

SENIORS
Getting in the holiday spirit
Page 2

SPORTS
Basketball season openers
Page 11

TIMES

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Chris Sterritt shows attendees tips for their holiday greeting cards.

Turley photos by Kristin Rivers

Scantic River Artisans host Holiday Greeting Card Workshop

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

HAMPDEN - The Scantic River Artisans hosted a Holiday Greeting Card Workshop at the senior center on Dec. 12.

The workshop, overseen by Chris Sterritt, is part of the art association's Interactive Learning Through Art classes they offer throughout the year.

Here, attendees learned how

to complete a watercolor painting for a festive holiday greeting card by depicting a winter scene with a snowy field, a gradated blue background sky with background trees, two large birch trees with a fence in the foreground and two cardinals.

The next classes are creating collages on Feb. 27 and flower arranging by Bilton's on April 17, with more forthcoming in 2025.

Sterritt explained the artisans chose a holiday greeting card as the workshop fell around the holiday

season.

"The scene incorporated several techniques common to the watercolor medium such as a gradating sky, masking the birch trees so the sky could be painted without disturbing the white of the birch trees and using a dry brush painting approach to paint the patterns seen on the bark of birch trees. They also used a fine brush to paint the branches of the trees and the fence,"

Please see **HOLIDAY**, page 4

Teen Advisory Board crafts homemade blankets to donate

By Amanda Munson
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM - The teens at the library are continuing to spread kindness and holiday cheer at their monthly meeting on Dec. 16.

The Teen Advisory Board, run by Teen Services/Young Adult Librarian Rachel Hapgood, holds group meetings that go over upcoming events, volunteer expectations and input on new events in the planning stage.



Turley photos by Amanda Munson

From the left, Jillian True, Katy Lotterer, Johnny Gueria, and Allison Demetri help tie blankets for donation.

In the month of December, WPL partnered with the Ronald McDonald House of Springfield, an American nonprofit organization that's mission is to create and support programs that directly improve the health and well-being of children, and crafted and donated homemade fleece blankets made by teens.

"We have donated no-sew fleece blankets to the Ronald McDonald House for the last three years. Prior to that, we donated blankets to Shriners Hospital in Springfield, but after the pandemic, their services and needs changed, and that's when we heard about the need at the Ronald

Please see **BLANKETS**, page 5

HISTORICAL WILBRAHAM

Town bustles with December 1966 Holiday events

St. Cecilia's thrived under Fr. Scanlon's leadership

By Charles F. Bennett
Times Editor Emeritus

While browsing through news clippings from December of 1966, 58 years ago, one gets the impression that Wilbraham had a very busy social life capped off by lots of church news that year.



back then, in town and in the rest of the world.

Church News

While looking through my

I had chosen to look back at a turbulent election year, 1968, in last month's Historical Wilbraham column. This month I picked a few years earlier, 1966, to see what was happening



mother, Ethel Bennett, the Wilbraham Morning Union correspondent's news clippings from 1966, I realized that news items really are "the first draft of history". But it seemed that over half of the news and photos covered in the paper involved Wilbraham churches. If aliens were looking down on us back then, they

Fifty-seven years after his death, townsfolk still remember Fr. Scanlon, whose portrait hangs in St. Cecilia's Church.

(Charles F. Bennett photo)

would think "most of the social life of people in Wilbraham involved their churches."

For example, one of the most popular persons in town, with a kind demeanor, but who was known for his very fiery sermons on Sunday mornings, was Rev. John J. Scanlon. He was born in the 19th century. Shortly after Christmas 1966 he suddenly died a few weeks later on Jan. 15, 1967.

Fr. Scanlon was celebrating

Please see **HISTORICAL**, page 10

Thank you for filling our year with so many special memories!

Hope Your Season Is Trimmied With Every Happiness

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Community Newspapers

HSC gets in holiday spirit at Holiday Luncheon



From the left, Ann Albert, Al Fabbri, Jean White and Judy Fleury show off their festive Christmas outfits at the Holiday Luncheon in Hampden.



Tina Doran, administrative assistant and volunteer coordinator at Hampden Senior Center, hands out raffle tickets to attendees.



Irving Lewis poses for the camera as he serenades attendees with Christmas songs during the Holiday Luncheon at the Hampden Senior Center.



Turley photos by Kristin Rivers
Caryn Greco presents the luncheon meal to attendees.



Claudia Kapinos and Joan Shea pose for a festive photo.



Lil Fedora, in a fun Santa hat, holds a plate of food as she helps serves attendees.

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

Holiday Luncheon in the community room on Dec. 18.

HAMPDEN - The senior center got in the holiday spirit early with a festive

The luncheon included a delicious meal of dinner rolls, ham with pineapple,

herbed green beans, au gratin potatoes and apple pie for dessert. The meal was provided by Greater Springfield Senior Services.

Entertainment was provided by Irving Lewis, who sang a mix of Christmas classics and other covers.

Other highlights included gifts of candy put together by St. Mary's Parish, a reading of the poem "Such a Choice" written by Cliff Slate and Bill Gumlaw doing an impromptu musical performance of "Brown-Eyed Girl" while juggling two tambourines.

Tina Doran, the senior center's administrative assistant and volunteer coordinator, was excited to celebrate the holidays.

"It's just really fun. Everybody's in the mood to be happy," Doran said. "Hopefully, this brings everybody together and for people that don't have families to celebrate with the holiday, this becomes their family. I do think it's a really good thing that they do every year."

Doran was thrilled with the turnout, including seeing attendees get in the holiday spirit with festive garb.

"It's just nice to know that they are looking forward to coming here. Our doors are wide open for everybody and anybody," Doran said. "They enjoy being together."

She added how groups that meet at the senior center—including the Common Threads group—also get together at these events, having gotten their own table together for the Holiday Luncheon.

"I do see people saving seats for friends and family that come in," Doran said. "They make it their family here."

For Lewis, who has performed for 45 years, senior centers are some of his favorite venues.

Lewis shared his favorite Christmas song is "O Holy Night" and he got into music through his father, who played the saxophone.

"I've been here before, numerous times, and I guess I'm one of the crowd favorites so I'm back!" Lewis said. "But this is what I love to do anyway. Out of all the venues that I do—I do Mohegan, Foxwoods, I do a lot of big events—these are my favorite venues to do."

Lewis also enjoys doing these events as he gets to see some familiar faces.

"People come up to me and they said, 'Oh you're back! I'm glad you're back!'"



Eileen and Tom Kology were just among the many attendees enjoying the Holiday Luncheon on Dec. 18.

That makes me feel good too. That's a feel-good two-way street, they feel good I feel good," Lewis said.

The biggest thing for Lewis—when he performs—is that people walk away happy.

"Just seeing people happy. When they leave, I want them to say, 'That's the best time I ever had!'" Lewis said. "I want to be responsible for that. To me, it's worth way more than money. It's happiness. Happiness doesn't cost anything."

Doran encourages the community to attend future luncheons and hopes everyone enjoyed the Holiday Luncheon to get in the Christmas spirit.

Also, to attend future events whenever they can.

"We're happy to see the people that have come out. The community should always know that they should be looking at the newsletter. They can join us any time they want. It is for the community," Doran said. "So, we're happy to open our doors to everyone."

Lewis shared this special holiday message.

