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The Wilbraham-Hampden

TIMES

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OCTOBER 15, 2026

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Minnechaug represented at annual Big E Parade

By Selena Nguyen
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM – Minnechaug Regional High School was represented in the annual Big E parade on Sept. 29, where the Marching Band presented the Military Escort March (arr. Bennett), joined by the color guard, who showcased their flag-spinning skills.

Dave Morris, Director of Band and Strings, described the yearly event as a valuable performance opportunity and bonding activity, as it is the first event of the year the entire band is together outside of football home games.

“It’s a different group every year. The bigger the group, the more numerous the challenges can be in terms of logistics. I think the hardest part is you never know what to expect in terms of weather, crowd, and all the elements you can’t control about a parade,” Morris said. “So for the kids, it’s a lesson of flexibility and tact.”

The students expressed great excitement towards the event every year and a sense of pride in representing their school at such a major event.

Senior Drum Major Abigail Lee, who was one of the students leading the Marching Band, expressed her excitement.



Photo courtesy of Kyle Garron

One of the band members waves to the camera as it nears parade time.

Please see **BAND**, page 5



Turley photo by Harold Anderson

Susan Gove of Ludlow and Pam Carney of Monson show off their stained glass.

Seniors create stained glass in WSC workshop

By Harold Anderson
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM – The announcement in the Wilbraham Senior Center’s newsletter asked people to “Get ready to unleash your creativity” and that certainly was in evidence as area seniors participated in a Stained Glass Workshop on Tuesday, Oct. 6 at the Center.

The audience consisted of some people with previous crafting experience as well as those who were new to the idea of working with stained glass.

Led by Ann O’Toole from East Longmeadow, a full class of about a dozen eager crafters gathered to make their own 5x7 arched stained-glass window to

proudly take home with them. In a short presentation to begin the workshop, O’Toole introduced herself to the audience.

“I recently retired and this is my hobby,” O’Toole said and added, “I’ve been working in stained glass for about over 20 years.”

What does O’Toole like most about stained-glass art?

“Watching all the different designs people make. I really love that....Everybody has their own creativity....Everything comes out different....no two alike,” O’Toole said.

The style of the stained-glass window for this workshop was in the mosaic style. O’Toole recounted her own

Please see **STAINED GLASS**, page 15

Fall Special Town Meeting Warrant officially set

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - The warrant for the Fall Special Town Meeting in Hampden has officially been finalized and set after the Selectboard reviewed it on Oct. 5.

After reviewing the warrant articles, the board officially closed and signed the warrant.

As a reminder, the Fall Special Town Meeting is scheduled for Monday, Oct. 26, at 6:30 p.m. at the Hampden Town Hall and will also be streamed online through

the Town of Hampden YouTube page.

There are 25 warrant articles.

Article One focuses on proposed amendments to the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District’s regional agreement. Readers can check out the proposed

changes in full by visiting the town website and the Town Clerk’s office; they will also be handed out at STM.

Articles Two through Five are budget amendments.

Article Two will vote to amend the vote taken under Article 7 of the May 11, 2026, Annual Town Meeting to in-

crease the budget line item “69.1 Assessment (Regional School District)” and further raise and appropriate or transfer from unappropriated available funds a sum of money for additional funding for the HWRSD.

Article Three, meanwhile, will be a vote on whether to

raise and appropriate or transfer from unappropriated available funds a sum of money to pay the Town’s portion of the Hampden Wilbraham Regional School District’s Capital Assessment.

Article Four will be a vote

Please see **STM**, page 2

‘Sourdough Brandon’ visits the WSC

By Harold Anderson
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM – Brandon Cochran of Granville, Mass., who goes by the nickname “Sourdough Brandon” came to the Wilbraham Senior Center on Wednesday,

Oct. 7 to present an hour-long Sourdough Workshop to a large audience at the Center.

He introduced himself as a full-time sourdough recipe developer.

“I do these workshops all over Massachusetts and New England,” Cochran said.

Everyone in attendance found a small container with sourdough starter on their chair as they arrived as well as an instruction sheet with details on “How to Maintain Your Sourdough Starter.”

“At this point, I’ve given out my sourdough starter to over 3,000 people,” Cochran said.

“So, I’m kinda like the Johnny Appleseed of sourdough in the area,” he added to laughter from the audience.

Cochran noted that people “may have heard that having a sourdough starter is like having a pet,” but remarked instead that, “I don’t want this to be a chore for you. This should be a fun hobby,” saying that he would go over “ways to maintain and adjust the feedings of your starter to make it work for your schedule and your life depending on how much you bake.”

Cochran explained that sourdough starter “looks very much alive. That’s because it is. A sourdough starter is a live



Turley photo by Harold Anderson

Sourdough Brandon, Brandon Cochran, and Wilbraham resident Rosemary Surdyka displays the small container of sourdough starter each participant received.

Please see **SOURDOUGH**, page 13



Photo courtesy of James Wadzinski

A group photo of James Wadzinski with members of Wilbraham Scout Troop 359 and volunteers for his Eagle Scout project at Rice Nature Preserve.

Wadzinski completes Eagle Scout project

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - James Wadzinski, a member of Wilbraham Scout Troop 359, recently completed an Eagle Scout project for Rice Nature Preserve.

The project was completed on Sept. 9 and Sept. 20

and is now in the final review process, which will include Wadzinski filling out a proposal binder with pictures during and after the project, getting six more merit badges and composing a letter of his life ambitions. All of these will then be sent to the Eagle Board of Review and when accepted, he will attain Eagle Scout status.

Wadzinski explained the project involved renovating a trail on the back of the preserve, working with the Open Space & Recreation Committee and the Conservation Committee.

“They wanted some trails that weren’t blazed to be obscured so that people

Please see **EAGLE SCOUT**, page 10

Hampden Theatre Guild to hold ‘Barefoot in the Park’ auditions on Oct. 27-28

HAMPDEN – “Barefoot in the Park” by Neil Simon is a romantic comedy about the chaotic first days of marriage for a young couple with opposite personalities.

Auditions will be held on Oct. 27 and 28 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. at the Hampden Town Hall, the former Thornton Burgess School, 85 Wilbraham Rd., Hampden, MA.

Synopsis:
Corie and Paul Bratter are a newlywed couple. For

their first home, they live in an apartment on the top floor of a brownstone in New York City. Corie is optimistic about their future together, while Paul, the more anxious and grounded half of the couple, worries about the various flaws in the apartment, such as a hole in the skylight, their leaky closet, and the lack of a bathtub. Shortly after moving in, Corie attempts to set her mother up with their eccentric neighbor Mr. Velasco.

During the course of four days, the couple learns to live together while facing the usual daily ups-and-downs. Corie wants Paul to become more easy-going: for example, to run “barefoot in the park”.

All roles open.

Corie Bratter: (20’s- early 30’s)A vibrant, romantic, and adventurous free spirit who loves spontaneity.

Paul Bratter: (25- early 30’s) Corie’s new husband,

a conservative, cautious, and straight-laced lawyer.

Ethel Banks: (45-early 60’s) Corie’s proper, traditional, and widowed mother.

Victor Velasco: (50-65) The eccentric, bohemian attic neighbor who lives upstairs.

Telephone Repairman: (40-60’s) A weary man who struggles with the apartment’s fifth-floor climb.

If you have questions, please contact Margie Secora at 310-210-6705.

Halloween Decoration Contest

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Welcome Project announces “The Great Halloween Decorating Contest.”

Open to all residents and businesses in Wilbraham/Hampden. Multiple award categories including The Mountain Of Fright Award (scariest house), The Peach And Black Award (most original display), The Falcon’s Flight Award (most family-friendly display), The Boo-Tique Award (best business display), The Haunted Hollow Award (best decorated street), The Apple Orchard Award (best harvest display).

Sign up at <https://www.thewilbrahamwelcomeproject.com/halloween>. Judging will be the weekend of October 24-25. Winners will receive a trophy, lawn sign, and bragging rights for a year.



thewilbrahamwelcomeproject.com/halloween. Judging will be the weekend of October 24-25. Winners will receive a trophy, lawn sign, and bragging rights for a year.

STM from page 1

to amend the vote taken under Article 7 of the May 11, 2026, Annual Town Meeting to increase the budget line item “23.2 Monitoringnesting” (Transfer Station) and further to raise and appropriate or transfer from unappropriated available funds a sum of money to support additional funding for the monitoring and testing at the Transfer Station.

On Article Five, this is a vote to amend the vote taken under Article 7 of the May 11, 2026, Annual Town Meeting to increase the budget line item “7.3 Unemployment Compensation” (Insurance) and further to raise and appropriate or transfer from unappropriated available funds a sum of money for additional funding for unemployment expenses.

Articles Six through 11 focus on capital projects and equipment.

Articles Six and Seven will be a vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from un-

appropriated available funds a sum of money to purchase and equip new police cruisers, including all incidental and related costs for the Hampden Police Department.

Article Eight is a vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from unappropriated available funds a sum of money to purchase and equip a new pickup truck, including all incidental and related costs, for the Hampden Highway Department.

