

**SENIORS**  
45th Turkey Trot  
Page 3

**SPORTS**  
All-Star Games  
Page 15

# TIMES

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Turley photos by Amanda Munson

Starting during the pandemic, the HPD started the fire truck parade that allows everyone in town to see the lit up trucks in their own front yard. Here, members of the Hampden Fire Department pose for a group photo with one of the lit-up fire trucks.

## Community enjoys Santa, caroling at Annual Tree Lighting in Hampden

By Amanda Munson  
Correspondent

HAMPDEN- The Annual Tree Lighting in front of the Hampden Town House on Dec. 1 attracted a crowd that was ready to see Santa and Mrs. Claus, sing along to Christmas carols with the Green Meadows Singers, view the beautiful tree lighting, and support the Girl Scouts Food Drive. Families with young children were happy to meet up with neighbors, friends, and families to enjoy the cold and activity filled night.

While walking around the area, many guests were mentioning that

they've been attending this town event since they were kids. The sense of community and pride felt at the tree lighting was shared by everyone, especially Selectboard Member John Flynn.

"The Board of Selectmen always attends, I've been attending this tree lighting since I was a kid. It's a ritual, rite of passage, all the words you want to use. It's one of the things that shows that Hampden is a great community," Flynn said. "Everyone remembers. I saw people there with their grandchildren, same thing as me, bonding over when they first started going to these events as kids.

That's the part that makes the town unique, especially the people. We are blessed to have the ability to have kids grow up in a community they felt so special growing up in."

Approaching Maryn Rizzuto, a singer of the Green Meadows Singers, she talked about her years participating in the group and her excitement to finally sing this year.

"I've been singing for two years and tonight I am here with most of my friends. My favorite song is 'Rocking Around the Christmas Tree' and my favorite thing about the holiday season is receiving pres-

Please see **HAMPEN**, page 21

## HSC holds Thanksgiving Grab and Go ahead of the holiday

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
krivers@turley.com



Turley photos by Kristin Rivers

Jim Dupuis poses with his festive turkey hat as drivers begin arriving for the Thanksgiving Grab and Go at the Hampden Senior Center on Nov. 27.

HAMPDEN - The senior center parking lot was packed on Nov. 27 to pick up this year's Thanksgiving Grab and Go Dinner.

The event provided the community with all the Thanksgiving dinner trimmings including turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy, cranberry sauce, rolls, mini apple pies for dessert and more.

The Grab and Go was free, compliments of the senior center and sponsored by Bethlehem Church, Brodeur Campbell Fence Co., Great Horse, Monson Savings Bank, Polish National Credit Union, The Reserve, Texas Roadhouse, the Hampden Senior Center Quilt Group and Saint Mary's Parish.

Jim Dupuis was doing traffic detail with his friend, Tom Farrow, sporting a festive turkey hat as he greeted drivers.

"It's really nice to help out folks that can't really afford it," Dupuis said. "We donate our time. Like I told you a little bit earlier, I'm going to run around, deliver 10 meals to some folks that can't get out. I enjoy it. I love hanging out here, all my buddies are up

Please see **GRAB AND GO**, page 4

## MRHS gets in holiday spirit at Holiday Craft Fair

By Noelle Hisgen  
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - On Nov. 23, the Minnechaug Fine Arts Department held a Holiday Arts and Crafts Fair in the school gymnasium.

The fair had a wide variety of local vendors selling various crafts such as handmade work, soaps and clothing.

In the past, the art department held a craft fair in tandem with Minnechaug's Car Show for two years. After its popularity and success, it was time for the Fine Arts Department to host their own craft show independently.

The event was led by Fine/Applied Arts Teachers Jen Zera, Kyle Garron and Tessa Cham-



Turley photos by Noelle Hisgen

Minnechaug's Associate Principal Nicole Smith sells her hand-made crafts with her business One White Whisker.

bers, working for months helping get vendors, get vendors committed and getting everything set up for them.

"I am totally overjoyed to see the amount of people that have showed up to support the Fine Arts Department, along with the different vendors that are here," Zera said. "There's a lot of different displays that are showcasing a lot of different talents. But I'm just feeling a lot of good energy and it's just really exciting to see the community come together."

"So, we've always wanted to have kind of more of a community presence in the school, and bring more awareness to the Fine Arts Department, other than the art show that we have in the win-

ter and the spring," Chambers said. "I just want them to experience local artists and know that there is such a big artist presence here (and) know for our school community that the arts can be a job. That people are passionate about their hobbies and about the art that they make. We have quite a few students who have booths set up, former students, faculty staff. So, it's something that people really love and they see as being their safe space. So, we want to encourage students that this is something that people use and you can actually make money off of and potentially be really successful in."

There were a wide variety of

Please see **CRAFTS**, page 11





Submitted photo John Hegarty

The Knights of Columbus of Wilbraham's St. Cecilia church worked together to assemble and distribute 65 boxes of food and 65 Thanksgiving turkeys to families in need.



Turley photos by Patricia Sullivan Tom Wadzinski pulls a wagon loaded with Thanksgiving food boxes at St. Cecilia church.



Knights of Columbus member John Hegarty loads a box filled with Thanksgiving food for local families.

# Knights of Columbus 10195 hosts Thanksgiving Food Drive

By Patricia Sullivan  
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - Thanks to the Knights of Columbus 10195 of St. Cecilia Church and its parishioners, 65 local families without the means to purchase a Thanksgiving feast enjoyed a multi-course turkey dinner for the holiday.

St. Cecilia parishioners donated \$10,000 for the food drive, which took place on Nov. 25 and 26. More than a dozen Knights of Columbus members, guided by Food Drive Chair John Hegarty, purchased, boxed and distributed boxes of food and frozen turkeys to those in need.

Sister Mary McCue, pastoral minister at St. Cecilia's, praised the project.

"This is the most important thing for me," McCue said. "God's favorites are the poor. And we have every desire to help as

many people as we can."

The food drive was a smoothly executed operation.

"How many turkeys do we have in this vehicle?" Hegarty asked, as his crew of Knights loaded cars and trucks in the church parking lot on a gray, rainy Tuesday before Thanksgiving. "I need one here and 12 there!"

Hegarty, a former Grand Knight, has chaired this drive and an Easter Food Drive since 2020.

"I enjoy the satisfaction of helping people; it's part of our faith. The Knights of Columbus is a great organization. Their values are charity, unity and fraternity and a project like this allows me to espouse those values," Hegarty said.

The 65 boxes hold all the makings of a large Thanksgiving dinner: fruit cocktail, pickles, butternut squash soup, two kinds



Submitted photo John Hegarty

Members of the Knights of Columbus 10195 at St. Michael's Cathedral with a turkey delivery for their Annual Thanksgiving Food Drive.



Volunteer Ed Spear totes two turkeys for the Knights of Columbus food drive.

of bread mixes, peas, green beans, corn, cranberry sauce, blueberry muffin mix, stuffing, gravy, lemon pudding, Dream Whip, pumpkin pie filling and a pie shell. Each box comes with a frozen turkey.

Rather than collecting unpredictable amounts of donated food, the Knights purchase the groceries from Big Y at a discount, ensuring that each box has everything needed for a complete Thanksgiving dinner. They distribute the food to families in need with the help of other local organizations.

Rosa Blair drove to St. Cecilia's to collect food boxes for contacts she's made through Calvary's Love, a Spanish/English church in Springfield.

"Many people today aren't able to afford groceries," Blair said. "You see big smiles on their faces when we give out the food. The Knights of Columbus and the people of Santa Cecilia work so hard and do so much. We are very grateful for this help."

Blair said that recipients of the Thanksgiving feasts will include recent immigrants from Haiti living in Springfield.

Pediatrician Tom Wadzinski pitched in on his day off to help his fellow Knights distribute the food boxes.

"It's nice working on projects that give back to the community," Wadzinski said. "I have seen patients who are beneficiaries of this type of service work and I can tell that it makes a big difference in their lives."

Working with their state organization, the Knights of Columbus 101095 at St. Cecilia's also hold a Coats for Kids Drive during the holiday season. This year, they purchased 216 winter coats that will be given to local children through the Gray House in Springfield.

McCue commented on the church's work.

"The parish family enjoys contributing to those in need," McCue said. "It's an honor to help the less fortunate."



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# Community takes part in 45th Annual Turkey Trot



Turley photos by Noelle Hisgen  
Runners start the first stretch of the Turkey Trot.

By Noelle Hisgen  
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - On Thanksgiving morning, the 45th Annual Wilbraham Turkey Trot commenced at the Wilbraham United Church.

The annual tradition, which started in 1980, has grown in recent years selling out at 500 runners in the past several years.

The race was five miles long, starting from Woodland Dell Cemetery. Then, the runners turned left onto Main Street and went 1.6 miles uphill on Monson Road.

Once at the top, they turned onto Ridge Road and were treated to a view of the valley for the third mile. Then, they went down Ridge Road, left on Mountain Road and finished back at the church.

The race focuses on providing a classic New England Turkey Trot with one large hill. Awards were given for the top three in each gender as well as the first male and female runners at the top of Monson Road and 10 year age groups.

In previous years, the race has benefitted the Community Survival Center and the Minnechaug Cross Country and Track teams, who will benefit again this year.

The race director this year was Mackenzie Gray, who has been the director for the Turkey Trot for over 10 years. He initially took it over as a fundraiser for the Minnechaug track teams, where he was a coach from 2010 to 2015.

"I like this race, in particular, because it feels like a homecoming," Gray said. "It feels like a classic kind of turkey trot. It's very local, and it feels like a real runner's race. It's a challenge, the course is certainly a difficult course. And really only people that want to run and really want to be part of this community show up today...I think it's nice to support your local racers," Gray said.

Gray reflected on the Turkey Trot also supporting the community.

"Generally, these smaller local races are benefiting some good causes for a number of years. We've supported the Community

Please see **TROT**, page 7



Runners smile on their first leg on the race.



Meredith Garrity finishes the Turkey Trot as the first female finisher.



People are having lots of fun during the Turkey Trot.



Jacob LeBlanc finishes the race as the first male finisher.

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Wendy Cowles, outreach coordinator at the Hampden Senior Center, checks off a driver during the Thanksgiving Grab and Go on Nov. 27.



Becky Moriarty, executive director at the Hampden Senior Center, brings a Thanksgiving meal to a driver.



Lil Fedora hands a Thanksgiving meal to a driver.



Submitted photos Diane Marino  
Volunteers were on hand to put Thanksgiving meals together for the Thanksgiving Grab and Go event at the Hampden Senior Center.

**GRAB AND GO** from page 1

here as you can see when we kid around with each other. It's a good time."

Dupuis was thrilled with the turnout. "Besides the day being a beautiful day--gorgeous day--it's just nice to see all the folks. They all mention my turkey hat that I have, so it's nice to entertain the folks and show them a good time for a few minutes of the day," Dupuis said.

Claudia Kapinos shared the volunteers and staff put



Submitted photos Diane Marino  
Caryn Greco does her part to put the Thanksgiving Grab and Go meals together.

together over 200 meals for the event, enjoying getting together with her fellow volunteers to give the meals.

"We work together often. This group we do a lot together, so we're in sync. We get things done, we get the job done," Kapinos said. "We have a good crew and Becky and Wendy are the best. They tell us what to do and we get it done."



Claudia Kapinos gives a Thanksgiving meal to a driver. Kapinos was one of the volunteers to help give out meals.

For Kapinos, it's about giving back to those in need and supporting each other.

"I think what we do here is invaluable and very much appreciated by people in town and the surrounding communities because some people, this might be the only meal that they're going to have for Thanksgiving. Or, a meal tonight and then a bigger meal tomorrow," Kapinos said. "It's wonderful. It really makes us feel good that we're helping people."

Outreach Coordinator Wendy Cowles checked in attendees as they drove up, explaining the event is part of the senior center's community outreach and everyone at the senior center enjoys giving back every day, with the holidays no exception.

"Right before Thanksgiving, it's nice to be able to do that. We're thankful for the people that support us on a daily basis and it's just our way of saying thanks to them for kind of having our backs and being so supportive of us. It means a lot," Cowles said.

Cowles shared the Thanksgiving Grab and Go was inspired by an encounter she had a decade ago when a gentleman came to the senior center after Thanksgiving.

"He told me he had a bologna sandwich and I was very sad to hear that and I went into the director's office and I said, 'I will not let that happen again.' So, since then, we've always either had Thanksgiving here on Thanksgiving Day or then we transitioned it to Grab and Go," Cowles said.

Cowles also clarified the Thanksgiving Grab and Gos will continue along with the Halfway to St. Patrick's Day Grab and Go, but the monthly Grab and Gos will no longer take place.

"We will do the big events, just not the monthly events. It's a lot to do. When we do a monthly grab and go, it's 100 people for dinners and that is a lot with the staff, with the space that we have," Cowles said. "But, we will always make sure people have Thanksgiving dinner on Thanksgiving if they want it."

Kapinos wants the community to know their senior center is here for them.

"Everybody here is so helpful to our community. Older people, the senior citizens and, also, younger families in town come to us for assistance. The girls will do whatever they can with fuel assistance, SNAP benefits," Kapinos said. "There's just so much more we do here that's not just seniors and people should know that. That's very important. This is just a great place to be."

Cowles's message was this.

"Just thanks for supporting us and we appreciate you. We're thankful for all of those people that support us and Happy Thanksgiving!" Cowles said.



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# Hampden holds 2025 Tax Classification Hearing

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - The Selectboard held its tax classification hearing on Dec. 2, with Principal Assessor Kelly McCormick and Board Members Phil Schneider and Robert Makuch in attendance.

Craig Rivest was absent this week.