"Merry Christmas! Happy Holidays to everybody. Enjoy your life and just be kind to people. There's no way you could lose if you're kind to people because it will come back to you," Lewis said.

To check out upcoming events for 2025 at the senior center, check out the newsletter or call 413-566-5588.



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Select Board recommends Reserve Fund transfer for microwave link repair

Later approved by FinCom

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - The Select Board recommended a transfer of \$45,723.54 for the emergency replacement of a microwave link from Ridge Road to Hovey Hill Road.

It was then forwarded to the Finance Committee for approval and final review, which was unanimously approved at the committee's Dec. 18 meeting.

Anthony Gentile, director of the Wilbraham Regional Emergency Communications Dispatch, explained how he had noticed earlier in the week a microwave link was not working.

"This link goes from the Ridge Road tower to the Hovey Hill tower in Monson. The Hovey Hill tower covers the east side of the town for the police and fire radio systems," Gentile said. "Right now, it's inoperable, it's not working. I had radio service go up and check and they noticed that the ODU--or Outdoor Power Unit--on one of, if not both of, of the microwave links is not working. It's not inoperable. It needs to come down and be repaired."

Gentile said he received a quote from their radio vendor, Goosetown, to replace the microwave link.

"The microwave link that we have up there now is almost 10 years old and it's out of warranty," Gentile said. "Last time we had something like this done it took several months because the power units actually have to go to Canada to be repaired, then brought back to the United States to be put back up."

Gentile added the last time this was done was "a year or two ago."

"It wasn't this link. This link was

the only one that wasn't affected several years ago where we had a few of them go down at once," Gentile said.

On the links throughout the community, Gentile explained there are eight or 9 of them, with most of them having been repaired once.

The quote to fix this current microwave link is \$45,723.54 with a three-year warranty.

"Now, last time we had to replace a pair it was approximately \$34,000 to have the pair repaired. If we had it replaced, it's about \$11,000 more and then it'll come with a warranty for about three years--if not five years--for this link," Gentile said.

On funding, Gentile said it would be a transfer of funds and checked if it could be paid for by state grants.

"However, I wouldn't know if we were able to get the money until July and that's just too long to go without the east side of town without any type of radio coverage for both public safety agencies," Gentile said. "It's needed. That's why we have it and I think this should be replaced sooner rather than later with newer equipment that's able to withstand another 10 years worth of service."

Vice Chair Michael Squindo asked about the life expectancy for the link.

"What's the life expectancy of the units when it comes to how long we expect them to last?" Squindo said.

Gentile replied, "Probably about 10 to 15 years."

"These units can probably be repaired. The only problem is the length of time it takes to repair them, and then, once we put them back up they're still not under warranty," Gentile said. "If they go down--the power units fail again, which almost all of them have--we have to get them repaired and then sent out and then it takes two months to turn back from Canada, come back to the United States. It's a minimal fee to replace them, I feel, to have another

extended warranty on this critical infrastructure that we have."

Gentile added he will work with State 911 to get grant funding for the others in town.

"But again, I have to wait for the state to open the grant cycle and approve that funding," Gentile said.

Squindo then asked this.

"Are we averaging that 10 to 15 years on these, because as you said, we just did a bunch of these recently, not that long ago," Squindo said.

Gentile said the equipment that was bought in 2013 was not placed into service until 2017.

"So, right when we placed the equipment into service, it was already out of warranty. So we started using the equipment after it was out of warranty," Gentile said. "So about 10 to 15 years for this type of microwave link. Now, the new aviats that we got a quote for would last longer--or the same if not longer--than the 10 to 15 years that we would get out of the dragon waves now."

Clerk Marc Ducey followed up on funding.

"Are you saying you're not sure if it's going to be reimbursable to the existing grant or you said you had to wait until July," Ducey said. "I don't think I understand."

Gentile clarified the grant cycle for FY25 is closed so he cannot ask for additional grant funding.

"When the grant cycle starts again in June for me to get my grant application in, then I can ask for the money which would be dispersed July 1st and then I would know if we would be able to receive the grant funding from the state for the rest of the microwave links," Gentile said.

"So that's not reimbursable under this year's grant is what you're saying," Ducey said.

"Correct," Gentile said.

Family Lego® Challenge Build Day

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Public Library will be holding a Family Lego® Challenge Build Day on Saturday, Dec. 28 at 10 a.m. Work with your family to recreate LEGO® designs!

There will be both LEGO® Chal-

lenge Cards available to build with, as well as LEGO® "Free Build". Finished LEGO® designs will be photographed for display in the children's department following the program.

This program is for children 5+

with adult supervision. Adults are required to remain with their child/ren at all times.

Call the library at (413) 596-6141 or visit www.wilbrahamlibrary.org to register.

Clarification/Additional Information

In our Dec. 19 story about Cookies with Santa at the VFW Post 9397, there was additional information brought to our attention we wanted to add/clarify. Dorothy McElory's position with the

VFW Auxiliary is the treasurer and historian.

Santa's elf helpers were also known as Peppermint Twist and Sleepy Elf.



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Professional Organizer to Share Tips at WPL

WILBRAHAM— New year, new you! Jenna Elliot, founder of The Naked Flower Professional Organizers, will lead a workshop at the Wilbraham Public Library on Monday, Jan. 6 at 6 p.m. This informative workshop will inspire attendees to get a jump start on their new year organization goals. Learn how to create better habits, utilize your calendar and to-do lists more effectively, and find organization resources to help you stay on task.

This free event is sponsored by the Wilbraham Friends of the Library. Registration is requested as space is limited. Sign up at wilbrahamlibrary.org, or call the library at 413-596-6141.

Troop 359 hosting Bottle & Can Drive

WILBRAHAM - Wilbraham Troop 359 will have their Bottle & Can Drive on Sat, Jan. 4, 2025 from 8 a.m. to Noon.

It will be held in the 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.

Storytime at WPL

WILBRAHAM - Registration is now open for the winter session of Storytime at the Wilbraham Public Library. Join Mrs. B for a fun collection of stories, songs, and fingerplays geared for children ages three to six.

Kids must come in independently and parents/ caretaker must wait in the library. Sessions run for six weeks.

Winter session dates: Thursday January 9, 2025 to February 13, 2025 at 10 a.m.

Call the library at (413) 596-6141 or visit www.wilbrahamlibrary.org to register.

WPD Hunting Reminder

WILBRAHAM – The police department shared this reminder on their Facebook page on Dec. 2:

“Today is the first day of shotgun season. PLEASE wear hi-visibility clothing and dress your dogs accordingly when in the woods over the next few weeks.”



Turley photos by Kristin Rivers

Chris Sterritt demonstrates a step to attendees during the Holiday Greeting Card Workshop hosted by the Scantic River Artisans



Chris Sterritt shows off the process for creating a holiday greeting card during the Holiday Greeting Card Workshop hosted by the Scantic River Artisans at the Hampden Senior Center on Dec. 12.



Throughout the evening, members of the Scantic River Artisans also went around the tables to offer tips and tricks to attendees on their holiday greeting cards, as shown here with Ann Bagge speaking with Ellen Richards.



Ellen Richards shows off her completed holiday greeting card.

HOLIDAY from page 1

Sterritt said.

Sterritt enjoyed hosting the workshop because “it gave me a chance to show some people new to watercolor that it is a medium that anyone can learn.”

