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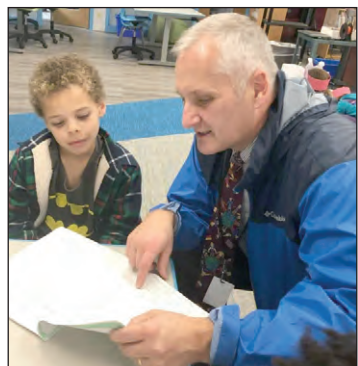
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Supt. Provost debuts 22 strategic plan initiatives

By Dalton Zbierski
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WILBRAHAM -- The Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District embarked on creating a strategic plan 13 months ago, Superintendent John Provost announced during the Nov. 16 meeting of the HWRSD School Committee.

The strategic plan will consist of 100 initiatives and goals that will outline the district's future direction. Last Thursday, Provost announced the progress of 22 initiatives during a Power-Point display at the School Committee meeting.



Turley photo by Dalton Zbierski
Superintendent John Provost announced the progress of 22 initiatives from the strategic plan during the Nov. 16 School Committee meeting at Minnechaug Regional High School.

"The first is to establish a district-wide leadership team focused on pedagogy. That is done," Provost said.

Pedagogy is the "art, science or profession of teaching," according to Merriam-Webster, and can include various teaching styles, feedback and assessment. Once a month, a team has met to discuss issues of pedagogy and structural leadership. The second initiative is establishing and implementing PreK-12 curriculum councils.

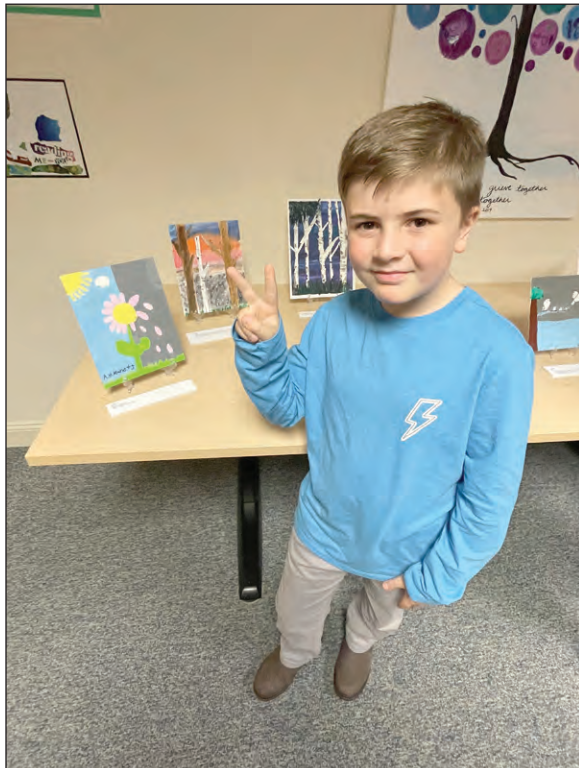
"We do now have curriculum councils in both ELA and math. They are meeting on a regular basis," Provost said.

Identifying and providing opportunities for teachers PreK-12 in similar content areas to collaborate is the third initiative. On Nov. 16, the School Committee viewed a portion of "scheduled common planning time" that is provided for teachers throughout the district.

The fourth initiative is to provide targeted professional development to maintain and sustain a PreK-12 aligned curriculum.

"You have in here several agendas from different PD dates

Please see **PLAN**, page 7



Nine-year-old Rigby stands in front of his painting "Secrets and Stories" at Rick's Place on Nov. 15.



Turley photos by Dalton Zbierski
Lawrence and Catalina stand in front of their artwork at Rick's Place while Sarah Flynn stands by their side last Wednesday.

Art gallery at Rick's Place recognizes Children's Grief Awareness Month

By Dalton Zbierski
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WILBRAHAM -- A powerful art gallery captivated several dozen people at Rick's Place during a Nov. 15 exhibition at the nonprofit's Post Office Park headquarters.

The gallery, titled "Reflections: A Grief Awareness Exhibit", commemorated Children's Grief Awareness Month in November. Rick's Place serves as a beacon of support for children, teens and families navigating grief, and both youth and adult participants created the artwork

that was displayed.

"We really are trying to get the word out that we have to open the narrative and change the way we talk about grief and loss and make it more of an inclusive, supportive community for people who have experienced the death of someone," Rick's Place Program Manager Betsy Flores said.

While the reception marked the first gallery at Rick's Place, expressive art is integral to the programming that is completed on site and in schools. Most of the art displayed was created by children and teens; Flores noted that the artwork provides a visual into what they deal with day

to day as they grieve.

She said when a loved one passes away there are many ripples of loss and change. Peer support in the community is significant because grief is an isolating experience for many people; finding a positive outlet to channel that anger and sadness in a supportive, judgement free zone such as Rick's Place is critical.

"When they're given healthy outlets, it sort of helps them to navigate all the other challenges in a more successful way," Flores said. "I'm always so proud of the depths these kids go to and the way that they articulate how they're feeling, the

way they're open to exploring it."

Nine-year-old Rigby Archambault lost his father, John, in 2018. For last Wednesday's gallery, he painted a forest of trees and called it "Secrets and Stories." He pointed out two oak trees and one birch tree.

"If you ask any author or illustrator if they have secrets in their stories, almost all of them will absolutely say, 'Yes.' That's exactly what I tried to describe," Archambault said. "I put two oak trees and one birch tree because it feels like the odd one out when you're the one griev-

Please see **ART**, page 5

'Shop Till You Drop' Fundraiser supports senior center

All proceeds support senior center programming

By Kristin Rivers
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HAMPDEN -- The Friends of Hampden Seniors is holding its annual "Shop Till You Drop" Holiday Fundraiser to support senior center programming.

The fundraiser kicked off Nov. 6 and is held in the lobby of the facility on Allen Street. It runs through Dec. 29, with varying handmade or donated items available for purchase, including festive, holiday-themed gifts of dolls, stockings, handmade ornaments and stocking stuffers, clothing, jewelry, board

games, mugs, books, candles and many more.

All proceeds support the senior center's programming.

Bobbi Grant organized the fundraiser and donated grapevine wreaths, explaining the fundraiser has gone on for 12 years, with her in charge of restocking, displaying and tracking the purchases.

The fundraiser was advertised in the senior center newsletter with calls for donations from September through October, with other donations coming in throughout the year.

Please see **SHOP**, page 13

A wooden rack holding up handmade ornaments are some of the many items up for grabs during the Shop Till You Drop Annual Holiday Fundraiser at Hampden Senior Center.



Wicked Good Treats by Elaine is November's featured vendor

By Kristin Rivers
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PALMER -- Wicked Good Treats by Elaine was chosen as November's special vendor for the Baystate Wing Auxiliary Gift Shop.

Wicked Good Treats is run by Wilbraham resident Elaine Shepard, selling baked goods, breads, cookies, pies, jams and more throughout the year at farmers' markets, fall craft fairs and more.

She also sells pickles during the Big E at Saltbox Seasoning.

Shepard explained that she's done this for 16 years, crediting her children for her start.

"I used to do stuff with my kids when they were very small, and we started out making lollipops and things," Shepard said. "We'd go to a party, you go to someone's house, and you would always bring something. Sometimes, I would bring something chocolate, and they would say 'Oh this is so good; you should sell this,'" Shepard said.

Eventually, she did when she took part in the Mattoon Street Arts Festival.

"I sold out. I had nothing left. Every little last morsel was gone, and people loved it," Shepard said. "That was the beginning of it."

Shepard said Janice Fontaine, an Auxiliary Gift Shop board member, reached out to her about the opportunity to be a vendor.

"They got permission to have a vendor come in and they knew that I had been very successful," Shepard said. "I was one of their most popular vendors from previous years, and I said, 'Sure, I'd be happy to come back.'"

Shepard added Baystate Wing Hospital "is a special place to me too" as they took care of her mother when she was ill and her daughter was a nurse there.

"So, it's nice to be able to do something that benefits the auxiliary when they've been so good to my family," Shepard said.

Shepard cherishes each day she has running Wicked Good Treats, including coming up with new products year after year.

"I think being able to be creative and working with customers one-on-one to make their parties very personal, it's one of the things that I enjoy," Shepard said.

Shepard added when you support a local business or vendor, "your money stays right in town."

"In all of my baking and making jam and making pickles and things, I always try to use local products grown right here," Shepard said. "From doing the different farmers markets, I have

made great connections with the farmers and being able to use their products, their fresh produce, in my baked goods and in my pickles and in my jams and things. It's been very rewarding."

Shepard also appreciates the opportunity for her products to bring joy to others when they visit the hospital.

"People, even visitors, like to be able to say thank you to the staff and to be able to give them a small token," Shepard said. "Being able to say more than thank you, it makes you feel good to give something to people, to staff members that care for your family. So that's a nice feature when I'm there."

Looking ahead to the end of the year, Shepard will be busy working on orders for the holidays.

"We're doing orders for pies and breads for Thanksgiving. We're doing cookie trays and cupcake orders through Christmas," Shepard said.

Shepard wants the community to know Wicked Good Treats is here and she looks forward to working with more local farmers.