On all four required motions, the board voted unanimously to keep a single factor rate of one for the minimum residential factor, not to offer the Open Space Discount as the town, currently, has no properties classified for this, not to use the residential exemption and not to offer the small commercial exemption.

On the first motion, McCormick explained this would mean there's no single tax rate for all types of property.

"The other option would be to shift the rate to lessen the amount for the residential class, but it would mean increasing the amount for the commercial, industrial and personal property class," McCormick said.

On the Open Space Discount, McCormick said Hampden "currently has no property classified in open space, which is class two."

On the residential exemption, McCormick explained it would shift the burden "within residential class" onto high-priced and non-owner occupied properties and "has been adopted in a few

communities that have a large number of vacation homes."

For the small commercial exemption, the focus would be shifting the burden from qualifying small businesses to other commercial and industrial properties.

"Out of 40 commercial properties, fewer than 10 may qualify for this exemption," McCormick said.

McCormick then broke down the numbers, starting with the residential factor of one.

"We currently have approximately 85% of all of the property in town is residential, while the other 15% is a mixture of commercial, industrial and personal property. Historically, Hampden has always adopted a single tax rate," McCormick said.

On the levy percentages, McCormick said "they've been right around 15%" for several years now for the commercial, industrial and personal property.

"Last year, it went to 14% and then back to 15% this year, but it stayed pretty steady around that point," McCormick said.

For the values, McCormick shared these numbers.

"So, the town value has increased this year from \$877,611,088 with the town value for FY24, and it's increased by approximately \$100 million," McCormick said. "For FY25, the town value is \$977,539,640."

When Chair Don Davenport asked if that was all the property in town, McCormick affirmed yes.

"The values are just increasing. They've been rising," McCormick said. "And then out of that, we also got \$1 million in new growth this year."

When Davenport asked about new growth, McCormick elaborated.

"New growth can be any new constructions, additions, sheds, any new personal property accounts, new solar arrays. We have one new solar array up (off) Somers Road that hit the books this year which is over \$17 million in new growth," McCormick said. "So, that was a significant number for us this year."

Selectboard Member John Flynn asked McCormick about the increase from 2017 to 2025.

"I mean, you see it going up--oh my gosh, Don--60-something percent, roughly from 513 up to 830. Would you say that percentage is a revalue or most of it is new growth?" Flynn said.

McCormick replied "a mixture" and how "a lot of it's our market adjustments."

"We're required to be within a specific range by the Department of Revenue Standards. So, when properties are selling for more, we have to do our analysis and if we're outside of that range, then adjustments are required in order for our values to be approved," McCormick said. "So, that's a big part of it but there was, also, a significant amount of new growth this year as well."

McCormick noted there was new growth from public utilities

as well, including from the new solar array.

"So to give you an idea. New England Power, we had over 1.8 million new growth this year, Eversource Gas almost 1.5 million, the NStar Electric over 211,000 and Mass Electric over 600,000," McCormick said.

"So the bulk of new growth is utility and energy-related?" Flynn said.

"Quite a bit, yes," McCormick said.

If a shift in the tax rate was considered, McCormick explained what the minimum residential factor would be if the shift was 125% or 150% and, potentially, tax bills for residential costs and commercial, industrial and personal property values.

The average assessed sin-

gle-family home value, she added, also rose from \$377,000 to \$419,000.

"Grouping together for the commercial, industrial and personal property, last year when we looked at the average for all of that was \$858,000. This year it's \$1,020,500," McCormick said. "Values have increased quite a bit on both sides."

After further discussion, which included questions about PILOT agreements for solar and the estimate on how much taxes would go up for commercial, industrial and personal property if the 150% shift was considered--which the tax bill would have been an increase by \$7,800--the votes were cast for the four motions.

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braham (sponsored 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"!

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## VIEWPOINTS



By Ellenor Downer



### Turkey vulture

A Brimfield resident, who emails quite often noticed three turkey vultures on Sunday, Oct. 20

He said, "I went outside and I saw soon seven turkey vultures flying by along the ridge east of the house. The birds drifted off to the south east. A few minutes later a group of ten vultures drifted slowly south about a half a mile west of the first group. These birds flew around for awhile, circling and gaining altitude

until they were quite high. The ten birds then drifted out of sight."

The turkey vulture is 26 inches tall and has black feathers. The trailing end of the wings are silver and the head has no feathers and is red. Immature turkey vultures have gray heads. They are often seen soaring with wings held in a V. They rock side to side, but rarely flap their wings.

Turkey vultures feed by scavenging on carrion, fresh or decayed. They find their food by both sight and smell. Sometimes, they are seen in roads feeding on road kill. They are often seen coming or going to nightly roosts. They use thermals of warm air and updrafts to stay in the air. When the thermals and updrafts end and they have to flap, they usually stop flying and land.

When perched, they will spread their wings. I saw one several years doing this against a high tension pole in Oakham.

The female lays one to three dull white eggs, occasionally with dark marks in a nest scraped on bare ground, in a hollow stump, cave, cliff edge or old building. Grunts and hisses are heard at the nest site often during competition over food.

### Pond tour

The Brimfield resident sent an emailing and reported he and his wife did a tour of some of the ponds in Brimfield, Holland and Warren on Sunday, Nov. 3. He said, "In Brimfield (Sherman Pond) and Holland (Holland Pond) we saw a few pairs of hooded mergansers and a

belted kingfisher at the pond in Warren on South Street. Other ponds had lots of Canada geese and mallards."

He also said, "In the yard recently the most exciting sighting was a Carolina wren that showed up briefly a couple of times. Then yesterday we had an immature accipiter was seen sitting on top of one of our feeding stations." He wrote, "The bird was either a female sharpshinned hawk or a male Coopers hawk based on size, it was a little bigger than a mourning dove, the bird's size was in the area where the sizes of the two species overlap. The tail shape is suppose to help differentiate the species but I'm not confident about the tail shape, I'm not sure which species we saw?"

Later in the day he saw a fox sparrow doing the sparrow feeding behavior, jumping back and forth to stir up ground looking for seeds. He said, "That was the first fox sparrow seen this fall. One or two are usually seen during fall migration."

### Moose

Although not bird related – no feathers on this critter – I saw a moose cross New Braintree Road in Oakham one evening. It was dark, but I did get a good view of its rear portion as it went over a stone wall and into the woods.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.



### Dear Rusty:

I retired at my full retirement age, am now 79 and will be 80 in December.

I have been working consistently since. I get a meager Social Security benefit, only about \$800 due to my federal retirement offset. Most jobs I have held since filing and collecting SS have involved very labor-intensive work, to include my current position. This has taken a toll.

My question is there any provision in Social Security that permits re-evaluation of Social Security benefits for disability after one has collected and paid into the system for some 15 years? I suspect not but thought I would ask, since at my not so tender age, I am faced with having to cease employment that generates needed income.

Signed: Working Still at 79

### Dear Still Working:

I'm afraid that Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits are no longer available once you reach your SS "full retirement age" or "FRA," which for you was age 66. In

## Working septuagenarian asks about disability benefits

deed, anyone collecting SSDI at full retirement age is automatically converted to their regular SS retirement benefits at the same amount they were previously receiving on SSDI. That's because SSDI benefits are intended to sustain workers up to their SS full retirement age, but SSDI goes away once FRA is attained.

Thus, the provision to apply for SS disability allows only those who have not yet reached their full retirement age to seek disability benefits. Once FRA is reached, SSDI benefits are no longer available. Simply for your awareness, there would be no financial advantage for you to receive SS disability benefits anyway, because the most you can get on SSDI is your full retirement age amount. Thus, since you retired and claimed SS at your full retirement age, no additional disability amount would be available anyway.

FYI, I admire, at your "tender age," that you are still actively working, but I'm afraid you cannot claim more now on Social Security disability because you've already reached your FRA. However, from what you've written, your SS retirement benefit has been affected

by the so-called Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) which affects those with a separate pension earned without contributing to Social Security.

If you've been separately working and contributing to Social Security since you left government service and you now have more than 20 years contributing to SS from other non-government "substantial earnings," it's possible that you can request a reevaluation of your WEP penalty.

WEP provides relief for those, who have more than 20 years contributing to Social Security. So, if you have more than that over your lifetime, you could ask that your WEP reduction be reevaluated to consider your additional years contributing to Social Security. If that is the case, your monthly amount would be increased to consider those additional years contributing to SS since you first claimed.

I suggest, if you now have more than 20 years of contributions to Social Security from your non-government work over your lifetime, that you call Social Security to request reeval-

Please see **SOCIAL SECURITY**, page 7

## Election letters to the editor welcome

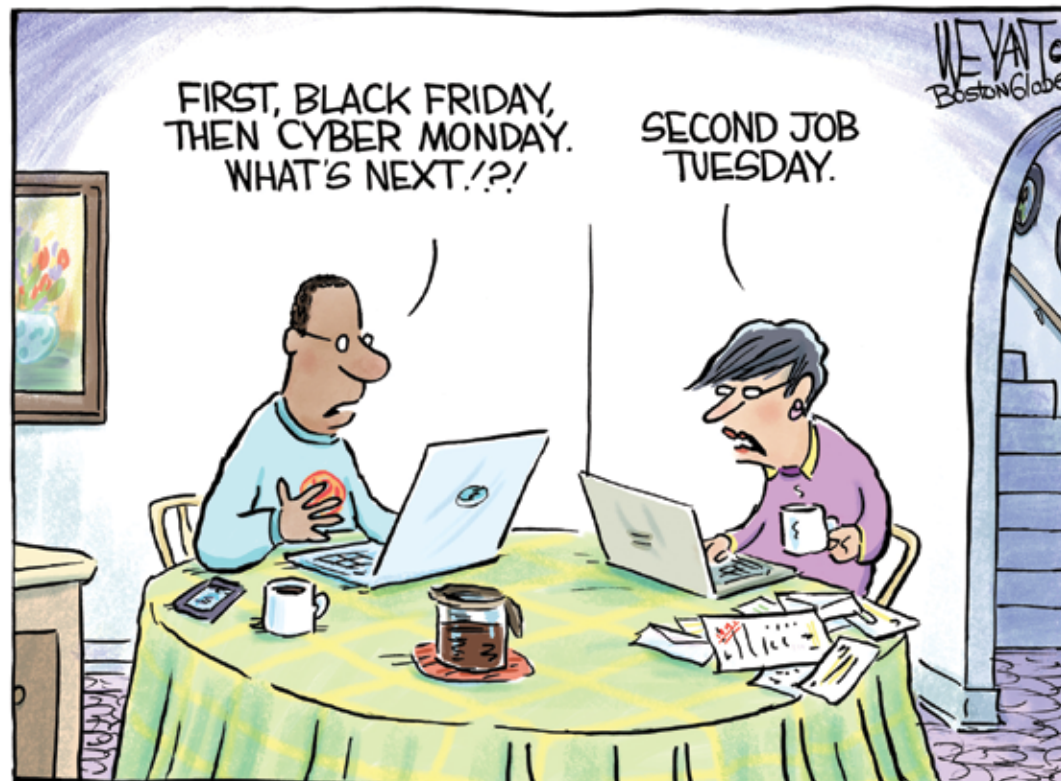
The Wilbraham-Hampden Times welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to Wilbraham-Hampden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



# School Committee selects Douglas Slaughter as next Asst. Superintendent

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - The School Committee has selected Douglas Slaughter as the next Assistant Superintendent for Finance, Operations and Human Resources.

Slaughter will now enter negotiations with Superintendent Dr. John Provost after the School Committee approved authorization on Nov. 21.

The decision comes after the departure of Aaron Osborne, who served as the district's assistant superintendent since 2020, and the organization of a Search Committee to find his successor, with seven applicants for consideration. Two applicants, Slaughter and William Metzger, were recommended to be interviewed. However, prior to these interviews, Metzger withdrew his name from consideration, leaving Slaughter as the only candidate.

### Who is Douglas Slaughter?

Slaughter has worked in school districts for 20 years and began working in the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District's IT Department, later moving into the Business Office at the beginning of 2020. He served as the interim superintendent last year when the prior superintendent took a leave of absence from May to July 2023 and, later, departed the role.

Other experience includes serving on the town of Amherst's Finance Committee, the Select Board and a number of regional boards.

Slaughter said he was "transitioning away from the district at this point."

"And so kind of breadth of

experience, been in a lot of roles and different government seats, and so I understand those challenges and opportunities that come up with those kinds of positions," Slaughter said.

### The Interview

Several School Committee members asked Slaughter questions ranging from his strategy and approach to producing a budget as timely and accurately as possible to how would he proceed to learn about the culture and core values of the district and thoughts on technology and education.

When Michael Tirabassi asked Slaughter about his approach and strategy for producing a budget both timely and accurately, Slaughter explained how it is challenging.

"I think when you have--in particular--when you have contracts to make, you have to make estimates of what those are going to look like and what and it's a balancing act between what you would like to provide and what you think those resources are going to look like from both the town side of things, the state side of things," Slaughter said.

Honesty also plays a role.

"It's about being honest where the firm and non-firm things are. So, if we know that our health insurance is going up 6%, we know that is pretty rock solid. That's usually a pretty big number, you can speak to that directly, say 'We're pretty confident about this number. If we don't know what that number is, here's what we're estimating that.'" Slaughter said. "So, it's about explanation, what are the weak spots and when you think and resolve and how close you think you're going to be. I think



that most budgets are 85% people and their benefits. You have some sense of the size and scale that's going to look like, you can generally understand the metrics involved given how negotiations might proceed..."

Timothy Collins asked Slaughter about his process in developing a school budget and selling it to the community and School Committee, noting the other capacities where Slaughter developed budgets.

"So, over the years, as you've gone through the process, how has it changed and what have you learned?" Collins said.

Slaughter listed items including forecasting and projecting, trends for budget items including health insurance and finding resources.