“It’s not as scary as some are led to believe and the results are always great as we experienced with the positive feedback received at the workshop,” Sterritt said. “I had a great teacher years ago, Walter Cudnohufsky, and I enjoy passing

on what I learned from him to others interested in the medium. His mantra was, ‘Anyone can learn to paint!’”

She added the workshops are open to all, whether professional artists or beginners.

“We are fortunate that so many people from Hampden and surrounding communities find our ILTA’s fun and encouraging. We have many folks that try to attend most of these events to learn something new and to meet new people or just to have a night out,” Sterritt said.

Ellen Richards and Sally Bryce were among the crowd of attendees

having a great time at the workshop.

“It was fun! I learned something new that I never did before, so it was a good time,” Richards said.

“I’ve always enjoyed it and it was a good opportunity to get out on a cold, wintry night,” Bryce said.

Richards enjoyed the people she met and Bryce loved the instructors. “Meeting new people, that’s always nice,” Richards said.

“The artists themselves that take their time out to try and help us out,” Bryce said.

“Very supportive. They encourage us no matter what,” Richards said.

“Very helpful,” Bryce said.

Richards added it was her first time doing one of the ILTA workshops. “I would definitely come again!” Richards said. “It was interesting. Definitely enjoyed it, learned a little something. Went out of my comfort zone.”

Lisa Caron loves all forms of art but never tried out watercolor until this workshop. “I tend to work more with acrylic-type things, with bolder colors, and I’ve never done anything in the form of a wash, so I really enjoyed it and I’m kind of hooked on it now,” Caron said.

Caron enjoys the workshops as they’re offered in the evening, the prices are reasonable and meeting new people, adding how the Scantic River Artisans are important as they help promote local art in the community.

“I think that by promoting these workshops and bringing as many people out that do attend them, it promotes their group and art in general in the community. Especially when they do the art shows and things like that,” Caron said. “I think it’s really lovely that we have such a great group in our environment, in our area. Not all communities have that.”

Sterritt thanked everyone for attending and encouraged the community to check out future workshops.

“I want to thank all of the people that attended the ‘Holiday Greeting Card’ workshop in watercolor. I hope you had a good time and learned something new. I was amazed at all of the beautiful cards that were created. I am looking forward to seeing many of you return to the upcoming ILTA’s in 2025,” Sterritt said.

Caron’s advice for future attendees is to “embrace their inner artist.” “Not put any kind of standard on it, but just do what they feel like they think and express themselves,” Caron said.

To learn more, visit scanticriver-artisans.com or email info@scanticriverartisans.com.

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WPL Invites Families to Storytime Fun

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Public Library is thrilled to announce a special storytime event designed for families with young children. Join us for a morning of delightful stories, engaging songs, and fun activities on Saturday, January 11th at 10:00 a.m.

This interactive Storytime session will feature:

Captivating stories: Enjoy a selection of engaging picture books that spark

imagination and foster a love of reading.

Sing-alongs: Join in on lively songs and rhymes that encourage movement and interaction.

This event is free and open to the public, but registration is encouraged to ensure adequate space for all attendees. To register, please visit the Wilbraham Public Library website or contact the library directly at (413) 596-6141. Contact: Lisa Berezin lberezin@wilbraham-ma.gov



Turley photos by Amanda Munson

From the left, Teen Services/Young Adult Librarian Rachel Hapgood, Allison Demetri, Abby Patterson, Charlotte Oh, Johnny Gueria, Katy Lotterer, and Jillian True hold up their first blanket donation to the Ronald McDonald House in Springfield.

BLANKETS from page 1

McDonald House,” Hapgood said. “After reaching out to a representative, they told us that their homemade blanket need continues to be for teenage boys, so we specifically chose mostly prints/patterns/colors that this age group might like.”

Held in the Brooks Room, the environment felt cozy with two television sets showing fireplaces, a variety of snacks and drinks, and several blanket patterns to choose from. The teens worked together by cutting each blanket, tying them together, and proudly showing their creation to Hapgood.

“The teens do respond well to hands-on activities and workshops, where they are creating, doing and making. One of their favorite programs is the Stuffed Animal Sleepover during February vacation, which the teens completely plan, organize and put on for the kids in the community. It includes reading books to kids, and some of the teens remember coming to our library as a kid with their stuffies, so they are excited to run the event as a teen!” Hapgood said. “They love doing community service, and making no-sew fleece blankets to brighten a teen’s day. And any programs with food are popular!”

With a small group this past Monday evening, Hapgood says the attendance varies depending on their schedules.

“The TAB kicked off the school year at our September meeting with 15 teens in attendance, which is more than the prior year. We hope to be welcoming to any teen to join us and see what TAB is all about. In the new year, I hope to see returning teens and new teens that want to share their ideas with me, and help me better teen library services,” Hapgood said.

The teen population is often overlooked, but with third spaces like the local libraries, teens are able to be in a space where you can relax, gather, and have fun without having to be in a school or work environment.

“It is so important to continue to support the teens, as the teen years are critical in development. I see the library as a “third space” for teens, a place outside of their home and school where they can engage, learn and socialize with others,” Hap-



From the left, Abby Patterson and Charlotte Oh help cut the blankets to add another cozy layer.

good said. “We want the library to be a space where teens can relax and learn other skills. As a Teen Librarian, I think the Teen Advisory Board is an important part of my job. TAB is basically a group of teens trying to keep the Wilbraham Library a safe, welcoming, enriching and fun space for all teens.”

When asked about her favorite aspect of the job, Hapgood said, “The best part of my job is the teens, my co-workers and our supportive community!”

Upcoming teen events are Jan. 17 the WPL will show a movie, “Inside Out 2” at 1:30 p.m. with pizza and snacks. Jan. 28 the WPL will host a Paint, Sip, Fun night at 5 p.m. The Winter Reading Program is happening in the months of Jan. and Feb. for all ages, with teens having a chance to win a book.

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For further information call Randall at (413) 436-5357 or email adventuretours@att.net or go to www.adventuretoursofwarren.com

Falcon Housing Coporation

Organization: Falcon Housing

Location: Wilbraham

Type: Volunteer

About Us:

Falcon Housing is dedicated to providing affordable and quality housing to low-income seniors through HUD programs. Our mission is to enhance the living standards of our residents while fostering a strong sense of community.

Position Overview:

We are seeking passionate and dedicated individuals to join our Board of Directors. As a Board Member, you will play a critical role in shaping the strategic direction and oversight of our organization. This is a unique opportunity to contribute to meaningful change in the community and support our mission of affordable housing to seniors.

Key Responsibilities:

- Attend and participate in Board meetings and committee meetings.
- Provide strategic guidance and oversight in areas such as finance, governance, and program development.
- Review and approve budgets, policies, and major organizational decisions.
- Advocate for the organization and its mission within the community.

Qualifications:

- Commitment to the mission of providing affordable housing to seniors and community development.
- Previous experience in non-profit management, real estate, finance, law or a related field is preferred.
- Strong communication and leadership skills.
- Ability to work collaboratively with other board members and staff.
- Willingness to dedicate time and effort to board responsibilities.

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- Attend quarterly Board meetings and additional committee meetings as needed.

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VIEWPOINTS



Am I entitled to more Social Security from my ex-husbands?

