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Shopping local at Holiday Craft Fair



Kelly Lamontagne sold children's books made by PaperPie at the Winterfest Craft Fair on Dec. 9.

Turley photos by Dalton Zbierski

Federated Community Church holds community-oriented event

By Dalton Zbierski
Editor
dzbierski@turley.com

HAMPDEN – Multiple levels of the Federated Community Church were abuzz with activity on Dec. 9 for the Winterfest Holiday Craft Fair.

Proceeded by a Breakfast with Santa from 8 – 10 a.m., the craft fair lasted until 2 p.m. and occurred both upstairs and downstairs on the second Saturday of December.

In addition to a raffle and lunch available for purchase, several dozen crafters filled the church, presenting a variety of goods.

“Once I get inspired with ideas, I get really motivated,” crafter Carol Adamski-Maggi said. “I’ve found that every person I’ve spoken with has been very friendly, upbeat and happy to be here... (Shopping local) is the way to go because you can find very original items that are unique that you can’t find in a big retail store.”

Adamski-Maggi arrived to sell homemade refrigerator magnets, gift jars and boxes, Christmas cards and a range of original paintings. She said there was a lot of anticipation as she prepared and felt right at home when the craft fair began.

Mariellen Guidetti made her way to Hampden to sell handmade Christmas trees, both large and small, stained in polyurethane and decorated. She also encouraged

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Govt. Study Committee holds public forum in Hampden

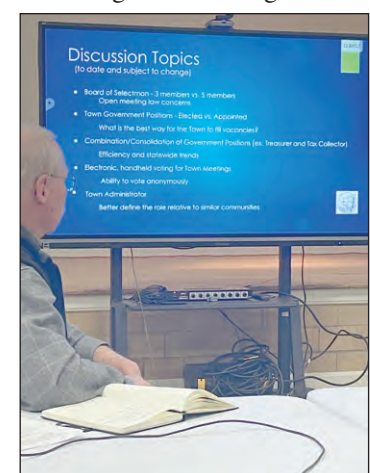
By Dalton Zbierski
Editor
dzbierski@turley.com

HAMPDEN – The Government Study Committee held a public forum in the Town Hall on the evening of Dec. 12.

The 90-minute session tackled a variety of questions, including if the Board of Selectmen should expand to five members, if electronic, handheld voting is preferable for annual and special town meetings, if town government positions should be elected or appointed, if government positions should be combined or consolidated and if the role of town administrator should be better defined.

“Tonight, we’re hoping to listen to what you all have to say. We want to hear your thoughts on how town government is run, how it’s working, what you think is working and what you think is not working,” Chair Donna Hatch said.

The committee also consists of Michal Boudreau, Eric Brewer, Keith Pixley, Luis Severino, Cliff Bombard (Ex Officio) and John Matthews (Ex Officio), and the group has no authority other than to make recommendations at coming town meetings.



Turley photos by Dalton Zbierski
Government Study Committee member Eric Brewer pictured next to the talking points for the Dec. 12 public forum.

The committee first convened on March 6 and meets in the Town Hall’s Melville Room at 6:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month. Residents can email ideas to HampdenGSC@gmail.com.

In preparation for the forum, the committee met with each of the Selectmen, Town Administrator Bob Markel, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Eva Wiseman, Board of Health Coordinator Jane Budynkiewicz and Town Treasurer Dick Patullo.

Please see **FORUM**, page 5

HISTORICAL WILBRAHAM

Markers point out historic sites

Memorial markers to be replaced

By Charles F. Bennett
Times Editor Emeritus

The Town of Wilbraham is old enough now, incorporated in 1763, to see its older historical markers deteriorate with age. Unlike some adages that say things get better with age, Wilbraham’s oldest memorial stone landmarks, including gravestones in Adams Cemetery, are suffering from years of New England weather and acid rain.



Several of those stone memorials relate to sites that have a personal meaning for me and

my family and you shall see why.

The Wilbraham Historical Commission has arranged for the replacement of the memorial marker at the top of Tinkham

Road honoring the site of the First Meeting House. With generous funding from the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) using a CPA allocation, and approval at the 2021 Annual Town Meeting, two years ago the Commission started the ball rolling with a project to make sure the first meeting house site would not be forgotten.



Turley photo by Charles F. Bennett

This deteriorated stone memorial at the top of Tinkham Road marks the site of the first meeting house built in 1748. It will be replaced by the Wilbraham Historic Commission in 2024.

information to the CPC Committee to explain the history behind the Historic Commission’s request: (Full disclosure, I am

vice-chair of the commission.) The first meeting house was

Please see **MARKERS**, page 8

1748

I furnished the following



Turley photos by Kristin Rivers
Chef Mike Harrison works on the chicken as he shares tips during his cooking demonstration at Wilbraham Senior Center.



A close-up of Chef Mike Harrison in action pouring beef broth into the pan during his cooking demonstration at Wilbraham Senior Center.



Chef Mike Harrison shares a cooking tip during his cooking demonstration at Wilbraham Senior Center. Harrison, a Wilbraham resident, is the senior service chef from Mass Appeal and also cooks at Bear Mountain in Chestnut Hill in East Longmeadow.

Chef Mike Harrison leads cooking demonstration

Harrison cooked a classic chicken marsala meal at the Wilbraham Senior Center

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - Seniors enjoyed a delectable cooking demonstration hosted by Chef Mike Harrison on Dec. 18 at the senior center.

Harrison, a Wilbraham resident, made chicken marsala with fettuccine pasta, homemade buttermilk biscuits and cannolis filled with a sweet mascarpone kind of ricotta containing vanilla and chocolate chips.

Harrison cooks at Bear Mountain in Chestnut Hill in East Longmeadow and serves as senior service chef on "Mass Appeal".

During the cooking demo, Harrison

shared his background and provided cooking tips for making chicken marsala, with one highlight being using beef broth instead of chicken broth.

Afterward, attendees sampled the chicken marsala to rave reviews.

Harrison shared he's been doing senior services for nearly 20 years and originally worked at Wilbraham & Monson Academy as their food service director and later their football coach when he first came to Wilbraham.

Cooking is Harrison's passion, and he loves sharing it with seniors in the community and getting the opportunity to meet new people.

"We want to provide good nourishment that's aesthetically appealing and that tastes great while getting away from the stigma of nursing homes of folks just going there and parking," Harrison said. "We don't have to go to a nursing home and park. We can thrive there, and food is the number one reason because it enhances the socialization, the appetite. Through

those things, I hope people live longer and happier."

The biggest thing Harrison stressed is that people love the food they eat.

"You can cook healthy and still have it taste great, so that's what we do," Harrison said.

Harrison added that having cooking demos at senior centers also help provide a meal for attendees.

"This is a way of getting folks out of the house, letting them enjoy a nourishing meal," Harrison said. "The interaction that happened at the table with the other ladies is huge."

When asked what his favorite dish to make at his cooking demos is, Harrison said he loves preparing seafood.

"It's one of those healthier options for you and, you know, right now with meat and pork and steak and beef being so high-priced, seafood is, really, a reasonably priced option," Harrison said. "Especially for someone who is living at home or on a budget."

Harrison appreciated the audience's engagement during the demonstration and that they enjoyed the meal.

"This was a great group. They were very interactive," Harrison said. "They ate well. They asked a lot of questions. I think it was a learning experience for them."

As for what he hopes attendees took away from attending his cooking demo, Harrison said that "chicken marsala does not have to be an intimidating dish."

"You can go home, and you could prepare it. We cooked for five people, two different batches, plus all the staff inside of 20 minutes, so it's easy," Harrison said. "Cooking can be really intimidating sometimes, but it doesn't need to be."

Harrison encourages the community to "just stay busy" as they get older and visit the senior center for their programming.

"Find these organizations that you can volunteer for or that are having these

Please see **COOKING**, page 9

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Wilbraham library encouraging residents to take Strategic Plan Community Survey

The survey can be found on the library's website

By **Kristin Rivers**
Staff Writer
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - The library is seeking feedback on its strategic plan through a community survey.

The survey can be found at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScGEgcT-mjUHEjJ6zFIPsw6xv5KLF_Ueyx8HWBa5fvF08UHBMg/viewform?pli=1, with print copies available at Town Hall, the library and senior center. Additionally, the library can mail out surveys to those who are interested.

The deadline to submit your feedback is by Jan. 12.

For the survey, residents are being asked to provide their thoughts on the library and its services to plan for the future.

Library Director Karen Ball explained the strategic plan takes place every three years and is submitted to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners to help the library be eligible for applying for LSTA grants.

"Our current one is good through FY24 so we'll be getting an extension for that, and then our next one will be FY25 through FY28," Ball said.

Ball said the process includes a Planning Committee with between 10 to 12 members of the community, including members of the Friends of the Wilbraham Public Library, two library staff members, one full-time and one part-time, two library trustees, a teen representative, retirees, parents and people who are new to Wilbraham but have experience with libraries in prior towns.

This portion of the strategic plan is currently in the finalization stages.

Ball expressed gratitude to people taking the survey and for wanting to take part in the planning process.

"It's great to have dif-

ferent areas of the community represented," Ball said. "It's nice to get opinions from people that use the library in different ways."

Additionally, there will be community forums, with the dates in the



Submitted photos Wilbraham Public Library

works.

"We'll have in-person and virtual opportunities for people to discuss the library and provide additional feedback. We're working with a consulting group, New England Lean Consulting. Our contact there is Paul Critchley," Ball said. "He'll be facilitating our meetings with the public."

On the current strategic plan, Ball said priorities include early literacy and more resources and programs for residents living with dementia as a part of the town's dementia-friendly initiative. Other improvements have been paving the new parking lot to add 12 more spots, replacing a parking lot light and landscaping projects.

Reflecting on 2023, Ball is proud of the building and landscaping improvements, offering more weekend programming including Craft & Play events, setting up a puzzle table and

sewing machine, and providing more and enhancing the Take & Make kits.

"With the next strategic plan, we'll also be able to look at other things that the community wants to do in the future, whether or not it's having to do with our building or different collections or services that we want to offer," Ball said.

Ball stressed community feedback is important "to find out what they think we're doing well and what they think we can improve on."

"We're always looking at ways to meet the needs of the community," Ball said. "I think just going through that process, and getting feedback from the community is important to do all the time, but definitely around strategic planning it's a good way to just get us pointed in the right direction."

Ball encourages residents to take the community survey and share their thoughts and ideas, adding the library has a goal of receiving 200 responses.

"We're actually at 147 (responses) as of (Dec. 15), so we're close to our goal," Ball said.

Also, she shared this message on how the community survey helps the strategic plan.

"Planning is essential to how this makes the best use of account resources to be able to meet the community's needs," Ball said.

To learn more, visit wilbrahamlibrary.org or contact Ball at 413-596-6141 ext. 159.

Spartan welcomes their newest future mechanic Callan Jack Hourihan who joins big brother Declan and big cousin Wesley!



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Hampden's Master Plan Committee is taking shape

Committee will update master plan for first time since 1982

By Dalton Zbierski
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HAMPDEN – A steering committee is being established to oversee the modernization of the town's master plan, after residents voted in favor of updating the guiding document during the October town meeting.

Hampden's most recent master plan was crafted in 1982. A majority of voters supported an appropriation of \$57,000 on Oct. 30 to supplement \$75,000 of state grant money to update the master plan.

Planning Board member Patrick Coyne is taking the

lead in updating the master plan, which will set priorities for long-term physical development in Hampden over a period of decades if not generations.

On Dec. 18, Coyne appeared before the Board of Selectmen to share his progress in developing a steering committee. He noted that Planning Board Chair Madison Pixley sent out several emails over the last several months, seeking people from various town committees to participate.

"We penciled in some names thinking we might know who that might be, and so the objective tonight was just to get that process moving forward because our consultant is anxious to have a meeting with the steering committee and kick things off a little bit," Coyne said.

Coyne said the board is working with Massachusetts Land Planning Team Leader Luke Mitchell from Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc., a civil engineering and consulting firm headquartered in Watertown with an office in

Springfield.

