistics.

From March 18, 2022 to June 25, 2023 at the former WSC, 10,162 total individuals signed in. Of this, 3,275 took part in fitness and exercise programs; 4,461 participated in social events. The remainder attended other programs and services. These numbers do not include individuals who attended and participated, but did not sign in.

For the same time period, March 18, 2024 to June 25, 2025, at the new WSC, there were a total of 42,099 sign-ins, a whopping 414% increase! 17, 291 participated in our 9 different fitness and exercise programs or used the gym; 15,926 enjoyed social events and coffee get-togethers. Other stats show how many attended community educational presentations, health screenings, informa-

tion sharing and recreation programs. Again, not all attendees signed in.

In the WSC's July Newsletter, 140 classes or programs are available to attend/participate in/enjoy: educational, craft and art classes; quilting; knitting; rug making; grief counseling; the Pocket of Peace Support Squad; movies; Tai Chi, Chair Exercise, Yoga, Fit After 60 and Fit After 60+; Healthy Bones & Balance; Pilates; Chair Volleyball; or use the gym. 9 different afternoon board games are played weekly. Social dancing with an area musician is enjoyed. And a musical instrument class is available. 223 people have signed up for the Monday/Wednesday/Friday meals through the end of July. And 120, with a wait list, consistently enjoy the catered Special Lunches monthly. Eight teams with subs play bocce weekly. Blood pressure readings are taken on Tuesday morning. You can enjoy the Book Club discussion, learn to tell a story, write a book or hear about our history. Billiard tables are always ready for friendly games. A SHINE representative is available by appointment to provide information on Medicare enrollment; a 20-minute consultation with an attorney can be scheduled, or a discussion with Senator Oliveira's Aide can take place. Other health services are available for reasonable fees.

Our Social Services Coord-

inator leads the well-attended Memory Café; organizes and dispenses the Brown Bag food program; provides help for fuel assistance, SNAP and the Knox Box programs, and oversees the Senior Assistance Program for those in need. Our Activity Directors are always reviewing, organizing, and coordinating new events and programs that interest and support seniors.

The Senior Center van provides rides to area stores on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, or around town on Tuesdays. Volunteer drivers may be scheduled for seniors' transportation to area medical and dental appointments, and medical equipment can be loaned if needed and if available.

These programs and services are continually managed by the WSC staff and supported by 125+ volunteers who willingly offer their time and dedication to make this such a viable, happy location!

This information on the programs and services provided by your well-managed Wilbraham Senior Center is readily available through the Senior Center Newsletter, the Town of Wilbraham website's senior center link, and social media.

Wilbraham's tax monies are certainly not being wasted!

Dee Mitchell,
Wilbraham

Revisit wildflower gardening

After driving by an exquisite wildflower border, I was prompted to revisit and update a column

I wrote some years back on the topic of wildflowers.

If you wish to give the natural look a go, preparation is the key. Read on for more useful advice.

Wildflower or meadow gardens can be beautiful, even breathtaking, if properly cared for. Besides being pretty, they are low maintenance and environmentally friendly, and they often attract butterflies, bees and other pollinators.

Our goal at the time of sowing is a grass-free, weed-free seed bed. Since wildflower seed is sown in winter or early spring, we have lots of time to achieve that goal.

At summer's end rototill the spot intended for your wildflowers. If the grass is especially thick you may need to go over it several times. Allow what is left of the grass to

decompose.

Pull any weeds that sprout, or lightly cultivate the soil - don't go too deep or you'll expose more weed seeds to the light! You can also skip the tiller, and eradicate the grass by use of black plastic or a tarp-of course you'll have to look at it for several weeks!

If that's okay, then start now by mowing the grass as close as possible. Lay the black plastic or tarp on top and secure it in place with bricks or rocks. The heat, coupled with the absence of light will kill the grass underneath. By early fall you will be able to rake away any debris that remains. Plan to sow your seeds in early spring.

There are many wildflower mixes to choose from. I'd recommend selecting one that is suited to the northeast. A mix that contains both annual and perennial flowers is a good option - the annuals providing you with color the first year while the perennials

are establishing themselves.

Don't skimp on the seed. In fact, use up to three times more than the packet says you need to ensure you'll end up with lots of blooms. To avoid bare spots, divide your seed in half and sow the entire area with the first half, then go to the second.

Don't cover the seed at all, just firm it into the soil. A lawn roller works great!

Gently water until your seeds have sprouted and your plants are up and growing - this will usually take at least a month. Watch now, as the season unfolds in all of its beauty!

At the end of the growing season, after the plants have gone to seed, you should mow the entire field with your mower on its highest setting. This will prevent trees and shrubs from establishing themselves in your meadow. The mower will do a fair job of chopping up spent stems and leaves - just let them fall where they will.

First, they will act as winter mulch. Then, over time they will break down and add

Please see **GARDEN**, page 10

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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.

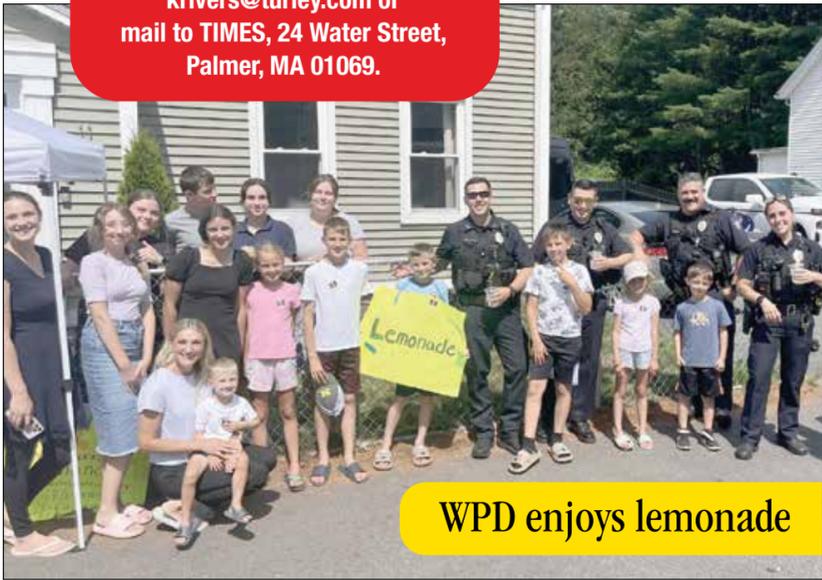
Candidates who wish to further publicize their candidacy, beliefs and events may contact advertising, 413-283-8393 about paid advertising in Wilbraham-Hampden Times.



Life in &

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



WPD enjoys lemonade

Photo and caption courtesy of Wilbraham Police Department

On July 5, the Saturday 3 to 11 p.m. shift cooled off at a lemonade stand on Cottage Avenue.

Dave meets Harry...



Photo and caption Charlie Bennett
Dave Bourcier, president of the Wilbraham Atheneum Society, meets beloved Wilbraham senior citizen Harry Setian in the Hearse House of the Atheneum's Old Meetinghouse Museum Ice Cream Social July 13.

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

Happy Birthday **JAMES**



Happy 7th Birthday to our sweet, smart, funny James. We love you!
Love Anita, Mom and Dad.

The Ice Cream Trio...

Photo and caption Charlie Bennett

Three Wilbraham ice cream lovers (from left) Frank Ludwig, Valerie DaCunha and Jim Davis enjoy Friendly's Sundae Cups in the Hearse House of the Old Meetinghouse Museum's Ice Cream Social July 13.



HFD conducts water supply operations training

On July 14 for training our members reviewed water supply operations. Engine-2 utilized our turbo draft device to draft water out of Mill Pond. Engine-2 then supplied Engine-1 which was flowing a master stream device. Over the next few weeks, our members will be taking advantage of the warm weather and train on various water supply operations.