"So, that helps build the budget and then you look at that versus the resources and so you start to look at our revenues. Where are the places we get money sent to towns, state aid, etc etc and sort of stack up what those look like, how they compare, how firm or not firm they are over time," Slaughter said.

Another highlight was contingency for building something into the budget--such as special

education funding, for example--so something is funded and looked into.

"I think with any and all of those things, it's about articulating clearly to both School Committee and beyond what we call, what are our goals, what are our intentions. We're trying to do our best by our students first and foremost within the resources we have available," Slaughter said.

Sherrill Caruana asked Slaughter about communication.

"How do you convey to people in the school system and the community that you want them to share their ideas and concerns with you? How do you convince them that you will seriously consider what they have to say?" Caruana said.

Slaughter thinks "that's a critical piece of the work" both internally and externally to listen and hear what people have to say, adding "not being defensive from the beginning" is important too.

"I think it's critical to be a good listener and to be a proactive listener, and so I try to do that. I try to encourage people to share ideas because I don't have a monopoly on good ideas," Slaughter said.

He emphasized the want and need for the feedback and input to help understand and leverage ideas to move in particular directions.

"I've always been and continue to be open to that feedback from the community and the School Committee about what is and what is not important and when do we want to do it, how do we do it, can we get there from here and then try to find creative solutions to that," Slaughter said.

Richard Rediker was fascinated by Slaughter's technology background.

"Which ways do you think it should be used in the school system, whether both in administration, education, in the classroom, learning? So, what are your thoughts on technology and education?" Rediker said.

Slaughter focused on leveling the playing field "to make sure everyone has skills that are necessary to be functional, appropriate and a member of society in regard to technology."

"But, I think it's critical that we put the resources in place for the students as well as the staff so we can leverage that and do the appropriate professional development, so the staff can leverage those tools and know how to use them and be efficient with them," Slaughter said. "I think there's a great opportunity for efficiency. There's a risk out there. The Internet's a wild place and we have to be cognizant of that and how we teach our kids how to be good citizens."

After Slaughter asked the School Committee about the operations side of the role with capital and planning and several minutes of deliberation, the School Committee selected Slaughter.

### SOCIAL SECURITY from page 6

uation of your WEP retirement amount. FYI, you can see exactly how many years of SS-covered work you have by requesting an "Earnings Statement" from Social Security. You can get this Statement by calling 1-800-772-1213 or you can also get it at your personal "my Social Security" online account at [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount). Social Security will also be able to tell you this directly when you call. In any case, I wish you good fortune, and hope that reevaluating the WEP reduction to your SS benefit may offer some small financial relief as you go forward.

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](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at [ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org). Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

## Calendar Raffle Thank You

WILBRAHAM - The members of the St. Cecilia Women's Club would like to thank the following businesses and individuals who donated money or prizes for each day of the month of November for the club's Calendar Raffle Fundraiser.

Alpha Oil, Berkshire Bank, Cluett's Appliances, DL&G Tree Service, Forastiere Family Funeral Homes, Denise Flanagan, The Gardens of Wilbraham, Marisol Franco, realtor, Kelly & Velazquez Eye Center, Kitchen Encounters, Inc., Lia Toyota of Wilbraham, Life Care of Wilbraham, LUSO Federal Credit Union, Madden Insurance Agency, Inc., Dr. Michael Margolis, orthodontist, Monson Savings Bank, New England Funeral

& Cremation Center, Noonan Energy Group, Novak Oil, Christopher O'Connor Financial Advisor, Edward Jones, Pioneer Valley Financial Group, Post Computer Systems, Pro Shred, Roberts & Ludlow Printing, T. P. Sampson Chapel of the Acres, Scantic Valley YMCA, Spartan Auto Care Center, Trombley Assoc. Investment & Retirement Planning, Wilbraham Family Dentistry, Dr. Mikhail Tsesis, and Wilbraham Funeral Home.

The funds raised will help to pay for the club's scholarships and donations to many charitable organizations in the area. The donations from these businesses is greatly appreciated.

### TROT from page 3

Survival Center. We've also benefitted one of our sick athletes one year who needed help with a power wheelchair," Gray said. "And then more recently just kind of raising funds for the track team to do additional things that aren't supported by the school."

The top male finisher of the day was Jacob LeBlanc, who won with a time of 27:38.9.

"It was a little colder than I wanted it to be, but I felt pretty good. Especially going on the downhill," LeBlanc said.

The top female finisher of the day was Meredith Garrity, who won with a time of 35:28.7.

"It is a really good course, this is my first time doing it, so very hilly, but it was a really great race," Garrity said. "It's su-

per fun, I feel like it brings everyone together and it's always a fun time."

At the end of the race, the top three from each gender and in each age group were given their very own Turkey Trot water bottle. The top three from each gender and age group, also, won their own red Turkey Trot water bottle with money inside of it.

The Turkey Trot was a great start to the Thanksgiving festivities for all involved.

Despite the rainy weather, everyone pulled through and finished. Just in time for everyone to go back home and celebrate Thanksgiving with their families.

The race is, also, looking for a new race director.

Anyone who is interested can contact Mackenzie Gray via the contact form on [TriangleTiming.com](http://TriangleTiming.com).

**Early Deadlines**  
for all LEGAL NOTICES...

**All Papers Will Deadline Thursday, Dec. 19 at Noon for Publication Dec. 23-27**

*Happy Holidays!*

*Happy New Year!*

**All Papers Will Deadline Friday, Dec. 27 at Noon for Publication Dec. 30-Jan. 3**



# Selectboard holds lawsuit discussion with Grassetti

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - The Selectboard held a lawsuit discussion with the Grassetti during their Nov. 25 meeting.

The discussion included two cases that were filed against the town and Planning Board: the Garvey-Cimmino case regarding two separate self-storage facilities in town—a controversial topic with much opposition from residents—and the 16 Somers Rd LLC case, which had Attorney Raipher Pellegrino representing this case and, also, involved a proposed self-storage facility.

The Garvey-Cimmino case was ruled in favor of Garvey in Superior Court, with the Selectboard declining to appeal the ruling on Aug. 7—while the 16 Somers Road LLC case was ruled in favor of the Planning Board in Land Court in February 2023.

The Grassetti are residents who were concerned about the projects and are abutters, having sought legal counsel to represent them during public hearings with the Planning Board.

After the 33-minute discussion, Chair Don Davenport said the board “has a lot to consider” and would not make a decision that evening. Instead, they will consult in Executive Session “at some point and make a decision,” advising Mary Grassetti to send the board an email.

Davenport also addressed receiving an email sent to Mrs. Grassetti from Attorney Michael Pill, because he was forwarded an email that Mrs. Grassetti had sent to Davenport, calling it inappropriate.

“Apparently, someone in town—official—forwarded to Mr. Pill—Attorney Pill—his response, I thought, was inappropriate. A citizen has a right to come before the board and discuss anything they want at any time that they want,” Davenport said. “Also, his lecturing of our town council of how cases should be handled and shouldn’t be handled was inappropriate.”

Davenport added, “This is not the first time someone has intervened on Mr. Cimmino and Mr. Garvey’s behalf regarding this case.”

“But, his comments to Mrs. Grassetti were inappropriate and uncalled for and I’m very disturbed that someone is forwarding emails to someone who is an applicant and a plaintiff in a case regarding the town,” Davenport said.

## The Concerns Raised

After sharing she’s followed the procedures and was told to speak with the Selectboard after reaching out to Town Administrator Brian Domina, Grassetti explained she had found “some inconsistencies” upon reviewing the Garvey-Cimmino and Pellegrino cases in how the Planning Board submitted their decisions.

Grassetti went through everything for both cases and noted the Pellegrino case first, which was approved and the judge stayed with the Planning Board’s approval.

“A detailed record review was submitted in that case as to why this case was approved by the Planning Board. Heather Beattie’s detailed explanation as to why she believed it didn’t belong on the aquifer and, also, her detailed explanation as to why it didn’t fit the character of the town. She went into aesthetics, she went into extensive reasons why,” Grassetti said.

For Case 2021B, the Garvey-Cimmino case, Grassetti said, “all that the Planning Board submitted to the court when they remanded them --now a second time--and said, ‘Give us the reasons you’re denying this.’ For Heather Beattie, they submitted one paragraph.”

“Heather Beattie at the end of a three-hour meeting was told ‘You have to give your reason right now, we have to have it this minute.’ She asked if she could go back and retype up her notes so she could hand a hard copy like she did in the Pellegrino case and it was a decision that, ‘No, you have to give it right now’ after a three-hour meeting,” Grassetti

said.

Grassetti handed the board a copy of a verbatim transcript she put together herself, noting on page one how Beattie said she wanted “to set the record straight for the first decision that was submitted to the courts.”

“Heather wanted to correct the record to say ‘I asked to be part of that decision and I was told by the chair of the Planning Board, you may not be involved in writing this decision’ and then that decision was moved forward to the court with just a checkmark denied,” Grassetti said. “Both courts sent it back and said, ‘You have to give us reasons, you can’t just check that box.’”

After noting page two where Beattie starting her reasoning with water “as to why she believes being on top of the aquifer is a danger to the community,” Grassetti pointed out a page noted 3619, which is 36 minutes and 19 seconds into the record.

“All of that is her detailed reasoning as to why this does not belong in the center of Hampden... she is addressing the rural character of the town, the aesthetics of the town,” Grassetti said. “If you look at this side by side with what was submitted for the Pellegrino case, it is almost verbatim and it never got into the decision for the Garvey-Cimmino case.”

On another page which lists the three hour, one-minute mark of the record, Grassetti noted a discussion on how Beattie and Christina Brodeur’s comments “will be in the record.”

“They had a lengthy discussion as to ‘what we’re saying here, everything we’re saying here must get into the record, submitted to the judge’ and at one point, I’m not sure, I think it was Madison (Pixley) says, ‘We’ll do a verbatim transcript.’ None of that was submitted,” Grassetti said. “And so, that’s an inconsistency and I think it does not look well on the Planning Board that in one case, they submit a detailed overview as to why this does not belong and in a second case that’s abutting that property, they give a paragraph and the judge threw it back and said, ‘You didn’t even give a hint as to why this does not belong.’”

After this, Attorney Seth

Wilson, representing the Grassetti, provided additional perspective to the board, highlighting his concerns pertain to the Planning Board “understands that they need to make sure that the decisions they issue have all of the findings by each of the individual Planning Board members included in the record.”

“Not just in the record, but in the actual written decision,” Wilson said.

Wilson added how “in some of these scenarios,” the only document--or only information--the court may look at “is that actual written decision.”

“I’m just saying on behalf of very concerned residents who spent an awful lot of money and effort fighting these--as they are entitled to do--fighting these projects and then to have Planning Board members or any other town decisionmaker make a decision and clearly enunciate the reasons for that decision--which a judge at some point is going to be reviewing--needs to find its way into the actual decision,” Wilson said.

## How the Discussion Wrapped Up

After Town Attorney Jesse Belcher-Timme confirmed everything Wilson said was correct and summarized the process of the cases, Grassetti asked why things had gone the way they had with the Planning Board decisions and wanted to know more.

“It doesn’t seem right. They clearly know what to do because they did it for one case. Why would they not do it for the second case? That, to me, is a real concern,” Grassetti said.

After reiterating the distinctions between the two cases, Wilson noted the importance of the Planning Board, going forward, to “be consistent in their decisions at the initial stage.”

“So I think there is a distinction here, but it’s, I think, an important distinction for the town going forward is to look and, perhaps, have the boards get counsel in particularly difficult cases, have town council at least provide them with guidance about what requirements there are for their decisions and for their written product to be at the end of the process,” Wilson said. “So that they make sure that they include the information that they’re required to have for the judges to be able to make their decisions.”

After Belcher-Timme confirmed legal counsel was included for the board in both cases and he understood the concerns of Wilson and Grassetti, Grassetti later brought up Motion 60B, which states if new evidence comes to light “you can file for relief.”

“This is new evidence that has come to light. This is facts that the judge did not see. I would like the town to look into Motion 60B and see if we can file. We have one year to file the Motion 60B,” Grassetti said.

Belcher-Timme replied he doesn’t think this falls under that motion.

“It, first of all, it’s got to be something that’s newly discovered and relevant evidence, so the fact that the Planning Board--maybe--could have written a more thorough decision is not the kind of thing that would rise to that level,” Belcher-Timme said.

Wilson said, “Respectfully, I might disagree,” and noting there was evidence, “a very clear decision” and a “very formal request of the transcript” and there are a number of grounds for Motion 60B.

“Perhaps having missed reasoning or perhaps having left stuff out, but actually, demonstrably, did not include the reasoning from a Planning Board member for her decision that she specifically requested be included in the decision in a written transcript of those reasons that did not find its way in here,” Wilson said. “And if that was influenced at some level, there’s grounds in 60B for that being addressed. If it was inadvertence that that was not included, that’s also covered by 60B.”

Jeffrey Grassetti stressed he didn’t want the board “to think that we’re on a witch hunt here to find out who didn’t perform their job and why maybe this didn’t get handed off.”

“But, we would like to know why it didn’t go forward and I know that people do clerical jobs, they do all kinds of jobs, but this thing didn’t get handed off the correct way and it was all there,” Grassetti said. “So, it just doesn’t fly because there’s a rule here and that 60B rule is for this and we want you to consider that. We want you to consider that your town voted to deny this and now, there’s a reason to uphold that denial.”

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## 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

## Toy Drive runs through Dec. 14

HAMPDEN - The Hampden Police Association is holding a Toy Drive from Dec. 2 through Dec. 14, a joint effort between the Hampden Police and Fire Departments.

New unwrapped toys can be donated at the PD or Monson Saving Bank. No toy guns or bicycles please.

