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The Wilbraham-Hampden

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JULY 30, 2026

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St. Cecilia Church holds weeklong Bible Camp

By Noelle Hisgen
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - The St. Cecilia's Church finished their annual weeklong Vacation Bible Camp, St. Cecilia's Summer Adventure, on July 17.

This was the church's fifth year running the camp. This year's theme was "Jesus is our friend."

At the camp, children learned all about how Jesus is their friend: They made crafts, watched stories from the Bible, and sang songs. This year, a total of 57 kids participated in the camp.

Friday was a special day for the campers: It consisted of a water slide, meeting the local police and fire departments, and a special concert for parents.

Faith Formation director

Rosemary Oldread, who led the Bible Camp program, spoke upon the camp in its fifth year.

"The theme this year is 'Jesus is Our Friend,' so we're learning about different ways that Jesus shows his friendship to us," Oldread said. "I want the children to know that St. Cecilia's is a place for them, that this is their home and that they have a place here for them to have fun and learn about Jesus. It's a place that they can come to and it's for more than just Mass. It's a place where there's fellowship, friendship and fun. We have some incredible volunteers. We have some incredible adult volunteers, which we could not run this camp without. And then our high school volunteers are top notch. It really is the volunteers that put so much



Top photo, campers, volunteers, and the fire and police departments come together for a group photo at St. Cecilia's Summer Adventure. Above, campers get a visit from the Wilbraham police & fire departments.

Photos courtesy of Rosemary Oldread

work into this camp and make sure that the kids enjoy every second of it."

Deacon Andy Nowicki, who was helping volunteer

over the week, spoke about the camp as well.

"It's a nice week. It's a great way in the middle of the summer to get kids out

playing with each other. They also get to learn about

Please see **CAMP**,
page 10

Selectboard discusses health insurance costs

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - The Selectboard discussed health insurance costs with Town Treasurer Richard Patullo during their July 13 meeting.

Chair John Flynn began the discussion asking if there was an opportunity for the Scantic Valley Health Trust to "engage with the carriers to see if different changes to the plans can be offered."

"I shared before, in my personal business, every year we're faced with the opportunity that we either accept the increase, which can be double digits, or do we moderate it somehow by changing a copay or deductible, etc," Flynn said. "And as you go to the meetings, is that ever a topic of discussion at the meetings?"

Patullo replied how the town does not buy insurance, but self-insures through the trust and is six government entities, which are the towns of Hampden, Wilbraham, East Longmeadow, Longmeadow, the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District and the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative.

Please see **BOARD**,
page 13

Teens take part in soapmaking workshop at WPL

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - Teens gathered in the library's Brooks Room on July 22 for a Flower Blossom Soapmaking Workshop event.

The Wilbraham Friends of the Library sponsored the event. During the event, teens learned how to make their own multi-colored soap by using glycerin-based soap, colored soap cubes, cosmetic-grade glitter, flowers and natural scents through essential oils.

Gariné Arakelian of Kulina Folk Art taught the event, assisted by Master Potter Rick Hamelin.

Arakelian was thrilled to see many teens come out for the event.

"It's amazing. It's really amazing. This library really can pull the teens in. It's very hard to get teens to come to workshops—for whatever reason—but this library really pulls them in," Arakelian said.

What also thrilled her was seeing the finished products from the attendees.

"It's amazing how well they did and they were so creative. They all used the same technique that I teach them, but all the soaps come out different because they're using their own imagination," Arakelian said.

Arakelian shared she's done workshops for the past eight years and besides this workshop, has also taught candle making, painting on silk, painting on canvas tote bags, paper quilling and pa-

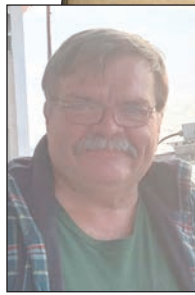
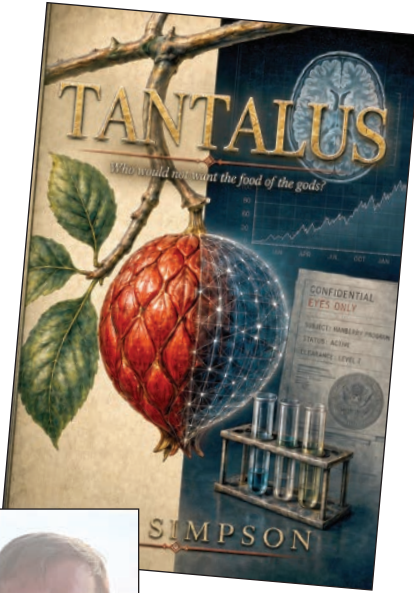
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Simpson to publish novel

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - Biff Simpson is about to release his debut novel, "Tantalus," through Franklin Publishers.

"Tantalus" is a medical thriller centered on Peter Hanner, a biochemist whose experimental creation—a mysterious, genetically engineered fruit-promises unprecedented vitality. But as its effects touch friends, family, and strangers alike, the line between miraculous cure



Biff Simpson

and uncontrollable blurs. Across quiet towns, bustling labs, and the hidden recesses of

Please see **NOVEL**,
page 13



Turley photo by Kristin Rivers

Teens show off their completed soaps after taking part in the Flower Blossom Soapmaking Workshop event.

Families enjoy Animal Storytime and crafts at Hampden Public Library with baby goats

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - Families gathered at the library on July 22 to enjoy an Animal Storytime event with baby goats.

In collaboration with Cloverbrook Farm, the event featured baby goats named Dunkin, Munchkin, Eclair, Frenchie, Mister Coolada, Sprinkles and Cappuccino, all Dunkin Donuts-themed names and a reading of "Goats Go Nuts for Headbutts" by Briggs Brixley.

Afterward, families headed inside to the children's room to enjoy a goat-themed craft.

Shannon Gallagher, owner

of Cloverbrook Farm, said the event was a way to bring farm animals out to the children and bring some smiles.

"We love when families are involved, especially at programs like at the library. I think it's really good that the library offers these events for free, especially if there's families who wouldn't be able to afford to otherwise," Gallagher said. "Especially during the summer when kids sometimes have limited access to friends and other things, this is a great way to bring them out and for them to make new friends. Animals are the universal ice-breakers, so whenever animals are involved, everybody lets their guard down. Animals love everybody, they don't

judge anybody, so sometimes kids just need that chance to sit down with an animal and relax and feel the love and the snuggles."

Gallagher said she also likes finding books to share with the kids.

"At our farm, we collect all kinds of horse books and we have a free library where people can come and just pick up books on horses and animals. My working students love to take books out to share them with each other," Gallagher said. "We have everything from learning how to take care of a horse to young adult fiction about horses, so anything

Please see **GOATS**,
page 15



Turley photo by Kristin Rivers

Frenchie aka French Vanilla relaxes with one of the Cloverbrook Farm volunteers.

An advertisement for OrthoMA, an orthopedic urgent care clinic. The top features the OrthoMA logo with illustrations of various orthopedic procedures. A large red banner on the left says "NOW OPEN". To the right, another banner says "NEW HOURS!" with the tagline "MORE ACCESS. MORE CARE. MORE CONVENIENCE." Below this, a red banner states "STARTING AUGUST 3, 2026". The middle section lists "OUR SERVICES:" with a checklist: Sports Injuries, Cortisone Injections, Fracture Care, X-Ray, Arthritis, and PRP Injections. To the right of the services, a box highlights "NEW!" hours: 8:00 AM - 12:30 PM, Evening Hours 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM, and Weekends 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM. Below the text, three male doctors in blue scrubs are shown. At the bottom, two clinic locations are listed: Wilbraham Clinic (35 Post Office Park, Wilbraham, MA) and Westfield Clinic (53 Southampton Road, Westfield, MA). The footer contains the website "ORTHOMA.ORG" and the phone number "413-83-ORTHO".

The OrthoMA logo is at the top center, with the word "Ortho" in black and "MA" in red. Below it are four line drawings illustrating different orthopedic treatments: a knee joint, a hip joint, a shoulder joint, and a hand/wrist joint. Below the drawings, the text "ORTHOPEDIC URGENT CARE" is written in red.