Article 9 is a vote on whether to transfer the remaining balance of funds appropriated under Article 7 “HVAC Installation at the New Hampden Town Hall (Formerly Thornton W. Burgess School)” of the November 3, 2025, Special Town Meeting for building and site improvements at the Town Hall, including but not limited to septic system improvements, asbestos abatement and installing new flooring and all incidental and related costs.

Article 10 is to see if the

Town will vote to transfer the remaining balance of funds appropriated under Article 14 “Moving Costs for Administrative Offices and Library” of the May 12, 2025, Annual Town Meeting for building and site improvements at the Town Hall, including but not limited to electrical, lighting and well improvements, and all incidental and related costs; and further to raise and appropriate or transfer from unappropriated available funds an additional sum of money.

Article 11 is a vote on whether to raise and appropriate or transfer from unappropriated available funds a sum of money to repair or replace the automatic transfer switch to the generator at the Green Meadows Elementary School, including all incidental and related costs.

Article 12 focuses on whether to raise and appropriate or transfer from unappropriated available funds a sum of money for activities and celebrations to commemorate the founding of the Town of Hampden in 1878, including all incidental and related costs. This concerns the Town of Hampden’s 150th Celebration in 2028.

Article 13 concerns debt service payments, so whether to raise and appropriate or transfer from unappropriated available funds a sum of money for the purpose of making a debt service payment for the Scantic Valley Water District Expansion Project.

Articles 14 through 16 center around the former Hampden Town House.

Article 14 would be to see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectboard to sell, on such terms and conditions and for such consideration, as it deems appropriate, all or a part of the Town-owned

building and property located at 625 Main Street, Hampden, MA, formerly known as the Town House, containing approximately one (1) acre, more or less and identified as Assessor’s Parcel 35-17-0, and, further, to authorize the Selectboard to take such other action as may be needed to carry out the vote to be taken hereunder.

On Article 15, this would be a vote to authorize the Selectboard to explore the reuse of all or a portion of the former Hampden Town House, containing approximately one (1) acre, more or less, and identified as Assessor’s Parcel 35-17-0, and, in connection therewith, to authorize the Selectboard to enter into a public private partnership, lease, leaseback, Or a similar arrangement, for such property, for a term of up to 99 years, on such terms and conditions and for such consideration as the Selectboard deems appropriate, and to authorize the Selectboard to take such other action as may be needed to carry out the vote to be taken hereunder.

Article 16, meanwhile, is to see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectboard to explore the reuse of all or a portion of the former Hampden Town House, containing approximately one (1) acre, more or less, and identified as Assessor’s Parcel 35-170 and, particularly, to use said property for historical, cultural, educational or civic purposes, and to authorize the Selectboard to take such other action as may be needed to carry out the vote to be taken hereunder.

Article 17 focuses on an authorization to lease town property for communication purposes, with a vote on whether to authorize the Selectboard to lease from time

to time such portion or portions of the Town-owned former Town landfill, located off of Cross Road and identified as Assessor’s Parcel 19-085-000, for telecommunications purposes for terms of up to 30 years. Also, grant access, utility and/or other easements on said property for the foregoing purposes, all on such terms and conditions, and for such consideration, as the Selectboard deems appropriate.

Articles 18 and 19 concern zoning bylaw amendments.

Article 18 would be a vote to amend the Hampden Zoning Bylaws, Section 7.16 “Solar Energy System(s)”. The language can be found in Attachment B, which is on the town website, in the Town Clerk’s office and via handout at STM.

Article 19 would be a vote to amend Hampden Zoning Bylaws, Section 4 “Continuation of Existing Uses”. The language can be found in Attachment C, which is on the town website, in the Town Clerk’s office and via handout at STM.

Article 20 concerns a local acceptance item. Here, this is a vote on whether to accept the provisions of General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 53FY4 to allow the Town to establish a separate revenue account to be known as the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund, in which may be deposited funds received in connection with a franchise agreement between a cable operator and the Town and further that monies in the fund shall only be appropriated for cable-related purposes consistent with the franchise agreement.

Article 21 is a certified citizens’ petition, asking for a vote to authorize the Selectboard to file a Special Act with the Massachusetts General Court to permit a Hampden reserve police officer to continue serving past the normal retirement age of 65 and potentially to 75 years of age.

This pertains to Reserve Ofc. Michael Kane and reads as follows:

“SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, Michael Kane, a reserve member of the police department of the town of Hampden until he reached the age of 70, may continue to serve in such position until the age Of 75, the date of his retirement or non-reappointment or the date he is relieved of his duties by the town, whichever occurs first; provided, however, that he is mentally and physically capable of performing the duties of his office; and provided further, that the town may, at its own expense, require that Police Officer Kane be examined by an impartial physician designated by the town to determine such capability. No deductions shall be made from the regular compensation of Michael Kane pursuant to chapter 32 of the General Laws in connection with his service to the town for retirement or pension purposes,” it reads. “SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon its passage.”

Articles 22 through 25 are financial transfers.

Article 22 would be a vote on whether to transfer from unappropriated available funds a sum of money to the Conservation Trust Fund.

Article 23 would be a vote on whether to transfer from unappropriated available funds a sum of money for the purpose of reducing the tax rate for Fiscal Year 2027.

Article 24 would be a vote on whether to transfer a sum of money from the General Stabilization Account for the purpose of reducing the tax rate for Fiscal Year 2027.

Article 25 would be a vote on whether to transfer a sum of money from unappropriated available funds into the General Stabilization Account.

Election letters must be received by Oct. 16

The Wilbraham-Hampden Times welcomes readers to participate in this year’s state election by writing letters to the editor for publication.

Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to The Wilbraham-Hampden Times, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to krivers@turley.com by noon on Friday, Oct. 16 to be published in the Thursday, Oct. 22 edition. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election.

Letter writers need to provide their name and the town they reside in.

Please include a daytime telephone number (for verification purposes only) when submitting your letter. Your phone number will not be printed.

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Wilbraham Friends of the Library Clothing and Household Textile Drive to benefit all

WILBRAHAM - Wilbraham Friends of the Library (WFOL), a non-profit committed to raising funds for the Wilbraham Public Library, is holding a clothing and textile drive on Saturday, Oct. 17 from 8 a.m. to Noon.

During back-to-school season, remember the WFOL

as you sort through your kids closets and drawers. And don't stop there...clean out that linen closet and the old dresser in the guest room. Bag up all the extra clothing and textiles that are just clogging up your home. Clothing, shoes, purses, sheets & blankets, curtains - give them a

new lease on life!

Millions of pounds of clothing and household textiles used to end up in U.S. landfills each year. Current Massachusetts laws ban disposal of textiles, easing the burden on landfills but leaving some to wonder just what to do with it all. The WFOL

Clothing & Household Textile Drive gives you the opportunity to take responsible action through donations and upcycling.

The Friends will receive a per pound payment for these items which will go directly to the library for programs, museum passes, equipment,

and other needed items. The donated items will be given a second life with new owners - at an affordable price - instead of adding to the already overwhelming landfill situation.

Join us with your clothing drive donations on Oct. 17, learn more about the Friends, and receive a coupon for a

free book at our Annual Book Sale which is scheduled to take place in May 2027.

For more information on the Wilbraham Friends of the Library visit them on the web at <http://wilbrahamlibrary.org/friends.asp>, on Facebook or via email at wfol.info@gmail.com.

BAND from page 1

"I always look forward to the fun filled day that we have as a band, and of course the New Hampshire building's Mac and Cheese. However, we also love to be given the opportunity to showcase the work that our musicians have done at 'Chaug to the larger audience at the Big E,'" Lee said. "This year in particular, our band grew enormously in size, which did bring some challenges, but it was incredibly rewarding to see how far our band program has grown in just my four years in it."

The long-standing tradition started back when Margaret Reidy was the Director of Band and Orchestra, as well as the Color Guard Coach – whom the current Coach Kyle Garron refers to as "a mentor of mine today."

This year, the Color Guard returned to the Parade with an entirely new group of students. Garron voiced great gratitude towards the opportunities the event offers.

"Minnechaug is known to have a stellar athletics program, but we have a really solid grounding in the arts as well! Added benefits of events like today's parade are the tendency of these performance events to build the self-confidence, resilience, and adaptability of the students participating. I am so incredibly proud of the students who marched this year. All of these students are brand new to Color Guard, having joined up in the past three weeks! We've only had three practices to teach them the basics before today. If this is what they could pull off in three weeks, I can't wait to see how they grow with practice!" Garron said.

Senior O'Brien Chen, who also serves as a Trombone Section Leader, reflected deeply on his time in Band.



A group photo of the Minnechaug Regional High School Marching Band ahead of marching in this year's Big E Parade.



The band members showing off their Minnechaug Regional High School pride with smiles.



The Big E Parade was an opportunity for the Minnechaug Regional High School Marching Band to strut their stuff.

When asked why having music in schools was important, he said this.

"The cast changes as you go through but really, Band is a place where like-minded people get together. We all play music, we all enjoy what we're doing. And, I think it's important for people to give the opportunity for people to find a community and to represent music as a whole. I'm sure some of the best artists in the world have played in middle school and high school's bands," Chen said.