"I'm not about making a lot of volume. I just want to make things that look good and taste good," Shepard said. "I've met some great people. I look forward to meeting more people."

To learn more, visit www.wickedgoodtreatsbyelaine.com or contact Shepard at 413-427-5240 or WickedGoodTreats@charter.net.



Submitted photo Elaine Shepard Elaine Shepard of Wicked Good Treats by Elaine with Taylor Brown at the Springfield Pride Parade in June. Shepard, a resident of Wilbraham, is this month's vendor at the Baystate Wing Auxiliary Gift Shop.

Residents share safety concerns with Select Board during open forum

By Kristin Rivers
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WILBRAHAM -- Residents voiced several safety concerns around Whitford

Place ponds, a sidewalk project and pedestrian safety during a Nov. 13 meeting with the Select Board.

The comments were presented during Citizens Open Forum.

Gabby Petruzzelli shared she and her

husband, Dave, were concerned about the ponds by Whitford Place, an area mentioned by Department of Public Works Director Tonya Capparello earlier in the meeting.

Petruzzelli explained she reached out to the Conservation Commission for help. "Now they're, you know, very swampy. Mosquitos are bad in the summer; there's trees that are having issues that need to be taken care of," Petruzzelli said.

Petruzzelli explained that the steps by the pond are also a concern, as friends have fallen. She said kids from Wilbraham & Monson Academy can't use the steps and must go on people's lawns to access the connector on their running route.

Additionally, she's reached out to Solitude Lake Management about putting together an annual plan to keep the lakes healthy.

"I think, from our perspective, we're just wanting to know can we get a committee together kind of like they did for Bennett Pond and take care of the areas as a community ourselves, or is it something that we need to ask of the town and try to see if that gets followed through on?" Petruzzelli said.

Brian Johnstone also expressed concerns, asking the board if any pollution studies have been done.

"Where they're talking about the ecological issues, things such as what people are putting in their lawns in order to make them greener typically runs in a, say, downstream effect, which may be worth studying," Johnstone said.

Dave Petruzzelli hopes the residents in

the area can do something to address the concerns.

"If we can get the town's somewhat approval that we could do work done in there as a little community, our little cul-de-sac and the other cul-de-sac joins," he said. "We're just kind of asking for the approval to do some work there and see if we can get it back to where it should be and kind of maintain it as a group."

Town Administrator Nick Breault said the residents presented great questions.

"I can bring back and have conversations with Tonya and we can get back with folks," Breault said.

Johnstone also asked for clarification on the sidewalk project, explaining work has stopped and different sets of communication from different town officials were received.

Additionally, set crosswalks don't have streetlights or flashers.

"I have two children here in town. We like to go for walks. Part of the thing was we were excited about two years ago we heard that this sidewalk would be completed. What we've heard so far is that that money has been redirected for a bridge in town, which is also not completed, so we are confused as you can imagine," Johnstone said.

Elizabeth Cherella lives immediately next to Wilbraham Commons and worries about walkers making their way along Stony Hill Road.

"Not having a sidewalk for a population that's walking is horrifying and so being told three years ago it was going to happen and not have it come to fruition is upsetting, and we didn't get any update as to why," Cherella said.

Johnstone added he worries about the impact on businesses, residents and congestion on the streets, sharing he also can't turn left out of his own driveway.

"So it is a safety issue and a safety concern for multiple people," Johnstone said.

Chairman Theresa Godrich thanked the residents for sharing their concerns, directing Breault to get their contact information to review the issues.



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Pickleball court plans for Memorial School hits setback

By Kristin Rivers
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WILBRAHAM -- Tensions arose during the Select Board meeting on Nov. 13 when discussing the plan for pickleball courts for Memorial School in regard to Article 97.

The plan to move forward with the pickleball courts was approved a week earlier on Nov. 6.

The discussion began normally, with Town Administrator Nick Breault explaining that putting up the pickleball courts at Memorial School, or anywhere, "that would make those courts part of use for recreation activity, which would make them recreation by definition."

"So that means that if there were an attempt in the future to change the use of those courts -- let's say the town wanted to sell the entire Memorial property -- that particular area would be subject to Article 97," Breault said. "Meaning it would likely need a vote of the town to approve the sale of them as recreation property and would also require approval of the State Legislature and would require the town to find a substitute piece of property, more than likely to replace that piece of property."

Article 97, according to the town website, states, "The land is acquired for conservation purposes and cannot be used for other purposes except by a 2/3 vote of each branch of the General Court, i.e. the State Legislature."

Breault added that the area already has recreation facilities with the baseball fields, clarifying building the courts there is "an opportunity to see if the public has appetite to really invest in that property long-term for recreation facilities."

After the board agreed to move forward with the plan and found no issue in relation to Article 97, Certified Public Accountant Chair Tracey Plantier spoke up online, explaining how the CPA money that would go towards the pickleball courts has to be at a recreation location.

"I really think the board needs to hold off on moving forward on this until it's looked into further," Plantier said.

Plantier said how schools are an exception to Article 97 and had recreation property affiliated with the school.

"You're making decisions with C P A money without a formal decision

on the property and when Recreation approached CPA about doing pickleball and the location, they committed to it would only be at Memorial School if there was a decision to move forward on the Memorial School project," Plantier said.

Parks & Recreation Director Bryan Litz disputed this, saying Plantier was incorrect.

"Whether it was a recreational facility or not, it's currently in use as you folks know, so obviously our preference was to make sure that we're not going to put money into a facility that potentially was going to be sold," Litz said.

Litz added the department "has nothing to do with the actual writing of the articles."

"All we participate in is the submittal of the CPA applications," Litz said.

When Plantier said to the board, "So, I guess you're willing to risk \$350,000 of the Select Board in the future if it decides to sell that property," Chairman Theresa Goodrich responded, saying her stance is still the same on moving forward and doesn't see the town approving to sell the property, in her opinion.

"That property's an asset to the town. That property houses 30% of our recreation now and it's only going to grow if we do anything," Goodrich said. "I think that for us to put pickleball courts there as we have agreed, that's the logical place to do it."

Goodrich then directly addressed Plantier with this.

"And now if you're saying you're not going to give the taxpayers their money for their pickleball courts, that's a whole nother ball of wax," Goodrich said.

Plantier argued how it's risking taxpayer money and the program. She is concerned about the rush to move forward on the plan.

"This is a good example of where it can go wrong, so I just feel it needs to be looked into more carefully," Plantier said.

Select Board member Michael Squindo said the way he sees it and with the information he has,

"You're damned if you do and you're damned if you don't."

"We're either already protecting that property by 97 or what are we going to do with the \$350,000 to CPA? Buy parts or receive donated land

from Spec Pond and then develop additional private property taking it permanently off the rolls?" Squindo said.

After Squindo asked Litz what the timeline would be if the plan moved forward, he explained the contract would be signed with an engineering company the next day, followed by getting bids in December and January and construction beginning in March.

"The longer we delay, the more likely we are to miss the window of getting on the calendar for the construction companies in the spring," Litz said.

Breault later relayed how Attorney Brian Winner said using CPA Funds for the pickleball courts at Memorial School "would be appropriate," clarifying he appreciated Plantier bringing up this concern and has no personal animosity towards her.

"It's her job as the chair of CPC to do this, so if it needs to go the extra step -- and if the board wants to do the extra step -- for what it's worth, I understand it and I appreciate it," Breault said.

The conversation exploded when Litz said this.

"I feel like Tracey's just going to keep going until she can get her way. This thing has been discussed and discussed and discussed and I feel like you both had made a decision. We had a meeting last week. It's obviously; she's not a pro-rec kind of thing here," Litz said.

Goodrich quickly halted the conversation, and when Litz and Plantier butted heads again later, the board agreed to have Breault consult with Winner on how to move forward.

Squindo presented this motion to end the discussion.

"I would make a motion to authorize Parks & Recreation Department to move forward with putting pickleball courts at Memorial School if, after the conversation with Attorney Winner, there is a clearly stated acknowledgment that the town meeting article in question clearly permits it to be done," Squindo said.

The motion carried 2-0.



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Finance Committee approves funding request from Bylaw Committee

This follows approval after the Sept. 13 Select Board meeting

By Kristin Rivers
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WILBRAHAM – On Nov. 8, the Finance Committee approved a technology and efficiency request presented by the Bylaw Committee.

The approval comes after the Select Board passed this initial request back on Sept. 13.

Police Chief Ed Lennon spoke on behalf of the Bylaw Committee, recapping how the committee has been researching models to improve town regulatory or code documents.

During the process, Lennon said the committee heard from General Code LLC, a vendor used by other towns, on what the business does to enhance documents online.

“General Code’s service is one where they manage the town’s code documents by digitizing the codes and publishing them online. These documents are organized into intuitive, easy-to-understand formats,” Lennon said. “General Code reviews the documents for inconsistencies, potential legal conflicts and provides hyperlinks between the related codes and documents.”

He added how the request has support from the town clerk, Building, Planning and IT Departments and General Code would apply their services to the general bylaws, zoning bylaw, subdivision rules and regulations and fee schedule.

“This is just under approximately 400 pages between all the documents,” Lennon said.

