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OCTOBER 29, 2026
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SB appoints new town accountant

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - The Selectboard has appointed Julia O'Connor as the new town accountant.

She will be succeeding Elise Diemand.

Chair John Flynn explained Diemand gave her notice, but "has been terrific in staying on and helping us doing two jobs at the same time."

"We advertised for it. We had two applicants and with the committee tied two-two, so we thought it'd be best to bring them to the Selectboard," Flynn said. "So, we invited both applicants."

Flynn added the other candidate for the position "was not willing to appear for questions," so the interview was with only O'Connor.

O'Connor shared she has worked at MassMutual and was in corporate finance for 13 years.

"So, I do not have a background in municipal accounting, but I do think that I am a quick learner and I do like to investigate things and really understand what I'm working on," O'Connor said. "So, I think given the opportunity, I think I could do the job of what was requested. I did speak to Elise briefly during the interview. She said she had left some documentation and put things in Excel. I'm very proficient in Excel."

She has also served on several boards as treasurer including the Wilbraham Children's Museum and Green Meadows Elementary School.

"So while that's not large amount of money as Hampden, I have reconciled those bank statements and monthly activity," O'Connor said.

Selectboard Member Erik Vanderleeden also asked her this question.

"If we were to call your manager at MassMutual, what do you think they

Please see **ACCOUNTANT**, page 2

Knights of Columbus Council 10195 hosts annual benefit dinner



Turley photos by Harold Anderson
Here are the Knights and Teen Volunteers in a group photo.



(L-R) Knight Joe Selva (Wilbraham) and Knight George Flanagan (East Longmeadow) as the cooks for the event.

By Harold Anderson
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM – The Knights of Columbus Council 10195 hosted their annual dinner at the parish hall at St. Cecilia's Church in Wilbraham on Oct. 17 to benefit the important work that the Community Survival Center in Indian Orchard has provided for 45 years.

The Center serves Ludlow, Wilbraham, Hampden, 16 Acres of Springfield and Indian Orchard, noted Krystal Turcotte, who has been the Executive Director of the Community Survival Center for a little over one year.

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Select Board receives update on Broadband Committee

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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WILBRAHAM - The Select Board received an update on the Broadband Committee during their Oct. 19 meeting.

Broadband Committee Chair Mat Nelson explained he met with Select Board Vice Chair Sue Bunnell and Town Administrator Nick Breault recently.

"She expressed to me thoughts in general about what's going on and how there's financial pressures obviously in the town for other things that we're going to need to pay for—they're coming due—and that the Broadband Committee—there was talk of it being dissolved," Nelson said.

Nelson said the committee met the prior Thursday, fully understood what was going on and nobody disagreed "with the premise of where we are."

"The opportunity that was there at one point maybe is not there right now," Nelson said. "The general perception, I guess, at this point, of the Broadband Committee is while they, as a group,—me and myself included—understand where we are, I think there might be something to consider other than dissolving the Broadband Committee."

One suggestion was "metering down the activity" by meeting every quarter "as opposed to what we're doing now, with the full understanding that what we're producing is not necessarily something for immediate consumption and action by the town."

"But more along the lines of monitoring what's going on around us, monitoring what opportunities may exist down the road and, basically, keeping the ball rolling albeit be much, much slower," Nelson said.

One concern a couple of the members brought up, he added, was if the committee

Please see **UPDATE**, page 9

Sara Hall wins Big E competition

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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WILBRAHAM - Sara Hall, a resident of Wilbraham, won this year's Creative Arts Department Cake Decorating Competition at The Big E.

Hall secured first place and the People's Choice Award in the Sept. 24 competition that featured Celebrity Judge Sandra Lee. Allison Henry, owner of The Sugar Chalet in Wilbraham, was also one of this year's judges and had won last year's competition, securing first place as well.

Hall is the owner of Sara Hall Cake, which specializes in custom cakes and handcrafted toppers. She previously worked in fine dining, luxury hotels and boutique bakeries in New York, Chicago, LA and Las Vegas before coming to Massachusetts and settling in Wilbraham.

Hall explained this was the second year The Big E

Please see **WINNER**, page 5



Photos courtesy of Mark Hall
Sara Hall took first place in the Creative Arts Department Cake Decorating Competition at The Big E. Also pictured are Amy Despatie who was the second-place winner and the third-place winner Alyssa Woodbury.



A close-up shot of the chicken cake.

Church celebrates 100-year anniversary

By Harold Anderson
Correspondent

HAMPDEN – The Federated Community Church of Hampden on Main St. was the site for a grand celebration event on Sunday, Oct. 18 to honor the 100-year anniversary of the federation of the Methodist and Congregational Churches in town becoming The Community Church of Hampden in 1926.

They adopted their current name in 1930.

Under blue, sunny skies, church congregants, joined by some of their former pastors, representatives from the UCC (United Church of Christ) and other local area churches gathered with family and friends to celebrate the day together and reflect on the history of the church in the community.

At their 10 a.m. service that morning, Pastor Rev. Eunji Lee, who has been with the church since July 2025, noted in her sermon how she felt humbled as she watched the



Photo courtesy of Eunji Lee
Pastor Rev. Eunji Lee reading the sermon at the service.

preparations for today's event develop and read prayers shared by their former pastors.

"I was given a glimpse of how deeply this church has been loved and cared for over the years….I see the people who have been part of this church through so many seasons of its life," Lee said. "I am reminded that this is the body of Christ, and I am grateful that God has brought

Please see **CHURCH**, page 9

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COMMUNITY

School Committee approves regional agreement changes

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com



WILBRAHAM - The School Committee unanimously approved changes to the regional agreement during its Oct. 22 meeting.

The changes and amendments to the draft will now go before both communities for a vote during the Oct. 26 Special Town Meeting in Hampden and the Nov. 9 Special Town Meeting in Wilbraham.

The Times will have more about the STM vote decisions in upcoming editions.

Superintendent Dr. John Provost explained that in the months and weeks since the School Committee last reviewed the regional agreement, "there's been additional conversation between the towns and there's been additional communication between the district and the Department of Education."

Provost broke down the final changes to the committee.

"In section 1, A1, there's an addition to the agreement that gives the current weighting of the School Committee votes. That's based on feedback that we got from the Department of Education saying that the agreement addresses how votes are weighted in the future, but it doesn't address the current weights of the vote," Provost said. "So, this is the exact same methodology that is described in the future, so we just apply that. It's actually the methodology that's currently in place, so just being very explicit about that."

In section 3, D1, Provost said they were advised to remove the words "within the district."

"Because it implied that no student would ever be educated outside of the district, which has implications for students with disabilities and also students attending vocational schools," Provost said.

For section 3G, the change is "to add the words at Seatek, LPVEC or," which would "indicate what our own local vocational technical education school is."

"In 4C, this is a little bit more of a substantive change. We had put some language in—as you recall—in order to try to future-proof the agreement so that the leases could change over time and the agreement wouldn't have to be changed every time the lease is changed," Provost said. "However, the regulations around regional agreements say that you need to specify what's going to be assessed, and so we put some language in here that's slightly revised that says, 'We are going to assess based on what the leases say.'"

In section 10, Provost noted two changes.

"One, we tried to do a diligent search to replace all of the 'Board of Selectmen' with 'Select Boards' but one got through and that was noticed just towards the end. So, that is changed as well," Provost said. "And then, at the very last moment, a citizen noted to us that there was a statement in the current agreement that locks in the payment ratio for debt at the time that School Committee authorizes the debt which is actually very helpful in it. It allows for planning in the district and for the towns in the future instead of having the debt obligations float from year to year, and that had been inadvertently dropped in the final version. So, that language is added back to section 10."

Provost also announced that the night before, the Office of Regional Governments informed the district that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's legal side reviewed the language, the language of the regional agreement and the language of the amendment.

"It approves them both and will be willing to recommend this to the commissioner for his signature upon approval bu the School Committee in the two towns," Provost said. "So, I would recommend this to you for your approval tonight."

After School Committee member Sean Kennedy presented the motion and it was seconded by Vice Chair Dr. Michael Tirabassi, the changes and then the amendments were approved without further questions or discussion.

Wilbraham residents invited to hear Building Utilization Committee findings

Important public presentation to the Wilbraham Select Board

WILBRAHAM — The Wilbraham Building Utilization Committee invites all citizens to an important public presentation of its findings before the Wilbraham Select Board on Monday, Nov. 16, at 6 p.m., at The Senior Center.

The Wilbraham Building Utilization Committee was formed in April 2025 to conduct a comprehensive review of all municipal buildings in Wilbraham. Its work is important to the entire community because these public facilities support town services, programs, employees, and residents—and decisions about their use will have lasting operational and financial effects.

After examining the condition, current use, capacity, and future needs of the town's full municipal building portfolio, the committee will present its findings and key considerations to the Select Board. This presentation gives residents an important opportunity to understand the committee's work firsthand and stay informed about choices that may shape Wilbraham for years to come.

As an advisory body, the Building Utilization Committee will provide its findings and recommendations to help inform the public discussion. Any final authority and decisions remain with the Wilbraham Select Board and, ultimately, with the citizens of the community.

YOUR COMMUNITY. YOUR BUILDINGS. Residents are strongly encouraged to attend this important community conversation.

Agenda information will be made available by the Town of Wilbraham.

Age & Dementia Friendly Wilbraham to host 'A Toast to Memories'

Wine tasting fundraiser on Nov. 6

WILBRAHAM — Age & Dementia Friendly Wilbraham is inviting the community to an evening of connection, remembrance, and support. "A Toast to Memories" wine tasting fundraiser will take place on Friday, November 6 from 5–7 p.m. at the Wilbraham Senior Center.

Held in recognition of National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month, this event is designed to bring people together for an evening of making new memories while supporting friends and neighbors living with dementia. Thanks to support from Country Bank and The Guilty Grape, guests can look forward to wine pairings and raffles, as well as special guest speakers. Tickets are available for purchase online at https://square.link/u/J9Hu0DpP, or in-person at The Wilbraham Senior Center.

"This event is a meaningful way to gather together as a community, raise awareness, and support those affected by dementia," said Katie Krupka, a representative from Age & Dementia Friendly Wilbraham. "We hope attendees will enjoy a warm and welcoming evening to support an increasingly important cause." All funds raised will support the ongoing work of Age & Dementia Friendly Wilbraham.

For more information, please contact: Katie Krupka, Director of Placement and Aging Services, Assisted Living Locators - Western MA & Northern CT, 413-329-6730 (Text Friendly); atiek@assistedlivinglocators.com

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ACCOUNTANT from page 1

would say?" Vanderleeden said.