His words align perfectly with Morris who added, "You can't spell the word humanity without human. And the arts are what makes us human. Our ability to create and our



The drummers and percussionists prepare their instruments.

ability to be moved."

The annual event has become one of the many reminders why having the arts within the Wilbraham-Hampden District is so significant and serves as a key opportunity to showcase the students' talents and dedication to the cause.

Upcoming community events that the Marching Band will be performing at include the Veterans Day Parade, as well as Memorial Day later in the year, where the color guard will also be joining them at.



The saxophonists pose for a group photo.



A group photo of the color guard members.

Photos courtesy of Kyle Garron



A group shot of some of the band members ahead of the Big E Parade.

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VIEWPOINTS

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor

Does a Veteran who uses VA Healthcare need Medicare at age 65?

Dear Rusty:
I'm not yet old enough, but must I enroll in Medicare at age 65?
I am a disabled military veteran with VA benefits, so must I still take Medicare when I turn 65?
Signed: Disabled Veteran

Dear Disabled Veteran:
First, please accept my gratitude for your military service to our country. And please also know that if you now rely 100% on the VA for all your healthcare needs and you expect that to continue for the rest of your life, then you have the option to decline enrolling in Medicare Part B when you turn 65. However, if you believe that using healthcare providers from outside the VA may someday be in your future, you should enroll in Medicare when you are first eligible.
Although you are required to enroll in Medicare Part A (coverage for inpatient hospitalization services) if you collect Social Security after age 65, enrolling in Medicare Part B (coverage for outpatient medical services) is always optional because there is a monthly premium for Part B (\$202.90 for 2026 - changes yearly).
So, as a military veteran using VA healthcare, you have a choice to either enroll in Medicare Part B at age 65, or not if you get

all your healthcare services from the Veterans Administration.
Just be aware that VA healthcare is not considered "credible" for Medicare purposes, so if you do not enroll in Medicare Part B during your Medicare Initial Enrollment Period and later choose to enroll in Medicare Part B, there will be a permanent Late Enrollment Penalty for enrolling in Medicare Part B outside your initial enrollment period (your Medicare IEP is three months on either side of the month you turn 65).
So, the decision you will need to make as you approach 65 years of age is this: will all of your healthcare needs always be provided through the VA? Or do you want the convenience (and flexibility) to know you can use any healthcare provider anywhere the U.S. or its territories, whenever and wherever you wish.
If the latter is true, then you should likely enroll in Medicare Part B when you turn 65. You can still use the VA for some services if you are enrolled in both, but there is no coordination of benefits (e.g., the VA will not make copayments if you use Medicare services, and vice versa).
Which means that you may also wish to also consider a Medicare Advantage plan or a Medicare Supplement.

Please see **SSI**, page 15

Candidate Statement

2nd Hampden District

I am running for State Representative in the 2nd Hampden district because I believe our community deserves a strong, independent voice on Beacon Hill—someone who will listen to the people, stand up for taxpayers, and focus on the issues that matter most to our families.
Government works best when it is accountable to the people it serves. As your State Representative, I will work to make state government more responsible, transparent, and responsive. I will not forget that every dollar government spends ultimately comes from the taxpayers.
Our state faces real challenges. The cost of living continues to put pressure on working families, seniors, and small businesses. Property taxes and housing costs are concerns for many of our neighbors. We need to find ways to make Massachusetts more affordable while protecting the quality of our schools, public safety, infrastructure, and essential services.
I will be a strong advocate for our local communities. State government should partner with cities and towns—not dictate to them from Boston. Local officials and residents understand their communities best, and their voices deserve to be heard.
I also believe Massachusetts must create an environment where small businesses can succeed. Small businesses are the backbone of our local economy, providing jobs, services, and opportunities. Excessive regulations, high costs, and an unpredictable tax envi-



Peter Warren

ronment make it harder for them to grow. I will support policies that encourage entrepreneurship, investment, and job creation here in Massachusetts.
Public safety must remain a fundamental responsibility of government. Our police, firefighters, emergency responders, and other public servants deserve our support and the resources they need to keep our communities safe.
I will also fight for responsible stewardship of taxpayer money. Before government creates another program or increases spending, we should ask a simple question: Is this the best use of the taxpayers' money? We need to prioritize essential services, eliminate waste, and demand measurable results.
Most importantly, I will be accessible and accountable to the people I represent. Being a State Representative should not be about political titles or party leadership. It should be about representing the people back home.
I am asking for your support because I believe our community deserves a representative who will work hard, listen carefully, and put our communities and taxpayers first.
I will bring an independent voice, common sense, and a commitment to service to Beacon Hill.
You can contact me through my website: Peter-WarrenforMA.com
I would be honored to earn your vote and serve as your State Representative.

Peter Warren

Random Acts of Kindness

By Barb Turcotte

This month's story is quite the Random Act of Kindness! I don't know whether it should include, "She'd give you the shirt (coat) off her back" or Dolly Parton's song, "Coat of many colors".
I first met Tangie Jackson as we were checking out of the supermarket and I complimented her on her beautiful flannel blue plaid coat. She accepted the compliment saying she had one in every color! We each cashed out going our separate ways, or so I thought. I went to back out and a car was blocking me, then out jumps Tangie with an orange and beige plaid coat draped over her arm. She excitedly came up to me and said she wanted me to try it on because she wanted me to have it! I did resist her offer but she was so animated, I decided to oblige. Perfect fit! I argued that I couldn't take her coat asking, why she would do something like that. Her explanation, "I'm from Mississippi (born there and moved to MA when she was 3½) and we do this kind of thing. I believe when you give, it comes back tenfold". To say this wasn't an awkward encounter I would be lying, but she just has such a fun and warm demeanor, it was infectious. In the end I accepted the coat which I love and in turn told her about my articles and asked if I could feature her in one. She agreed, we met for lunch, enjoyed the conversation covering many topics and shared many laughs. And now I'm going to tell you more about this incredibly generous person that I was so privileged to have cross my path.
Tangie certainly is not a stranger to tragedy in her life and is currently the sole care giver for her mom whose health is declining. She had 4 siblings that unfortunately

encouraged her to become her best self. She generally took in girls having two girls herself, but she did take in a five-year-old non-verbal boy who was eventually returned to his mom.
Tangie has been a CNA and in fact had her own agency for years helping community residents who needed help with home care.
Her Godbrother owns IKANDY and she often volunteers to advertise and promote events for him. She loves line dancing and if you're in her presence, be ready to dance and have fun! These events could have you taking a trail ride, taking part of a soul night, creating a double Dutch jumping competition or her emceeding a musical event. Her favorite style of music is 'Southern Soul' which she explained is similar to country music. She is a vivacious and energetic soul herself with a contagious personality.
Tangie truly is a beautiful person inside and out. She has also done modeling while volunteering with the Dunbar Community. She boasted she cooks a mean chicken pot pie, pineapple upside down-cake and sweet potato pie. I'm ready for dinner!
She truly is a woman with a huge heart and many facets to her personality, just such a pleasure to be around. In spite of life's hardships, she's such an inspiration with her positive beliefs.

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

She took that to heart and became a Foster Mother to many kids for the duration of three months to 3 years. The longest was for a teen girl for three and half years. The young girl never went back to 'juvie' which unfortunately doesn't happen often. She helped her get into STCC and

Parent intervention for campaign 2026 TV ads...



in my BACKYARD

By Ellenor Downer

Every fall I look for the return of the dark-eyed juncos, also known as "snow birds" in the middle latitudes.
Over most of the eastern United States, they appear as winter sets in and then retreat northward each spring to breed. Other juncos are year-round residents, retreating into woodlands during the breeding season or, like those of the Appalachian Mountains, moving to higher elevations during the warmer months.
I have not seen any yet, but I keep an eye out for them. Often my first sighting of the year is along the side of the road when I spot their white tail feathers as they fly.



Dark-eyed juncos are little sparrows with gray plumage and white outer tail feathers and white underneath. Females and juveniles are slightly browner and duller.
They breed in forests including coniferous and deciduous types and can be found at elevations from sea level to over 11,000 feet. Typically, the female lays between three to six eggs per clutch. She usually lays one egg per day until the clutch is complete.
Their diet primarily consists of seeds and insects, adapting to available food sources throughout the year.
Juncos are social birds, often seen in flocks during winter and they exhibit a distinctive hopping behavior on the ground. They flit about forest floors of the western mountains and Canada, then flood the rest of North America for winter.
They are among the most

Please see **BACKYARD**, page 15

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 \$50 by calling 800-824-8458 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 or 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

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

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

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



ROUTE 20 BAR & GRILLE celebrates 10 years

Submitted photos and caption Laurie Bongiorno

Route 20 Bar & Grille celebrated its 10th anniversary with a Sunday afternoon celebration on Oct. 4. There was also a raffle with many gifts

donated by local companies and also a 50/50 raffle with ALL PROCEEDS going to The Wilbraham Vets Services Fund!