The proposed fee for setup, Lennon explained, is \$9,980, with a yearly fee of \$1,195 to maintain it.

“When changes to these documents

are needed in the future, the town would send the changes to General Code, and they would review and make the changes. General Code would charge a time and materials fee for any of these updates,” Lennon said.

Xiomara Albán DeLobato approved of the request.

“I think it’s a great move forward to be digitizing an important government’s document like our bylaws and having that just be easily accessible not only to town municipality but residents,” DeLobato said. “They’re looking through. It’s just easier to navigate.”

Marc Ducey asked Lennon who uses the software most and how frequently people look at and search the bylaws.

“That’s what I’m trying to get a sense of. Is this stuff used, you know, very infrequently, is it often? I don’t know what those numbers are,” Ducey said.

Mike Mazzucca said he thinks one would have to look at the individual departments to find out the exact numbers.

“How many times do they get a phone call, whether it’s a day or a week, asking about specific issues? I do know that Planning is probably the heaviest of them all but there could be others as well,” Mazzucca said.

Joe Lawless cited Springfield as an example when looking at other town bylaws online, explaining how it took him only 10 seconds to find what he was looking for, adding the site and PDFs for Wilbraham “is much more cumbersome.”

“I think if we were to do this, I think we would have to sell it to the community,” Lawless said.

Lawless suggested having a table at a future town meeting could encourage residents to check out the bylaws.

“I think it would probably encourage more engagement in the community on something like that,” Lawless said.

Ducey agreed “there’s probably a lot of benefit to this” in making the documents more user-friendly for residents and internal employees, clarifying his concerns were around the charges for the changes in terms of what the numbers really are.

“I think we need to be cognizant about this. This is a lot of money, okay? But it all matters and so I’m being a little bit more cautious and I think will continue to be that way,” Ducey said.

The motion to move the amount of \$9,980 from the Technology and Efficiency Fund to the town’s Bylaw Study Committee carried 5-1.

Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative needs bus drivers

By Dalton Zbierski
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WILBRAHAM -- Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative Executive Director Alvin Morton returned to Minnechaug Regional High School on Nov. 16 for a meeting of the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School Committee.

After providing an interim report several weeks ago, Morton presented on the need for bus drivers last Thursday. He said LPVEC can’t offer enough money to be competitive with other private companies hiring drivers, partially because those companies pay their drivers during the summer.

“What we were trying to get to you is the fact that our bus drivers during the summer go two months without work. They cannot claim unemployment because we’re an educational facility. Our drivers go two months without pay,” Morton said, noting teachers can’t get unemployment either.

LPVEC supports the success of students by providing high-quality shared programs and services that are cost-effective, but Morton said the bus driver shortage is a national issue and one LPVEC hasn’t found a solution to.

To cut costs, even senior members of the LPVEC team are taking on new roles.

“We have our supervisors, our transportation general manager and assistant general manager driving buses now. That’s where we are at, at this point in time, trying to find creative ways,” Morton said.

Morton is in his first year in the position after serving last year as the interim superintendent for Chicopee Public Schools. The bus driver shortage was one of the major challenges that awaited him when he took the new position.

Morton said LPVEC has turned to advertising to try to fill the vacancies.

“We’ve spent \$62,000 on advertising,” he said. “Billboards, commercials, radio ads, we had posting on trains, posting on signs, so we’re trying everything. We’re offering a \$200 incentive for anybody that refers a bus driver that stays a whole school year. We’re trying a variety of things.”

LPVEC is also working to build its social media presence to “expand our

footprint in the community” because that’s where a lot of people get their news and information, Morton said.

The bus driver shortage is so bad that LPVEC is losing its substitute drivers, Morton said, as they go to other districts or companies that guarantee four or five hours of pay regardless of how long they drive.

“That’s something we have to go back to the bargaining table; we’ll be going probably in January, where we can talk about different ways to be creative to retain people and try to add on,” Morton said.

Morton has communicated to Superintendent John Provost that LPVEC has come across a pool of mothers who want to drive but require childcare. Morton requested the district’s help.

“Maybe some of our member districts will be able to offer some slots in their daycare or preschool programs in order for those parents to be able to drive in their member districts,” Morton said. “Because if someone has childcare and lives in Agawam, it’s hard for them to come over here and drive in Hampden or Wilbraham when they have to worry about (their child) or vice versa.”

Provost confirmed that he spoke with Morton about the subject and is willing to look into helping.

“If we have individuals who are in that situation, please let us know and we’ll see what we can figure out,” he said. “We do have a number of incoming preschoolers so we’re certainly going to have to expand our program anyways.”

Morton reiterated that the greatest obstacle facing LPVEC bus drivers is unpaid summers.

“I mean even myself, it would be tough to go two months without pay, so we’re trying to find creative ways in order to do that. We go back to the board, looking for a way to pay our drivers that we can sustain. I think that’s one of the biggest issues; the two months without pay,” Morton said.

When asked how many drivers are hired for summer school or summer special needs programs, Morton said the number is only about 15 or 20 out of 252, which leads to drivers seeking other jobs.

“People go into the summer and get part-time jobs, and those part-time jobs turn into full-time jobs, and they don’t come back,” Morton said.

Federated Community Church to hold Winterfest Holiday Craft Fair Dec. 9

HAMPDEN – The Federated Community Church, located at 590 Main

Street, is holding a Winterfest Holiday Craft Fair on Saturday, Dec. 9, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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Refreshments will be served



From masks to portraits to quilts, a variety of artwork was displayed as part of the gallery "Reflections: A Grief Awareness Exhibit" at Rick's Place on Nov. 15.

ART from page 1

ing and almost no one else in the school can feel what you're feeling. They try, but I don't think they'll understand unless they actually experience it."

To complete the painting, Archambault said he needed encouragement and inspiration. He found it at Rick's Place, where he feels at home.

"It's very special to be here. I'm among all of these people who can actually explain what I'm feeling," Archambault said. "I'm very grateful. I think my dad passed down his skills, he was a very great artist."

Rick's Place Executive Director Therese Ross was moved by the gallery and the talent of the children. She anticipated that families and board members would arrive on Nov. 15 but didn't expect members of the community unaffiliated with Rick's Place to stop by and show support.

Ross said art can be used to communicate. "Sometimes, it's hard to come up with the words, but if you can do some art, it feels a lot better," Ross said. "It catches me off guard; the powerful impact that art has and the idea that when kids (draw on) their emotions or experiences, they can actually use art to really represent some of the things that they can't put words to."

The gallery at Rick's Place was its first but won't be its last. Ross praised Flores for deciding to pursue the program, which was highly successful with a great turnout.

Flores said the children who participated in the gallery should be very proud of themselves for exploring the pain that they're feeling and sharing it with others in a positive, constructive way.

"Really, it's not their responsibility to teach the rest of the community about what it's really like, but we want to be a part of that sharing of information that helps them in the long run end up being more supported too," she said.

The gallery at Rick's Place will be featured at the nonprofit for the next several days but will move to Agawam Public Library in December. After that, it will likely return to Rick's Place.

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VIEWPOINTS

in the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



My dad has been gone a long time.

I sometimes feel badly that he is not in my thoughts as much as he used to be. A lot has happened since his death - marriage and children, a new (old) house.

Sometimes it's easy to get caught up in the day to day, but today, as I write, I think of him. Holidays at my childhood home were always a lot of fun.

I reflect on that now, as we make plans for our Thanksgiving and Christmas gatherings. I can still picture him standing at the counter by the sink, carving the turkey and later in the day enjoying a whopping piece of apple pie (with American cheese?) from his recliner.

My mom still keeps some of the traditions alive as do other family members. Read on to learn about some of the favorite vegetables, fruits and even herbs that make an appearance at the table.

I am not exactly sure where my mom's stuffing recipe originally came from, but it is always a big hit. My Illinois based brother loves it so much that my sister-in-law asked for a copy and now makes it for him on Thanksgiving.

I guess if you can't be at home, having mom's stuffing is the next best thing! Her recipe wouldn't be the same without sage and I doubt yours would either.

Common garden sage (*Salvia officinalis*) is a shrubby perennial plant native to the Mediterranean.

Its leaves start out lime-green in color, but at maturity end up more grey than green. They are somewhat "pebbly" in texture and are very aromatic.

Thanksgiving thoughts

matic.

For the most pungency, sage leaves should be harvested just prior to flowering. Hang the leaves and stem tips in loose bunches upside down in an airy, dark place to dry.

Once completely dry (crispy to the touch), leaves can be stripped from their stems and stored in an airtight container.

Remember, as with any herb, drying concentrates the oils in the foliage. Use only half the amount of dried herbs if you have to substitute them for fresh in any recipe.

Because sage is nearly evergreen (actually, "evergrey") I rarely dry any, but harvest it for immediate use even through the winter months - it is freeze-dried but still tasty! Cut back the plant hard in early spring- you will sacrifice a few flowers, but will be rewarded with a lush bushy plant, rather than one that is woody and sparse.

Another one of mom's cherished contributions to Thanksgiving dinner is her apple cranberry relish. This is a simple recipe in which fresh cranberries and peeled apples are chopped fine and mixed together with a little sugar.