Also, the police department still has sweatshirts available and they’d make a great Christmas gift!!

## Theater Guild holding auditions

HAMPDEN - The Theatre Guild of Hampden will hold open auditions for the musical “Jerry’s Girls” on Sunday Dec. 29 at 2 p.m. at the Hampden Town House on Main Street.

For more information, call Mark Giza at 413-204-5333.



Happy Holidays from all of us at

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**Jill Moccio, founder of Babes, Brews & Browsing and co-owner of Hustle & Heart, at her booth. Moccio orchestrated this entire event.**



**Carrie Ferrindino (right), co-founder and owner of Ferrindino Maple, joined by a member of her crew at their booth where they had an array of products available to purchase.**



**Nichele Herrick, self-taught photographer and owner of Derelict Depictions with her booth. She had several framed photos for display as well as a book of large prints to flip through.**



**One booth, Match Us Collection, chose a green, white, and brown color scheme for their display.**



**Live acoustic music was performed for the event by Project 267.**



**One Shriner member, Zorana Owens-Imbody, posed for a picture near their booth. She is seen wearing her red blazer, pins, and fez that indicates her membership with the group.**

# Babes for a Cause Vendor Fair at Great Horse supports Shriner's

By Hannah Yeasley  
Correspondent

HAMPDEN - The Starting Gate at Great Horse crowded with guests on Nov. 30 for the "Babes for a Cause Holiday Tour" shopping fair.

The event, headed by Babes, Brews & Browsing founder and co-Hustle & Heart owner Jill Moccio, aimed to showcase local women-owned businesses and raise money for Shriners Children's New England [SCNE], a children's hospital located in Springfield.

The event was sponsored by New Valley Bank & Trust, Grace Group Realty, Blush Med Spa, Inspire Wellness Co., Fern Valley Farms of Wilbraham, Ferrindino Maple and Common Grounds of Wilbraham.

Doors opened at 4 p.m. and stayed open until 8 p.m. Tickets needed to be bought in advance, with 50% of ticket sales going directly to SCNE.

Each vendor in attendance also agreed to donate 10% of their sales to SCNE.

The event boasted a wide variety of vendors, from fine art and photography to clothes, sweets, and even a couple with dog and pet-centered items. There was also live music, plenty of food offerings and two separate cash bars.

Moccio was running her own



Turley photos by Hannah Yeasley

**A list of the sponsors for the evening's event. New Valley Bank & Trust, Grace Group Realty, Blush Med Spa, and Inspire Wellness Co. all had booths set up as well.**

was there to provide more information on what the group does and how to join.

"We're really a sorority; we're all sisters," Owens-Imbody said. "We have about 70 chapters across the globe and we do a lot of community work, including donating to and volunteering for the children's hospital. To join, you only need the support of two existing members, who would willingly support anyone looking to help out."

More information about becoming a member can be found at [www.ladiesorientalshrine.org](http://www.ladiesorientalshrine.org).

From hand-etched crystal glasses by Papineau Studio all the way to hooded towels for children—designed to be thick enough to handle the pool, the beach, or bathtime—by All Wrapped Up, this Holiday Tour event was sure to have something for everyone.

One vendor and sponsor, Ferrindino Maple, had their booth set up near one of the cash bars. They have been in business for over a decade, and love coming to events like this.

"We are local, so doing local events like this is a great way to stay connected with the community," owner Carrie Ferrindino said. "We are in 20+ Big Y's and growing in the university world, but staying true to our organic-forward origin is incredibly important to us."



**Elaine Shepard, owner of Wicked Good Treats, with her wide array of chocolates and other baked goods. Shepard, another Babes event veteran, has been making chocolate for many years, even having attended chocolate school to really hone her craft.**

Another booth, Derelict Depictions, was run by self-taught photographer Nichele Herrick. Herrick was also at the first vendor fair thrown by Moccio in March and hopes to continue to be a part of it.

"I wasn't sure how people would respond to my photos, but I've gotten nothing but positive feedback," Herrick said. "It's really cool to be able to do my own thing and still have support, and it's especially important to be at events like this that are for a good cause."

As people browsed around

the booths, others gathered around the high-top tables set up around the room. Eating and drinking while they listened to the music, it was easy to have a good time.

"This is so much fun," one attendee said. "It's such good food, there's so many booths to choose from, and it's for a good cause."

The next Babes shopping event will likely be a Christmas one, according to Jill Moccio. Information about her store and others involved in this event can be found on Instagram at [@hustle\\_heart\\_8](https://www.instagram.com/hustle_heart_8).





Melissa Doe and Kate Forest with Doe Forest Botanicals sell their vegan and organic products at the craft fair.



Carole Cross (Left), Angelina Cross (Right), and Linda Cross (Bottom) Sell their handmade yarn animals along with various other crafts.



Jackie Perry (Right), Kelsey Jennings (Middle), and Taryn Jennings (Left) sell various hand-painted items at the craft fair.



Layla King and Cam Maziarz with Layla's Lights sell candles at the Minnechaug Regional High School Holiday Craft Fair on Nov. 23.

Turley photos by Noelle Hisgen



Eve Singer with The Weirdo Wardrobe sells vintage clothing at the fair.



Isabella Kirton and Molly Michels with A Little Bit of Everything sell their crocheted items and handmade earrings at the fair.



Alicia Reep with Reep What You Sew Embroidery sells her embroidered clothing at the fair.

**CRAFTS** from page 1

vendors at the craft fair, including Melissa Doe and Kate Forest, who were representing their brand Forest Doe Botanicals. They sell organic and vegan body care products such as soaps, serums, roll ons, and other accessories that are good for your body and also the planet.

Doe is also a Physical Education/Yoga teacher at Minnechaug.

"First of all, being an employee here at Minnechaug I think it's important to support the community and I absolutely love the Fine Arts Department and what they do not only in the school but also by giving back to the community," Doe said. "So I think it's important to show up for events like this."

There were also vendors who were out supporting their families and their booths, such as Minnechaug senior Angelina Cross, who was with her grandmother and aunt Carole Cross, where they make their crafts called Amigurimi, a Japanese art form where it involves crocheting small yarn creatures. They also sold tumblers, handmade earrings, and coasters all of which were handmade.

"We want to sell our crafts and show

what we've worked on and all of my aunt's hard work that she does in her free time," Cross said. "The little things can make people happy, like good gifts for people and it (the craft fair) also brings the community together, it gives people something to do on a Saturday."

Many students of Minnechaug were a part of the craft fair too, including sophomores Molly Michels and Isabella Kirton, who recently started their own brand called A Little Bit of Everything.

"We wanted to try some new arts and crafts so we may as well sell them..." Kirton said. "Everything is handmade, it took a lot of time. And we are open for business!"

Alicia Reep, who was with her company Reep What You Sew Embroidery, also spoke on the craft fair.

"I wanted to be here because this is my first craft fair so I wanted to get my feet in the water and see if I'm as good as I think I am and the people here are giving me positive feedback that I think I needed," Reep said.

The Holiday Arts and Crafts Fair was a great way for local vendors to show their creations to others, with a great event put on by the Fine Arts Department and creating a very successful day.

Please join us for our annual *Candlelight Memorial Service*

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TIME: 5:00 pm

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# A COMMUNITY GALLERY

### WMS Strings and Friends Ensemble perform seasonal concert



Submitted photo and caption Elaine Holdsworth

The string students of the Hampden Wilbraham Middle School Strings and Friends Ensemble performed a seasonal concert for the residents of Loomis House at Reed's Landing on Friday, Nov. 22, 2024 at 4 p.m. Strings and Friends is directed by Denise Gendron (kneeling, front right) and was founded by Elaine Holdsworth (standing, left).

*Life in & HAM*

Readers are encouraged to send in medium to high resolution photos for this page by e-mail to [dzbierski@turley.com](mailto: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.

# WIL HAM

### WPD receives visit from WMA Baking Club



Photo courtesy of Wilbraham Police Department

The Wilbraham Police Department received a special visit from Wilbraham & Monson Academy's Baking Club, who dropped off sweet treats to the department. On their Facebook page, the police department expressed their thanks: "the treats were greatly appreciated... and quickly ingested."

### Mixing mulled cider for Tree Festival Dec. 8...



Submitted photo and caption Charlie Bennett

Past President of the Wilbraham Atheneum Society, Peter Ablondi, mixes up mulled cider in the Hearse House at the Old Meeting House Museum at last year's Christmas Tree Festival. This year the fest takes place Sunday, Dec. 8 from 3 to 6 p.m. Free and open to the public.

### Wilbraham Hiking Club enjoys Black Friday Hike



Wowie Zowie!! 19 hikers enjoyed the Wilbraham Hiking Club's Black Friday hike at the Quabbin, led by Wowie Zowie. Contact Wowie Zowie on TeamReach or write to [wilbrahamhiking@gmail.com](mailto:wilbrahamhiking@gmail.com).

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# WILBRAHAM HAMPDEN

Santa coming to Tree Lighting...



At a previous event Santa addresses the boys and girls awaiting his arrival for the annual Wilbraham Town Tree Lighting. He will be delivered by a Fire Engine again on Sunday, Dec. 8 at 5 p.m. to turn on the town Christmas Tree lights for the first time. Sponsored by the Rotary Club. (Times file photo)

Selectboard Member John Flynn reads to kids



Submitted photos John Flynn

Selectboard Member John Flynn took part in the Biannual Read Aloud event at Green Meadows Elementary School on Nov. 21, reading stories to the students.



Submitted photos Shelley Pim-Eldridge and Howard Eldridge, Caption Sue Birk led by Shelley and Howie!! Check out the club's December hikes



HPD receives treats from local businesses

The Hampden Police Department received special treat donations from Village Food Mart and The Apple Place on Nov. 27, thanking them on Facebook for the deliveries.

Photos courtesy of Hampden Police Department

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# PET PAGE

## READERS!

Send in your pet picture for our "Pet of the Month" and receive a free weekend get-away or spa package for your pet courtesy of Porter Road Pet Care.

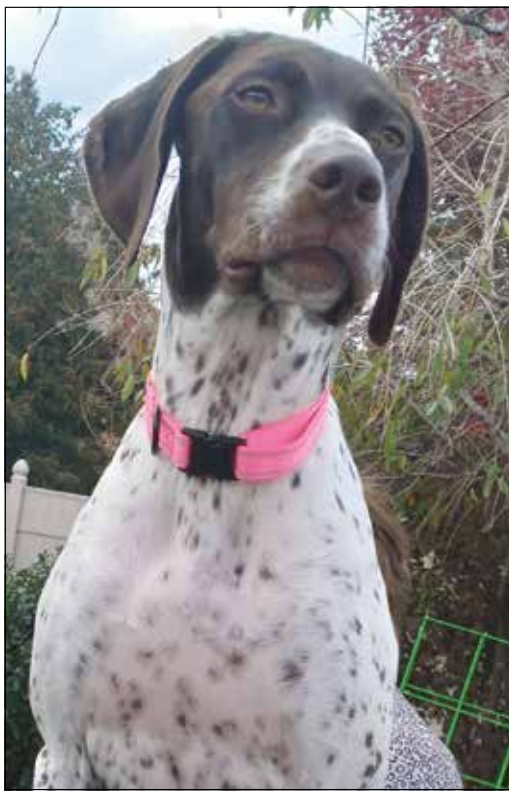
Email your photos to: [jwalker@turley.com](mailto:jwalker@turley.com).

Please include your name and your pet's name.



### PET OF THE MONTH Meet Elza!

Her mom, Olimpia says Elza is the best dog ever. She is always ready for adventure. Elza is a typical Pointer. She will play, hunt and much more.



### WILBRAHAM Animal Hospital

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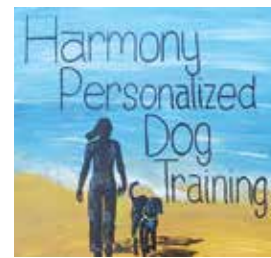


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ASK ABOUT MY DAY TRAINING PROGRAM!

### Your Pet's Emergency Information

My husband and I have our beloved dog Samson. When we travel we try to bring him with us whenever possible. We seek out dog friendly rentals, hotels, restaurants, beaches etc. However, the truth is it's just not possible for him to join us on every trip or outing we go on.

This is why having a go-to "doggy hotel," close friend, or trusted dog sitter is SO valuable. But here's the thing, communicating every detail of your dog's health needs, meals, and routine can be downright stressful. Which is why I am sharing a handy printable emergency information sheet created by Integrative Veterinarian, Dr. Marty Goldstein!

This sheet is the ultimate one-page guide to all things about YOUR pet! So, the next time you go out of town, just fill out this sheet to communicate ALL your pet's essential information with your sitter. That way, they feel right at home — even when you're away.

Use this QR Code to access your free Dr. Marty's Pet Emergency Information Sheet.



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# SPORTS

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Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com  
**Brady Suomala corrals the ball.**

## All-Star soccer action

SPRINGFIELD – Last Monday night on the turf of Pope Francis High School, high school soccer held all-star games. Class C and D played in one match while A and B clashed in another. Brady Suomala was among the all-stars, representing Minnechaug Regional in the match.



**Brady Suomala makes a run up the field in the Class A and B boys soccer all-star game last Monday night.**

## All-Star volleyball match



**Nehir Elcin makes a play to her right.**



**Anna O'Toole goes for the spike.**



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com  
**Maliha Daubon sends a hit over the net.**



**Anna O'Toole, Nehir Elcin, and Maliha Daubon represented Minnechaug Regional in the volleyball all-star game**

HOLYOKE – Last Tuesday evening, The International Volleyball Hall of Fame hosted the Western Mass. All-Star Game, featuring some of the best players from throughout Western Massachusetts. Anna O'Toole, Nehir Elcin, and Maliha Daubon represented Minnechaug Regional in this year's game. The event was held at Holyoke Community College.

