

HAPPY Thanks GIVING

SPORTS
Girls soccer defeated
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What residents had to say ahead of HSC renovation and expansion defeat

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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HAMPDEN – During the Nov. 12 Special Fall Town Meeting at Thornton W. Burgess Middle School, residents spoke out for 30 plus minutes on the senior center’s proposed renovation and expansion plan.

The latest defeat—as highlighted in last week’s edition—came after two defeats at the Annual Town Meeting on May 13, the ballot box on May 20 and after this year’s Special Fall Town Meeting was postponed from its original Oct. 29 date due to over-capacity.

The vote would have appropriated \$5.96 million—a reduction from the \$6.6 million originally proposed—by borrowing, authorizing the Treasurer—with the Selectboard’s approval—to issue any bonds or notes that may be necessary for the purpose of renovating and expanding the senior center.

It, also, would have been contingent upon approval of a Proposition Two and a Half Debt Exclusion, allowing the town to raise the money needed to repay its borrowing share outside the limits established by the proposition.



Randy Rivest offers his thoughts on the proposed Hampden Senior Center renovation and expansion on Nov. 12.

Turley photos by Kristin Rivers

The Latest Presentation

Gary Weiner, chair of the Senior Center Building Committee, explained the committee was back “because the needs of the senior center and the Hampden community as well will not go away” and have heard the concerns raised since Annual Town Meeting.

Weiner said when the Se-

lectboard formed the committee two years ago, the members were asked to assess “the current needs as well as try to project 20 years out what the future needs would be.”

“When the committee met with the Selectmen in June following the two town votes, they asked us about moving forward. The committee unanimously

agreed not to quit and asked the Selectmen for additional monies so that we could move forward. Selectmen approved the funding and asked us to detail a renovation-only scenario. No expansion, leave the footprint of the building alone,” Weiner said.

The renovation only scenario includes a new roof, storage space, HVAC system, sprinkler

system, bathroom renovations, lighting upgrades and window repairs and/or replacements.

The cost would be between \$1.7 and \$2 million dollars.

“The committee spent many hours discussing and debating the needs of the renovation-only option, but found it does not address additional storage or the need for private program space. For example, blood pressure monitoring and nursing are being tended to in the library. In fact, bathroom renovation would require additional square footage, reducing storage or program space,” Weiner said.

For structural, Weiner emphasized program space and how “it is the only social service agency in Hampden.”

Weiner also addressed why the hours have not been extended to 40 hours.

“The early opening would not result in additional program space as seniors are not early morning, active participants,” Weiner said. “The afternoon hour is being looked at by the director for future programs and some current programs currently extend well into that 4:00 hour. Also, additional hours do not

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Town Tree Lighting to feature visit from Santa

Sunday Dec. 8 in Gazebo Park starting at 4:30 p.m.

By Charles F. Bennett
Times Editor Emeritus

WILBRAHAM - When Wilbraham-Hampden Rotary Club President Peter Salerno was asked by the Times what is the goal of the club holding the Town Tree Lighting every season? Salerno said, “We look forward to seeing the smiles on the faces of our children as they approach the Christmas Holiday season. We help make it an incredibly happy time in their lives and their joy reaches out to every level of our hearts. We are thrilled to see Santa Claus touch the lives of the town’s children.”

The Town Tree Lighting will feature holiday music and refreshments starting at 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 8 at Gazebo Park. The Town of Wilbraham’s Fire Department will deliver Santa at the Park around 5 p.m. atop the Fire Engine with sirens sounding and lights a-blazing.

After a countdown that everyone takes part in, Santa flips a magic switch and the colorful, twinkling lights of the tree turn on for the first time officially this season. They will remain on each night through New Years.

Leading up to the Tree Lighting at 4:30, the Atheneum Society will present its annual Christmas Tree Festival at 450 Main St. from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. chaired by



Rotary Club President Peter Salerno practices greeting kids in front of the Town Christmas Tree in preparation for the Dec. 8 Tree Lighting. (Charles F. Bennett photo)

Trustee Marianne Wagner. The museum will open at 3 p.m. and stay open until 6 p.m. so that those who attended the Tree

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Turley photos by Amanda Munson

A crowd shot of the Cordage Workshop outside the Hampden Free Public Library on Nov. 16.

Earthwork Programs visits HPL to recognize Native American History

By Amanda Munson
Correspondent

HAMPDEN- “It’s the thread of connection.” With over 25 years of wilderness experience, Frank Grindrod of Earthwork Programs shared his love for cordage, the history, and how useful it is in nature. Attendees and patrons at the event were able to create rope and string from natural materials and craft

that cordage into a little bag on Nov. 16.

Located in Conway MA, Grindrod has several titles including a teacher, author, wilderness guide, survival instructor and the founder of Earthworks Programs. Leading wildlife education programs across America, sometimes even the world, Grindrod is a trained Wilderness First Responder whose love of nature and how to be safe while en-

Please see **HISTORY**, page 4

Knights of Columbus 10195 presents \$8,000 donation



George Flanagan helps himself to chili during the Chili Cookoff Contest during the Nov. 19 meeting of the Knights of Columbus 10195.



George Reich, who chairs the Community Survival Center Fundraiser Dinner event, and Mary Cassidy, executive director at the Community Survival Center, pose for a photo with the \$8,000 check donation.



Jered Sasen, former director of Veterans Services, and Senior Veteran Bob Plasse shake hands as Sasen receives a certificate of thanks from the Knights of Columbus 10195 for his years of service to the veterans.

Jered Sasen recognized for work with veterans

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - The Knights of Columbus 10195 presented the Community Survival Center with a \$8,000 donation during their meeting on Nov. 19.

The donation comes after the Community Survival Center Fundraiser Dinner held on Oct. 12 at the St. Cecilia Parish Center.

The Knights, also, would like to thank the following donors for their support of the dinner: Iron Duke Brewing, Texas Roadhouse, Scantic Valley YMCA, Polish National Credit Union, The Cutting Crew, Fettes Wine and Spirits, Rondeau's Dairy Bar, LUSO Federal Credit Union, Five Star Gardens, The Daily Pint, The Scented Garden Gift Shop, Sixteen Acres Garden Center, The Guilty Grape, Curio Kitchens & Bath, Gio's Pizzeria, Milano's Ristorante & Pizzeria, The Home Depot, Kapinos-Mazur Funeral Home, Lenox Saw, The Life Care Center of Wilbraham, New England Promotional Marketing, The Frame & Picture

Shoppe, HAS BEEN Collectible Toys & Comics, Alpha Oil & The Diotalevi Family, CIMA Restaurant and Chop House, Randall's Farm & Greenhouse, Route 20 Bar & Grill and Scatolini Insurance Agency.

Also, The Local Tap n Table Restaurant, Joanna Wang, Spartan Auto Care Center, Pafumi's on Main, Wilbraham Funeral Home, Wilbraham Flowers, Pan'E Dolcetti, Karen Madden Insurance, Theme Cakes By Jo-lene, Alterations By Josie, Berkshire Facial Surgery, Koopman Lumber and Building For The Future.

George Reich, who chairs the event, thanked the Knights for their support.

"We all did a lot of work, but without you guys, we couldn't have done it so thanks to all of you who volunteered," Reich said.

After the check presentation to Executive Director Mary Cassidy, there was more celebration to be had as the Knights honored Jered Sasen, the now former director of Veterans Services, who began training for his new role as the Western Massachusetts National Service Officer with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Veterans Services on Nov. 18.

Sasen talked about his new

role, reflected on his service to the veterans of Wilbraham and how "I wouldn't be where I am today if it not for this amazing community, in every aspect."

"Being able to sit across the desk with veterans like yourselves and just this community as a whole and getting to hear their stories really--truly-- enriched my personal experience in this and I was able to grow and develop based on that," Sasen said. "Every time I went to Washington, D.C. and I was able to sit and talk with our legislators, it was very easy for me to express the passion that I had because I just got done meeting with a Vietnam Veteran who was dying from prostate cancer and cases like that. So, when I got to go and represent you guys to the federal government, it was easy to do because of the stories and your experiences that you left with me."

Sasen said he was very proud of the work he accomplished, thanking the veterans for all they've done.

"I just want to thank the years of service that you guys have given my department and just the things that you did to make my life as a Veterans Service Officer very, very easy," Sasen said.

After Grand Knight Mike Mazzuca had the veterans in the room stand up and be recognized, Sasen received a certificate of thanks presented by Senior Veteran Bob Plasse, who has also served as a past district deputy.

Other highlights throughout the meeting



Grand Knight Mike Mazzuca calls the Nov. 19 meeting of the Knights of Columbus 10195 to order.

included the welcoming of Philip Patton and Kevin Patton as new members, a very competitive chili cookoff, the announcement of 216 coats received for the Coat For Kids Drive, preparations for the Thanksgiving Food Drive on Nov. 25 and 26 to fill 65 boxes of food--and which also raised \$9,470--and reflecting on faith and service through Catholic Veterans.

Also, preparing for upcoming events including the Christmas Toy Drive next month and the Free Throw Contest on Jan. 4.

Robert Chartier, the organization's District Deputy, shared this during his updates to the members.

"You guys do such great work. I always enjoy coming to hear about all the good things that you're doing. You should congratulate yourselves for everything that you do because you do amazing, amazing work," Chartier said.

Reflecting after the meeting, Mazzuca said the organization's

continuing success is due to the involvement of the Knights and those in the community who lend their support.

"It's important because it really is a measure to how the community responds to our volunteer efforts," Mazzuca said. "It's really wonderful when you have a strong community like ours in Wilbraham and Hampden where people really want to help and we provide the guidance, we provide the volunteers and we provide the hours so that that help they provide us can be distributed properly and make everybody happy."

Mazzuca said from here, the Knights are going to continue working and supporting the community, adding any Catholic men who are looking to join the Knights to come by for a future meeting.

"If there are people in need, people that need help, please let us know. We're there," Mazzuca said.



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Selectboard welcomes new fire cadets

Also, SAFE Grant update

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - The Selectboard welcomed two new fire cadets joining the cadet program during their Nov. 18 meeting.

Lt. Nick Bertrand introduced the two candidates, Logan and Darren, who are local students.

Bertrand said Logan, a junior at Minnechaug, is currently in the cadet program in Three Rivers.

"But, he lives right off Oakland Street in Wilbraham, which is obviously closer to us. He didn't know that we had a cadet program or we were getting one," Bertrand said. "So, he'd like to come over to this program."

On Darren, a sophomore, Bertrand said he lives nearby on Sessions Drive and is interested in fire service.

"Just want to get a feel for it," Bertrand said. "So both of them seem like good kids. They got the okay from the schools, their grades and their guidance counselors. Everything's in good standing now that we're almost through the first semester."

After Selectboard Member John Flynn said he didn't see a downside, Chair Don Davenport thanked the cadets for joining them and for their interest.

"It's important to the town and it'll be good for you professionally in your careers too if you decide to go, no matter what you do," Davenport said. "So, it's great."

Next, Hampden Fire Deputy Chief/Medic and Wilbraham Fire Capt. Patrick Farrow explained the SAFE Grant, which is awarded

through the Emergency Office of Public Safety and backed up by the Department of Fire Services.

"So, they allow grant funding for fire departments to teach fire safety in the schools and then, additionally, our Senior SAFE which is senior awareness of fire education to our senior citizens," Farrow said. "Teach them the concept of fire safety so to stop, drop and roll, get out, stay out, home escape plans, kind of all the things we all learned and some additional ones. Teaching them hot versus not hot, firefighters community helpers and then provide funding for programs such as the File for Life, teaching hands-only CPR, stop the bleed."

Farrow added there's "a whole magnitude of programs that this grant supports" along with an option to regionalize it.

"So, I'm here tonight to kind of pitch a regionalization proposal between us and Wilbraham. I currently run the grant for both departments, so over the past three years or so I've been writing two of the same grants for both departments," Farrow said. "What this regionalization will do, it will increase our educators to be an educator. You attend a course at the Mass Fire Academy, it's called Fire Life Safety Educator, and then that gives you the credential to go out and teach these courses. So, that would put us at 12 educators between the two departments and, ultimately, what that can do for us is just enhance and increase our educators to town lines."

For this, Farrow has spoken with the fire superintendent and Chief Michael Andrews, the Union of Wilbraham Firefighters and both directors of the Wilbraham and Hampden Senior Centers, who all said they were on board.

"How it would have to be managed is that the funds would have to go to one town and Wilbraham, currently, is set up as they've received another Regional Grant through FREEMA in the past," Farrow said. "So, in the event we do something, we would just invoice Wilbraham and then Wilbraham would then pay whatever it is whether it was salary for training or and then bulk order plastic helmets and all the giveaways for fire education. So, really not much of a change."

Another benefit, Farrow said, was how his colleagues in Wilbraham could come to Hampden to help a new educator.

"I think it'll just empower everyone and create a really high-product producing between the schools," Farrow said.

Davenport asked if there would need to be an inter-municipal agreement between the two towns.

"Or can we just do the grant together?" Davenport said.

Town Administrator Brian Domina said, "Probably."

Flynn expressed approval. "Thank you for doing the work on both towns," Flynn said.

Farrow concluded if there was a motion, Andrews asked to add in Wilbraham's official vote which would be pending approval from their Select Board.

Fire Chief Ed Poulin added it's only for one year.

"It's not continuous, year after year," Poulin said. "So, we do this one year. If it doesn't work out, then we don't have to do it next year."

The motion to regionalize the SAFE Grant between Wilbraham and Hampden contingent upon approval of the Wilbraham Select Board passed 2-0.