So easy yet incredibly yummy! I tried growing cranberries only to be disappointed that voles chewed the roots and killed the plants.

Maybe I'll try again sometime in the future. They don't need a bog, but the water does help with harvesting.

My mom always bought a small turnip for my Dad to enjoy at Thanksgiving dinner. I have to say that I don't recall any other members of the family eagerly anticipating it, not the way he did anyway.

I remember mom carefully cutting away the hard outer skin and then cubing the flesh. It was then boiled and mashed as you would potatoes, with lots of butter.

Turnip must be one of those foods that you acquire a taste for, and as of yet I have not.

To produce the best-tasting, largest turnips

time your plantings to grow and mature in cool weather. For Thanksgiving turnips sow seeds 90 days before the first fall frost is expected.

Simply make a shallow trench one-quarter to one-half inch deep and position seeds one to one and a half inches apart. Once germination occurs and plants have developed their first set of true leaves, thin seedlings to three inches apart.

Deep, loose soil is best for root vegetables of any kind. Turnips benefit from extra water during droughty periods.

If an early frost threatens and your roots aren't yet mature you can cover turnip plants with a sheet or blanket on chilly nights to get through the cold spell and sneak out some additional growing time. Do watch out for frigid temps, however, since mercury that measures below the twenty-five degree mark can damage the crown of the plant.

This type of injury can make turnips more susceptible to rot and reduce storage capabilities. Turnips are best stored at temperatures around thirty-five degrees.

They can be packed in damp sand or leaves in a cold cellar and should keep for at least two or three months. Some books recommend wrapping individual roots in plastic wrap to hold in moisture as well as prevent the strong turnip odor from permeating other vegetables.

Commercial turnip growers use a food grade wax for this purpose, which makes cutting away the outer flesh all the more challenging.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 31 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.

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor

Dear Rusty

My wife retired in 2015 and is receiving Social Security. I am past my full retirement age and I still work. I recently filed for Social Security benefits and received my first payment earlier this month and my benefits are around three times my wife's. I now find that, due to other income, I am having some regrets about filing for Social Security, as the taxes will be complicated. So, my questions are:

If I do a "Voluntary Suspension", can my wife still apply to get up to 50% of my benefits, or do I have to be "actively" receiving Social Security benefits? In other words, does the "Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015" prevent this?

If I do a "Voluntary Suspension", how soon could I "restart" my benefits?

Signed: Having Second Thoughts

Dear Second Thoughts

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 closed a loophole which previously allowed someone to file for their Social Security retirement benefit in order for their marital partner to claim a spousal benefit, after which the primary beneficiary could suspend their own benefit and allow it to grow to maximum at age 70. That "file and suspend" option went away in April of 2016; thus, your wife cannot claim her spousal benefit while your Social Security retirement benefits are suspended you must be "actively" receiving benefits for your wife to get benefits on your record.

Nevertheless, because you've already reached your full retirement age, you can voluntarily suspend your benefit payments at any time to allow it to continue growing by simply calling Social Security at your local office or at the national number 1-800-772-1213 and asking them to do so. Your wife will not receive her spousal benefits for any months your benefits are suspended, but she would continue to get her own SS retirement amount, only the spousal portion of her monthly amount would

Can I voluntarily suspend my Social Security payments?

be suspended.

You will be able to restart your benefits at any time by calling Social Security again and asking that your benefits be resumed. You can suspend and restart your benefits as needed (no restriction on how many times), but they will only start/resume the suspension effective with the month following the month you call. And, as you likely already know, for each month your benefits are suspended you will earn Delayed Retirement Credits resulting in a higher payment amount later.

Just for clarity, voluntary suspension of benefits is only available to those who have reached full retirement age but is an excellent way to increase your monthly Social Security payment. Your benefit will grow by .667% for each month suspended and, if your benefit is still suspended when you turn 70 years old, Social Security will automatically resume pay-

ments at that time, at your higher maximum monthly amount.

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. . N SSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.



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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.

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Fire Chief presents Selectmen RFQ draft for building expansion

By Dalton Zbierski
Editor
dzbierski@turley.com

HAMPDEN -- Fire Chief Ed Poulin presented the Board of Selectmen with a drafted Request for Quote for fire station expansion design plans on Nov. 6.

Since 2018, the fire department has explored the possibility of expanding its station on North Road. To produce the RFQ draft, fire department personnel worked with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

"What this RFQ will do is give us actual plans, actual real time cost and not a speculation of what they may be or could be," Poulin said. "I don't think there's any way to bring this forward to the town for any kind of vote if we don't have harder numbers than, 'It could be this or that.'"

Mark Barba, representing the fire department, noted that a representative from PVPC vetted the draft to several architects, who concluded that \$50,000 is an appropriate target number. By comparison, the senior center expansion design plans will cost approximately \$57,000.

Barba said that the "meat of (the RFQ) is the tasks," which pertains to identifying needs and deficiencies.

He noted that the firm that is hired will analyze studies completed by Tecton Architects, which specializes in public safety architecture and design and is based in Hartford, CT, and Mitchell Associates Construction Corp., a general contractor based in Shrewsbury.

"Basically, what they're going to come up with is two conceptual designs broken out," Barba said. "That's kind of what you're funneling down to. From

there, we'll be refining things and picking basically one of those (potential firms) to come up with a true, working, ready to build set of documents."

Selectman Craig Rivest asked for an explanation of the RFQ process, as he hasn't participated in a building expansion as a member of the board. Town Administrator Bob Markel walked him through it.

"The RFQ process was designed as a way to avoid the lowest qualified bidder. In other words, you want to get qualifications, look at the qualifications, select a firm based on its qualifications and negotiate a price. If you can't make a deal, you go to the second of the group of qualified firms and so forth," Markel said.

The design plans could be funded by a vote at an annual town meeting or by using American Rescue Plan Act money, of

which the town has \$500,000. However, most – if not all – of the ARPA money will be spent on a water project, Markel said.

Markel inquired if the fire department's strategy is to wait until funding becomes available to send out the RFQ and establish a committee to review proposals.

"I don't think so," Barba said. "I think you can start the process with this, but you want to have a committee ready in place at some point, which I don't think would take too long (to form)."

Board Chair John Flynn said the process would be consistent with what the town has done for past building projects, making a building committee necessary. He believes a committee could be formed by the time the design phase receives funding.

"Obviously, we had a police station building committee, we have the senior center building committee. I think a project

of this size (would have one). I know, of course, we're inundated with volunteers all the time. I'm sure we can grab some people to serve if that's what is decided," Flynn said.

Flynn described Poulin and Barba as a "two-man committee."

He encouraged the two-man team to continue taking it one step at a time.

"I am concerned about going too far ahead when we don't have a clear funding source," Flynn said.

It was expected that the Selectmen would put the "final stamp" of approval on the RFQ during their Nov. 13 meeting. Unfortunately, due to early Thanksgiving deadlines, the Times was unable to access last Monday's meeting.

Updated coverage can be expected in next week's edition.

PLAN from page 1

throughout the past year. You can see that items on each of those agendas are focused on getting our curriculum aligned and in order," Provost said, thanking Curriculum Director Lisa Curtin for "taking a major leadership role."

Initiative five involves creating and implementing a process for updating, growing and innovating district-level educational programming.

"I've stated many times and I'll state it once again, I'm concerned about the number of initiatives in this strategic plan," Provost said. "There's 100 if you count them all up, and just trying to get aligned on the basics has been (challenging) for both the administrators and the teaching staff. I think that creating a new process to develop new programs is something that needs to take a back seat while we work on getting the basics covered."

Re-establishing a district Safety/Wellness Advisory Team is the sixth initiative and has already been completed.

The seventh initiative is to create a specialized district-level Family Reunification Team that is trained on procedures that are updated for each building. It also involves conducting a family reunification functional exercise. The team has been established.

"We did the training for all of our district staff to be able to do family reunification," Provost said. "We did a drill last year at Green Meadows (School). We used that as a training ground for other schools, and it turned out to be quite useful because, as you know, it was shortly thereafter we had a pipe burst at the middle school and had to conduct family reunification here at the high school."

Initiative eight pertains to updating a Medical Emergency Response Plan to be submitted to the state's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Provost noted that the plan will be submitted next year, as DESE doesn't want the plan this year.

The ninth initiative involves launching an annual school climate survey for students, staff and community members. Provost said the survey is in progress but will be fully completed later in the academic year.

"We decided to defer the actual launch to this year because, as you know, last year we did the equity audit, which involved a massive survey of the community. We felt that there was a little bit of survey fatigue going on," Provost said.

The tenth initiative includes the formation of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team, which has been formed. Initiative 11 involves coordinating with LPVEC on hiring a new DEIB coordinator, which the district has completed twice because it hires that position.

Initiative 12 involves supporting an equity audit resulting in a three-year improvement plan and has already been completed. Initiative 13, involving the identification of effective, research-based instructional practices that meet the diverse needs of all learners, has also been completed.

"That really is what the catalog of tiered supports in the district is," Provost said.

The fourteenth initiative pertains to identifying effective research-based, proactive social-emotional learning curriculums that support equity, diversity and inclusion, beginning at Tier 1. One "strand" that has been conducted was "social emotional," Provost said.