Photo and caption courtesy of Hampden Fire Department

Tree planting by Wilbraham Women's Club



Submitted photo and caption Sue Agnew

As part of the Wilbraham Women's Club Commemorative Tree Program, a Flowering Thundercloud Purple Leaf Plum Tree was gifted and planted on the south side of Crane Park Drive by the Flower Arrangers Group of the Wilbraham Women's Club in memory of long time member Pat Stoeber. Pictured left to right are: Marguerite Basile, Marcia Morgan, Dottie Schwendenmann, Kathleen Lutrell, Marge Trimble, Halina Lefort, and Karen Feen. Other members contributing to the tree and not pictured are Michele Axtmann, Edna Colcord, Diantha Ferrier, Joanne Pedro, Pat Tutty, Marjorie Weeks, and Charlotte Worthington. Pat's daughter, Joanna Stoeber, was also unable to attend. For information about planting a tree in honor of a loved one, please contact Cheryl Wesolowski, Wilbraham Women's Club Commemorative Tree Chairman, 413-538-1178.



Photo and caption Charlie Bennett

Artful kids at Ice Cream Social...

Visiting kids, with the help of adults from the Atheneum Society, try out their arts skills with materials from The Rentable Art Cart company on the back lawn of the Old Meetinghouse Museum's annual Ice Cream Social July 13. (From left) Nora Chicoine, Maddie Roos, Liz Pacosa-McEvoy, Bradley, William and Shallan Gregory, Lindsey Bourcier, Hazel May Lewison and Riley Chicoine.

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July 2025 Nomination for The Gina Kahn Most Valuable Person Award

WILBRAHAM/HAMPDEN - It is with deep respect and admiration that Sophie Pariseau be nominated for The Gina Kahn Most Valuable Person Award. Sophie exemplifies the extraordinary strength of the human spirit. In the face of unimaginable personal loss, she has not only found a path forward but has become a beacon of hope, healing, and purpose for countless others.

While navigating the depths of grief, Sophie made a courageous choice: to transform her pain into purpose. Instead of retreating inward, Sophie looked outward, identifying the needs of others who might be suffering silently. She founded the 3.3 Miles for Change, honoring her mother, Sima, and brother, Dylan. This walk is raising money to be donated to the YWCA of Western Massachusetts, aiding their domestic violence program.

The program is dedicated to helping individuals who have been affected by domestic violence, as well as providing education to younger generations.

Through Sophie's direct community engagement, Sophie has broken stigmas about grief and loss. Her empathy, resilience, and leadership are making a profound and lasting difference in our community.

Sophie's journey is not defined by tragedy, but by the extraordinary compassion and action that followed it. It is rare to encounter someone who so clearly embodies the idea that from great loss can come great light. Sophie is not just a survivor she is a changemaker and an inspiration for all who cross her path. Sophie is nominated in honor of her unwavering commitment to turning personal sorrow into a gift for others.



The adults of the Paint Sip Fun segment for the day come together with their wine glasses.

PAINT SIP from page 1 create a fun and supportive environment for everyone. Paint Sip Fun is a mobile art studio which provides painting events across the Western Mass and Northern Connecticut area.

They strive to be a resource of creativity for others.

Paint Sip Fun is led by Erin Boughamer, the founder of Paint Sip Fun, who is a former art school student, and is a current art teacher. She was inspired to create Paint Sip Fun after witnessing this program happen at a restaurant.

"Every human being is creative, whether it's through paint, drawing, cooking, gardening, creating a spreadsheet, getting your clothes done for the day, it doesn't matter. We are all human beings, creative creatures. It's just in our nature," Boughamer said. "I was given the gift of art, so I teach art. But there are so many ways to be creative. And if you are not creative, you can get seriously depressed, seriously up in your head, and it's not good mentally. You need to create."

Teen Services/Young Adult Librarian Rachel

Hapgood, also spoke about having the Paint Sip Fun program for people and giving them a creative outlet where they can freely express their creativity, along with sharing it with others.

"We can usually have a full event," Hapgood said. "We have a lot of teens that know about the Paint Sip Fun, or their parents do, so we typically will get a lot of teens that will come out to try different kinds of painting today."

Hapgood shared what she hopes attendees took away from their respective events.

"I hope that they use their creativity today and enjoy being with friends and learning about painting in class and have a fun time," Hapgood said.

It was a great day for people of all ages to come out and show their creative side, being able to go home with something they have worked so hard on.

For more information about Paint Sip Fun, check out their website at paintsipfun.com.

For more upcoming summer programs at the library, visit wilbraham.libnet.info/events.



Wine glasses made by the attendees of the Paint Sip Fun segment are up for display.



The teens are hard at work painting their mason jars. Turley photos by Noelle Hisgen

Hampden Historical Society presents Thornton W. Burgess Talk

HAMPDEN - The Hampden Historical Society presents a talk about our famous local author Thornton W Burgess, His life and stories". by - Linda Paquette.

He was a conservationist and naturalist who published 170 books on animals and nature, such as; "Old Mother West," "Peter Rabbit" and "Reddy Fox." His wonderful

stories are still as relevant today as they were when originally written from 1915 through 1965. Pizza and refreshments will be served.

Please join us on Thursday July 24, 2025 at 6:30 PM at 616 Main Street, Hampden, MA., 01036

Any questions please call Linda Krawiec at 566-8447.

Cookbook Club at the WPL

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Public Library Cookbook Club is meeting on Wednesday, August 6 at 6:30 p.m.

This month's selection is "Good Lookin' Cookin'" by Dolly Parton and Rachel Parton George.

Please let the library know what you're bringing when registering so we do not duplicate recipes. Cooking is encouraged but not re-

quired for attendance. Copies of the book are available now at the Service Desk.

The Cookbook Club meets on the first Wednesday of every other month at 6:30 p.m.

This program is free and open to the public, and registration is required. For more information or to register, please call the library at 413-596-6141.

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Hampden Senior Center Tag Sale next month

HAMPDEN - The Friends of The Hampden Senior Center will hold a HUGE indoor Tag Sale from Monday, Aug. 25 through Sept. 14!

The Hampden Senior Center is located at 104 Allen Street in Hampden. Please consider cleaning out your

closets and donate gently used or new items for donation.

These items can be dropped off starting the week of July 28. What we are looking for are shoes, household items, clothes, etc.

We cannot take, however, large items such as furniture

pieces. Thank you as always for your generous contributions and support.

All proceeds will be used to benefit the programs and activities at The Hampden Senior Center. For more information, please feel free to contact Joan Shea at 413-566-8224.

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Park Administrator

Full-time Park Administrator for a large, over-55 mobile home community. Responsibilities include overseeing facilities and maintenance crew, as well as enforcement of cooperative rules. Individual would be expected to take an active role in day-to-day operations, in coordination with President, Board of Directors, maintenance crew and office staff.

Requirements include previous management experience; general knowledge of building, property and vehicle maintenance; excellent organizational, communications, and time-management skills.

Resumes can be sent to:
Pine Valley Plantation Cooperative,
281 Chauncey Walker St., OFC30,
Belchertown, MA 01007
 or emailed to office@pvpco-op.com
 Attention: Richard Kelleher, President

Please include days and times that you would be available for an in-person interview.

SPORTS

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Catalano scores win at Monadnock

WINCHESTER, New Hampshire – For Tommy Catalano, watching his brother Trevor earn his first NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour victory at Monadnock Speedway last year was emotional for several reasons.

Trevor's triumph came in only his eighth NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour appearance. Entering Saturday's Duel at the Dog 200 at Monadnock Speedway, Tommy had 96 career starts on his resume, none of which had resulted in a win despite several close calls.

Years of patience and hard work brought a second Catalano to Monadnock's Victory Lane in thrilling fashion.

Tommy was tasked with fending off Patrick Emerling during an overtime restart while on older tires. Emerling briefly took the lead from Tommy, but a nudge to Emerling's back bumper knocked him out of the groove just enough for Tommy to earn an emotional breakthrough victory by the slimmest of margins – .007 seconds.

"I didn't really want to get [Emerling] like that into [turn three]," Tommy said. "I was hoping to kind of move him up the hill a little bit. Everyone was kind of tight right there. Justin [Bonsignore] was right on my bumper. It's unbelievable."

"Hopefully this isn't the last one."

After starting 12th, Tommy cycled to the second position after electing to stay on track during a caution with 42 laps remaining that, ironically, involved his brother Trevor.

Tommy lined up second behind Luke Baldwin for the ensuing restart, with Tyler Rypkema providing the two a buffer between Emerling, who led the remaining lead lap cars off pit road. Knowing he needed to move quickly, Tommy dove underneath Baldwin in Turn 1 to take the lead, which also pinned Emerling on the top line.