"(VHB) would like to schedule a call discussing the timeline, so they'd like to do it in early or mid-January and asked us to advise on a preferred date and time," Coyne said. "They said they are excited to get started (and asked) us to confirm who will be attending this meeting as we get started."

Coyne made a list of potential town committee members who could potentially join the steering committee and listed them out one by one.

"We have from Board of Selectmen Don Davenport, from the Building Department Wendell (Hulbert), Capital Planning was Pam (Rogers), Conservation Judy (McKinley Brewer), Highway Department Mark (Langone), Historical Commission Connie (Witt), Parks & Rec Carrie Joseph, Fire Department Ed Poulin and Planning Department myself."

Selectman John Flynn asked if someone should represent the Council on Aging and offered to reach out to the COA Board. Davenport, chair of the Board of Selectmen, said he could join the steering committee and asked if the consultant planned to get input from the community to which Coyne responded, "Absolutely, they have very comprehensive outreach."

Coyne said the idea of a steering committee extends from VHB's desire to get input as they're tracking along and get feedback on particular issues, to keep the process moving forward as they go through their workplan.

"And really get the input because I think not everybody is going to be on the ground as they send their team out, so I think that's really their goal," Coyne said.

While the committee isn't set, Coyne is confident about the list of candidates he compiled.

"I think this is an important role. We want real input from these people. Some of them have spoken at the meetings previously, so (we're) really looking for them to make pointed comments," he said.

Coyne was asked about adding a member of the public to the steering committee and acknowledged it would be something to consider. In the meantime, he hopes to spread word about the process of updating the master plan.

I would prefer to at least get the communication out. If I don't have everyone set, maybe just get it out to the folks and (let them know) we want to get going. And if we have a call with eight out of 10, we'll go with eight out of 10 just to get the consultant really moving. If that sounds reasonable, that's what we'll do," Coyne said.

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FORUM from page 1

It also interviewed retired Administrative Assistant Pam Courtney, Planning Board Chair Madison Pixley, Police Chief Scott Trombly, Highway Superintendent Mark Langone and two representatives of the Massachusetts Municipal Association's Form of Government Committee.

"In the spring, we'll likely do another meeting to kind of let everyone know the direction that we're going in and get feedback on that," Hatch said. "Then, for our third meeting, we'll likely share with everybody ahead of the town meeting our conclusions that we've come to and what we'd like to put forward."

If any recommendations pass at the Spring Town Meeting, there could be a bylaw change.

Expanding the Board of Selectmen from three to five members

The first topic tackled at the forum was the possibility of expanding the Board of Selectmen from three to five members, which Hatch argued would create more stability, as it wouldn't require a third of the board to be elected and potentially rotated out annually.

"If you look across the commonwealth, there's an equal balance between three board members and larger boards. Larger boards offer larger representation and viewpoints and reduces risk of dominating biases and Open Meeting Law violations," Hatch said.

One resident remarked that the town government appears to run smoothly.

"I'm not sure bigger is better," he said. "I would be concerned about making a more elaborate contraption out of government."

Another resident said that increasing the board's size would lead to scheduling and logistical difficulties.

One audience member said that the term length is a greater issue and proposed limiting the number of terms one can serve to "prevent people from thinking it's a closed shop."

Brewer said the committee evaluated towns similar to Hampden and noted, "Roughly half the towns have three and half have five, so I don't think there's an overwhelming argument for either."

He added that most smaller towns have three-person Select Boards "because that's history, and let's face it, smaller towns tend not to change that quickly, which is a good thing or a bad thing depending on your point of view."

Electronic, handheld voting at Spring and Annual Town Meetings

Even before a critical vote at the Annual Town Meeting in October was recounted and ultimately failed by less than five votes, the committee began researching the pros and cons of switching to electronic, handheld voting at the town's two major meetings.

"For Town Meeting, the show of hands would be replaced by that," Pixley said. "When you sign in, rather than get a voter card that you hold up, you get (a device). You know how many people are in the meeting, and they literally have a screen. When you vote, the votes show on the screen so there's an ano-

nymity to your vote."

Pixley first presented the idea at the Annual Town Meeting.

On Dec. 12, one resident said he used them before for work functions and did not trust them.

"It's not 100% infallible. I don't believe it is. Maybe it's improved technology, but I don't trust it," the resident said.

Pixley referred to the recount in October, calling it "very unscientific with people walking around," to take votes; he added that some voters barely raised their cards and questioned if their votes were even counted.

"In the end, this in theory would have removed any question because it's automatically recorded," Pixley said.

One audience member last Tuesday said it's difficult enough to get the audio to function properly at Thornton W. Burgess School, home of the town meetings, and another resident was reluctant to turn to the technological option because it would be "horrendous" if something went wrong and "there's not much technology to holding up a piece of paper."

Pixley questioned why so many votes at the town meetings are unanimous and questioned if that is how people really feel. While one resident replied that residents are smart enough to know when a vote needs to pass, Pixley still questioned if anonymity could be beneficial.

"It can be uncomfortable to vote at a town meeting when you have the police chief in front of you asking for something and you're raising your hand saying 'no' to his face, or any department for that matter," Pixley said. "I think young people especially, who are more familiar with technology, don't have the same level of concern. I think that people would be more encouraged to come out if they weren't literally waving their vote in the air."

Should town government positions be elected or appointed?

The committee is researching how to best fill vacancies and asked the audience on Dec. 12 if town government positions should be elected or appointed. While positions like police chief are appointed, many Town Hall employees are elected.

"One of the things that we've discussed is that there are a lot of people who have been running this town faithfully and responsibly for a number of years and will be retiring out," Hatch said. "What happens next? Do we continue down the elected path or do we go towards appointed?"

Hatch noted that more communities are turning towards appointed positions to attract more qualified candidates, who can come from out of town unlike elected ones. For instance, between 2014 in Massachusetts communities, the appointment of treasurer and collector has risen from 248 to 308, a 24% increase.

Hatch clarified that the discussion has nothing to do "with the great people we have in positions," but refers to the future. If the item passed at town meeting, current officials would be grandfathered in, and the switch would be made after they retire or step down.

Pixley pointed out that there are no criteria for elected positions.

"The treasurer doesn't necessarily

have to have a financial background," he said. "It does give the town a little more control to make sure the people in those positions are more qualified to have them. When we looked at it, to me at least, it was shocking the number of communities that are doing that; it's the majority have changed from elected to appointed."

Brewer acknowledged that Hampden's town employees are well-trained because most have been in their positions for a considerable time period. He said that replacing them through elections will be extremely challenging.

"One of the obvious things is the complexity of government and the complexity of financial/town management. It's really increased and will continue to increase," Brewer said.

Doug Boyd, chair of the Advisory Committee, attended the forum and agreed that the town has been very fortunate with key positions because the individuals elected are competent and kept up with changes. However, he is nervous about the eventual turnover.

Markel said that municipal departments have grown far more complex over the years, becoming more technical and requiring more training. He noted that the town has good people in place, but they will retire.

Markel said it will become increasingly difficult to land new, adequately trained employees by way of election.

"We have a very good town treasurer, who will retire at some point," Markel said. "He's very competent, smart and does a good job, but what are the chances of replacing that individual in an election when he retires? In an election where the field of candidates is limited to town residents. You couldn't bring somebody in from Wilbraham unless they agreed to move into town."

Markel also pointed out that if an employee is on the ballot, it makes it complicated to negotiate contracts.

"In other words, you're working with people who are going to vote later on, and in general, that's a difficult thing to pull off, and to do it always in the best interest of the town," he said.

Should government positions be combined or consolidated?

Currently, Eva Wiseman, an elected official, serves as both Hampden's town clerk and tax collector. The committee is exploring the idea that more positions should be combined or consolidated.

Brewer said that Wiseman's positions aren't consolidated, as she holds two part-time jobs and works full-time. The committee is looking at the possibility of making the treasurer a full-time position that would assume the responsibility of tax collector.

Hatch inquired if it would be smart to make the position an appointed one.



Turley photos by Dalton Zbierski

The Government Study Committee held a public forum in the Town Hall auditorium on Dec. 12.

"It's just one of the trends across the commonwealth," Hatch said. "Would it be beneficial down the road post (Wiseman's) retirement that the position becomes appointed so that you can search for the best skill-set, best fit and best capabilities for the town. One of the things we need to consider going forward is we take steps to maintain a continuity of government as people retire out... It might be worthwhile bringing in a skill set and knowledge."

Roles and functions of the Town Administrator

Hatch said the committee is looking into better defining the role of town administrator relative to similar communities. She said the role's responsibilities typically include supervising daily operations, budgetary and financial oversight and personnel administration.

"In the face of growing complexities in government, most towns have hired a chief administrative officer," she said. "Currently, 254 out of 292 towns, or 87%, have a professional position with job titles like town administrator, town manager, chief administrative officer, executive director and so on."

In the committee's conversations with the MMA representatives, they discussed the difference between daytime and nighttime government. Nighttime government includes bodies such as the Board of Selectmen, and daytime government pertains to those who work full-time in Town Hall.

"Nighttime government should not be running daytime government. Nighttime government sets policy that daytime government executes," she said.

Markel, who will step down early next year, has been town administrator in Hampden since September 2019. One audience member praised his performance and said he doesn't see a need to change a single thing Markel has done.

"If he hasn't written out a job description for the next person, then shame on the Selectmen for letting him get out of here without that in their

hands. They need to replace Bob with another Bob, who used to be the mayor, knows Joe, gets us the grants and all the other good stuff like this Bob has done," the resident said.

Markel weighed in, noting that involvement with the budget process is in the current job description, although he has been minimally involved because other town officials and bodies such as the Advisory Board have traditionally handled that process.

"I can talk about tweaking the system, but it works well. Whatever criticisms we can make, it seems to work well here, frankly, and I've been in other situations where I thought the town charter was superb and everything worked poorly," Markel said.

Markel said the issue for the town overall is how much central management it wants. He said the town administrator represents central management, and that the government in town works very well but is highly decentralized with elected boards, committees and two department heads.

"The only frustration I can tell you I have is that there are some central changes we would like to make that have become very difficult, if not impossible, because of the decentralized nature," Markel said.

On a positive note, Markel said the relations in Hampden are civil, a facet that is being promoted by search firm Community Paradigm Associates to land his replacement.

"That is a real asset that I hope the town never loses. It makes working here attractive and it will be something that helps you attract and retain an administrator," Markel said.

Markel said he would be cautious about making quick changes so as not to disrupt what the town currently has.

"I'm not harshly critical. I will leave here with very good thoughts about this community, largely because everyone seemed to get along, everyone seemed to want to do their job, they do their jobs, and I don't see any slackers in our departments."

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VIEWPOINTS

in the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



This weekend was supposed to be the weekend when all four of us partook in a cookie-making marathon.

Usually, we start baking right after Thanksgiving, but this year the kids were involved in a play, then a concert, and alas, there was no time. We started out strong yesterday and then I began to feel a little funny.

By midafternoon I was definitely under the weather and that was it for my cookie-making. We got two batches in before I left the kitchen.

One is an almond covered thumb print, and the second is a coriander cookie – one of my all-time favorites. It must have been a favorite to a few other folks along the line because the recipe dates back to the early 19th century!

I tried them for the first time at Old Sturbridge Village's Christmas by Candlelight some years back and making them has been a tradition in our house ever since. Why don't we take this opportunity to learn about a very versatile plant.

Most gardeners already know that Coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*) is one of the few herbs that goes by two different names depending on the part of the plant used.

Its foliage, known as Cilantro, is used fresh in a number of culinary delights. When the plant goes to seed, known as Coriander, it

Cookies made with a familiar herb

can be used in that stage as well, eaten whole, crushed or powdered.

I liken cilantro to being the "marigold" of the herb world. Either you love the smell/taste of it or you hate it.

I, for one, immensely dislike it and if given the chance to pick it out of my salsa I will certainly do it! Even in a restaurant.

I found it interesting to learn that some people possess a genetically predisposed aversion to it, according to studies by Charles J. Wysocki of the Monell Chemical Senses Center in Philadelphia. To me it has a bitter taste that I have a hard time describing beyond that. Dirty? Soil-like?