O'Connor replied this.

"I think they would speak pretty highly of me. I am a dedicated, organized and, like I said, I like details and data," O'Connor said. "I think you would like what they have to say."

On Vanderleeden's next question on understanding the laws and regulations financially, O'Connor said "I think I could understand it."

"Like I said, I do enjoy trying to figure things out, so I wouldn't back down from that," O'Connor said.

Selectboard Member Don Davenport shared his thoughts next.

"I think you're qualified, but my concern is the difference between municipal finance and the corporate. I don't know how to reconcile that," Davenport said.

Flynn noted that Diemand mentioned in the interviews that she herself came in with no municipal accounting background "and was able to take advantage of some courses and some study and some help" and would also help shadow whoever enters the role next.

Town Administrator Brian Domina mentioned DGS "has a tremendous amount of training material online."

"They've been very helpful. Local reps have been very helpful and it's just getting up to speed as coming and being available," Domina said. "The auditors were very helpful for Elise as well."

Davenport said this.

"The town municipal work is kind of cyclical in a way. Busy periods and slow periods. What do you plan to do in the slow periods?" Davenport said.

O'Connor said, "if there's improvements that can be made or documentation that could be done or just learning something else to understand the process more," she'd work on that.

"Have you continued any kind of courses or anything in financial or accounting?" Davenport said.

She replied she had including a "minor-like CFA training" and additional courses like economics and macroeconomics. Also, she's in Hampden all the time, including being a regular visitor to the library.

Flynn said he was one of the people on the committee who voted in favor of O'Connor and "thought she would do a fine job for the town of Hampden and I would support her application."

After Vanderleeden agreed, he made a motion to appoint O'Connor to town accountant through June 30,2027, which was unanimously approved.

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Hampden Theatre Guild is holding auditions for 'Barefoot in the Park'

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 Thursday Oct. 29 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.

Rummage Sale, Nov. 6 & 7

WILBRAHAM - The annual Rummage Sale sponsored by the St. Cecilia Women's Club will be held Friday, Nov. 6, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., and Saturday, Nov. 7, 8:30 a.m. - Noon in the Saint Cecilia Parish Center, 42 Main St., Wilbraham. Gently used adult and children's clothing, household items, linens, jewelry, toys, puzzles, pictures. and seasonal items, etc. will be sold at very reasonable prices. Saturday is bag day and a bag will be provided to fill for a minimal price. Looking forward to seeing you there. A great opportunity for some early holiday shopping as well!

Town of Wilbraham to host Veterans Day Breakfast

WILBRAHAM – The town of Wilbraham will hold their annual Veterans Day Breakfast on Friday, Nov. 6.

This event is free and Veterans, Active Service Members, Surviving Spouses and a guest are welcome to attend.

When: Friday, Nov. 6 at 8 a.m.

Where: Wilbraham Senior Center, 250 Springfield Street

Breakfast is sponsored by the GFWC Wilbraham Junior Women's Club.

To register and for more information, call (413)596-8379.

Halloween Night Party

HAMPDEN – The Hampden Free Public Library will be hosting their Halloween Night Party for grades five through 12 on Friday, Oct. 30 from 6 to 8 p.m.

There will be a Costume Contest, Mummy Challenge, video games and candy. Join us for music, pizza and prizes too.

Sign up at tinyurl.com/HPLHalloween2026.



WINNER from page 1

held the contest and she was among five contestants competing, with two themes to choose from: America's 250th and "Unexpect Everything."

"Basically, you had about two hours. You could have your cake kind of ready, put together, but you had two hours to decorate it in front of the audience and it had special size requirements. So, it had to have two tiers. The bottom half had to be a 10-inch cake by four inches high and the top had to be six inch by four inch at least," Hall said.

Her cake was a chicken cake, inspired by one of the chickens she currently owns named Ghost. The chicken was clad with a straw hat and each feather hand cut from edible paper and meticulously placed to mimic the appearance of a live chicken with a bundle of feathers.

The chicken's tail-end had read "Guess What?" while a fondant speech bubble beside the bird's head read "Chicken butt!", a nod to the classic joke, "Guess what? Chicken butt!"

"I always wanted to make a chicken cake and this was a great chance because it's very unexpected to find a cake that looked like a chicken. I thought that'd be something fun and challenging," Hall said. "I think people liked it. It went well."

Hall was inspired to participate when she saw information online and looked into it. Seeing an opportunity, she went for it.

"I just saw it was available. It wasn't overly expensive, to be honest, so for me it was like, 'oh why not?' and it worked out for me," Hall said.

Her favorite part of the competition was the challenge, and of course enjoying The Big E itself.

"I like a challenge and for me that's fun. I didn't really have time to look up at the audience, but I could hear all their comments as people were walking by and people were going like, 'Oh, look at that chicken' and different things like that. It was just nice to get some feedback from the audience which was not something I was expecting, but something that happened that was really nice," Hall said. "I enjoyed that part for sure."

Also, the excitement from people as they saw her chicken cake.

"Something that was really unexpected, some people got really excited about this chicken cake. They were just excited. That was fulfilling just hearing all the people like, 'Wow! How'd you do this? This is great!' Just excitement; I think the excitement is fulfilling," Hall said.

On the People's Choice recognition, Hall explained that as people were walking through, they could write down their favorite cake and the table number. Once all those were collected in a basket, the votes were tallied and the winner was chosen.

"It was nice," Hall said.

Hall said she's been in the pastry field for about 20 years, with the last decade dedicated to cake decorating. She enjoys making unique cake decorating creations and cakes from wedding cakes to birthday cakes for kids and adults alike.

"I would say it's an opportunity to be a little more creative and stepping out of my comfort zone usually turns out to be a good thing," Hall said.

Her advice for anyone who competes next year is that a practice run is always helpful.

"Fill out the form and send it in," Hall said. "Make sure you read the rules and definitely have a good time. I think that's the most important thing is that you go and don't be too nervous. Do what you're going to do and have fun."

For aspiring bakers, don't get discouraged and give it another try.

"It's important that you just try," Hall said. "Practice makes perfect. It's okay to fail. If the cake doesn't come out okay, you can do it again. You can always do it again."

Hall was honored to represent Wilbraham with these wins.

"I've only lived here for three years, but I love living here," Hall said. "I was proud—for Wilbraham and to represent Wilbraham—and maybe next year's winner will also be from Wilbraham. Let's make it three times Wilbraham!"

Her message was this.

"I hope people give it a try if they're interested, even if it's just being a competitor in general or just trying baking. The opportunity is there so just give it a try if you're able to," Hall said. "Anything creative I think it's always a great thing, so can't go wrong."



Photos courtesy of Mark Hall

Sara Hall working on her cake entry.



Sara Hall receives her blue ribbon and certificate from Celebrity Judge Sandra Lee after winning the competition.

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VIEWPOINTS

in my BACKYARD

By Ellenor Downer

Recently, I watched a pair of white-breasted nuthatches climbing up and down an oak tree in the yard.

They have a gray/blue back with a white face and black cap. They are a small, compact bird with a long, sharply pointed bill and short tail.



White-breasted nuthatch

Females look similar to the males, but have a gray cap rather than a black one. Both sexes have white bellies and a chestnut colored patch on the lower belly and near the tail. The head is large and they have almost no neck.

They are about 5.1 to 5.5 inches long. White-breasted nuthatches are agile birds that creep along trunks and large branches, probing into bark furrows with their straight, pointed bills.

Like other nuthatches, they often turn sideways and upside down on vertical surfaces as they forage. A friends mother called them "upside down birds" for that reason. Unlike woodpeckers, they don't lean against their tails.

They inhabit mature woods and woodland edges particularly deciduous stands like maple, hickory, basswoods and oak. They also are found in coniferous forests.

White-breasted nuthatches eat mainly insects including weevil larvae, wood boring beetle larvae, other beetles, tree hoppers, scale insects, ants, gall fly larvae, spiders, caterpillars including spongy moth (also known as Gypsy moth) and tent caterpillars.

They cache food typically hiding it under a piece of bark, lichen, moss or even snow.

They also eat seeds and nuts including acorns, hawthorn, sunflower seeds and sometimes crops such as corn. At feeders, they like sunflower seeds, peanuts, suet and peanut butter.

White-breasted nuthatches are cavity nesters and sometimes use nest boxes. The female builds the nest and lines the nest cavity with fur, bark and lumps of dirt.

She builds a cup nest of fine grass, shredded bark, feathers and other soft material. They reuse their nest holes in subsequent years. The female lays five to nine eggs and raise one brood per year.

Eastern phoebe

An Oakham couple saw an eastern phoebe on Tuesday, Oct. 13. They were surprised the bird was still around and had not headed south by now. The phoebes, which nest every year near me, left last month.

eBird sightings

eBird sighting on Sunday, Oct. 18 included a Carolina wren and a common raven in Hardwick and a yellow-billed cuckoo at Longmeadow flats. Pontoosuc Lake in Pittsfield had a spotted sandpiper.

Common raven

Monday, Oct. 19 I heard and then saw a common raven. It frequents the woods behind the house. Sometimes I spot it flying, but mostly I hear its low, gurgling croak.

Dark-eyed juncos

I spotted my first juncos on Oct. 10. I saw a small flock take flight as I drove on a country road in Barre. I noticed their white tail feathers.

They are one of my favorite winter birds. I enjoy watching them pick up seeds dropped by other birds at the feeder. They also come for suet.

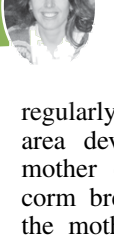
A few days later, I saw two or three in the yard. They flew up when I drove into the driveway.

People may report a bird sighting by emailing edowner@turley.com or calling or texting 774-262-5882.

The next steps for frost tinged dahlias and glads

in the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



I finally came inside at 6:45 p.m. with a flashlight in hand.

It was my own fault. I started a project much too late in the day for the work that it entailed.

You see, we had a frost last night. The first one of the year, for me, anyway.

The temperature just hit the 32-degree mark, so the tips of certain plants were hit. Leaves that were under the cover of other plants looked pretty good.

I probably could have left the gladiolus and dahlias in the ground for a bit longer based on the upcoming, warmer forecast, but I decided to seize the moment and get them dug up and moved indoors.

Read on to learn the specifics of how to overwinter these summer loving, tender bulbs.

As mentioned, dig up dahlia tubers either just prior to or soon after frost hits. I typically use a shovel or pitchfork, starting a foot or so away from the stems.

Once the soil is loosened up a bit, the stem should lift up easily with the tubers intact.