## Hall of Fame hosting pair of college matchups

SPRINGFIELD – The MGM Springfield Basketball Hall of Fame Classic, presented by the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, takes place on "World Basketball Day," Saturday, Dec. 21, at the MassMutual Center and will be televised nationally on CBS Sports Network.

"We are proud to work with local stakeholders to bring local businesses in as sponsors of the Basketball Hall of Fame Classic," said John L. Doleva, President and CEO of the Naismith Basket-

ball Hall of Fame. "Thank you to MGM Springfield and the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism for supporting the Hall of Fame Classic and helping us fulfill our mission of celebrating and promoting basketball's history and bringing four great teams to the 'Birthplace of Basketball.'"

"This iconic event in the birthplace of basketball is a hoop dream realized for many of the sports' up and coming stars," said Louis Therios, MGM Springfield

President and COO. "MGM Springfield is incredibly proud to support and celebrate the Classic, honoring basketball's rich legacy, inspiring future generations, bringing visitors to downtown, and shining a light on the City of Firsts."

"The Basketball Hall of Fame Classic is a slam dunk for Massachusetts tourism," said Kate Fox, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism. "By celebrating World Basketball Day in the sport's birthplace, we're

inviting visitors from across the country to experience the excitement of the game and explore our state's diverse offerings."

Tickets for the 2024 Basketball Hall of Fame Classic are on sale now via massmutualcenter.com and the MassMutual Center Box Office. For more information, please visit hoopball.com. Group ticket pricing and hospitality opportunities are also available.



## This Week in Rec

Lisa Panaia with ART-Ventures

WILBRAHAM - Does your child(ren) want something fun (and creatively enriching) to do on their winter break? Join us for 2 days of ART-rageous fun held at Memorial Elementary School.

ART-ventures for Kids/Crayola Imagine Arts Academy inspires children to create art that is uniquely their own. We encourage their creative spirit and imagination as they practice and learn art techniques: explore artist's styles, culture, history and a multitude of art forms. When children learn to appreciate form and color when they learn the importance of fashioning their own images of the world around them, they achieve greater discipline, program-solving skills and self-confidence. We help them think outside the box about art as it relates to the amazing world around us. Please join us for three hours of fun filled with exciting and imaginative projects.

### Superhero Blast Off!

Friday, Dec 27th

Superhero girls and boys soar off on a top-secret mission to save planet

Earth using the most important super-power of all: imagination! Create your own bean mosaic superhero masks to protect your secret identities, then blast off in super-duper spaceships built out of recycled materials. Plus, draw self-portraits of your heroic alter egos. Exciting and environmentally conscious masterpieces.

### Rainforest Tigers, Turtles and Snakes

Monday, Dec 30th

Learn some fun facts about turtles that live in the rainforest while painting and decorating ceramic turtle banks. Then sculpt clay pots in the shape of snakes using the coil technique. Plus create beautiful jungle tiger-stained glass and learn how to draw colorful and whimsical toucans. You might as well be right there in the rainforest.

We are excited to offer these school vacation programs and look forward to working with your budding artists!

*NOTE: To register for our programs and for more information, please visit WilbrahamRec.com*

## T-Birds climb back above .500 with win over Bruins

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — The Springfield Thunderbirds (10-9-1-0) got off to a quick start en route to a 3-2 win over the Providence Bruins (8-10-2-0) on Sunday afternoon at Amica Mutual Pavilion on a day when the two teams sported throwback jerseys. Springfield donned the Indians jerseys circa 1979, while the Bruins wore their late 1990s gold "Pooh Bear" logo jerseys.

The T-Birds jumped ahead on the scoreboard for a sixth consecutive game, this time just 3:51 into the contest. Scott Harrington settled a puck at the right point and fired it toward the net mouth with two teammates setting up screens. Aleksanteri Kaskimaki showed terrific hand-eye coordination, successfully spiking it down to the ice between the legs of Bruins goalie Michael DiPietro, giving the T-Birds a 1-0 lead. Harrington picked up his first point as a T-Bird, and Dalibor Dvorsky earned the secondary assist to extend his point streak to five games.

Colten Ellis drew the net for a second consecutive start, looking to extend a five-game streak without a regulation loss, making nine stops in the opening period. The Bruins' first and only power play of the period, though, got the game evened when Patrick Brown cleaned up his own rebound following a splendid Ellis save at 13:49, evening the slate, 1-1.

Springfield failed to connect on its first power play, but the T-Birds took advantage with 1:56 of man-up time to

begin the second. Samuel Johansson got the play started from the right point, whipping a pass in the left circle to Marcus Sylvegard. The winger uncorked a shot that DiPietro deflected but could not cover. The rebound sat in the blue paint, where Matt Luff swooped in to backhand the puck across the goal line to give the T-Birds the 2-1 lead just 38 seconds into the middle period.

The Bruins attack could not get anything going in the T-Birds end, registering just four shots on Ellis for the duration of the second. Springfield's offense remained opportunistic and extended the lead at 13:04 when Dylan Peterson flipped a puck toward the net, allowing Reece Newkirk to slip it into the blue paint and Drew Callin to bury the loose change to make it a 3-1 score.

Providence did not go down easily as defenseman Mason Millman connected for his first goal as a Bruin with a slap shot just 1:36 into the final period to make it a 3-2 game. The Bruins had the bulk of the offensive chances in the final period, but Ellis and the Springfield defense did enough to prevent the home side from finding an equalizer. Ellis, who is now 5-0-1 in his last six starts, had 25 saves in the victory.

The T-Birds, who now sit above the .500 plateau for the first time since they won their season opener, rest up before welcoming the Bridgeport Islanders on Friday night at the MassMutual Center, with puck drop set for 7:05 p.m.

## Railers takes two of three on the road

WITCHITA, KS — The Worcester Railers HC (8-10-0-1 17pts) fell to the Wichita Thunder (10-9-1-0, 21pts), on Saturday night by the final score of 6-2 in front of a crowd of 4,009 at the INTRUST Bank Arena. The Railers are back on the ice next at the Cool Insuring Arena taking on the Adirondack Thunder on Wednesday, December 4 at 7:00 p.m. EST.

It was Wichita who tallied the first goal on the board as they took an early 1-0 lead 1:08 into the first period, with a goal from Jeremie Bucheler (1-1-2). Joe Carroll (1-0-1) extended the lead to 2-0 6:01 into the first. Colin Jacobs (1-0-1) then netted one for Worcester making it a 2-1 game. Wichita then scored two unanswered to finish the first period coming from Nolan Kneen (1-0-1) and Nolan Burke (1-0-1) making it a 4-1 Wichita lead headed into the second period. Anthony Repaci (1-0-1) scored the only second period goal with his power play goal with under a second remaining in the period. Wichita closed the game out with two third period goals, the first coming from Michal Stinil (1-1-2) on the power play while Braden Hache (1-1-2) was able to score on the empty net to close out the scoring, leaving the game with a 6-2 final score.

The scoring came early from Wichita through the first 20 minutes of play. Wichita got started with a goal from Jeremie

Bucheler (4th) just 1:08 into the game. Joe Carrol (7th) extended the Wichita lead to 2-0 6:01 into the first. The Railers answered back with a goal from Colin Jacobs (2nd) with just over eight minutes to go in the first. Wichita finished the period by pushing their lead to 4-1 with goals from Nolan Kneen (1st) and Nolan Burke (3rd). Shots favored Worcester in the first 22-12.

Despite the five total goals in the first both teams scoring slowed down in the second period. It looked as if the second period would go without a score until Anthony Repaci (14th) scored a power play goal with under a second to go in the period making it a 4-2 game heading into the third period. Shots Favored Worcester 12-8 in the second.

The third period was another low scoring period on both ends. The stalemate was broken when the Thunder got on the power play and cashed in with a goal from Michal Stinil (10th) 16:15 into the third period. The Railers went with an empty net late in the third trying to make the comeback, but the Braden Hache (1st) of the Thunder was able to get the puck all the way down the ice and score on the empty net making the final score 6-2. Shots favored Worcester 16-12 in the third and 50-32 in the game.

## Volleyball Hall mourns loss

HOLYOKE — The International Volleyball Hall of Fame announced the passing of Board of Directors member Charlie Diener on Oct. 29. He was a dedicated and long-time member of the IVHF Board of Directors. Charlie's passion for volleyball and his unwavering commitment to the Hall of Fame were exemplified through his leadership as past Chair of the Events Committee and his many years of service to our mission.

"Charlie's legacy will live on in every event that we host, in every inductee that we honor, and in the many lives that he influenced while on the IVHF Board," said IVHF President Steve Bishop. "Back in

2017 we honored Charlie (and Rick Barry) with the inaugural IVHF President's Award for their longtime service. They set the standard for future recipients of this award."

"Charlie's contributions went far beyond the planning and execution of events," said George Mulry, IVHF Executive Director. "He brought energy, creativity, and a collaborative spirit that inspired those around him. His tireless work and genuine love for the sport have left an indelible mark on our organization, and his efforts have played a significant role in shaping the IVHF's legacy."

## 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.

## 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!

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# United We Ring Handbell Ensemble holds Christmas concert



Rev. Janet Sandquist-Skagerlind welcomes everyone to the handbell concert.



United We Ring performs music on the handbells



United We Ring put on a fabulous performance for many members of the Wilbraham community.



Audrey Pierce talks about the importance of handbells as the Western Massachusetts representative for the Handbells Musicians of America.



Deb Trimble performs a song on the bell tree.

Turley photos by Noelle Hisgen



Aurora Pierangelo Frias speaks on behalf of the Wilbraham Cultural Council, a sponsor for the handbell concert.

**By Noelle Hisgen**  
*Correspondent*

WILBRAHAM - On Dec. 1, the Wilbraham United Church's United We Ring Handbell Ensemble held their first Christmas concert, "Ring in the Season with United We Ring."

The members, or "ringers," of the handbell ensemble consisted of director Bobbie Morkin, John Colkos, Patti Colkos, Candy Dearborn, Glenna Ford, Karen Kielb, Alesia Peck, Larry Picard, Audrey Pierce, Deb Trimble and Marge Trimble and Kimberly Figueroa on flute.

The ensemble started off with a performance of "Alleluia" on the bells. Where after, Rev. Janet Sandquist-Skagerlind welcomed everyone to the musical celebration.

During songs, there were also words from Audrey Pierce of the Handbell Musicians of America as the Western Massachusetts Representative, as well as Aurora Pierangelo Frias, who spoke on behalf of the Wilbraham Cultural Council, who sponsored the event.

There were full ensemble performances of Impressions on "Sing We Now of

Christmas," "Carol of the Bells," "O Come O Come Emmanuel," "Angels We Have Heard on High," "He is Born," "Joy to the World," and "A Patchwork Christmas."

There were also notable performances in specific songs, such as ensemble member Deb Trimble playing on the bell tree for "Tuya Es La Gloria" and "The First Noel". Audrey Pierce and Karen Kielb also did a bell duet for "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring." "Silent Night" also had flute accompanist Kimberly Figueroa, where the ensemble invited everyone in the audience to sing along.

At the end of their final song, "We Wish You a Merry Christmas," the audience erupted in applause for the group who has put so much work into this production.

The handbell ensemble is led by Bobbie Morkin, who directs the ensemble at the church. She has been with the United We Ring Bell Ensemble for just over three years.

"Bells have the ability to produce many varied sounds all depending on the manner in which they are played. They are a technical instrument. It's so much more than holding a bell and then pushing it forward when you want it to ring," Morkin said.

"All of the sounds, from the most delicate to those that strong and broad, demand particular styles of ringing. As with any instrument, it takes work and practice to get the desired sounds. If you've never heard a bell ensemble ring, it's not possible to believe how awesome they sound. I fell in love with bells from the first moment I began trying to play with their mysterious and inviting tonal quality."

Deb Trimble, who has been a bell ringer for over 25 years, spoke about her experience with handbells.

"Handbells ringing is a musical challenge for me and I enjoy the challenge. It's a team effort. We each play our own position and when we all come together it makes for a cohesive ensemble. Unlike other musical ensembles who're playing the full range of notes on their instruments, bell ringers are only playing two to three notes each and you have to ring your position when it's your time in the music," Trimble said. "We all have to be there to make the music come together. Bell ringing is both an aural and a visual performance. We have to think of not only how do the bells sound but also strive to make them look beautiful as well. This is the first time some of our players have ever

performed in a concert setting and we've worked really hard to bring the beauty of the season through the bells come together."

Audrey Pierce was also a part of the handbell ensemble. She is also the Western Massachusetts representative of the Handbells Musicians of America Association.

"United We Ring choir has put a lot of work into this concert... Heart & Soul," Pierce said. "They were asked to take on this venture by the director (Bobbie Morkin) and they rose to the task. There are eleven ringers including the director. I have known this group and have rung with them randomly for a few years. As well as joined many of them at Festival Conferences as part of Area One, Handbell Musicians of America. This group consists of many wonderful ringers, including a mother/daughter team and a husband/wife pair."

It was a wonderful way to ring in the Christmas season and celebrate the Holidays with the Handbell Ensemble.

United We Ring is supported in part by grants from the Wilbraham Cultural Council, a local agency, sponsored by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

## SENIORS

### Monthly Highlights for December at the Hampden Senior Center

HAMPDEN - The following programs will occur at the senior center on Allen Street in the coming weeks.

**Create a Greeting Card with Ellie!**

Tuesday, Dec. 3, 10 a.m. to Noon

Cost is \$3 per person. All materials are provided. Please call 566-5588 to reserve your seat, space is limited.