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4:00 PM – 8:00 PM

WEEKENDS

8:00 AM – 1:00 PM

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A photograph of three male doctors standing side-by-side, smiling. They are all wearing blue medical scrubs. The doctor on the left has a beard and is wearing scrubs with the OrthoMA logo. The doctor in the middle is clean-shaven. The doctor on the right has a beard and is also wearing scrubs with the OrthoMA logo.

WILBRAHAM CLINIC

35 Post Office Park
Wilbraham, MA

WESTFIELD CLINIC

53 Southampton Road
Westfield, MA

ORTHOMA.ORG

413-83-ORTHO

HSC hosts Hot Dog Luncheon

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - The senior center hosted a Hot Dog Luncheon event on July 15 in celebration of National Hot Dog Day.

The hot dogs were provided by Friendly's American Restaurant of East Longmeadow and the ice cream sandwiches by The Reserve at East Longmeadow. Salad and chips were also part of the menu.

The pasta salad was made by Executive Director Rebecca Moriarty and Assistant Director/Outreach Coordinator Wendy Cowles.

Also, attendees enjoyed a trivia game on hot dog facts.

Program and Volunteer Coordinator Tina Doran shared how the senior center always looks "for something to celebrate."

"It's National Hot Dog Day, so it was just a good excuse to have a party, and so this is why we reached out to a couple people. One of which was Friendly's in East Longmeadow," Doran said. "They're all franchisers, so this was the owner of Friendly's restaurant of East Longmeadow that supplied all of the hot dogs and buns today."

Doran added to check out the other national holidays because there may be another one in the future. On the secret ingredient to the perfect hot dog, Doran said it's the snap and the favorite condiment would be mustard.

She said the senior center also loves holding these events.

"It's different than our day-to-day. So, you like to change things up a little bit, so that's what makes it fun," Doran said.

On other events coming up, Cowles noted these.

"In August, we have Na-



Program and Volunteer Coordinator Tina Doran leads the hot dog trivia game during the event.

tional Creamsicle Day, so we're going to have a creamsicle with lunch that day," Cowles said. "Aug. 21 is National Hawaiian Shirt Day and we will have the Ukelele class will be performing for us and then we hit the fall with a vengeance with a lot going on in the fall."

On the secret ingredient to the pasta salad, she said it's love.

"That's the only secret we will give away," Cowles said.

Cowles also enjoyed the event.

"It's just fun. Nothing extravagant, just simple hot dog, pasta salad, chips," Cowles said. "Relaxed, lots of people came out. I think it might become an annual event."

Doran's message was this.

"Thank you for coming. Thank you for being here and coming through our doors, because by you showing up, you're supporting us. We just like to give back and this is a great way to give back," Doran said.

To learn more about upcoming events at the HSC, check out their monthly newsletter The Scribe or call 413-566-5588.



Turley photos by Kristin Rivers
A volunteer presents a plate to attendees as they get ready to dig in and enjoy their hot dogs.



A shot of attendees enjoying the Hot Dog Luncheon.



A crowd shot at the event.

CORRECTION

In our July 23 story reviewing "Shrek Jr.," one of the cast members was misidentified.

Lord Farquaad was actually played by Jordyn Lajeunesse. Lacey Desjardins was in the role of Gingy.

We apologize for the error.

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Hampden Cultural Council accepting September grant applications for FY 2027

HAMPDEN - The Hampden Cultural Council is looking for applicants! Each year, the Massachusetts Cultural Council works with local cultural councils around the state to award more than \$7 million in grants to more than 7,600 community-based cultural programs. Over the past 28 years, volunteers on Hampden's Cultural Council have been able to disperse over \$137,000 in funding for arts, science, and cultural programs and projects for our residents. In 2025 alone, the Hampden Cultural Council awarded \$6,500 in grant funding to local organizations and individual artists, benefitting our local community and enriching life within the town of Hampden.

Since 1998, the Hampden Cultural Council has helped fund cultural-centered experiences that include performances, workshops and lectures, in-school and out of school programming, historical preservation, public murals, music and drama production materials, and seasonal, arts and cultural

festivals. Cultural groups have given performances on Native American culture, Irish American culture and music, and Tai Chi. The Hampden Cultural Council has also provided support in sending our Hampden students to the Springfield Symphony Orchestra, Old Sturbridge Village, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, and the Berklee Performing Arts Center in Boston.

To give you a broader idea of individuals and groups who have been awarded grants, some of our previous awardees have been mural painters, storytellers, musicians and multicultural performers, puppeteers, and enrichment program leaders. Other awardees have given lectures covering local history, WWII history, women in history, and the underground railroad. Additional recipients have lead workshops focusing on topics such as music, creative writing, painting, pastels, photography, woodworking, STEM, deafness and deaf culture, mindful practices,

nutrition and health, and environmental conservation with aid of cultural council funding.

So, who can apply? Grant applications are accepted from individuals, public schools, libraries, municipal organizations, private organizations, and nonprofit organizations. The Hampden Cultural Council gives preference to qualified local organizations or individuals that show a clear benefit to the Hampden community. Groups who work with a Hampden sponsor or venue such as the library, school, senior center, or other community organization are preferred. Programming that is available to a wide range of participants or multiple generations of participants are considered ideal. Grants awarded by the Hampden Cultural Council should not be the sole source of funding for these events but rather should help offset the costs of bringing a program to our town. Eligible programs are awarded reimbursement grants after the event has

taken place.

Our past grant recipients include the Hampden Senior Center, Hampden Public Library, Scantic River Artisans, The Theatre Guild of Hampden, the Hampden PTO, our high school, elementary and middle schools within HWRSD, One Book One Community, Old Post Road Orchestra, Pathways for Parents, Strings and Friends, and many individual artists.

The Hampden Cultural Council will start accepting online grant applications for FY27 on September 1st. The deadline for grant applications is October 15th, 2026. A full list of application guidelines can be found at <https://massculturalcouncil.org/communities/local-cultural-council-program/application-process/> Still have more questions or ideas for future programming for the town of Hampden? Are you interested in joining Hampden's Cultural Council? Contact our Hampden Cultural Council Chair, Virginia Blake at ginbee@charter.net.

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The S.O.S. Save Our Sign Fundraiser will be taking place at the VFW Post 9397 on Saturday, Aug. 15, at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$25 at the door, \$20 in advance and \$5 for kids under 12. There will be entertainment with DJ Bob playing tunes, games, raffles, face painting and henna tattoos. Food will be served from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. and the menu comprises BBQ Beef Chicken, Corn on the Cob, Baked Potato, Burgers, Dogs, Salads and Desserts. There will also be a cash bar and raffle prizes. All proceeds will go to the S.O.S. Fund. Can't make it? Can still donate by scanning the Venmo QR Code to support the VFW 9397 Fundraiser at @VFWPost9397 (last four digits 9397).

Listen, pray, share & thank

INDIAN ORCHARD - A concert in Honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary will be held at Immaculate Conception Church, 25 Parker St. Indian Orchard, Ma on Sunday, Aug. 16, 2026 starting at 3 p.m.

Join our Parish Choir in singing Polish, English & Latin Marian Hymns. Guest speakers during the Concert will be Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist- Sister Faith Marie Woolsey FSE will speak about the Rosary and its significance, and Sister Rosario Ongayo FSE will speak about real life experiences related to the mysteries of the Rosary.

Light refreshments after the concert.

Program is sponsored by Parish Rosary Sodality, Free will offering will benefit the parish.

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Tips on how to stay safe from ticks and mosquitoes

By Quinn Suomala
Correspondent

As the weather gets warmer there is an increase in the number of ticks and mosquitos as people go about summer activities.

It is important for people to be aware of protection against these insects to prevent illnesses, including West Nile Virus, Lyme disease and Alpha-gal Syndrome.

The Director of Public Health in Wilbraham Ryan Paxton recommends that people check themselves, children and pets for ticks after going outdoors.