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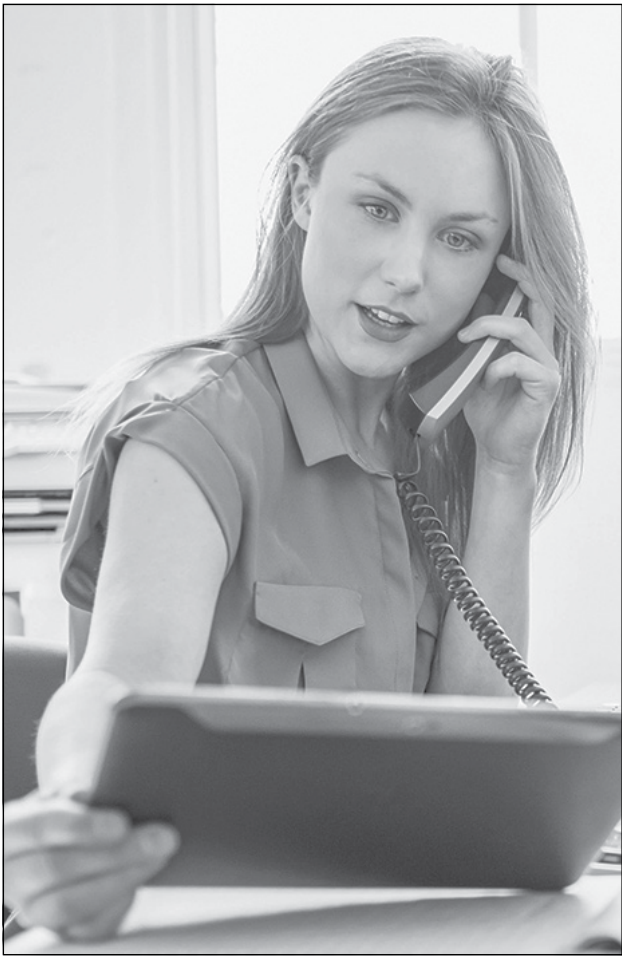
Women inBUSINESSweek

Women-owned businesses are thriving

Women entrepreneurs are not to be underestimated. Data affirms that women-owned businesses are growing and thriving.

According to North One banking, women-owned firms account for more than 12 million businesses in the United States. In addition, the 2024 Wells Fargo Impact of Women-Owned Business Report, in partnership with Ventureer, Core Women and Women Impacting Public Policy, found the number of women-owned business increased at a rate of 4.5 times between 2019 to 2023. Women-owned businesses are driving economic growth, and a deeper look at some of the numbers supports that notion.

- The Women’s Business Enterprise Council says there are 12.3 million women-owned businesses in the U.S., which comprises about 40 percent of the total number of businesses.
- Women-owned businesses bring in nearly \$2 trillion every year, says the National Women’s Business Council.
- During the pandemic, women-owned businesses added 1.4 million jobs and \$579.6 billion in revenue to the economy, says Wells Fargo.
- World Bank indicates that roughly one-third of principal owners of all businesses are female.
- WBENC advises that 64 percent of new women-owned businesses are started by women of color.
- Women’s Business Enterprises Canada says



Women-owned businesses are driving economic growth, and a deeper look at some of the numbers supports that notion.

more than 85 percent of buying decisions are influenced by women. The Canadian Minister of Small Business notes that women business ownership is growing. In 2023, approximately 18.4 percent of all businesses in Canada were majority owned by women, compared to 15.6 percent in 2017.

- According to Forbes, women-led tech companies achieve a 35 percent

higher ROI. A Forbes study with First Round Capital, a venture capital firm, found female-founded businesses in their portfolio outperformed male-founded companies by more than 60 percent.

Women-owned businesses are making a large impact on North America and around the world. Such firms continue to employ millions of people and foster strong economies.



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Jan Luczek, Peggy Broda, Shop Owner Sandy Polom, Lorraine DiNuovo and Sandy Sotolotto

For seven years, Sandy Polom has poured her creativity, energy, and entrepreneurial spirit into making The Scented Garden Gift Shoppe a special part of the Wilbraham community. Since becoming owner in 2019, Sandy has grown the shop into a go-to destination for thoughtful gifts, fashion and accessories, beautiful jewelry, baby gifts, home accents, and plenty of unexpected finds.

Whether you’re shopping for someone special, searching for something to brighten your own day, or simply enjoying a browse, The Scented Garden is all about discovering something you’ll love. With

personal service and complimentary gift wrapping, Sandy and her team make every visit feel special.

Kick off the holiday season at The Scented Garden’s annual Holiday Open House, Thursday, November 12th through Sunday, November 15th. Stop in for festive fun, raffles, special surprises, and the chance to shop with some of the store’s favorite vendors.

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You’re Invited to our *Holiday Open House!*
Thursday, Nov. 12th - Sunday, Nov. 15th
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CORE and MORE

Arice is nationally certified as a Pilates teacher and a licensed occupational therapist. She provides specialized instruction in small group classes and individual sessions and creates an environment that inspires clients to reach their personal fitness goals. Using her experience as an occupational therapist, she designs Pilates classes that combine strengthening and functional skills



for living. As a result, her classes inspire and motivate clients to reach their personal fitness goals. She combines all of her past experiences with the knowledge of Pilates to enhance flexibility, balance and strength for people of all abilities.

Arice opened CORE and MORE, A Pilates Studio, in 2017, which is conveniently accessible to Wilbraham, Ludlow, Palmer, Springfield, Chicopee and East Longmeadow.

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At LUSO Federal Credit Union, strong leadership has long been shaped by the experience and dedication of the women at its helm.

President and CEO, Jennifer M.G. Calheno (center), has led LUSO for more than 25 years, guiding the credit union’s growth while maintaining its focus on members and the community. She is joined by Chief Financial Officer, Sharon Dufour (left), who has been with LUSO for 20 years, and Chief Operating Officer, Sandra Coddling (right), who has served in her role for more than a decade.

Together, Calheno, Dufour, and Coddling bring decades of experience and institutional knowledge to LUSO’s executive team. Their collective leadership continues to shape the credit union’s direction, foster a culture of service and collaboration, and keep LUSO moving forward while remaining grounded in the local relationships that define the credit union.



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NMLS #255907

Celebrate

Women inBUSINESSweek

Linda Martins – Innovadora Marketing

Linda Martins, founder of Innovadora Marketing, is a lifelong Pioneer Valley resident with a passion for community, connection, and creativity. After more than 20 years in marketing across private and nonprofit sectors, she launched Innovadora to combine her professional expertise with her love for helping local businesses thrive.



As Founder and Brand Strategist, Linda partners with organizations of all sizes to bring clarity to their brand and energy to their outreach. Innovadora Marketing offers support with branding, social media, events, and office design. What truly sets the studio apart is Linda’s personal approach. She listens carefully, builds relationships, and finds creative ways to help businesses grow while staying true to their values.

Outside of work, Linda is active in youth sports programs, local nonprofits, and enjoys spending time with her family. She sees her business as a natural extension of her roots in Western Massachusetts. Learn more at innovadoramarketing.com or connect with Linda at linda@innovadoramarketing.com.

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Mary C. McGovern, MBA

Country Bank President & Chief Executive Officer



Mary McGovern brings more than 36 years of experience in the financial services industry to her role as President and Chief Executive Officer of Country Bank, where she is proud to serve as the institution’s first female leader. A results-driven executive, Mary is recognized for her authentic leadership style that blends innovation, collaboration, and compassion.



Since stepping into the role, she has embraced opportunities to inspire others and elevate women in leadership, from speaking engagements to mentorship. She currently serves on the boards of the Massachusetts Bankers Association, the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, and the Massachusetts Housing Authority, extending her impact beyond banking into community well-being.

Mary’s leadership and achievements have been recognized by both the Worcester Business Journal and Hannaford Supermarkets, honoring her as one of Massachusetts’ outstanding women in business. She remains dedicated to advancing Country Bank’s mission while empowering its people, customers, and communities to thrive.



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BE BELLA BOUTIQUE

From a 20-foot fashion truck to a downtown Westfield Boutique

In September 2020, Bethany Liquori began her fashion journey with a 20 foot- mobile boutique, traveling throughout Massachusetts and Connecticut and bringing the latest women’s fashion trends directly to customers. For a year and a half, the boutique on wheels became a familiar sight as Bethany built relationships with women throughout the area and discovered just how much she loved helping people feel confident in what they were wearing. But life as a mom of six made the mobile boutique challenging. Many of the events were held on nights and weekends, making it increasingly difficult to balance family life and sports with the demands of a growing business.

Bethany knew it was time to make a change. Taking another leap of faith, she opened the doors to Be Bella Boutique in downtown Westfield, taking a chance on the local retail community and turning her dream into a permanent home. More than six years later, Be Bella has become much more than a place to shop for clothes. For Bethany, it has been about the people who walk through the door. “Be Bella is not just about selling clothes,” says Bethany. “It’s about making women feel good about themselves and creating an experience where everyone feels welcomed.” That experience is something Bethany and her employee Colleen Salomey work hard to create every day. Colleen has been a very important part of the Be Bella family and, as Bethany describes her, is truly the heart and soul of the store. Together they strive to provide personalized service that makes every customer feel seen, heard, and valued. Whether someone is looking for the perfect outfit, needs help finding something that makes them feel confident, or wants to enjoy a fun shopping experience, the goal is always the same: for every woman to walk out of Be Bella feeling beautiful from head to toe.