Most people that do dislike it have a similar lack of descriptive ability; they just can't put their finger on it, but they don't like the taste... or the smell of it. It's funny that when my oldest daughter received her Ancestry DNA results, she was shown not to possess the genetic aversion. Well, she didn't get that from me.

Cilantro is often used in salsa and other Mexican, Asian and Italian dishes including curries, sauces, salads and soups. If you prefer to grow the plant more for its greens and less for its seeds, manage it as you would spinach.

Sow seeds in the ground in the cool of the season and in succession every two weeks. It dislikes being transplanted but doesn't mind pot culture.

Harvest greens rather aggressively – about one-third of the plant at a time. Just like spinach, there are slow-to-bolt varieties to choose from such as aptly named "Slow Bolt" and "Longstanding". Cilantro's flowers are edible, and they attract lots of beneficial insects such as lady beetles, parasitic wasps and syrphid

flies.

Coriander seeds, on the other hand, have a pleasant (at least to me) fragrance once dried. The scent is easier to pin-point too; nutty and spicy (ever so slightly) come to mind.

Coriander seed is also well known in various ethnic cuisines and is a favorite in spice blends, curry being the most popular. It is also used in the making of a number of distilled spirits, herbal liqueurs and Christmas cookies as I have come to find out and favor!

The Herb Society noted that during World War II coriander seeds were coated in white or pink sugar and thrown from carnival wagons, earning the name "confections" or "confetti." When the seeds were replaced by balls of colored paper the name confetti stuck.

Take this one to your next game of Cruise Ship Trivia!

It is easy to harvest the seeds. Simply let the heads dry to brown right on the plant. Clip them and place inside a paper bag; as they dry further, they will open, and the seeds will pop out.

Even if you are only interested in harvesting the seeds, multiple plantings (or a big garden patch) are necessary to get a decent-sized harvest. Let a few drop their seeds and you will be blessed with a few self-sown plants next spring.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 31 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.



I'm 65 and working; can I collect ex-spouse benefits?

Dear Rusty

I turned 65 earlier this year and I still work full time.

I was divorced four years ago after 38 years of marriage, but my ex-husband has been collecting Social Security for at least 10 years now. Can I start collecting Social Security and still work full time? And can I collect my ex-husband's amount if it is more than mine and what is the best way to achieve this? When I went to my local SSA office, they said they had no way of knowing that.

Signed Working Divorcee

Dear Working Divorcee

Although you are eligible to claim Social Security at age 65, because you are working full time you may wish to wait a bit longer to do so. That's because Social Security has an "earnings test" which applies to anyone who collects benefits before Full Retirement Age and you have not yet reached yours.

The earnings test imposes a limit on how much you can earn before SS takes away some of your benefits. If you exceed the annual earnings limit (\$22,320 for 2024), Social Security will want back \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the limit and you will need to repay that, usually by having future benefits withheld. If you significantly exceed the limit, you may even be temporarily ineligible to receive SS benefits until you either earn less or reach your full retirement age (FRA) of 66 years and 8 months.

So, if your earnings from working will significantly exceed the annual earnings limit, which changes yearly, it's likely that your wisest move would be to wait longer to claim your Social Security. As a bonus for doing so, your monthly payment will have grown and will be higher when you claim later. The earnings test no longer applies after you reach FRA.

Regarding benefits from your ex-husband, you cannot collect his instead of yours. What you may be able to do, when you claim your own

benefit, is to get an additional amount, which brings your monthly payment up to 50% of his. In order for that to happen, you would need to satisfy the following criteria:

You are not currently married.

The personal benefit you are entitled to at your FRA must be less than 50% of your ex-husband's FRA entitlement.

If the above are true, when you claim your own SS retirement benefit you will also get a "spousal boost" to bring your payment up to what you're entitled to as an ex-spouse. The amount of the spousal boost, if you claim Social Security at your FRA, will be the difference between half of his FRA entitlement and your FRA entitlement. If you claim your benefit before your FRA, not only will your own benefit be reduced for claiming early, but the amount of your spousal boost will also be reduced. Benefits claimed before FRA are always reduced.

Whenever you decide to claim Social Security, you will be automatically deemed to be filing for benefits from your ex-husband as well (you shouldn't need to apply separately). You've already satisfied the basic criteria of at least 10 years married to get benefits from an ex-spouse and, if you satisfy the above criteria as well, you will be entitled to a spousal boost when you claim.

Air traffic controller shortage & holiday travel...



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Correction Policy

The TIMES will gladly correct factual errors that appear in this paper and can be substantiated. Corrections or clarifications will always appear on the editorial pages. To request a correction, send information in an e-mail or mailed communication to the editor at the above address listed above.

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Baby's First Christmas
2023



Benjamin Rau

January 16, 2023

Parents: Nick & Wendy Rau, Wilbraham
Grandparents: Dave & Cindy Rau, Wilbraham
Bill & Kim Bechert, Unionville, CT



Raelynn Brown

July 20, 2023

Parents: Ryan & Ashley Brown, Hampden
Grandparents: Art & Lynn Anderson, Wilbraham
Rick & Joanne Brown, Monson



Cole Joseph Willett

February 28, 2023

Parents: Stephan Willett & Sky Beaudry
Grandparents: Normand & Lisa Willett, Hampden



Joseph Theo LaDuke

November 1, 2023

Parents: Katie & Vinnie LaDuke, Hampden
Sister: Philomena LaDuke
Grandparents: Beth & Joseph Kalinko, Springfield
The late Philip LaDuke, Springfield & Maryann LaDuke, Harwich



Hannah Jean Labrie

September 24, 2023

Parents: Kenneth & Stephanie Labrie, Chicopee
Grandparents: Taryn Dunaj, Wilbraham
Gary & Donna Labrie, Chicopee



Hayley Kate Stebbins

August 19, 2023

Parents: Matthew & Linda Stebbins, Warren
Grandparents: Randall & Roxanne Stebbins, Wilbraham



Lyla Ann Vallerie

May 24, 2023

Parents: Robert & Valerie Vallerie, Wilbraham
Grandparents: Robert & Saima Vallerie, Wilbraham
Joyce & Norman Jarrett, Easthampton

Hot Off the Press:

Our Best Wishes

Delivering our thanks and warmest wishes to your door this Christmas!

Thanks for your trust in us, and for making this community a wonderful place to be at the holidays and all year.

The Wilbraham-Hampden
TIMES

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MARKERS from page 1

built on Wigwam Hill during 1748 to serve a sparse collection of settlers who had been traveling each Sunday nine miles to Court Square, Springfield in all types of weather to worship. The meetinghouse was located 30 rods south of the intersection of Tinkham and Bolles Road. (A little less than a half a football field.) A rod is 16.5 feet.

It is estimated the town's first religious structure was located close to the rear of the current blue Victorian house that was the home of my brother Donald Bennett that fronted the mountain location of the Bennett Turkey Farm. The valley farm was at 599 Main Street.

Turkeys were raised nearby on a knoll adjacent to what once was Rice's apple orchards. Located half-way up Wilbraham Mountain, I use to tell folks that the turkeys had one of the best views in town.

The meetinghouse was located to the rear of the house where a barn for the turkeys was later located. The first minister at the meetinghouse was Rev. Noah Merrick who had built his home in what is now the northwest corner of the junction of Bolles and Tinkham Road.

Weshaugan

I've written about her before, and town histories relate, that the last Native American to live in town was Weshaugan, a squaw who lived alone in a wigwam by a little brook at the bottom of Wigwam Hill. Historian Chauncy Peck reported that Weshaugan's home was 50 to 80 rods (or about 2 1/2 football fields length) from the Meeting House. She was sometimes invited to have dinner with Rev. Merrick and his family at his home near the meetinghouse.

It was decided to move the meetinghouse down the mountain to the Center Village which was easier for worshippers to access in winter. The last parish meeting in the Wigwam Hill

**56 Years Ago
Lions Club Preparing
Christmas Tree Sale**

Here is a news clipping reported by my mom, Ethel M. Bennett, who was the Wilbraham correspondent for the Springfield daily newspaper The Morning Union from the 1940s through 1970s. From a December 1967 edition: *"The Wilbraham Lions Club is setting up 500 Christmas trees that they will be selling starting Saturday and continuing until Dec. 21 at the vacant lot on Main Street, formerly the site of the old Wilbraham United Church."*

Helping out was Gordon Long, president, James Kelly and Selectman William Leonard, co-chairmen"

building was on April 18, 1794 and the structure was moved to a plot of land on Main Street where Gazebo Park is now.

A historical marker was erected on the south side of the top of Tinkham Road to commemorate the location of the first meetinghouse. The date the marker was erected is lost to history but the Historical Commission continues to research the details. Over the years the marker has deteriorated due to weather, acid rain, road sand and salt. The Commission felt that it would be in the best interest of the town to replace the stone marker and if something wasn't done soon, it too would be lost to history. The Commission thought that it was important to replace the marker because it is a vital part of our history and connects us to the past.

We thought we were on track for a prompt replacement. However the COVID Pandemic hit us unexpectedly and affected the supply chain of Vermont granite and delayed delivery of

the memorial marker. The delay continued. There was a large-scale flood in Vermont. Then the quarry workers paused their work this fall to go deer hunting. So, we are still waiting for delivery this winter.

Main Street Site

You might think that we were gluttons for punishment, but the Historic Commission has decided to apply for another replacement marker at a similar site, although the first one hasn't even been delivered yet. We plan to apply for CPA funding for another stone marker that is in bad shape at the corner of the east side of Federal Lane and Main Street. Take a look the next time you drive by. It is approximately an eighth of a mile before you get to the Minnechaug driveway if you're coming from the Center.

The Main Street marker simply reads: "First Church Wilbraham Organized here, June 24, 1741." It commemorates the site of where the first church was organized and its minister, Rev. Noah Merrick was ordained. In the first history of Wilbraham published in June of 1863, its author, Rufus P. Stebbins D.D., using the flowery embellishment of the times, described the day at the site where the organizers met to organize the church and ordain Rev. Merrick, a 1731 graduate of Yale.

"Accordingly, a large oak-tree was selected as the place of ordination...a rude pulpit of rough boards was constructed, and a few seats of boards and logs arranged around it to accommodate the people. The morning of the great day to this people came at last, but it came not clear and balmy and fragrant as June mornings usually are. It was lowering, and the sky was unpropitious," wrote Stebbins. In other words, it looked like a storm was threatening.

In the Charles Merrick "History of Wilbraham" chapter on "Churches", the writer Mrs. Robert I. Brown continues the



Times file photo

Aerial view of Wigwam Hill shows the turkey house at the peak of a knoll by the top of Tinkham road. Behind the blue house is the site of the first meeting house built in 1748.

story, "But, the morning was rainy and the ordaining council moved into the barn of Nathaniel Warriner on the present Bennett Turkey Farm at 599 Main Street."

That scenario is important to me personally as 217 years later I was put to work sorting eggs in that same barn, behind the historic farmhouse that was owned by my grandfather Frank E. Bennett and my father Francis J. Bennett.

That same farmhouse, 14 years later, was occupied by soldiers of Shay's Rebellion, fueled by liquor, on their way to attack the Springfield Armory. My grandfather had their bayonet holes in the bedroom ceilings to prove it. (They were plastered over in a 1950's remodeling.)

Along with Rev. Merrick the eight male founders of the church were David Merrick, Nathaniel Warriner (who owned that barn), Isaac Brewer, Joseph Wright, David Warriner, David Chapin and Nathaniel Hitchcock, the first settler in Wilbraham at 603 Main St., next to Nathaniel Warriner's farm, that eventually became the turkey farm.

The Rev. Noah Merrick spent the rest of his lifetime in Wilbraham and was the most influential man in the parish in those colonial days. There are some of his artifacts on display at the Old Meeting House Museum operated for the town by the Atheneum Society.

Editor's note: We will keep our readers informed on the Historic Commission's progress of installing the replacement markers on Tinkham Road and on Main Street and Federal Lane.