Dear Rusty:

I am 76 years old and a retired high school counselor/teacher. I was married to my first husband from 1968 until 1981. He is still living and he remarried two more times and, I believe, he is currently divorced. He is 77 years old. His income was always much higher than mine. I was married to my second husband from May 1989 until we divorced in April 2017. My second husband died in June 2023. What I wonder is if I am entitled to receive Social Security benefits based upon the income of either of my ex-husbands?

Signed: Twice Divorced Spouse

Dear Twice Divorced:

Divorced spouses are entitled to the same benefits as a current spouse if their marriage lasted at least 10 years which, in both cases, yours did. The other caveat is whether your own SS retirement benefit is less than you are entitled to from either of your ex-husbands. If your own SS retirement benefit is less, then you will get an incremental amount on top of your own SS retirement to bring your total monthly benefit up to your spousal (or surviving spouse) entitlement.

Since your first husband is still living, it is likely that your best financial option is to claim a surviving ex-spouse benefit from your deceased second husband. The reason is that survivor benefits from husband # 2 are based on his actual benefit at his death, whereas benefits from a living ex-spouse, husband #1, are based upon his full retirement amount. In other words, it is likely that 100% of deceased husband #2's benefit at his death is more than 50% of living husband #1's current benefit at his Full Retirement Age.

It is, of course, possible that 50% of your first husband's FRA entitlement is more than 100% of your second husband's benefit at death, in which case your ex-spouse benefit from your first husband could be more. The only way to sort this out is to contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 to make an appointment to apply for surviving ex-spouse benefits from your deceased second husband. Explain that your first ex-husband is still living and that you are unsure of what your benefits are as your first husband's ex-spouse.

Social Security will be able to determine from their records, which one provides you with a higher benefit amount, provide each husband's Social Security number when you call. As I said, your best financial option will likely be to take your survivor benefit from your deceased second ex-husband note, however, if your first ex-husband also dies before you, you can subsequently file for a survivor benefit from him, if that is more than you are getting from your second husband's record.

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

Kissing balls for a new porch

It's really funny that sometimes I have to consult my own columns to remember how to do something.

You see, now that the front porch is done, there is a new area to decorate, an area well-suited for kissing balls! My daughter and I were at the local garden center and there were so many beauties for sale.

Of course it would break my budget to buy one to go in the middle of each pair of columns, so it looks like I'll be making them myself.

The first thing you will need is a styrofoam ball. One that is six inches in diameter would make a good size kissing ball.

Then gather a coat hanger and some wire cutters. Snip away the hook and straighten out the rest. Insert it through the middle of the ball and bend one end as a hanger.

About 18 inches will be showing; it will look better if you choose a gold colored hanger. If not, you can always cover it later.

Getting the piece of wire into the dead center can be difficult, so use a long wooden pick to pre-make the hole. After that insertion will be easy.

Having a selection of greens on hand will make a pretty kissing ball. Scavenge the landscape for holly, yew, white pine, juniper and the like. Now it is time to insert clumps of greenery into the ball.

Styrofoam is very durable – great for holding all of these stems, but much more difficult to work with than floral foam. For that reason, all but the most rigid stems need to be put on wooden picks before they can be stuck into the ball.

Make small bunches of greenery about four inches long, holding their stems next to the pick and wrapping the attached wire to it. One by one insert these bunches into the styrofoam.

It is best to work randomly around the

ball – setting the dimensions if you will, rather than starting in one place and working out. Being that it is round, it will be hard to put it down while working on it.

After a while you'll get into the swing of things by wiring a few bunches of greens, putting them in, wiring a few more and so forth. Finally, give it a good look. Is it a nice, round shape? Is there any foam showing? Where could it use a few berries?

Rose hips or winterberry, or even artificial berries will surely brighten it up, as will strands of ribbon wired to a wooden pick and inserted into the bottom. Wired ribbon is a good

choice since it has a little shape; less droopy so to speak.

It will be surprising just how much greenery it takes to make a kissing ball. When I am making wreaths or decorations of any sort I always continue harvesting even after I think I have enough, just as a bit of insurance. It's always better to have extra than have to stop everything and go picking again.

One little factoid for cruise ship trivia: "Kissing bunches" in Old England were comprised of two intersecting circles of greens that were often decorated with fruit as well as figures of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. The "kissing" aspect came from the sprig of mistletoe that hung on the very bottom of the sphere – evoking the same response it does when hung by itself today.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 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.



Election letters to the editor welcome

The Wilbraham-Hampden Times welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to Wilbraham-Hampden Times, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to krivers@turley.com. Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by noon Monday to be considered for that Thursday's newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the newspaper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election.

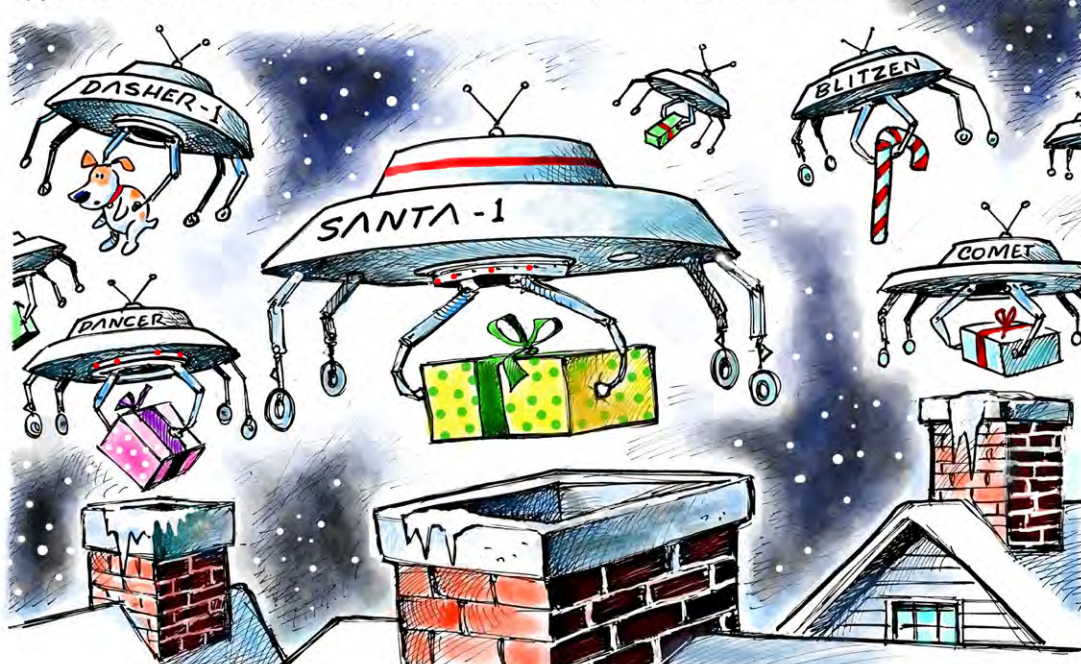
For more information, call the editor at 413-283-8393.

Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspaper plans to print stories about contested races for Congress, state Senate, state House, district attorney and Governor's Council during the weeks leading up to the election, as well as a question-and-answer voters guide. In order to ensure fairness to all candidates, no political press releases will be printed, nor will reporters cover political rallies or fundraisers.