Soil should be eased off the tubers with a spray of water before placing in storage. Leave a small portion of stem attached to the tubers – it is a great place to adhere a label.

Once the tubers have air-dried for a bit, you can even write on the tubers themselves with a permanent marker. Take it from me – it is easy to forget a name over the winter months!

Placing tubers in damp peat moss, saw dust, shredded leaves, or even ventilated plastic bags will help to prevent shriveling.

Choose a location to overwinter your tubers that maintain 40-50 degrees temps and 90% humidity. These conditions will keep them dormant and healthy until it is time to replant.

Many people have good luck using a cold basement or root cellar; small quantities of tubers can be stored in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator. Be sure to check on your tubers every couple of weeks throughout the offseason.

Should you see shriveling, mist them with clean water and re-dampen the medium in which they were placed. If you see mold, bring down the temperature and humidity level.

Some growers like to get a jump-start on the season by pre-starting dahlias indoors.

We have done this occasionally at Old Sturbridge Village and I am always amazed at just how fast the plants grow, and how quickly they outgrow their pots and become leggy. If you attempt it, four weeks prior to the last spring frost would be soon enough.

Similarly, around the time of our first frost gladiolus corms should be lifted from the ground with a spading fork or shovel. Never just yank the plant out by pulling on the stem!

Once out of the ground, cut the stem from the corn as closely as possible. Rinse under running water and allow to dry in a frost-free airy location for two-three weeks.

Check the corms regularly, and when a corky area develops between the mother corm and the new corm break off and discard the mother. After drying is complete, store on trays or in mesh bags in a well-ventilated area at temperatures between 38 and 58 degrees. The lower the temp, the better.

Inspect throughout the winter months and throw away any corms that begin to rot.

Typically glads are planted directly in the ground, with no pre-starting needed. You can stagger when you plant, though, so that all of your flowers are not borne at once. Plant a few every week of June for color throughout the late summer through frost.

By harvesting your bulbs now, you are protecting your investment for years to come! Only get out there and do it before you run out of daylight!

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



support community journalism

My brother died on Dec. 23, does he get Social Security for December?

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor

Dear Rusty:

My question concerns the passing of my brother on Dec. 23, 2025. Since he passed away before the month was over, does that mean he will not receive a Social Security payment for December 2025? Does the fact he passed before the end of December negate him receiving benefits for December 2025?

Signed: Executor of my Brother's Estate

Dear Executor Sister:

Please accept our sincere condolences on your brother's passing. FYI, according to Social Security law, all SS benefits are paid in the month following the month they are earned, which means two in things in this circumstance:

1. Any SS payment your brother received during the month of December (his month of death) is legally his or his estate's because that payment was for the month before he died (November 2025).

2. Any SS benefits received thereafter (e.g., SS benefits paid in January 2026 for the month of December 2025) must be returned to Social Security. The bank, which received his SS payments, would normally handle this automatically if they were notified of your brother's death.

Social Security benefits are not paid for the month of death because the beneficiary did not live the entire month and SS benefits are not paid for partial months. So even though your brother lived about 3/4ths of the month of December, he (his estate) will not get any SS benefits for the month of December. Indeed, even those who pass shortly before midnight on the last day of the month do not get Social Security benefits for the month they died.

For additional information, if your brother was married and his wife is still living, she would be entitled to a one-time, lump sum death benefit of $255 (if she is also eligible for her own SS retirement benefit). And, depending on her own SS retirement amount, she might also be eligible for a surviving spouse benefit as your brother's widow.

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

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 800-824-6458 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.

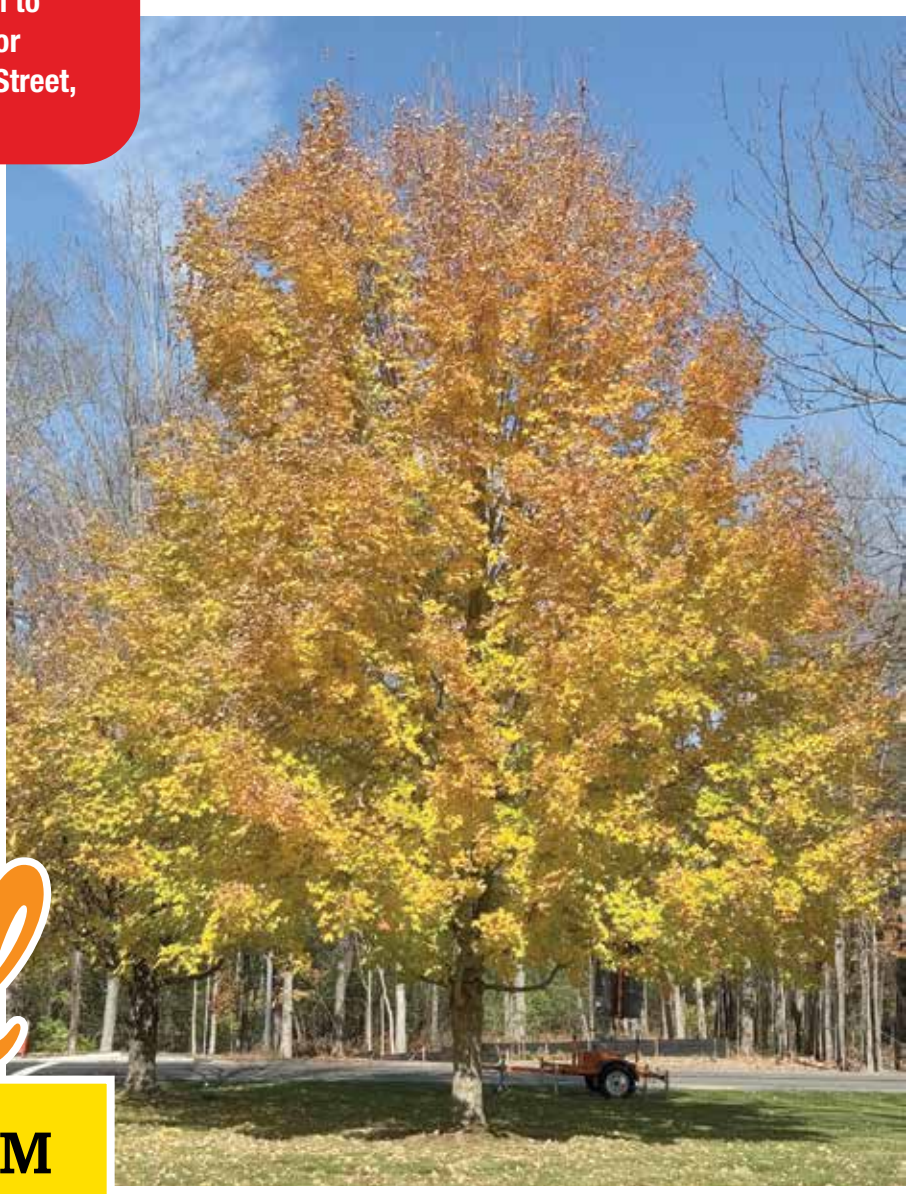
A COMMUNITY GALLERY

Life in WILBRAHAM & HAMPDEN

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



Here is a large orange leaf tree in the Hampden Senior Center parking lot.



This giant orange and yellow leaf tree can be found as you arrive at the Wilbraham Town Hall and drive up to the Wilbraham Senior Center.

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



These trees changing color were spotted outside the Wilbraham Public Library.

Fall in WILBRAHAM and HAMPDEN

On Oct. 21, Times Editor Kristin Rivers took a drive around Wilbraham and Hampden to check out some fall colors as the autumn season continues. Enjoy these snapshots around the communities.

Turley photos by Kristin Rivers



Some touches of fall found outside the Hampden Town Hall.



Here is some changing leaves outside the Federated Community Church in Hampden.



As residents park at Hampden Memorial Park, they are greeted with this burst of fall color.



These autumn-colored trees can be found as you walk in Crane Park in Wilbraham.

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Senior & Veteran Tax Work-Off Abatement Program seeks applicants

WILBRAHAM - The Town of Wilbraham is accepting applications for 49 positions under the Senior Citizen & Veterans Tax Abatement Program. Senior Citizens and Veterans selected under this program will work during calendar year 2027 to receive an abatement on their property tax bill for fiscal year 2028 (July 1, 2027 – June 30, 2028).

Basic requirements are that taxpayers must be an assessed owner of property in Wilbraham and must have owned and occupied a home in Wilbraham for at least five years. To be eligible for the Senior Citizens program the resident must be over 60 years of age. To be eligible for the Veterans program the resident must be a Veteran defined by MGL (a copy of your DD 214 is required).

The current compensation is calculated at $15.00 per hour, and the maximum allowable abatement is $1,500.00 per property. Abatement workers will need to work 100 hours to receive the full abatement of $1,500.00 (less federal income tax and Medicare deductions).

The 49 positions being offered are:

Public Access Television: 5 Production Producers

Clerk's Office: 4 Office Assistants

Treasurer/Collector's Office: 2 Office Assistants

Library: 4 Library Pages

Library: 1 Local History Assistant

Select Board Office: 2 Office Assistants

Facilities: 4 Gardeners

Facilities: 2 Facilities Laborer/Helpers

Parks & Recreation: 3 Assistant Gym Supervisors

Senior Center: 20 Office Assistants

Engineering: 1 Engineering Assistant

Veterans: 1 U.S Flag Custodian & Veteran Event Support

Hours are flexible and will be worked out on an individual basis between the department director and the abatement worker but must be completed by November 30, 2027.

This program is beneficial for both senior and veteran residents and Wilbraham taxpayers. Seniors and Veterans have an opportunity to lower their property tax bill, and taxpayers are benefitting from the superior talent and work experience these individuals bring to the job at a very low cost to the town.

Interested residents can pick up applications and information packets at the senior center, library, or Select Board Office, or print it from the town website: www.wilbraham-ma.gov. Applications should be submitted to the Select Board Office no later than December 11, 2026.

Veterans Day Ceremony set for Nov. 11

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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CHURCH from page 1

me here to be part of it."

In the lawn outside the church, final preparations were well under way with church members busily making sure that all was ready. Jack Germain of Hampden, church member and self-proclaimed "burger and dog flipper" prepared the large grill and began cooking hot dogs and hamburgers.

A long table was filled with various other food items and salads made by church members along with a large celebration cake and other desserts.

Typical music from each of the 10 decades of the church's history was performed by the local group "Then and Now" or sung by the church choir. Rev. Lee played the digital piano for the final song after the audience sang her "Happy Birthday" in anticipation of her own celebration a few days later.

Present to share in the event were former pastors Rev. Tom Howells, Rev. Dr. Janet Burdewik, Rev. Patricia Miller Fernandes along with former Christian Education Director Meri Blanchard and her husband, Rev. Ken Blanchard.