Initiative 15 refers to establishing a website review and evaluation team and has already been completed. The sixteenth initiative involves examining the quality of staff meetings at all levels.

"That's ongoing. We have evaluated team meetings, but that's something you have to do on an ongoing basis just to make sure that your meeting practices stay sharp," Provost said.

Initiative 17 involves making School Committee meeting minutes public and acquiring a better live streaming process, which Provost said has been completed.

Initiative 18 pertained to the creation of diverse district wide teams, such as a climate team, a DEI team, a student success team and a communication team.

"I'd say that is ongoing because team members come and go," Provost said. "The teams that are established are meeting, but that is something that I think will always be on an ongoing basis. It's not you just create them and then take a victory lap. You have to actually do the meetings."

The nineteenth initiative involves establishing roles, meeting schedules and communication protocols. Provost said it is ongoing and he will bring more communication to the School Committee soon.

"There are lots of different groups that are meeting, and sometimes it's hard for them to communicate with each other, for people to figure out different things that are happening with the different teams, so I've been thinking about (how we can communicate) with each other in an effective way for the whole district," Provost said.

Initiative 20 includes establishing financial support for team sustainability and is ongoing. Provost said that it can't get out of the ongoing category until the district finds a way to deal with its capital needs.

Initiative 21 involves creating a planning committee appointed by the School Committee and Select Boards in Hampden and Wilbraham and has already been completed. In fact, the district went be-

yond what was in the original plan.


"Originally, (forming the committee) was the goal for the first year but, as you know, that planning committee has been meeting on a regular basis and trying to get a lot done because it has heard a sense of urgency from the community about trying to get to the end of thinking about what a new regional agreement would be and what new district reconfiguration would be."

Lastly, Initiative 22 pertained to analyzing and evaluating the current vocational tech opportunities to determine program feasibility.

"As you know from the program studies, we added eight new pathways that begin with vocational education in the ninth grade," Provost said. "I can say that half of the students in the collaborative now are students who entered this year or last year because of those new opportunities we've been working on."

Ultimately, Provost is pleased with the district's progress.

"This is where things stand at the end of year one. I think we're in good shape in rolling out the strategic plan," he said.



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Deadline for photos and forms is Friday, December 6, 2023

A COMMUNITY GALLERY



Congratulations to Ophelia Hunter, another finisher of the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten Club at the Wilbraham Public Library. Pictured with Ophelia is her mother, Ashley. Photo courtesy of Rachel Smythe, assistant children's library at the library.

Life in & HAM

Readers are encouraged to send in medium to high resolution photos for this page by e-mail to dzbierski@turley.com or mail to TIMES, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069. Please note that if you send us a photo of the Times in different parts of the world, please include a recognizable landmark in the background. Examples: Eiffel Tower; castle in Spain.



On Nov. 14, members from the Hampden and Monson Fire Departments attended a training put on by LifeFlight Nurse Nick North. The training was conducted at the Monson Fire Department. Members learned about the capabilities of the air ambulance, safety around the helicopter and landing zone procedures. Over 32 members attended this training between the two departments. Photos and caption courtesy of the Monson Fire Department.



Firefighter Patrick Farrow connects with a student at Green Meadow School in Hampden, as firefighters and EMTs visited students as part of the S.A.F.E. program. Photo courtesy of Principal Sharon Moberg.

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Newly appointed firefighters, Grimes and O'Donnell, have completed their two-week administrative training, where they learned the day to day operations of the Wilbraham Fire Department. On Nov. 9, they began their 50-day recruit training at the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services Springfield Campus. This training will equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to work effectively throughout their careers serving the Town of Wilbraham. Photo and caption courtesy of the Wilbraham Fire Department.



Students at Green Meadows School in Hampden got to spray the fire hose last month when members of the fire department stopped by to raise awareness about the importance of safety. Photo courtesy of Principal Sharon Moberg.

As we are in the season of falling leaves, it's important to stay mindful of potential fire hazards that can arise when mowing leaves. Driving over a leaf pile can pose serious risks, including potential fire. As leaves can be dry and flammable, the heat generated by a vehicle's exhaust system could ignite the pile, leading to a fire. It's important to avoid driving over large leaf piles to prevent this. Allow equipment to cool down before storing it away. Whether it's a lawnmower or leaf blower, giving it time to cool down reduces the risk of accidental fires. Hot equipment and flammable materials like dried leaves or grass can potentially lead to a dangerous situation. Photo and caption courtesy of the Wilbraham Fire Department.



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Questions to be answered at Forum with Supt. Provost

WILBRAHAM -- The public will have the opportunity to ask questions of Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District Superintendent Dr. John Provost at a public forum at 7 p.m. at the Country Club of Wilbraham about initiatives raised by the recently announced consolidation of the eighth-grade classes at Minnechaug Regional High School. The meeting, sponsored by the Wilbraham-Hampden Rotary Club, is free and open to the public.

According to the Rotary event coordinator Peter Salerno, who is a former chairman of the regional school committee, Provost will talk about his thoughts and plans on what direction he believes is critical to students attending local schools. It has been said the move would relieve the pressure on an overcrowded Wilbraham Middle School, where the eighth grade is now.

Salerno said the high school was built to accommodate 1,225 students. It now serves 950 students, so there is space available. Folks who attend

the forum will have a chance to learn what are the advantages of such a move or voice objections to it.

Other questions are: What would the curriculum targeted at the eighth graders look like? What would involve ensuring the safety of the students? Looking to the recent Strategic Plan undertaken in the school district, what is needed for Wilbraham and Hampden to plan for the raise or lowering of the school-age population over the years to come? And, will the actions that are taken be permanent or temporary? Provost will outline the planned advantages of consolidating the eighth-grade classes at the high school and how this will benefit education in the school district.

He will take questions on those topics and other queries that relate to educational matters important to all Wilbraham and Hampden citizens.

For more information about the forum or the Rotary Club contact Brad Sperry, secretary of the Rotary Club at 413-537-4171.

Christmas Tree Festival on display

WILBRAHAM -- The Christmas Tree Festival at the Old Meeting House Museum at 450 Main St. will be held over two Sundays, on Dec. 3 from 3-5 p.m. featuring an ice carving demonstration at the rear of the museum, mulled cider and a wreath raffle.

On Dec. 10 from 2-4 p.m., the focus will be on youth with refreshments of cookies and milk instead of mulled cider. There will be a visit from Mrs. Claus, a scavenger hunt and crafts.

The museum, operated by the Atheneum Society of Wilbraham for the town, is free and open to the public. On both dates there will be a total of nine Christmas trees on display decorated by various local organizations. The Gift Shop will be open.

For more information about the Old Meeting House Open House, email president@wilbrahamatheneum.org.

Piano duo to perform Nov. 25

WILBRAHAM -- Quin Facey and Virginia Zheng, a classical piano duo, will perform at Wilbraham United Church on Saturday, Nov. 25 at 4 p.m. The church is located on Main Street. Donations will be gratefully accepted.

Richard R. Green Insurance Agency toy and supply drive Initiative is in its 18th year

HAMPDEN -- Richard R. Green Insurance Agency, Inc. is doing its 18th annual collection of toys for children and supplies for veterans' gift bags. This year, the toys will benefit the I Found Light Foundation located in Springfield. The gifts for veterans will be brought to the VA Center in Leeds.

For our veterans, the wish list for women includes clothing sizes 6-18, shoes sizes 9-12 and feminine products. For men: new socks and undergarments. Also, especially important for both men and women: gift cards to local stores, deodorant, toothpaste, razors, shaving cream, shampoo, conditioner, soap, lotion, body wash and blankets.

The insurance agency will be collecting new, unwrapped toys and veterans' gifts through Dec. 13 and is collecting at the Hampden office located at 32 Somers Road and Monson office located at 128 Main St. This year, the insurance agency will match the first \$500 in collected items FOR BOTH THE CHILDREN AND THE VETS. Please call 566-0028 for more information.

HOMETOWN SPOTLIGHT

WILBRAHAM-HAMPDEN TIMES

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Falcons fall in second round



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
McKenzie Murray dekes with the ball.

WILBRAHAM – Minnechaug Regional High School girls soccer had an excellent regular season this year and could have advanced in the Western Mass. playoffs but fell in penalty kicks. But their season ended after they lost in the second round of the state tournament, losing to Hingham 3-0 in the Round of 16. Minnechaug, which was the No. 9 seed, defeated Bishop Stang in the opening round of the tournament 3-0. In that win, McKenzie Murray, Nora Kennedy, and Ava Kearney scored goals for the Falcons while Makenzi Pastreck had four saves in getting the shutout. Minnechaug season ends with a 13-5-2 record.



Zoriah Wray sends a pass away during play this season.



Ava Kearney heads up the field.



Taylor Labadorf makes a throw-in.



Claire Poindexter looks to shoot.

Hingham ends field hockey season for Chaug



Kate O'Connor tries to chase down a ball.



Audrey Izzo sweeps a pass.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Serina Chan sends the ball up the field.



Norha Dumala passes the ball.