Wilbraham Garden Club December Meeting

WILBRAHAM - The December meeting of the Wilbraham Garden Club will be held at the St. Cecelia Parish Center on Main St. in Wilbraham at noon on Thursday, Dec. 5.

The speaker for the day will be Matthew Flatow, owner of Flowers, Flowers in Springfield, MA. Matt has been creating unique floral masterpieces for clients in Western MA and Northern CT for decades. He will share his innovative and cutting-edge techniques with us. Whether you like simple elegance or over-the-top drama, Matt can do it all! Matt's beautiful arrangements will be raffled off at the end of his program! Come and enjoy a Wonderful Christmas meeting!

Cookbook Club at the Wilbraham Library

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Public Library Cookbook Club is meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 4 at 6:30 p.m.

This month's selection is "The Tucci Cookbook" by Stanley Tucci.

Sign up is required; please let the library know what you're bringing so we do not duplicate recipes. Cooking is encouraged but not required for attendance. Copies of the book are available now at the Service Desk.

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

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



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Wilb. Community Chorus to Present Concerts

WILBRAHAM - The nearly seventy-voice Wilbraham Community Chorus, accompanied by Marcia Jackson and conducted by Ray Drury, will present two concerts in early December. The first concert will take place on Sunday, Dec. 8 at 3 p.m. at Saint Cecilia's Church, Wilbraham, and the second on Saturday, Dec. 14 at 2 p.m. at First Church of Christ, Longmeadow.

Drury has chosen a varied and compelling program including music of Haydn, Mozart, Vaughan Williams, Forrest and Whitacre as well as varied arrangements of folk tunes, pop songs and seasonal music. Of particular interest will be performances by both Jackson and well-known local pianist Todd Rovelli offering selections of four-hand piano music, and additionally a chamber choir comprised of members of the larger group will also perform.

While admission to each concert is free, a free-will offering will be taken.

Wilbraham Hiking Club December Hikes

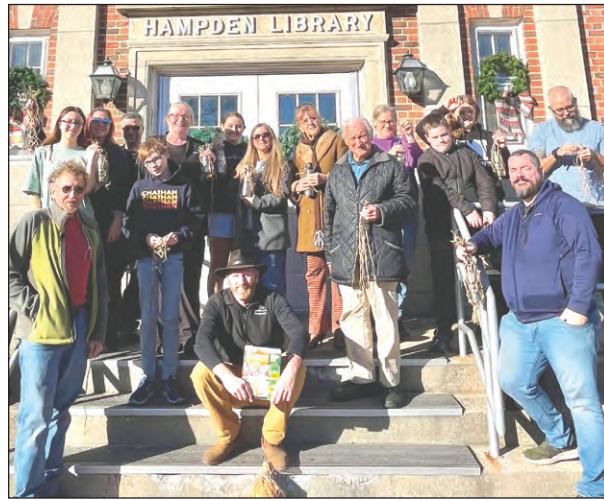
WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Hiking Club has these hikes coming up for December.

- * Dec. 3 - 10 a.m., Arunah Hill in Cummington
- * Dec. 9 - 10 a.m., Two Towns, Two Brooks, Wilbraham and Monson
- * Dec. 16 - 10 a.m., Mittineague Park, West Springfield
- * Dec. 22 - 1 p.m., Harvard Forest, Petersham

For more info on the hikes above (and possibly additional hikes), use the club's TeamReach App or write to wilbrahamhiking@gmail.com ...and, wait! there's more!

The Wilbraham Senior Center Hiking Club has great hikes, too! For more info and to register for the hikes below, contact Jen at the Senior Center, 596-8379

- * Friday, Dec 13- 9:30 a.m.- Bear Hole Reservoir, West Springfield
- * Tuesday, Dec 17- 9:15 a.m. McLean • Game Refuge, Granby CT
- * Tuesday, Dec 31- 9:30 a.m. Arcadia Rolling Meadows, Easthampton



A group photo of skilled patrons ready to create more cordage at the Hampden Free Public Library on Nov. 16!



Eric Koupis of Hampden holds the cordage that will eventually be woven into strong rope.



Frank Grindrod, with his signature hat, shows off his holder that he created with twine found in the craft store.



On the left; Jammie Lopez, Richard Goyette, and Adrianna Lopez are starting the delicate process of creating cordage together as a family.

HISTORY from page 1

joying it blends throughout his workshop.

"I am the founder and owner of Earthwork Programs. Founded in 1999, this is my 25th year. I've done programs throughout the United States and Central America. We did the cordage workshop today, Ellen brought me in as a special guest, and she thought it would be a great thing. We wanted to have people walk away with something they created and with a little piece of cordage. Ellen thought of the water bottle so I suggested having people create a holder for it out of the cordage," Grindrod said.

Moved outside to the front lawn of the library, attendees were given a stick and told to take off the wood to expose the fibers beneath. Left with only a swirl of fiber, silk-like to the touch, Grindrod showed how Native Americans were able to create rope, also known as cordage, with such a delicate material.

"The process is a little tedious and I ask you to have a zen mind. Allow yourself to be open to this plant because your ancestors did," Grindrod said.

Director Ellen Moriarty joined in the fun and talked about the importance of having time to be disconnected from technology. Basking in the sunlight, everyone was silent and focused on their craft, without a phone or tablet for over two hours.

Grindrod also reflected on connecting with nature.

"We went outside and saw the vultures flying around and traffic going by, but we all as a group shared a sense of gratitude. At one point, people weren't speaking, just engaged with the plant and learning the skill, there was a connection. We do things out of inspiration or desperation, when we are inspired to take action to do something, we will go out and do it. A lot of people recommend nature as a healing factor," Grindrod said. "Getting out in nature you are not necessarily alone. You are not experiencing loneliness, you are experiencing solitude. There is a huge difference. The room and building around us patterns us, so when we are patterned around walls, we think there are walls everywhere. When we get out in nature, there are no walls and it creates an expansive mindset."

The two-hour program ended with guests wanting to learn more skills and leaving content that the afternoon was filled with good company and even better weather.

In Grindrod's book, "Wilderness Adventure Camp," the essential outdoor survival skills for kids, readers learn to explore the wilderness confidently and safely with skills like starting a fire or building a shelter, unique with a weatherproof cover to take out in your endless adventures.

Residents can learn more at earthworkprograms.com and find Frank Grindrod's book available at the library.

Upcoming events at the library—as we gear up for the coming holiday season—include the annual Holiday Party on Dec. 7 and the Teen Holiday Party on Dec. 14.

To learn more about upcoming events, visit hampden-library.org/events.

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Wilbraham receives \$38,000 from Complete Streets program

The money will be spent on drafting a Complete Streets policy.

By Dalton Zbierski
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM – The town of Wilbraham is taking steps forward as it tries to make its streets more complete.

The U.S. Department of Transportation considers a “complete street” to be a safe roadway that can support mobility for users of all ages and abilities. These users include drivers, pedestrians, bicyclist or public transportation riders.

Last Monday, Department of Public Works Director Tonya Capparello joined the Select Board meeting and informed the public that the town is working with the Complete Streets funding program. The board gave Capparello permission to apply for funding during a previous meeting, and she gave a positive update.

“We were actually approved for the second tier, which allows us to engage with a consultant,” Capparello said. “We’ve received around \$38,000 to develop...a draft policy that’s been distributed.”

The consultant will work with the town to go over the requirements of the Complete Streets program. Capparello said the DPW has identified about 15 to 20 locations in town where a street needs improvement.

“We’ve basically put together our priority list so that when we want to apply for the next level, the third tier,

which is up to around \$500,000, the state will be looking for us to go to that list,” Capparello said.

Capparello added that the state is looking for Wilbraham to plan and prioritize locations that need improvement, solicit feedback from the public and gain the Select Board’s approval of the town’s Complete Streets policy. A meeting could occur as soon as next month to give the Select Board an opportunity to approve the policy.

“If there’s comments, we can add them; circulate it there for a public hearing, get feedback and then once we get the policy adopted...the next step would be for the board to appoint an advisory board,” Capparello said.

The advisory board would consist of town employees and maybe others.

“In some communities, you have your key players – police, fire, DPW, planners. Other communities will have key players and then will invite committee members or just members of the public who are interested,” Capparello said, noting that she is open to sorting out the logistics with the Select Board while it reviews the policy.

Capparello assured the board that there are plenty of community members who are deeply invested in the town’s streets and the safety of their neighbors.

“I don’t think you’ll have a hard time finding anyone who wants to provide some input and wants to participate,” Capparello said.

Per the request of Select Board Clerk Marc Ducey, Capparello promised to monitor what other programs are doing in connection to the Complete Streets program. She will update the board at a later date.

Wilbraham Police Department alerts residents about Country Bank fraud

WILBRAHAM – The police department shared this alert to the community on Nov. 20 concerning fraudsters who are impersonating Country Bank:

“Please be aware that fraudsters are impersonating Country Bank by spoofing Country Bank’s real telephone number 800-322-8233 specifically requesting debit card information.

1) Fraud alert tip: your bank will never

call to ask you to provide personal, card or account information.

2) Fraud alert tip: Multifactor Codes are for you and you only to avoid scams. They should never be shared with another person.

If you receive a call claiming to be Country Bank and aren’t sure, hang up and dial us directly to verify.”

Gingerbread House Workshops at the Wilbraham Public Library

WILBRAHAM—The Wilbraham Public Library is pleased to announce that it will be hosting two Gingerbread House Workshop events for children and teenagers. The events will be held on Dec. 2. Registration is required. These programs are sponsored by the Wilbraham Friends of the Library.

Kids’ Gingerbread House Workshop
Monday, Dec. 2
at 4 p.m.

Sign up to decorate a gingerbread house using cones of various sizes, different types of frosting, fondant and a generous candy buffet! All materials are free & included for this event. Allergy note: The ingredients used include eggs and dairy. Open to children in grades three, four and five only, registration required, registered participants only in the Brooks Room. Starting Monday, Nov. 18, sign up online or call the library at 596-6141. Wilbra-

ham residents only for the first week of registration. Nov. 18 to 24. The program will then open up to children residing outside of Wilbraham.

Teen Gingerbread House Workshop
Monday, Dec. 2
at 5:30 p.m.

Teens in grades six through 12 will create their own gingerbread house using cones of various sizes, different types of frosting, fondant and a generous candy buffet! All supplies are included. Starting on Monday, Nov. 18, sign up online or call the library at 596-6141. There is no charge for this event but sign-up is necessary as space is limited! Wilbraham residents only for the first week of registration. Nov. 18 to 24. The program will then open up to teens residing outside of Wilbraham.



You are cordially invited to attend the

Wilbraham Christmas Tree Lighting

a community-wide Holiday Event

Hosted by
The Rotary Club of Wilbraham-Hampden



Please bring your donations of hygiene items (shampoo, liquid soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, combs, etc.) which the Rotary Club will donate to local organizations serving families and individuals in need.

❄️ Surprise Visitor from the North Pole at 5:00 PM ❄️

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8th
Music & Refreshments **4:30 PM**
in **GAZEBO PARK**

The Wilbraham-Hampden Times,
Media Sponsor

VIEWPOINTS



Why does the government raid Social Security?

Dear Rusty

The Social Security program is funded by employees and their employers.

The federal government does not contribute to the program, right? So why does the federal government feel they have the right to raid the fund? All the money sent to Ukraine and other unnecessary programs could have been used to pay back what they owe to Social Security.

Signed: Disgruntled Senior

Dear Disgruntled Senior

You are correct that the Social Security program is mainly funded by payroll taxes on employee earnings and by employers, who match those employee contributions.

FYI, some additional SS revenue is received from income tax on Social Security benefits, as well as from interest on the special issue government bonds held in the Social Security Trust Fund. But the assertion that the Federal Government used (raided) the Social Security Trust Fund for any other purpose is a myth.

All Social Security revenue received since

the program began in 1937 has been accounted for and all excess funds are contained in a special Trust Fund in the form of interest-bearing government bonds, reserved to pay future benefits. FYI, the interest on those bonds contributed about \$67 billion to the Trust Fund reserves in 2023. Social Security revenue, today, is not adequate to pay all benefit obligations and the extra money needed to pay full SS benefits for everyone is obtained by redeeming Trust Fund reserves. Redemption of those Trust Fund bonds is how the federal government "pays back" the cash loaned to it by Social Security.

The excess SS money received from contributions was loaned to the Federal Treasury by the SS Trust Funds, interest-bearing bonds were issued by the government in return for the cash received and the bonds issued are redeemable as needed by Social Security to pay benefits. FYI, the average interest on the 2023 bonds in the Trust Funds was about 4.125%, whereas the average rate of return on all bonds held in reserve was about 2.387%. This transaction is the same as for any other investment vehicle except the bonds in the Trust Funds are redeemable at any time without penalty. Said another way, all excess money ever received by Social Security is/was invested in special-issue government bonds and resides in reserve to pay future benefits, as needed.

"Paying back" the money represented by bonds held in the Trust Funds would not be a wise financial move because it would eliminate all future interest earned by those bonds again, that interest was about \$67 billion in 2023). Federal money spent for other purposes e.g., Ukraine is from the general U.S. Treasury and not from the Social Security Trust Fund, which is held totally separate from the U.S. Treasury.

Since inception, all money ever contributed to Social Security has been and is used for one purpose and one purpose only to pay Social Security benefits to those eligible, which, by the way, does not include "illegal aliens" or anyone else who is not a legal resident of the United States.

For clarity, Social Security does have a future financial issue because annual benefit obligations are now greater than annual Social Security revenue and money from the SS Trust Fund is now used to make up the difference. Unless the program is reformed soon, the Trust Fund reserves about \$2.8 trillion as of 2023 will be depleted and benefits for all Social Security recipients will be cut by about 23% starting in 2033 or 2034 according to the Trustees of Social Security and the Congressional Budget Office.