Candidates who wish to further publicize their candidacy, beliefs and events may contact advertising, 413-283-8393 about paid advertising in Wilbraham-Hampden Times.

ABOUT THE DRONE ACTIVITY IN THE EVENING SKIES...



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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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Happy Holidays

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TO ALL OF YOU!

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A COMMUNITY GALLERY



HFD cautions drivers during snowstorm

The Hampden Fire Department advised drivers to use extreme caution during a snowstorm on Dec. 5. "The wet snow mixed with strong winds is causing trees to fall. Currently N Monson Rd is closed in the area of #150. Please don't approach down wires and call 911 if you see wires down," the department said. The later was later reopened. Photo and caption courtesy of Hampden Fire Department



Road closure alert from HPD

In addition to the fire department, the Hampden Police Department also put out a weather alert on Dec. 5: "Road Closure. North Monson Road from Glendale Road / North Monson Road to Bennett Road in Monson closed due to a downed tree." By 10 a.m., North Monson Road was open with National Grid on scene working to restore power to the North Monson Road and Bennett Road area.

Photos and caption courtesy of Hampden Police Department



Life in & WILBRAHAM-HAMPDEN

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

WILBRAHAM-HAMPDEN

WMS Robotics advances to WEST Championship

Congratulations to WMS Robotics team on advancing to WEST Championship: (L-R) M Liam Shattuck, Martin G Lam, Liam Matthews, En tuck, Nolan Carney, Reid and Michelle Kyei Oher student contributors n Jason Cao, Ellen Di Nino, Saviengvong). Submi caption Samu

Rotary donates toys to YWCA Women's Shelter...



Each member who attended the Dec. 11 Wilbraham-Hampden Rotary Club Holiday Party at La Cucina in Hampden donated a toy to the YWCA Domestic Violence Shelter Dec. 12 in Springfield. The toys were accepted by YWCA Front Desk Receptionist Anais Jones from Rotary Past Presidents Charlie Bennett (left) and Brad Sperry (right). For information on joining the club, call Sperry at 413-537-4171. (YWCA photo) Photo and caption Charlie Bennett



THIS PAGE IS BROUGHT TO YOU



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

Wishing you the best all holiday season & throughout the new year

WILBRAHAM HAMPDEN

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Dedicated to Improving the Quality of Life in the Communities We Serve

WPD receives donation from HasBeen Toys



The day after the Stuff-a-Cruiser event on Dec. 7, the Wilbraham Police Relief Association received another donation from HasBeen Collectible Toys & Comics own Rik Alvarez and Mike Bolduc from Lunch Money Comics YouTube channel. The police department expressed their thanks for the generous donations. Photo and caption courtesy of Wilbraham Police Department

WFD delivers baby

The Wilbraham Fire Department shared a photo of a stork holding a pink bundle on Dec. 9 after announcing the delivery of a baby girl. On their Facebook page, the fire department wrote, "In the early morning hours of Dec. 8, our Wilbraham firefighter paramedics assisted in the field delivery of a beautiful baby girl. A huge congratulations to the new parents!"

Photo and caption courtesy of Wilbraham Fire Department



WPD hosts Stuff a Cruiser



Photos and captions courtesy of Wilbraham Police Department
The Wilbraham Police Department shared this message on their Facebook page after the Annual Stuff-a-Cruiser event on Dec. 7 outside Big Y on Boston Road: "On behalf of the Wilbraham Police Relief Association, we extend a sincere #thankyou for the outpouring of support in this year's Stuff-A-Cruiser event," the department said.

Select Board hears update on 176 Cottage Ave.

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM - The Select Board received an update on 176 Cottage Ave. during their Dec. 17 meeting.

Town Administrator Nick Breault explained that Building Commissioner John Walsh would meet with a representative from Charlie Armit Services onsite the next morning to lay out the fencing to put up.

"The town has now taken the measure of putting up the fence on our dime for the time being. We've been in contact with counsel for the property owner and we've made our dissatisfaction and disappointment known as a town and our concerns, more importantly, about public safety," Breault said. "So, the town's going forward with it."

Breault said they wanted to give every opportunity for this

to be addressed by the property owner, but it was not.

"So, we're now going to incur a short-term cost, which is not insignificant. We think it'll be approximately \$3,000 or so to just install the fence and then there'll be a monthly fee probably in the \$500 range. John sought three quotes for this," Breault said. "But, we've made it clear that this will be recovered by the town as the form of a lien on the property and so, unfortunately, it had to come to this."

After Clerk Marc Ducey asked what would be next steps, Breault said this.

"I don't know if further legal remedies we could do. I think because of things that were identified as part of that Board of Survey process, that's still in place. So, the fence is one of the measures that's identified," Breault said. "If there are other measures, so for example, there's an empty com-

mercial-grade propane tank on the property, maybe the town at some point says, 'We've given you enough time to remove that or use it. We're going to go in there and do that.' There are other vehicles that presumably are abandoned or inoperable on the property that can be removed. We could do that."

Another item, Breault said, is "a decrepit building--a smaller building--on the property."

"That's not only an eyesore, but another potential for a dangerous collapse, in attractiveness," Breault said. "So, we could end up doing those kinds of things."

Ducey also asked about safety for the neighbors in that area.

"But this will secure the building and make it safe for the neighbors, at least as much as we can," Ducey said.

Breault replied, "As much as we can."

"Both chiefs and Mr. Walsh

have continued to keep an eye on the building—physically going there—taking a look at it," Breault said. "The elements are taking their toll as you would think and wind storms and rain storms, they're going to have their effect on that property."

Chair Sue Bunnell asked about a board of survey report.

"Were we getting a report from the Board of Survey?" Bunnell said.

Breault confirmed a report was received, sharing the findings.

"The report from the Board of Survey was that that they did their work and they came to the conclusions that these were the properties over there. So, that was received," Breault said.

When Ducey mentioned contacting the neighbors and notifying them, Breault agreed.

"Certainly, we can," Breault said. "We can certainly notify them."

Wilbraham Men's Glee Club to Begin Rehearsals

WILBRAHAM - The Wilbraham Men's Glee Club, accompanied by Marcia Jackson and conducted by Ray Drury, will begin rehearsals for the 2025 concert season on Monday evening, Jan. 6, at Christ the King Lutheran/Episcopal Church at 7 p.m. Rehearsals will continue each Monday thereafter until 2 concerts in late April/early May.

While no audition is required, all interested should be able to "carry a tune" attend the majority of rehearsals, and be able to pay a nominal fee at the first rehearsal to cover the cost of sheet music.



HISTORICAL from page 1

his 16th year as pastor and founder of St. Cecilia's in 1966 while the Men's Club and Choir helped him observe his 40th year as a Catholic priest. "Under his leadership a new church has been built and all aspects of parish life have flourished..." said a spokesman for the men's club.

A plaque of Fr. Scanlon, currently mounted in the Social Center of St. Cecilia's, reads: "His priestly devotion, burning zeal, tireless efforts and self-sacrificing labors for the welfare of our parish keep him in high esteem and loving remembrance."

St. Cecilia's announced that the Mother and Daughter Communion Supper would be held on Dec. 16 (1966) with a Mass and then a smorgasbord, Miss Katheryn Engle, a teacher at Memorial School, would show home movies of her recent trip to Europe.