Ainsley Sheehan heads off a loose ball.

WILBRAHAM – An outstanding season for Minnechaug Regional field hockey ended in the state quarterfinals at Hingham High School. The Falcons lost in that matchup 3-0. Prior to that, the Falcons defeated Leominster and Northampton in the first two rounds to reach the Division 2 quarters. Minnechaug, which won its first Western Mass. title in several years, defeated Longmeadow in overtime and finishes their season with an excellent 17-3-1 overall record.

SENIORS

Hampden Senior Center to prepare 200 free Thanksgiving dinners

HAMPDEN -- The Senior Center is preparing 200 FREE Thanksgiving dinners for local people in the community! Next Wednesday, Nov. 22, between 2:00-2:30 p.m., people that have signed up can come pick up their prepared Thanksgiving meal in the Grab & Go pick up line.

The senior center will also be delivering meals to those that are unable to pick up. They will be getting

a full meal of turkey, gravy, mashed potatoes, stuffing, carrots, cranberry sauce, rolls and butter and of course a slice of pie! There will also be some special treats made by local kids in Hampden. This FREE meal would not be possible without the support of the senior center's amazing sponsors.

A BIG thank you to Monson Savings Bank, Brodeur Campbell Fence Company, Polish National Cred-

it Union, Great Horse, Bethlehem Church, St. Mary's Church, Hampden Senior Center Quilt Group and The Reserve. And a special thanks to St. Mary's Faith Formation program and Green Valley Pre-school for the special treats. There are also many volunteers helping to prepare the food, pack it up and help distribute and deliver it. Needless to say, it takes a village to make this happen!

November at the Hampden Senior Center

HAMPDEN -- The following programs will occur in the coming weeks at the Hampden Center, located on Allen Street.

African drumming with Jason! New six-week session

Fridays at 2:15 p.m., began Nov. 3, goes through Dec. 22.

No classes on Nov. 24.

\$25 for the session if paid in full and get one class free, or \$5 per class.

"Shop till you drop" Annual Holiday Fundraiser is back in our lobby!

The sale began on Monday, Nov. 6, and will remain available through Friday, Dec. 30.

Cash or check only. All proceeds benefit activities at the Hampden Senior Center.

Get in the Holiday spirit and decorate a Diamond Dotz project with Sheree!

Come see what the "Diamond Dotz Craze" is all about, while enjoying a fun gathering with great conversation, and lots of laughs, complete with treats and a beverage!

The cost is \$8 per person (all materials are included)

D & R Farm Share

Winter Farm Share will be back in January.

D & R Farm will again offer fresh produce twice per month starting in January and run through June.

FREE with SNAP/HIP if you qualify.

If you do not qualify for SNAP/Hip, you may purchase a share for \$40 per month.

New applications are required.

If interested, please contact Wendy to get your application in.

Hampden Resident Emergency Fuel Fund

The Fuel Fund is available to any Hampden resident who is in a heating crisis. A resident must have received a shut-off notice from the electric company, have less than a quarter of a tank of oil or be in another emergency heating situation.

Please call Wendy at 566-5588 for more information or to schedule an appointment.

All information provided is confidential.

The Hampden Emergency Fuel Fund is made available through private donations throughout the year. We are so grateful for the support of this valuable program.

Help Us Stock Our Shelves With Disinfecting Wipes!

Thank you to those who donated liquid dish soap last month. Every month we will target a different item to fill our shelves to provide non-food items to SNAP recipients.

Friends of Hampden Senior Citizens 2024 Fundraiser

Back by popular demand, the Friends of Hampden Senior Citizens, are selling one-month lottery calendars for \$10 each to support the Hampden Senior Center Building Expansion Fund.

Calendar Sales will begin on Nov. 6 and end on Dec. 30.

You have a chance to win a cash prize or gift card to a local business and you can win more than once! You have a chance to win EVERY day for the month of January. One name will be drawn daily during the month of January. Winners will be notified and can pick up their prize or we will mail it to them.

This is a great gift idea for all those people you want to give a thank you to for their services throughout the year. The calendars also make great stocking stuffers!

College: Owls win conference title

WESTFIELD -- Westfield State junior Delaney Parker (Orange, Mass.) delivered the game-winning goal with 24 minutes left in regulation to lift the Owls to a 2-1, come from behind win over top-seeded Bridgewater State in the 2023 Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference championship game at Mazzaferro Field in Bridgewater earlier this month.

Westfield earns the league's automatic bid to the NCAA Division III Tournament with the win.

For Westfield, it's the Owls third straight, and 10th overall MASCAC tournament title, all coming in the last 16 years under current Owls head coach Todd Ditmar.

"It shows how old I am," joked Ditmar. "I think we have talented players, they all have good attitudes and it makes it easy to coach them. Players just want the opportunity to get on the field and show how good they are."

Westfield fell behind on a fluky first goal from the Bears just 6:38 into the match. Granted a free kick from near midfield, Bridgewater's Sydney Dewhurst launched a long ball into the penalty area which appeared to be misjudged by Owls GK Julia Robak (Chicopee, Mass./Comp), who slipped a bit while changing direction to come off her line, and the ball skipped into the right side of the goal on one hop.

"We wanted to start strong and play good possession, and I was worried we could take a step back after the early goal," said Ditmar. "Bridgewater is an intimidating team, Dewhurst is a force, and we were like 'oh no!'"

Westfield had several good chances to level the match before the half, but a long shot from Parker was saved by Bears 'keeper Logan Levesque in the 22nd minute, then in the 24th minute Emily Ottomaniello's (Agawam, Mass.) header off of a free kick was saved.

Dewhurst had another good attack up middle of the Owls' defense before the break, but her shot from top of box was saved by Robak to keep the deficit at one.

"We put some good pressure on, but were attacking straight on, needed to attack from the wings and try to move their goalkeeper," said Ditmar. "At the half we talked about changing formation, but the players wanted to keep with it and said it was working."

Tournament MVP Kiana Maratsuka (Mililani, Hawaii) got the Owls on the board, and leveled the game at 1-1 with a free kick blast from 31 yards out, well-placed over the wall and into top left corner of the goal off the hands of goalkeeper Levesque, 7:18 into the second half.

"After Kiana got the goal, you could see that they were more anxious and we were more relaxed, that was huge momentum change," said Ditmar. "I think it really helped to see we could get one past their goalie, who is really good, and our players stepped up and believed in themselves, and our bench was supportive and positive throughout."

Parker's game winner came with 24:19 left to play, as Muratsuka deflected a Bears' attempt to clear the ball, and the high arching deflection wound up on the right side of the penalty area. Muratsuka beat a Bears defender to the ball and slipped it left to Parker, who dribbled through traffic from the right side across the top of the goalkeeper's box and whistled it to the left upper 90 for the goal and the 2-1 Owls' lead.

Westfield's best chance for an insurance goal came when Tia Tollis (East Longmeadow, Mass.) juked a defender but fired a shot just over the top of the crossbar with just under 14 minutes left. Westfield kept the offensive pressure on the Bears for the entirety of the second half.

Bridgewater's best chance to level the game late came when Dewhurst ripped a shot from the top of the penalty area, but her blast was blocked point blank by Owls' defender Jaida Cochran (Middleboro, Mass.) with 3.5 minutes left in the game.

Westfield outshot the Bears 13-3 overall in the second half, and the Owls didn't allow any shots on goal in the half.

Westfield is now 13-6-1. The Owls will learn their destination and opponent in the NCAA tournament on Monday, when the selection show is streamed at NCAA.com at 1:30 p.m.

Bridgewater's season comes to an end at 11-6-1.

Westfield entered the game as the number two seed. The Owls' lone loss of the conference season came two weeks ago at the feet of the Bears, by a 2-1 final in a game where Westfield had out-shot Bridgewater 23-11.

Today, Westfield out-shot the Bears 23-8 overall and 11-3 in shots on goal. The Owls also recorded four corner kicks to none for Bridgewater.

Levesque finished with nine saves for the Bears, while Robak made three saves for Westfield.

Wilbraham Christmas Tree Lighting to 'sparkle' Dec. 3

WILBRAHAM -- The Annual Town Christmas Tree Lighting will take place in Gazebo Park on Sunday, Dec. 3 at 4:30 p.m. presented by the Wilbraham-Hampden Rotary Club. Santa will arrive at the park on a Wilbraham Fire Engine with sirens blazing. Santa will say a few words to the gathered families, and then flip the switch turning on the colorful lights on the Town Christmas Tree. From there, children will line up at the gazebo until it is their turn to tell Santa what they want for Christmas. He will listen to their Christmas wishes and give them a candy cane.

LUSO Federal Credit Union will provide the candy canes, hot chocolate and cookies. Traditional Christmas music will be presented by David and Lisa Gomes.

A hygiene item collection to take place at the Tree Lighting. Families attending the event are asked to bring personal hygiene items such as shampoo, soft soap, hand sanitizer, toothbrushes, toothpaste, combs and more and drop them into a collection box near the Gazebo at the event. The club will donate those items to local organizations serving needy families and individuals.

After the Sunday spectacle the tree lights will turn on daily from sunset to 11 p.m., set by a timer, throughout the holiday season. For more information about the event or to join the Rotary Club, call Club Secretary Brad Sperry at 413-537-4171.