Congress needs to act soon to enact Social Security reform to restore the program to fiscal solvency. The Association of Mature American Citizens is steadfastly lobbying Congress to enact the needed Social Security reform as soon as possible.

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.



My spring flowering bulbs have traveled quite a distance to make it to me, and what a debacle in the process.

Usually, my order, placed in late July comes effortlessly around mid October. The east coast port strike may have only lasted three days, but it sent my bulbs that had come from the Netherlands first to New York, then to Mobile, Alabama, then to the Bahamas and finally, a week ago, to New Jersey, where they will be sent to me, hopefully.

I say this because it is time to get the tulips and daffodils I ordered in the ground, so they can do their thing before the calendar finally decides it is November and not September.

Tulips and daffodils on vacation, oh my!

We learned how to plant garlic last week, and we plant spring bulbs each fall nearly the same way. Read on for a refresher course, and if you haven't gotten your bulbs in yet, there is no time like the present!

Let's consider these main points:

Timing

We do our best to plant our bulbs in early fall, so that they can take advantage of optimal temperatures for rooting. Strong roots will keep the bulbs in place, well-anchored during the freeze/thaw cycles of winter.

Location

Most bulbs thrive in full sun, in fertile, well-drained soil. It is important to avoid "wet feet" at all costs when planting bulbs. This means you should steer clear of low areas in your yard, or those that tend to pool water, such as under downspouts or roof overhangs.

Fertilization

I like to use a well-balanced granular organic fertilizer for my bulbs, mixing it into the

soil at planting at the rate recommended on the bag. Bone meal was always the fertilizer of choice for bulbs, but this is no longer so.

It has been shown that in addition to phosphorus and potassium, bulbs require small amounts of nitrogen and trace minerals for optimal growth. These days advanced methods of cleaning bones by steaming have all but eliminated the nitrogen and trace minerals from bone meal.

In the spring, another fertilizer application can be made, and if you have an option, choose one with a higher nitrogen to support strong leaf growth. Daffodils are less dependent on fertilizer than tulips and hyacinth- the size of these flowers will diminish over time.

Spacing

Most folks will agree that drifts or clusters of bulbs are more stunning than one or two sprinkled here and there about the garden. Spring bulbs can come in all sizes, so the general rule is to plant them two times the width of the bulb apart from one another.

Election letters to the editor welcome

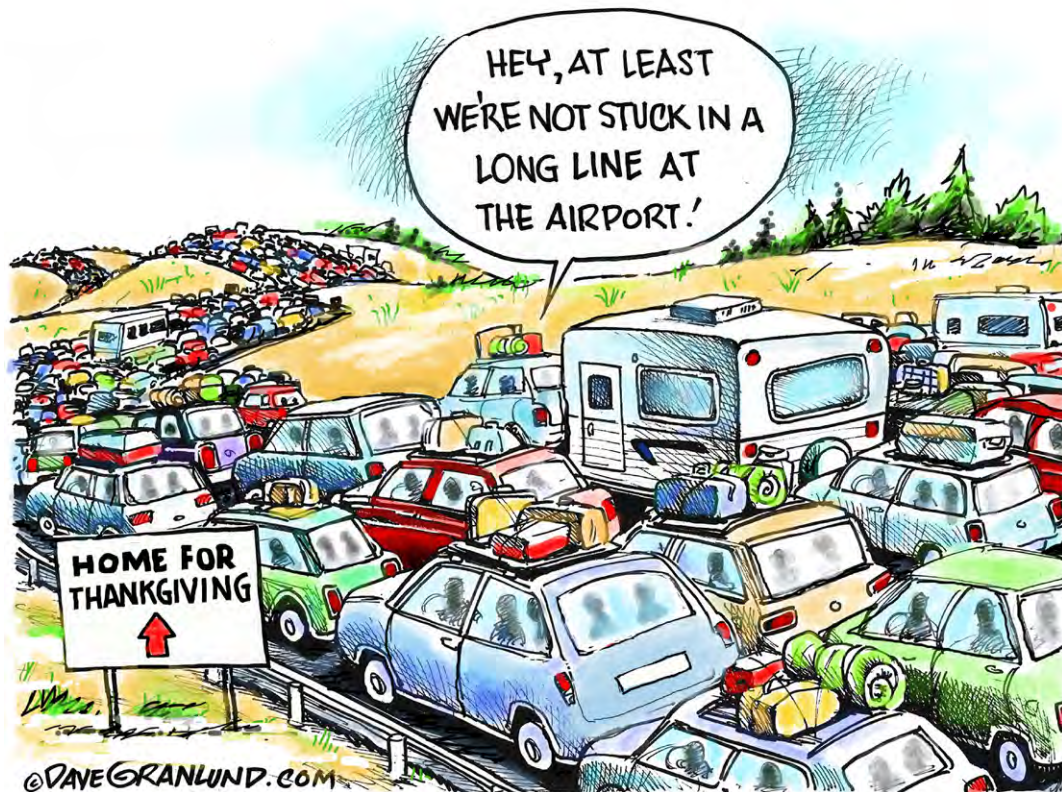
The Wilbraham-Hampden Times welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to Wilbraham-Hampden 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.



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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.

WPD awarded \$28,318,99 for Municipal Road Safety Program

WILBRAHAM - Chief Edward Lennon is pleased to announce that the Wilbraham Police Department has been awarded \$28,318.99 from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Massachusetts Office of Grants and Research (OGR) to support the Municipal Road Safety Program (MRS).

This competitive grant is awarded to municipal police departments that have shown a commitment to traffic safety measures. The funds will allow the department to support initiatives that include conducting traffic safety enforcement, bicyclist and pedestrian safety enforcement, non-enforcement activities such as training or community events, and purchasing traffic safety equipment or safety items to distribute in the community such as bicycle helmets. This year, OGR awarded \$5,637,336.83 to 191 Massachusetts departments, a record number of recipients for the program.

The funds award will allow our department to deploy additional officers to focus on citizen complaints and requests for additional traffic enforcement as well as participate in National traffic safety campaigns such as #DriveSoberOrGetPulledOver, #ClickItOrTicket, and seasonal Speed & Distracted Driving initiatives. This year's funding also includes a new radar message board, Lidar training for new officers and the expansion of our Child Passenger Safety Technician program that inspects and installs Child Passenger Safety Seats.

Hampden Winter Parking Ban Information

HAMPDEN - The Town of Hampden Winter Parking Ban will run from November 15, 2024, through April 15, 2025.

Any vehicles left on town roads may be towed at the owner's expense. All vehicles that impede snow removal shall be towed at the request of the Highway Department.

New school zone could be implemented in Wilbraham near high school

The town also looks to finish Stony Hill Road sidewalk project

By Dalton Zbierski
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - A new, 20 mph school zone could be coming to Wilbraham near Minnechaug Regional High School.

Police Chief Ed Lennon informed the Select Board last Monday that his department is working hard to establish the school zone in proximity to the high school on Main Street and Tinkham Road.

Lennon said he and his colleagues have done a lot of research because it appears there used to be a designated school zone nearby in the past before it was removed.

"The information that was relayed to me, and this is probably two decades old, is that the state at some point requested that it be taken down because it was too far from the school and because there was a regulation that prohibited it," Lennon said.

According to Lennon, the police department has researched extensively and cannot find a law preventing the town from reestablishing the school zone. They've also turned to the state.

"We've been in touch with MassDOT, who has given us guidance on this, and their guidance is that we can establish these in place," Lennon said.

Lennon said that his department must take measurements and present the board with the dimensions and lengths of the proposed school zone and how the town will mark it.

"Our understanding is that traditionally you see a lot of them have the flashing signs, which come on and off at certain times. My understanding is we don't have to do that [because they're] a little bit of an expense. We can do it with just signage and timing. That would be much less costly," Lennon said.

Select Board Clerk Mark Ducey said he was surprised a school zone doesn't already exist there. He told Lennon to pursue the option of investing in the flashing lights.

"I would definitely look at what it would cost to put the lighting up as well because I think that is an important element of it," Ducey said.

Ducey asked how much the lights will cost, and Department of Public Works Director Tonya Capparello was able to answer.

"Depending on whether we can get solar or hard-wired, we're looking for a set, so anywhere from \$10,000 to \$15,000. We are working also on a pilot for these rapid rectangular flashing beacons. RRFB; it's the new 2025 term," she said.

Capparello added that the town has one of these lights already and is applying to get three or four more through a grant.

"If we get this grant, this location will have solar power RRFBs like they have in front of [Wilbraham & Monson Academy] as well as potentially on Stony Hill Road," Capparello said.

ello said.

Not long after Stony Hill Road entered the conversation, Town Administrator Nick Breault provided an update on a sidewalk project taking place there. For the benefit of the public, he said the town is looking at the best way to finish out the project.

"There's been a significant - significant from the town's perspective - development that we may be able to look at keeping and finishing the sidewalk on the same side that DPW's put in a significant piece of already. That would lead to Boston Road and not need to have a crosswalk," Breault said.

Breault also addressed erratic traffic at the Town Hall and Wilbraham Senior Center. He said it's great that the senior center is seeing so much activity but urged residents to drive slower and in the right direction when entering and exiting the facility.

"We are seeing some instances of people coming in and speeding a little bit," Breault said. "We've also seen folks going the wrong way, whether they're trying to avoid having to go out and around to come back out or just not realizing it, so you may see some measures that we're looking to implement."

Breault said he wanted to bring the item to the attention of the Select Board and public. He asked again that people driving onto and off the site be more aware of the signs and traffic flow.

"And we'll try to do a better job increasing signage and education on that as well," Breault said.

For example, if the bulb is three inches wide, plant it six inches apart from its neighbor.

Depth

The same rule applies for depth. Two times the height of the bulb is the ideal planting depth; you can even go a tad deeper.

This is especially true if you are hoping your tulip bulbs will return year after year. If your garden soil has been loosened up, planting lots of bulbs is easy.

I have described the fast, "jab and grab" method before, but here it is in a nutshell: Holding your trowel facing in, jab it into the soil and pull forward. If you have not achieved the desired depth, repeat the motion.

Grab the bulb and drop it into the hole, pushing the soil back over as you do so.

Care during bloom time

I always deadhead the spent flowers on my bulbs. The theory behind deadheading is that you remove the flower as it withers, before the plant wastes energy forming a seed.

That way energy is redirected to the bulb, and to forming next year's flowers. In college we were taught to do it, for the above rationale as well as to keep the plant looking tidy.

Most folks simply remove the entire stem at ground level. One part about this process always bothered me though, why don't we just pop off the spent flower parts and leave the stem - it is very leaf-like in appearance and will do a fair job of photosynthesizing and adding to the plant's energy reserves.

Care during post bloom

Unfortunately, foliage should remain in place until it is completely yellow and withered. It seems to take a long time to get to that point, especially for daffodils, and we can get

impatient in the process.

There is good reason for leaving it there - it is making energy for flowers next year. The best way around the inevitable ugliness is to camouflage them with other plants.

Try interplanting daffodil bulbs such as alongside daylilies or other leafy plants. Once the foliage yellows it is safe to remove it - a gentle tug is all that is necessary to release the leaves.

I will certainly have my hands full when the shipment of bulbs arrives, but the beautiful gardens around Old Sturbridge Village come springtime will be well-worth the effort!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 32 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.

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CLUES ACROSS

- Long piece of squared timber
- Emaciation
- "Bewitched" boss Larry
- Combining form meaning "different"
- Current unit equal to 10 amperes
- Older
- Large, stocky lizard
- Ringworm
- Actor Pitt
- Indian hand clash cymbals
- Data at rest
- Jeweled headdress
- Indicators of when stories were written
- Check
- Cigarette (slang)
- Arctic explorers (abbr.)
- Yearly tonnage (abbr.)
- Delivered a speech
- A place to bathe
- Postmen deliver it
- Surface in geometry

CLUES DOWN

- Piece of felted material
- Ancient Greek City
- Aquatic plant
- Potentially harmful fungus (Brit. sp.)
- Body art (slang)
- One who follows the rules
- Ordinary
- Honorably retired from assigned duties and retaining one's title
- Relaxing space
- Japanese socks
- Indian city
- Rip
- Icelandic book
- Satisfies
- Where golfers begin
- Small amount
- Snag
- Determine the sum of
- A distinctive smell
- Exposed to view
- Stain or blemish
- Small loop in embroidery
- River herring genus

CLUES DOWN

- Large beer
- Deep, red-brown sea bream
- Partner to cheese
- At a deliberate pace
- Gurus
- Of each
- Angry
- Popular beverage
- Flower cluster
- Blocks
- Those who benefitted from efforts of relatives (slang)
- Polio vaccine developer
- (usually) large and scholarly book
- Popular soap ingredient
- NBAer Bradley
- Popular movie about a pig
- Musician Clapton
- Not a sure thing
- Recipe measurement (abbr.)
- Father

Public Auction

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4TH at 11:00 A.M.

MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE
• WILBRAHAM •

8 ROOM / 3 BEDROOM
2 STORY
COLONIAL STYLE HOME
WITH
(3) CAR ATTACHED GARAGE

4 Monson Road WILBRAHAM, MA
To be Sold on the Premises

FEATURES:

- 2 Story Colonial Style Home • ±¾ Acres of Land •
- Total of (8) Rooms w/ (3) Bedrooms & (2) Baths •
- ±2,436 S/F of Gross Living Area • Hot Water Baseboard Heat •
- Basement • Fireplace • Wood Exterior •
- Map Reference: 7950-2-3276 •
- Attached (3) Car Garage •

Sale Per Order of Mortgagee
Attorney C. Barry Waite
Of the firm of Resnic, Beauregard, Waite & Driscoll
330 Whitney Avenue, Holyoke, MA
Attorney for Mortgagee

Terms of Sale: \$10,000.00 Deposit Bank or Certified Funds.
5% Buyer's Premium Applies.
Other Terms to be Announced at Time of Sale.