By the time Emerling worked his way back to second behind Tommy, another caution would trigger an overtime restart. The fastest car at Monadnock all evening would now be lined up to Tommy's outside for the final two-lap sprint, but even with the odds against him, the seasoned veteran was not ready to surrender the win just yet.

Emerling led at the white flag. Through determination and sheer will, Tommy led at the checkered flag, albeit just barely.

The scene in Victory Lane was nearly identical to last year's Duel at the Dog 250, with the only difference being the role reversal of the brothers.

As the Catalanos celebrated, Emerling felt a mix of frustration and disappointment with his second-place effort. He was critical of the maneuver Tommy pulled on him to take the victory but does not plan to linger on Saturday's defeat for long.

"We had the best car today," Emerling said. "We led basically the whole race and the whole team executed really good. We were doing exactly what we had to do and had the race won in the last corner but got smashed out of the way. That's not the type of racing that I do, but I guess that's how it goes."

If Emerling had edged Tommy at the line, he would

Please see **RACE**, page 10



Keira Horne grabs the loose ball.



Maya Usher chases down a loose ball.



Brooklyn Manning passes for the Falcons.

Falcons fall at home against Brownies



WILBRAHAM – Last Wednesday evening, Agawam handed Wilbraham A Girls summer soccer their first loss of the season. Agawam prevailed 3-1 in the matchup to notch its sixth win of the season. Agawam is in fifth place in the A Division standings while Wilbraham is in third with a 7-1-2 record. The playoffs are set for next week in the PVSSL.

Taylor Bartosz heads up the field.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

LEFT: Alexis Carreira sends a pass away.



Sophia O'Connor heads up the field.

Pioneers grab win in playoffs

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—Four days after giving up a pair of stoppage time goals and having to settle for a tie against rival Vermont Green FC in the regular season finale, the Western Mass. Pioneers hosted the Long Island Rough Riders in a USL League Two

play-in match. Once again, the Pioneers held a two-goal advantage late in the second half, but this time there wouldn't be any miracle comeback by the opposing team. The Pioneers advanced into the Eastern Conference quarterfinals with a 2-0 shutout victory before a large crowd at Lusitano Stadium, last Tuesday

night. "We're very happy with this result, especially after what happened on Friday night," said longtime Western Mass. Pioneers head coach Federico Molinari. "It was in the back of my mind during tonight's game. You just hope it doesn't happen again." The Pioneers, who finished the regular season with a 10-1-3 record, played their last home game of the season.

Pioneers' goalie Trey Sheppard, who made his first home start of the season against Vermont, was feeling much better after posting his first shutout against the Rough Riders.

"I didn't sleep very well the other night, but I received a lot of support from my teammates," said Sheppard, who's from Columbus, Ohio. "I just forgot about the past and focused on tonight's game. I'm really looking forward to playing for this team again next year."

Sheppard is also one of the goalies listed on the Amherst College men's soccer roster. The Mammoths are



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Jose Suarez Monaco goes after the ball.

the defending NCAA Division 3 National Champions. Sheppard, who's going to be a sophomore in the fall, missed most of the Pioneers regular season because the Amherst men's soccer team made a trip to Europe where they played several matches. "It was definitely a very cool experience," he said. "We played a few games over there, but I'm very glad they gave me an opportunity to

play here." Sheppard certainly enjoyed having a solid defense in front of him led by Pioneers captain Aidan Kelly, who's a member of the UMass-Amherst men's soccer team. "Aidan is a great defender," Sheppard said. "He makes all of the plays."

Please see **PIONEERS**, page 10



Gustavo Barbosa gets a leg on the ball.

Western Massachusetts softball captures gold in Bay State games

DEVENS – Earlier this month, the entrant from Western Massachusetts captured the gold in this year's Bay State Summer Games for softball.

The tournament began this

year with West team actually suffering a loss 3-0 in the opener playing in the Willard Field Complex in Devens. The tournament started on July 8 with two games. Following an opening loss, the

West bounced back with a 4-3 win over the Northeast team.

Action continued on Wednesday July 9 as the West scored two wins in the game. They defeated Metro 2-1 and then trounced on the Central

Mass. team 10-2 to earn a spot in the gold medal game, which took place on Thursday, July 10. The West found itself in a rematch with Coastal and this time prevailed in a slugfest, winning 11-7.

Among the players on this year's team from Western Mass., Chelsea Hull of Monson High School, Agawam's Alexina Lentes, and Holyoke's Mia Bauer were on the team.

SPORTS

Blue Sox scored slugfest win before break

HOLYOKE – The Valley Blue Sox had great offensive success in their 14-11 victory over the Sanford Mainers. Valley (16-19) had the bats going early thanks to shortstop Michael Elko and right fielder Isaac Wachsmann, however, Sanford (18-18) started the offensive explosion first.

In the top of the first, Mainers' Zack Kent singled up the middle to score Domenico Tozzi. Peter Keblinsky scored an earned run on an E2 by Hayden Perry and Kent scored unearned. Sanford had a dominant top of the second inning, scoring four more insurance runs thanks to wild pitches and an error by the Blue Sox.

Valley found their footing in the bottom of the inning. It started with Wyatt Hunt being hit by a pitch which was followed by Andrew Loikits'

double. An E6 error occurred which allowed Hunt to score and Loikits to advance to third. Kai Cunningham then singled into center field scoring Loikits. Cunningham found his way down to second base on a nice steal and was then driven in to score off a single by Chris Carson. It was now 7-3 at the end of two innings.

Sanford acquired two runners on first and second before Sam Miller nuked a three run home run shot into left field to make it 10-3 heading into the bottom of the third. Just when it looked like

the Blue Sox were going to be crushed by the Mainers,

Valley had an incredible offensive explosion. Wachsmann crushed a homer into left field to start the scoring frenzy. Nicholas Spaventa and Hunt

walked and then Loikits reached first base on an E1 which allowed Spaventa to score to make it 10-5. Cunningham hit a sac ground out to score Hunt and advance Loikits. Hayden Perry walked to reach first. Carson drove a ball into left center to score Loikits and advance Perry to third. Then Michael Elko came to the plate. Elko ripped a triple into right field scoring Perry, Carson and himself on a E4 to tie the game at 10-10. Wachsmann came up to bat for the second time that inning and crushed a homer into the same exact spot as before to give Valley their first lead of the night 11-10 to end the inning.

Wachsmann was hyped about his home runs. "There

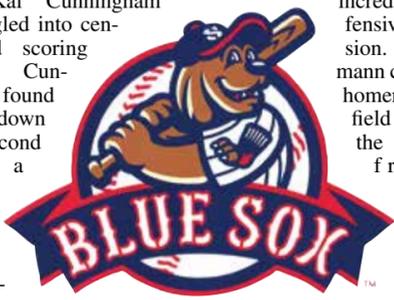
was not a lot going through my head [during the home runs.] I was just trying to put together good at bats and help the team get back into the game."

Valley's Head Coach Endy Morales was impressed with Wachsmann's performance. "He's a super talented guy and when pitchers make mistakes and when facing really good hitters, you make them pay, that's just the name of the game right there."

More scoring occurred in the bottom of the fourth. Hunt tripled which was then followed by Lokits walking and stealing second. Cunningham then walked to load the bases up. Perry's sac ground out scored Hunt and advanced Loikits to third. Carson walked and then Elko slapped a double off the center field wall to drive in Loikits and Carson. The Blue Sox were now up 14-10.

Sanford was ultimately not able to catch up to Valley's explosive offensive momentum as the game ended 14-11 in favor of the Blue Sox.

Morales was hyped about the win. "Absolutely incredible [game]. I told the [team] in the second inning this game was going to be a dog fight and they responded," Morales said.



This week in recreation



Erin Carroll, Assistant Director

WILBRAHAM - We hope that everyone is having a great summer full of fun, friends, family and fantastic memories! We know that summer is still in full swing and we do not want to think about the fall yet but a few fall sport registrations are ending so do not delay!