From its humble beginnings in a 20-foot mobile boutique to its home in downtown Westfield, Be Bella Boutique has grown through hard work, family support, loyal customers, and a genuine love for fashion and people. Bethany is incredibly grateful for the community that has supported her journey and helped make her dream a reality.

As Be Bella looks toward the future, Bethany’s vision is simple: continue bringing unique and fashionable styles to the women of Westfield and surrounding communities while creating the kind of shopping experience that keeps customers coming back-not just for clothes, but for connection.

After more than six years in business, Bethany is excited for what’s ahead and looks forward to continuing to make Be Bella Boutique a special part of downtown Westfield.



What started as a little dream – and a little bit of a leap of faith – has grown into a local thriving business in the heart of downtown Westfield.

Clean Slate

• Electrolysis and Laser Hair Removal •

Tracy Walence is the owner and operator of Clean Slate Hair Removal, a permanent solution to unwanted hair, located at 2 Allen St., Hampden, MA. She is a graduate of the Electrology Institute of New England in Tewksbury, MA and has been practicing electrolysis and laser hair removal for 8 years.



After 22 years working in the medical billing and insurance field, Tracy decided it was time for a major career change. While staying in the “medical” environment, she wanted a more one-on-one situation, helping each and every one of her clients to feel better in their own skin. Her clients range from adolescents to octogenarians, male and female, and the transgender community as well. She has clients that travel from the Boston area to take advantage of the Lumenis laser and its comfortable and quick treatments. Larger areas are treated with the laser and maintenance follow ups can be done with either the laser or the epilator (electrolysis). New clients are always welcome to a complimentary consult and a brief treatment to experience the laser and/or the epilator. To make an appointment for this unique specialty, please call (413) 566-1477 or email Tracy at tracy@cleanslatehairremoval.com.

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Who Goes There Reveal Oct. 16

WILBRAHAM - Join the Friends of Wilbraham Seniors on Friday, Oct. 16 for the “Who

Goes There” Premiere Reveal, a paranormal fundraiser unveiling three area investigations of paranormal activity uncovered by presenter Rob Goff Sr.,

Director and Founder of Agawam Paranormal and his team along with our three raffle winners from our May 1 fundraiser.

This event will be held at the Wilbraham Senior Center, 250 Springfield St., Wilbraham; presentation from 6:30 to 8:30; VIP seating \$15 pp and General Admission \$5 pp. (VIP seating will include early admission; a private group session with the paranormal team; hands on experience with paranormal equipment and reserved seating at the ‘Reveal’)

As an added attraction, A RAFFLE availing one winner and a guest from the VIP and General Admission group, an opportunity to participate in a final investigation at the Old Meeting House, Main Street, Wilbraham.

Local author Dave Bourcier will be selling and signing his latest book, “Wilbraham...A Journey Through History.”

For more details, visit the Friends of Wilbraham Seniors website friendsofwilbrahamseniors.org or stop by the Wilbraham Senior Center for the flyer.

EAGLE SCOUT from page 1
wouldn’t continue to use those rogue trails, as they kind of take away space from wildlife and it makes it very confusing to be on those trails,” Wadzinski said.

He added that the project also included adding a bench at the top of one of the trails, Sunrise Peak, so recreationists can enjoy the lookout spot.

Wadzinski said he came up with the idea after asking around with different town organizations for their needs and ideas. After receiving a couple of suggestions and spending time on two of them, he pivoted towards the Rice project.

“It just got complicated with state stuff, so I decided to do this one where it was much easier kind of paper-wise to get through,” Wadzinski said.

He explained as the project came together, his fellow scouts and volunteers also lent their support.

“We had a big turnout for it. It was split into two days and so, the first day where we kind of removed those rogue trails had 20 or so people coming out and helping. The trail, like we expected it to take four hours, but instead, with this kind of big turnout, it only took two, one and a half, so that’s very nice,” Wadzinski said. “Lots of scouts, couple family members.”

Wadzinski expressed his appreciation for the support.

“I was very glad because one of the things of an Eagle project is that there is this community interest that you need to have to go along with it. So, I was just very happy that it appeared that there was a community interest and that this was kind of a useful project benefiting people,” Wadzinski said.



Members of Wilbraham Scout Troop 350 assisting on James Wadzinski's Eagle Scout project.

Also, the town boards and committees who helped him bring the project to reality.

“The town boards and committees were a big help. They were the one who originally suggested the idea, did all that, but they were good at critiquing what I was doing and that they gave me this idea and I wrote up this proposal about what I would be doing,” Wadzinski said. “Then they gave me a lot of useful feedback by using the correct terminology, giving me maybe an extra trail to do, stuff like that. But they were very nice to work with.”

Wadzinski’s dad, Scout Master Dr. Thomas Wadzinski, was proud of his son’s accomplishment.

“It’s always exciting seeing scouts come up, kind of figuring out that project and kind of putting it through. It does take a lot of work for that scout to put the project together in the first place, but then really kind of show their leadership and kind of getting different groups of people to do different things



Photos courtesy of James Wadzinski

The new bench at Sunrise Peak on the Rice Nature Preserve.

for whatever that project happens to be,” he said. “It’s always exciting seeing your kids grow up and do different things. You always expect certain things, but it’s always surprising when it happens. It’s definitely rewarding and exciting to see things move along, certainly, for James, but also for the Open Space Committee and Conservation Committee as far as the trails and different resources that we have in Wilbraham. So, it’s always good.”

Wadzinski shared he’s al-

ways enjoyed the campouts with his troop when asked to reflect back on his many years with the group.

“Hiking in the White Mountains, whitewater rafting, stuff like that. But, I think the thing it’s given me the opportunity to do is leadership that’s not super high-pressure, but it gives me an opportunity to learn how to delegate things and do things myself and learning how to give leadership to other people,” Wadzinski said.

His advice for fellow scouts when it’s time for them to pursue their own Eagle Scout project was this.

“One thing I would tell people is just keeping a scope in mind because you don’t want to be doing too little, obviously, for your Eagle project, but you don’t want to bite off more than you can chew,” Wadzinski said. “Just picking something that can be accomplished within a reasonable timeframe is super helpful in actually getting that project completed.”

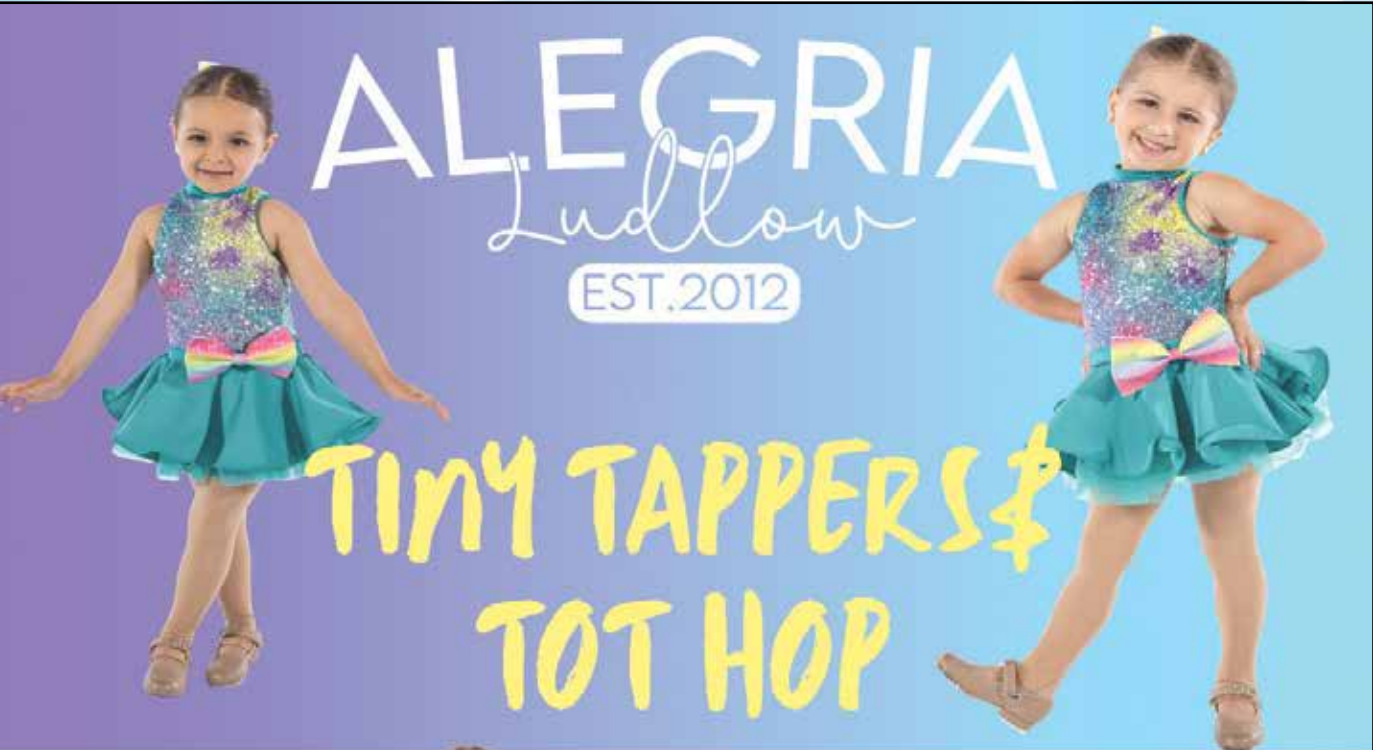
Dr. Wadzinski offered this advice.