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Christmas Holiday Craft Fair Dec. 7

HAMPDEN – The Federated Community Church of Hampden will be hosting a Christmas Holiday Craft Fair on Saturday, Dec. 7, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Pancake Breakfast will be from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., costing \$5. Lunch available for purchase from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., costing \$5.

A variety of items made by local crafters!

Heritage “Pops” Orchestra Christmas Party Dinner & Dance

LUDLOW - Celebrate the Christmas Season with The Big Band Sounds of the 19-piece Heritage “Pops” Orchestra with vocals by Ann Maggs.

Includes Hors d’oeuvres, Dinner & Dessert .

Advance Tickets are \$25 per person

There will be a Giant Wood Dance Floor and 50/50 Raffle and Cash Bar

Polish American Citizens Club

355 East Street, Ludlow, MA

Friday, December 13, 2024

Hors d’oeuvres 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Grand Buffet Dinner by John Diotalevi at 6:30 p.m.

Music and Dancing from 7 to 10 p.m.

Tickets Available at the PACC bar or call Bob at 413-636-7588 or call Paul at 413-800-4164.

The Local Table N Tap hosting food drive

WILBRAHAM – The Local Table N Tap is hosting a food drive to support the Community Survival Center.

The donations include peanut butter, corned beef hash, breakfast cereal, chunky soups, canned stews, canned ham, canned tuna, SPAM, shelf stable milk and paste sauce.

Other donations include personal care items such as toothpaste, soap, shampoo, feminine hygiene, dish detergent and toilet tissue.

Donations will be accepted now through the holidays.

Find Your Calm: Join our Gentle Yoga Retreat

WILBRAHAM – Join us for our Gentle Yoga Retreat on Friday, Dec. 13 at 10 a.m. to Noon at the Wilbraham Senior Center.

Reconnect with your inner peace at our Gentle Yoga Retreat. This retreat is designed for all abilities with a focus on mindfulness, relaxation, and healing.

You will be guided through a restorative yoga session consisting of gentle movement and balance followed by a guided meditation practice and extended savasana.

This event is FREE thanks to the Friends of Wilbraham Seniors. Non-Senior Center members are welcome! Please call the Senior Center to register. 413-596-8379.

Thanksgiving travel note

WILBRAHAM – The police department is encouraging the community to be safe and responsible this Thanksgiving holiday and weekend, sharing this on their Facebook page on Nov. 19:

“Travel is at an all-time high around the Thanksgiving holiday.

If you’re gearing up to hit the road next week, check out our safety tips before you go - <https://www.nhtsa.gov/thanksgiving-travel-safety-tips>.

Hanukkah - It’s NOT Jewish Christmas

WILBRAHAM – Norah and Craig Kazan will be hosting a free educational presentation at the Wilbraham Senior Center

Hanukkah is the Jewish Festival of Lights and occurs in proximity to Christmas each year. Come learn a little bit about the Jewish religion, the significance of Hanukkah in the Jewish calendar, and sample some of the culture surrounding this holiday.

We will be discussing:

Very brief overview of Judaism, The Jewish Calendar and Holidays, The story of Hanukkah and its significance, Observance and meaning in Israel vs. the U.S., Lighting the Menorah, Games, Foods, Open Forum

Dec. 20 at 1 p.m. at the Wilbraham Senior Center. This is a free presentation that all are welcome to join.

Please call the sign up at 596-8379.

STM from page 1

provide the additional storage space, consultation office space and health and wellness space.”

For project cost, the committee reassessed the design, eliminating an office space and a multipurpose room and keeping the entrance and vestibule the same.

This led to the cost reduction, with actual building cost—without the soft cost—at \$4.75 million. Also, the expansion reduced by 800 feet, or 20% of the previous proposal.

“The new design includes the renovation’s needs as well as providing for the additional needed storage space. Over 320 square feet to be added and the needed office program space and wellness space at the north side of the building. The new design maintains the required number of bathrooms,” Weiner said.

On the town demographics for the next 20 years, Weiner said this.

“Currently, there are 2,000 seniors living in the town of Hampden, about 40% of the town over the age of 60. Based on the Hampden age list supplied by the town clerk, by 2044 Hampden will still have between 1,850 to 1,950 senior citizens over 60,” Weiner said.

Weiner said the Friends of Hampden Senior Citizens put \$250,000 towards the expansion and plan to do other fundraising efforts alongside ongoing ones, adding the Friends are all taxpayers and “throughout our two years of meetings have never forgotten to consider the cost to young families with children as well as seniors on fixed income.”

“However, when you consid-



Tina Doran, administrative assistant and volunteer coordinator at the Hampden Senior Center, speaks to the audience.

er that the cost of this project to the average taxpayer in Hampden would be less than \$1 a day, the future needs of the town seniors and the entire Hampden community, it can be fulfilled,” Weiner said.

What Residents Had to Say

Gabby Fisk shared she’s not opposed to the proposal and thinks “it’s a phenomenal idea” and “we owe it to our community to invest in something like this.”

Fisk’s concern was how the town should “really strategically and more aggressively be seeking out capital campaigns” along with additional grant fundraising.

“You say it’s \$1 a day per town resident, but it’s significant when we talk about all of the other increases that we’re seeing and knowing that there are government and grant funds available for these specific projects, especially when they consider the impact to the larger community outside of Hampden,” Fisk said. “So, I just

urge everyone to really recognize that the burden does not have to fall solely on us and that additional work should be done to

seek out the efficacy of that opportunity.”

Weiner clarified the committee did reach out to state legislators to ask about funding and aid for the project.

“Unfortunately, they are looking at a budget that is busted, which they pointed out to us numerous times and that there were no funds available,” Weiner said.

Rita Vail said she wants what is best for the senior center and the town, having attended both public forums this year about the proposed plans.

Vail then read the numbers on the monthly participation from handouts at those forums: for May 2024 it was 183, while October 2024 had 155.

“A decline of 28 persons per month. These are not my numbers. These are senior center numbers. Something is causing this declining enrollment. Maybe it’s the opening of the Wilbraham Senior Center and should be considered,” Vail said.

Vail then shared one more fact: the average square footage for new senior centers is 3.31 square feet per senior of the town.

“Hampden’s present building already exceeds that number. The recent design is 5.8 square feet per senior. It is way out of line,” Vail said.

After Fahmida Bashar asked about property tax cost, Weiner replied the committee asked the town treasurer to run a number of scenarios for the cost.

“If your home is worth \$377,000, the worst-case scenario would be about \$314 a year.



Turley photos by Kristin Rivers
Doug Boyd, chair of the Advisory Committee, presents his recommendation for Article 10.

A better case scenario based on a lower interest rate when they go for bonding would be around \$225 or \$227 a year,” Weiner said.

Referencing Vail’s earlier comments, Weiner said Executive Director Becky Moriarty has been tracking the numbers and no decrease was found to date.

“I know that the number that you’re pointing out, I don’t know where that came from, but I do know the numbers that Becky has been tracking over the course do not show a decrease in usage at our senior center because of Wilbraham,” Weiner said.

Erik Vanderleeden suggested a different approach.

“I will say, for the record, I think what Becky and the senior center does for you guys is phenomenal. You can’t compare her to anyone else, she’s phenomenal. But, the scope of this project is so large and so expensive, our Selectmen are, currently, working diligently on getting this very building back and I know you guys know this because it’s been presented in town meetings,” Vanderleeden said. “That being said, why don’t we look bigger? Stop gaps in the meantime. Your foot care in closets. Open a little bit later, get that foot care in an appropriate room. It may be a little later, a little hours or whatnot. Let’s work on the small things and look at the bigger picture.”

Mary Ellen Glover appreciates everything the senior center does and their efforts, but expressed disappointment in how the renovation and expansion was defeated twice by voters and was, again, before voters once again.

“Rather than respect the will of the people as evidenced by their vote, those involved with the senior center have chosen to review their initial proposal and are now back to request funding for a revised plan,” Glover said.

Glover added by approving the project, “the average home will be paying a total in the range of \$6 to \$7,000” and “a house worth more will pay more.”

Also, after bonds are paid off, “taxes are rarely reduced” with money “usually allocated for another purpose,” noting a question of priorities.

Town Moderator Richard Green then spoke up to say the half-hour mark was approaching, making it clear he was “not necessarily inclined to cut off debate.”

Randy Rivest encouraged “a broader financial strategy” and noted the project was still very expensive.

“The projected tax impact ranging from \$7,000 to \$20,000 per homeowner over time for the life of the bond is undeniable. Given what we as a town are facing in the future in the form of a multi-million dollar fire station, a multi-million dollar renovation of TWB, a multi-million dollar decommissioning of the current Town House, it is also unfeasible. It’s time to prioritize fiscal responsibility and reject this unwanted expenditure for a third time,” Rivest said.

As reported last week, after several proposed motion amendments and votes, Article 10 was defeated by a two-thirds vote in both the cafeteria and gymnasium.

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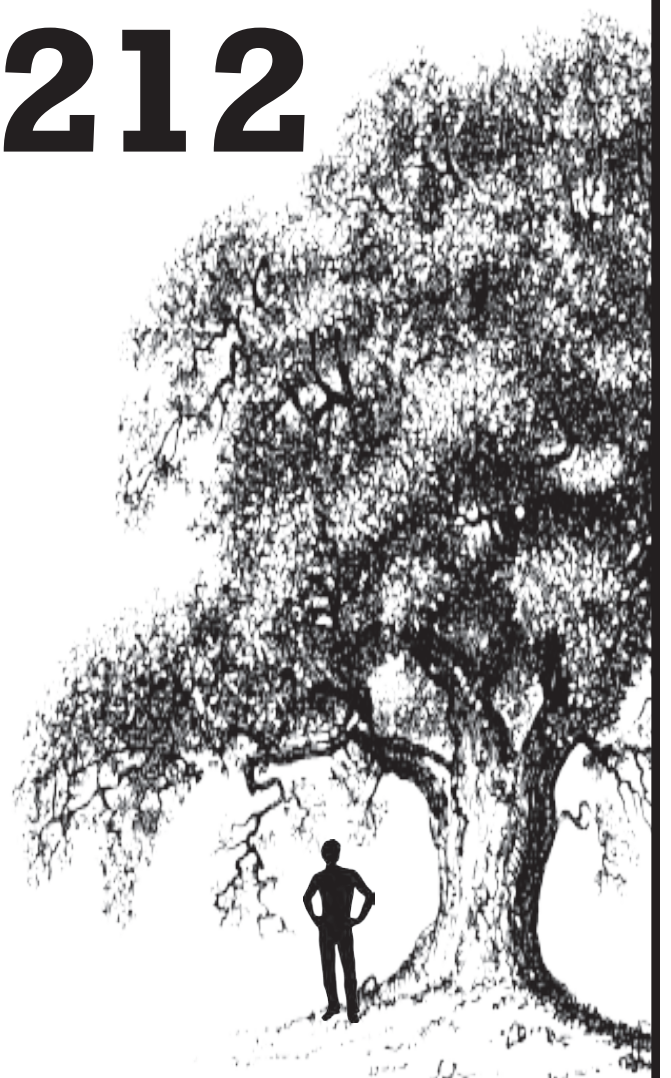
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A COMMUNITY GALLERY

Firefighter Nichole O'Donnell completes probationary training



Photo and caption courtesy of Wilbraham Fire Department

Firefighter Nichole O' Donnell has completed her year of probationary training. Throughout the past year, Firefighter O' Donnell has successfully completed all trainings, tasks and assignments required of her. On Nov. 18, Chief Andrews and Captain Arventos presented Firefighter O' Donnell with her Wilbraham Firefighter helmet shield.

A safety reminder from the Wilbraham Senior Center



Photos and caption courtesy of Wilbraham Senior Center

The Wilbraham Senior Center shared this safety reminder to the community on their Facebook page on Nov. 14: "PLEASE!!!! Follow posted signage in the parking area. SPEED LIMIT will soon be posted at 9 1/2 mph. Slow down as you are entering the town hall parking lot. Check your speed next time you visit the center. Let's work together to make sure everyone has a safe journey in and out of the parking lot."

Life in &

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.

WILBRAHAM & HAMPDEN

Happy Thanksgiving

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Community Bulletin

Send us your announcements for Happy Birthdays, Anniversaries, etc.

We will pick one each week to feature in the paper. Please keep it to less than 100 words. Please send to krivov@turley.com



Mother's Pride

After their family moved two years ago, mother Vira Syrota is proud she is of her son at Wilbraham Middle School basketball and soccer at Peneer Academy and Adapting to a new life has immersed himself years in town, also becoming his coaches and teacher Syrota also recently celebrated Oct. 5.

Submitted photos Vira Syrota



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Owner expresses pride for son

Returned to Wilbraham from Ukraine, Stepan Syrota is expressing how proud he is of his son, Stepan Syrota, a student at Wilbraham High School, who is active on the soccer team. He also passed selection for the U.S. National Team and IFA.

Stepan's fluency in language and culture, Syrota is a role model in the community in his two languages. He is a source of pride and admiration from his family and friends. He celebrated his 14th birthday on Nov. 18.



Selectman updates Rotary Club...