"The main thing about the Federated Community Church is the community aspect of two working together. The different denomination doesn't divide them, they work together. That's wonderful," Howells said.

Rev. Fernandes added her reflection.

"It gives you pause to stop and think about all of the people that have passed through the church....to think of all of the families that this church has touched….people that were committed enough to community, to love of God, to share that witness and to be part of it. It's heartwarming," Fernandes said.

Also lending support with their presence were Rev. David Jones (UCC Area Conference Minister) and Rev. Paul B. Nesbit (Moderator Hampden Association/Pastor Wilbraham United Church), Barbara Martino and Patty Ryan from East Longmeadow UMC, representing the recently formed Cooperative Parish group of five area churches, and Pastor Skip Gunn and Dr. Diane Gunn from LifeStream Church in Hampden.



The choir performs at the celebration of Federated Community Church.





Photos courtesy of Eunji Lee

Rev. Jan Burdewik (former Pastor), Rev. Paul B. Nesbit (Pastor, Wilbraham United Church), Rev. Tom Howells (former Pastor), Rev. Eunji Lee (current Pastor), Rev. Patricia Miller Fernandes (former Pastor) and Rev. David Jones (UCC Area Conference Minister).

Rev. Jones recalled his reason for coming to the event.

"I'm here to bring greetings from the wider church…. the Southern New England Conference, and to be present, just to be with this wonderful community on this celebration….I've been delighted just by how welcoming everyone's been and how warm this community clearly is," Jones said.

When asked about his experience meeting those present, Rev. Nesbit said, "My experience is that they're very happy…that it's a joyous occasion. They're happy to be here. They're very welcoming."

Pastor Gunn was pleased to join in the celebration as well.

"I just love to see faithfulness…..It's really the spirit and it's the nature of our Heavenly Father," Gunn said.

What would he say to the church members?

"Congratulations. Stay faithful. Go the distance," Gunn said.

John Flynn, Chair of the Hampden Selectboard, who used to live next door to the church, said, "We're blessed to have them in this community…..We just want to extend welcome greetings from the Selectboard, myself, Don and Erik. This is just a great event. We're happy that they're (the) partners in town that they are….They've been part of the community forever and they will continue to be."

Gretchen Warner Hebert of Hampden, a long-time congregant, was asked if it meant a lot for her to be there.

"It definitely did and to see the people and feel the warmth of the community…. It's just a wonderful place," Herbert said.

Laurie Schoolcraft of Hampden, a church member since her early childhood, noted this about her church.

"The faith is still there. The people are still wonderful….I absolutely love it….I would not go anywhere else. It is my church," Schoolcraft said.

Maribeth Sterling-Elliot of Hampden shared similar appreciation, "We love this church, we love the community, we love the people."

Her husband, Steve Elliot, agreed, "It's phenomenal. The people that are here, they're family."

"We were churchless….for six years….we went church to church….(and never) found anything that fit us," said Nora Fernands of Wilbraham.

Her husband, John Fernands, recalled that first day they entered this church about a year ago and sat down.

"We were welcomed so warmly and genuinely….. When we left that service that day….we were walking to our car,… looked at each other simultaneously and said 'This is the place!'." He said

Marjorie Butler from Somers, CT said she had left the church after she got married.

"But I found my way home and my greatest joy was that, when I walked into this church for the first time after many years, it was the church that I had remembered from my childhood. It was warm and welcoming and everything was the same," Butler said.

In her sermon's closing remarks that day, Pastor Lee expressed these words. "As we celebrate these 100 years, I give thanks for those who came before us and for everyone gathered here today. I don't know what lies ahead for us. There may be times of joy, and there may be times of struggle. But I look forward to discovering what God will do among us, trusting that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide us. We will not walk this journey alone. Christ is with us, and we have one another."

UPDATE from page 1

goes away, "it's going to be much more difficult to basically start it from scratch again with, theoretically, new people down the road at some point."

"There is general dissatisfaction with Charter among the general population of the town and, my personal opinion, I think it potentially sends the wrong message of security to Charter if we were to dissolve and the promo chasing that we all engage with right now to get good rates may go away if they don't realize that they, theoretically, have to be on their best behavior with some of this stuff," Nelson said.

Nelson said the committee will honor whatever the Select Board wants to do, but emphasized that "we've made some good progress" in meeting with different fiber options and gathering information and data.

"I can produce a report at this point with a recommendation and what the costs would be, what the risks would be if we go forward or don't go forward that we can basically put on a shelf somewhere to revisit. We'll do that, but what I recommend too is we all understand what the situation is. If the Broadband Committee continues and we say meet once a quarter to kind of make sure everybody's keeping track of what's going on, we'll do that with the understanding that we are not submitting a request for funding in the near term because of everything else that's going on," Nelson said. "So, that's kind of where we are. Like I said, we understand the situation and it's just a matter of what message do we want to send the people of Wilbraham and what level of work do we want to theroetically start from scratch from down the road as opposed to keeping a little bit of consistency."

Bunnell noted how "everybody knows how hard this group has worked and how engaged they've been."

"I'm inclined to encourage the production of a report and I would think that that would involve at least maybe one additional meeting so the committee has the chance to review and sign off," Bunnell said. "Sadly, I'm more inclined than not to go ahead and disband the committee and then just keep all our fingers and toes crossed that if and when we see another window opening we can pull you guys back in."

Clerk Michael Squindo said this was a difficult one for him, as this was the very first topic he read about when he moved to Wibraham in 2012 and knew what was going on before that. He agreed with Bunnell on producing a report.

"I am entirely in favor of getting some sort of a report from the committee about what's happened to date and where we stand with the current situation," Squindo said. "I think that you summarized very well exactly why I would be opposed to strictly disbanding it. I think that this body being a member body of three and being involved in so many other aspects will just simply lose sight of this opportunity if it's disbanded in its entirety."

Squindo suggested the Select Board and the Broadband Committee consider what the new mission would be.

"There was a very clear vision when the Broadband that exists today was drafted, so, I think if we're going to continue it even if on a much reduced scale, I think it needs to have a very clear purpose," Squindo said. "So, I don't disagree with the overall summary you provided, I would just be interested in narrowing that down to something that's manageable."

Nelson agreed, saying the mission would pivot more towards "environmental monitoring" to see what's going on in other towns and communities, what they are doing, what's working and not working and collecting information.

"As opposed to right now where I think the mandate is, okay let's get Wilbraham rolling on broadband, it would pivot more towards, okay let's make sure we're capturing all the information we have so that when the time does come, there isn't another one-year ramp-up to figure out what's going on around the world," Nelson said.

He added it might also look like a semi-annual report to the board to keep track of things, especially if years go by.

"So it becomes more of kind of a reporting body as opposed to an action body," Nelson said.

Chair Marc Ducey was also conflicted.

"If we wanted to change the charge of the committee to be like an oversight committee of what options may be available or to kind of keep the pulse of what's going on in that space, I might consider that. But that's a very different purpose than what we set you out on initially," Ducey said. "Can we just change the charge or do we need to disband the committee and form a new one?"

After Bunnell suggested receiving a report and then having another conversation, Ducey said this.

"I will say this. I'm not in favor of keeping the committee as it's structured today. So, should we disband this committee with the notion that we may reformulate it in a different context?" Ducey said.

When Squindo suggested letting the committee decide the charge moving forward, Nelson said he could produce a report with the recommendation—for either route—on how they'll move forward.

Squindo again emphasized the committee's importance due to interested members being involved in it to do the work.

"If we just say 'Have a good day,' to the people who have expressed interest, we're saying we're done with this. That's how I look at to your concern on what does it say to the community," Squindo said. "And I don't think we're done with it. I think that we need to pivot for a lot of the reasons that have been outlined but I think that we need to continue to keep this alive because the world doesn't stop developing."

Ducey's concern was sending out a message to the community "to say this issue is still alive."

"I think if we want to pivot and make it something different, then I'm okay with that. But I don't want to have this mixed message that the Broadband Committee is still alive while looking at alternatives," Ducey said.

After Bunnell reiterated her earlier suggestion of a report and another meeting, Ducey agreed and Nelson said he would get everything together for the board.

Squindo also suggested getting a summary of how much money was expended on this project, which Nelson noted he could get together as well.

After the report is compiled and the Broadband Committee reviews it, Nelson will return to the board in November for the next discussion.

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USDA INSP. FROZEN BONE-IN CHICKEN THIGH TRAY PAK 88¢ lb
USDA INSP. ANTONINA'S GLUTEN-FREE YELLOW CAKE w/BUTTERCREAM FROSTING 18 OZ. $3.99 ea
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SCHOOLS

Hampden-Wilbraham School Nutrition Team selected for National Initiative



WILBRAHAM - The Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District's School Nutrition Team has been selected for the inaugural cohort of the Chef Ann Foundation's Starting From Scratch initiative. School Nutrition Director Julie Dougal and District Chef Cindy Normandin will travel to Boulder, Colorado, in early November for a hands-on culinary intensive designed to help school districts expand scratch cooking and improve school meals.

During the four-day program, Dougal and Normandin will work alongside school food professionals from across the country to strengthen culinary skills, improve kitchen operations and develop a customized roadmap for sustainable change. Following the intensive, the district will receive a year of dedicated support from the Chef Ann Foundation to continue implementing its plan.

Under Dougal's leadership, the district began developing a vision to increase scratch cooking and incorporate more locally sourced produce and products into school meals. Normandin was hired last year to help make that vision a reality.

A graduate of Johnson & Wales University, Normandin has extensive culinary experience, having worked as a chef and owned two restaurant and food businesses. She owned and operated The Apple Place farm and store, her family farm. Her passion for supporting local agriculture and her relationships with area farmers have helped advance the district's efforts.

One significant development has been a partnership with Marty's Local, which delivers produce from regional farms directly to district schools. Students have enjoyed local strawberries, apples, tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce, potatoes, broccoli, green beans, asparagus and butternut squash.

Scratch-made items are also being introduced into school menus. Homemade macaroni and cheese has become a student favorite. To ensure new recipes appeal to students, Normandin regularly visits schools to offer taste tests and gather feedback before adding items to the menu.

Recent successes include locally sourced fish sticks made with fish from Massachusetts waters through partnerships with Red's Best and Arnold's Meats. Students also sampled a new scratch-made sauce called "Splashtastic," which was an enthusiastic hit. The partnership supports local fishermen and the Massachusetts economy while introducing students to seafood sourced close to home.