Fall Rec Soccer (K-8) and Field Hockey (Gr 3-8) registration will end on Monday July 28th. Please log in to your wilbrahamrec.com account or stop by the office to register before it is too late! We are always looking for volunteer coaches for our sport teams, so if you want to make a difference to families/kids in the community as well as promote a passion for sports and being active consider volunteer-

ing! We also have multiple fall programs that have registration just starting or opening soon. Flag Football (K-4), N Zone Junior (Ages 2-3), and Pre-K Soccer (Ages 4-5) registration started on July 22. Cross Country (Gr. 4-8), Fall Volleyball (Gr. 3-8), Fall Tennis (Gr. 2-12) and Stars of Tomorrow Dance (Ages 3-teen) all open registration on Aug. 5.

If you are still looking for things to do this summer Spec Pond Beach is open daily, until Aug. 17 and includes a splash pad and a concession stand with ice cream and more. We also have some room left in some of our weekly summer program offerings.

For more information on all of our programs and to register, please visit wilbrahamrec.com.

Follow Turley Sports on Instagram

Turley Publications sports department has recently joined Instagram. You can find our account by searching "turleysports." We will regularly feature samples of photos that you will see in our publications on a weekly basis. Please follow and share with your friends and loved ones. We will be featuring photos from all 11 of our sports sections, but as always, you can see all the photos that appear by subscribing to your local paper or picking up a copy in your community.

RACE from page 9

have snapped a streak of different winners to open 2025, having previously won at New Smyrna Speedway. Austin Beers' victory at Lancaster Motorplex last weekend tied the record for seven different winners in seven events that was set in 1999.

Instead, Tommy's valiant effort during the final laps set a new NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour record; eight winners in the first eight races.

Building up Catalano Motorsports has been a prolonged, methodical effort not only by Tommy, but his mother Amy, his father Dave, his brothers and every member of his team. That elusive first victory finally arrived on Saturday, a day Tommy wasn't sure would ever materialize.

"It's just nuts," Tommy said. "You see all the people that have won so far this year and if you said any of them were going to win their second race [this year], that wouldn't have surprised me at all. To come here and do what we did is phenomenal."

"You start getting down thinking it's not meant to be, but you keep plugging away and keep at it."

Kyle Bonsignore finished third in his 100th NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour start, followed by his cousin Justin Bonsignore and Beers. The rest of the top 10 included Rypkema, Baldwin, Stephen Kopicik, Craig Lutz and Anthony Nocella.

PIONEERS from page 9

The other three Pioneers starting defenders in the home finale were Jaiden Willems, Juan Hermoso, and Gustavo Barosa.

Willems suffered an injury in the middle of the first half against Long Island (9-3-1). He was replaced by Jared Smith.

"I thought Jared was the man of the match," Sheppard added. "We have a very good defense."

The play-in match was scoreless until the 26th minute of the opening half.

That's when Mamadi Jiana, who graduated from Chicopee High School, received a pass from Israel Neto before blasting a shot

into the net.

"I felt very good after scoring what turned out to be the game winning goal in front of the hometown crowd," said Jiana, who mostly likely played his final match wearing a Pioneers jersey at Lusitano Stadium. "It's always very special whenever we're playing at home."

A couple of minutes later, Neto fired a shot from the top of the box, but Long Island goalie Ethan Wood managed to knock the ball over the crossbar resulting in a corner kick.

The Pioneers held a 1-0 halftime advantage.

In the middle of the second half, Neto chipped a pass from the right side of the box to a wide Santiago Blasco Gomez, who put the ball into the net giving the Pioneers a 2-0 advantage.

Unlike what happened in the regular season finale, Sheppard and the defense



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com Rees Sheppard socks a free kick away.

didn't allow the Rough Riders to make a late comeback.

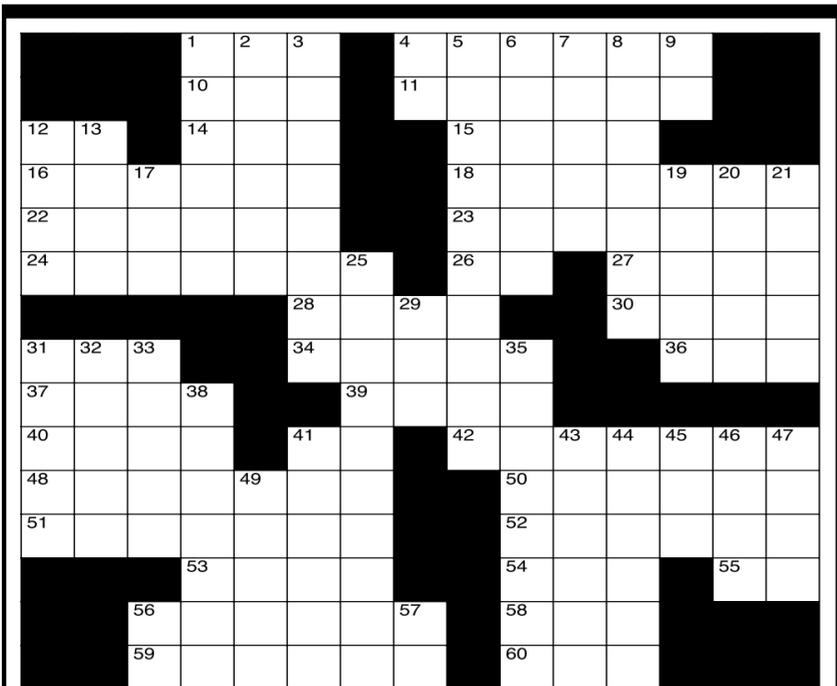
GARDEN from page 6

organic matter to the soil – just as leaves and twigs do in the woods. In the absence of a mower you can go the old fashioned route and cut the meadow with a scythe or hedge clippers.

In all instances care should be taken not to damage the crown of the plants, this can severely weaken or even kill perennial wildflowers.

As far as fertilizers go, wildflowers generally don't need it! In fact, rich soil does more harm than good, causing weeds to thrive and compete with your flowers for sunshine and water. Speaking of water, once your meadow is established it will only require water in cases of severe drought or if you plan to re-sow annual seeds in bare spots the following spring.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 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.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Pacific Standard Time
- 4. Extracts through heating and melting
- 10. Express delight
- 11. More curvy
- 12. Expression of uncertainty
- 14. Indicates before
- 15. Daughter of Hera and Zeus
- 16. Southwestern CA city
- 18. Unified
- 22. Less attractive
- 23. Base of jellies
- 24. A large and noisy party
- 26. He was traded for Luka
- 27. Wolverine genus
- 28. «Happy Days»

- actress Moran
- 30. Root of taro plant
- 31. Student environmental group (abbr.)
- 34. Silk garments
- 36. Unique power
- 37. Ray Liotta cop film
- 39. Leak slowly through
- 40. Notion
- 41. Atomic #55
- 42. Fixed in one place
- 48. About heat
- 50. Type of baseball pitch
- 51. Seedless raisin
- 52. Large wading birds
- 53. Similar
- 54. Time zone
- 55. Atomic #34
- 56. Program
- 58. Old world, new

- 59. Contrary belief
 - 60. «To the ___ degree»
- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Plain-woven fabric
 - 2. Classed
 - 3. Suppositions
 - 4. Midway between south and west
 - 5. Tropical American trees
 - 6. Leveled
 - 7. Published false statement
 - 8. Adolescent
 - 9. Junior's father
 - 12. Aurochs
 - 13. Not low
 - 17. Boxing's GOAT
 - 19. Short musical composition
 - 20. Small immature herrings

- 21. Eavesdropper
- 25. Parcels of land
- 29. Anger
- 31. Irritations
- 32. Hindu holy man
- 33. Wicker basket for fish
- 35. Natural object
- 38. Transporting in a vehicle
- 41. A dog is one
- 43. Smaller portion
- 44. Sew
- 45. Belonging to a thing
- 46. Horsley and Greenwood are two
- 47. Scottish language
- 49. Producer
- 56. Exclamation of surprise
- 57. Russian river

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SENIORS

Events & announcements schedule

Scantic River Artisans presents 'Reflective Musings' A Community Art Project

HAMPDEN – Scantic River Artisans invites artists of all levels and ages to participate in a unique and inspiring community art experience: "Reflective Musings."