Not to be outdone The Women's Christian Fellowship of Grace Union Church held their December meeting in the Parish Hall where Mrs. Colin A. Trant and Rev. and Mrs. Henry E. Green showed slides of a trip they took that summer to Europe. Members were asked to bring shirt boxes and Christmas wrapping paper for the 30 wool sweaters the group purchased for holiday gifts for the girls at the Protestant Youth Center in Baldwinville, Mass.

New Priest

Meanwhile, west of town at the Church of the Epiphany, that church welcomed a



Watching a rehearsal of the Christmas Cotillion are: Mrs. Douglas Dickie, second from right, project chairman of the Mother's Club of Wilbraham United Church, and Miss Linda Morgan, right, dance assistant. Karen Taylor, left, and Wendy Hayn are among those who will participate Saturday afternoon from 2 to 4 at the Fellowship Hall of the church.

News photo from Springfield Morning Union promotes the Mothers Club of United Church 1966 Christmas Cotillion. The event featured a formal Grand March and a number of Christmas games and dances for kids 3 to 10 years old. (Morning Union photo)

new Episcopal priest, Rev. James C. Crossen, who had served parishes as far away as California and New York State. Rev. Crossen filled the vacancy left by Rev. Daniel B. Kunhardt who was vicar there for eight years. Crossen had an interesting background. Before being ordained he was a journalist and served as program director for the Buffalo Radio Broadcasting Corp. and a feature writer for the Buffalo Times.

Leading up to Christmas that year the

Mother's Club of Wilbraham United Church was busy getting ready for what they called their "An old-fashioned Christmas Cotillion". Dance teacher Adeline Johnson would help organize the formal Grand March and a number of Christmas games and dances for kids 3 to 10 years old.

St. Cecilia's was also getting ready for Christmas by holding their Christmas Bazaar in the Social Center on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 9 and 10. General Chairman of the event was Mrs. Raymond Trombley with co-chairman Mrs. Frank Engle. A new feature for sale that year was black and white and brown and white tiles made by Mrs. Dorothy Wheeler with a pencil sketch of St. Cecilia's Church. They could be used as wall plaques or to put under hot dishes.

Vietnam

What was happening out in the world at that time?

International Days of Protest against the U.S. policy on Vietnam were taking place. Pope Paul VI issues an encyclical on the Vietnamese War and a 48-hour Christmas truce was observed in Vietnam.

In Wilbraham the Welcome Wagon held its December meeting at United Church with the theme "Candlelight Cookery".

A get-acquainted Christmas Tea was held Dec. 7 between 1 and 3 p.m. by the Friendship Committee of United Church. All women of the parish were encouraged to attend to meet new members of the church. Mrs. Everett Warner was the chairman and said babysitting services would be offered.

Wintery December

It could get cold in Wilbraham in those days. Twenty-five Scouts of Troop 177 slept out in zero weather on a December Saturday night at a camp in Monson. The boys worked on advancement skills that weekend.

The spirit of Christmas enveloped the entire town that season. My mother wrote, "The highlight of the Christmas Social Season was The Holly Ball sponsored by the Mothers Club at United Church. That year it was held out of town at the Elmcrest Country Club in East Longmeadow. Many ball-goers held private parties in their own homes prior to the event to get in the right frame of mind.

The Sanctuary Choir of Grace Union Church held their annual Christmas Concert on Dec. 11 in the church. A trumpet trio took part in the concert. The choir was under the direction of Minnechaug music teacher Dwight D. Killiam.

The Wilbraham Grange held its Christmas Party Dec. 21 that featured a move by the electric company. All Grange Masters from local towns were invited.

The youngsters in town had their own

holiday entertainment when students from grades 7 through 10 attended a record hop in the Grange Hall sponsored by the Grange youth members.

And then crime raised its ugly head when Wilbraham Policemen Terrance T. Reidy and Robert Sweeney, checking the Parkway Drive-in on Boston Road, closed for the winter, found a side door broken. Upon further investigation they found a cigarette machine in the Concession Stand had been rifled of cash.

Daily life in America and the world continued when it was announced that U.S. car registrations totaled 78 million passenger cars and 16 million trucks and buses. President Johnson's youngest daughter Luci married Patrick J. Nugent. UCLA defeated Michigan State 14-12 to win the Rose Bowl on New Years Day.

The Red Guard demonstrated in China against Western influences. President Johnson went on a Far East Tour. Nazi minister Albert Speer was released after 20 years imprisonment.

William Manchester published "Death of a President". Robert Heinlein wrote the science fiction classic "The Moon is a Harsh Mistress".

Christmas Morning

When Christmas morning finally came that year, townspeople woke up to see the Civil War Statue in Crane Park adorned with a red Santa's cap with a white tassel and a bulging white sack over its shoulder. Clifford D. Scott, who operated a gas station across the street, said it wasn't there when he closed up Christmas Eve so the deed must have been done during the height of the weekend snowstorm.

One alert citizen, who preferred to remain nameless, recalled that the Shults brothers, Rudy and Maitland, owners of the Village Store next door, had been wearing the same sort of caps recently as a pre-Christmas customer relations gesture. A call to the Village Store revealed that Rudy Shults, missing from the store on Christmas Eve, no longer had a tasseled red cap in his possession. Speculation persisted in the Center Village of Wilbraham on Christmas Day. "But nobody knows from nothing, or so they say."

Sources: News archives, December 1966, of Springfield Morning Union. "History of Wilbraham Bicentennial Edition 1763-1963" edited by Charles Merrick; Chauncey Peck who wrote "The History of Wilbraham, 1731, 1763-1913. "The Timetables of History" by Bernard Grun, a Touchstone Book published by Simon & Schuster.

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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Falcons hand Agawam first loss

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

AGAWAM—The basketball fans who attended last Monday night's boys' varsity game between the Minnechaug Falcons and the Agawam Brownies saw a very entertaining affair from the opening tip-off to the final buzzer.

Led by junior guard Miles Fergus, who scored a career-high and game-high 30 points, the Falcons improved their record to 2-0 by overcoming a 13-point deficit in the middle of the third quarter to defeat the Brownies, 60-56, at Agawam's Clifford P. Kibbe Gymnasium.

"When we were trailing in the third quarter, coach (Mike) Orzech kept telling us to keep chipping away. We executed very well down the stretch," Fergus said. "This is a very big win for us against a pretty good Agawam team."

Prior to the 2023-24 season, the two basketball teams were members of the Suburban North Division. They would battle each other twice during the regular season. The Falcons moved to the Suburban South Division a year ago and they only play each other



Nate Pace uses his body to keep the ball.

one time.

A year ago, Agawam snapped a three game losing streak against the Falcons by celebrating a 66-55 road win.

Last Monday's contest was the Brownies (2-1) first home game of the regular season.

Fergus also scored 20 points in the Falcons 63-51 season opening victory at Wahconah Regional "Miles is probably one of the

best basketball players in Western Mass.," Orzech said. "He does a lot of different things for us."

Fergus scored ten or more points in 13 games last season. He scored 20 and 23 points in the Falcons final two games of the 2023-24 regular season, which were very close losses.

"We did lose a lot of close games last year, which wound up hurting us because we didn't



Drew Grasso makes a shot under pressure.

qualify for the postseason tournament," Orzech added. "We have a lot of returning players this year and we were able to grind out a win in tonight's game."