At Soule Road School, students sampled roasted asparagus from Hadley, and many asked for seconds. Successful taste tests help determine which new foods will be added to district menus.

Other regional products now featured include Greek yogurt from Hastings Farm in Suffield, Connecticut; pizza crusts and dinner rolls from The Good Crust made with grains milled in Maine; muffins made from a mix featuring locally milled grains from Holyoke; apples from Fern Valley Farms; Craic Hot Sauce from Lowell; and bagels from One Mighty Mill.

Breakfast menus are changing, too. In response to updated USDA school breakfast standards calling for reduced added sugars, the team is offering more savory and "speed-scratch" options. Homemade granola, protein bites, overnight oats and lower-sugar muffins are among the new offerings, along with grilled egg and cheese sandwiches, egg and cheese quesadillas, and a ham, egg and cheese bake.

With Dougal's leadership, Normandin's culinary expertise, and the continued support of the Chef Ann Foundation, the district is poised to build on its progress and bring even more fresh, locally sourced, scratch-cooked meals to students in the years ahead.

Community members can follow the HWRSD Food and Nutrition Facebook page (HWRSDfoodandnutrition) for news and menu updates.

Parks & Recreation announces 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.

St. Cecilia Women's Club sponsoring 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.

150th Hampden Anniversary volunteer committee to meet

HAMPDEN - The 150th Hampden Anniversary Committee is holding their next volunteer meeting on Saturday, Oct. 31, at 11 a.m. at the Hampden Town Hall.

The committee is looking for volunteers to help out with the planning and organizing of the celebrations for the 150th Hampden celebrations.

Questions contact Lisa Zeno at 150thcommittee@hampdenma.gov.

Misgivings Comedy Night set for Feb.

WILBRAHAM - "MISGIVINGS" Comedy Night sponsored by the Wilbraham Women's Club will take place on Friday, February 5, 2027 at 7:15 p.m., Soule Road School, Wilbraham.

Don't miss this delightfully entertaining and uplifting comedy show with Dave Kane. Tickets are $20 will be sold at the Wilbraham Public Library, Wednesday Nov. 18, Dec.16, Jan. 6 and Saturday January 16.

You may also contact Linda Raffa at (413) 596-8245 for tickets. All proceeds help to support our scholarship program and other charitable endeavors.

Limited Seating ~ Tickets must be purchased in advance.

Ukulele Play Group at WSC

WILBRAHAM - FREE Ukulele (and other strings!) Play Group! Dec. 1, 8, 15 and 22.

All Adult Aged Players Welcome (Minimal experience to Advanced!) Tuesdays 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

Grab your ukulele and dust off some old skills or improve on some new ones! Join us as Amy Scott leads us through some guided group play and sing-alongs!

This group is designed for folks with some experience, but if you need beginner lessons, please inquire! Grab your instrument and come join us! Call the senior center at 413-596-8379 or stop by to sign up.

Saturday Adult Craft at the Wilbraham Library

WILBRAHAM – Wilbraham Public Library is offering an Adult craft program on Saturday, Oct. 31 from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Join us to create a mason jar leaf lantern! This is a fun, relaxing, and easy-to-learn project.

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

BABY'S FIRST CHRISTMAS

Turley Publications, Inc.



Kelsie Smith
January 11, 2026
Parents: John & Carolyn Smith, Palmer
Grandparents: Theodore & Susan Smith, Ware
Joseph & Audrey Jones, South Hadley

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This offer is available to all babies born in 2026.
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- ❑ Quaboag Current
- ❑ The Register
- ❑ Sentinel
- ❑ Town Reminder
- ❑ Ware River News
- ❑ The Wilbraham-Hampden Times

Deadline for photos and forms is Thursday, December 4, 2026

Send Us Your Community Holiday Events

Turley Publications will print your holiday calendar events FREE OF CHARGE in our Dazzler Supplement which will be published November 19, 2026.
Total circulation of 85,000 which reaches over 200,000 readers in the Pioneer Valley.
Event Should Be Non-Profit & Open to the Public

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

Event Name _____
Date/Time _____
Location _____
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Description _____
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Cost _____
Contact name & phone number for more information _____
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Deadline for Calendar submissions is October 29.

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

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SPORTS

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Falcons shut out Brownies in home match

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WILBRAHAM—From honoring its seven seniors during a pregame ceremony to celebrating with family and friends after the final whistle, Senior Night proved to be a memorable occasion for the Minnechaug Regional girls' varsity soccer team.

The Lady Falcons posted a 4-0 Senior Night victory over the Agawam Brownies in a non-league match held on Oct. 19.

"It's so surreal," said Minnechaug senior Makenna Sacco, who recorded a goal and two assists against the Brownies. "This is the best season we've had in the three years that I've been playing for the varsity soccer team. I'm really excited for the Western Mass. and state tournaments."

Second-seeded Minnechaug (11-1-4) was scheduled to host seventh-seeded West Springfield in a Western Massachusetts Class A quarterfinal on Tuesday night. The same two teams played a scoreless draw in the regular season finale on October 21.

The Lady Falcons, who posted a 7-0-1 record on their home turf field this fall, were the fifth ranked team in the MIAA Division 2 state power rankings.

Minnechaug's other seniors are Addison Derosia, Paige Holt, Isabella Usher, Carson Humphries, Katelyn Hoar, and Ainsley Holden.

"This was a fantastic night for our seniors, who are a very special group of players." said Minnechaug head coach Nundi Goncalves. "The seniors are happy that they won tonight's game, but they're also happy that the underclassmen also got some playing time."

Steve Burndrett, who served as Minnechaug's athletic director for the previous four years before accepting the same position at Lynnfield High School in August, returned to Wilbraham and handled the public-address duties during the pregame ceremony.



Ainsley Holden circles a loose ball.



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

After receiving a pass, Taylor Bartosz heads up the field.

It was an emotional evening for Usher, who suffered a right knee injury during the Lady Falcons 3-2 non-league game at Douglas High School two days earlier. She missed her entire sophomore season with a left knee injury.

"I feel very bad for Isabella," Goncalves said. "She has been an outstanding soccer player for the varsity team and is a quiet leader. It's a huge loss for us because she's capable of playing several different positions. She's a great kid."

With the aid of crutches, Usher slowly made her way to midfield before the start of the match.

After the referee blew his whistle, she booted the ball to her younger sister Maya, who's a sophomore. Isabella Usher was then replaced on the field by sophomore Brooklyn Manning.

"I'm very thankful that I was able to be on the field with my younger sister for one final time in a varsity soccer game," said Usher, who had two goals and an assist this season. This was the first year that we had the opportunity to play on the varsity team together and I'm really going to miss playing soccer with her. This team is like a family, and it has been an amazing experience for the past four years."

Usher is planning to continue playing soccer at Chatham University, which is a Division 3 school located in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania.

"I've verbally committed to play soccer at Chatham University," Usher said, "The Chatham coaches reached out to me at a college tournament earlier this year. They invited me to tour their campus, and they have health/science majors, which I'm looking forward to studying. I also liked the members of the coaching staff and team. They were the first school that reached out to me."



Isabel Horne gets ready to make a goal kick.

Last summer, Usher spent a month playing soccer in the United Kingdom.

"It was an amazing experience," she said. "I traveled

Please see LADY FACLCONS, page 12

Rival Lions, Falcons battle to 2-2 tie



Stepan Syrota tries to kick the ball past an opponent.



Tyler Supczak advances up the field.
CENTER: Cameron Salvador turns and heads up the field.

LUDLOW – Last Monday night, Minnechaug and Ludlow, neighboring rivals, went at it again. Minnechaug would score first, but it was Ludlow that came back and the game ended in a 2-2 tie. Tyler Supczak and Colton Rogers scored for the Falcons while Evan Dias and Desmond Danso had the goals for Ludlow. The Lions qualified for the Western Mass. and state tournaments at 7-5-4. Minnechaug is now 1-13-2 and will have nonplayoff games this week to end their season.

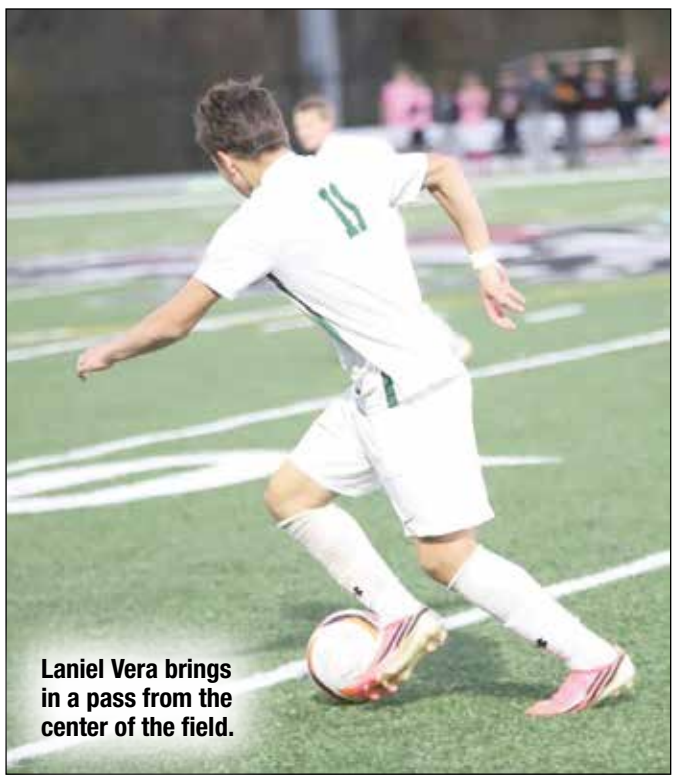


The Falcons work near the middle of the field last Monday night in Ludlow.



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibell

Eli Childers chases down a loose ball.



Laniel Vera brings in a pass from the center of the field.

Despite loss, Chaug in position to make tourney

WILBRAHAM – The Minnechaug Regional High School football team was defeated the last two weeks by Westfield and 41-14 last Thursday night against Central High School. The Falcons are now 3-4 on the season. They are ranked No. 10 in Division 3, which will likely allow the Falcons to make the tournament this year. The Falcons needed to have won three games in order to qualify as well. Coming up this Friday night, Minnechaug will face 0-6 Longmeadow to complete their regular season schedule.

Minnechaug's opponent for Week 9 will be announced Sunday afternoon.



SPORTS

T-Birds grab split with Charlotte

CHARLOTTE, N.C. - The Springfield Thunderbirds (3-3-1-1) saw another standout performance from their young netminder in a 2-1 victory over the Charlotte Checkers (5-3-0-0) on Saturday night inside Bojangles Coliseum.