This inclusive project encourages participants to tap into their memories, emotions and thoughts to create a personal work of art based on the theme of reflection.

Artists are encouraged to work in any medium—painting, collage, drawing, mixed media, photography or even something unexpected. A list of optional "musings" is available to spark inspiration, but participants are also welcome to follow their own creative path.

FREE Demo Sessions will be held to offer guidance and spark ideas: Aug. 28, 6 to 8 p.m.

Location details available on our website

"This project is about more than making art," Nan Hurlburt, special assistant to the board. "It's about connection, expression, and celebrating the diverse, creative voices within our communi-

ty." Completed works must be submitted by Sept. 18 to be included in the "Reflective Musings Showcase Exhibit and Sale" on Oct. 11 and 12. All submitted pieces will be on display and available for purchase.

Proceeds from the event will support the Scantic River Artisans Scholarship Fund and local arts programming, helping to foster the next generation of creative talent.

Spots are limited—don't miss your chance to be a part of this powerful community collaboration.

Sponsored in part by the Mass Cultural Council and Dick Blick Art Supplies and local generous members of the community.

For more information, visit scanticriverartisans.com.

Questions? Email us at info@scanticriverartisans.com

Follow the journey on social media.

Facebook: Scantic River Artisans

Instagram: @scanticriverartisans

VFW Post 9397 hosting Steamers

HAMPDEN – VFW Post 9397 will be hosting Steamers beginning on May 16 at 5 p.m. until sold out.

The menu is steamers, clam chowder, clam strips,

chicken tenders, French fries and onion rings. The price is market dependent.

First come, first serve with limited supply.

Transfer Station Sticker Sales

HAMPDEN - The Hampden Selectmen voted on April 28, 2025 to increase the price of the Transfer Station permits.

The increase will start May 23, 2025.

For Seniors over 65 the price will be \$40 for the first permit and \$20 for any additional permits for those residents meeting those criteria and car registered to that

person or person.

For those residents that are under 65 the cost is \$70 for the first permit and \$35 for any additional permits for those residents meeting the criteria.

The Transfer Station is located at Cross Road.

Hampden Board of Health and Selectmen

Monthly Highlights for July at the Hampden Senior Center:

Crafts with Kim Scrapbooking Class
Tuesdays, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon
Please bring 7-8 photographs, scissors, a tape runner, and any stickers you may wish to use.
Kim will provide scrapbooking paper and all the tools necessary to make your book gift-worthy.
Cost is \$10 per class.

Ballroom Dance for Balance and Longevity!
8-week session, July 10 to Aug. 28
Thursdays, from 2 to 3 p.m.
Social dance classes, led by Amy Villalobos-Schold, a skilled occupational therapist. Focused on strengthening, stability, and modifications... so you can dance! Beginners and singles welcome!
Cost is \$60 per person for the 8-week session if paid in full or \$10 for drop-ins.
Please call 566-5588 to reserve your spot.

A Visit from the Hampden Assessors: Real Estate Tax Exemptions
Wednesday, July 23 at 10:30 a.m.
Please call 566-5588 to let us know you are coming to the presentation.
The Town of Hampden offers Real Estate Tax Exemptions for those who qualify. Applications are currently being accepted by the Assessor's Office for FY2026. The deadline to apply for an exemption is April 1.
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.

Ukulele with Amy New Students Welcome.
The current session continues through July 28. Drop-ins are welcome!
The NEW 8-week session will begin on Monday, Aug. 18.
Beginner Ukulele – Mondays, 12:15 to 1:15 p.m.
Advanced Ukulele – Mondays, 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.
Cost is \$50 for the session if paid in full or \$7.00 per class

for drop-in students.
Please pay cash or make checks payable to: Friends of Hampden Senior Citizens
Please call 566-5588 to reserve your spot now.

Choral Group
Are you interested in singing in a choral group? Please let us know by calling 566-5588.

Living Stronger... Longer... with Lamar Moore – New Students Welcome.
Tuesdays, 2:15 to 3 p.m.
The current session ends July 15. The new session starts on July 22.

Drop-ins welcome! Classes in July are on the 8, 15, 22, and 29.

Learn about balance and how it impacts your overall health and wellness. Get tips on strength training and cardiovascular endurance to increase mobility and flexibility.

Cost is \$50 per session or \$6 per class for drop-ins. Please call 566-5588 to reserve your spot.

"African Drumming" with Jason – New Students Welcome
14-week session through Aug. 1. (No class on 7/4.)
Fridays, 2:15 to 3:15 p.m.
Cost is \$7 per class for drop-ins. Please call 566-5588 to reserve your spot.

Do you have Parkinson's Disease or know someone who does?
Mondays from 9 to 10 a.m.
PWR! Moves Group Exercise Classes with Lisa Kern, OT, Reiki Master! Holistic Therapist
A Parkinson-specific exercise class that "makes function, exercise" to keep you moving and doing more of what you want to do! As you practice, you will be challenged physically and cognitively while working on fitness goals: strength, balance, agility, aerobics, and flexibility.
Exercises are designed to improve your fitness, counteract your PD symptoms, and increase your daily activity. This whole-body function-focused exercise class will push you to do more than you think you can in a fun, empowering, and

enriched environment!
Cost is \$10.00 per class. Please call 566-5588 to register.

Common Threads Led by Joan Tompkins, PhD
Mondays, from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
Come join our friendly group... We share memories and learn new coping skills on how to deal with loss, loneliness, and adapting to life changes.
Please call 566-5588 to let us know you're coming. There is no charge to join this group. All are welcome.

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

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

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

Help us stock our shelves with toothpaste
Thank you to those who donated dish soap last month. Every month, we will target a different item to help fill our shelves to provide non-food items to SNAP recipients.

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

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

Tuesdays with Ann Maggioro, RN, or Ruth Haley, RN
Thursdays with Karen Blair, RN

Facials with Diane Neill
Diane is on Summer Vacation.

Manicures with Cat
Please call Cat directly at 413-335-7422 for an appointment and pricing.

Anyone is welcome to schedule appointments for these services.

Please call 566-5588 to schedule your appointments.

The Dog Days of Summer Luncheon
Friday, Aug. 1 at Noon
Join us for a hot dog lunch and yummy cake for dessert

while you listen to the great music of Baird Souls.

Cost is \$6 per person. Sign up before July 25th to reserve your seat.

Hot Dogs provided by Mountain View Restaurant, and Cake provided by Vantage at Hampden.

Thank you, Sponsors.

Alzheimer's Benefit Dinner Dance with Entertainment provided by: Off the Record
Saturday, Aug. 23 at 5:30 p.m.

Brush off your dancing shoes and get ready for the event of the year! Enjoy a stuffed chicken breast dinner and delicious dessert while supporting a great cause. Proceeds will support the Alzheimer's Association.

Sign up today to reserve your seat. Cost is \$30 per person, paid in advance.

Ticket price includes appetizers, dinner, dessert, entertainment, and one free drink.

Call 566-5588 to secure your ticket or with questions.

This event is generously sponsored by: Monson Savings Bank, Great Horse, and Tudor House Liquors

Upcoming HSC Trips

HAMPDEN - The following trips are being arranged at the Hampden Sr Ctr, 104 Allen St, Hampden; prices include the driver's tip.

Tues, Sept 30 - Lakeside Turkey Train (Lake Winnepesaukee) Harts Turkey Dinner on board, Country Farm Store stop (on own) & NH Liquor Store - \$140pp. Get on the Waitlist for a second train car.

Mon, Dec 8 - The Aqua Turf Club "Rock This Town Orchestra" - Coffee on arrival, delicious family-style lunch, Swinging '50s and '60s tunes - \$127pp.

Full Payment Deadlines are usually 2 weeks before the event. Flyers are available @ the Sr Ctr or via email. Questions call Bobbi @ 413-566-8271 or email bobbij2@charter.net.

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WILBRAHAM-HAMPDEN TIMES

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SCHOOLS

Minnechaug Regional High School fourth term honor roll announced

WILBRAHAM – Minnechaug Regional High School recently named the fourth term Honor and High Honor Roll.