The key places to check are: inside and behind ears, along the hairline, the back of the neck, the armpits, the groin, the legs, and between the toes.

To remove a tick utilize fine point tweezers and grab the tick as close to the skin as possible. Try to pull straight out, as moving at an angle can leave parts of the tick behind.

Additionally, as is on the website for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, people should avoid applying kerosene, petroleum jelly, nail polish or a hot match tip to remove a tick, as those methods aren't effective and can result in injury.

The Department of Public Health also recommends noting when the tick was removed and where on the body it was removed from. This information will be helpful if a person or pet needs to go to a doctor for treatment.

A person should go to the doctor if they develop a rash where they were bitten or experience the common symptoms of tick-borne diseases (including fever, headache, fatigue or sore muscles).

Someone should also go to the doctor if they have stomach or intestinal problems (including nausea, vomiting or diarrhea) or symptoms of an allergic reaction within a few hours of eating meat or dairy.

It is also important to be aware of mosquito bites. The West Nile Virus is the most common mosquito-borne illness in the United States.

However, this illness has not been reported in humans in Massachusetts this year.

To prevent tick and mosquito bites a person can wear a light-colored long-sleeved shirt with long pants and tuck their pants into their socks. This helps to prevent a tick or mosquito from getting onto a person's skin and can help a person to spot a tick on their clothing.

Avoiding outdoor activities between dusk and dawn during peak mosquito season also greatly lowers the risk of mosquito bites.

The Department of Public Health also recommends removing standing water in yards, as that is where mosquitos breed.

This can include water in garbage cans, flowerpots, bird baths and discarded tires.

Property owners can also utilize mosquito prevention services, including spraying private property with insect repellent to help reduce the amount of insects.

Additionally, people should use bug repellents that contain DEET on their skin. There should be no more than 30-35% DEET in repellents for adults and no more than 10-15% DEET in repellents for children.



Select Board reviews required Clean Energy Regulation Appointment

By Ben Hernandez
Staff Writer

WILBRAHAM – The Select Board gathered on July 20 to discuss a new small clean energy regulation.

According to Select Board Chair Marc Ducey, the town will need an appointed person to handle the issue.

“My understanding is by Oct. 1—we got confirmation from our attorney back—by Oct. 1, we have to appoint somebody, the person who’s the point person for this,” Ducey said. “I don’t know how best to frame . Because they don’t make a decision, do they?”

“They make sure all of the documents are properly permitted and / or properly presented and I think there are other duties,” Vice Chair Sue Bunnell said. “I think communities have generally named either the town administrator or, if they have a Planning Director, the Planning Director.”

Bunnell then asked Ducey if he had already reached out to their planning director on this initiative. When he said he had not, she replied she could take on that task.

Ducey mentioned the issue came up due to a talk with the chair of the Planning Board, who encouraged them to “consider putting a small group together” and recommended they reach out to the various town committees such as the Planning Board and Conservation Commission chairs.

He added how the group could cross “so many different touchstones.”

“We don’t need to make a decision on this now,” Ducey said. “We need to begin thinking about how we want

to proceed with this as it comes forward because two months will be here before we know it. But, we need to have something done by Oct. 1.”

Bunnell mentioned they could complete this sooner as early as July 1, a sentiment which the Chair agreed but also cautioned this.

“We can do it sooner,” Ducey said, “but we haven’t really had a discussion. So I at least wanted to raise this issue to get it on our radar. Do we want to put it as one person or do we want to put a small committee together?”

Bunnell expressed hesitation on organizing a group, as she believed the requirements were “pretty straightforward.”

“Like in terms of, it’s a checklist that you get to say yes or no. They actually checked all the boxes and they got it all in,” Bunnell said.

Ducey stated he needed further explanation on the position’s role expectations to make an informed decision as well.

“I guess I need to understand the role of this person as well,” Ducey said. “I need to understand the role of the person or whatever it is.”

Clerk Michael Squindo then quoted from the FAQ sent to the board and mentioned how the local government representative appointment would be responsible “for reviewing and determining whether an applicant has met all pre-filing requirements,” as well as “signing the pre-filing engagement completion checklist.”

The representative would also be required to review “consolidated local permit applications circulating among the various municipal

departments,” to determine if the application is complete, evaluating the applicant’s site and suitability reports as well as proposed utilization and mitigation measures and compiling decisions of individual boards “issuing the decision of the consolidated local permit application.”

“Just looking at those four things, to me, it seems like it’s a very administrative task to try and move things forward where creating another group is going to do the exact opposite,” Squindo said. “I would also say, to Sue’s point, absent some very strong logical explanation from our Planning Director why it wouldn’t make sense to appoint our Planning Director, I will also just say that the document states that absent an appointment from the local government, it automatically goes to the Chief Administrative Officer.”

Squindo added this role could be held by either the mayor, the town manager or the Select Board themselves depending on the town’s organization.

After additional thoughts, Bunnell suggested if the goal was to streamline the process, then appointing one person to the required position to satisfy the requirement should work.

Squindo agreed. “Again, based on how I’m understanding this, I think we have some time, but I’d want to hear from our Planning Director. If she can provide reason why it shouldn’t be the Planning Director, I’d want to hear that, but otherwise that’s my inclination would be she’s already doing that...” Squindo said.

Bunnell added her understanding was having the op-

tion to stick with the process “for directing applicants for solar to go through the process that is more run by the state.”

“It has tighter timelines and so forth. Part of this is around the fact that the Commonwealth set pretty aggressive goals for reducing greenhouse gases and one of the ways to get there is to permit a lot more solar, and the downside for Western Mass is it’s easier and cheaper and so forth through Boston to create a process where it’s easier to do out here—not easier to do out here—but there’s certainly more land and all of that,” Bunnell said.

Ducey noted “getting input from all the appropriate boards” which showed “the boards would have a say in this,” which Bunnell and Squindo agreed.

Squindo added they didn’t have a choice in whether the position existed, but they did have a choice on who would be appointed, which the board also agreed and Bunnell emphasized it was about the review of the process.

After Ducey said he wanted to put this on the board’s radar to begin discussions, Bunnell said this.

“It’s dense and complex,” Bunnell said. “Going to that rural and Western Mass meeting was one of the most eye-opening things because it all sounds great when the legislature focused on Boston, it’s trying to make it easier for somebody in Lexington or wherever else to get some stuff done. But the consequences out here...”

“The consequences to the smaller—the truly smaller communities—was truly significant,” Ducey said.

An Evening with Paul Revere at the library

WILBRAHAM – Michael Lepage, historical interpreter and re-enactor, will portray Paul Revere at the Wilbraham Public Library on Monday, Aug. 10 at 6 p.m. Revere’s name evokes images of the famous “Midnight Ride” of

April 18-19, 1775. Hear his story, culminating with that night in April when he spread the alarm “to every Middlesex village and farm” that the regulars were coming out!

This free program is open to all and is sponsored by the

Wilbraham Friends of the Library. Registration program is appreciated for planning purposes, but seating is available on a first come, first served basis. Sign up at wilbraham-library.org, or call 413-596-6141.

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VIEWPOINTS

Letters to the Editor

Lachenmeyer supports universal health coverage

To The Editor:

The affordability crisis is increasing support for a single-payer healthcare system in Massachusetts. This momentum is driven by double-digit insurance rate hikes across the state, the bankruptcy of Steward Hospitals, the end of Affordable Care Act subsidies for 300,000 people, and reduced benefits for 400,000 public employees covered by the Group Insurance Commission.

H.1405, a bill that creates the Massachusetts Health Care Trust for universal coverage, can solve the health care crisis and save millions for residents, towns, and the state. For this economic reason, Michael Lachenmeyer, running for State Representative in the 12th Hampden District, supports the bill.

In 2022, voters in Wilbraham and the other communities in the 12th Hampden District explicitly instructed our current Representative, Angelo Puppolo, to co-sponsor H.1405 through a ballot question. Yet five years later, we are still waiting for his support. Many who voted for the question share this long-standing frustration, as the legislative process continues to stall while the urgency of the healthcare crisis grows.