Submitted photo and caption Charlie Bennett
The Wilbraham-Hampden Rotary Club hosted the newest Wilbraham Selectman, Marc Ducey (right) greeted by club president Peter Salerno at their Nov. 19 meeting at the Country Club of Wilbraham. Ducey updated the club about the town dispatch center, high speed internet, Memorial School, changes to the Regional School Agreement, Boston Road status and the need for more sidewalks.

Wilbraham Women's Club welcomes Mary Ann Dietschler



Submitted photo and caption Sue Agnew
Mary Ann Dietschler spoke about human trafficking to a full house at the Wilbraham Women's Club meeting on Nov. 14. Mary Ann, with her "Wreaths for a Reason" is helping to bring attention to this growing problem. She & volunteers make and sell wreaths to help the cause.

Red Hat Ya Ya Sisterhood goes to the theater



Submitted photo and caption Cheryl Phillips
The Red Hat Ya Ya Sisterhood attended an amazing production of Beauty and the Beast from the Exit 7 players in Ludlow followed by a delicious dinner at Tony and Pennys.

WFD receives special surprise



Photo and caption courtesy of Wilbraham & Monson Academy
Students from Wilbraham & Monson Academy's Baking Club delivered special treats to the fire department on Nov. 20.

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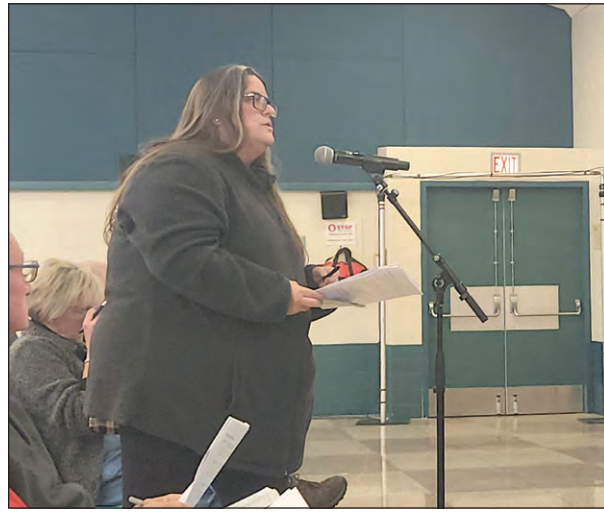
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Selectboard Member Craig Rivest reads a motion for approval of an article during the Special Fall Town Meeting.



Maura Ryan asks her questions during the Special Fall Town Meeting at Thorton W. Burgess Middle School on Nov. 12.



Aili Bond, a member of the Cemetery Commission, provides the commission's recommendation for Article 9.

Turley photos by Kristin Rivers

An overview of Fall Special Town Meeting Articles One through 11

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - Now that we've reviewed the big topics from the Fall Special Town Meeting on Nov. 12, let's recap the rest.

As recapped in last week's edition, Articles One through Four received one passage and three defeats.

Article One changing the name of the Board of Selectmen to the Selectboard passed by a two-thirds vote.

Article Two to change the Town Clerk from an elected position to an appointed position was defeated by a majority vote.

Article Three combining the elected Treasurer and elected Tax Collector positions into an appointed Treasurer/Tax Collector position was defeated by a majority vote.

Article Four to increase the Board of Selectmen--now the Selectboard--from three numbers to five was defeated by a majority vote.

Article Five was to establish a Revolving Fund for the electric vehicle charging stations, which would require a vote to amend the town's general bylaws.

The Revolving Fund would have the Selectboard the authorized department, board, committee, agency or officer to spend from the fund, the costs associated with operating and maintaining the electric vehicle charging stations, appurtenant equipment and the surrounding site, no full-time salaries as a restriction or condition on expenses payable from the fund and would go towards Fiscal Year 2025 and subsequent years.

Selectboard Member John Flynn explained how prior Town Administrator Bob Markel was "instrumental in getting a grant to pay for these charging stations," which are hosted at the senior center.

"At this point, there was very little cost to the town and there will be revenue to it. I know I heard from a couple people that used it that it is up and running. That money is being accumulated and when the software is fully installed, that money will come to the town," Flynn said. "So, there's really no downside to it but we need this paperwork done."

Maura Ryan noted how there were no full-time salaries.

"So, who is going to be responsible for collecting funds, making sure that the funds make their way back to the town and then if there's issues with the maintenance, who's responsible for that?" Ryan said.

Town Administrator Brian Domina said users would pay with a credit card through an app "and those funds will be accumulated and then sent to the town" and placed in the Revolving Fund.

"So, the Revolving Fund is an accounting fund that allows us to deposit revenues and pay expenses out of a fund without further town meeting appropriation," Domina said. "It's a more efficient way to handle the chargers."

Upon Ryan's additional questions, Domina clarified the responsibility would fall under the town administrator subject to the review of the Selectboard.

When Rich Webber asked

about it being a break-even venture, revenue-making or if money could be lost, Flynn said there was a concern about wear and tear, but the charging stations were installed for free and they have been used.

"Right now, they are accumulating money for the town. We had no expense in putting them in," Flynn said.

After questions on electricity and costs pertaining to that were addressed, Town Treasurer Richard Patullo said he wasn't in favor of the idea originally, but said this.

"Basically, they're going to bill us for electricity if we don't have a method for taking the cash in to pay the electric bill, then we're going to be paralyzed. As far as any extra cost or maintenance, if there isn't money in the Revolving Fund, the only place that's going to come from is back to town meeting and the town meeting will say, 'This is stupid. We either won't do it or will do it,'" Patullo said. "So, you get another bite at the apple if the deal that Mr. Markel negotiated is a bad deal. So, right now, it doesn't cost anything to do this and we can, at least, see if it will turn a profit."

Article Five passed by majority.

Article Six--also related to the Revolving Fund for the electric charging stations--would establish a spending limit for the fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024.

The expenditure limit was set at \$10,000.

When Thad Clavette proposed a cap of \$100, Patullo reiterated what the Revolving Fund does and that number would not

help pay bills.

Town Moderator Richard Green also clarified to Laura Gogan that a state grant covered the electric charging stations.

Article Six passed by a majority vote.

Article Seven was a vote to raise, appropriate or transfer from unappropriated available funds \$90,000 to increase budget line item 7.2. for employee benefits.

Article Seven passed by a majority vote.

Article Eight, meanwhile, was a vote to raise, appropriate or transfer from unappropriated available funds \$7,500 to increase budget line item 57.8 for the police department's Career Incentive Pay account.

Article Eight passed unanimously.

Article 9 was a vote to raise, appropriate or transfer from unappropriated available funds \$7,500 to increase budget line item 21.3 for the Cemetery Commission's Maintenance Account.

Article 9 passed unanimously.

As also recapped in last week's Times, Article 10 concerning the senior center expansion and renovation was defeated by a two-thirds vote.

Article 11 focused on phase two of the water district expansion, voting to raise and appropriate, borrow, or transfer from unappropriated available funds a sum of money to extend the existing water main for the water district.

It would be from the intersection of Glendale Road and Scantic Road northeastward approximately 1,900 feet along Glendale Road to the intersec-

tion of Cross Road, and further extend from the intersection of Glendale and Cross Road--where it will connect to the existing water main on Cross Road--which is located approximately 400 feet north of the intersection of Cross Road and Scantic Road.

Also, extending the existing water main from the intersection of Scantic Road and South Monson Road northeastward approximately 800 feet along South Monson Road to the front of 27 South Monson Rd., identified as parcel 14-040-000. It would, also, extend the existing water main of Scantic Road and South Monson Road southeastward approximately 1,100 feet along Scantic Road to the front of 148 Scantic Rd.--parcel 14-020-004--and connect additional users to the water system.

Selectboard Member Craig Rivest explained how this was brought back from the Annual Town Meeting in May.

"This is just an extension to remediate the PFAS contamination from the transfer station," Rivest said.

Rivest added the town did apply for grants, with one for \$2.3 million having been denied last month.

"However, we have a verbal commitment to an Emerging Contaminants Grant for \$1 million. Obviously, it's a verbal at this moment but we're hoping to get that," Rivest said.

Article 11 passed by a two-thirds majority vote.

An overview of Articles 12 through 21 can be found in this week's edition.

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Random Acts of Kindness

By Barb Turcotte

The name Joanne Costello may be familiar to you for many reasons. Though now retired, this mother of three began her career in nursing for a private practice, then went onto working at Baystate Medical Center for thirteen years. She started in the Neonatal ICU then moved to the Labor and Delivery department. Her son Ryan lives in Italy with his family, her son Mike lives with his family in Georgia and her daughter Meghan (Terone) lives in Connecticut with her husband. After motherhood began she then switched to part-time teaching childbirth classes.

Another reason Joanne's name might be familiar is she was a strong advocate for her daughter who was a Children's Miracle Network poster child at Baystate Children's Hospital in the early and mid-nineties. When the now 38-year old was diagnosed with cancer she was only six years old. Joanne talked about the amazing

Random Acts of Kindness that she and her family received while she stayed at the hospital with her daughter. She spoke of these niceties being received from not only the hospital personnel but the sharing and comradery of other parents of pediatric patients. Neighbors and family came forward to help with meals for the family as well as helping her then husband with the care of their two sons.

We often think of Random Acts of Kindness only being bestowed upon strangers, but these gestures can be shared with people we know as well. Perhaps sending a quick text in the middle of the day just letting them know you're thinking of them or maybe sending a card, bringing back a lost art of communicating. These can make such a difference in someone's day.

When Meghan became ill Joanne stopped her professional nursing and instead used her skills to help her daughter contin-

ue to the next plateau of wellness. Meghan has had a difficult medical journey and the biggest Random Act of Kindness that has ever been bestowed on her has happened recently, that being her brother Mike was a willing and qualified kidney donor for her. Her older brother Ryan unfortunately though willing, wasn't able to do that. Though this wasn't a 'random act', what an incredible act of unselfishness to offer this.

In those early Joanne felt she wanted to help other pediatric parents going through their own hardships and decided to add another qualification to her nursing by becoming a licensed massage therapist. This gave her more flexibility and her intention was to give parents back massages to help ease their tensions. She did this at no charge, instead doing as Random Acts of Kindness for others. Then as Meghan got older and her medical needs became less demanding, Joanne turned her massage therapy into a second career of which she retired from.

Joanne being a mother of an ill child as well as being a nine-year breast cancer survivor herself, knew well the value of this service. She proposed her idea of giving children, their parents and adult cancer

survivors chair massages while they were being administered their chemo therapy. It was a way for them all to relax and take their minds off of their worries for a little bit.

Because Joanne was so adamant knowing this was such a valuable service she kept working with the director of the cancer center. The director also believing the same brainstormed but unfortunately they were unable to get an actual position approved for a program. Well with Joanne's persistence and the director's belief in this idea a plan was established and was successful. She would be paid one-half through a charity and one-half from a second budget in order to do this which would entail her being a private contractor rather than an employee. Joanne developed the process and implemented the plan as well as trained other therapists. She is still asked to return on a per-diem basis to train new therapists. You may well have experienced a massage and thanks to her, many people have benefited from this practice with this ongoing service still in effect. Another way Joanne enjoyed giv-

ing back was giving Random Acts of Kindness chair massages at charity events.

Joanne and Jim have now been together for seven years and are enjoying retirement while relishing trips to locations such as Africa, India, Poland, Ireland and many sites within the states. There are many more places they want to see so wishing them many safe journeys as they continue to explore! I know they will also go on doing Random Acts of Kindness while experiencing these travels.

Doing a Random Act of Kindness not only feels wonderful for the recipient but it will also add an indescribable joyfulness to your day. As the saying goes, "Try it, you'll like it!"

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

Old Post Road Orchestra Holiday Shows

WILBRAHAM - Feeling nostalgic? Let the OLD POST ROAD ORCHESTRA bring you "Home for the Holidays"! Our free, family-friendly concerts will have you feeling like a kid again with favorites from Rudolph, the Grinch, the Muppets! For the young, or the young-at-heart, you're invited to join the orchestra and wear your favorite holiday pajamas or ugly holiday sweaters!! Performances are Friday, Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m., at St. Cecilia's Church, 42 Main St., in Wilbraham (spon-

sored in part by Berkshire Facial Surgery, Inc.) and on

Sunday, Dec. 15, 2 p.m., at Mary, Mother of Hope Church, 840 Page Blvd., in Springfield (sponsored in part by RMG Wealth Management Group and a grant from the Springfield Cultural Council, a local agency, which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency). Let the Old Post Road Orchestra bring you "HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS"!



In a scene right out of Norman Rockwell from a previous Tree Lighting, Santa hears what Wilbraham kids want for Christmas in the town's Gazebo. (Times file photo)

TREE from page 1

Lighting will also have a chance to come to the Museum to see all nine Christmas Trees decorated for the holidays by local organizations.

The Festival includes an ice carving demonstration, a children's scavenger hunt, a wreath raffle and mulled cider in the Hearse House. A "Remembrance Tree" will be installed on the back porch of the building.

Local Support

The Rotary isn't the only group helping make the Tree Lighting a success. Local businesses are again lending a hand to support this popular community event, said Tree Lighting Chairman Brad Sperry, the club's secretary.

Business owners Mark and Heidi Pafumi of Pafumi's on Main, and Bobby Ward, proprietor of The Guilty Grape Beer, Wine & Provisions, are providing generous contributions of their time and resources in decorating the tree and the park.

LUSO Federal Credit Union will provide hot chocolate and cookies for families attending the event, in addition to candy canes for the children visiting with Santa under the Gazebo.

Traditional holiday music will be presented by DJs David and Lisa Gomes.

And, as the Times went to press, it

was announced that real estate agent Art Ferrara said Landmark Realtors will be a sponsor of the event.