Sources: "History of Wilbraham Bicentennial Edition 1763-1963" edited by Charles Merrick; Chauncey Peck who wrote "The History of Wilbraham, 1731, 1763-1913. Wikipedia. "Historical Address, Centennial Celebration, Town of Wilbraham" by Rufus P. Stebbins, D.D., 1864.

Editor Emeritus Charlie Bennett is a member of the Historic Commission and a trustee of the Wilbraham Atheneum Society. Readers can contact him with comments or ideas for the column at cbennett4765@charter.net.

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**Select Board announces bid award
for Maynard Road repairs**

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - The Select Board announced a bid award on Dec. 18 for Maynard Road repairs.

Chairman Theresa Goodrich explained how the area at Maynard Road "sustained a lot of damage in the last big rainstorm we had a week and a half ago."

"It doesn't really appear too bad from the road but if you - and I don't want anyone to go down and do this - but if you were to see what's going on down below, you would be aware of significant, major, major destruction from that rain," Goodrich said.

Goodrich praised the Department of Public Works for securing the area and for their preliminary work to help a construction company have access roads to work on repairs.

"If they didn't do what they did, we would certainly be paying for a construction company to get that access road in," Goodrich said. "So, I just have to say thanks to our DPW for all the work they did getting it to the point where that now to have it be accessible to a construction company."

The Maynard Road Drainage and Embankment Emergency Repair 2023 will be awarded to Gagliarducci Construction Inc. in Springfield for \$87,000.

Michael Squindo asked for clarification from Town Administrator Nick Breault regarding the bid numbers, as there were some as low as \$87,000 to as high as \$487,000.

"Because I don't know how to read any of these construction documents, I wanted to make sure that Tonya (Capparelo)'s comfortable with that number. Is there any way to walk us through the difference between the low bids and the higher bids?" Squindo said.

Breault clarified bids like this, particularly in construction, have these spreads.

"(It) usually indicates at least one of two things. That the contractor is already so busy that they will have to divert resources on projects that they're doing to get over there which may have some cost to them," Breault said. "Or it may just be a signal that unless it's really just so worth it, you know, with that number, that they'll take it and put other things aside. Or they're having difficulty with supplies that they know that they'll have difficulty with supplies."

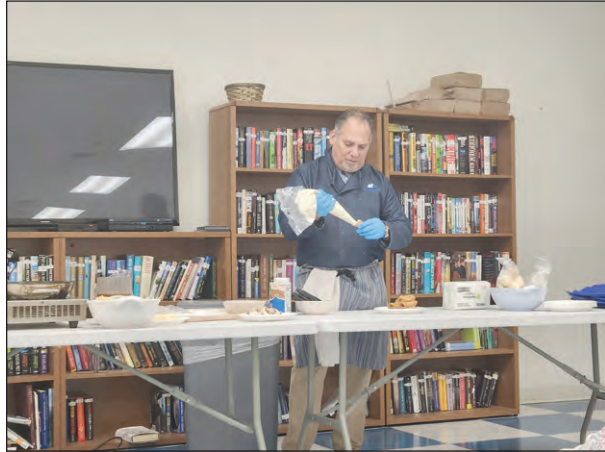
Breault said he doesn't feel "that's necessarily the case here."

"I think the bids were submitted in good faith, but yeah, different firms would do that. It's not unusual to see something like that," Breault said.

The Maynard Road repair bid award to Gagliarducci Construction Inc. was approved 2-0.



A close-up shot of the chicken marsala meal with fettuccine, homemade butter biscuit, garnish and mushrooms cooked by Chef Mike Harrison during his cooking demonstration at Wilbraham Senior Center on Dec. 18.



Chef Mike Harrison fills a cannoli during his cooking demonstration at Wilbraham Senior Center.



Chef Mike Harrison cuts the garnish as he finishes up his cooking demonstration at Wilbraham Senior Center.



A close-up shot of the cannoli desserts Chef Mike Harrison made for attendees at his cooking demonstration at Wilbraham Senior Center.

COOKING from page 2

events and just be there," Harrison said. Harrison's message to attendees was this. "I feel blessed that you ventured out in this awful weather that we had to come and hang out with me, and I just appreciate them," Harrison said. Residents can catch Harrison on "Mass Appeal" again on Dec. 29 for a cooking demo for beef wellington and in-person on Jan. 18 at an open house event at Bear Mountain in Chestnut Hill, with the meal in the works.

Sourdough Workshop to be held at the Wilbraham library

WILBRAHAM – Baker and food blogger Sourdough Brandon will present his Sourdough Starter Workshop at the Wilbraham Public Library on Monday, Jan. 22 from 6 – 7 p.m. Attendees will learn how to build, maintain, and store a sourdough starter and will even receive a free sample to get baking. Online registration is required, and space is limited. To register, please contact the library at 413-596-6141 or visit the Event Calendar at www.wilbrahamlibrary.org. This free program is sponsored by the Wilbraham Friends of the Library.

Wilbraham Troop 359 – Bottle & Can Drive Saturday, Jan. 6

WILBRAHAM – Wilbraham Troop 359 will have their Bottle & Can Drive on Sat, Jan. 6, 2024, from 8 a.m. to Noon. It will be held in St. Cecilia's Church parking lot. All donations to Troop 359 provide support toward camping equipment and supplies, program materials, registration and activity fees throughout the year. People come to the troop's bottle & can drives year after year. The generous community support and donations are greatly appreciated.

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<p style="text-align: center; color: gold;">HOLIDAY Favorites</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">Sugardale Fresh Bone In Shank Portion HAM \$1.89 LB.</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">Best Yet Frozen 16-20 Ct 1 Lb. Bag RAW SHRIMP \$6.79 EA.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Fresh Kayem Whole Boneless PIT HAM \$3.79 LB.</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Best Yet Frozen 31-40 Ct 1 Lb. Bag COOKED SHRIMP \$6.39 EA.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Fresh SPIRAL HAM \$2.99 LB.</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Best Yet Frozen 31/40 Ct 1 Lb. Bag RAW SHRIMP \$6.99 EA.</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center; color: green;">GROCERY & DAIRY Specials</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">4 Lbs. Lifegoods Granulated SUGAR or 5 Lbs. Gold Medal FLOUR 2/\$7</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">Land O Lakes 16 Oz. BUTTER \$4.49 EA.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Polar 1 L SELTZERS 88¢ EA.</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Philadelphia 8 Oz. CREAM CHEESE 2/\$5</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Galbani 32 Oz. RICOTTA CHEESE \$6.49 EA.</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Friendly's 48 Oz. ICE CREAM \$3.88 EA.</td> </tr> </table>	Sugardale Fresh Bone In Shank Portion HAM \$1.89 LB.	Best Yet Frozen 16-20 Ct 1 Lb. Bag RAW SHRIMP \$6.79 EA.	Fresh Kayem Whole Boneless PIT HAM \$3.79 LB.	Best Yet Frozen 31-40 Ct 1 Lb. Bag COOKED SHRIMP \$6.39 EA.	Fresh SPIRAL HAM \$2.99 LB.	Best Yet Frozen 31/40 Ct 1 Lb. Bag RAW SHRIMP \$6.99 EA.	4 Lbs. Lifegoods Granulated SUGAR or 5 Lbs. Gold Medal FLOUR 2/\$7	Land O Lakes 16 Oz. BUTTER \$4.49 EA.	Polar 1 L SELTZERS 88¢ EA.	Philadelphia 8 Oz. CREAM CHEESE 2/\$5	Galbani 32 Oz. RICOTTA CHEESE \$6.49 EA.	Friendly's 48 Oz. ICE CREAM \$3.88 EA.	<p style="text-align: center; color: green;">Fresh PRODUCE</p> <p>BERRY SALE! Driscoll Blueberries pint 2/\$7 Raspberries 6 oz or Blackberries 6 oz</p> <p>Dole PINEAPPLES \$2.99 EA.</p> <p>Cara Cara NAVEL ORANGES 3/\$4.00 EA.</p> <p>BROCCOLI CROWNS \$1.79 LB.</p> <p>ROMAINE HEARTS \$2.99 EA.</p> <p>EUROPEAN CUCUMBERS or MINI CARROTS \$3.00 2 lbs. for</p>
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Fuel assistance is available via Hampden, Wilbraham senior centers

By Dalton Zbierski
Editor
dzbierski@turley.com

Each winter, fuel assistance helps eligible households challenged by the high cost of home heating by offering to pay a portion of their winter heating bills.

At both the Hampden Senior Center and Wilbraham Senior Center, full-time employees are available to help eligible residents of all ages through the application process.

If you are struggling to pay for heat as the cold season arrives, the Valley Opportunity Council's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program is there to help, and senior center employees can help you apply.

The money allotment goes directly to the fuel provider and not to the individual. The income guidelines for fuel assistance for Hampden and Wilbraham residents are as follows.

For a one-person household, the income limit is \$45,392. For a two-person household, the income limit is \$59,359.

For three-person households, the income limit is \$73,326, for a four-person household, the income limit is \$87,294 and for a five-person household, the income limit is \$101,261.

Hampden Senior Center

Wendy Cowles, outreach coordinator for the Hampden Senior Center, noted that income refers to wages, or for retired individuals,

Social Security, pension, annuities, IRAs, stocks, bonds and dividends.

Cowles stressed that no one knows who is on fuel assistance, as the information is entirely confidential. She said it's not a handout but rather a helping hand and emphasizes that there is a significant difference.

"If you need a helping hand, you should look into it," Cowles said. "Goodness, things are very expensive right now. If there's something that can help you, absolutely look into it and take advantage of that. We've all needed a helping hand at some point in our lives, and you take that helping hand when you can."

Cowles has been at the senior center for 14 years and said more people are applying for fuel assistance than she can remember. She said when you apply for fuel assistance, you also qualify for a discount on your electric bill.

"You may get a better rate on your oil price if you use oil. For people to be able to take advantage of that, it can make a huge difference not to have a heating bill through the winter," Cowles said.

Applying for fuel assistance in Hampden, or Wilbraham, can save someone a trip to Springfield or Holyoke, home of the VOC. While help can be found at the senior center, Cowles stressed that you don't have to be a senior to receive assistance.

"I have families I work with that I help apply for fuel assistance," she said. "As long as you meet the income limits, that's the

factor. That is how you figure out whether you qualify or not. If you look at that number and you qualify, then you go through the whole process."

If you live in Hampden, there is an emergency fuel fund available to you. If you are out of oil, Cowles said the town can help get oil delivered to you.

"If you need some help with your gas bill or your electric bill or need some pellets, I strongly encourage people to reach out because we can help with that. We don't want anybody cold during the winter months," she said.

Cowles said that when people come into the center, the staff will do whatever it can to help them. She reiterated that everyone deserves assistance at some point in their lives.

"It comes in different ways. It could be lots of different things, but it's just a helping hand. That's what we're here for, and we're happy to do it. Don't hesitate. Just come on in, and we'll help you get through it," she said.

The Hampden Senior Center is located on Allen Street, and Cowles can be reached at 413-566-5588.

Wilbraham Senior Center

Barbara Harrington, social services coordinator at the Wilbraham Senior Center, encourages residents to apply for fuel assistance if they need it. She noted that if someone is homebound, she can go to their home to assist in the process.

Harrington urges those in need to begin the application process immediately.

"They need to get their applications in as soon as possible because (VOC) took on Springfield permanently now, so they have a lot of (demand). It's over 3,000 households together if not more," she said.

Harrington said that most local senior centers will assist you in filling out the applications and, for individuals in Wilbraham, she'll mail them out.

"Every senior center does it differently, but I try to make it the best and least stressful way to fill out the application," Harrington said. "I'll sit down with them and make it as easy as possible for anybody that comes in. It's a great resource."

Like Cowles, Harrington stressed that the application process is confidential; no one knows what you are visiting her office for.

The first time filling out the application is the most time-consuming because of the information required, but for individuals who have applied in the past, Harrington keeps records, so if there are any questions in the recertification process, she can find the answers.

Harrington also mentioned that once an individual is on fuel assistance, they are automatically given a discount on their electric bill.

She says she often hears people say that there are others who are more deserving of the resource, but that isn't the case.