The September 1 Democratic Primary offers voters a crucial opportunity to elect a representative committed to comprehensive and universal health care coverage by voting for Michael Lachenmeyer.

Maria Idali Torres
Wilbraham

Angelo Puppolo’s animal rights record is all bark and no bite

To the Editor:

In May 2026, Representative Angelo Puppolo honored Anna-Banas Chen at the Massachusetts State House for her work engaging youth in veterinary medicine. Per the Wilbraham-Hampden Times, Puppolo remarked that he “enjoyed seeing so many people gathered to celebrate an event meant to encourage youth engagement in such a critical field.”

Yet despite proclaiming veterinary services a “critical field”, Puppolo’s record paints a different picture. In 2011, he accepted a donation from George Carney, President of the Raynham-Taunton Greyhound Park. The park opened in 1940, operating as a bustling hub for greyhound racing for decades.

By the early 2000s, however, public sentiment had shifted. Per the New York Times, nonprofit groups such as GREY2K USA Worldwide had fought to end the practice for animal abuse concerns. Such concerns included killing dogs that could no longer race, confined living spaces, and diets of performance enhancing drugs and low-quality meat.

In November 2008, a 56% majority vote in Massachusetts passed the Greyhound Protection Act, a statute to eliminate commercial

dog racing by 2010. The Raynham-Taunton Greyhound Park held its final dog race on December 26, 2009.

So why, in 2011, over a year after the track was shuttered due cases of animal abuse, would Representative Puppolo take money from George Carney, the president of said park?

Publicly lauding the work of veterinarians while privately accepting money from a man linked to animal cruelty is certainly a choice. One that’s certainly not going to persuade constituents they’re opting for a candidate with strong principles.

Cayla Bartosz
Wilbraham



By Julie Midura
Guest Columnist

Seventeen days into our 320-mile walk on the A.T. from North Carolina to Virginia, the sky broke open with unyielding rain, drumming the leaves overhead and turning the trail into a torrent of rushing water. The squish, squish, squish of water-filled shoes became a constant melody for the next eight days as rain drifted through the forest... sometimes in sheets and sometimes in hushed murmurs.

Wet foliage accosted us at every turn, the branches leaning heavily onto the trail from the weight of SO MUCH unrelenting rain.

Every step became methodical. Our eyes looked down rather than ahead, focusing on the individual brushstrokes rather than the entire painting. Only then were we able to see the tiny little details we likely would not have noticed under sunny skies.

As we continued to walk through ever-present WET, our attention narrowed. We focused our eyes on a much smaller world-the one directly below our feet.

I crouched down to see a turtle shyly peeking its head out of its bright yellow lacquered shell. I squatted with my elbows on my knees in the middle of the path to watch a



snail moving with ceremonial slowness as it crossed the trail on a rotting log, leaving a trail of silver in its wake. I stooped low to get a closer look at a vivid orange salamander with black speckles dusting its back and golden eyes staring straight into mine. I observed tiny creatures of our earth-who remain under cover on hot sunny days-come to life on the surface of the rain-drops.

For eight days in a row, we awoke in a tent and pulled on soaking wet socks and shoes. We gripped trekking poles with fingers that turned white and puckered by days end. But we also witnessed magical forest spirits and tiny details we would never have noticed on a clear day.

It rained overnight and was still spitting when we packed up our wet tent on our final day on trail. Before we started walking, we ended our morning prayer with, “And if it be your will, Lord, please let us end this hike under sunny skies.”

Several hours later, we reached the end of our journey at the Virginia border,



completing our 320-mile walk from Fontana Dam, NC to Damascus, VA! We congratulated each other, snapped a few pictures, then continued hiking the final few miles toward the town of Damascus, where our friends were meeting us to shuttle us back to our car.

As we walked, the clouds finally began to loosen their grip on the sky. Minutes lat-



Submitted photos

His glory with every step, and carrying us when we could no longer carry ourselves.

My fatigue had concealed it. The rain and clouds had obscured it. My own determination had camouflaged it. But here, in a moment of complete clarity, with the sunlight warming my face, drops of water dripping from the leaves above me, and over three hundred miles behind me, I could see it clearly.

God had been with us in every step.

In the strength when ours failed. In the shelter that appeared when we needed it most. In the strangers who offered kindness. In the moments when we thought we had nothing left, yet somehow continued forward.

I stood among the trees, while beams of golden light streamed through the branches above me in silent testimony. Stripped of my armor, I wept on my husband’s shoulder while he held me in his arms. And finally, every raindrop, every ache, every hard climb, every trial, and every mile... made sense.

We completed our goal, not because it was easy, but because we kept putting one foot in front of the other for 24 days.

We embraced a path that humbled us. Carried us. Challenged us. Stripped us down and built us up-physically, mentally and emotionally. Taught us resilience. Showed us that we can sit in discomfort without becoming a casualty of it.

We tasted freedom. We inhaled silence. We knew peace.

The miles may be finished, but we will carry what they gave us as we step out of this wilderness and re-enter the world we left behind.

Onward!

Read more about Julie and Tom’s wilderness adventures on Instagram @morethanthemountain.



The Wilbraham-Hampden

TIMES

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Correction Policy

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

The Wilbraham-Hampden TIMES is published every Thursday by Turley Publications, Inc. One year out of town subscriptions are available at \$45, out of state \$60 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

A COMMUNITY GALLERY



8u Players at the Minnechaug "Fill the Stands" game in April.



Falcons Softball players having fun at the Woo-Sox Game!



14u pictured here.

Wilbraham-Hampden Falcons Softball program season reflections

The Wilbraham Hampden Falcons Softball program proudly reflects on an exceptional 2026 season! This season was filled with remarkable accomplishments, growth and community spirit across every age division.

A huge highlight in the season comes from 12u Sheehan, as they won the Little League District 2 South 12u Championship! 10u Thomas earned an impressive District 2 South 10U runner up finish and competed with heart all season. Our 12u All Star Team also represented Falcons softball with determination and pride, completing at a high level throughout tournament play at the end of June.

Success extended well beyond the field as Falcons Softball hosted a variety of events that strengthened our program and brought our families together, including our photo night at Spec Pond, multiple player clinics, coach development workshops, and community events such as a trip to Polar Park for a Woo-Sox game! We also hosted a memorable closing ceremony and party at the end of the season. These achievements would not have been possible without the dedication of our coaches, volunteers, sponsors, families and supporters who generously give their time and encouragement throughout the season. Most importantly we want to congratulate every Falcons softball player for their hard work, perseverance and commitment.

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8u Chouinard ready for their game!



Congratulations to Kylie, Kat, Natalie, Lauren, Grace, Natalie, Savannah, Audrey, Juliette, Emma, Violet, and coaches Kristyn, Jacob and Nicole on their LL D2 South 12u Championship win!



10u Players at Photo Night in May.

Submitted photos and caption Martha Queiroga



Falcons Softball having fun at the Closing Ceremony and Party.



10u Tessicini and 12u Liberty after their match up in May.

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SOAP from page 1

per weaving.

"I do a lot of workshops. Variety," Arakelian said.

She also taught herself how to make these projects.

"Even though I've been in the arts forever and ever, I had never made soap, I had never painted on silk, so what I did was I went to my public library in my town and I picked up some books and taught myself how to make all these," Arakelian said. "So it's a good thing to let them know that they can always pick a book and teach themselves anything."

Arakelian said she enjoys coming to Wilbraham to see how creative the kids are and watch them learn under her instruction.

"I also learn from them. I can see something that they're doing that's a little different than I had never thought about, so I always learn from my participants, whether they're teens or adults," Arakelian said.

Besides seeing the finished products, teaching her participants also fulfills her work.

"Seeing successful, finished projects. Because there's a lot that goes into a project. Before I come to a library, there's a lot of preparation and I want to make sure that I teach them step by step so that way they don't get lost or confused, and that's what, actually, makes a successful project," Arakelian said.

The secrets to successful projects, she added, are experimenting, being open-minded to ideas and always learning and growing.

Her message was this.