Garden Club to meet Dec. 7

WILBRAHAM -- The December meeting of the Wilbraham Garden Club will be held on Thursday, Dec. 7 at noon, at St. Cecelia's Parish Center on Main Street in Wilbraham. A special Christmas luncheon will be served.

Once again, we will be entertained by the wit and wisdom of floral designer, Matt Flatow, from Flowers, Flowers on 758

Sumner Ave., Springfield. Matt will demonstrate and discuss his floral arranging techniques. He will be designing some beautiful arrangements for the holidays that will be raffled at the end of the presentation.

We will be extending invitations to area garden clubs, so come early, get a good seat, sit back and enjoy this wonderful program.

Women's Club to meet Dec. 14

WILBRAHAM -- The December meeting of the Wilbraham Women's Club will take place on Thursday, Dec. 14 at St. Cecelia's Parish Center on Main Street in Wilbraham. The Social Hour will begin at 11:30 a.m. and the luncheon is at

noon. At this meeting there will be many delicious "hot" dishes and desserts.

Join us for this fun-filled Christmas meeting. We will play some holiday themed games for prizes, and laughs.

Holiday Wreath Sale Thanksgiving Weekend

BELCHERTOWN -- The Belchertown 4-H and Boy Scout Troop 507 Annual Wreath Sale will be held on the Belchertown Common, Thanksgiving weekend Saturday, Nov. 25 and Sun-

day, Nov. 26 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The price of wreaths starts at \$20. Deluxe wreaths, which include ornaments, are pre-order only and supplies are limited, please text 413-210-0990.



Bobbi Grant holds up an item while standing in front of the Shop Till You Drop table inside Hampden Senior Center. Grant oversees the annual holiday fundraiser, now in its 12th year.



A wide shot of varying items available for purchase during the Shop Till You Drop Annual Holiday Fundraiser at Hampden Senior Center. The items were all donated by residents.



A jewelry table on display for the Shop Till You Drop Annual Holiday Fundraiser at Hampden Senior Center.



A close-up of festive Christmas stockings up for grabs during the Shop Till You Drop Annual Holiday Fundraiser at Hampden Senior Center.



Varying clothing items on display for purchase during the Shop Till You Drop Annual Holiday Fundraiser at Hampden Senior Center.

SHOP from page 1

“It’s something that has expanded tremendously because of the generosity of so many people,” Grant said. “It’s like one big labor of love, basically.”

Grant said since opening on Nov. 6, “we’re doing quite well.”

“It’s one of our biggest fundraisers and it’s been wildly successful for a long time,” Grant said.

Grant said the idea originated from Council on Aging Executive Director Rebecca Moriarty, with people bringing in an item and a small table being set up. Since then, the fundraiser has grown to four tables full of donated and handmade items, including a full table dedicated to jewelry.

“It’s been quite a feat of accomplishment for the whole center because we all take part in it,” Grant said. “Our biggest seller is the jewelry. Everybody just kind of migrates to that side of the display. It’s been a labor of love for all of us.”

Grant was thankful for all the community support, explaining how items were donated or handmade by residents and senior center staff.

“Without them, it wouldn’t be here. It wouldn’t exist,” Grant said.

She also stressed how important the fundraiser is to support the senior center and its programming.

“The senior center is in the process of negotiating to renovate and expand the building and there are programs that we want to have here that we just don’t have the room for,” Grant said. “So, the sales here will go towards the programming and the renovations and, hopefully, the expansion of the building.”

She also said seeing the sales “go up, up and up” and meeting people when they drop off their items are the most fulfilling parts of doing the fundraiser.

“It’s just so nice to have such generous people,” Grant said.



A close-up shot of jewelry available for purchase during the Shop Till You Drop Annual Holiday Fundraiser at Hampden Senior Center.

Reflecting on the upcoming holiday season and beyond, Grant said she looks forward to spending time with family and thanking the donors and supporters in the January newsletter.

“I just make a generalized thank you letter in tremendous appreciation for what everybody has given and the way we’ve accomplished, and I always put in the total sales so they can say, ‘Gee, I helped do that!’” Grant said.

Grant wants the community to know how much the senior center supports its seniors through its programming and events; she encouraged residents to come shop till you drop and check out the fundraiser.

“I’m so grateful to those that have donated and equally as grateful to those that have come and done shopping,” Grant said.

To learn more, stop by the senior center lobby or check out the newsletter.

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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Nocturnal S. American rodent
- 5. Requesting
- 11. Give temporarily
- 12. Happiness
- 16. Military branch
- 17. -___ denotes past
- 18. Middle Eastern city
- 19. Air hostesses
- 24. Partner to Pa
- 25. Percussion instrument
- 26. Popular computers
- 27. Decrease light
- 28. Valley in the Osh Region
- 29. “To ___ his own”
- 30. Absence of difficulty
- 31. Notice announcing intended marriage read out in church
- 33. Trims by cutting
- 34. Impact
- 38. Military member
- 39. A French river
- 40. Member of prehistoric people in Mexico
- 43. Messenger ribonucleic acid
- 44. Musician Clapton
- 45. Greek sophist
- 49. Largest English dictionary (abbr.)
- 50. Narrow valley
- 51. A way to disentangle
- 53. Indicates not an issue (abbr.)
- 54. Recommending
- 56. Genus of legumes
- 58. Friend to Larry and Curly
- 59. Off-Broadway theater award
- 60. Fencers
- 63. Small Eurasian deer
- 64. Denoting passerine birds
- 65. Separate by category
- 3. Photographic equipment
- 4. Confirms a point
- 5. Developed over time
- 6. Not the leader
- 7. ___ Lang (country singer)
- 8. Adults need one
- 9. Nests of pheasants
- 10. Antelopes
- 13. One quintillion bytes (abbr.)
- 14. Japanese three-stringed lute
- 15. Type of cat
- 20. Cools your home
- 21. The ancient Egyptian sun god
- 22. Pouches
- 23. Trigraph
- 27. Form of Persian spoken in Afghanistan
- 29. ___ route
- 30. Body part
- 31. Bridge building degree
- 32. Indicates position
- 33. Political action
- committee
- 34. Tasty snack
- 35. Part of a quadruped
- 36. Locate
- 37. Pitching statistic
- 38. Of I
- 40. City in Utah
- 41. Football players in the trenches
- 42. Hammer is one
- 44. A “nightmarish” street
- 45. Performers
- 46. Slang for cut or scrape
- 47. More breathable
- 48. Most slick
- 50. Provokes
- 51. Home to college’s Flyers
- 52. Sodium
- 54. Large fish of mackerel family
- 55. Zero
- 57. ___ and behold
- 61. The Palmetto State
- 62. Popular Tom Cruise movie franchise (abbr.)

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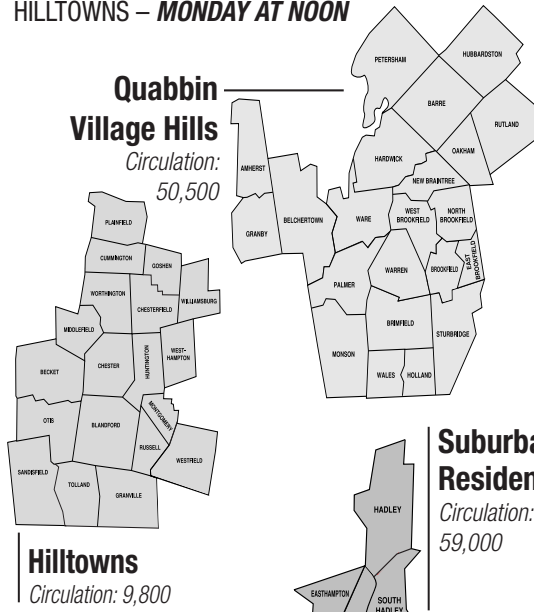
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Learn how to take charge of your diabetes with healthcare team

November is National Diabetes Month

SPRINGFIELD -- Newer drugs, easier glucose monitoring, focusing on a healthy lifestyle and a coordinated approach working with your health care team is resulting in better outcomes for diabetes patients.

According to Dr. Cecilia A. Lozier, chief, Division of Endocrine and Diabetes at Baystate Health, managing diabetes takes a team to help you identify the right tools to live well with diabetes. Often this includes a primary care provider or diabetes specialist who helps match the right medications to your needs, and a registered dietitian, or certified diabetes educator who assists patients in understanding the way diabetes impacts their lives while guiding them to make small, but powerful, progressive steps towards a healthy lifestyle.

"A diabetes diagnosis most often begins with your primary care provider who will then work with you to manage your diabetes over your lifetime through matching the right medication to your body's needs to keep you healthy and maintain your blood sugars at a safe level," said Lozier. "They will also provide you preventative care by monitoring the other parts of the body most impacted by diabetes complications including your eyes, heart, kidneys and feet. Maintaining good blood sugar values while monitoring for and responding to a complication of diabetes should it occur is key to living a long, healthy life with diabetes."

Diabetes educators, who are nurses or other healthcare professionals trained in diabetes care and education, are an essential part of the health care team.