**Meet Veteran Service Officer Jason Burgener**

Wednesday, Dec. 4 at 9:30 a.m. at the Hampden Senior Center.

Coffee and light refreshments will be provided.

Jason's office hours at the Hampden Townhouse are Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please call Jason directly at 413-640-0540 to schedule an appointment.

**Coffee with a Cop**

Thursday, Dec. 5, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Enjoy a hot coffee and a little snack with the Hampden Police.

Take this time to ask any questions and enjoy good conversation.

**We are happy to announce Foot Care is Back! Starting Dec. 5.**

Deborah is our new foot care specialist and a registered nurse. She will be here on the 1st Thursday of every month by appointment only. Cost is \$40 for a 30-minute appointment.

Please call 566-5588 today to schedule your appointment.

**Living Stronger... Longer... with Lamar Moore**

Lamar is offering a FREE class on December 17th to current students or anyone who would like to try the class. Learn about balance and how it impacts overall health and wellness. Get tips on strength training and cardiovascular endurance to increase mobility and flexibility.

New 12-week session begins January 8th through March 26th.

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

Cost is \$60 for the session if paid in full and receive two free classes or \$6 per class (call ahead for availability).

Space is limited. Please call 566-5588 to reserve your spot.

**Holiday Luncheon**

Wednesday, Dec. 18 at 12 p.m.

Join us for a Holiday Celebration with a delicious meal of Ham with Pineapple, Herbed Green Beans, Au Gratin Potatoes, Dinner Roll, and Apple Pie for Dessert provided by GSSI.

Entertainment provided by Irv Lewis. Cost is \$5 per person. (\$3 for entertainment/\$2 suggested donation to GSSSI for meal).

Please call 566-5588 starting December 1st to reserve your spot. Space is limited.

**"African Drumming" with Jason**

See us in-concert and join in the fun! Dec. 13 at 2:30 p.m.

Refreshments will be served. New 12-week session begins Jan. 3 through March 28.

Fridays, 2:15 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. - Accepting New Students Cost is \$70 for the 12-week session if paid in full and receive two free classes or \$7 per class (call ahead for availability)

Please call 566-5588 to reserve your

spot. Space is limited.

**Reiki, anyone?**

Reiki (ray-key) is a safe and gentle therapy that involves placing hands on or near a fully clothed person to promote healing by improving the flow-of-energy in the body. Many benefits of this ancient Japanese practice include stress reduction, relaxation, pain relief, improved mobility, vitality, mental alertness, and better sleep quality. Lisa Zizza is a Level 3 certified Reiki Master in the Usui Tradition.

If interested, Lisa will be available by appointment at the Senior Center on a Friday (TBD).

The cost is \$30 for a 30-minute session or \$60 for a 60-minute session (recommended). Lisa is offering \$10 off your first session. Please call the senior center at 566-5588 if you are interested.

**The Friends "SHOP TILL YOU DROP" Annual Holiday Fundraiser is open!**

The holiday shop will be open through

Please see **HSC**, page 19



# Classifieds

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187 Main St.  
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## WANTED

**ANTIQUES AND OLD STUFF WANTED.**

**BUYING** Bottles, Crocks, Jugs, Pottery, Costume Jewelry, Toys, Games, coins, sterling, Glassware, Silver-plated items, watches, Musical instruments, typewriters, sewing machines, tools, radios, clocks, lanterns, lamps, kitchenware, cookware, knives, military, automotive, fire department, masonic, license plates, beer cans, barware, books, oil cans, advertising tins, hunting, fishing, signs, and more Donald Roy (860) 874-8396

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Junk, Appliance, Cleanouts.  
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Full house cleanouts, attics, basements, garages, pools, hot tubs, sheds, decks. Same day service. 8am-9pm. Credit cards accepted. Free estimates on phone.  
Fully insured.  
Call Pete 413-433-0356.

## SERVICES

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Email: [jmbookkeeping24@gmail.com](mailto:jmbookkeeping24@gmail.com)

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**Peter's Electrical** offers fast and reliable electrical services for your home or business. Call now for a FREE estimate!  
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**KELLUM HEATING & COOLING LLC.** Licensed and insured HVAC Technician. 30 years experience, repairs, full and 24 hour emergency service. 413-275-4408.

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**HANDYMAN RESIDENTIAL REPAIRS.** Powerwashing, home repairs, interior/exterior painting, ceiling/wall repairs and chimney repairs. Fully licensed/insured. Lic. #105950CSL. Call 413-566-5596/413-433-5073.

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Find archives of this local newspaper at [www.newspapers.turley.com](http://www.newspapers.turley.com)

## SERVICES

**PLUMBING**  
**GREG LAFOUNTAIN PLUMBING & HEATING** Lic #19196 Repairs & Replacement of fixtures, water heater installations, steam/HW boiler replacement. Kitchen & Bath remodeling. 30 years experience. Fully insured. \$10 Gift Card With Work Performed. Call Greg (413)592-1505

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## HELP WANTED

### TOWN OF BLANDFORD HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

The Town of Blandford is seeking a qualified individual for the position of Highway Superintendent. Salary range starting at \$75,000-\$80,000+ negotiable based on experience/skills.  
Please visit our website [TownOfBlandford.com](http://TownOfBlandford.com) or email [Administrator@TownOfBlandford.com](mailto:Administrator@TownOfBlandford.com) for more information.

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**ALL REAL ESTATE** advertised herein is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination." We will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. All persons are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised are available on an equal opportunity basis.

**PROFESSIONAL OFFICE SPACE,** shared with consultant. Artistically designed and decorated. Includes utilities, conference room, and kitchen. 3333 Boston Road, Wilbraham. 617-209-4882.

## FOR RENT



All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.  
This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

# FILL OUT AND MAIL THIS MONEY MAKER

MAIL TO: Classifieds, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069  
or call: 413-283-8393

DEADLINES: MONDAY AT NOON

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13	14	15	16
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29	30	31	32
33	34	35	36
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**Hilltowns**  
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All Three ZONES for \$26.00 for 20 words plus 50¢ for each additional word.

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**GREAT VALUE!**  
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## St. Cecilia Catholic Women's Club December Meeting

WILBRAHAM - The St. Cecilia Catholic Women's Club December meeting takes place on Tuesday, Dec. 10 at 5:30 p.m.

Holiday Music with Todd & Carol

Liturgy at 5:30 p.m. with dinner to follow in the Parish Center. Following our Christmas Liturgy we'll enjoy a delicious catered meal accompanied by seasonal music from our very own Dr. Todd Rovelli and Carol Adamski-Maggi! The meal cost is \$26.

Please send check in by Dec. 8.

Please bring sweatshirts to this meeting for children in need.

**HSC** from page 17

Friday, Dec. 27.

### Shopping Hours are:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and

Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Thursday, from 9 a.m. to Noon. Cash or checks only.

All proceeds benefit the needs of the senior center.

You'll find lots of great gifts for those special people in your life.

All are welcome and encouraged to come in and shop at the Hampden Senior Center, 104 Allen Street.

**"Come What May" Boutique...** is open in our lobby for all to shop during normal business hours,

Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

We accept donations of new or gently used clothing, outerwear, accessories, and footwear.

### YEAR END Boutique Sale in the Great Room

All clothes on the \$5 rack will be \$3 through Dec. 31.

All proceeds from Boutique sales will benefit the needs of The Senior Center.

### HELP US STOCK OUR SHELVES with Toothpaste!

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

### AARP Tax-Aide Program Volunteer Opportunity

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide is the nation's largest volunteer-run tax preparation and assistance service. And we want you to join us. Please volunteer as a Tax Counselor and work with area residents in preparing their tax returns on the computer. Basic computer skills and some experience in filing your tax returns are helpful, along with a willingness to make a one-day-per-week time commitment during our 10-week tax season. Hands-on training is provided in the classroom, and we have experienced Counselors to assist at all sites. Please consider volunteering your time for the Tax-Aide Program this year. For questions or additional information, please email Director, at: D5Taxaide@comcast.net

The Hampden Senior Center will be taking calls to set-up appointments for anyone who would like their taxes done through this complimentary AARP Tax-Aide Program starting Monday, Jan. 6.

### Tax Work-Off Program

The town of Hampden will begin accepting applications for the 2025 Tax Work Off Program starting on December 2, 2024. Applications will be available at the Hampden Senior Center starting on November 27, 2024, and completed applications are due back by December 20, 2024.

The town currently has 14 tax work-off positions in various departments within the town including the Senior Center, the Hampden Public Library and the Hampden Police Department and provides up to a \$2,000 tax abatement. Due to the popularity of this program, all positions will be filled using a lottery system.

Department heads may choose to interview potential tax work off employees to make sure the employees

skills meet the specific needs of the department. Applications and more details will be available at the senior center front desk starting on November 27, 2024. If you have questions about this program, please contact Becky at the senior center at 413-566-5588.

### We need your Vote!

The Friends of Hampden Senior Citizens has an opportunity to receive a donation through the

Monson Savings Bank Community Giving Initiative.

Each year, Monson Savings Bank asks the community to help plan the Bank's community-giving activities by inviting people to vote for organizations they would like the Bank to support during the upcoming year.

Please visit their link at, [www.monsonsavings.bank/CGI](http://www.monsonsavings.bank/CGI) and click "VOTE NOW"

Where it says Organization Name\*, type in

"Friends of Hampden Seniors" and Submit

If you have any questions, please call the Senior Center at 566-5588.

## Memorial School a topic of conversation at Wilbraham Select Board meeting

A long discussion was held regarding the former building on Main Street.

By Dalton Zbierski  
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - Recreation was a subject of conversation for nearly an hour during Monday's Select Board meeting in Wilbraham.

Much of that time was spent discussing the old Memorial School on Main Street and what its future uses might entail.

Parks & Recreation Director Bryan Litz joined the meeting, as did representatives of the Wilbraham Friends of Recreation and the Wilbraham Playground and Recreation Commission.

A smaller item was brought to the table first by Litz - the need for new wrestling mats in the wrestling area that has been implemented inside some of the building's former classroom space.

Litz pointed out that high school students have begun practicing there. The group agreed that 17-year-old wrestlers beat up the mats a bit more than their peers who are six or seven years younger.

"With the high school program in there, there's a lot more wear and tear. So, that's something that probably should have been done this season because it's not in great shape," Litz said. "That's on the horizon because we didn't have enough money to fix the mats, but again it's something that needs to be done for the program."

The dialogue then shifted focus to greater needs, and the need for direction regarding the building's future was considered most significant. Litz said improvements to the building's roof are coming, but there are other problems that must be addressed as well.

He noted that about 40% of the building is being actively used, while other areas are left in the dark.

"Right now, you have safety issues...doors that don't lock, bathrooms that don't work," Litz said. "And the response I get from the town is we're not putting a single dollar into it... There was one weekend where anyone could have gotten into that building."

By speaking to the Facilities Department, Litz said he learned the town does not currently have greater plans to improve the building, which numerous recreation programs and dozens of residents use regularly.

"To clarify, the Facilities Director has told me that with his budget, he is not going to do anything to the building. My point is that conversation needs to happen," Litz said. "We take people on tours of the building and [have to say], 'This wing has no heat and no bathrooms.'"

Marc Ducey, a Select Board member, agreed that the building needs to be made safe for those who use it.

"We want to make sure the envelope is secure, and the building is safe," Ducey said. "I think we'll do what we can to try to make the envelope as secure and as safe as possible, definitely within the confines of the budget."

Ducey stressed the importance of having a plan, and the group agreed that a broader plan for future use should have been established when the school closed more than a decade ago. He compared the Memorial School to Spec Pond.

"To me, I think we did an amazing job at Spec Pond. And there was a plan at the beginning. It was a very clear plan. I don't know if we followed it to a tee, but there was a plan," Ducey said. "I'd like to see a similar thing, and I think the townspeople need to see that before they start voting on [projects]. They need to understand the costs."

Litz responded that "every project we've done has had a plan associated with it."

He continued to note that a document with a plan exists.

"We have a document that has immediate needs, mid-term, long-term. It's very easy to put together that document, at least on my end. It's not a \$50 million ask," Litz said.

It was noted by the group that a lot of time and effort have gone into identifying how the building can be best used going forward.

Currently, the Parks & Rec Department has an office in the old Memorial School. Litz said the department would even move that office if it were best for the town.

"We love our office there. I don't want to leave our office, but if it's for the greater good, we would," Litz said.

The group agreed that the future of the building should ultimately be decided by residents at a town meeting. It is unclear when that item will be brought to the table; it could take several years.

Sarah Quinn, a member of the Friends of Recreation, said a "dream or idea" exists regarding a five-year plan and a 10-year plan, but currently progress seems to have halted.

"What we want to do is give Wilbraham their Disney World so to speak where everyone can do what they feel they want to do," Quinn said.

Quinn said that there is currently a "standstill" that has been ongoing for about two years as the town figures out how to best use the old school.

"If we can utilize this space, it's kind of like the world is our oyster. We can create an opportunity for everyone in this community to feel welcome. Without that, we don't know where we're going. We don't have a current direction other than just status quo," Quinn said.

## 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.

## PUBLIC NOTICES

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
The Trial Court  
Probate and Family Court  
Department

HAMPDEN, Division  
Docket No. HD21P2070PM

To all persons interested in the estate of Josephine Carabello, of Wilbraham, in said County. A petition has been presented to said Court for license to sell at private sale - public auction certain real estate of said Josephine Carabello for her maintenance.

If you desire to object thereto you or your attorney should file a written appearance in said Court at 50 State Street, Springfield, MA before 10:00 in the forenoon on the **20th day of December 2024**, the return day of this citation.

Witness, BARBARA M. HYLAND, Esquire, First

Judge of said Court, this 21st day of November 2024.