Master Potter Rick Hamelin assists a teen during the workshop.



The teens begin their work on the soaps.



Teens fan and finish up their soaps.

"I hope they pick up a book and teach themselves something. Anything. I always had a goal of teaching myself something new every year, at least one thing," Arakelian said. "Teach yourself

something new, be curious about things and just teach yourself. You don't need to teach a class. Grab a book."

To learn more about future events at the WPL, visit wilbrahamlibrary.org.



A close-up shot of some of the varying soaps teens made.



Gariné Arakelian of Kulina Folk kicks off the workshop.

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CAMP from page 1

Jesus. Plus, we get fun things like a waterslide, pinatas, or other games,” Nowicki said.

Another adult helping out at the summer camp was Meg Cyr, who was assisting with the crafts.

“It’s just great to see all the teenage volunteers that are involved, and then to see this continue to grow more and more with campers coming and enjoying learning more about their faith, having a great time, and meeting some new kids,” Cyr said.

St. Cecilia’s Summer Adventure had tons of teen volunteers serving as counselors. One of those teen counselors was Nikki Mentekidis.

“I like seeing how happy the kids get with activities, and getting to spend time with them, all of it brings me joy,” Mentekidis said.

One special part of St. Cecilia’s Summer Adventure is teen volunteers reenacting stories from the Bible. Leading that initiative, along with leading music for the kids, is Carolee McGrath.

“This camp offers children an opportunity to grow closer to Christ while having fun at the same time. It builds upon the faith handed down to them by their parents and the faith experienced at Mass, and in the sacraments. It helps remind the kids, counselors and myself that Jesus is true joy. He is as St. John Paul II said, ‘the peace and happiness that we are seeking,’” McGrath

said. “And when you hear 60 plus kids sing at the top of their lungs ‘Soul on Fire’ or ‘Praise,’ you know that the Holy Spirit is stirring up that joy in our hearts. God is good and very much at work”

There were teen volunteers for the Bible stories including Gavin Hisgen, Joey McGrath and Justin Nowicki.

“In this Bible camp, we were role playing as some of

the miracles Jesus did,” Hisgen said.

“It shows the kids what happened in the Bible and explains it too,” McGrath said.

“It’s very fun,” Nowicki said.

For their special day on Friday, the children got a visit from the police and fire departments. Speaking on behalf of the fire department is Captain Patrick Farrow with

the fire department and 3-11 Patrol Officer Taylor Beaudry.

“Community outreach is a vital part of the Wilbraham Fire Department. And we enjoy taking some time away from emergency calls to meet with our community members, show them our equipment, and have them meet our firefighters,” Farrow said.

“It builds good trust in the

community. It allows us to get to know the community that we’re serving, and allows us to understand the needs and what people are expecting from us and how we can better serve them,” Beaudry said.

It was a very fun weekend all around for children to make new friends, do fun activities, and all the while learning about the many ways that Jesus is our friend.



Campers enjoy a fun activity involving wrapping each other with toilet paper.



Camp attendees perform one of the songs that they learned at the camp.



Children get to see a close up in a police car.



Campers get to have a close up look at a fire truck.

Photos courtesy of Rosemary Oldread



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• Boys & Girls Grades 4th-6th 5:15 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
(3rd grade can try out with 4th grade)

• Boys & Girls Grades 7th & 8th 6:30 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.

• Boys & Girls Grades 9th-12th 7:45 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Tryout # 2: Thursday, August 6, 2026

Location: North Brookfield High School
10 New School Dr., North Brookfield, MA

• Boys & Girls Grades 4th-6th 5:15 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
(3rd grade can try out with 4th grade)

• Boys & Girls Grades 7th & 8th 6:30 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.

• Boys & Girls Grades 9th-12th 7:45 p.m. - 8 p.m.

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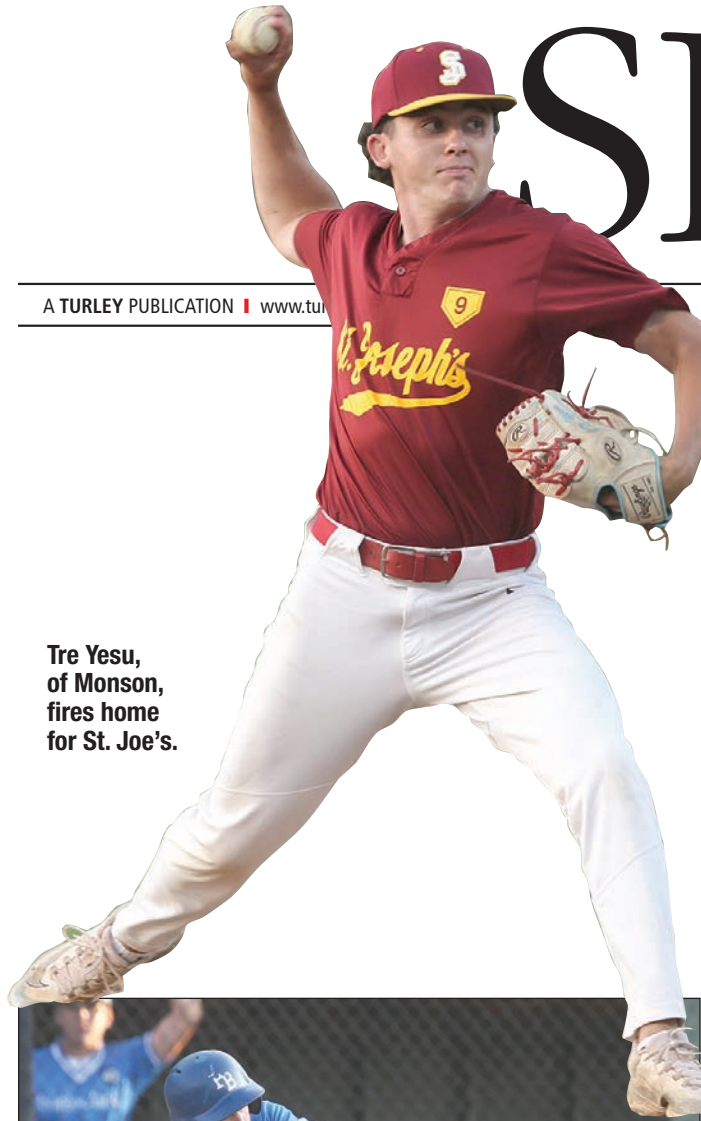
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Tre Yesu, of Monson, fires home for St. Joe's.

Saints beat rival PeoplesBank

HOLYOKE — Last Thursday night, the pennant race stepped up with rivals PeoplesBank and St. Joe's matching up at Mackenzie Stadium. While PeoplesBank trailed early in the game, they nearly came all

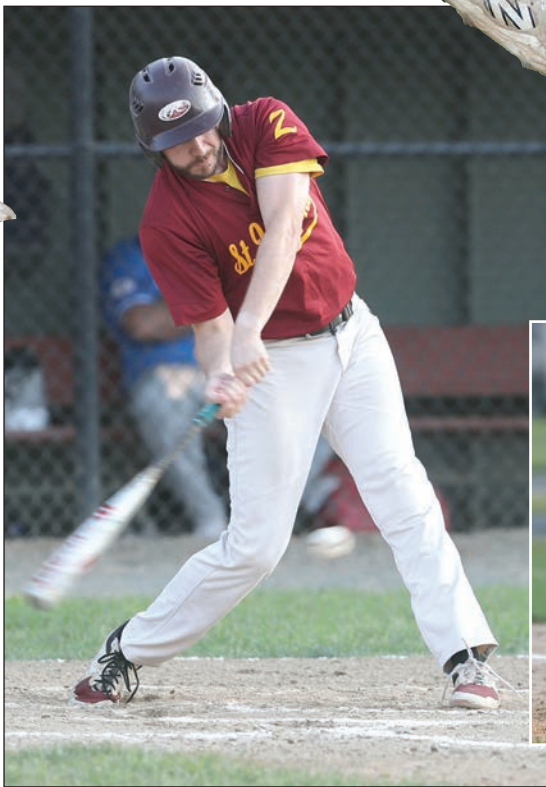
the way back, but St. Joe's prevailed 9-7. The playoffs are on the horizon in the league with St. Joe's and PeoplesBank likely drawing top seeds for the six-team play-offs.