"Well, it's not a permanent situation. If you're having difficulty this year, you can just come in and file for one year. If economically things are getting better or the person's financial situation is better, they don't have to refile, but if nobody uses these resources, the funding won't be there as much for the people," Harrington said.

Harrington has been in her position since 2011. Like Cowles, she is seeing more applicants than ever before. She noted it is hard for many people to come and ask for assistance because they are right on the borderline of being eligible.

"I told them there's nothing to be ashamed of. The resources are there and just use them. I've gotten calls afterwards just thanking me, saying it helped them a great deal," she said.

Harrington said it is important to know that the resources are available, that she is available, and that residents can call with any questions. No question is silly to ask, she said.

She echoed Cowles, saying that many people who need assistance aren't seniors, but the senior center is still there to help.

"Today may be a difficult day, but the resources are here. Hopefully, next year things will be better, and you won't have to use them. We'll do anything to make it as easy and convenient as possible," Harrington said.

The Wilbraham Senior Center is in Post Office Park, and Harrington can be reached at 413-596-8379.

Select Board moves forward on draft food truck policy

Also, public hearing for Burt Lane pole and wire locations

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - The Select Board moved forward on a draft food truck policy for the town during its Dec. 18 meeting.

Sue Bunnell was absent this week.

During the Dec. 11 meeting, Town Administrator Nick Breault explained how he made significant changes to the policy but be-

lieves "they're all well still within line with what had been previously approved or at least reviewed" by the police, fire, building and health departments.

Some of the changes include issue dates of April 1 to March 31 and two types of food truck licenses, with fees for each.

An annual food truck license

for designated locations or events, such as the Wilbraham Farmers' Market or Fern Valley Farms where vendors frequently go to. A temporary food license, meanwhile, would be for one-off events including the Hill Climb, events going on school district property or private events like block parties.

Additionally, for annual places, Breault proposed a map.

"It can be something basic that notes where a food truck can be on a given location so that, you know, once fire and police take a look at it, they'll have it on file as well and if the food truck was in a spot that was not agreed to, they'll have something to say," Breault said.

This week, after Breault confirmed no further correspondence, Chairman Theresa Goodrich thanked him for his work in getting the policy together.

"I know you spent a lot of time, did a lot of research and I appreciate your effort," Goodrich said. "I think this will, ultimately, help all the vendors that bring a food truck into town. I think this is going to make it a very welcoming town to work with and to do business in and I know that all the venues in town will be happy to have this as well."

Breault expressed his thanks to everyone who worked on the policy and appreciation to

the vendors for their patience, explaining how the item has been "a long, long process."

He shared what comes next.

"So, we're looking, probably, to implement, just as it's outlined, with a Feb. 1 maybe with the applications and coming to the Select Board at some point for a February meeting or whatever it is to make approvals on that and also to reach out to the sites and to some of the places," Breault said.

Squindo and Goodrich agreed to the request.

The motion to approve the food truck policy as presented passed 2-0.

Another highlight this week was a public hearing with a petition from National Grid for pole and wire locations for Burt Lane #30787303.

The representative provided a background on the item.

"The necessity of the pole is there's a new building going in at 468 Main St., and this pole will serve as a service riser to the building. There's also kind of low wires between pole one and two, so that's going to correct that issue," she said.

After a resident asked a question and received clarification from the representative, the motion to approve the petition from National Grid for pole and wire locations for Burt Lane #30787303, passed 2-0.

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USDA INSP. IQF FROZEN COOKED SHRIMP JUMBO 16/20 CT, 2 LB BAG **\$17⁹⁹** ea

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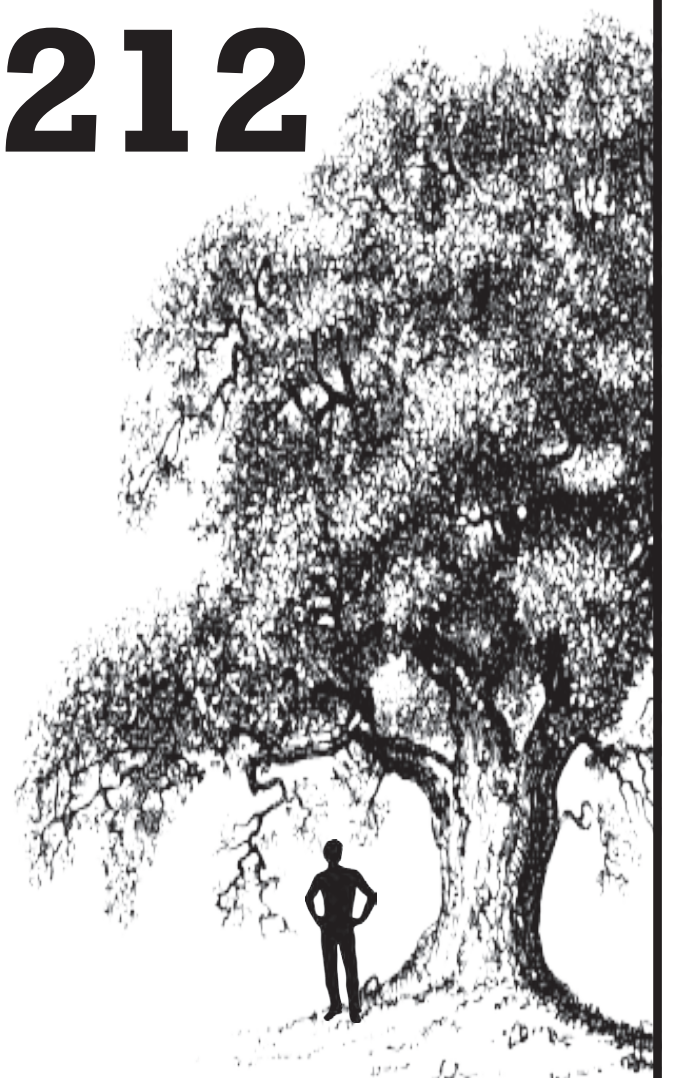
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A COMMUNITY GALLERY



On Saturday, Dec. 2, Scouts from Wilbraham Troop 359 gathered to set-up the Wilbraham town manger in Crane Park. Photo courtesy of Lorna Lawrence.



WMS Robotics Club attended the 2023 FIRST LEGO League Qualifier at Worcester Polytechnic Institute on Dec 10. From the left, back row: Hussein Saleh, Mario Garcia Elijah Mathias and Geoffrey Kyei Ohemeng; middle row: Zach Senecal, Emmett Shattuck, Jason Cao, Quintis Saviengvong and Ellen DiNino; front row: Willis Lam and Liam Shattuck. Photo courtesy of Robotics Coach Samuel Lam



On Dec. 12, Polish National Credit Union presented the Wilbraham Senior Center with a \$15,000 check towards the new building. PNCU will have a plaque in the Veterans Office. From the left – Zaneta Graskakis, PNCU Wilbraham branch manager, Matt Villamaino, president at Friends of Wilbraham Seniors, Inc., Paula Dubord, director of elder affairs of Wilbraham Senior Center and David Fernandes, PNCU VP of Retail. Photo courtesy of Zaneta Graskakis.

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

WILBRAHAM

Multi-generations of gift shoppers...

Shelly Russell (right) of Wilbraham took her multi-generational family to the Old Meeting House Museum Gift Shop to look for historical Christmas gifts at the museum's Dec. 10 Open House. From left, Lindsey, Owen and Emily Chamberlain and Russell. Museum Vice President Karen Geaghan mans the counter. Photo courtesy of Charles F. Bennett.



The Strings and Friends fourth through eighth grade students performed at 7 p.m. The Festival of Trees is a fund raiser to benefit the Girls and Boys Clubs to benefit the children who attend these clubs in Springfield. Strings and Friends. Photo taken by Marcy Griguoli and shared with her permission.

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Heidi Pafumi

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WILBRAHAM HAMPDEN

At the Saint Cecilia Women's Club December meeting, members donated 65 sweatshirts for adults and children to be given to the homeless. Also, the club purchased 30 poinsettias, which members will bring to the home bound. Members from left are Ligia Guerin, club president Jackie Pahl, Pat McGranaghan, Ginny McGovern, Chris Veale, Mary-Lou Sanderson and Cheryl Wesolowski, club recording secretary.

Photo courtesy of Sue Agnew.



The Hampden County Sheriff's Department, Wilbraham Fire Department and Wilbraham Senior Center worked together last week to present "Sand for Seniors". The sand was donated by Hampden County Sheriff's Department and delivered by the fire department. Pictured in the photo are Patrick Farrow, left, and Mathew Walch.

Photo courtesy of Barbara Harrington.



The Festival of Trees in Springfield on Sunday, Dec. 10, between 1:30 – 4 of Springfield, so these Wilbraham students shared their musical talent ends is led by Denise Gendron, director, and Elaine Holdsworth, founder.

Natalie Jurgen spotted this creature behind her house on Stonegate Circle in Wilbraham.

Photo courtesy of Natalie Jurgen.



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You know how sometimes you meet a vivacious personality and you just know they've got stories to tell, that's how I felt when meeting Julia Miller.

Julia grew up in Wilbraham after her parents relocated them from their apartment in the Queens. She explained what a culture shock the rural area was and the feeling of having their own back yard with trees! She remembered her and her mother being baffled when a neighbor brought them a 'Welcome Basket'; that had never happened in the city, and decided they liked it here. Julia even went on to become a member of the Peach Festival's Queen's court!

Julia quickly made friends and still maintains many of those friendships. She has been married for 22 years, and they've been blessed with one son. She worked 16 years for the Connecticut Convention Center but for the past two years has been employed as the General Manager at the Bristol Event Center. She's been involved since the beginning planning stages and it actually just opened in October.

Julia talked about how she likes buying the coffee for the person behind her because one day, as the recipient, it totally turned her lousy day into a brighter one. That's exactly what Random Acts of Kindness are all about, making a nice difference in someone's day. She said it simply feels good to do something with no expectations in return. She went onto explain that a friend had gone through surgery so for two weeks brought her meals. When the woman acknowledged her appreciation that was more than enough for Julia.

Julia further shared about another friend who faced a breast cancer diagnosis. Understandably, her friend felt overwhelmed and each week she sent her a card of encouragement. Her friend expressed how those cards were



By Barb Turcotte

the reason she was able to find the strength she needed. Julia said it feels good when you can make a positive impact somehow, well she certainly did here!

Julia revealed her young son used to question her as to why she did nice things for others if she wasn't going to get anything in return but said he's "getting it" now. One of the reasons for that is she incorporated his help in a project during COVID. Julia's husband is a mail carrier and during the epidemic for many reasons they worked a lot of extra hours. She and her son made up about 60 bags of items and included notes in them thanking the mail carriers for the jobs they were doing, and her husband distributed them. Her husband came home and explained what an incredible difference those had made for the other carriers and how much they were appreciated. What wonderful Random Acts of Kindness, spreading positivity!

As a manager, Julia tries to help her employees be the best they can be and encourages them through open conversations how to get there. As a volunteer, she was the past president and still maintains a position of the board of MPI (Meeting Professionals International) where she speaks at colleges and universities regarding the hospi-

pitality business. Again, never knowing who will be impacted by her efforts, she believes it's helping students become their best.

She said that her mom is the kindest person she knows, and people just show up for her because she always shows up for them. She's proud to walk in the footsteps of her mom and hopes her son follows that same path.

Julia also shared with me a pretty delicate subject, the realization that her son was being bullied. Steps she took once again proved her strength plus what an example for her son with how she handled it. She eventually felt she wanted to create a post about this, and her son thought it was a great commentary. She said she had so many positive responses endorsing her actions she knew she'd done the right thing by making this horrendous experience known. Her reasoning was to help anyone who may be dealing with this type of issue. One response that reinforced her decision was, "Your kindness made a difference in my life."

Her son is now doing wonderfully and because of their open communications he was able to ask for help when he was at his lowest point. By Julia and her son making this public, they truly have no idea how many that post may have impacted and was just a different way of doing a Random Act of Kindness.