Minnechaug had two other double digit scorers against Agawam. Junior guard Andrew Grasso finished with 15 points with the help of four 3-pointers. Senior forward Nathan Pace scored 11 points. Senior guard Gus Przybyl

rounded out the scoring column for the visitors from Wilbraham with four points. He scored a game-high 29 points in the season opening victory.

The Brownie's leading scorer was senior point guard Elijah Maldonado who scored 18 of his 29 points during the first half. No other Agawam player reached

Please see **FALCONS**, page 12



Ava Ofcarkik passes inside.



Ava Manning attempts a three-pointer.



Lyric Nelson sends a pass away.

Turley photos by Sofia DiGrande

Falcons defense shines in season-opening win

WILBRAHAM – Last Wednesday night, Minnechaug Regional High School girls basketball held Holyoke to just sev-

en first half points and rode that great defense to a 51-24 win. The Falcons spread through scoring around with 12 different

players registering points in the win. Lyric Nelson and Ava Ofcarkik had nine points each to lead the team. The Falcons faced

Central on Dec. 20 and travel to Wachusett on Friday, Dec. 27 at 1:30 p.m.



Caileen O'Brien looks to drive to the hoop.



Elizabeth Woytowicz heads into the arc.



Ainsley Holden makes the long jumper.

Swimming sweeps Amherst Regional

WILBRAHAM – Last Wednesday afternoon, Minnechaug Regional High School swept visiting Amherst in a pair of swimming meets. The boys were victorious 133-33 while the girls won 110-70. In their season-opening meets, the boys lost to West Springfield 109-75 while the girls won 140-33. In the girls opening victory, Emma Grzebieniowski took wins in the 100 and 200 freestyles. Chelsea Ortega had wins in the 500 freestyle and 100 fly. Lianna Lisowski won the diving competition. Minnechaug took first place in every event. In the boys defeat against West Springfield, Cameron Maziarz won the 200 individual medley and 100 freestyle for the Falcons.



FALCONS from page 11

double digits.

“Elijah is a terrific basketball player,” said Agawam head coach Tim Sheehan, who was previously the boys’ varsity basketball coach at Granby High School. “He always wants to win more than anything else.”

Maldonado has scored more than 800 points during his varsity basketball career. He’s hoping to join his former teammate, Colin Smith, as a member of the elite 1,000 point club. Smith accomplished the feat last year as a senior.

Fergus, who joined the varsity team as a freshman, scored nine of his points during the first quarter, as the Falcons entered the second quarter with a slim 13-11 advantage.

The Brownies outscored the Falcons 17-7 in the second quarter, and they headed into the locker room with a 28-20 halftime lead. Maldonado scored 12 of his team’s 17 points during that quarter.

With 4:35 remaining in the third quarter, a Maldonado driving lay-up down the middle of the lane gave Agawam a 38-25 lead.

The Falcons then responded with a 10-0 run.

“We got into foul trouble in the third quarter and that’s when they went on a run,” Sheehan said. “We played well offensively in tonight’s game, but we didn’t play very well defensively.”

Fergus began the Falcons’ run by sinking a jumper from the left side of the key. He capped it off with a steal and a lay-up. In between, Grasso buried a 3-pointer from the top of the key and he also made an old fashioned three point play.

Agawam responded with back-to-back field goals from junior Josiah Wyner, which were his only points, and an inside

hoop from sophomore center Matt Letellier (2 points). The Brownies entered the final eight minutes of the contest holding a 44-38 lead.

Fergus made a free throw before hitting a 3-pointer from the left side which closed the gap to 44-42 less than a minute into the fourth quarter.

A Przybyl lay-up with 5:17 left in regulation gave Minnechaug the lead at 47-46 for the first time since the second quarter.

Agawam quickly retook the lead when freshman guard Brody Sheehan buried a 3-pointer from the right corner. Sheehan, whose two older brothers (Tim Jr. & Ryan) played basketball at Granby High School, is one of the three freshmen listed on the Brownies varsity roster. He was also a starter in the home opener.

“It’s very special to have now coached all three of my sons at the varsity level,” coach Sheehan said. “Whenever we’re on the basketball court, Brody is just another player and I’m his coach.”

The other two Agawam freshmen are Dylan Jorgensen, and Caeden Roeder (5 points)

A putback hoop from sophomore forward Gavin Cruz (6points) gave the Brownies a 51-48 advantage with four minutes remaining on the scoreboard clock.

Then Fergus made a lay-up, and a 3-pointer from the right side, which gave the Falcons the lead back at 53-51. Pace added a jumper, and the visiting team would continue to pull away.

They held a 60-54 lead following a Fergus free throw before Maldonado made a lay-up at the buzzer.

The Brownies players and coaching staff would probably like to play the Falcons again in either the Western Mass. tournament or the Division 2 state tournament.

Puppolo announces \$5,600 in Grant Funds for Recycling and Waste Reduction

WILBRAHAM - State Rep. Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr. (D- Springfield), is pleased to announce that the Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) Sustainable Materials Recovery Program (SMRP) has awarded the Town of Wilbraham a \$5,600 grant through the Recycling Dividends Program.

“I am pleased that Wilbraham will be able to continue to maximize their recycling and waste reduction efforts as they work toward a healthier and sustainable environment for their residents through the continued support of the DEP and the Legislature,” stated Puppolo.

The Recycling Dividends Program recognizes municipalities that have im-

plemented policies and programs proven to maximize materials reuse and recycling, as well as waste reduction. Communities that receive this funding must reinvest in their own municipal recycling efforts.

MassDEP’s SMRP program provides funding for recycling, composting, reuse and source reduction activities that will reduce the amount of waste disposed of in landfills and incinerators. Waste prevention and recycling reduce greenhouse gas emissions by capturing the embodied energy in everyday products and packaging waste and converting it into new products.



By Barb Turcotte

Cody Jaramillo asked me the same question I’m often asked, where do I find people to share their Random Acts of Kindness stories. I told him he was a prime example of how people cross my path.

I had a plumbing problem so called Fletcher Sewer & Drain. I was lucky to have Cody be on call and how I met him. He treated me with such respect and dignity I just knew he had stories to be told. Boy was I right, he’s an incredible young man!

I’d asked Cody about the tattoos he sported on his arm and quickly found out he’d suffered more losses than someone his age should have had to endure. He’s overcome some difficult situations from self-admitted bad choices.

After losing a best friend he considered a brother in 2014, he spiraled into a black hole of drinking causing him to gain approximately a hundred pounds. One day he woke up and knew that’s not what his friend would have wanted for him, that’s the day he turned his life around. He got sober, started making better choices and then in 2021 shed the extra weight!

Cody has a wonderful support system and though some were doubtful he’d be able to accomplish this transformation, there was always love. His dad and mom were incredible examples that shaped him into the kind and caring core person he is. He is a self-proclaimed Mama’s boy but recalled how his dad, who he reiterated numerous times within our conversation was his hero, was at all he and his brothers sporting events always encouraging them. His mother who had served in the military when she was younger retired as head nurse for a VA hospital specializing in spinal cord injuries.