Both teams exchanged minor penalties and unsuccessful, abbreviated power plays in the opening four minutes, but the Springfield man-advantage got another crack and opened the scoring at 5:51. After wrestling the puck out of a board scrum, Michael Buchinger freed it up and dropped it back to Theo Lindstein at point position. The second-year blueliner danced toward middle ice before firing a seeing-eye wrister past Kirill Gerasimyuk's glove, giving Springfield the 1-0 edge.

That proved to be enough for Will Cranley to hold the T-Birds lead into the intermission, as the second-year backstop denied each of Charlotte's seven shot attempts.

The game's pace grinded to a halt in the second period, as both teams paraded their ways into the sin bin. The teams would combine for 28 penalty minutes and seven separate power play opportunities, but despite all the chaos, shots were a scarcity, with Charlotte launching only six attempts at Cranley, while Springfield managed just four at Gerasimyuk.

Oskar Sundqvist had the T-Birds' best chance to extend the 1-0 lead, but the veteran forward rattled the crossbar with a high-rising wrister.

After beginning the weekend 0-for-7 on their power play, the Checkers did finally cash in with just 27 seconds left in the peri-

Please see T-BIRDS, page 13

Westfield State University Owls fall at Plymouth State

PLYMOUTH, N.H. — Plymouth State scored 21 points in the fourth quarter to erase a 10-point deficit and rally past Westfield State, 28-17, in a Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference football game Saturday at Panther Field.

Westfield State (3-3, 3-2 MASCAC) led 17-7 entering the fourth quarter, but Plymouth State (3-3, 2-3 MASCAC) scored three touchdowns in the final 15 minutes to turn the game around and secure the victory.

The Owls built a 14-0 halftime advantage behind two rushing touchdowns. Freshman quarterback Quinn Sumner opened the scoring with a 4-yard touchdown run with 4:41 remaining in the first quarter, capping a nine-play, 72-yard drive. Andrew Currier added the extra point for a 7-0 lead.

Westfield extended its advantage early in the second quarter when freshman running back Cole Ingham broke free for a 31-yard touchdown run with 13:36 remaining. Currier's second successful extra point put the Owls ahead 14-0.

Plymouth State threatened

Please see OWLS, page 13

Railers fall at home to Maine Mariners

WORCESTER – The Worcester Railers HC (1-2-0-0, 2 pts) visit the Maine Mariners (2-1-0-0, 4 pts) on Sunday afternoon at Cross Insurance Arena in Portland, Maine. Puck drop is scheduled for 3:00 p.m. ET. Worcester failed to bounce back after falling 3-0 to Maine on Saturday, October 24th, in the first road game of the regular season. Worcester is back on the Road on Friday, October 30th in Glens Falls NY against the Adirondack Thunder. Puck drop is at 7:00 p.m.

Matt DeMelis (1-0-1) opened the scoring at 10:30 in the 1st period off assists from Stevie Moses and Riley Piercey to give the Railers a 1-0 lead. The Mariners responded in the 2nd period when Max Andreev (1-1-2) scored a shorthanded goal at 11:41 to even the score at 1-1. Later in the period, Josh Bloom (1-0-1) scored on the power play at 18:43, assisted by Andreev and Antonio Venuto, to give Maine a 2-1 lead heading into the 3rd period. At 15:19 in the 3rd, Venuto (1st) found the back of the net off assists from Robert Cronin and Ryan Francis to extend the Mariners' lead to 3-1. Maine held on for the remainder of the game to secure the 3-1 victory over Worcester.

The Railers started the 1st period slowly, with both teams dumping the puck into the opposing zone and trying to create pressure. Worcester's defense tested Max Lundgren from the blueline, but the Mariners kept the puck out of the net. With 12:05 left in the 1st, Anthony Kehrer was called for high-sticking, sending the Railers to the penalty kill. Gabe Carriere, recently sent down from the Hartford Wolf Pack, made a key save to help Worcester successfully kill the penalty. With 9:30 remaining, Ryan Piercey jumped on the puck and passed it to Moses, who helped set up Matt Demelis (2nd) for the goal to give Worcester a 1-0 lead. All three members of the Railers' first line contributed to the scoring play. Carriere later made a great save on Cronin, stretching out on his side to keep the puck out. With 6:30 left in the period, Tyson Fawcett dropped the gloves with Wyllum Deveaux following a big hit by Deveaux on Worcester's Donhauser. Kaplan later dropped the gloves with Dylan MacKinnon as the physical play continued. With 1:33 remaining, Matt Hobbs was called for interference, sending the Railers back to the penalty kill. The 1st period ended with Worcester leading 1-0, while the Mariners held a 14-9 advantage in shots on goal.

The Mariners started the 2nd period on the power play following a late penalty in the 1st, but Worcester successfully killed it off to

Please see RAILERS, page 13



Brooklyn Manning possesses the ball.



Maya Usher looks to pass to her right.



Katelyn Hoar encounters a defender.

LADY FALCONS

from page 11

to the U.K. by myself. I was a little bit scared at first, but I felt very safe over there. My team had several training sessions, and we played a couple of games."

Usher, along with Humphries and Holden joined the varsity squad as freshmen. They won 13 games that season. The other four seniors joined the soccer team as sophomores.

The Brownies seniors are Maya Gingerhua, Nawra Ahmed, Marissa Fusco, Sam Izzo, and Victoria Papova. Papova, who's a captain, was the only senior starter against Minnechaug.

It was not the first time that the Brownies were the opponents for the Lady Falcons senior night.

Back in 2022, Agawam head coach Laura Wray-Ramos watched her daughter, Lilliana, play in her senior night game for the Lady Falcons, which was also a 4-0 Minnechaug victory.

The Brownies head coach had the opportunity to coach her youngest daughter, Gaby, who's a junior captain on this year's team.

It was a rebuilding season for Agawam, who completed the regular season with a 3-12-1 overall record. The Brownies are scheduled to wrap up the 2026 campaign with two non-playoff games.

Following the pregame ceremony, the Lady Falcons were awarded a penalty kick six minutes into the opening half when Sacco was fouled in the penalty area. She then stepped up to the spot and put a low shot into the right corner just out of the reach of junior goalie Kayleen Sullivan (16 saves), who attempted to make a diving save.

It turned out to be the only goal of the opening half by either team.

After holding a 1-0 halftime advantage, the Lady Falcons scored their first goal of the second half during the 56th minute when Holt blasted a hard shot that got past the keeper. Hoar was credited with the assist.

Less than ten minutes later, Sacco assisted on a tap in goal by Holden.

During the 69th minute, Sacco delivered a pass from the left side to the middle of the field where sophomore Stephanie Labadorf netted her first career varsity goal by putting a shot into the left corner.

Minnechaug sophomore goalie Isabel Horne only had to make two saves in posting her fifth shutout of the regular season. Horne recorded another shutout a couple of days later.

SENIORS

Monthly Highlights for October at the Hampden Senior Center:

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

Lunch is provided by Greater Springfield Senior Services daily at Noon. Suggested donation is $3 per meal. You must reserve lunch by 11 a.m. one day prior. Feel free to schedule reservations for the month.

An Important Message from Greater Springfield Senior Services

In an effort to reduce food waste, if you are unable to attend the lunch you signed up for, please call the Senior Center the day before by 11 a.m. to cancel your meal. Cancellations after 11 a.m. will result in a wasted meal. Thank you for your help in reducing food waste!! Please call GSSSI with any questions at 413.781.8800.

NEW CLASSES AND PROGRAMS:

Mat Pilates with Alexis

Wednesdays from 9 to 9:45 a.m., through Nov. 4; $5 per class

Curious about Pilates? This four-week Mat Pilates series is a welcoming introduction to a low-impact form of exercise that focuses on building strength, improving balance and mobility, and moving with greater control and confidence. Classes will use simple, intentional movements that can be adapted to a variety of fitness levels and abilities.

Classes will be led by Alexis Knight, a Balanced Body-trained Pilates instructor and co-founder of Degree Pilates, a new mat Pilates studio opening this fall in Wilbraham. Degree Pilates will offer mat-based classes in heated and room-temperature settings, designed for a range of experience levels and fitness goals.

Whether you're completely new to Pilates or already have some experience, this series is a great opportunity to learn the foundations and experience the benefits of Pilates in a supportive environment.

Ballroom Dance with Christine is back!

4-week session; Wednesdays, Nov. 4 from 10 to 11 a.m.

Discover the joy of ballroom dancing!

Learn the basics & explore styles like the Waltz, Rumba, Foxtrot, Cha-Cha, Salsa, Tango, and Swing.

No partner required—your pro has you covered.

Instructor Chrisine Kjellquist has enjoyed over 40 years as a trained dancer and has been a certified professional ballroom instructor since 2002 & competitor in the Rhythm and Smooth Ballroom styles.

Cost is $40 per person for the session. Please call 566-5588 to reserve your spot.

Jazz Latin Infusion Music and Movement Class with Christine

4-week session; Wednesdays, Nov. 4 from 11 a.m. to Noon

Wear your sneakers and join Christine for this fun, energetic movement class designed to get you on your feet and give you a great cardio workout! Start with an easy warm-up and stretching, and learn new, fun dance moves. It's Jazz dancing with a Latin music kick!

Cost is $20 for the session or $6 for drop-ins.

Evening Yoga with Lisa Zizza

6-week session; Mondays, Oct. 19 – Nov. 23 from 5:45 to 6:45 p.m.

Back by popular demand, Lisa Zizza returns for evening yoga. Cost is $30 for the session prepaid

OCTOBER LUNCH AND LEARN PROGRAMS:

Lunch is served at Noon; suggested donation of $3 for a GSSSI lunch; program starts at 12:30 PM

OTHER SPECIAL PROGRAMS HAPPENING IN OCTOBER: Please call to register for all programs.

HALLOWEEN LUNCHEON

Friday, Oct. 30 at Noon; $5 per person

Enjoy a delicious lunch of Chicken Carbonara provided by Greater Springfield Senior Services, dessert from Westfield Technical Academy, and stay for an afternoon full of games and prizes.

Play candy BINGO with prizes galore and prize PLINKO sponsored by JGS Lifecare.

MAKING MUSIC!

Monday Ukulele with Amy Scott

8-week session: through Nov. 9 (no class on October 12th).

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

Cost is $7 per class for drop-ins.

Advanced Ukulele – 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Cost is $80 for the session.

"African Drumming" with Jason

Fridays from 2 to 3 p.m.

12-week session: through Dec. 11 (no class on 10/30 & 10/27)

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

ONGOING PROGRAMS:

Common Threads Led by Joan Tompkins, PhD

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

Do you ever feel lonely, discouraged, or overwhelmed? We all experience difficult times in our lives.