One of my favorite movies is, "It's a Wonderful Life", and each year as I watch it during the holiday season, I reflect on things. I hope you have wonderful recollections of the positive impacts you've had on others and remember that Random Acts of Kindness do make an enormous difference.

If you would like to tell me a story about a Random Act of Kindness please contact me at bdt514@aol.com or 413-788-7514. Who knows, you might see your story in this column, 'Just 'Cause' you witnessed, did or received something nice being done. See you next month with another Random Act of Kindness!

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Great Decisions Discussion Group returns in 2024

WILBRAHAM – Registration has begun for the 2024 Great Decisions Discussion Group, to be held at the Wilbraham Public Library beginning Feb. 7. Sessions will be held in the Brooks Room on Wednesdays from 4-5:30 p.m. on Feb. 7, 14, 21 and 28, and March 6, 13, 20 and 27. If any sessions are canceled for snow or other bad weather, April 3 and 10 will be used as make-up dates.

The topics from the upcoming series are Mideast Realignment, Climate Technology and Competition, Science Across Borders, U.S. - China Trade Rivalry, NATO's Future, Understanding Indonesia, High Seas Treaty and Pandemic Preparedness.

Great Decisions Groups meet all over the country – in private homes, libraries, and other venues to discuss selected topics in the area of current affairs. Participants can have their opinions tallied in a National Opinion Poll, which then gets sent to the White House, members of Congress and the national media. This is a wonderful program to learn more about what is happening in the world and to have your voice heard by people who make the decisions.

The Foreign Policy Association, which selects the key issues for discussion, publishes a briefing book for participants to read in advance so they can be informed and ready to engage. Participants can order the book from the FPA website at www.fpa.org, or by calling 1-800-477-5836. A copy of the book will also be available at the library Service Desk for in-library reading.

Please register through the Events Calendar at www.wilbrahamlibrary.org or call the library at 413-596-6141.

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Big early lead paces Falcons to win

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WEST SPRINGFIELD—Minnechaug Regional hockey coach Kyle Bousquet was very pleased with how his team performed during the first two periods of last Saturday's non-league match against Belchertown.

Minnechaug, who's a member of the Berry Division, entered the final period with a 5-0 lead.

Belchertown, who's a member of the Wright Division, battled back with the help of junior Charles Fijal, who recorded a hat trick over the final 15 minutes. The effort wasn't quite good enough, as the Falcons held on



Ben Daniels attempts a shot.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com



Nick Garib looks to pass.

for a 5-3 win at the Olympia Ice Center in West Springfield.

"We just didn't play a complete game today," Bousquet said. "A lot of good things happened during the first two periods. I'm not very happy with how

Please see **HOCKEY**, page 16

Falcons fall at home to Agawam

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WILBRAHAM — After beginning the new season with a 76-40 win at Westfield High School on December 11, Agawam boys basketball traveled to Wilbraham last Friday night and came away with a hard-fought 66-55 victory over the Minnechaug Falcons.

"We're now 2-0 and we haven't played a home game yet," said Agawam head coach Tim Sheehan following the Minnechaug game. "We did get off to a slow start in tonight's game, which is something that we've done every time that we've played a game in this gym over the past couple of years. This is a good quality win for us, but there is still a lot of room for improvement."

The two boys' basketball teams were members of the Suburban North Division the past two seasons.

Agawam is still a member of the Suburban North, but Minnechaug (1-1), who had won the previous three meetings on the hardwood by less than ten points, moved to the Suburban South Division.

Please see **FALCONS**, page 9



Miles Fergus eyes making a centering pass.

Turley photos by Sofia DiGrande



Laila Smith heads for the hoop.

Chaug girls pile up points

HOLYOKE — Last Friday night, Minnechaug's offense was on full display in a 59-16 win over Holyoke. The girls would avenge a playoff loss in last year's state tournament. Jayla Comes had 14 points while Elizabeth Wotoywicz had had 11 points. Nine different players would contribute points for Minnechaug in the win. The Falcons are 2-1 to start the season.

Turley photos by Sofia DiGrande



Kelly Cronin makes her way down the court.



Alani Botas shoots in traffic.



Elizabeth Wotoywicz makes her way up the court.



Lyric Nelson attempts to pass.

T-Birds suffer 1-0 shutout against Bears

HERSHEY, PA – The Springfield Thunderbirds (14-9-2-0) could not solve the top-ranked defense in the AHL, as the Hershey Bears (22-6-0-0) skated off with a narrow 1-0 triumph on Sunday inside Giant Center.

The battle of the Eastern Conference's two best defensive teams lived up to that billing in the opening 20 minutes, as neither Springfield's Malcolm Subban nor Hershey's Hunter Shepard showed nerves in their goal crease. Subban had a trio of high-danger denials off odd-man rushes, including a right-pad kick out on a Jimmy Huntington breakaway. Shepard had his own sterling saves, including a point-blank snapper from Kean Washkurak.

The biggest fireworks of the period came in the form of mitts dropping between former T-Bird Dylan McIlrath and Sam Bitten less than four minutes into the action. The early scrap between two of the toughest customers in the AHL added a big boost to both benches but ultimately did not lead to either team cracking into the scoresheet in the first 20 minutes.

As difficult as it was for the teams to establish in the first, it became even more difficult in a second period that saw only seven combined shots between the two teams, with Subban stopping four Hershey attempts and Shepard blocking three Springfield offerings, forcing the scoreless draw into a final period.

The game gave every indication that the first goal would be pivotal, and at 5:31 of the third, Pierrick Dube finally got on the board for the Bears, blasting a slapper that glanced off Subban's left shoulder and squeaked across the line just moments before a T-Birds defender could get to the goal line to save it.

The winger's 14th of the season proved to be the only tally, as Springfield could not dent Shepard the rest of the way. Former Bear Jakub Vrana had perhaps the best chance to tie the game on a one-timer from the right circle, but Shepard slid from right to left to deny the chance, and Springfield succumbed to their first shutout defeat of the season.

The two teams will have a grudge match on Friday night inside the MassMutual Center as the T-Birds begin a seven-game homestand. Puck drop on Friday is set for 7:05 p.m. for another Deuces Wild Friday.

Candlepin League News

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

Tuesday Night Commercial Elks League

PALMER – The Commercial Elks League had another week of bowling before their holiday party.

The standings as of Dec. 5, Life is Good still leads in the #1 spot with nine wins, two losses and one tie. Tied for second place is The Champs R Here and Acres with each time carrying a 9-3 record.

Team BK has a record of 6-6. Last in Line has a record of 5-6 and 1 tie. The winner of round 1 Compression is 5-7. Blue B's has a record of 3-9.

The two teams tied for second place Acres and Champs R Here bowled each other on Dec. 12. In game one, The Champs won against Acres by a score 413-384. John Colkos of Champs R Here started off strong with a 114 game. Taylor Colkos started off with 109 and Steve Manolakis bowled 101.

In game two, Acres won the game 386-372. Paul Tereso and Dave Cobleigh of Acres were over their average and scored 103 and 100 in game two. In game three, Acres won 436-379. Kenny Trudel of Acres finished the night with a 109 game. Matt Bertelli had a strong finish by bowling a 117. Topping his own teammate's score, Dave Cobleigh finished with a 121 game.

Acres won total pinfall with a final score of 1206-1164.

The number one seed Life is Good bowled against Compression. In game one, Life is Good won by a score of 358-327. In game two, Life is Good and Compression tied at 341. In game three, Compression won over Life is Good 373-329.

Compression won total pinfall by a final score of 1041-1028.

Last in Line bowled against Team BK for the night. In game one, BK was victorious over Last in Line 384-352. Pulling for the team was Jeff Whyte and Paul Nothe by scoring 112 and 107. In game two, BK remained strong and won 388-358. Nothe stayed consistent by remaining in the 100s with a 108 in game two.

In game three, Team BK won the last game 369-360. Team BK won all three games and total pinfall with a final score of 1141-1070.

The Tuesday Night Commercial Elks League will be hosting a holiday party and banquet the following Tuesday night. The league will have a fun night of bowling by hosting a random draw doubles tournament.

Thursday Night Mixed League

The Thursday Night Mixed League at Diamond Junction Bowling Lanes continued with the holidays right around the corner.

Team Five bowled against Team Three on lanes four and five.

In game one, Team Three won by a score of 382-370. In game two, Team Three won again by a score of 419-384.

In game three, Team Five won the last game by a score of 419-382. Team Three won total pinfall by a final score of 1183-1173.

On lanes six and seven, Team Six bowled against Team Two. In game one, Team Two won a close game against Team Six 383-380. In game two, Team Six defeated Team Two 440-403. In game three, Team Two won the last game 401-389.

Team Six won total pinfall with a final score of 1209-1187.

On lanes two and three was a match between Team One and Team Four. In game one, Team One was victorious over Team Four 385-371. Kris Rickson of Team One started off the night with a 108 game. In game two, it was close all game but Team One wins another by a score of 427-425. Rickson bowled 120 in game two.

In game three, Team Four won the last game 437-401. Nick Maslon of Team Four finished with a 102. Rickson finished the night with a 115 and three game series of 343.

Teams Four, with a big win in the third game won total pinfall by a final score of 1233-1213.

Visit Diamond Junction Bowling Lanes at 1446 N. Main St. The Alley can be reached by calling 413-289-0013.



Ethan Kelliher is pressured near the boards.



Brayden O'Sullivan receives the puck with the backhand.



Gabe Tassinari takes the wrist shot.

HOCKEY from page 15

we played in the third period. It was a missed opportunity and they outplayed us. We really should've put them away."

Even though the victory improved the Falcons overall record to 2-1, it'll hurt them in the MIAA power rankings. A hockey team needs to win a game by at least three goals to earn extra points in the ratings.

"We did get the two points for the win, but we just didn't maximize our points in the power rankings," Bousquet said. "One of the ways to maximize your points is to have a three goal margin. Their third goal takes away the differential."

The loss gave the Orioles (1-3) a few extra points in the power rankings because they're a Division 4 team and Minnechaug is a Division 2 team.

First-year Belchertown head coach Jordan McCarthy wished his squad didn't wait until the third period to start playing well.

"I prefer that we play well for the whole game and not just one period," said McCarthy, who replaced Derek Chandonnet as the Orioles varsity hockey coach. "We have a very young team this year and it was nice to see the players improve during the game."

Seven of the players listed on the Orioles hockey roster are either eighth graders or freshmen.

The only three seniors listed on the Belchertown roster are Caleb Reardon, Caiden St. Laurent, and Chris Wood.

Fijal also had a hat-trick in the Orioles 8-2 win against McCann Tech on December 13.

"We've been relying on Fijal offensively so far this season," McCarthy said. "We just need to have a few other players contribute offensively."

McCarthy coached the women's hockey team at Curry College, which is in Milton, for five years. He was also an assistant

girl's hockey coach at Lincoln-Sudbury High School.

"I recently moved to the area, and I wanted to coach a hockey team," said McCarthy, who's currently the varsity baseball coach at Doherty High School in Worcester. "Coaching a boys hockey team is a little bit different than coaching a girls' team. It's the same game, but it's a little more physical on the boy's side.

Fijal wasn't the only player to score three goals in last Saturday's game.

Minnechaug senior Gabe Tassinari posted his first hat-trick in a varsity hockey game.

"It was nice to see Gabe get his first hat-trick in a high school hockey game," Bousquet said. "He's also one of our captains."

Belchertown sophomore goalie Curtis Wojnas (28 saves) made several saves during the first few minutes of the opening period.

The Falcons, who outshot the Orioles, 33-14, took a 1-0 lead at the 4:58 mark when a shot attempt by freshman Nick Garib deflected off the goalie pads and his classmate Ethan Kelliher knocked the puck into the net for his second varsity goal. Senior Ben Daniels was also credited with an assist on the Falcons first goal.

Tassinari netted his first goal of the game on a power play a couple of minutes later, which was assisted by senior Derek Semanie.

With four minutes remaining in the opening period, Tassinari stole the puck at the red line before firing a shot that sailed over the goalie's left shoulder into the net for an unassisted goal.

The Falcons, who also won the previous two meetings against the Orioles, added two more goals during the first two minutes of the second period.