Grade 9 Honors: Peter Appleby, Rama Awkal, Ant’Gilee Ayala, Addison Baldyga, Cole Balog, Taylor Bartosz, Bryce Beckel, Madeline Bleau, Hunter Buckert, Maximus Cayo, Thomas Chitiva Ortiz, Joseph Comes, Masen Cruz, Nathaniel David, Anna Dennis, Kaelyn Dionne, Oksana Dobronski, Ryan Donovan, Ava Eggsware, Caroline Euber, Emmy Foisy, Chase Folli, Colin Foulis, Gavin French, Gianna Fusco, Jackson Gagner, Corrine Gates, Eliza Gloss, Hayden Gloss, Gavin Goldrick, Mallory Gro- no, Daniel Heinold, Parker Hoey, Demetrius Holmes, Mason Howard, Brielle Hunter, Drew Jennings, Alexis Joseph, Tia Kayrouz, David Kim, Isabella Kupis, Geoffrey Kyei Ohemeng, Brayden Lane, Landon Laskiewicz, Cameron Lowe, Jacob Luttrell, Dominic Mascaro, Olivia Maserati, Elijah Mathias, Ashley McDonald, Ellie McRobbie, Mar- abella Melluzzo, Mylie Mit- tler, Wilhelm Morales Casillas, Caleb Moreno, Ryan Mullen, Jayshawn Nomishan, Nich- olas Nordstrom, Gianna No- wicki, Liam O’Brien, Sophia O’Connor, Patrick O’Toole, Kirk Pagoaga, Joshua Pardave, Ava Peck, Owen Petit, Kend- all Placzek, Hailey Scliopou, Alysandra Serju, Tanvi Shar- ma, Demetri Smith, Gabriel Solowinski, Audriana Stasio, Mya Suarez, Elliot Sylvester, Miyani Tessier, Jillian True, Amelia Tucker, Ormandy Velazquez, Calvin Webster, Sophie Weissler, Layla Wil- liams, Olivia Zheng
Grade 9 High Honors: Owen Antaya, Tommy Apple- by, Kayden Bain-Purdy, Nich- olas Capen, Annalecia Carlo, Bartosz Checiek, Irelyn Cof-

fey, Emmett Fitzpatrick, Nora Fletcher, Mario Garcia, Nicho- las Gencarelli, Brennan Glies- man, Ashley Griguoli, Madis- on Guertin, Danika Haygood, Emilia Imbriglio, Kelsey Jen- nings, Brooke Johnson, Pey- ton Lee, Savannah Lee, Adria- ana Lopez, Yman Ly, Isadora Maurice, Daizy McDonald, Clare McMahon, Tess Mor- row, Dylan Niznik, Youngsun Oh, Tristan Oliveira, Demetri Pappanikou, Madeline Pas- tore, Benjamin Patterson, A- verie Picard, Alexis Powers, Noah Ramos, Brenan Rost, Jil- lian Rumprik, Ava Secor, Jil- lian Senecal, Zachary Senecal, Lil- lian Sergienko, Sofia Shores, Joseph Sullivan, Michael Sullivan, William Szpakow- ski, Grayson Tanguay, Anna Taylor, Camren Valle, James Wadzinski, Juliana Washing- ton, Joseph Woytowicz
Grade 10 Honors: Lilia- na Bennett, Nathan Bosworth, Adrianna Brandoli, Darby Burgmyer, Abigail Camire, Samantha Catellier, Lilianna Celetti, Ivy Christensen, Cam- eron Colon, Kiera Connors, Gavin Coughlin, Jonaiky DeJesus, Addison Derosia, Tucker Derosia, Catherine Dickson, Ava Disa, Andrew Dolaher, Brady Dones, Barba- ra Dos Santos Costa, Darren Duah, Angelina Dunn, Eliza- beth Espinal, Isabella Esteves, Saniah Evans, Brielle Foisy, Carter Fortin, Alyssa Fortune, Ella Gagliarducci, Nicho- las Garib, Olivia Gencarelli, Kaden Gralia, Gavin Grimley, Emma Grover, Richard Hale, Liam Harrigan, Anne Hicklen, Ryan Jacobsen, Kalhan Kar, Ethan Kelliher, Abyaan Khan, Gabriel Kishinevski, Ryan Knox-Nelli, Sophia Kozub, Isabella Lafield, Drew Lang, Teagan Lawor, Celayna Ledvi- na, Leah Lomascolo, Caelan Luszczyk, Liam Maher, Avery Marceau, Olivia Martows- ka, Cameron Maziarz, Liam

Metzger, Molly Michels, Ma- son Mish, John Morley, Athe- na Nguyen, Jasper O’Connor, Shiv Patel, Natalie Petit, An- thony Powers, Haley Powers, Samuel Przybyl, Karolina Robles-Maurer, Emanuel Ro- man, Brooklyn Rosas, Ethan Rose-Vialpando, Jillian Rub- ner, Makenna Sacco, Madelyn Sackrider, Yara Saleh, Quinn Salerno, Jolena Sanchioni, Moira Shannon, Landon Sheerin, Savannah Sheerin, Gracie Smith, Alison Souza, Andrew Stark, Cole Stone, Sophia Sundheim, Grayson Sweet, Kaleb Sweetman, Grace Trombly, Isabella Usher, Luis Vega, Ariella Velez, Sarah Rose Walsh, Alaina Warren, Azaryah Wheeler Montanez, Jade Wong-Vallejo
Grade 10 High Honors: Isaac Abergel, Gana Abuata, Angelina Bontempi, Philip Castellano, Annabella Cian- fione, Katie DeGray, Jonathan Dyer, Nehir Elcin, Brooke Germain, Naomi Griffin, Eli- ana Gunn, Lucy Haile, Cait- lin Hebert, Paige Holt, Mad- elyn Hoskinson, Kadence Illig, Amelia Kellogg, Isabella Kirton, Hana Le, Abigail Lee, Molly Lynch, Reese Magee, Caroline Maloni, Chelsea Or- tega, Riddhi Patel, Ainsley Pat- terson, Collin Purcell, Lauren Roberts, Sydney Rocha, Jack Rumprik, Cameron Salvador, Ava Scatolini, Tyler Supczak, Logan Thomas, Connor Till- berry, Faith Trombly, Brayden Tugie, Drew Weinberg, Thom- as Wurm
Grade 11 Honors: Lucas Akers, Ali Awkal, Emma Ba- log, Logan Barcome, Max- well Baroni, Donovan Belton, Gabriella Bermudez, Alec Boilard, Mia Bolduc, Lila Britton, Luke Bruno, Eclipse Buckert, Kennedy Burgmy- er, Trinity Burgmyer, Hayden Carlotto, Irene Chen, Avery Coburn, Steven Cocchi, Ca- leigh Conboy, Thomas Corm-

ier, Kelly Cronin, Alexan- der Danio, Maliha Daubon, Hannah Donovan, Madeline Dos Santos, Samuel Eaton, Landyn Eldridge, Cody Er- skine, Domenic Fantone, Dominic Fiorentino, Lucas Fyntrilakis, Ryan Giombetti, Madyson Giroux, Carina Gon- nello, Jenna Goodwin, Kyle Gralia, Andrew Grasso, Colin Haines, Giselle Harris, Chase Henderson, Zeirra Hernandez, Laila Hosnander, Laya Ibra- him, Elizabeth Johnson, Lana Johnson, John Kavanagh, Zachariah Kozub, Benjamin Latourelle, Evan Liverseidge, Kaitlyn Lopez Pham, Chris- tian Lowe, Hannah Luff, Ava Luszczyk, Kai Ly, Nylie Mal- donado, Ava Manning, Austin Marques, Luca Mastroianni, Michael Mazzaferro, Jasmine Miller, Alyssa Mitchell, Ja- cob Moore, Emily Moriarty, Danielle Muir, Anastasia Mutti, Alina Narvaez, Hao- nam Nguyen, Cambria Nor- val, Stephen Nowicki, Cailin O’Brien, Luke O’Connor, Al- exander Parent, Zachary Par- ent, Nico Penna, Zoe Pinnock, Grayson Placzek, Kameah Pryce, Maisen Rosado, Anna- bella Rostek, Emma Rostek, Connor Roy, Mostaffa Saleh, Shawnee Santiago, Alexander Savlick, Nina Semanie, Alex- a Sherman, Aubrey Stachowicz, Bianca Stewart, Jediah Stew- art, Lincoln Stiles, Lilianna Sullivan, Owen Sullivan, Mad- isyn Vazquez, Elijah Webster, Celena Williams, Alexander Wright, Nicholas Zayas
Grade 11 High Honors: Angelina Acevedo, Victoria Ambrose, Ian Angelica, Cal- lan Blanchard, Alyssa Capen, Lilianna Catellier, Anthony Cianfione, Nicholas Cianfione, Natalia Clarke, Jonathan Cor- rera, Allison Demetri, Aidan Dzierwinski, Miles Fergus, Noemi Fraga, Margaret Ful- ton, Mateo Garcia, Hunter Howard, Tyler Jaslanek, Mae-