"There is a lot to learn following a diagnosis of diabetes and diabetes educators provide patients with comprehensive

education. They guide diabetes patients on adopting a healthy lifestyle and personalize their diet and exercise plan. They can advise you on monitoring your blood sugar and how to respond to your numbers. And, they can look over your blood sugar patterns and help you learn to recognize how food and other things influence your sugars," said Lozier.

Primary care providers can also refer their patients to a diabetes and endocrinology specialist like Lozier in more complex cases.

"At Baystate Endocrine and Diabetes, we see about 10% of the patients in the area with diabetes. Often our patients have complex needs or have difficulty controlling their diabetes. Our role is to work with them to stabilize their diabetes while ensuring they get the comprehensive education needed to better understand their diabetes. Once this is achieved, we transition their care back to their primary care provider to continue monitoring and evaluating their diabetes," she said.

Diabetes is a chronic disease that happens when your blood glucose, also called blood sugar, is too high. The pancreas makes insulin, which is a hormone that helps glucose get into your cells to be used for energy. But when your body doesn't make enough-or any-insulin (type 1 diabetes), or doesn't use insulin well (type 2 diabetes), then glucose then stays in your blood and can cause health problems.

Symptoms of diabetes include frequent urination and thirst, extreme hunger, unusual weight loss, extreme fatigue and irritability. Those with uncontrolled diabetes may have frequent infections, blurred vision, cuts and bruises that are slow to heal, tingling/numbness in the hands or feet, and recurring skin, gum or bladder infections.

November is National Diabetes Month and its theme - "Take Charge of Tomorrow" - focuses on taking action to pre-

vent diabetes-related complications such as heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney damage and limb amputations.

Newer ways to monitor blood sugar, called continuous glucose monitoring which do not require pricking the finger for a blood sample, a deterrent for many, are helping people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes to "take charge."

Continuous glucose monitors - including the Dexcom G7 and Abbott Freestyle Libre 3 -are sensor-based systems that continuously provide glucose readings day and night. Dr. Lozier and her colleagues have a lot of experience helping patients with diabetes by starting them on a continuous glucose monitoring system.

"The benefit of this technology is twofold. First, it is a painless system and the bar to see what your sugar is becomes quite low in doing so. Secondly, and most importantly, you can see how your sugars respond to different foods or conditions. I had a patient tell me recently how the sensor she was wearing helped her attain excellent sugar values by seeing how her body responded to different foods and by using that feedback to drive lifestyle changes," said Dr. Lozier.

There have been new diabetes medications coming to market recently which target not only improvement in your blood sugars, but also protect the heart and the kidney from the long-term impact of diabetes. These medications include the GLP1 agonists and the SGLT 2 Inhibitors.

Non-insulin injectable medications including Ozempic, Trulicity, and Victoza belong to the GLP-1 agonists medication class and they have been growing in popularity over the last few years designed for people with type 2 diabetes. Victoza is a daily injection while Ozempic and Trulicity are weekly injections designed to trigger insulin release, block sugar production in your liver, and slow the metabolism and absorption of sugar from your gut making

you feel full. Commonly, these medications have the additional benefit of aiding in modest weight loss.

SGLT-2 inhibitor medications are pills which you take daily. These pills help the kidneys release sugar into the urine and out of the body. They are used for people with type 2 diabetes, but because of their powerful benefits on the kidney and heart, they have been studied for and are helping patients with kidney failure and heart failure without diabetes stay out of the hospital and slow their disease progression.

Mounjaro, similar to GLP-1 agonists, is a more recent drug in the class GLP-1/GIP agonists. It's the first medication available in the United States that activates both the GLP-1 receptor and the glucose-dependent insulinotropic peptide (GIP) receptors.

"Mounjaro is a new medication, so we are still learning about it, but it appears to be a powerful aid in management of blood sugars and weight loss," said Lozier.

She noted there are many tools available to help you on your journey with diabetes to

"Take Charge of Tomorrow.

"Get connected with a team of health care professionals. Most importantly, actively engage with your primary care provider to be on top of monitoring your diabetes and establishing a smart medication regimen suited for you. Establish a relationship with a diabetes educator to understand how to live a long happy and healthy life with diabetes. Get set up with a continuous glucose monitor to receive and respond to feedback from your body to make health choices. You can do this," Lozier said.

For more information on Baystate Health, visit baystatehealth.org, and for assistance in finding a primary care provider if you do not have one, click on "find a provider" on the front page then enter primary care.

Lower your taxable income while supporting WFOL

WILBRAHAM -- According to the Philanthropy Roundtable, 90% of people ages 61 to 75 donate either time, money or goods like food and clothing. Charitable giving is the lifeblood of non-profit organizations like the Wilbraham Friends of the Library which qualifies under Internal Revenue Code 170(b) (1)(A). Current tax laws allow you to donate directly from your

Individual Retirement Account when taking your annual Required Minimum Distribution. Such a qualified charitable distribution is excluded from (and therefore lowers) your gross income subject to tax. It gives the donor some say in how one's tax dollars are used. It's a triple win for the donor: the money grows tax free while in the IRA, is not taxed when given directly as a

gift, and the non-profit doesn't pay tax on it, thus putting all the funds directly to the cause. Consult your tax advisor for details.

Since 1973 WFOL has funded Wilbraham Public Library programming for children, teens and adults; the Museum Pass Program; furnishings and other library equipment. This "heart" of library service is not provided by property taxes, which cover

basic overhead of the facility and staff. Charitable giving is a great way to demonstrate and pass on a family value to children and grandchildren. More than 300 local residents, friends, and families donate regularly to WFOL. Libraries have been called "beacons of civilization" and we are fortunate to have one in our town.

other source by check should be made out "Wilbraham Friends of the Library" and mailed to WFOL, 25 Crane Park Drive, Wilbraham, MA 010095. Donations can also be made online via the secure link on the WPL web page, <http://www.wilbrahamlibrary.org/friends.asp>.

Taxable donations from any

PUBLIC NOTICES

**LEGAL NOTICE
PUBLIC HEARING:
APPLICATION FOR A
TRANSFER OF
LIQUOR LICENSE**
The Wilbraham Select Board will hold a public hearing under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 138, Section 12 on **Monday, December 11, 2023, at 7:05 PM** at the Town Office Building, 240 Springfield Street, Wilbraham, to hear public comment on an application to transfer a Section 12 On Premises All Alcoholic Beverages license submitted by Posh Eastern Fusion, Inc., located at 2391 Boston Road, Wilbraham with Daniel P. Belanger II as the Manager of Record. Anyone wishing to comment on the application will be heard. This meeting will be conducted in person and virtually (see meeting agenda for details).
WILBRAHAM SELECT BOARD
Local Licensing Authority
11/23/2023

Wilbraham Community Preservation Committee Annual Public Hearing
The Wilbraham Community Preservation Committee will hold its Annual Public Hearing on **Thursday, December 14, 2023, at 6:30 PM** at the 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.

The Committee may be contacted at cpchair@wilbraham-ma.gov.
Tracey Plantier
Chair CPC
11/16, 11/23/2023

**LEGAL NOTICE
REQUEST FOR
PROPOSALS
OPEN ACCESS
PROVIDER SERVICES
FOR WILBRAHAM
FIBER**
The Town of Wilbraham Broadband Committee, on behalf of the Wilbraham Select Board, issues a Request For Proposals (RFP) from qualified Bidders for Open Access Provider Services. The successful Bidder will provide a platform and all related hardware and software capable of supporting a minimum of one gigabit symmetrical active Ethernet services to business and residential customers for a Town-wide Municipal Fiber Network. While the primary focus of this platform is the delivery of internet services,

the Town recognizes the platform will be capable of delivering many diverse services. Copies of the RFP will be available beginning November 8, 2023 on Commbuys, the Town's website at: www.wilbraham-ma.gov ("Government, Bids") and from the Select Board Office, 240 Springfield St., Wilbraham MA 01095. Sealed Proposals must be received by December 6, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. in the Select Board Office. Proposals will be opened and recorded in the Select Board Meeting Room at 240 Springfield Street on December 6, 2023 at approximately 2:05p.m. The Broadband Committee reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive informalities and to recommend award of the contract to the Select Board, in the best interest of the Town of Wilbraham. All questions regarding this RFP should be directed to Nick Breault, Town Administrator, at: nbreault@wilbraham-ma.gov.

gov.
Thomas Newton, Chairman
Wilbraham Broadband
Committee
11/16, 11/23/2023

PUBLIC NOTICE
This ad is pursuant to MA Gen. Law Ch.255, Sec. 39A as of **November 24, 2023** the

following motor vehicle will be for sale to satisfy a garage keepers lien:
Vehicle: 1994 Chevrolet S-10
VIN: 1GCCS442RK181386
COLOR: Blue
LKO: Unknown
R & S Assoc. Inc.
Wilbraham MA 01095
413-596-4374
11/09, 11/16, 11/23/2023

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INSURED AND CERTIFIED

Tree Removal



Structural Pruning



Crane Service



Storm Damage



Stump Grinding



Lot Clearing



Give us a call for your free estimate and tree evaluation

413-478-4212

DL&G TREE