Sophomore Enzo Hrycay

scored his first career varsity goal 43 seconds into the second period.

Tassinari completed his hat-trick with an unassisted goal at the 1:45 mark.

Neither team scored another goal during the final 13 minutes of the second period.

Minnechaug senior goalie [Elijah Arel](#) (11 saves), who made his first varsity start, entered the final period hoping to post his first shutout.

Fijal spoiled that milestone by scoring a goal, which was assisted by freshman Gavin Harrington, at the 4:20 mark.

Fijal scored another goal, which was unassisted 36 seconds later. He netted his third goal, which was also unassisted, with 1:22 remaining on the scoreboard clock.

The Orioles did make it very interesting in the third period, but they came up a little bit short.

Shenette declares for modifieds tour

WORCESTER – Driving the No. 8, John-Michael Shenette will chase the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour Rookie of the Year honors in 2024. When the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour begins a 16-race schedule in February at New Smyrna Speedway in Florida, Shenette plans to be in attendance. It will be the first race in his quest to compete in a majority of the races on the schedule to chase the prestigious award.

Formerly based in Thompson, Connecticut, Shenette is the CEO of Eighty-Two Services, a General Contractor located in Concord, North Carolina. The team, Eighty-Two Autosport, will also contest additional SMART Modified Tour and Open Modified events when available in 2024.

Shenette made his debut on the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour at Langley Speedway in 2023 and finished 12th. He also competed in events at North-Wilkesboro Speedway and Martinsville Speedway prior to the end of the season.

“We’re excited for 2024,” John-Michael Shenette said. “Last year was about putting a car on the track. We struggled with a mechanical issue that plagued us at all three events and prevented us from logging laps. All-in-all, it was a good year

- we were able to build a great group, add a second car and square away all the bits and pieces that it takes to run. The NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour is the best of the best in modified racing, if not NASCAR as a whole. Our team is ready for the challenge. Chasing the prestigious Rookie of the Year award is on our bucket list, but we’re also looking for consistency and to chase our first career win in Modified in 2024.”

Shenette was born in Worcester, and started racing at 7-years-old at Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park’s “Little T” track in Connecticut. He’s raced on and off his entire life - running in the Pro Stocks, Thompson Modifieds, PASS Super Late Models, ARTS Trucks, Karts and now Tour-Type Modifieds 30 years later.

Shenette and his NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour team, led by crew chief Scott Morin and car chief Stephen Robinson, will open the 2024 season at New Smyrna Speedway on Saturday, February 10, as NASCAR opens their 76th season of racing. For more information on the team, fans are encouraged to follow the team on Facebook on their new page, Eighty-Two Autosport, for the latest news and information, including race day updates.

Cheng, of Wilbraham, inducted into WNEU’s Chapter of Epsilon Iota Honor Society

SPRINGFIELD – Epsilon Iota, the Western New England University chapter of Rho Chi Pharmacy Honor Society, celebrated the induction of nine outstanding members from the PY3 Pharmacy Class at an event held on Thursday, Nov. 16, at the Munich Haus in Chicopee.

The Rho Chi Society, established in 1922, is an international honor society dedicated to fostering high scholastic achievement, fellowship among students in pharmacy, and the promotion of pharmaceutical sciences.

The ceremony was presided over by Marissa L. Ostroff, Clinical Associate Professor of Ambulatory Care at Western New England University’s College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. Dr. Ostroff, also the Faculty Advisor, served

as emcee for the event.

The keynote address was delivered by Allissa Long, a distinguished alumna of Western New England University from the Class of 2019. Currently, she holds the position of Assistant Professor at the University of Saint Joseph’s. Notable speakers at the event included Dr. John Pezzuto, Dean of the WNE College of Pharmacy, and Dr. Ostroff.

Western New England University’s College of Pharmacy prepares students for their role of “Pharmacist as Educator.” The cross-disciplinary approach to teaching includes the theoretical and practical aspects of pharmacy, and also promotes the development of leadership, professionalism, advocacy, and a commitment to community service.

HOMETOWN SPOTLIGHT

WILBRAHAM-HAMPDEN TIMES

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Nate Pace eyes a free throw.



CJ Socha shoots.



Gus Przybyl follows through on his shot.

FALCONS from page 15

“I’m disappointed in tonight’s result,” said Minnechaug head coach Mike Orzech. “I thought the effort was there, but we had too many turnovers and missed too many shots in the second half.”

The driver of the bus in the first two road games for the Brownies was senior guard Colin Smith. He scored a total of 67 points in the two victories.

“Colin is a very good basketball player,” Sheehan said. “The difference this season is he isn’t forcing his shots. He’s letting the game come to him.”

After scoring 34 points with the help of four 3-pointers in the season opener, Smith scored 21 of his game-high 33 points against the Falcons in the second half. He scored most of his points in last Friday’s contest on lay-ups. He also had six steals, five rebounds and two assists in last Friday’s game.

“We played with a lot more energy in

the second half than we did in the first half,” Smith said. “We also made a lot more shots. We have a lot of very good players on this year’s team, and it’s been a lot of fun so far.”

Smith, who has scored close to 600 career points, joined the boys varsity basketball team as a freshman. Sheehan, who was previously the boys’ varsity basketball coach at Granby High School, coached Smith for the first time the following year.

“Colin has improved so much since I began coaching him as a sophomore,” said Sheehan, who had the opportunity to coach a couple of 1,000-point scorers at Granby. “He’s a senior now and nothing ever seems to rattle him. He still has a lot of room to get better. He’s also an unselfish player.”

The duo of junior forward Melih Tomak (13 points) and junior guard Elijah Maldonado (10 points) also provided a spark offensively for the Brownies in the second half.

The Falcons were led offensively by sophomore guard Miles Fergus, who scored 13 points of his team-leading 16 points during the first 16 minutes of the contest. Junior guard Gus Przybyl netted nine of his 13 points in the second half. Junior forward Nate Pace added eight points.

In the middle of the opening quarter, an old fashion three point play by senior guard Nick Disa (5 points) gave the home team a 9-2 lead.

The Falcons also led by seven points (13-6) late in the first quarter following back-to-back lay-ups by senior forward D.J. Johnson (6 points) and Przybyl.

Following a steal and lay-up by Smith, the visitors entered the second stanza trailing 13-8.

Fergus made three 3-pointers in the second quarter, which helped Minnechaug build a 26-18 halftime lead.

The Falcons eight point lead slipped away like sand in an hourglass, as the Brownies scored the first ten points of the second half.

“I told the kids in the locker room at halftime that our shot selection in the



DJ Johnson goes for the layup.

Turley photos by Sofia DiGrande

first half was pretty good, but the problem was we didn’t make very many of them,” Sheehan said. “We made a lot more shots in the second half, and it stopped their transition game, which was probably the biggest difference.”

Smith began the comeback by sinking a pair of free throws.

A reverse lay-up by Tomak tied the score at 26-26 with 6:10 left in the third quarter.

Less than a minute later, Agawam took the lead for the first time at 28-26 when freshman forward Gavin Cruz (4 points) made a shot while falling to the ground in the middle of the lane.

The Brownies entered the final eight minutes of the contest holding a slim 41-40 lead.

The duo of Tomak and Smith combined to score the first twelve points of the fourth quarter for Agawam.

With 4:25 remaining in regulation, a steal and lay-up by Smith increased the Brownies advantage to 53-44.

Agawam sealed the deal by making nine free throw attempts during the final three minutes.

The Brownies players enjoyed another bus ride back home.

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
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52	53	54				55				56		57	58	59
60					61					62		63		
64					65						66			
67					68						69			

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Droops
- 5. Subatomic particle
- 10. Not in danger
- 14. Nursemaid
- 15. Black band worn in mourning
- 16. Long song in opera
- 17. Edible seed of a Philippine tree
- 18. Chicago political family
- 19. Pursues pleasure from one place to another
- 20. Appetizer
- 22. Hill (Celtic)
- 23. Simple shoe
- 24. Songs to one you love
- 27. Secret activities
- 30. Upset
- 31. Popular hot drink
- 32. Body art (slang)
- 35. Fired
- 37. Blood relation
- 38. Identical
- 39. Porticos
- 40. Partner to cheese
- 41. Type of sword

- 42. Enough (archaic)
- 43. Surface layer of ground
- 44. Cotton fabric woven like satin
- 45. Choose for a post
- 46. Father
- 47. Tell on
- 48. Indian title of respect
- 49. Fonts
- 52. Fencing sword
- 55. Mock
- 56. Vaccine developer
- 60. Atmosphere surrounding a person or place
- 61. Marten with a short tail
- 63. Chinese temple
- 64. Invests in little enterprises
- 65. Popular cut of meat
- 66. Charity
- 67. Iron-containing compound
- 68. River in Northern Europe
- 69. One point east of southeast

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Exhausts
- 2. Genus of fish related to gars
- 3. Impudent behavior
- 4. Adherents to Islam
- 5. They come after A
- 6. Spoke
- 7. Room to receive guests
- 8. About opera
- 9. End-blown flute
- 10. Heroic tales
- 11. Member of a Semitic people
- 12. Dog’s name
- 13. Opposite of west
- 21. Political divisions in ancient Greece
- 23. Ocean
- 25. Cool!
- 26. Young woman about to enter society
- 27. One from central Caucasus
- 28. Indian city
- 29. A way to serve ice cream

- 32. Emaciation
- 33. Escort aircraft carrier
- 34. Italian city
- 36. Mythical settler of Kansas
- 37. Unhappy
- 38. High schoolers’ test
- 40. Measured in pace
- 41. Satisfies
- 43. Gullible person
- 44. Enclosed space
- 46. Substance used to color something
- 47. Shirt type
- 49. Discover by investigation
- 50. ___-Castell, makers of pens
- 51. Semitic Sun god
- 52. Grads wear one
- 53. French river
- 54. Part of a cap
- 57. Digestive fluid
- 58. Metrical foot
- 59. Body part
- 61. Very fast airplane
- 62. Supplement with difficulty

PUBLIC NOTICES

WILBRAHAM PLANNING BOARD

The Wilbraham Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday, January 10, 2024, at 5:45 PM in the Town Office Building, 240 Springfield Street, on the application of Bryan and Christine Stadnicki to allow an extension of the deadline for a previously issued Special Permit (SP06-05) as required under Sections 3.4.2.5 and 4.7 of the Wilbraham Zoning By-Law for approval of a Flexible Nonsubdivision (Estate Lot) Plan consisting of single building lot (Lot B-4) containing approximately 7.35 acres of land with 50 feet of frontage on Red Gap Road and being located on all or a portion of land known as 5V Red Gap Road as shown on information on file in the Planning Office and posted for public viewing on the Planning Board page of the Town of Wilbraham website at www.wilbraham-ma.gov/123/Planning-Board. Both in person and virtual participation are available. To participate virtually go to https://meet.goto.com/929325397 or call 877-309-2073 (Access Code: 929-325-397).

John McCloskey Chair

12/21, 12/28/2023

WILBRAHAM PLANNING BOARD

The Wilbraham Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday, January 10, 2024, at 6:00 PM in the Town Office Building, 240 Springfield Street, on the application of Michael and Christina Pietras for a special permit (#SP23-13) under sections 3.9.2.15 and 4.10 of the Wilbraham Zoning By-Law to allow use of a portion (approximately 900 square feet) of an existing detached accessory structure (garage/carriage house) at 592 Ridge Road as an accessory apartment, and for amendment of a prior special permit (#SP19-06) which prohibited use of the structure for living space, as shown on information on file in the Planning Office and posted for public viewing on the Planning Board page of the Town of Wilbraham website at www.wilbraham-ma.gov/123/Planning-Board. Both in person and virtual participation are available. To participate virtually go to https://meet.goto.com/929325397 or call

877-309-2073 (Access Code: 929-325-397).