Rosemary A. Saccomani,  
Register

12/05/2024

Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Probate and Family Court  
Hampden Division  
Docket No. HD24P2214EA  
Estate of:

PAUL DANIEL PIRRO  
Date of Death: 9/19/2024  
INFORMAL PROBATE  
PUBLICATION NOTICE

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Lisa Manuell of Newton, NH.**

**Lisa Manuell of Newton, NH** has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the

Petitioner.  
12/05/2024

### 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

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



## SCHOOLS

# Minnechaug Regional High School Honor Roll

WILBRAHAM – Minnechaug Regional High School recently named the first term Honor and High Honor Roll.

### Grade 9 Honors:

Arielle Ali, Owen Antaya, Peter Appleby, Tommy Appleby, Rama Awkal, Addison Baldyga, Cole Balog, Mia Balog, Aidan Bean, Bryce Beckel, Andrew Boilard, Ellianna Brodeur, Nicholas Capen, Annalecia Carlo, Gavyn Clark, Joseph Comes, Leah Croteau, Nathaniel David, Anna Dennis, Kaelyn Dionne, Oksana Dobronski, Ryan Donovan, Jestiny Ferreira, Lucas Ferreira, Chase Folli, Devon Fortenberry, Colin Foulis, Gavin French, Mya Gierlich, Hayden Gloss, Gavin Goldrick, Mallory Grono, Madison Guertin, Maura Guertin, Kevin Harvey-Wainwright, Demetrius Holmes, Mason Howard, Thomas Hutcheson, Emilia Imbriglio, Releana Jackson, Drew Jennings, Alexis Joseph, June Keeler, Declan Kelly, Emma King, Isabella Kupis, Brayden Lane, William Lapalm, Landon Laskiewicz, Savannah Lee, Riley Lodo, Cameron Lowe, Jacob Luttrell, Yman Ly, Ryan Mackie, Evan Marques, Ashley McDonald, Sky-Lynn McGrath, Ellie McRobbie, Marabella Melluzzo, Caleb Moreno, Frank Morin, Ryan Mullen, Lucy Nolan, Nicholas Nordstrom, Gianna Nowicki, Sophia O'Connor, Tristan Oliveira, Patrick O'Toole, Madeline Pastore, Ava Peck, Owen Petit, Kendall Placzek, Noah Ramos, Domenic Roach, Hussein Saleh, Benjamin Salvador, Hailey Scliopou, Ava Secor, Ryan Semanie, Zachary Senecal, Tanvi Sharma, Mykhael Sierapabey, Demetri Smith, Julia Smith, Gabriel Solowinski, Elliot Sylvester, Amelia Tucker, Lucian Twarog-DeJura, Camren Valle, Juliana Washington, Adelle Williams, Layla Williams, Olivia Zheng

### Grade 9 High Honors:

Taylor Bartosz, Madeline Bleau, Bartosz Checiek, Irelyn Coffey, Caroline Euber, Emmett Fitzpatrick, Nora Fletcher, Emmy Foisy, Jackson Gagner, Mario Garcia, Corrine Gates, Nicholas Gencarelli, Brennan Glieman, Eliza Gloss, Ashley Griguoli, Parker Hoey, Brielle Hunter, Kelsey Jennings, Brooke Johnson, David Kim, Peyton Lee, Adriana Lopez, Dominic Mascaró, Olivia Maserati, Elijah Mathias, Isadora Maurice, Daizy McDonald, Clare McMahon, Mylie Mittler, Wilhem Morales Casillas, Tess Morrow, Dylan Niznik, Liam O'Brien, Youngsun Oh, Kirk Pagoaga, Benjamin Patterson, Averie Picard, Brenan Rost, Jillian Rumpalik, Riley Senecal, Lillian Sergienko, Alysandra Serju, Sofia Shores, Audriana Stasio, Joseph Sullivan, Michael Sullivan, William Szpakowski, Grayson Tangway, Anna Taylor, Jillian True, Ormandy Velazquez, James Wadzinski, Calvin

Webster, Joseph Woytowicz

### Grade 10 Honors:

Gana Abuata, Lilianna Bennett, Nathan Bosworth, Katherine Britt, Darby Burgmyer, Philip Castellano, Liliana Celletti, Kiera Connors, Katie DeGray, Addison Derosia, Tucker Derosia, Ava Disa, Daniel Dix, Braedon Donahue, Brady Dones, Angelina Dunn, Jonathan Dyer, Saniah Evans, Cameron Faneuff, Marion Fil, Brielle Foisy, Alyssa Fortune, Nicholas Garib, Jasmine Gaspariano, Kaden Gralia, Gavin Grimley, Richard Hale, Mia Hanley, Liam Harrigan, Anne Hicklen, Jacob Hisgen, Ainsley Holden, Kadence Illig, Ryan Jacobsen, Kalhan Kar, Ava Keegan, Ethan Kelliher, Abyaan Khan, Gabriel Kishinevski, Ryan Knox-Nelli, Sophia Kozub, Isabella Lafield, Drew Lang, Peter Langone, Zoey Lape, Celayna Ledvina, Leah Lomascolo, Caelan Luszc, Reese Magee, Liam Maher, Caroline Maloni, Avery Marceau, Olivia Martowska, Cameron Maziarz, Mason Mish, John Morley, Jameson Murray, Athena Nguyen, Selena Nguyen, Madilyn Ortiz, Kairi Os, Jack Paterno, Nicholas Pelletier, Natalie Petit, Mackenzie Picard, Haley Powers, Samuel Przybyl, Jaison Richard, Karolina Robles-Maurer, Sydney Rocha, Emanuel Roman, Brooklyn Rosas, Jillian Rubner, Makenna Sacco, Quinn Salerno, Cameron Salvador, Jolena Sanchioni, Dillon Shaughnessy, Landon Sheerin, Savannah Sheerin, Gracie Smith, Norah Smith, Andrew Stark, Grayson Sweet, Logan Thomas, Connor Tillberry, Grace Trombly, Hope Trombly, Brayden Tugie, Owen Tzoumas, Sarah Rose Walsh, Max Waskiewicz, Azary Wheeler Montanez, Kei Williams, Jade Wong-Vallejo, Thomas Wurm

### Grade 10 High Honors:

Raymond Adorno, Angelina Bontempi, Adrianna Brandoli, Abigail Camire, Samantha Catellier, O'Brien Chen, Ivy Christensen, Annabella Cianflone, Catherine Dickson, Barba Dos Santos Costa, Nehir Elcin, Elizabeth Espinal, Isabella Esteves, Ella Gagliarducci, Olivia Gencarelli, Brooke Germain, Naomi Griffin, Eliana Gunn, Lucy Haile, Caitlin Hebert, Paige Holt, Madelyn Hoskinson, Amelia Kellogg, Isabella Kirton, Teagan Lawor, Abigail Lee, Molly Lynch, Liam Metzger, Molly Michels, Chelsea Ortega, Riddhi Patel, Ainsley Patterson, Collin Purcell, Lauren Roberts, Jack Rumpalik, Yara Saleh, Ava Scatolini, Alison Souza, Benjamin Stebbins, Tyler Supczak, Kaleb Sweetman, Faith Trombly, Isabella Usher, Luis Vega, Ariella Velez, Drew Weinberg

### Grade 11 Honors:

Angelina Acevedo, Lucas Akers, Victoria Ambrose, Ian Angelica, Adam

Arce, Ali Awkal, Daniela Baez, Emma Balog, Kelly Balog, Logan Barcome, Maxwell Baroni, Colleen Basch, Emily Benoit, Callan Blanchard, Alec Boilard, Mia Bolduc, Lila Britton, Luke Bruno, Eclipse Buckert, Kennedy Burgmyer, Isabella Carlin, Hayden Carlotto, Lilianna Catellier, Cameron Cayo, Irene Chen, Nicholas Cianflone, Logan Clark, Natalia Clarke, Serenity Clarke, Caleigh Conboy, Madeline Dos Santos, Caden Duke, Samuel Eaton, Landyn Eldridge, Meghan Elmasian, Cody Erskine, Jacob Fahey, Miles Fergus, Dominic Fiorentino, Noemi Fraga, Margaret Fulton, Lucas Fyntilakis, Yong Ming Gao, Mateo Garcia, Jacob Gilmartin, Ryan Giombetti, Carina Gonnello, Jenna Goodwin, Andrew Grasso, Izabella Gusev, Colin Haines, Brody Harrison, Zeirra Hernandez, Liam Howe, Lana Johnson, Maeghan Joyce, Ava Kearney, Molly Kinsman, Zachariah Kozub, Samuel Laird, Benjamin Latourelle, Evan Liverseidge, Jacob Long, Kaitlyn Lopez Pham, Benjamin Lopez, Christian Lowe, Jack Lucarelle, Avery Lucas, Ava Luszc, Kai Ly, Natalie Madison, Luca Mastroianni, Michael Mazzaferro, Nolah McConnell, Madeline McDonald, Riley McLeod, Jasmine Miller, Alyssa Mitchell, Arianna Morales, Daniella Moraru, Ava Moretti, Emily Moriarty, Morgan Morrow, Anastasia Mutti, Lyric Nelson, Haonam Nguyen, Alexandra Nichols, Alyssa Nogueira, Cambria Norval, Luke O'Connor, Michael O'Connor, Cora Pace, Alexander Parent, Zachary Parent, Nico Penna, David Preston, Katelynn Pronovost, Natalie Proulx, Kameah Pryce, Hannah Przechocki, William Quinn, Chloe Robins, Cameron Rodriguez, Maisen Rosado, Aezlin Rost, Annabella Rostek, Gwyndolyn Roszko, Connor Roy, Patrick Ryan, Shawnee Santiago, Alexander Savlick, Dylan Secor, Colin Sheehan, Alexa Sherman, Linda Stanco, Bianca Stewart, Jediah Stewart, Lincoln Stiles, Lilianna Sullivan, Yazmin Tafolla-Chapin, Ava Thompson, Ezekiel Vargas-Nunez, Madisyn Vazquez, Dylan Walker, Journey Waters-Brown, Aiden Whitaker, Alexander Wright

### Grade 11 High Honors:

Trinity Burgmyer, Anthony Cianflone, Kelly Cronin, Ava Croteau, Alexander Danio, Maliha Daubon, Allison Demetri, Aidan Dzierwinski, Laya Ibrahim, Tyler Jaslanek, Aidan Lee, Hannah Luff, Nylie Maldonado, Ava Manning, Jaymiel Martinez, Sean McSwain, Jacob Moore, Danielle Muir, Alina Narvaez, Cailin O'Brien, Anna O'Toole, Mia Peck, Mostaffa Saleh, Connor Seymour, Gabriel Talaia, Ella Trosky, Elijah Webster, Elizabeth Woytowicz, Josiah Zayas, Nicholas Zayas

### Grade 12 Honors:

Alexsa Abeid, Joseph Aguiar, JeVaughn Archer, Kyle Atkin, Mackenzie Barlow, Jayden Beck, Hunter Bennett, Evan Bowler, Abigail Branham, Noah Brathwaite, Meghan Britt, Joseph Brower, Jeremiah Campbell, Margaret Capuano, Gia Caputo, Logan Conboy, Katherine Crespo, Julia Crooks, Kali Crosby, Jason DeGray, Elizabeth Dickson, Paul Diehl, Joshua Disa, Brandon Djavi, Alexandria Dubai, Lukas Dzierzowski, Maxyne Evon, Amanda Fenyes, Nicholas Fopp, Molly Gallagher, Wen Xi Gao, Noelle Giombetti, Hunter Gormally, Alivia Grono, Gabriella Harding, Ian Horne, Imani Ibrahim, Ryan Ice, Alexander Johnson, Alita Johnson, Lila Keegan, Caitlyn Labonte, Olivia Lefsyk, Lianna Lisowski, Gracie Lodo, Matthew MacPhail, Isabelle Manning, Jeremiah Martin, Antonia Mascaró, Madison McCluskey, Mackenzie McEwan, Aidan McMinn, Alexander Melluzzo, Margaret Michels, Sean Miller, Nhi Nguyen, Alyah Nogueira, John Peter O'Connor, Ryan Oldread, Brayden O'Sullivan, Thomas O'Toole, Abby Peyman, Summer Pinney, Nicole Pollard, Emma Powell, Kamaria Pryce, Ethan Purcell, Alexander Rice, Hayden Richard, Aiden Rodrigues, Sean Rooney, Mialece Rosado, Matthew Ryan, Amaderis Santiago, Ella Sarno, Joseph Smith, Quinn Symington, Leonora Teixeira, Angela Verdon, Sofia Villanueva, Skylar Weinberg, Alexander Wietecha, Domenic Yacovone, Felix Zayas

### Grade 12 High Honors:

Hannah Alves, Emmamarie Annear, Lilliana Barkyoub, Bryce Barlow, Cayla Bartosz, Matthew Beaudin, Bryan Beckel, Mason Belcamino, Sadie Blair, Joseph Bonavita, Marissa Bontempi, Alani Botas, Jake Burnett, Samantha Burnham, Noah Caress, Olivia Christenson, Kayla Coolbeth, Mackenzie DaFonseca, Jordan Dietz, Lucie Dones, Grace Fallon, Aaron Foy, Nina Gallagher, Deacon Gardner, Aaron Gasteyer, Kendall Gates, Victoria Gonzalez, Renee Goulet, McKenna Hale, Giana Hall, Jaiana Hall, Noelle Hisgen, Audrey Izzo, Nora Kennedy, Layla King, Arthur Lam, Andrew Lang, Morgan Lape, Myah Larimore, Joshua Lawrence, Wyatt Lewis, Alayna Lucas, Alison Mackie, Andrew McDonald, Catherine McMahon, Collin Meunier, Taylor Meunier, Elizabeth Nguyen, Tiffany Nguyen, Ava Ofcarcik, Makenzi Pastreck, Ava Peabody, Laura Pecoy, Gus Przybyl, Sophia Rachele, Ciara Reilly, Marily Remaly, Dawson Rice, Liam Richard, Gabriella Robinson, Rafael Rodriguez Alvarez, Madeleine Rooney, Brandon Rosas, Gianna Siciliano, Chloe Sullivan, Jack Sullivan, Brady Suomala, Leah Tassinari, Aidan Thompson, Aaron Treat, Caeli Whitcomb



## Superintendent Awards

WILBRAHAM - John A. Provost, Ed.D., Superintendent of the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District is pleased to announce that Minnechaug 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, Lum-

berjack 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.