Jake Jachym sends a ball to homeplate for the Bankers.



Seth Adams swings for the fences.



Brandon Magni connects.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Joe DeMichele makes a catch at first.



Dave Clark sends a throw to first for PeoplesBank.



Above, Nick Tomasetto looks to turn a double play during recent action last week at Mackenzie Stadium. Below, Trey Spees swings and makes contact.

Blue Sox nearing end of regular season

HOLYOKE — The Valley Blue Sox went 1-for-2 in a doubleheader against the Mystic Schooners on Saturday. Entering Saturday's doubleheader against the Schooners (22-17) Valley sat at 16-18-1, sixth in the South Division and outside the playoff picture, trailing both Danbury and Bristol for one of the division's postseason spots. The Blue Sox (17-19-1) responded with a convinc-

ing 10-3 victory in Game 2 to split the twin bill and remain in the postseason hunt. Mystic struck first in the first game and opened the inning when Bryce Detwiler lifted a sacrifice fly to right field after consecutive singles from Jack Harley and Anthony Belisario put runners on the corners. The Schooners added another run in the

fourth as Chris Walsh lined a two-out single before Adam Troch followed with an RBI double down the left-field line, giving Mystic a 2-0 advantage. Valley answered immediately in the bottom half; however, Chris Cancel launched a solo home run to left field to cut the deficit in half.

Andrew Oppenheimer kept the Blue Sox

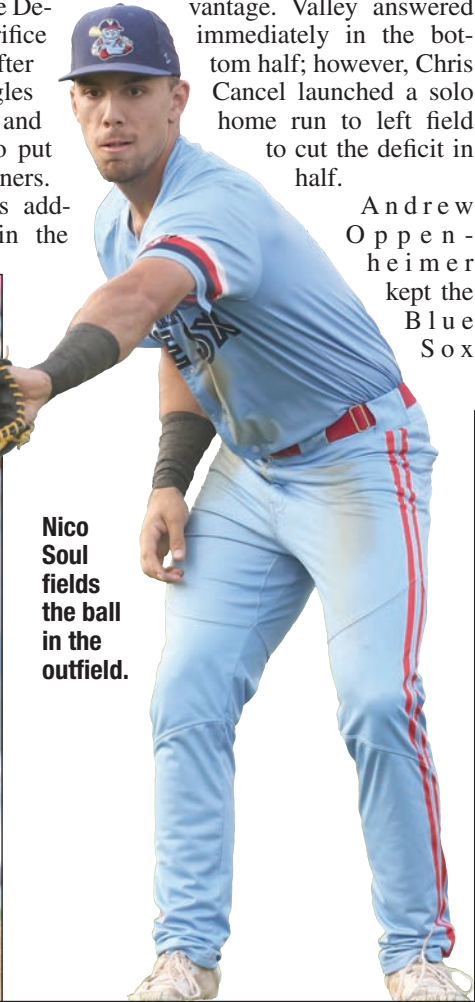
within striking distance throughout his six-inning start, allowing three runs, only two earned, while striking out four. But Mystic manufactured what proved to be the decisive run in the sixth after a hit batter, a walk and a Valley error loaded the bases. Walsh singled to center to score Detwiler and extend the lead to 3-1.

Valley mounted one final rally in the seventh. Chris Carson doubled to center before pinch-hitter Alex Hill

Please see **SOX**, page 12



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com



Nico Soul fields the ball in the outfield.

Wilbraham girls soccer heads for playoffs

WILBRAHAM — While it was a tougher summer for the boys PVSSL teams, the girls teams in both the A Division and B Division qualified for the playoffs.

The Pioneer Valley Summer Soccer League, celebrating its 44th season, had their playoffs beginning earlier this week. The top eight teams in each division qualified and quarterfinals were scheduled to start earlier this week with the finals coming up this weekend.

In the A Division, the Falcons are the top seed in this year's playoffs and drew a quarterfinal matchup with South Hadley. If they win, they would play in the semifinals later this week.

The B Division playoffs have the Falcons in the No. 8 position, and they were scheduled to travel to No. 1 Granby in the quarterfinals earlier this week. The same scenario applies as the Falcons could play in a semifinal later in the week if they can get by the Rams.



Joshua Toole frames up a pitch.



Estaban Garcia has his eyes on the ball as he swings.



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SPORTS

SOX from page 11

delivered an RBI single to trim the deficit to one. With the tying run aboard, Mystic closer MJ Bollinger recorded the final two outs to preserve the 3-2 victory. Despite matching the Schooners with seven hits, the Blue Sox came up just short.

The Blue Sox wasted little time putting the loss behind them in the nightcap.

Nick Tomasetto ignited the offense with a solo home run in the first inning before Michael Iannazzo added a sacrifice fly later in the frame to give Valley a 2-0 lead. To-

masetto drove in another run with an RBI single in the second, and after Mystic answered with one of its own, Valley broke the game open in the third.

Nick Spaventa blasted a solo home run to center before Chris Carson added an RBI single. A wild pitch later scored Michael Iannazzo to cap a three-run inning and extend the Blue Sox's lead to 6-1. Valley continued to add insurance the rest of the way,



highlighted by Tomasetto's two-run single in the fifth, an RBI single from Iannazzo in the sixth and Nico Soul's sacrifice fly in the seventh. The Blue Sox finished with 10 runs on 14 hits.

Earlier, Carson was named an NECBL All-Star, and the outfielder backed up the honor with another productive performance. Carson finished the doubleheader 3-for-7 with a double, an RBI and two runs scored, helping pace a Valley lineup that received contributions through-

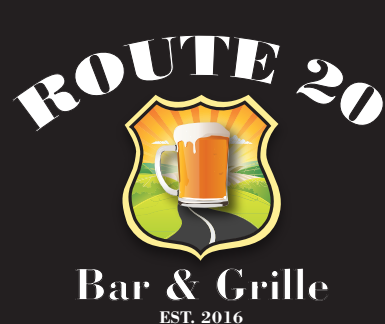
out the order. Tomasetto led the way by going 3-for-5 with a home run and four RBIs, while Iannazzo collected two hits and two RBIs. Spaventa also homered as the Blue Sox salvaged the split.

Four Valley pitchers combined to secure the Game 2 victory. Lukas Jachens started before Niall Todd earned the win with two scoreless innings in relief. Jon Shields and Jason Pinonnault closed out the final three innings as the Blue Sox improved to 17-19-1, keeping themselves alive in the NECBL playoff race entering the final week of the regular season.



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NOVEL from page 1

human ambition, Peter and Adam Dent confront questions of morality, science, and desire.

The book is currently available for preorder and advance copies and will be available on July 31 on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Target, Walmart and Titcomb’s Bookshop on the Cape in Sandwich.

Simpson shared he’s enjoyed the experience and just recently wrote two bonus chapters, which readers can snag if they preorder the book.

“The more you think about it, the more you think of new, new things that happen if you ate something, you felt like you were 20 again,” Simpson said. “I was in healthcare for about 20 years and I’m also diabetic—and this is a sore spot for me—because depending on what numbers you read, anywhere between 20% to 30% of all adults are diabetic. If you are and you go in to your doctor, they’ll say, ‘Oh, you got to adjust. It’s because of your background and your ancestry and you got to eat these foods.’ Bull, no, no. Ask the question, ‘I want to cure diabetes,’ and they go, ‘Uh uh uh uh.’ They either don’t know or won’t tell and there’s lots of articles on this that are out there. Dr. Phil and Dr. Oz

are really big proponents of ‘There is a cure for diabetes. They’re just not telling you it,’ and there’s lot of people that are making lots of money on this. So, that sort of feeds into the background of the book. Who’s making money off of people being sick and who’s making money off of people’s conditions.”