“It’s hard to really know from the start for any project like how much time is this really going to take, so it’s super important to kind of reach out to those different community organizations that they just interact with normally and just looking, asking about different possibilities for projects to get that conversation rolling so they, potentially, have a few options for things, possibilities, that they as they move those forward and things kind of sort themselves out, it comes clear which kind of project is feasible or timeline is appropriate or that sort of stuff,” he said. “You don’t always know the full scope of a project until you try it out.”

Wadzinski’s message was this.

“I hope more people can enjoy that section of Rice Preserve because a lot of the people that I’ve talked to didn’t know that there was a set of trails back there or said that they never hiked it. So, I hope people are able to explore and hike in Rice Preserve more easily now that my project is done,” Wadzinski said.

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Late goal helps Chaug earn tie



Carson Humphries sends a free kick away.

LONGMEADOW – Last Monday afternoon, Carson Humphries scored a goal late in the second half and the Falcons girls soccer team scored a tie with host Longmeadow 1-1. The Falcons are 8-1-2 overall and have already qualified for the Division 2 state tournament. The Falcons should also likely qualify for Western Mass. Class A. Coming up, the Falcons will host Belchertown on Thursday, Oct. 15 at 6:45 p.m.



Ainsley Holden gets ready to shoot.



Makenna Sacco brings the ball through midfield.



Brooklyn Manning looks to pass ahead of pressure.



Taylor Bartocsz looks to pass to the left of the defender.



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Katelyn Hoar sends a pass away.

Falcons split pair of games



Ava Eggsware guides the ball toward the right side.



Delaney Kinsman looks to center the ball.

WILBRAHAM – Last Monday night, Minnechaug suffered a 1-0 loss against rival Longmeadow. It was one of the best efforts of the season for the Falcons against a very strong Lancers program. The Falcons would then beat Greenfield 3-0 last Thursday and are now 3-8-1 on the season. They are scheduled to face Frontier Regional on the road Friday, Oct. 16 at 4 p.m. Minnechaug is just on the outside of the top 32 at No. 34. With a sub-.500 record, Minnechaug needs to get into the top 32 to make the state tournament this year.



Nora Tzoumas fights for the ball on defense.



Sierra Rocha is pressured by an opponent.

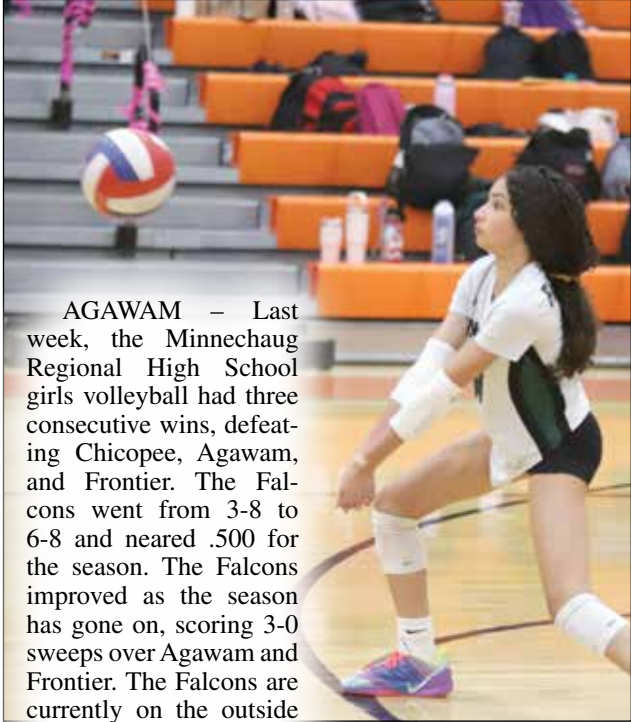


Alaina Giombetti chases after a loose ball.



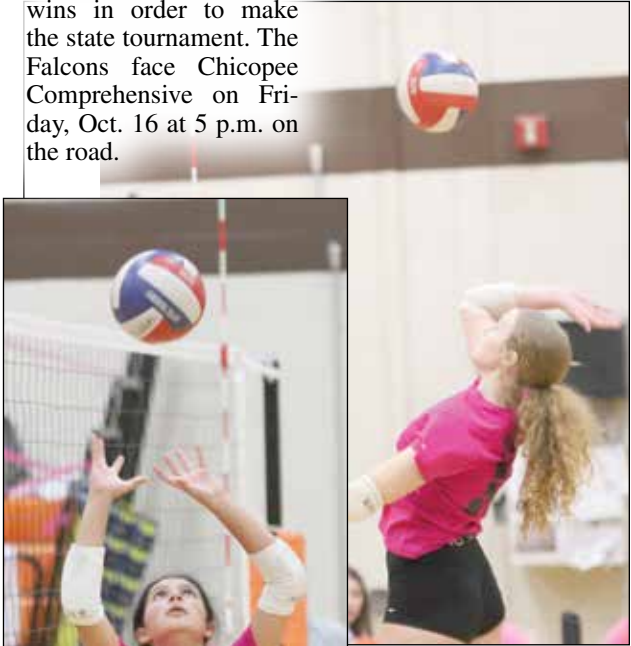
Reese Magee pushes a pass up the field.

Minnechaug girls scores pair of sweeps



AGAWAM – Last week, the Minnechaug Regional High School girls volleyball had three consecutive wins, defeating Chicopee, Agawam, and Frontier. The Falcons went from 3-8 to 6-8 and neared .500 for the season. The Falcons improved as the season has gone on, scoring 3-0 sweeps over Agawam and Frontier. The Falcons are currently on the outside of the top 32 in Division 2, and needs a couple of wins in order to make the state tournament. The Falcons face Chicopee Comprehensive on Friday, Oct. 16 at 5 p.m. on the road.

Jenahia looks to bump the ball at the net.



Leah Croteau goes for the spike.



Sireen Awkal sets the ball near the net.



Aa'mani Blanco makes a successful block.



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Juillian Rumplik serves the ball.



Haley Powers goes to her right side to bump the ball.

SPORTS

Stafford hosts final Friday race

STAFFORD SPRINGS, CT — Stafford Speedway hosted its final Friday night race program of the 2026 season with NAPA Auto Parts Championship Night on Oct 2. Feature wins were notched by Anthony Flannery for the second consecutive race in the SK Modified® feature, Josh Wood in the Late Model feature, Nick Anglace in the SK Light feature, Jason Lafayette in the Limited Late Model feature, and Brandon Warren in the Street Stock feature. Track champions for the 2026 season are Keith Rocco in the SK Modified® division, Adam Gray in the Late Model division, Tyler Barry in the SK Light division, Jeremy Lavoie in the Limited Late Model division, and Ryan Waterman in the Street Stock division.

In the 40-lap SK Modified® feature event, Dylan Izzo took the lead at the start with Marcello Rufrano taking second. Ethan Durocher was third behind the two leaders with Jon Puleo fourth and Mikey Flynn fifth. Keith Rocco spun in turn 2 to bring the caution flag out with 2 laps complete.

Rufrano took the lead on the restart with Izzo falling back to second. Durocher was still third wit Puleo

fourth and Troy Talman was now fifth. Anthony Flannery was sixth followed by Alexander Pearl, Todd Owen, Flynn, and David Arute.

As Rufrano was starting to stretch out his lead, Durocher made a move to the outside of Izzo for second and they ran side by side for several laps but Izzo was able to fend off Durocher's challenge. Flannery moved up to third with Todd Owen taking fourth as Durocher slid from third back to fifth on lap-16. Flannery took second from Izzo on lap-19 and that move opened the door for Owen to take third from Izzo one lap later. Flynn spun in turn 2 to bring the caution flag out with 23 laps complete.

Durocher got turned into the backstretch wall on the restart and that collected several cars including Puleo, Art Caruso, Matt Vassar, Josh Morrison, Chris Buffone, Wade Gagner, Bryan Narducci, and Cory DiMatteo to bring the caution flag back out before a lap could be completed. Under the caution the car of Josh Morrison ended up spun backwards against the frontstretch wall.

Rufrano took the lead on the next restart with Flannery in second. Owen took third with Izzo fourth and Pearl fifth. Just behind

Pearl and Izzo was Rocco, who was recovered from his earlier spin. Pearl took fourth from Izzo on lap-26 just before the caution came out one lap later for Talman and Curt Brainard, who both went around in turn 4.