## Friends of Wilbraham Seniors Dough Raiser

WILBRAHAM - Take a break and eat at Pizzeria Uno on Boston Rd. in Springfield anytime from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Dec. 3 through 5, and up to 20% of your check will go to Friends of Wilbraham Seniors (FWS) towards supporting programs and services at their new Senior Center.

This will include eat-in, drinks, catering, take-out, in addition to Door Dash orders, as long as you call Uno's (543-6600) and tell them your order supports FWS. Otherwise, present your coupon (paper copy or on your phone) when you're there.

Coupons will be available at the Senior Center, behind the Town Hall on Springfield St. You'll also find them online at the FWS website: [friendsofwilbrahamseniors.org](http://friendsofwilbrahamseniors.org) or on Facebook. Search either Friends of Wilbraham Seniors, Inc., Wilbraham Senior Center or Pizzeria Uno.





Turley photos by Amanda Munson

The Hampden Fire Department decorated all the fire trucks for the parade through town, which featured the antique fire truck that was turning into the Hampden Town House parking area.



Mr. and Mrs. Claus were sitting in the passenger seat and back of the fire truck upon their arrival in Hampden, waving to the crowd of kids and parents waiting to meet them.



The Annual Tree Lighting in front of the Town House in Hampden was lit up after 6 p.m. when Santa and Mrs. Claus arrived.



The Green Meadows Singers were getting all set up to sing Christmas carols for the crowd during this year's Annual Tree Lighting.

**HAMPDEN** from page 1

ents," Rizzuto said.

Adding to this is Rob Rizzuto.

"I am here tonight as a Hampden town resident. We live down the street and have been here for a little over three years. This is one of the nice little events that make it feel like an old-fashioned New England community. It's nice, we know mostly everybody and this year, Maryn gets to sing on the stairs of the Town House. This is very exciting!" Rob Rizzuto said.

Rizzuto shared what he loves about Hampden.

"We've moved here and immediately loved it. Moving here was one of the best things we did as a family. We visit all the town's amenities, spend time in each of them. We visit all the playgrounds, the schools are great, and the people are nice. It's all you need," Rob Rizzuto said.

When asked about the people who made this event possible, Flynn said this.

"The chorus teacher did a great job, Mrs. Canedi with the kids of the Green Meadows Singers. Special thanks to the staff at the Town Hall, Jade B. and Lauren M., if it wasn't for them this wouldn't have been organized," Flynn said. "Hampden Fire Department for getting everything set up and decorating the trucks. Craig, a Selectboard member, was there last night with his children. Carol S. of the Girl Scouts for their food drive and participation and the Hampden Police Department for their help with traffic control."

The Girl Scouts gave out candy canes, reindeer food and pamphlets of the chorus songs with lyrics to sing along. With a countdown to the lighting of the tree, the crowd was full of joy and Christmas spirit, right as Santa and Mrs. Claus arrived in tandem in the decorated fire trucks.

"I am very proud to have one of my daughters sing in front of the Town House, it's a really special part of Christmas and to have Santa kick off the season. I couldn't have asked for more!" Rob Rizzuto said.



One of the fire trucks lit up in Christmas lights makes its way to the Town House for the Annual Tree Lighting on Dec. 1.



Santa and Mrs. Claus greet the crowd as they make their grand entrance in Hampden.

**NOTICE**

ERRORS: Each advertiser is requested to check their advertisement the first time it appears. This paper will not be responsible for more than one corrected insertion, nor will be liable for any error in an advertisement to a greater extent than the cost of the space occupied by the item in the advertisement.

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USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS PORK SIRLOIN CUTLETS..	<b>\$2.55</b> lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN BEEF SHORT RIBS	<b>\$7.99</b> lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS & SKINLESS CHICKEN TENDERLOIN 10 LB BAG	<b>\$1.99</b> lb
USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN PORK LOIN ROAST RIB END or LOIN END .....	<b>\$1.99</b> lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN BEEF SHORT RIBS	<b>\$7.99</b> lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS & SKINLESS CHICKEN THIGHS TRAY PAK .....	<b>\$1.33</b> lb
SLICED IN OUR DELI HORMEL SMOKED HAM.....	<b>\$2.99</b> lb	USDA INSP. GROUND FRESH DAILY DIET LEAN GROUND BEEF	<b>\$4.99</b> 5 LB BAG	USDA INSP. FROZEN EDWARDS TURTLE CREAM PIE 25.1 OZ.....	<b>\$5.99</b> ea
SLICED IN OUR DELI PROVOLONE CHEESE.....	<b>\$4.44</b> lb	USDA INSP. STORE MADE ITALIAN MARINATED 1/2 CHICKEN.....	<b>\$2.99</b> lb	USDA INSP. IQF FROZEN 31/40 COUNT COOKED SHRIMP 2 LB BAG.....	<b>\$14.99</b> ea
USDA INSP. STORE MADE BONELESS KOREAN BBQ MARINATED PORK BUTT STRIPS .....	<b>\$3.35</b> lb				

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# Community gets in holiday spirit at Holiday Bazaar



From the left, Linda Leger, Margaret Superneau, Judy Cmero, director of the Friends of Wilbraham Seniors, and Marianne Duquette in a group photo at Santa's Café during the Holiday Bazaar.



Layla Keefe, Santa's elf, in a photo with Santa Claus as they await children to share their Christmas wishes this year.

Turley photos by Kristin Rivers



Ann Marie Gaudette of A.M.G. Creations made the Holiday Bazaar a family affair with her handmade cards the whole family can enjoy.



Carol Adamski-Maggi smiles at her table of creative artwork.



Author Debra Rollend shows off her book, "If I Had a Penguin For My Pet" and festive penguin ornaments designed by her daughter.

By Kristin Rivers  
Editor  
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - The community stopped by the senior center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Nov. 23 for this year's Holiday Bazaar.

Held in the senior center's Multipurpose Room, the annual event featured over 25 crafters and artisans, donated home-baked goods, nearly 60 donated raffle items, Santa's Cafe with beverages, pastries and meatball grinders up for grabs, a Children's Storytime with Miss Deb Gormley, membership director for the Friends of Wilbraham Seniors, visits with Santa and a special quilt raffle for a quilt handcrafted by members of the Wilbraham Senior Center's Quilting Group.

Also, attendees dropped off non-perishable food items to support the Community Survival Center.

The event was sponsored by the Friends of Wilbraham Seniors, with all proceeds to support programs and services for the senior center.

Judy Cmero, director of the Friends, called it "a really busy, fun, successful day" and "a great affirmation of what the Friends aim to do."

"To help the seniors in Wilbraham to live happy, enjoyable, productive lives and other communities as well participate," Cmero said. "So, it really just is a support from the community. There are people here from surrounding towns as well who are just supporting our Wilbraham seniors, so, it's very gratifying and it's fun."



A crowd shot of attendees enjoying the Holiday Bazaar at the Wilbraham Senior Center on Nov. 23.

Dr. Michael Tirabassi showed off his blacksmith projects, made with steel and some made with copper, explaining how he found himself loitering in the blacksmith shops during the Big E and watching "Forged in Fire" on the History Channel, which sparked his fascination with the craft.

"So, I started with making the leaf keychains that you see here...and then branched out into all of these projects and I found as I was working, I still have yet to ever make a knife," Tirabassi said. "Even when I started, I was going to do it to make knives, I still have yet to ever make a knife or a sword because I found all the artistic blacksmith work just to be so interesting and so much fun."

Tirabassi got involved in the event after bumping into a member of the Friends at the Peach Blossom Festival and chatted about his blacksmithing and shirts as, for safety reasons, it's important to wear one with all-natural fibers.

"I think it's really wonderful when the community can come together and do things. It kind of comes to that word, giving you a sense of community. You don't really have a sense of community when you walk into Walmart," Tirabassi said. "A lot of people, they do their hobbies and an event like this is a great way to kind of share your hobby with the community."

Debra Rollend was signing copies of her children's book, "If I Had a Penguin as a Pet," inspired by her daughter who wanted to have a pet penguin.

"I finished it in 2016. It was kind of set back by COVID, of course. It was in a number of stores," Rollend said. "I just didn't do much with it and I'm back doing it again and it's motivated me to write another book."

Rollend, who volunteers at the senior center once a week, was thrilled to participate, enjoying meeting with attendees.

"Especially in the winter, in

the colder weather, you don't see people as often and all, so this is just wonderful. Talking to people, seeing people I haven't seen in a long time," Rollend said. "It's just a great community area."

Santa met with families in the library and gave them free candy canes and magic reindeer food alongside his elf, Layla Keefe.

"I always love coming to Wilbraham. It's a wonderful place. The children of Wilbraham are very, very well-behaved and always on the nice list," Santa said.

Keefe shared this advice for future elves.

"If you keep continuing to be good, then you'll become an elf just like I did," Keefe said.

"Layla is one of the best elves Santa has ever been assigned. She has been so great at ensuring the flow of traffic, making sure all the children are attended to," Santa added. "She's doing an amazing job. Santa's very proud of her."

Santa added he's been a very

close friend of the Friends and is happy to support them.

"They've been wonderful. Very, very supportive of everything we do for seniors in our town, so Santa loves to come out and help them out," Santa said.

Cmero thanked the community for their support, emphasizing the event's success was due to them, the donors and all the crafters.

"Thank you for helping make this such a success and we hope that everybody will have a wonderful Thanksgiving and an absolutely wonderful Christmas, Hannukah, New Year, Kwanzaa, whatever holiday they celebrate," Cmero said.

Keefe shared this holiday message.

"I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and a Happy Thanksgiving!" Keefe said.



Deb Gormley, membership director for the Friends of Wilbraham Seniors, reads "The Polar Express" to children during the Children's Storytime at the Holiday Bazaar.



# '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

### 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.

## 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







# LET'S GO OUT!

and celebrate the season

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**di Hampden House**  
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**December 13, 14, 15**  
**December 20, 21, 22**  
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*No Limit, No Expiration*

**We have catering trays available**  
**for your holiday entertaining!**  
*See our website for banquet & catering menus.*

**13TH ANNUAL TOYS FOR JOY TOY DRIVE**  
**Tuesday, December 10th, 3-8pm**  
**Receive 50% OFF Your Entree with the**  
**Donation of a New, Unwrapped Toy!**

**LIVE MUSIC!!!** Every Friday & Saturday | Visit Facebook For Lineup

**BOOK YOUR NEXT FUNCTION WITH US!**  
[lacucinagreenhouses@gmail.com](mailto:lacucinagreenhouses@gmail.com)

**BAR OPEN LATE!** See our website for our Banquet & Catering Menu  
[lacucinahampden.com](http://lacucinahampden.com)  
 Mon.-Thurs. 3-9pm, Fri. & Sat. 11:30am-10pm & Sun. 11:30am-9pm

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**ROUTE 20**  
  
**Bar & Grille**  
 EST. 2016

*'Tis the Season...*  
 to celebrate with family & friends!  
 Join us throughout the holidays.  
**All roads lead to ROUTE 20 BAR & GRILLE**

**ANNUAL STUFF THE TRUCK EVENT!**  
 Sat., Dec. 14th 11:30am-5pm  
 Collecting **NEW Warm Winter Coats, Hats, Gloves, Etc. & NEW Unwrapped Toys For Kids Ages 5-15. Donate & Receive a FREE PASTA DINNER!**  
 (Donations can be dropped off any time up until Dec. 14.)

**Gift Card Special!**  
**DECEMBER 20-24**  
 For every \$50 gift card purchased, you'll receive an extra \$10!  
 Our bar will be open Xmas Eve 11am-4pm. Last chance for last minute gift cards

**SUNDAY BRUNCH 10:30-2:30**  
 Featuring Our Own **BUILD YOUR OWN Bloody Mary & Mimosa Bar**  
 Plus Our Regular Menu Until 8 p.m.

**Join Us NEW YEARS EVE!**  
 Regular Menu & Delicious Specials  
 Live Music with Dee & Rich 6:30-9:30pm.  
 Enjoy dinner & music and still get home early!

**Every Sun. Night**  
**\$20 STEAK N' BREW**

**Every Tues. Night**  
**\$18 PRIME RIB DINNER**

**Every Wed. Night**  
**\$19 WINE DOWN WEDNESDAY**

**Every Thurs. Night**  
**4-7:30pm HAPPY HOUR**  
 SPECIALLY PRICED APPS.

**ORDER OUR TRAYS TO GO FOR YOUR HOLIDAY PARTIES.**

**LIVE MUSIC!**  
 Every Thurs., Fri. & Sat.

**PLUS FRIDAY & SATURDAY SPECIALS**

**2341 Boston Rd., (Rt. 20) Wilbraham**  
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 Serving: Tuesday-Wednesday 4-9pm  
 Thursday-Saturday 11:30am-9:30pm  
 Sunday 10:30am-8pm  
 with EXTENDED BAR HOURS EVERY NIGHT  
 CLOSED Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve & Christmas Day  
[route20barandgrille.com](http://route20barandgrille.com)

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