Come and join our friendly group as we meet each week to share, connect, and support one another while navigating life's challenges and events. There is no charge, and everyone is welcome!

Pickleball at Thornton Burgess, 85 Wilbraham Road

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

This program is for anyone 60 and older who is new to the sport or a beginner to advanced-beginner who wants to learn the rules and practice playing. Please call the Senior Center to register.

Pickleball Clinics with Mary Grassetti

Our popular Pickleball Clinics return in September! We are offering a four-month series designed to help players build their skills through progressive instruction. Two sessions are available:

Session 1 Beginner: 8 to 10 a.m. / Session 2 Advanced Beginner: 10 a.m. to Noon

Remaining Fall Clinic Dates: Nov. 18, and Dec. 16.

Clinic dates will replace the regular Wednesday pickleball sessions.

Registration for the 2027 Spring Clinics will begin in the new year. Information will be available in the Scribe and during the regular pickleball sessions once the dates are confirmed. This program is open to adults aged 60 and older. Thank you to Mary Grassetti for volunteering her time and sharing her knowledge to provide organized instruction in our popular clinics! Also, thanks to Ann Maggio for overseeing all of our pickleball session times and clinics. And thank you to Karen Kielb for continuing to support our 11:00 am session. Ann & Karen both bring their knowledge of the game, along with their enthusiasm and encouragement, to players who are new to the sport. Thank you to these wonderful ladies for helping make our Senior Pickleball Program a success!

Line Dancing with Mikki

Thursdays, 2:15 to 3:15 p.m..

Join the fun and learn line dancing or build on the skills you already have! Line dancing is a great way to stay active, improve balance and coordination, meet new friends, and enjoy music. No partner is needed — just bring your enthusiasm and get ready to have fun!

Cost is $5.00 per class, paid directly to the instructor.

MEMORY CAFÉ

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

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

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

Please see SENIORS, page 13

OWLS from page 12

before halftime, driving to the Westfield 5-yard line, but the Owls' defense held on fourth down to preserve the shutout. Westfield finished the first half with 184 rushing yards and 348 total yards in the game, compared with 90 rushing yards and 238 total yards for the Panthers.

Plymouth State finally broke through in the third quarter. After recovering a Westfield fumble, the Panthers drove 41 yards on nine plays, capped by a 1-yard touchdown run by Josh Phillips with 3:42 remaining in the period. Ryan Bryant's extra point cut the deficit to 14-7.

Currier extended Westfield's lead to 17-7 with a 26-yard field goal with 14:13 remaining in the fourth quarter, finishing an eight-play, 66-yard drive.

The Panthers then capitalized on turnovers to seize control. An interception and a 37-yard return by Ricky Phom helped set up Plymouth State's next scoring opportunity, which ended with Drake Dumont's 1-yard touchdown run with 8:17 remaining. Bryant's extra point made it 17-14.

Plymouth State took its first lead of the afternoon with 3:37 left when freshman quarterback Colton Lefebvre connected with Hunter Trueman for a 39-yard touchdown pass. Bryant's kick put the Panthers ahead 21-17.

After Westfield lost another fumble, Plymouth State needed just six plays to cover 58 yards. Jayden Graham broke loose for a 22-yard touchdown run with 1:28 remaining, completing the fourth-quarter surge and setting the final margin at 28-17.

Westfield's offense was led by Sumner, who completed 10 of 17 passes for 164 yards and rushed for a touchdown. Ingham rushed for 50 yards on four carries, including his 31-yard scoring run, while Kevin Moreira also gained 50 yards on four carries. Malachi Hymes led the Owls with four receptions for 98 yards, including a long catch of 53 yards.

Plymouth State's rushing attack was paced by Graham, who gained 52 yards on 13 carries and scored a touchdown. Lefebvre completed six of 16 passes for 126 yards and a touchdown, while Trueman's 39-yard scoring reception was the Panthers' longest touchdown play. Phillips and Dumont added rushing touchdowns.

Mark Wright Woodhouse led the Owls defense with eight tackles and forced a fumble. Josh Marino and Aydan Verba each made six stops.

Westfield will travel to Mass Maritime next Saturday, with a 12 noon kickoff at Clean Harbors Stadium.

SENIORS from page 12

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

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

10/30 – No Café – Join us for the Halloween Luncheon

BLIND DATE WITH A BOOK!

If you missed the meeting in September but would still like to participate, we have plenty of "blind dates" (books) available for you to sign out! The theme for this date is: "Walk Down Memory Lane."

Our next Blind Date with a Book meeting will be held on December 8th, and the theme is "Winter Wonderland." Sign up for the next session now and let us know if you prefer large print! We look forward to seeing you!

Special thanks to Mary Grassetti for creating a fun and engaging experience that allows participants to learn new things through a different kind of book club, and to the late Cindy O'Sullivan, whose love of books, reading, and education continues to inspire us daily; and to Ellen Moriarty and her team at the Hampden Public Library.

OCTOBER & NOVEMBER CRAFTS: Don't wait, call to sign up now! Space is limited.

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RAILERS from page 12

maintain a 1-0 lead. Matt Demalis made a great individual play through the opposing zone and drew a hooking penalty against Antonio Venuto while on the penalty kill to create a 4-on-4 situation. Declan McDonnell nearly extended the Railers' lead on a breakaway, but his shot hit the post. Mason Primeau also created a chance with a takeaway and shot, but couldn't convert the rebound. The period became increasingly physical, with Bloom called for interference at 9:57 and Linus Hemstrom called for tripping at 14:32. At 11:41, M. Andreev scored his third shorthanded goal of the weekend to tie the game 1-1 for Maine. Late in the period, more penalties followed as Gabe Blanchard was called for slashing, while Lincoln Hatten and Wyllum Deveaux received roughing minors. With 1:17 remaining in the period, Bloom (1st) scored on the power play, assisted by Andreev and Venuto, giving the Mariners a 2-1 lead heading into the 3rd period.

The Railers and Mariners went through the opening three minutes of the 3rd period without much action, with both teams dumping the puck into the opposing zone and trying to create pressure. Underwood had a wrist-shot opportunity but stopped in front of the net as players looked for a tip. Maine continued searching for an insurance goal while Worcester looked to even the score. With 11:24 remaining, Cole Donhauser was called for boarding, sending the Railers to the penalty kill. Worcester successfully killed off the penalty to keep the game within reach. At that point, Maine led 33-24 in shots on goal. Lincoln Hatten was later called for high-sticking at 16:09. At 15:19, Antonio Venuto (1st) scored off assists from Robert Cronin and Ryan Francis to extend Maine's lead to 3-1. The Mariners went on to secure the victory, taking a 2-1 lead in the season series.

T-BIRDS from page 12

od as Jack Devine funneled a wrister from point position over Cranley's glove, tying the score and sending a 1-1 game into the third for a second straight evening.

As was the case on Friday, shots on goal heavily favored the Checkers for the game and especially in the third, as Charlotte twirled 15 pucks on Cranley. However, the T-Birds proved opportunistic, as Jack Finley found a loose puck in the left circle near the boards and whipped a perfect blind cross-ice feed to Dylan Peterson, who punched a shot through Gerasimyuk to restore the T-Birds lead, 2-1, at 6:32 of the third.

Peterson's clutch tally would be all Cranley needed, as the Springfield penalty kill dispatched two additional Charlotte power plays to bring the game to its finish line. Cranley finished with 27 stops and has now turned away 111 of 116 shots over his first four starts.

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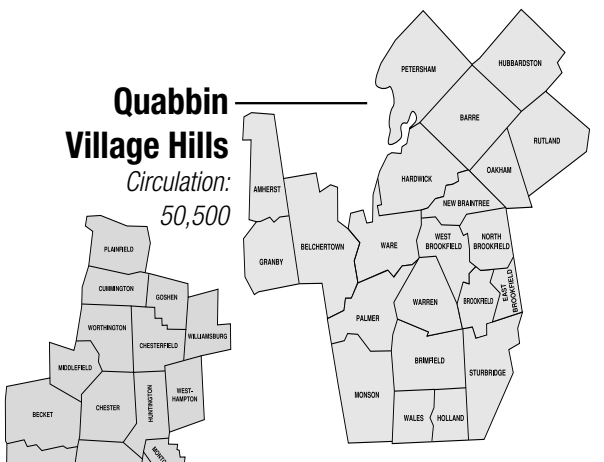
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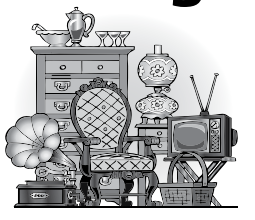
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Buying? Selling?



Our Classifieds Get Results!

KOC from page 1

"We have an emergency food pantry and a thrift shop. The thrift shop supports the food pantry," noted Turcotte who explained how important this event is to the Center. "It's a tremendous help. It will help us buy a lot of food to help get us through the holiday time and pay a couple of bills."

Asked if she's seen an increase in need, Turcotte responded, "Yes, a lot of need, especially with the SNAP cuts and everything. There's a lot more families in need."

George Reich, who has been a Knight for 10 years and was in his third year chairing this event, was pleased with what they've been able to accomplish.

"Last year, at this dinner, we raised and donated $9,000 to the Survival Center," Reich said.

When asked why this event was important for the Knights, Reich replied, "This is one of the opportunities we have to give back," and highlighted the many volunteer man-hours their members provided in the kitchen as well as with ticket sales, soliciting raffle prizes, decorating the room and serving as bartenders for the event.

Judging from the packed parking lot, it was no surprise that the Knights had another sell-out crowd that came for the dinner. On the menu for the second year in a row was a crowd favorite of Chicken Parmesan, pasta, salad, bread, coffee and a plate of two cannolis to close out the meal.

What was the audience reaction to the meal?

"They love what they're getting. You can see their eyes light up….It's all made from scratch," said Eric Forni from Hampden, a Knight and one of the sauce servers.



(L-R) Clinton Mathias (Wilbraham), Autumn Mathias (Wilbraham), Fabienne Dubois (Wilbraham) and Patrice Dubois (Wilbraham) enjoy the event.

Many members of the Knights of Columbus Council 10195 were present to handle the various tasks for the evening such as cooking and serving the entrée buffet style as well as selling tickets for their "legendary" raffle consisting of 45 items donated by many local businesses, organizations, parishioners and Knights.

Many gift cards, gift baskets and other items were available for lucky attendees to win with a separate raffle drawing for the Grand Prize of a set of assorted lottery tickets and a $100 bill.