Rufrano and Flannery went wheel to wheel for the lead back under green with Owen third, Pearl fourth, and Rocco fifth. Rufrano cleared into the lead on lap-30 with Owen and Flannery now side by side behind him as well as Rocco and Pearl. Owen took third on lap-31 while Flannery took the lead from Rufrano on lap-32. Rocco moved into fourth on lap-32 and he took third from Owen on lap-36.

Flannery led the field to the checkered flag to pick up his second consecutive victory after claiming his first career Stafford SK Modified® victory back on Sept. 25. Rufrano finished second with Rocco, Owen, and Pearl rounding out the top-5. Rocco clinched his fifth SK Modified® track title one week ago on Sept. 25, which ties him with Bob Potter for the second most SK Modified® championships with 5 each, trailing only Ted Christopher who won 9 SK championships.

Railers fall in final preseason game

WORCESTER — The Worcester Railers HC (0-2-0-0, 0pts) fell to the Maine Mariners (2-0-0-0, 4pts), on Saturday night by the final score of 4-1 in front of a crowd of 602 at the Fidelity Bank Worcester Ice Center to end the preseason for the Railers at 0-2. The Railers are at the DCU Center for the season opener against the Maine Mariners on October 17th with puck drop being at 6:05 pm.

Lincoln Hatten (1-0-1) opened scoring in the first with a tip. The Mariners came back with a strong effort from Jack Works (1-0-1) to keep the game level going into the second period. 3:55 into the second period, Kalle Vaisanen tucked in the go-ahead goal. Late into the third Dylan MacKinnon (1-0-1) snuck one past the Railers to extend the lead to 2. Wyllum Deveaux (1-1-2) took advantage of the empty net and the final score ended up a 4-1 advantage for the Mariners.

Lincoln Hatten (1st) had a beautiful tip in goal off of Adam Samuelson's shot from the blueline to give the Railers a 1-0 lead. Only 3:35 later the Mariners leveled the score. Jack Works (2nd) got the puck from Ryan McGuire and with a great effort on his knees squeezed it by Will Lavallière's right pad to level the score 1-1. Later in the 1st, Jack Works got sent to the penalty box for a delay of game which the Mariners killed.

The second period started hot with Jack Works getting placed in the box again for roughing after touching goalie Will Lavallière after the whistle was blown. Not

T-Birds earn point against Charlotte

SPRINGFIELD — The Springfield Thunderbirds (2-1-0-1) received another terrific netminding performance, but it proved not to be enough in a 2-1 shootout loss at the hands of the Charlotte Checkers (2-2-0-0) on Sunday afternoon inside the MassMutual Center.

Springfield starting goalie Will Cranley was the far busier netminder in the opening 20 minutes, as the Checkers outshot the T-Birds by a 13-3 margin through the first period, while Kirill Gerasimyyuk had little action in the Charlotte goaltender's crease.

For a second straight night, the T-Birds' shorthanded unit chipped in on offense, as Alek Kaskimaki and Otto Stenberg worked a beautiful give-and-go, with Kaskimaki cashing in from the left-wing side at 10:46, giving Springfield the 1-0 advantage. Kaskimaki has now registered points in each of the season's first four games.

Cranley's excellence continued, as he and the Springfield penalty-killing unit went a perfect 3-for-3 on the day, improving to 18-for-19 on the season.

After going the first 103 minutes of his season without allowing a goal, Cranley finally succumbed to a strike from Cole Schwindt at 3:44 of the final period, which brought Charlotte back even, 1-1.

The goaltenders' duel carried through the end of regulation, and in the 3-on-3 overtime, Gerasimyyuk received some luck from the iron as Kaskimaki hit the post on a breakaway backhand that would have sealed the game for Springfield.

The shootout followed, and Angus Crookshank opened the festivities with a forehander past Cranley's glove, which proved to be all Gerasimyyuk would need, as Justin Carbonneau, Kaskimaki, and Nikita Susuev all failed to get one behind the Checker backstop.

Despite the loss, Springfield has earned five points over its first four games of the season, allowing just eight goals to their opposition in regulation time.

The T-Birds continue the homestand next Friday and Saturday with back-to-back meetings with the Lehigh Valley Phantoms, with puck drops set for 7:05 p.m. on Oct. 16 and 6:05 p.m. on Saturday.

St. Gregory's Armenian Food Festival returns for a 49th year

INDIAN ORCHARD — The work starts months before the first guest arrives. In the church kitchen, parishioners roll dough by hand, pickled vegetables, and layer pastry tray by tray — some of them in their 80s and 90s, making the same dishes their mothers and grandmothers made.

St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church will hold its 49th Annual Armenian Food Festival on Saturday, October 24, from noon to 7 p.m. at 135 Goodwin St. in Indian Orchard. Admission and parking are free, food is available for dine-in and takeout, and a live Armenian band will play through the afternoon, with guests invited to join the traditional dancing. The festival runs rain or shine.

Many of the recipes on the menu reached Western Massachusetts with families who survived the Armenian Genocide and the loss of their ancestral villages. They settled in Indian Orchard and the surrounding mill towns, rebuilt their lives and held on to their faith, their language, and their food.

Those recipes were rarely written down. They were learned by watching — a grandmother showing a granddaughter how the dough should feel, a parent teaching a child how much filling is enough.

“Our food is more than flavor — it's history, memory, and resilience,” said Fr. Bedros Shetilian, Pastor of St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church. “Each dish connects us to our ancestors while inviting new generations to experience Armenian culture.”

Sue Lantzakis has been making paklava for the St. Gregory community for more than 50 years. She learned from her grandmother, and this fall she will again take her place at the table, layering trays alongside the other volunteers. “People ask why I'm still doing this at my age. Because my grandmother did it, and because somebody has to teach the young ones.”

Next year will mark the festival's 50th, and organizers are already planning how to honor the volunteers who have carried it that far.

On the Menu

Grilled on site:
Lamb shish kebab
Losh kebab
Chicken kebab
Kebab dinners are served with rice pilaf, salad, and pita. Losh sandwiches and spinach boereg are also available.

The pastry table will feature paklava, choreg, kourabia, kadayif, and bourma. Jars of homemade tourshi — traditional Armenian pickled vegetables — will be sold to take home.

Event Details

What: 49th Annual Armenian Food Festival
When: Saturday, Oct. 24, 2026, Noon–7 p.m., rain or shine
Where: St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church, 135 Goodwin St., Indian Orchard, Massachusetts
Admission: Free and open to the public
Parking: Free
Dining: Dine-in and take-out
Entertainment: Live Armenian music and traditional dancing

Rick's Place offers support group for grandparents raising grandchildren after a death

WILBRAHAM - Rick's Place will offer a four-week support group this fall for grandparents who are raising grandchildren following the death of a parent or caregiver.

The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Impacted by a Death Support Group is designed to provide a supportive space for grandparents navigating the unique challenges that can arise when a family experiences the loss of a parent or caregiver. In addition to supporting a child or teen, grandparents may be coping with their own grief while adjusting to new responsibilities and changes within the family.

The group will provide opportunities for grandparents to connect with others who understand their experience, share stories and resources, and build a supportive community. Sessions will include coffee, conversation, and time for participants to learn from and support one another.

The group will meet Mondays, Oct. 19, Oct. 26, Nov. 2, and Nov. 9, from 10:30 a.m. to Noon at Rick's Place, 35 Post Office Park, Wilbraham, MA. Participants are asked to commit to attending all four sessions.

There is no cost to participate, but pre-registration is required by Oct. 13.

To register or learn more, contact Rick's Place at 413-279-2010 or visit www.ricksplacema.org.

Rick's Place provides free, peer-based grief support for children, teens, and families following the death of someone significant. Through connection, shared experiences, and opportunities to express grief, Rick's Place helps ensure that no child, teen, or family has to grieve alone.

Wilbraham Veterans Day Ceremony

WILBRAHAM — The town's Veterans Day Ceremony, presented by the Wilbraham Department of Veterans Services, takes place at Crane Park on Wednesday, Nov. 11, at 11 a.m.

In the event of inclement weather, the ceremony will be moved indoors to the Wilbraham Senior Center.

All are welcome. Please join us as we honor the Veterans of our community and our nation.



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October events for adults at the Wilbraham library

WILBRAHAM— Several new in-person and virtual events for adults are coming up at the Wilbraham Public Library. These events are free and open to all.

On Monday, Oct. 19 at 6 p.m., journalist, author and historian Sally Cragin will present “Clothes Encounters: Victorian & Edwardian Apparel, Lifestyle & Beyond.” Cragin will discuss the history of fashion, share her collection of apparel and accessories, and allow attendees to handle, examine, and in some cases, try on these items.

On Wednesday, Oct. 21 at 1 p.m., a representative from AAA Northeast will share “The Older & Wiser Driver,” a safe driving presentation providing practical information on how mature drivers can compensate for the physical changes

that accompany aging and may affect their ability to drive safely.