Simpson said this book has been over two decades in the making and in his work, he saw “lots of problems that weren’t being addressed” and started asking questions himself after talking with friends.

“Well, if something could fix it all, would people buy in or would they have reasons to not do it because it’s going to cost them a lot of money, and it turns out the second part, I think, would happen, and we’ve seen that already with how diabetes has been treated,” Simpson said. “I got into it because I was in the healthcare industry and I was concerned. I got an agent and it got pitched to HBO and they were very interested in making a series, but it never quite came to fruition and my career was taking off, so we moved to New Hampshire and things happened for another 10 years after that. I came back, I’m retired now, and I need things to do. My wife said, ‘You got to get a hobby.’ Boy, did I get a hobby.”

Besides working with Editor Michelle Estor to rewrite the book, he’s also been working on an audiobook version, which will drop on Aug. 14.

Also, another book is in the works, which Simpson shared focuses on Burundi.

“In the book, a couple of friends in a bar talk about what would it take to bring Burundi to be the best country in the world from the poorest,” Simpson said. “A lot of the people there act in transporting goods on a bicycle. That’s the biggest vehicle in the country is bicycles. If you have a bike you’re very rich and it’s also very hilly, so people are transporting 500-pound bunches of bananas up and down mountains on a bicycle to bring them to market for \$12. It’s all about bringing Burundi from the poorest country in the world to the richest country in the world and who doesn’t want that.”

More books will follow later too.

“I’m already starting on a book on what would it take to actually build a bridge across Panama between North and South America,” Simpson said. “And also, what would it take—I just came back from

Alaska two years ago, this has been in planning since the 1800s—building a bridge across the strait between Russia and the U.S. That’s tough to do. It’ll be so beneficial because just think of all the oil that’s needed in China right

how he starts off with questions and how descriptive his writing is, crediting his travels and experiences talking with people for that writing style.

“His characters, I feel like, have a lot more depth and dimension to them as compared to a lot of other debut authors that are coming out that may lack those kinds of sensitivities around character-building and world-building and showing that off to the readers and really getting them to feel it and see it instead of telling them what’s happening and getting those questions generated within their hearts instead of showing those questions to their faces. I really like that style of writing and that’s what drew me first to the book,” Estor said. “It’s been such a privilege working with him as well.”

On the book title, Simpson said it was inspired by the Greek demigod Tantalus, who gave the food of the Gods to mortal men, which angered them.

“They relegated him to a place where there was a branch with something that looked like an apple on it—a fruit—that was just out of his reach and every time he’d reach up to get it, the branch

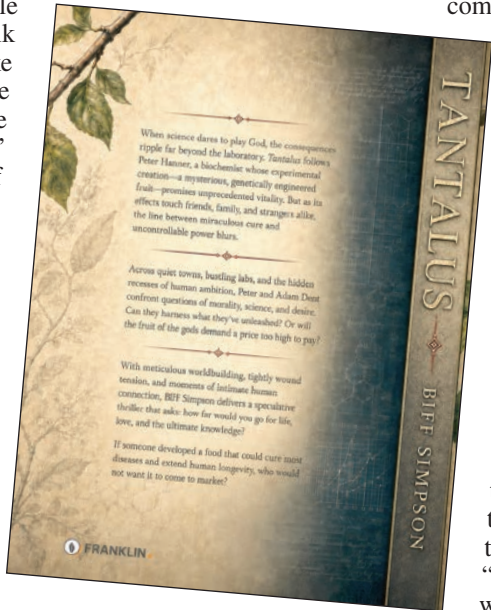
would pull back, and every time—there was water at his feet—and every time he’d lean down to grasp a cup of water or put some water in his hand, the water would recede, so he was constantly hungry and thirsty and for the rest of his life, could never do anything about it,” Simpson said. “That to me indicated here’s the food of the gods. Your mom is dying or something; it’ll take care of her. Your dad’s just about to die any time now, he’ll be around for a long time. So, it’s what everybody wants, but it’s just out of reach because of the greed of certain people.”

Simpson hopes readers enjoy the book and expressed gratitude for those who have supported him, hoping readers feel they can ask questions and be curious about the world.

His message was this.

“Do it. How many people have said, ‘I’ve always wanted to write a book.’ So, what’s stopping you? You don’t have a laptop or a computer? You don’t know how to type? Do it. Even write down on a piece of paper and stuff,” Simpson said. “Start doing things because it builds on itself. The more you write, the more you say ‘Wait I could do this. No, this is even better.’

To learn more, check out booksbybiff.com or email Simpson at authorbiffsimpson@gmail.com.



BOARD from page 1

On the insurances, he added they are BlueCross BlueShield, Health New England, Harvard Pilgrim and Tufts and a consultant assists them.

“They manage the insurance program for us and we collect the premiums and pay them the actual claims, and then we buy a self-insurance for people with very large claims. Anybody, any individual over 150,000 we reinsure somewhere else,” Patullo said.

Patullo explained the rate setting “has nothing to do with” the policies of the insurances “and how they structure it.”

“Yes, we do have some flexibility on what we cover and what we don’t cover. For instance, the carriers just suggested that GLP-1s for weight loss were getting to be ridic-

ulous and so, as of last July 1, none of our policies carry those,” Patullo said. “There’s been other similar decisions, but they’re all on the fringes, that type of thing.”

He added 16 years earlier, “the health trust had quite a bit of money in the bank.”

“They want to have some money set aside Is it 12% of the previous 12 months claims, which right now, at our current rate, spend rate, is about \$4.3 million. When I first got on there was an extra \$5 million in there. Hampden is about 10% of the trust when I look at the premium income that comes in,” Patullo said. “So, of that \$5 million, half a million of it was our money. I have endeavoured to spend that money by reducing rates, returning it to the town for the last 15 years.”

In the last two years, however, Patullo said “it finally caught up with us.”

“Our rate increases have been well below the averages in the industry, certainly below GIS. But last year, for the first time, we really took a pretty hard hit. We’re running at claims at about 120% of premiums. So, that’s why we ended up with a net of about 11% increase this year. I was shooting for 10%, but 11% is the best deal I could get,” Patullo said. “We’re actually, now, as of the last report, we are actually about \$245,000 below the \$4.3 million for reserves, but we’re now into a higher premium rate.”

He added there were options.

“The email that I sent out for informational purposes talks about deductible plans versus the non-deductible plans. I’m pretty sure that East Longmeadow has the deductible plan. And there’s a little bit of savings there,” Patullo said. “That is certainly a possibility

that we could go to next July and just shave all costs up.”

Flynn then brought up the school district.

“Which is obviously a much larger percentage, which would pass down into their budget,” Flynn said.

“Yeah. They’re a much larger group. I don’t know their numbers, but remember, we only get 20% of those savings,” Patullo said. “So, it’d be proportional.”

“And, of course, totally different on the retiree end as well because that’s a whole different ball of wax,” Flynn said.

“Retirees over 65, you’re absolutely correct. We have a H&D and a Medicare wrap, Medigap plus. We have a number of early retirees less than 65 who get their 20 years in,” Patullo said.

What he heard second-hand from the school district was “why we don’t have a

low cost, low value policy for healthy young people.”

“The trust had looked into it at the bus company’s request a couple years ago and really didn’t go anywhere. I brought it up again in May or June at our last meeting. The consultants were telling me that a national company like Cigna isn’t interested in Massachusetts municipal insurance because our regulations are different than what they can sell on a national level,” Patullo said. “However, we are going to start looking at seeing if there is a low-cost, less value option that we could offer young, healthy employees.”

Patullo added it would probably take about six months to get that answer.

“We meet next in September and they’re going to see what is available in that option. I don’t anticipate it as any way to force people into, but there might be some peo-

ple who would choose that, save themselves some money. So, that’s another thing we’re looking at,” Patullo said.

Flynn next noted how, for example, through Harvard Pilgrim a family plan is \$1,500 a month.

“Because, again, what we’ve had to do with deductibles, copays, out of network, the whole thing. It seems like every year there’s another adjustment that helps us with that, the bill we’re getting in,” Flynn said.