ghan Joyce, Molly Kinsman, Brady Laliberte, Aidan Lee, Savannah Loubier, Jack Lu- carelle, Jaymiel Martinez, No- lah McConnell, Madeline Mc- Donald, Riley McLeod, Sean McSwain, Ava Moretti, Lyric Nelson, Vinh Nguyen, Alexan- dra Nichols, Alyssa Nogueira, Anna O’Toole, Cora Pace, Mia Peck, David Preston, Katelynn Pronovost, Natalie Proulx, Hannah Przechocki, William Quinn, Chloe Robins, Aezlin Rost, Dylan Secor, Connor Seymour, Colin Sheehan, Lin- da Stanco, Isabella Strand, Yazmin Tafolla-Chapin, Gab- riel Talaia, Ella Trosky, Eliz- abeth Woytowicz
Grade 12 Honors: Hannah Alves, Kyle Atkin, Arash Bal- wa, William Bao, Lilliana Bar- kyoumb, Bryce Barlow, Cayla Bartosz, Matthew Beaudin, Bryan Beckel, Nicholas Ben- ninger, Sadie Blair, Noah Brathwaite, Joseph Brow- er, Jake Burnett, Jeremiah Campbell, Margaret Capuano, Noah Caress, Logan Conboy, Mackenzie DaFonseca, Zoe Dansereau, Elizabeth Dickson, Paul Diehl, Joshua Disa, Lucie Dones, Maxyne Evon, Grace Fallon, Nicholas Fopp, Aaron Foy, Molly Gallagher, Wen Xi Gao, Aaron Gasteyer, Kend- all Gates, Noelle Giombetti, Hunter Gormally, Alexander Gormley, McKenna Hale, No- elle Hisgen, Ian Horne, Ryan Ice, Audrey Izzo, Kalli Joyce, Lila Keegan, Nora Kennedy, Layla King, Kelvin Kyei Ohe- meng, Andrew Lang, Myah Larimore, Joshua Lawrence, Gracie Loddo, Alayna Lu- cas, Alison Mackie, Isabelle Manning, Jeremiah Martin, Collin Meunier, Margaret Mi- chels, Ryan Oldread, Thomas O’Toole, Nathan Pace, Mak- enzi Pastreck, Summer Pin- ney, Nicole Pollard, Mallory Poulin, Claire Pouliot, Emma Powell, Kamaria Pryce, Daw- son Rice, Hayden Richard,

Liam Richard, Cierra Robe- rson-Barron, Rafael Rodriguez Alvarez, Matthew Ryan, Ella Sarno, Corey Smith, Jack Sul- livan, Quinn Symington, Leah Tassinari, Aidan Thompson, Ryan Tillberry, Aaron Treat, Skylar Weinberg, Caeli Whit- comb, Domenic Yacovone
Grade 12 High Honors: Alexa Abeid, Joseph Agu- iar, Emmamarie Annear, John Bermudez, Marissa Bontem- pi, Alani Botas, Samantha Burnham, Nicholas Dufresne, Nina Gallagher, Victoria Gon- zalez, Renee Goulet, Giana Hall, Jaiana Hall, Gabriella Harding, Arthur Lam, Morgan Lape, Antonia Mascaro, Cath- erine McMahon, Taylor Meu- nier, Elizabeth Nguyen, Tiffa- ny Nguyen, Alyah Nogueira, Ava Ofcarcik, Ava Peabody, Laura Pecoy, Owen Perry, Gus Przybyl, Sophia Rachele, Mar- ily Remaly, Alexander Rice, Madeleine Rooney, Mialece Rosado, Geeta Sharma, Gi- anna Siciliano, Brady Suoma- la, Angela Verdon, Sofia Vil- lanueva

Local student earns place on Furman University’s Dean’s List

GREENVILLE, S.C. - Allison Shayna Kandel of Wilbraham, Massa- chusetts, earned a place on Furman University’s dean’s list for the 2025 spring semester. Furman’s dean’s list is composed of full-time un- dergraduate students who earn a grade point average of 3.4 or higher on a four- point system. Kandel’s parents and/or guardians are Anthony Kandel and Anne Kandel.

FUNDING from page 1

is that it may be very delayed in when we might receive it.”
“So, that’ll pose some challenges to us as to how we compensate for that loss of revenue and the things that it supports for us as the year goes along,” Slaughter said. “I think if the funding becomes available during the year, my hope is that we get some guidance from our partners at DESE relative to whether or not we could actively apply it back to what we intended to use it for or whether we’ll have to use it for funding from the time we receive it to the end of the school year.”
Slaughter added how this “has some real impact on us either way as far as what we

can do and what we plan to do.”
“So, it does have an impact on how we go about doing our work and what might be possible for us to do. If we choose to leave the open position open and use that resource that was budgeted for that to then support these other activities that we normally use this grant funding for, even if it returns, we’re in a challenging position as far as the actual hiring process to bring someone on—even if in a month from now they do that,” Slaughter said. “The shorter the time window for hiring, the more challenge it is to get someone to fill that kind of position and then, like- wise, if it goes into the school year and we’re then allowed the money or the money’s

released to us, we’re equally challenged to sort of hire that position to execute the robust plans that we wanted to do relative to these coaching positions.”
Slaughter added this would also require Curricu- lum Director Lisa Curtin “to work with staff on how to ap- proach that.”
“Compared to other dis- tricts, we have a very modest amount of resource. There are other districts that are much more dependent on these kinds of resources to help support their most vulnerable students,” Slaughter said. “So, I think that there’s a real ethical concern I have for all districts that are having to work their way through this. It proves a challenge for us—it’s not as

difficult as some other folks have it—but at the same time, it will be challenging for us.”
Curtin explained Soule Road Elementary School and Mile Tree Elementary School would be most impacted by this loss, which would be a literacy coach position.
“To ensure continued support, we plan to engage the services of Dr. Heidi Wojcik. She’s a professor from Worcester State College, she’s consulted with us through a few of our Literacy Consor- tium Grants to engage with her in a limited way to support the efforts that we’ve already begun,” Curtin said. “She brings valuable exper- tise in literacy development, she’s been along this journey with us for several years, so

she’s a great resource.”
Also, Curtin said the ex- isting coaching team would be creatively leveraged “to meet the literacy needs of both schools,” but that means “each elementary school will experience the strength of the reduced coaching capacity.”
“We have worked through that this year and we’ve been able to see, try different ways to address the need. We were without an instructional coach the whole year,” Curtin said. “We have a very dedi- cated team and will work col- laboratively with the building principals and the coaches to make necessary adjustments and ensure a thoughtful, strate- gic approach to the literacy support.”
She added this will also

impact grant writing for fund- ing requests due to the re- duced team, as instructional coaches “have played a key role in applying for and secur- ing grants” to fund high-qual- ity instructional materials, professional development and consultative services.
“With a reduced team, there’ll be fewer opportuni- ties for coaches to dedicate time to writing grant applica- tions, which may limit access to valuable, external resour- ces that support teaching and learning,” Curtin said.
Afterward, the School Committee shared their thoughts and questions. For those comments, check out this week’s edition.

PUBLIC NOTICES

TOWN OF WILBRAHAM
Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Engineering Design Services
Miller Street Water Main Installation Project
The Department of Public Works for the Town of Wilbraham seeks submissions from qualified engineering profession- als to provide design services for a water main in Ludlow, MA,

which will replace or supplement an aging 10-inch cast iron main, with the potential to continue services through the construction phase. This is the first phase of a larger project that will be de- signed and constructed in the upcoming years. An approximate \$2.0 million budget has been al- located for the first phase of the design and construction, begin- ning at 555 Miller Street in Lud- low, MA.