To consolidate the town's holiday displays, Boy Scout Troop 359 will relocate the nativity scene from Crane Park, where it has been for several years, to Gazebo Park. A menorah will be set up in the park to celebrate Chanukah.

All that is needed will be some mood snow, says Salerno. In keeping with Rotary's motto of "Service Above Self", and in the spirit of the "Giving Season", the Club will be collecting hygiene item donations at the Tree Lighting.

Families attending the event are asked to place personal hygiene items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, soft soap, combs and more in donation boxes at Gazebo Park. The Rotary Club will deliver the items to the Community Survival Center in Indian Orchard to help needy families in Wilbraham, Hampden, Ludlow and Springfield.

Salerno said the club hopes for a good turnout. "Our club members sincerely wish all of our community a joyous and merry Christmas and a Happy Holiday Season!" he said.

For more information about the event, or the Rotary club, contact Club Secretary and event chair, Brad Sperry at (413) 537-4171.



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Deadline for photos and forms is Monday, December 16, 2024

An overview of Special Fall Town Meeting Articles 12 through 21



Town Administrator Brian Domina provides insight on an article.

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - Now that we've reviewed the big topics from the Fall Special Town Meeting on Nov. 12, let's recap the rest.

An overview of Articles One through 11 can be found in this week's edition. Here, we will take a look at Articles 12 through 21.

Article 12 was to raise and appropriate or transfer from unappropriated available funds \$12,000 for the abatement of hazardous building materials at the Hampden Fire Station.

Fire Chief Ed Poulin explained that after a building assessment was completed, "this was something that was recognized as a hazard" inside the shell of the building.

"It has become broken up and tiles have lifted and it's asbestos, so we're looking to have that abated by a company," Poulin said.

Article 12 passed by majority vote.

Article 13--also for the Hampden Fire Station--would be a vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from unappropriated available funds \$25,000 for the installation of a generator passed by a majority vote.

Article 14 on a vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from unappropriated available funds a sum of money to purchase an electronic voting system for town meetings was a no action.

On this, Selectboard Chair Don Davenport explained why.

"At this town meeting, we weren't able to do that so we're going to bring it back as a test again at the Annual Town Meeting before we decide to spend the money," Davenport said.

The no action for Article 14 was passed by a majority vote.

Article 15 was to raise and appropriate or transfer from unappropriated available funds \$100,000 to plan for the renovation and repair of TWB, making such renovations and repairs at the middle school and to move the departments, boards, committees and commissions currently housed in the Town House to TWB.

When Maura Ryan returned to ask what the \$100,000 would cover, Flynn said how a study was done with Tighe & Bond to review TWB with "a more robust proposal coming back in the spring."

With this, he added "there's things we can do right now" including commissioning repairs for ventilation, reviewing the doors, consultants and money to put down when applying for grants.

"This gives us the latitude to go forward, but again, this is a step forward. Maura's right. We know there's a long list of things that need to be done, but the reality is look around. The bones of this building are in great shape," Flynn said.

Eric Forni asked about TWB being used as a school again.

"Because we got our kids crowded in Wilbraham and we got a school sitting right here and now we're going to spend all this money, it's going to have nothing to do with using it as a school?" Forni said.

Flynn said how "the efficiency of using this building in a school environment was not there" and that the School Committee also released TWB back to the town.

Davenport later added how the School Committee sent a letter to the Mass State Building Authority in 2017 saying the

school "would no longer be used as a school building."

"Last month, the current superintendent with the direction of the School Committee, sent a letter to the state saying that this school--this building--would be taken off-line as a school," Davenport said.

It was, also, reiterated by Flynn and Town Moderator Richard Green that the future use of the middle school was not being determined with this article, just the renovations.

After Kathy Pessolano made a motion to move the question, Article 15 passed by a majority vote.

Article 16 for CPA Funding for Memorial Park scoreboards, where a vote would appropriate or reserve from Community Preservation annual revenues--in the amount recommended by the Community Preservation Committee--\$20,000 for purchasing and installing two scoreboards at Memorial Park passed by majority vote.

For this, Advisory Chair Doug Boyd--who also chairs the Community Preservation Committee--the CPA Fund has \$572,837 in it as of that day.

"Out of that \$572,000, about \$150,000 of it or so is encumbered for...part of it is for the purchase of property on North Road and part of it is for affordable housing. It's not a specific project, it's just encumbered money," Boyd said. "This vote is essentially tax-neutral, doesn't impact our taxes one way or the other."

Article 17 was a grant of easement to National Grid, voting to authorize the Board of Selectmen--for and on behalf of the town--to convey to the Massachusetts Electric Company--National Grid--a perpetual right and easement to construct, reconstruct, repair, maintain, operate and patrol for the transmission of intelligence, an overhead system of lines, wires and cables and poles together with all equipment and appurtenances thereto for such transmission, installed over across, under and upon a portion of town-owned land at 104 Allen St.

The parcel is identified as 17-047-000 and would serve the town's property and electric vehicle charging stations and authorize the Board of Selectmen to take any--and all--action necessary for the purpose of accomplishing such easement conveyance to the town meeting warrant.

After Andrew Netherwood presented a question around easements and the leasing of town-owned land--with Town Council Rose Crowley explaining how National Grid "typically requires an easement"--Article 17 passed by a two-thirds vote.

Article 18 was to adopt a moratorium for battery energy storage systems, with the vote to amend the Zoning Bylaws by adding 7.20 for a temporary moratorium on battery energy storage units to section seven.

This item was also recommended by the Planning Board and would be an amendment to the Zoning Bylaws.

Article 18 passed by a two-thirds vote.

Article 19 to transfer from free cash unappropriated available funds \$679,283 for the purpose of reducing the tax rate for FY25 passed by majority vote.

Article 20 to transfer \$650,000 from the General Stabilization Account for the purpose of reducing the tax rate for FY25 passed by a two-thirds vote.

Article 21 to transfer a sum of money from unappropriated available funds into the General Stabilization Account was no action, passing by unanimous vote.

Bontempi and Gonzalez receive Superintendent Awards



WILBRAHAM - John A. Provost, Ed.D., Superintendent of the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District is pleased to announce that Minnehaug Regional High School seniors Marissa Bontempi and Victoria Gonzalez, have been selected to receive the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents Academic Excellence Award. This award is given to high school students who have distinguished themselves in the pursuit of excellence during their high school careers.

Marissa's current GPA is 4.77. She is the President of The National Honor Society Emerald Key Chapter, a member of Key Club, Lumberjack Club, and

American Cancer Society on Campus. Marissa's post-secondary education plan is to major in Health Science. At this time, she is leaning towards a career in the medical field, possibly anesthesiology.

Victoria's current GPA is 4.71. She is the Vice President of The National Honor Society Emerald Key Chapter, Secretary of the Class of 2025, and officer of the Spanish Club. She is also a three-season student-athlete, competing on the Cross-Country, Indoor Track, and Track and Field teams. After graduating from MRHS, Victoria plans to major in Biology and pursue a career in nursing.

NAMI receives \$3,000 donation



Submitted Photo

Mark Carney-Communications Coordinator, Denise Vershon-volunteer, Cathy Rogers-Executive Director NAMI-WM and Joe Liquori-Vice President PVGTO. We would also like to recognize the following PVGTO leadership. Paul Bourbeau - President and Joe Reich - Treasurer.

WEST SPRINGFIELD - The National Alliance on Mental Illness of Western Massachusetts was presented with a check on Nov. 6 for \$3,000 from

The Pioneer Valley GTO Association. NAMI would like to thank them for their ongoing support over the years.

Wilbraham Women's Club Christmas Luncheon Meeting

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Women's Club will be holding their Christmas Luncheon Meeting on Thursday December 12, 2024.

11:30 a.m. for Social followed by Noon Lunch at the St. Cecilia Parish Center.

Holiday Floral Arrangements with Bob Whitney too! Bob will design six holiday arrangements to be raffled off at the end of his presentation.

Area clubs will be invited. There will be a guest fee of \$5 for this program.

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Makenzi Pastreck socks a punt away.

Shutout in second round ends season for Falcons

WILBRAHAM — On Saturday, Nov. 9, the Minnechaug Regional High School girls soccer team made its second road trip of the state tournament. After narrowly escaping Scituate in the first round of the tour-

namment, the Falcons fell behind against Westborough. One goal held up as the Falcons lost 1-0 in the Round of 16. Minnechaug finished the season with a record of 8-8-4 overall.



Mackenzie DaFonseca catches up to the loose ball.



Zoe Pinnock takes a free kick.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli



Elizabeth Woytowicz makes pass back.



Cailin O'Brien searches for an open teammate.



Zoriah Wray makes her way up the field.

MIAA seeks to throw out judge's decision

Minnechaug, Monson unaffected by appeals

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

Minnechaug Regional High School and Monson High School filed injunctions at the beginning of the month with the Hampden Court Superior Court.

The schools were appealing a ruling from the MIAA that forced the schools to take forfeits for Western Mass. tournament games because of a procedural issue that was not followed by Minnechaug, Monson, Pathfinder Regional, and several other schools in the region.

According to information sent by the MIAA to member schools, they were supposed to input games to their schedule on the Arbiter website used to track results and formulate tournament data.

Those games, which were not yet known due to the how the schedule is structured, were simply supposed to feature the school and opponents TBA (to be announced). Those fillers in the schedule would eventually be filled with Western Mass. tournament games, or nonplayoff games if teams did not qualify.

Those filler games were supposed to be on team schedules by mid-September. Because the procedure was not followed, the MIAA imposed forfeits on the schools that did not follow the rule. Under the MIAA's ruling, Minnechaug and Monson, which had soccer teams in the Western Mass. tournaments, would have to take loss-

Please see **MIAA**, page16



Submitted photo

The Minnechaug Cross Country team competed at the state meet on Saturday, Nov. 15. Pictured are Coaches Kelsey Webber and Joe Hegarty with the Minnechaug Varsity state runners (Left-Right): Ava Ofcarcik, Noelle Hisgen, Kalli Joyce, Maggie Joyce, Kay Dickson, Victoria Gonzalez, and Margaret Fulton.

Falcons finish season at state meet

By Noelle Hisgen
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - The Minnechaug fall sports season has officially ended as the girl's cross

country team finished off their season.

The Falcons have had some exciting achievements this season. Including getting second place at the Ted Ducktevicz Invitational, get-

ting a momentous third place at the Western Mass championships, and being able to send seven of their girls to the state championship for

Please see **FALCONS**, page 16

This Week in Rec

Erin Carroll
Assistant Director

WILBRAHAM - It finally feels like Fall after many weeks of mild weather and winter is now in the air! Winter sports and programs are starting or will start soon. Basketball practices have started for our Gr 3-8 teams and practices will start next week for the Gr K-2 basketball teams. Registration for High School Intramural Basketball and Pre-K Basketball began this week on

Tuesday, November 26. Do not delay in registering for these popular programs before it is too late! Don't forget to mark your calendars for the December break ART-ventures program (Gr K-5) that will be offered on Friday, December 27 and Monday, December 30. Keep your kids busy over the holiday break!

As we head towards the end of November and the end of the year, it is important to remember that we have so much to be thankful for here in Wilbraham. We have are fortunate enough to

have amazing facilities, friendly faces, and incredible coaches and volunteers that continuously help our community to be top notch. Family, friends, health and being able to live in such a supportive area is something we should all be thankful for!

Happy Thanksgiving and Happy Holidays to everyone. We hope you all enjoy this wonderful time of year.

NOTE: To register for all of our programs and for more information, please visit Wilbraham-Rec.com.

FALCONS from page 15

the second year in a row, where they got 11th as a team.

This year, the cross-country team had more than 40 runners on its roster, 15 of whom were seniors. The team was led by head coach Joe Hegarty with assistant coach Kelsey Webber. Webber also is the head coach for the indoor and outdoor track teams while Hegarty continues to coach girls distance in the outdoor season.

"This season we came in with high hopes but it was anything but a smooth season," said Hegarty. "We had injuries, illnesses, and all kinds of changes to our varsity group. We battled through and I think we became more of a team because of it. I have many take aways from the season but I think the biggest of all is this group showed me how important it is to be a team and to trust each other and run for each other. Whether we win or lose; if we do that, we are champions. I loved this group and will miss these seniors a ton next year. I come back every year because of the challenge of improving this program but more importantly because of the long-term skills and character traits that this sport builds within young people. My life has been so positively shaped by this sport. It is truly a gift and I want to share that gift."

Two seniors, Victoria Gonzalez and Alison Mackie, who have been on the cross country team for all four years of high school, spoke about their experiences regarding this season and what they took away from it. "I chose xc because field hockey didn't work out, but I still wanted to do a sport. I heard xc was chill and the girls were nice so I joined," said Mackie. "This season was definitely a learning experience but I loved all the memories I made with my team. I loved that our team made states for the second year in a row in Chaug history! What I've learned from these four years is resilience and perseverance. Cross country is a mentally hard sport, but with the help of my coaches I learned to never give up. With me, I take away the lessons I've learned and the friendships I made with my teammates. I'm most proud of how I developed mentally as a runner. Last year was hard for me, but I came back as a better version of myself this year which I'm proud of. I learned to be proud of myself no matter the outcome of a race or what my time was."

"I chose xc because of its reputation for being the sport with the nicest people—I found this definitely held true," stated Gonzalez. "This season reminded me why I do xc, this sport is so much more than me and my goals its about supporting my teammates and working together to accomplish something even better. That's why making states was so rewarding it's the evidence of all our efforts put together. The most important lesson I learned was that there really is no limit to what we're capable of. Running shows how with consistency you can become better at anything. That doesn't mean it's easy though and running definitely taught me that good things take not only time but hard work. I'm most proud of how hard I pushed myself this season. I think that when I allowed myself to set ambitious goals that was when I actually started to achieve them."