WPL has also partnered with the Tewksbury Public Library and over 30 MA public libraries to present The Library 50+ Job Seekers Networking Group. If you 50 & older and looking for a new job/career direction, this group is perfect for you! Join a professional forum for networking with peers in a comfortable environment to develop skills and strategies to help in your career transition. The group meets via Zoom on the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

For more information about each of these events and more, visit the online calendar at wilbrahamlibrary.org.

Wilbraham Parks & Recreation announces new Indoor Adaptive Soccer Program

WILBRAHAM - Wilbraham Parks & Recreation, in partnership with Futsal & Street Soccer, is pleased to announce a new Adaptive Indoor Soccer Program for children ages 4-10. This inclusive program is designed for participants with disabilities, including Level 1 Autism, and provides a welcoming environment where every child can learn, play, and succeed. Led by experienced Futsal & Street Soccer coaches, the program emphasizes soccer skill development, teamwork, confidence, motor skills, and social interaction through adaptive coaching techniques that meet the individual needs of each participant. The goal of the program is to create a positive experience where every child feels supported, included, and excited to participate. Soccer

is for everyone, and happy to offer a program that helps young athletes grow both on and off the field.

Program Information:
FALL Session 1 Dates (six weeks)

Sundays Nov. 1 – Dec. 13 (no program 11/29)
Cost: \$214 residents / \$224 Non-residents (late fee applies after 10/26)

Registration: through October 26th
Ages and time: Ages 4-10

Time: 12:15 to 1:15 p.m.
Location: All sessions will be held at Memorial School Gym, 310 Main Street, Wilbraham.

Participants should bring a water bottle, athletic clothing, shin guards, sneakers, and a soccer ball. For additional information, please contact Alfred at info@futsalstreet.soccer.

ATI Club Walk new date

WILBRAHAM – Due to the Sept. 26 Nor’easter, the Minnechaug Regional High School Above the Influence Club postponed their Annual Walk event to Saturday, Oct. 24.

It will be from 10 a.m.

to 1 p.m. at the Minnechaug Outdoor Cross Country Trail, which is located near the far corner of the teacher parking lot. The community is encouraged to come by for the event.

St. Cecilia Women’s Club Calendar Raffle

WILBRAHAM - The Saint Cecilia Women’s Club is sponsoring a Calendar Raffle for the month of November.

Prizes for the month total over \$3,500. Tickets are on sale now with the drawings beginning Nov. 1.

Tickets can be obtained in the church rotunda, on the church website under downloadable forms, or call Sue Agnew, 596-9480 to get

forms or for any questions. The proceeds help the club fund its scholarships and donations to many charitable organizations in the area. Thank you for your support.



Sourdough Brandon speaks to the group.

Turley photos by Harold Anderson

SOURDOUGH from page 1

culture of bacteria and wild yeast that is strong enough to make bread with. So, this is the way people made bread for thousands of years....until the development of instant yeast and fast-acting yeast.”

A fact that surprised some in attendance was that, “at it’s very core basic level, a sourdough starter is just flour and water mixed together and then left to ferment over time,” Cochran said.

Cochran explained that “Every starter is a little bit different based on location and the way you feed your starter and the types of flours that you use and how you take care of it,” adding that “You can make great sourdough bread wherever you are in the world.”

In fact, sourdough starters can be very durable.

“You can have a starter that lasts forever,” Cochran said. “So, with proper maintenance and storage, you can have an heirloom starter that you pass down through generations.”

Cochran also debunked the myth that an older starter is better.

“An older starter is constantly being refreshed and fed with new flour and water and kept alive. It will always be adjusting to its environment,” Cochran said.

He also mentioned that one would be discarding some of the starter as it grew.

“Most people are going to have discard because you want to keep it a certain size so it doesn’t get too big and unmanageable,” Cochran said.

In addition to throwing the discarded starter away, composting it, drying it, giving it away or baking with it, Cochran also suggested saving it in the fridge for up to a month for use as a flavor enhancer in some other recipes such as cookies, donuts, biscuits, muffins, brownies or Irish Soda Bread.

Regarding some of the health benefits of sourdough bread, Cochran noted that “it does have a lower glycemic index so it doesn’t spike

blood sugar levels as fast and because of the long fermentation, it breaks down gluten a little bit easier for many people to digest.”

For those who think that some desserts are way too sweet, Cochran said that “sourdough desserts tend to be a little bit more balanced because....the acid in the starter helps balance out the sweetness in these recipes.”

He also went over how to make one’s own sourdough starter.

“I think that it’s important to know how to make this from scratch in case you wanted to make a different type of starter, like a gluten free starter,” Cochran said.

Additional tips Cochran mentioned included using a weight scale for consistent measurements, having a glass jar to put the starter in and a spatula to stir it, some kind of loose-fitting lid for the jar, the kinds of flour and water that can be used, tips for managing the starter and what to expect during the process.

Cochran closed out his presentation by inviting the audience to follow him on social media, send him an email, sign up for his newsletter or visit his website, SourdoughBrandon.com.

Afterwards, Maria Paolucci from Wilbraham expressed the same reaction as other attendees who were asked about the presentation, describing it as “very informative.”

Kim Keeton of Hampden was impressed by the talk and had plans for her starter.

“I’m definitely going to do bread, but I’d like to try some sourdough cookie type recipes,” Keeton said.

When asked if she planned to make some sourdough bread, Cindy Crowther from Ludlow said, “I plan to do that and I’m probably going to also make some cinnamon buns that look pretty interesting.”

Rosemary Surdyka of Wilbraham said she had tried



Sourdough Brandon, the presenter, before the presentation



From the left, Kim Keeton of Hampden, Sourdough Brandon and Cindy Crowther of Ludlow.

to make sourdough bread in the past, but remarked, “I think my bread was a little denser than I expected.”

But, after what she learned in the presentation, Surdyka added, “I’m excited to try again.”

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The Town of Palmer Department of Public Works is seeking snow removal contractors for the 2026–2027 winter season. Contracts are available on the Town website and at the DPW office. Interested contractors should submit a completed contract and copies of the required insurance forms to the DPW office at 1015 Bridge St., Palmer. Rates have increased for the 2026–2027 season. For questions, call (413) 283-2615, Monday through Friday, from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. or email edeterman@townofpalmer.com for more info.

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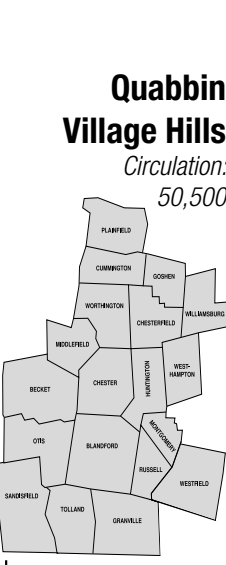
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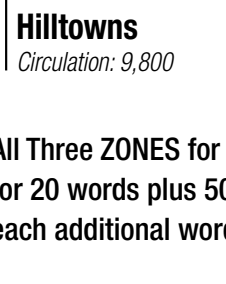
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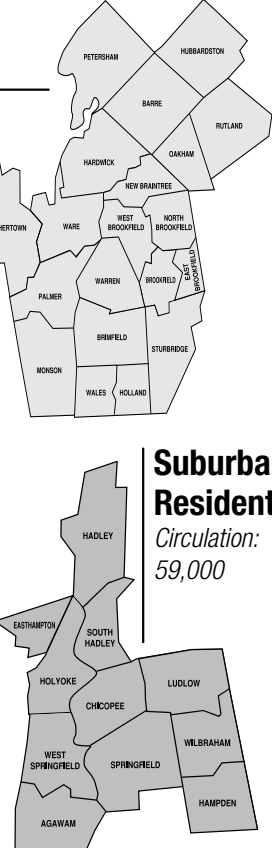
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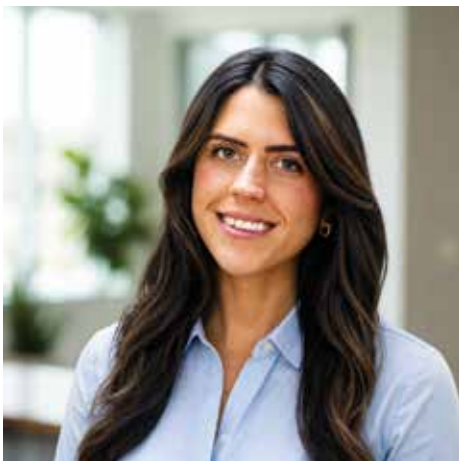
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As part of the next generation of the family business, Grace plays a pivotal role at Window World of Western Mass. Working directly with homeowners in the showroom, she helps customers explore their options, find the right solutions for their homes and feel confident throughout the decision-making process. Her involvement represents the continued growth and evolution of the family business.

Lanea brings her passion for home improvement to the Window World design consulting team, helping homeowners envision what is possible for their homes and find personalized solutions that fit their needs. By building lasting relationships with customers, Lanea plays an important role in the continued growth of the family business.



At The Kitchen & Bath Co., Anna brings her passion for design and renovation to helping homeowners create beautiful, functional spaces. From the initial design process through the finished project, she understands that every renovation is personal and works to create spaces that reflect each homeowner’s needs and vision.

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