Beginning on Thursday, July 24, 2025, RFQ documents and specifications will be available at the Town of Wilbraham En- gineering Office during normal business hours or through the Town’s website: www.wilbraham-ma.gov. All questions regarding this RFQ or its specifications must be made in writing and received by the Town no later than 4:30 PM on August 8, 2025. Submissions

will be received until 3:00 p.m. on August 19, 2025 by Tonya Capparello, P.E., Director of Public Works/Town Engineer, by delivery to the Engineering Office, 240 Springfield Street, Wilbraham, MA 01095. All sub- missions must be submitted in a sealed envelope and plainly marked “RFQ: Miller St. Water Main Installation Project”, in- cluding a separately sealed price submission.

Any contract awarded as a result of this RFQ is subject to the approval of the Select Board for the Town of Wilbraham. A contract will be awarded, if at all, on a negotiated basis, with payments for phased milestone deliverables as outlined in the project scope of work, subject to negotiation and subject to all procedures outlined in the RFP, as well as all applicable laws,

regulations and guidelines.
The Town reserves the right to waive any informality in and to reject any or all submissions, and to make an award in any man- ner consistent with the law and deemed to be in the best interest of the Town of Wilbraham.
Tonya L. Capparello, P.E.
Director of Public Works/ Town Engineer
Town of Wilbraham, Massachusetts
07/24/2025

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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.

PUBLIC NOTICE
This ad is pursuant to MA Gen. Law Ch.255, Sec. 39A as of August 8, 2025 the following motor vehicle will be for sale to satisfy a garage keepers lien:
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THE TOWN OF HUNTINGTON IS SEEKING A **PART-TIME TREASURER.**

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TOWN OF WORTHINGTON HIGHWAY POSITION OPENING

The Town of Worthington is soliciting letters of interest and resumes from qualified candidates for a **full-time Equipment Operator/General Laborer** position within the Highway Department. Valid MA CDL operator, Hydraulic Hoister's licenses and OSHA-10 certification is preferred.

More in-depth information can be found on the Town's website: www.worthington-ma.us
Questions will be answered by the Highway Superintendent at 64 Huntington Road, Monday - Friday, 7 AM to 3 PM; the telephone number is 413-238-5830 or send letter of interest, resume and three (3) references with relevant contact information to highway@worthington-ma.us and sboard@worthington-ma.us. This posting will remain pertinent until the position is filled.
The Town of Worthington is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Post your job openings in our classifieds. WE GET RESULTS!

HELP WANTED

TRUCK DRIVER/LABORER

The Town of Peru Highway Department is now accepting applications for the position of **Truck Driver/Laborer.** Preferred applicants will have a valid Class B CDL, Class 2A Hoisting license, and a current DOT Physical card. Construction and mechanical experience preferred. Must be able to work in all weather conditions. Position is full time 40hrs/week with mandatory overtime during snowstorms. Excellent benefits.
Email resume to: townadmin@townofperu.ma.us or mail to **Town of Peru, Board of Selectmen, 3 East Main Rd, Suite 107, Peru MA 01235.** For additional information contact the Highway Superintendent at (413) 655-8224. *(The Town of Peru is an equal opportunity employer).*

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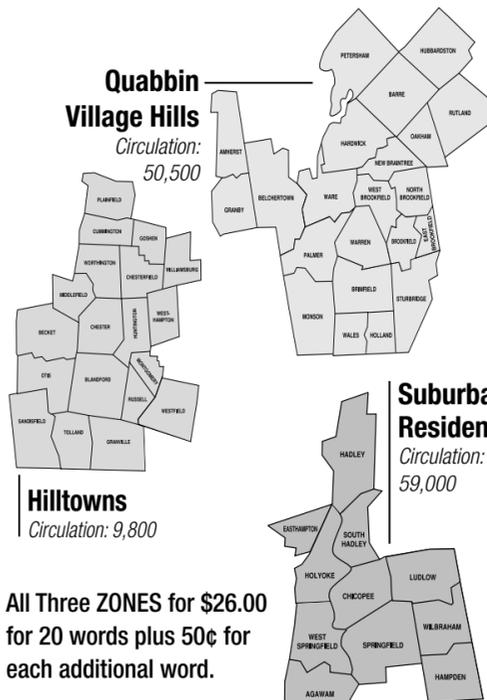
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28	Base Price \$26.50	Base Price \$35.00	Base Price \$36.00
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Fern Valley Market officially opens

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - Fern Valley Market has officially opened its doors on 651 Main St. in Wilbraham.

Fern Valley Market is overseen by Brooke and Dan Fernandes, the owners of Fern Valley Farms.

Inside, residents will find a wide variety of fresh, local foods including meats, dairy products including yogurt and frozen foods including soups, quiches and chicken pot pies, Sweet Babu's granola, Honey Bear Tea, eggs, herbs, breads, bagels, produce, baked goods, offerings from Ferrindino Maple Syrup, honey and many more.

Other offerings include flowers and candles, soaps and books from local artisans and authors.

As a recent addition, peaches have just arrived for the season and apples will be coming soon.

They are open 8 a.m. through 6 p.m. Wednesdays through Sundays.

Brooke Fernandes explained the idea came together two years ago and they really wanted "to find a way to get our apples down on Main Street," doing some brainstorming on how to make that happen.

"So, the idea started as just a little fruit stand somewhere on Main Street just to be selling our apples, but we have met a lot of really wonderful business owners and farmers through the orchard and it just kind of organically grew into a bigger idea," Fernandes said.

She added her husband, Dan, had always done composting on the plot of land where the market is and the couple later pitched their idea to Merrick Farm, which owns the land.

"They sell all of their produce in here, their corn's going to be here next week, which is really exciting," Fernandes said. "So, the Merrick Family was gracious to lease us five acres of land to build this and they've been just amazing to work with."

She also noted when people shop in the market, they are supporting over 30 businesses and farmers.

"It's been really, really fun. We've had wonderful support from the community. It's been busy. It's been really good so far," Fernandes said.

Fernandes said the opening "means a lot."

"The community has been so accepting of this new spot in town. It's always a little scary when you see old farmland getting dug up and something built on it, so it was important to us to not only create something that didn't stick out like a sore thumb, as well as remember the roots, where we came from," Fernandes said.

The community support has also meant a lot to the couple.

"It's huge. I mean, we've met so many wonderful people up at the orchard and to see people who have come to the orchard for years being excited to come down here and shop with us, it just means the world," Fernandes said. "Having a spot for the people who we live with and interact with all the time, for them to



Dan and Brooke Fernandes pose in front of the Fern Valley Market sign on Main Street in Wilbraham.

Turley photos by Kristin Rivers

get the best food possible into their hands, is just the best. We really love it."

Elaborating on history, Fernandes shared how Wilbraham "started as an agricultural town," and having recently spoken with Local Historian David Bourcier about the farmland and the orchard at Fern Valley Farms, along with the Rice Family that started agriculture in town.

"It's just important to us to remember that, so we'll be kind of bringing more history into here for people to enjoy, and we've always been really community-oriented up at the orchard," Fernandes said. "So, it means a lot that we can take the next chapter, support community businesses and get really good food into the hands of our community members. It's just very important to us, so we're just lucky that we've been able to continue that down here."

Fernandes stressed supporting local small businesses "enhances the community around you."

"If you have people producing local products, it's

enhancing your local community, economy. People are excited about it, they're very excited to support local," Fernandes said.

Dan Fernandes agreed.

"I'd say the same thing. I think that we all can do better if we work together. I think that there's a lot of people in town that support it, like Brooke was saying, and sup-

port the local businesses," Fernandes said. "I think that the more local businesses that will do well here and thrive well here, everybody will do better. I think everybody does better when we have more businesses for people to get local products. It's good."

He stressed how "there is a huge value in knowing where your food comes from."



A wide shot of the other offerings at Fern Valley Market.



A photo of flowers from Merrick Farm sold at Fern Valley Market



Varying meats customers can purchase from Fern Valley Market.



Fresh produce for customers to partake in, including the peaches that recently arrived.

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