There is the stereotype that the cross country athletes are some of the nicest people you will ever meet. And needless to say, Minnechaug's Falcons prove that right. Everyone is always so supportive of each other, cheering each runner on during the race, and pushing each other to become faster at every practice.

This season was full of ups and downs, but the team persevered through the season and truly came out on top. This large group of girls came together and each and every one of them gave it their all on every 5k.

The prominent theme for the girls this season was to give a piece of themselves, even if it wasn't the piece they wanted to give, in order to create the full picture. Needless to say, everyone gave their pieces to complete the puzzle, giving the Falcons one unforgettable cross country season.

MIAA from page 15

es affecting their standing for the state tournament. If the schools won, they were still able to advance in the tournaments. Monson girls soccer reached the Western Mass. finals. Pathfinder boys soccer did as well. Minnechaug girls soccer made it to the semifinals.

An injunction was filed by Monson and Minnechaug, seeking to not have the athletes punished for an administrative issue. Judge Tracy Duncan granted the injunction, and both schools had their forfeits changed to whatever their actual results were.

Minnechaug boys soccer benefited the most from the change, securing the No. 5 seed in the Division 2 state tournament. The changes had the ability to affect schools such as Agawam, Ludlow, Holyoke, and Chicopee Comprehensive in Division 2. Monson's injunction affected seedings for schools such as Granby, Quaboag, Palmer, and Pathfinder.

Pathfinder did not appeal to a court, and was defeated on the road in the first round of the tournament.

The injunctions also led to delays in the state tournament starting in the case of field hockey and girls volleyball. Northampton and Pioneer Valley Regional also won injunctions, though the MIAA is appealing those rulings. They are appealing despite the fact the tournaments have already concluded. The MIAA is not commenting on the court cases.

No schools from Western Massachusetts made it to the state finals in boys soccer, girls soccer, or field hockey.

T-Birds, Blues, announce long-term extension

SPRINGFIELD – Last month, the Springfield Thunderbirds and St. Louis Blues announced the extension of their affiliation agreement through the end of the 2030-31 season. The deal further solidifies the long-term future of the American Hockey League in Springfield, one of the league's charter cities.

"We are thrilled to continue our richly rewarding long-term partnership with the St. Louis Blues," said Thunderbirds President Nathan Costa. "The Blues and Thunderbirds share similar core values regarding player and staff development and maintaining a deep commitment to their communities. Our collaboration has enabled us to grow our franchise both on the ice and throughout the region. We cannot wait to see the next generation of Blues stars hone their talents in Springfield in front of the best fans in the AHL."

In the first three seasons as the Blues' AHL affiliates, the Thunderbirds have experienced tremendous success on and off the ice. In 2022, the team captured the Richard F. Canning Trophy as Eastern Conference Champions, reaching the Calder Cup Finals for the first time in club history. The T-Birds received the AHL President's Award as Team of the Year that same year.

"On behalf of our local ownership group, we are proud to announce an extension of our affiliation agreement with the St. Louis Blues. I want to thank Blues Chairman Tom Stillman, General Manager Doug Armstrong, and the Blues staff, as well as our President Nate Costa and his team, for building a culture of cooperation

and success that is unparalleled within the AHL. This agreement will ensure that AHL hockey has a home in Springfield for many years to come," commented Paul Picknelly, Thunderbirds Managing Owner.

The club built upon their success last season, posting a franchise-record 20 sellout games, including a 14-game sellout streak to end the campaign. 2023-2024 also marked the T-Birds' eighth consecutive season of attendance growth (6,321 fans per game).

"First, I want to thank Springfield Thunderbirds President Nate Costa, the local ownership group under managing partner Paul Picknelly, and the entire team and staff for their continued dedicated efforts and support and belief in our City of Springfield," said Springfield Mayor Domenic J. Sarno. "Special thanks and appreciation to the St. Louis Blues organization for their continued strong commitment to our local T-Birds! Both organizations are class acts that share a strong emphasis on community and fan engagement and putting a quality product and team on the ice.

Since the start of the partnership, the Blues have also promoted several Springfield staff members to the parent club in St. Louis. Most notably, Drew Bannister became the first T-Birds coach to earn a promotion to an NHL bench when he was named the Blues' head coach on May 8.

"Springfield provides a first-class environment for players in the Blues organization to develop on and off the ice and continue their progress toward the NHL

in a well-established, supportive market with strong, experienced leadership," said Blues Assistant General Manager Ryan Miller.

In addition to Bannister's rise to the NHL, 26 players have skated in games for both the Thunderbirds and the Blues, including young stars Jake Neighbours, Zack Bolduc, Matthew Kessel, Joel Hofer, Scott Perunovich, and Zach Dean.

"This is an exciting day for both the St. Louis Blues and the Springfield Thunderbirds organizations," said Thunderbirds General Manager Kevin Maxwell. "This agreement provides stability for our players and staff, and it will continue to offer our fans the chance to identify with our prospects and follow their careers as they graduate onto the Blues."

The affiliation extension assures Springfield's continued tenancy in the American Hockey League, which dates back to 1936. The City of Firsts has had an active AHL franchise on the ice every season since 1954.

"The city of Springfield has been a cornerstone of the American Hockey League for more than 80 years," said AHL President and Chief Executive Officer Scott Howson. "Hockey in Springfield has experienced a renaissance since the arrival of the Thunderbirds. Stability with an NHL affiliate is very important for AHL clubs, and we're pleased that Springfield's partnership with the St. Louis Blues will continue to bring excitement and entertainment to the fans of Western Massachusetts."

Tough start hurts Railers in loss

PORTLAND, ME – Worcester was outshot in a fateful and fatal first period, 21-1, and outscored by the Maine Mariner 4-0, on the way to a 5-2 defeat.

Lincoln Hatten and Cole Donhauser had the Railers goals. It was the first ECHL goal for Hatten, the first in a Worcester uniform for Donhauser. It was also shorthanded.

Drew Bavaro, Patrick Guay, Bennett Stockdale, Wyllum Deveaux and Evan Vierling had the Portland goals. Former Railers forward Jimmy Lambert had three assists for the winners.

Hatten scored from in close at 3:35 of the second period to make it a 4-1 game, Donhauser assisting. Donhauser scored unassisted with a wrist shot from the right wing at 19:29 of the third period to make it 5-2. He was plus-2 for the night.

Henrik Tikkanen made 33 saves for Worcester. Ryan Bischel had 27 for the

Mariners.

Bavaro opened the scoring with a power play goal at 6:30 of the first period, just before the Railers would have gotten Jordan Kaplan out of the penalty box. He snapped a 40-foot wrist home from above the circles.

Guay made it 2-0 at 9:02. He finished off a 2 on 1 break, converting a pass from Lambert. Stockdale scored a little more than a minute later with a shot from the left circle. Deveaux scored on a deflection at 16:23 to make it 4-0 on the scoreboard.

The Railers actually won the last 40 minutes, 2-1. Vierling had the only Maine goal in that span, scoring on the power play at 16:40 of the third period, but there was no way Worcester could climb out of its early hole.

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Nine Christmas Trees with different themes

Annual Christmas Tree Festival will light up the Old Meeting House Museum

By Charles F. Bennett
Times Editor Emeritus

WILBRAHAM – If you asked any town resident how long has the Town Tree Lighting been held in conjunction with the Christmas Tree Festival at the Old Meeting House Museum, they probably would say, “Forever!” The next one will be held on Sunday, Dec. 8. But, as a current member of both the Wilbraham-Hampden Rotary Club who sponsors the Tree Lighting and a Trustee of the Atheneum Society who oversees the Museum, I still have no idea how long the beloved annual events have been going on, and neither do many of my fellow members.

But one thing is certain, the town will be bustling with holiday activity and cheer on Dec. 8.

And, there are some changes in store for The Tree



Atheneum Trustee Marty Lyman with Christmas Tree decorated by Karen Geaghan Photography at last year's festival. (Times file photo)

Festival this year as the Old Meeting House Museum at 450 Main Street takes on an expanded role this season with new starting and ending times. It will be open later and feature a special “Remembrance Tree” on the back porch of the Museum that everyone can add to.

Atheneum Trustee and Tree Festival Chairwoman Marianne Wagner says the festival hours will be adjusted to fit in better with children and adults who also attend the Town Tree Lighting activities down Main Street at Gazebo Park. Now, those who were at the Tree Lighting earlier can stroll back to the Museum, after Santa returns to the North Pole, and check out the various trees on display.

The museum will open at 3 p.m. and stay open after the Tree Lighting for viewing of the decorated trees until 6 p.m. so that those who attended the Tree Lighting (starting at 4:30 p.m.) will also have a chance to see all Christmas Trees decorated for the holidays. The event is free and open to the public. As the Times went to press, it was announced that Wilbraham Candle will have a display set up at the festival.

Young and Old

“The Christmas Tree Festival, presented by the Atheneum Society of Wilbraham, will have lots of activities tied to it with events like an historical scavenger hunt for kids and a wreath raffle donated by Wilbraham Flowers, steaming hot mulled cider in the Hearse House and the ice-cold artistry of ice carver Joey Almeida,” said Wagner.

The following organizations will be providing tree decorations: Five Star Gardens, Friends of the Wilbraham Library, Karen Geaghan Photographer, St. Cecilia's Women's Club, Wilbraham Art League, Wilbraham Children's Museum, Wilbraham Garden Club, Wilbraham Girl Scouts and the Atheneum Society Remembrance Tree.

The Gift Shop will be open featuring “Wilbraham”-imprinted tee shirts, hats, stationery and local history books. Among the activities will be an ice carver demonstration, mulled cider in the Hearse House, a Scavenger Hunt for children and a wreath raffle.

The Wilbraham Art League Tree will feature bookmarks as ornaments. The bookmarks will be available for sale for \$2 each with proceeds going to the Atheneum Society.

Visitors can hang a special remembrance on the “Remembrance Tree” for a donation that will go to the Community Survival Center.

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

Events & announcements schedule

Babes for a Cause: Shop for a Reason Nov. 30

HAMPDEN – The Babes for a Cause: Shop for a Reason event takes place on Saturday, Nov. 30 from 4 to 8 p.m. at The Starting Gate at GreatHorse.

The Holiday Tour event supports Shriners Children's New England and will feature 35+ women-owned businesses, acoustic music featuring Project 267, a cash bar, snacks and small plates for purchase and complimentary spa services and complimentary readings.

10% of sales from vendors will be donated back to SCNE and 50% of ticket sales will be donated back SCNE.

Holiday Toy Drive At Hasbeen Collectible Toys & Comics

WILBRAHAM - Join us on Sunday Dec. 8 from Noon to 4 p.m. at HasBeen Collectible Toys & Comics located at 2378 Boston Road in Wilbraham Massachusetts for a special HOLIDAY TOY DRIVE! This event will be hosted by Rik Alvarez (owner of HasBeen and former Creative Manager of the Transformers/GI Joe Brands) and local comic book YouTube channel Lunch Money Comics. Attendees are asked to bring a new unwrapped toy to be donated to local children in need.

Attendees will receive a raffle ticket for each item donated. Several raffles will be held throughout the day with some fabulous prizes ranging from toys, art and comics! Refreshments and holiday treats will also be available. Lunch Money Comics t-shirts will be available for purchase with all proceeds going towards charity. If any items are purchased at HasBeen (with a \$10 value or more) for the toy drive, the attendee will receive two raffle tickets.

Special Guest Aaron Archer will also be selling original art and taking art commissions. Aaron is a former designer and character creator at Hasbro and has worked on a variety of brands including GI Joe, Batman, Aliens, Jurassic Park and most notably Transformers.

St. Cecilia's Women's Club sponsoring Calendar Raffle

WILBRAHAM - Feeling lucky?? The Saint Cecilia Women's Club is sponsoring a Calendar Raffle Fundraiser for the month of November. Each day a winner will be drawn for a cash prize.

\$3,500 has been donated by generous businesses in our area each sponsoring an amount for a particular day from \$50 to \$250. The profit is used for the club's scholarships and donations to various charitable and needy organizations.

Raffle tickets may be found in

the rotunda of St. Cecilia Church, on the Saint Cecilia website under downloadable forms, or call Sue Agnew, 413-596-9480, for information or tickets.

Thank you for your support!!

Knitters and Crocheters at Hampden Senior Center

HAMPDEN - Barbara Dunwoody teaches knitting at the Hampden Senior Center on Mondays from 9 to 11 a.m. This class uses yarn that is donated.

Everyone is invited to join in. This past summer when school was out, we had a young girl participate that was taught previously by her grandmother. As Barbara says, “If you don't know how to knit, we'll teach you.”

Because of all the generous donations the senior center received, these ladies went to work making lap robes (crocheted or quilted), and hats (knitted or crocheted). Over one year, this group made 49 lap robes and delivered them to Vantage at Hampden, a nursing and rehab facility. They also made 216 hats that will be distributed amongst eight local elementary schools.

We are very proud of our members at the Hampden Senior Center and their contributions to giving back to our community.



We hope this holiday finds you surrounded by those you love and hold dear. Thank you for giving us so much to be grateful for this holiday season and all year; we appreciate your loyal support.

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FCU helping military families for holidays

Giving campaign supports Westover Galaxy Community Council at Westover Air Reserve Base

SPRINGFIELD - During November, Freedom Credit Union is collecting cash donations at all its branches throughout western Massachusetts to help the Westover Galaxy Community Council support military service members and their families at Westover Air Reserve Base (ARB) in Chicopee.