“And the policy becomes lower value,” Patullo said.

Patullo said if Flynn could get him some data on that example along with comparison data, he could look into it further with the consultant.

He hopes to have some answers before the budget season starts.

After further discussion, the board moved on to their next agenda item.



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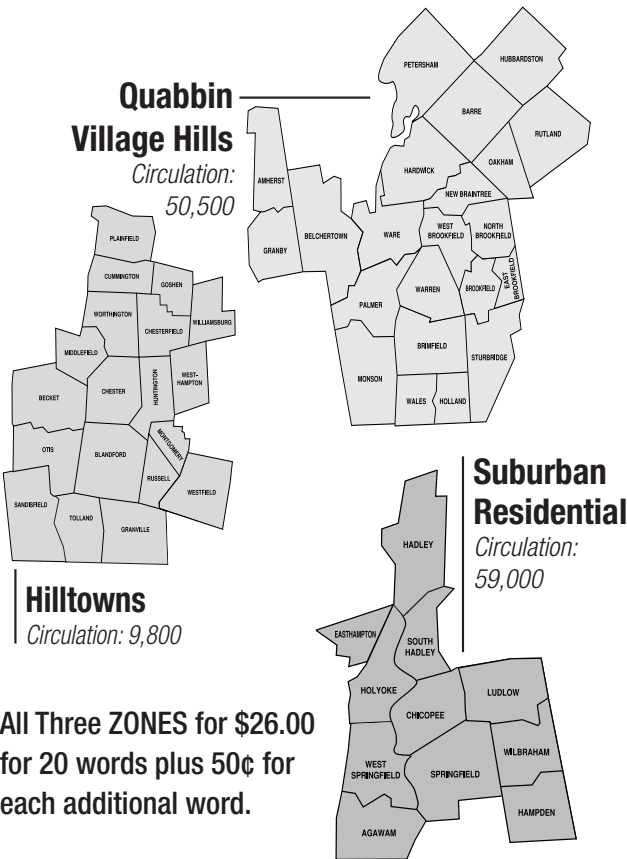
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GOATS from page 1

horse-related we have books on that at the farm.”

She enjoys collaborating with the library due to the experience the event brings and the opportunity to educate kids about farms and the animals.

“They’re just so excited to get kids excited about books and then bringing the goats and the kids can read goat books and do the goat craft. I love working with Kate and the library because they really do put the kids first,” Gallagher said.

Also, there will be a family-friendly comedy show event on Aug. 14 at 5 p.m. at the farm called “Goats, Giggles and Grub” featuring local comedians, “Chopped” Champion Veronica “Chef V” Flores catering the event and goats mingling with the audience.

Tickets are \$40 per person, including the dinner and show, and \$25 for children.

Youth Services Librarian Kate Rumpalik said the kids always enjoy the Animal Storytime event.

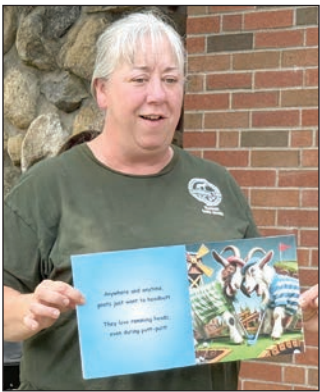
“This is by far one of my most popular programs. It fills up almost immediately and people know that. I think they’re actually coming back in August with the rabbits, so we’re looking forward to that too,” Rumpalik said.

Rumpalik said the library also enjoys working with Cloverbrook Farm.

“They always have such fun things when they come and the kids love any kinds of animals that I can bring in. It gets them to the library and we love the ability to be able to offer some free events for people in a time where everything costs so much,” Rumpalik said.

She added the summer reading season has been going well this year, encouraging families to attend the Finale Party on July 30 at 5:30 p.m. It is hosted and sponsored by the Friends of the Hampden Free Public Library and Village Food Mart.

“We did really well this year. We had quite a few participants this year and it went really well. All of our programs were pretty much maxed out and we had a lot of fun,” Rumpalik said. “We



Shannon Gallagher, owner of Cloverbrook Farm, reads from “Goats Go Nuts for Headbutts.”



HPL Youth Services Librarian Kate Rumpalik explains the goat-themed craft.



Here is Sprinkles.

did the Read and Bead again so the kids can make their necklaces. It’s always a good time.”

Also, to keep an eye out for upcoming events this fall including the Playgroups and Storytimes and Pathways for Parents programming.

Gallagher thanked the community for supporting the farm.

“We’ve only been open to the public for two years and we just feel the love of everybody in Hampden County. All the people who want to collaborate with us, whether it’s the library or other local farms, police departments, nursing homes, all the places that we



The families gathered outside the Hampden Free Public Library as they enjoy the baby goats.

Turley photos by Kristin Rivers



This baby goat sneaks a little hello.



The baby goats also enjoyed posing for the camera.

visit. We just really appreciate all the local support that we get,” Gallagher said.

Rumpalik’s message was this.

“Just keep reading and keep visiting the library,” Rumpalik said.



Families interact with the baby goats.



A close-up shot of Mister Coolada.

PUBLIC NOTICES

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No.
HD26P1561EA
Estate of:
Paul Nunez, Jr.
Date of Death: 03/04/2022
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION**
To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Maryann Nunez of Hobe Sound, FL** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.
The Petitioner requests that **Maryann Nunez of Hobe Sound, FL** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 08/13/2026. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
A **Personal Representative** appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the **Personal Representative** and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.
WITNESS, Hon. **Claudine T. Stoudemire**, First Justice of this Court.
Date: July 16, 2026
Rosemary A Saccomani, Register of Probate
07/30/2026

SALE OF MOTOR VEHICLE
This ad is pursuant to MA Gen. Law Ch.255, Sec. 39A as of July 31, 2026 the following motor vehicles will be for sale to satisfy a garage keepers lien:
Vehicle: 2000 Triumph Daytona
VIN#: SMT502FK3YJ105150
LKO: Antonio Pepper
397 Main St.
Indian Orchard, MA 01151
R & S Assoc. Inc
PO Box 543
Wilbraham MA 01095
413-596-4374
07/16, 07/23, 07/30/2026

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758**

**Docket No.
HD26P1516EA
Estate of:
Katherine Veronica Pychewicz
Also known as:
Katherine V Pychewicz
Date of Death: 10/11/2025
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION**
To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **John LaBarre of Fitchburg, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.
The Petitioner requests that **John LaBarre of Fitchburg, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 08/10/2026. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.
UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
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WITNESS, Hon. **Claudine T. Stoudemire**, First Justice of this Court.
Date: July 13, 2026
Rosemary A Saccomani, Register of Probate
07/30/2026

Sale of Motor Vehicle
This ad is pursuant to MA Gen. Law Ch.255, Sec. 39A as of August 7, 2026 the following motor vehicle will be for sale to satisfy a garage keepers lien:
2001 GMC Sierra 1500
VIN#: 1GHTHK29U31E256247
LKO: Tina Kearns
40 Sutton Rd.
Millbury, MA
PO BOX 181
South Grafton, MA 01560
R & S Assoc. Inc
PO Box 543
Wilbraham MA 01095
413-596-4374
07/23, 07/30, 08/06/2026

Town of Wilbraham Municipal Facilities Reuse & Consolidation Initiative Request for Information (RFI)
The Town of Wilbraham is seeking information and conceptual proposals from qualified organizations, institutions, developers, nonprofit entities, educational providers, recreation operators, and public-private partners regarding potential adaptive reuse, redevelopment, lease, partnership, and/or purchase opportunities involving several municipal facilities.
Properties Included in this RFI are Memorial School (310 Main St), Little Red School House (28 Springfield St), Former Wilbraham Police Building (16 Main St), Wilbraham Town Hall (240 Springfield St). **Responses due Wednesday, August 19, 2026, 2:00 p.m.**
Voluntary site visits Thursday, July 30, 2026, 8:30 a.m. at 16 Main Street.
For full RFI document visit: www.wilbraham-ma.gov/Bids.
07/30, 08/06/2026

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