John McCloskey Chair

12/21, 12/28/2023

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 Docket No. HD23P2554PM In the matter of: Bridget Wallace Of: Wilbraham, MA RESPONDENT (Person to be Protected/Minor)

CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF CONSERVATOR OR OTHER PROTECTIVE ORDER PURSUANT TO G.L. c. 190B, §5-304 & §5-405

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by Baystate Wing Hospital of Palmer, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that Bridget Wallace is in need of a Conservator or other protective order and requesting that Nancy Godbout of Granby, MA (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Conservator to serve With Surety on the bond.

The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is disabled, that a protective order or appointment of a Conservator is necessary, and that the proposed conservator is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court.

You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 a.m. on the return date of 01/10/2024. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

IMPORTANT NOTICE The outcome of this proceeding may limit or

completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.

Witness, Hon. Barbara M. Hyland, First Justice of this Court.

Date: December 14, 2023 Rosemary A. Saccomani Register of Probate 12/21/2023

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758 Docket No. HD21P1339EA

Estate of: Donald Dorn Also known as: Donald A. Dorn, Sr. Date of Death: 07/03/2020 CITATION ON PETITION FOR ORDER OF COMPLETE SETTLEMENT

A Petition for Order of Complete Settlement has been filed by Cheryl Dorn of Hampden, MA requesting that the court enter a formal Decree of Complete Settlement including the allowance of a final account, a determination of heirs at law and other such relief as may be requested in the Petition.

IMPORTANT NOTICE You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 12/29/2023.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M. Hyland, First Justice of this Court.

Date: November 27, 2023 Rosemary A. Saccomani Register of Probate 12/21/2023

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 Docket No. HD23P2537GD In the matter of: Bridget Wallace Of: Wilbraham, MA RESPONDENT Alleged Incapacitated Person

CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN FOR INCAPACITATED PERSON PURSUANT TO G.L. c. 190B, §5-304

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by Baystate Wing Hospital of Palmer, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that Bridget Wallace is in need of a Guardian and requesting that Nancy Godbout of Granby, MA (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Guardian to serve Without Surety on the bond.

The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is incapacitated, that the appointment of a Guardian is necessary, and that the proposed Guardian is appropriate. The petition

is on file with this court and may contain a request for certain specific authority.

You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 a.m. on the return date of 01/10/2024. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

IMPORTANT NOTICE The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M. Hyland, First Justice of this Court.

Date: December 12, 2023 Rosemary A. Saccomani Register of Probate 12/21/2023

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758 Docket No. HD23C0360CA In the matter of: Nezhath Khosrowjerdi CITATION ON PETITION TO CHANGE NAME A Petition to Change Name of Adult has been filed by Nezhath Khosrowjerdi of Wilbraham, MA requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to: Nezhath Khorramshokoh Khosrowjerdi IMPORTANT NOTICE

Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: Hampden Probate and Family Court before 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 01/09/2024.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M. Hyland, First Justice of this Court.

Date: December 12, 2023 Rosemary A. Saccomani Register of Probate 12/21/2023

13x13 crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-69 indicating starting positions for clues.

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Droops
5. Subatomic particle
10. Not in danger
14. Nursemaid
15. Black band worn in mourning
16. Long song in opera
17. Edible seed of a Philippine tree
18. Chicago political family
19. Pursues pleasure from one place to another
20. Appetizer
22. Hill (Celtic)
23. Simple shoe
24. Songs to one you love
27. Secret activities
30. Upset
31. Popular hot drink
32. Body art (slang)
35. Fired
37. Blood relation
38. Identical
39. Porticos
40. Partner to cheese
41. Type of sword
42. Enough (archaic)
43. Surface layer of ground
44. Cotton fabric woven like satin
45. Choose for a post
46. Father
47. Tell on
48. Indian title of respect
49. Fonts
52. Fencing sword
55. Mock
56. Vaccine developer
60. Atmosphere surrounding a person or place
61. Marten with a short tail
63. Chinese temple
64. Invests in little enterprises
65. Popular cut of meat
66. Charity
67. Iron-containing compound
68. River in Northern Europe
69. One point east of southeast

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Exhausts
2. Genus of fish related to gars
3. Impudent behavior
4. Adherents to Islam
5. They come after A
6. Spoke
7. Room to receive guests
8. About opera
9. End-blown flute
10. Heroic tales
11. Member of a Semitic people
12. Dog's name
13. Opposite of west
21. Political divisions in ancient Greece
23. Ocean
25. Cool!
26. Young woman about to enter society
27. One from central Caucasus
28. Indian city
29. A way to serve ice cream
32. Emaciation
33. Escort aircraft carrier
34. Italian city
36. Mythical settler of Kansas
37. Unhappy
38. High schoolers' test
40. Measured in pace
41. Satisfies
43. Gullible person
44. Enclosed space
46. Substance used to color something
47. Shirt type
49. Discover by investigation
50. ___-Castell, makers of pens
51. Semitic Sun god
52. Grads wear one
53. French river
54. Part of a cap
57. Digestive fluid
58. Metrical foot
59. Body part
61. Very fast airplane
62. Supplement with difficulty

Early Deadlines for all LEGAL NOTICES... All Papers Will Deadline Thursday, Dec. 21 at Noon for Publication Dec. 25-29 Happy Holidays! Happy New Year! All Papers Will Deadline Thursday, Dec. 28 at Noon for Publication Jan. 1-5

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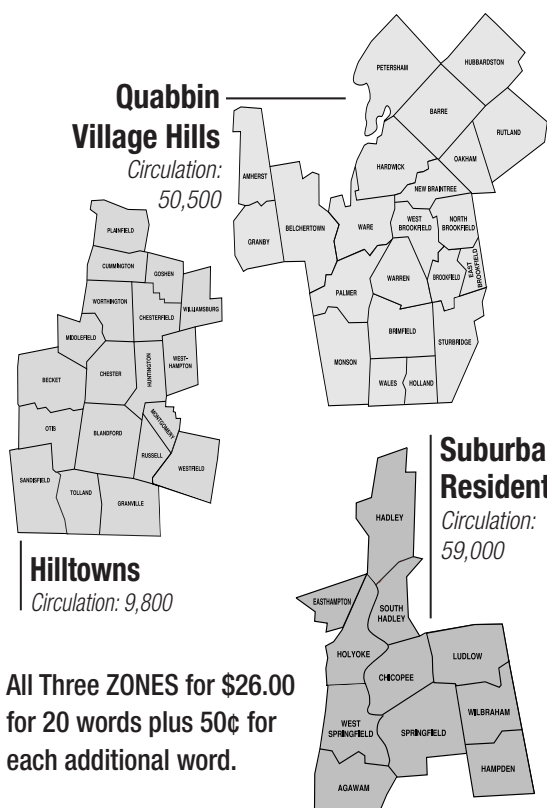
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Susan Nieves sold a variety of pet toys and clothing at the craft fair at the Federated Community Church on Dec. 9.



From left, Elizabeth Estabrook, Dyann Pederzani and Nikki Maggard sold homemade items at the Winterfest Craft Fair on the second Saturday in December.



Diane Stimpson sold homemade aprons, hot pads, placemats and hanging towels at the Dec. 9 craft fair in Hampden.



Mariellen Guidetti sold handmade Christmas trees, decorated and stained in polyurethane at the craft fair in Hampden on Dec. 9.

Turley photos by Dalton Zbierski



In addition to original paintings, Carol Adamski-Maggi sold refrigerator magnets, gift jars and Christmas cards at the Federated Community Church's Winterfest Craft Fair.

FAIR from page 1

residents to buy from local crafters, noting that there's nothing like receiving a homemade gift that people put their talents and effort into.

"It's just more personal than the big box stores," she said. "I love to see the people. Sometimes, you see people you know, and meeting new people is fun, especially when they complement you and are really excited to buy (a gift) for themselves or to give it someone else."

Beth Algie, an organizer, complimented members of the church for working together to make baked goods and lunches, as well as setting up tables and preparing the building for the event.

Preparations for the craft fair began a year-and-a-half ago, which is when Algie began visiting similar events locally, speaking to vendors and collecting their business cards. By the time of the church's craft fair, she had created a list of about 100 vendors, and many showed up on Dec. 9.

Algie was thrilled to see the range of items that were on display and available for sale.

"It's really heartwarming to have such a variety of unique things," she said. "People really enjoy shopping and buying their Christmas presents. They find things that you wouldn't find in the store. They're homemade, so they're good quality."

Kelly Lamontagne set up shop on the lower level of the church and sold children's books made by PaperPie, geared for babies, children and teens. She was pleased to see so many vendors and described the event as a fun time for families.

When asked what makes her excited about selling books, she said they make perfect presents and are something kids can grow and learn with.

"I'm pretty passionate about family bonding time



The Federated Community Church hosted a craft fair on Dec. 9.

over reading and engaging kids in non-screen activities, so our books have an extra interactive element. They're really engaging and break down facts in really simple ways that makes learning fun for kids," Lamontagne said.

Dyann Pederzani made her way to the craft fair to sell designer candy canes, homemade saltshakers and pins along with Elizabeth Estabrook and Nikki Maggard. She was impressed by the atmosphere at the church and was grateful to meet Pastor Kwan Kim.

"It seems like it's very locally oriented, a lot of people from this church," she said. "They speak so highly of this church, and the new pastor, we've heard such good things about him. I guess he's bringing in a lot of young people. He came around and thanked us."

Crafter Susan Nieves sold a variety of toys and clothes for pets. As someone who works from home, she was ecstatic to get out and meet new people.

Nieves stressed that craft fairs aren't just about sell-



At the Dec. 9 craft fair, Jennifer Egerton represented Tastefully Simple, a women-owned company out of Minnesota.

ing; they're about making others happy.

"A lot of people just love what they do; I love what I do and love getting out. They're so many people, and it's just nice to meet them," she said.



Photo courtesy of Minnechaug Regional High School

Siena Dansereau and Katja Wurm earn state recognition

Receive Academic Excellence Award from state Association of School Superintendents

WILBRAHAM – John A. Provost, Ed.D., Superintendent of the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District, is pleased to announce that Minnechaug Regional High School Seniors Siena Dansereau and Katja Wurm, 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. Siena's current GPA is 4.83. She was Captain of the Varsity Volleyball Team this past fall season. Siena is a member of The National Honor Society Emerald Key Chapter, Student Council and co-founder of the Women in STEM Club. Siena plans on attending a four-year college for engineering. At this time, she is leaning towards a career in chemical engineering.





Katja's current GPA is 4.76. She is Vice President of The National Honor Society Emerald Key Chapter, President of the International Club and Peer Mentors. Katja's future plan is to major in English and Science to pursue a career as a science journalist.

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KENO

Dr. Christopher J. Root DMD MAGD and team welcome

Dr. Mary Chalino DMD



Dr. Mary Chalino DMD has joined our clinical team as a full time Associate Dentist. Dr. Chalino completed a rigorous one-year advanced General Practice Residency (GPR) at Yale New Haven Hospital, focusing on medically complex cases and performing full mouth rehabilitation procedures in the operating room. She completed rotations in General Anesthesia and Internal Medicine as well.

Her dental training was completed at Tufts University School of Dental Medicine, where she served as Vice President of her class. She received her B.A from Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT, double majoring in Biology and Neuroscience & Behavior.

Dr. Chalino is well-versed in all aspects of dentistry, including Restorative, Endodontics, and Oral Surgery. She devotes close to 100 hours of Continuing Education per year to advance her clinical skill set. She travels across the US to attend seminars on full mouth rehabilitation and advanced treatment planning. She is a member of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (AACD), American Academy of General Dentistry (AGD), and American Dental Association (ADA). She is an active member with the Massachusetts Dental Society, and currently serves on the Health and Wellness Committee.

Outside of dentistry, Dr. Chalino is married to her husband, Joey, and lives in Central MA. She has visited almost 30 countries and is fluent in Arabic. She loves puppies, barre workout classes, and long road trips.

Dr. Chalino is passionate about providing positive dental experiences. We are excited by her dedication to the patients she serves, the breadth of talent and precision she brings to dentistry, and our shared engagement with professional development. We look forward to our collaboration and ongoing commitment to providing the highest standard of dental care.

For an appointment with Dr. Chalino, please call 413-279-2016

**Best Wishes for the Holiday Season
& a Happy, Healthy New Year!
from all of us at
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