"We salute the service and sacrifices of the brave men and women serving at the Westover Base," said Freedom Credit Union President Glenn Welch. "Especially with the holidays coming, having loved ones away from home is challenging. We hope our contributions help ease the burden on military families."

Formed in 1988 as a committee within the Chicopee Chamber of Commerce and incorporated as an independent organization in 1989, the Westover Galaxy Community Council is made up of veterans, local businesspeople and other citizens who support the men, women and mission of Westover ARB. Within Department of Defense guidelines, Westover Galaxy Community Council raises funds to contribute to events and special needs at Westover ARB, the largest air reserve base in the nation.

Anyone can contribute at any Freedom Credit Union branch. "You don't have to be a Freedom member," said Welch. "We feel fortunate to have such a generous community helping us give back to our troops."

Big Y Community Bag Program to benefit WFOL

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Friends of the Library (WFOL) has been selected as a beneficiary of the Big Y Community Bag Program for the month of November 2024.

The Big Y Community Bag Program, which launched in January 2019, is a reusable bag program that facilitates community support with the goal to make a difference in the communities where shoppers live and work. The program features the reusable Community Bag with a special tag attached to it that allows customers to direct a donation to a non-profit of their choice upon purchase.

Wilbraham Friends of the Library was selected as the November beneficiary of the program by store leadership at the Big Y located at Boston Road, Wilbraham. Wilbraham Friends of the Library will receive a \$1 donation ev-

ery time the reusable Community Bag is purchased at this

location during November, unless otherwise directed by the customer through the Giving Tag attached to the bag.

Our goal is to sell 200 bags, equivalent to \$200 raised. We are confident that with the help of our dedicated supporters, we can reach this goal.

The Community Bags are located on displays around the store and at the checkout. For more information about the program, please visit bigy.bags4my-cause.com.

We strongly encourage you to share this news with family and friends as well!

For more information, contact the WFOL at friends@wilbrahamlibrary.org.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Town of Hampden Notice of Public Hearing

The Hampden Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, December 11, 2024, at 6:30 PM** in the Town House, 625 Main Street, Hampden, MA on the application of Fiore Grassetti for a Special Permit under Section 6.1, 6.11 (1) of the Hampden Zoning Bylaw to allow the construction of a detached 30 ft. X 40 ft. metal building and the construction of a 22 ft. X 21 ft. metal carport with (3) enclosed sides which both exceed, in aggregate area, a square footage which is more than one half (1/2) the ground floor area of the main dwelling including any attached garage, at the Grassetti residence located at 115 Stafford Road. Information related to this application is on file in the Town Clerk's Office and is available for review by the public during normal business hours.

For the Board, Madison Pixley, Chair
Hampden Planning Board
11/21, 11/28/2024

R & S Assoc. Inc
PO Box 543
Wilbraham MA 01095
413-596-4374
11/21, 11/28, 12/5/2024

Wilbraham Conservation Commission LEGAL NOTICE

The Wilbraham Conservation Commission will hold a public meeting on **Monday, December 9, 2024 at 6:00 PM** on the Request for Determination of Applicability filed by Dennis Grimard under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Wilbraham Wetlands Bylaw. The request is to determine whether the area and/or activities depicted on plans submitted is subject to the Wilbraham Wetland Bylaw. The project includes the replacement of a septic system within 100' of an Inner Riparian Zone. The property is located at 10 Rice Drive, Wilbraham. Information relating to this application is on file with the Conservation Commission. Christopher Brown, Chairman
11/28/2024

Wilbraham Conservation Commission LEGAL NOTICE

The Wilbraham Conservation Commission will hold a public meeting on **Monday, December 9, 2024 at 6:30 PM** on the Request for Determination of Applicability filed by Linda Ramos under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Wilbraham Wetlands Bylaw. The request is to determine whether the area and/or

activities depicted on plans submitted is subject to the Wilbraham Wetland Bylaw and the Wetlands Protection Act. The project includes the filling of a sink hole and erosion in the front yard. The project is within the Buffer Zone of an intermittent stream and within the 100-year FEMA Flood Zone Bordering Land Subject to Flooding. The property is located at 35 Linwood Drive, Wilbraham. Information relating to this application is on file with the Conservation Commission. Christopher Brown, Chairman
11/28/2024

Wilbraham Conservation Commission LEGAL NOTICE

The Wilbraham Conservation Commission will hold a public meeting on **Monday, December 9, 2024 at 6:15 PM** at the Town Office Building, 240 Springfield St, Wilbraham, MA on the Request for Determination of Applicability filed by the Town of Wilbraham Conservation Commission under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Wilbraham Wetlands Bylaw to determine whether the work and area depicted on plans that includes accessibility improvements to the hiking trails on the Sawmill Pond Conservation Area are subject to the Wetlands Protection Act and the Wilbraham Wetland Bylaw. The property is located at 215R Soule Road. Information relating to this application is on file with the Conservation Commission. Christopher Brown, Chairman
11/28/2024

PUBLIC NOTICE

This ad is pursuant to MA Gen. Law Ch.255, Sec. 39A as of **December 6, 2024** the following motor vehicles will be for sale to satisfy a garage keepers lien:

Vehicle :
2019 Hyundai Elantra
VIN: KMHD84LF8KU885556
COLOR: Red
LKO: Zachery Mazzocca
5 Blackhorse Lane
Burlington MA 01803
and
IC Credit Union
300 Bemis Rd
Burlington MA

LUSO welcomes Russ Kelly as Business Development Mgr. & Sr. Loan Originator

LUDLOW - LUSO Federal Credit Union, serving members and communities in Hampden County since 1971, is pleased to announce that Russ Kelly of Ludlow has joined our team as Business Development Manager & Senior Loan Originator. A native of Scotland with over 15 years of experience in the mortgage industry in both the United Kingdom and the United States, Kelly brings a wealth of expertise and a dedication to client-centered service.



Russ Kelly

"I work on the old-fashioned principle of doing what's right for each individual. My focus is on building trust and guiding members toward achieving their financial freedom, whilst working with local realtors to improve their offering in the local community," said Kelly. "Joining LUSO is a unique opportunity to serve a community that has embraced me and that I care deeply about, and I am excited to help members meet their goals."

In addition to his role at LUSO, Kelly is actively engaged in the local community as Treasurer of the Young Professionals Society of Greater Springfield. In this capacity, he ensures the profitability of programs and advocates for membership representation throughout the Springfield area. Kelly is also a member and ambassador of the East of the River Chamber of Commerce where

he encourages the patronage and membership of local businesses across western mass.

Jennifer M.G. Calheno, President & Chief Executive Officer of LUSO Federal Credit Union, expressed her enthusiasm about Russ's addition to the team. "Russ's extensive experience and his unwavering commitment to member success align perfectly with LUSO's mission to prioritize our members' best interests," said Calheno. "Having someone of Russ's caliber and dedication on board strengthens our commitment to providing high-quality, personalized

lending services to our community."

To learn about LUSO Federal Credit Union, or to become a member, contact

844-LUSO-FCU or visit lusofederal.com. LUSO is federally insured by the NCUA and is an Equal Housing Lender. N M L S #255907.

Please check the accuracy of your legal notice prior to submission (i.e., date, time, spelling). Also, be sure the requested publication date coincides with the purpose of the notice, or as the law demands. Thank you.



Any way you slice it, I'm here to make buying or selling your home EASY AS PIE!

Happy Thanksgiving!

Maureen McGarrett Hall
REALTOR® MA 9585138 | Member MLS | Equal Opportunity Housing



GALLAGHER
REAL ESTATE

413-364-4994

realtybmaureen@gmail.com



'Tis the Season for Giving Back! A Local Charitable Giving Guide

Indian Orchard Citizen's Council

Toy Drive

Now through December 9th
New, unwrapped toys can be dropped off at
117 Main Street, Indian Orchard
Mon - Fri 10 -2
Or mail checks to
IOCC
PO Box 51593
Indian Orchard, MA 01151

The Local Table-n-Tap Restaurant

2039 Boston Road, Wilbraham
(In front of Big Y)

Dine-In to Benefit the Community Survival Center

Monday, December 9th 5-8pm
We will be donating 20% of food sales to support the
Community Survival Center

Collecting Food & Personal Care Items

To Benefit the Community Survival Center
donations can be dropped off at The Local
throughout the holiday season.

Food Items:

- Peanut Butter
- Corned Beef Hash
- Breakfast Cereal
- Chunky Soups
- Canned Stews
- Canned Ham
- Canned Tuna
- Spam
- Shelf Stable Milk
- Pasta Sauce

Personal Care Items:

- Toothpaste
- Soap
- Shampoo
- Feminine Hygiene Products
- Toilet Tissue
- Deodorant
- Dish detergent
- Laundry detergent

Route 20 Bar & Grille

2341 Boston Rd, Wilbraham
(The Wilbraham Shops)

Annual Stuff the Truck Event!

Saturday, Dec 14th 11:30am - 5:00 pm
Collecting NEW warm winter coats, hats, gloves, etc
And NEW unwrapped toys for kids ages 5-15.
Donate and receive a FREE pasta dinner!
(Donations can be dropped off anytime up until Dec. 14)

Spartan Auto Care Center

2714 Boston Road, Wilbraham

12th Annual Toys for Tots Campaign

New, unwrapped toys can be dropped off in their waiting room
now through mid- December.
Toys will be distributed to local charities and local families.

Luso Federal Credit Union

Two Locations:
599 East Street, Ludlow
1 Crane Park Drive, Wilbraham

Letters to the Troops

Annual Letters to the Troops campaign. We will collect letters now
through December 2nd during school banking or at one of our branch
locations. In return, LUSO will donate one toy to our annual toy drive
charities for every 20 letters/cards received, up to 50 toys!

Annual Holiday Coloring Contest

For students in grades Pre-K through 8. If you would like a chance
for your child to win one of our prize-filled holiday gift bags, please
have them complete the coloring sheet for their grade level (Pre-K
to 8th Grade). Then return the coloring sheet entry to the credit
union by Saturday, December 14, 2024. One winner from each of the
different grade levels will be selected on Wednesday, December 18,
2024. Coloring sheets may be picked up at our branch locations or
downloaded from our website. Students may drop off their coloring
entry to a LUSO staff member on your school banking day or bring the
entry to either branch location.

Holiday Toy Drive

Collecting new, unwrapped toy donations for children in need within
our community. Drop off your toys at either of our branch locations by
Saturday, December 14th. In the spirit of the season, for each toy
donated, you will receive an entry to win a gift card wreath
valued at \$150.

HasBeen Collectible Toys & Comics

2378 Boston Road, Wilbraham

One Day Holiday Toy Drive!

Sunday December 8th from noon to 4pm

Hosted by Rik Alvarez (owner of HasBeen and former Creative Manager
of the Transformers/GI Joe Brands) and local comic book YouTube
channel, Lunch Money Comics. Attendees are asked to bring a new,
unwrapped toy to be donated to local children in need. Receive a raffle
ticket for each item donated. Purchase an item with a value of \$10 or
more at HasBeen to be donated and receive 2 raffle tickets. Several
raffles will be held throughout the day with some fabulous prizes
ranging from toys, art and comics! Lunch Money Comics t-shirts will
be available for purchase with all proceeds going towards charity.
Refreshments and holiday treats will also be available.
Join us for a day of holiday fun and giving!

Pioneer Valley Financial Group

535 East Street, Ludlow

Ludlow Teachers Supply Drive

We have partnered with the Ludlow VFW to collect classroom supplies
to help teachers in the second half of the school year.

Drop off supplies now through January 3rd.

PV Financial Group
535 East St, Ludlow
Ludlow Veterans Center
487 Holyoke St, Ludlow

Classroom supplies:

- Colored copy paper
- Colored & white card stock
- Sharpies
- Expo Markers
- Index cards
- Pre-sharpened
- Ticonderoga pencils
- 2 pocket folders
- Gift cards to
- Amazon or Staples

Cleaning supplies:

- Cleaning/disinfectant wipes
- Alcohol wipes
- Baby wipes
- Paper towels
- Hand sanitizer
- Liquid soap
- Microfiber cloths

PV Financial Annual First Responders Appreciation Dinner

Inviting all law enforcement officers and first responders,
current and retired veterans to attend a fun night of dinner, games,
and prizes.
January 9, 2025 at the Gremio Lusitano Club, 385 Winsor St, Ludlow.

Richard R. Green Insurance Agency, Inc.

2 locations:
32 Somers Road, Hampden
128 Main Street, Monson

20th Annual Collection for Children and Veterans.

Collecting new, unwrapped toys to benefit the "I Found Light
Foundation". Also collecting gifts for veterans, a project we are working
on with the Hampden Senior Center. For our veterans project we need
individually wrapped snacks, cookies, crackers, granola bars, hard
candy & chocolates, mini hand sanitizers, hot chocolate packets, and
word search /puzzle type books.

Cash Donations for the Monson Senior Center

We are collecting cash donations to benefit the Monson Senior Center.
We will match up to the first \$1,000 in donations!
Collecting gifts for all three through December 15th.
Please call 566-0028 or 267-3495 for more information.

Town of Ludlow - Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony

Ludlow Town Hall
Sunday, December 1st at 4:30pm

Toys For Tots Collection

Collecting new, unwrapped toy donations at the tree lighting
ceremony.

La Cucina di Hampden House

1 Allen Street, Hampden

13th Annual Toy Drive!

Tuesday, December 10th, 3- 8 pm
Receive 50% Off your entrée
With your donation of a new, unwrapped toy!

Food Drive in Partnership with Girl Scout Troop 65374

Excepting donations of non-perishable food items
Now through Dec. 7th