Youth volunteers from St. Cecilia's Parish were on hand to help with the serving of tables as needed as well as the clean-up and putting away chairs after the event.

In his comments before the meal blessing, Fr. James Nolte, St. Cecilia's Pastor, expressed his gratitude to everyone for coming and especially for the hard work of the Knights and their helpers.

"It's wonderful that we're doing this for the Survival Center and to help out those less fortunate," Nolte said.



Turley photos by Harold Anderson

From left to right, Knight Bill Jolivet (Ludlow), Knight Matt Villamaino (Wilbraham) and Knight Eric Forni (Hampden).

Background music during dinner was provided by Minnechaug student Ella Gagliarducci playing the piano with fellow student Elijah Mathias playing violin. After the meal, the audience enjoyed Italian classics and sing-a-long selections sung by Carol Adamski-Maggi, a cantor at St. Cecilia's Parish, with piano accompaniment by Gagliarducci.

"I think it's a wonderful way to bring community together," Adamski-Maggi said.

At each table was a small printed songbook featuring the lyrics to the evening's song set of "Funiculì, Funiculà", "Torno a Surriento," "That's Amore," "O Sole Mio," "Volare," "Non Dimenticar," "Santa Lucia" and "Arrivederci Roma."



Here is Grand Knight Josh Mitchell with the banner.

Knight Giuseppe Daniele of Wilbraham joined in with his powerful baritone voice to accompany Adamski-Maggi in a few of the musical numbers, much to the delight of the audience.

Turcotte was pleased with how the evening turned out.

"The food was great. It was a sellout. It was a good night," Turcotte said.

Grand Knight Josh Mitchell stressed the importance of the work of the Knights of Columbus.

"It's charity, it's faith, the unity that we have with our brother Knights, all that encompasses into one. We're helping not only our parish, but our community (as well)," Mitchell said.

Reich was proud of the work the Knights of Columbus Council 10195 has done over the years, noting, "Over the last 10 years, we have donated $346,000 to groups such as this (all events combined)…. We do a Thanksgiving Food Drive. We do an Easter Food Drive…..We just completed a Coats for Kids Drive…They were doing a Tootsie Roll Drive last weekend…..We do numerous events throughout the year."

"The Knights are always looking for new members. We have a wide range of ages… We have a vibrant, active group," Reich said.

To learn more about the Knights, visit kofcwilbraham.com. Information about the Community Survival Center is available at communitysurvivalcenter.org.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Wilbraham Community Preservation Committee Annual Public Hearing

The Wilbraham Community Preservation Committee will hold its Annual Public Hearing on **Thursday, November 5th, 2026 at 6:00 PM** in the conference room at the Wilbraham Town Hall, 240 Springfield Street.

The purpose of this hearing is to get input from the general public as it relates to Community Preservation efforts in Wilbraham in the categories of Open Space, Historic Resources, Recreational Land and Community Housing. Members of other municipal boards and committees as well as Town employees are also welcome to attend. This hearing will be followed by a regular meeting of the Community Preservation Committee. The agenda for the hearing/meeting will be posted on the Town Hall outdoor bulletin board and on the Town's website at https://www.wilbraham-ma.gov/at least 48 hours prior to the meeting time and date

10/22, 10/29/2026

TOWN OF WILBRAHAM PUBLIC HEARING: TAX CLASSIFICATION

(Posted October 20, 2026)

The hearing will begin at 6:30 PM, November 10, 2026

The Wilbraham Select Board will hold a public hearing on **Tuesday, November 10, 2026, at 6:30 P.M.** in the Town Office Building, Select Board's Meeting Room, 240 Springfield Street, for the purpose of explaining, and soliciting comments relevant to, the establishment of the property tax rate for fiscal year 2027. The hearing will be conducted in accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30A, Sections 18-25. Residents may comment relative to the adoption of the tax levy percentages required by Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 56, as amended. Anyone wishing to testify or comment should participate, virtually or in person, at the hearing at the time and date noted above.

WILBRAHAM
SELECT BOARD
10/29, 11/05/2026



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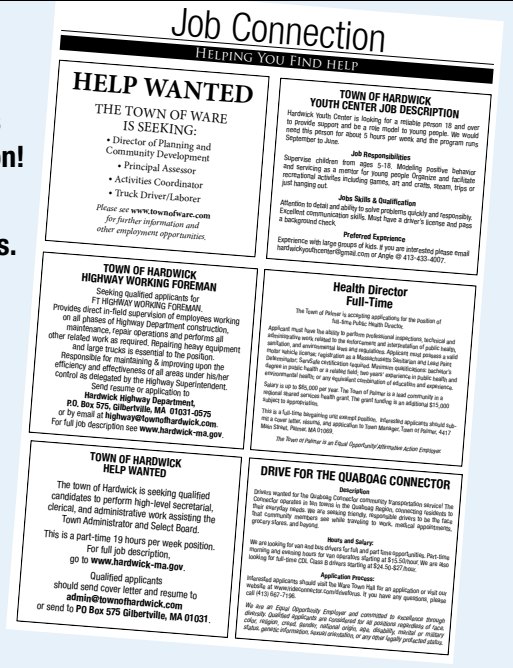
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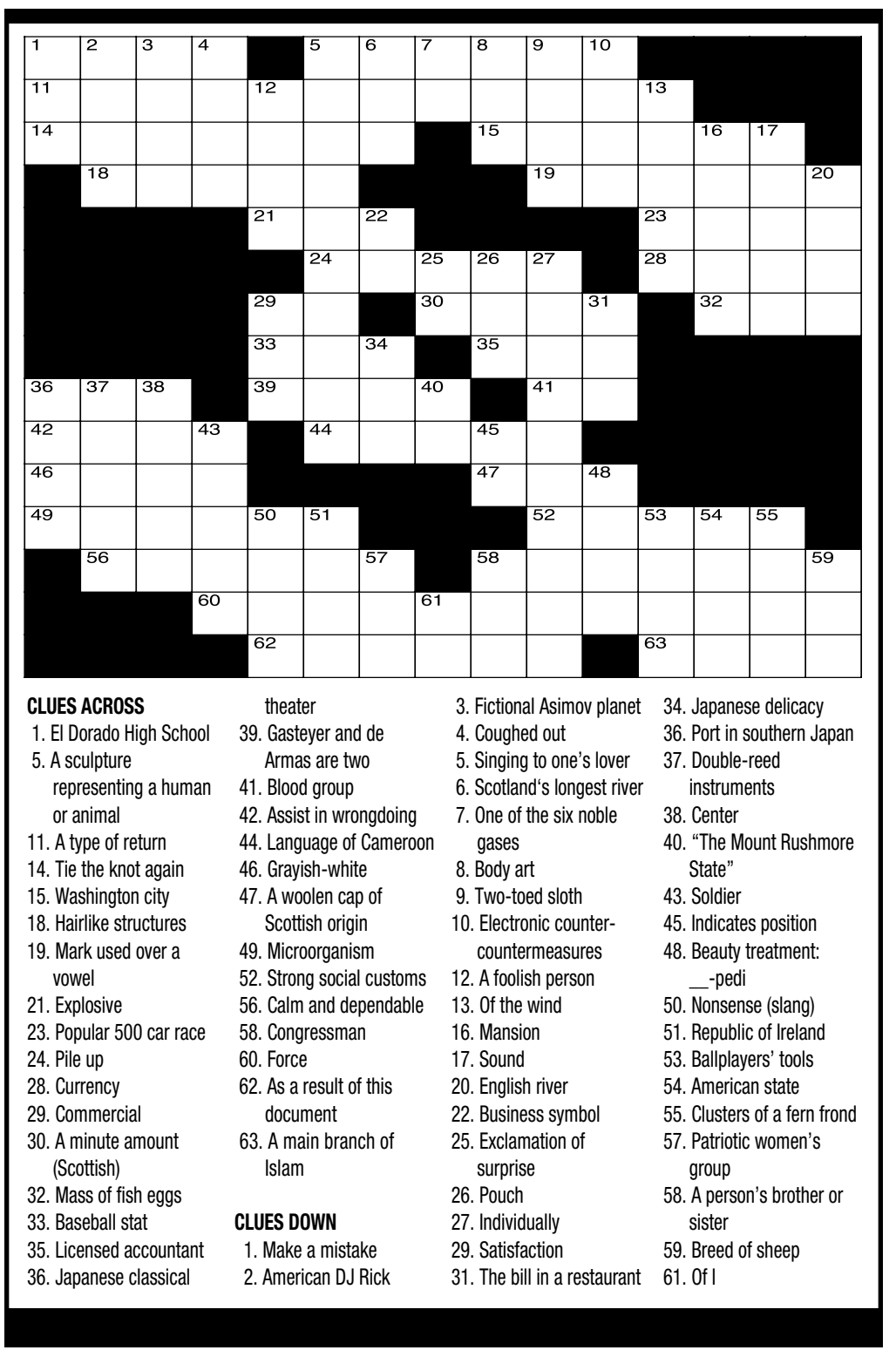
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CLUES ACROSS
1. El Dorado High School
5. A sculpture representing a human or animal
11. A type of return
14. Tie the knot again
15. Washington city
18. Hairlike structures
19. Mark used over a vowel
21. Explosive
23. Popular 500 car race
24. Pile up
28. Currency
29. Commercial
30. A minute amount (Scottish)
32. Mass of fish eggs
33. Baseball stat
35. Licensed accountant
36. Japanese classical theater
39. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
41. Blood group
42. Assist in wrongdoing
44. Language of Cameroon
46. Grayish-white
47. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
49. Microorganism
52. Strong social customs
56. Calm and dependable
58. Congressman
60. Force
62. As a result of this document
63. A main branch of Islam

CLUES DOWN
1. Make a mistake
2. American DJ Rick
3. Fictional Asimov planet
4. Coughed out
5. Singing to one's lover
6. Scotland's longest river
7. One of the six noble gases
8. Body art
9. Two-toed sloth
10. Electronic counter-countermeasures
12. A foolish person
13. Of the wind
16. Mansion
17. Sound
20. English river
22. Business symbol
25. Exclamation of surprise
26. Pouch
27. Individually
29. Satisfaction
31. The bill in a restaurant
34. Japanese delicacy
36. Port in southern Japan
37. Double-reed instruments
38. Center
40. "The Mount Rushmore State"
43. Soldier
45. Indicates position
48. Beauty treatment: __-pedi
50. Nonsense (slang)
51. Republic of Ireland
53. Ballplayers' tools
54. American state
55. Clusters of a fern frond
57. Patriotic women's group
58. A person's brother or sister
59. Breed of sheep
61. Of I

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