He shared that his mother actually introduced her mom and his Grandpa Charlie, then after six months they were married. Those grandparents were other excellent models. Grandpa Charlie, a thirty-five-year military man, was voted New England Marine of the year in 2024! He completed 15 years in the Army, 20 in the Marines and still continues work that supports veterans. He was even nominated for the National Marine honoree. Cody says he’s the perfect example of everything and definitely a ‘selfless man’.

When I asked Cody to tell me about his Random Acts of Kindness he shared how he’d helped a young woman whose car broke down in the middle of an intersection by pushing her to safety. Once he knew she was safe he left, never giv-

ing his name but knowing she’d be okay. He also reflected when younger how he always helped an elderly neighbor with her yard work and shoveling her driveway. His parents were always superior examples of this type of behavior.

As we chatted Cody told me about the wonderful woman he’s shared his life with these past four years, describing her as not only beautiful but also his rock. He said though they come from very different backgrounds, they support each other and it works.

He also shared something quite unique, in 2017 he became a lottery winner. He said the money wasn’t as important to him as the people in his life and he shared his good fortune with them. He was able to purchase a home for his parents, gave his four siblings a monetary gift as well as a very special aunt and uncle who had supported him through his troubled times. He also was able to help out some friends by giving them items after purchasing new things, such as a truck to one. He explained he was very happy this hadn’t happened in his earlier years but rather in his sober and healthier time.

That night he’d been out with friends playing pool and ordered a pizza for everyone. Those who wanted to chip in fine and if not, he was okay with that too. Just another example of his generosity. After, he stopped at a store and was going to buy a \$30 lottery ticket but instead decided to purchase three ten dollar ones. Though on the first he won more than the purchase price, it was the second one that gave him the bigger winnings.

Cody still works, loves meeting the various people with his job and just one more thing that impressed me was, this never changed who he is. He’s also now a youth wrestling coach in Wilbraham, kindergarten through eighth grade. What a wonderful mentor these kids have in Cody!

I know I’ve dreamed of what I’d do if I ever won the lottery and you probably have too, but what a wonderful story to be able share about someone this actually happened to. With your genuine lifetime of kindness, Cody you’re an inspiration to others in so many ways, thank you!

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

HOLIDAY Merry Makers



Members of the Wilbraham Garden Club decorated the dining room of the Potter Mansion at Storowton Village for the West Springfield museum's holiday events. An original centerpiece of apple, holly, and pine suits the 19th-century room.



The Wilbraham Branch of Monson Savings sponsored a Giving Tree and randomly distributed 10 gift cards to local business to 10 lucky customers. The bank also held a holiday toy drive. Above, Vicki Baldyga (left), branch manager, and Amber Messer, assistant branch manager, with the bank's holiday tree.



Turley photos by Patricia Sullivan
Sandy Polom, owner of The Scented Garden Gift Shoppe in Wilbraham, worked every day from Black Friday to Christmas Eve. Here she holds one of the boutique's many plush Jellycats, which were one of this season's best-selling gifts.



Julia Grottole of Kinderhook Flowers and Gifts in Hampden creates a mini Christmas tree. Boxwood log centerpieces, wreaths and small fresh flower arrangements in mason jars were popular this year at Kinderhook.



Allison Henry, owner of the Sugar Chalet in Wilbraham, decorates some of the many dozens of holiday cookies baked at the shop. Henry held a sold-out gingerbread cookie decorating class on Dec. 15.



Joelene Hackett, owner of Theme Cakes by Joelene in Wilbraham, with a tower of freshly baked holiday cookies. Many local businesses have a tradition of buying her cookies as customer gifts.

By Patricia Sullivan
Correspondent

WILBRAHAM/HAMPDEN - People across Wilbraham and Hampden were busy all through December baking, shopping, wrapping, and decorating to prepare for the holidays. No one worked harder than local business owners, who helped their customers get their homes and celebrations in order.

In the spirit of the holidays, local businesses also encouraged charitable giving. And, of course, revelers held parties all month long.

These photos feature some holiday happenings in Wilbraham and Hampden.



The Hampden Free Public Library held a holiday party for teens on Dec. 14. The teens took part in a candy cane tasting of "pretty gross" flavors, such as pickle, ketchup, macaroni and cheese, gravy, and pine.



Submitted photo Debbie Cusson
Jolene Cusson of Spartan Auto Care Center of Wilbraham with a box of toys donated by customers for Spartan's 12th annual toy drive. The Cusson family collects toys for I Found Light Against All Odds, a Springfield, Mass., nonprofit that supports local youth.



Eric Schultz was ready to sell Christmas trees and other natural holiday decorations at Bilton's Mountainside Orchard in Hampden.



Lilly won the Hampden Library's ugly sweater contest wearing a sweater she made with her mother.

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TOWN OF BLANDFORD HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

The Town of Blandford is seeking a qualified individual for the position of Highway Superintendent. Salary range starting at \$75,000-\$80,000+ negotiable based on experience/skills.

Please visit our website **TownOfBlandford.com** or email **Administrator@TownOfBlandford.com** for more information.

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This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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Wilbraham Hiking Club December Hikes

WILBRAHAM – The Wilbraham Hiking Club has these hikes coming up for December. ...and, wait! there's more!

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

* Tuesday, Dec 31- 9:30 a.m. Arcadia Rolling Meadows, Easthampton

Drop-In Tech Help at the WPL

WILBRAHAM– Need help setting up an email account, updating your phone, or figuring out a new device? Volunteer students from Wilbraham & Monson Academy (WMA) will be available for technology assistance at the Wilbraham Public Library on select Fridays from 3:30 – 5 p.m. Assistance is available on a first come, first served basis. Please bring any relevant devices and/or log-in and password information. Contact the library at 413-596-6141, or visit www.wilbrahamlibrary.org, for more information about upcoming dates.

Hampden Winter Parking Ban Information

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICES

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758 Docket No. HD24P2361EA Estate of: Fleming R. Cocchi Date of Death: 07/07/2024 CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons: A Petition for Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Richard C. Nicoli of Leeds, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: Richard C. Nicoli of Leeds, MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve Without Surety on the bond in unsupervised administration.

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 01/17/2025. 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.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration

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

Date: December 16, 2024 Rosemary A Saccomani, Register of Probate

12/26/2024 Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758 Docket No. HD24P2566EA Estate of: Jane Godfrey Also known as: Jane E Godfrey Date of Death: 11/03/2024 CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons: A Petition for Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Rebecca G. Lawlor of Bernardston, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: Rebecca G. Lawlor of Bernardston, MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve Without Surety on the bond in unsupervised administration.

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 01/07/2025. 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.

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

Date: December 10, 2024

Rosemary A Saccomani, Register of Probate

12/26/2024

WILBRAHAM PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 40A, Section 5, the Wilbraham Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday, January 8, 2025 at 5:45PM in the Town Office Building, 240 Springfield Street, to give interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed amendments to the Wilbraham Zoning Bylaw to regulate Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) by amending Sections 1.3, 3.4., 3.9.2.15

and 4.10. The complete text of the proposed amendments is available for review in the Town Clerk's Office and the Planning Office during normal business hours and posted for public viewing on the Planning Board page of the Town of Wilbraham website at www.wilbraham-ma.gov/123/Planning-Board. All persons interested or wishing to be heard on this matter are urged to attend the public hearing.

Both in person and virtual participation are available. To participate virtually go to https://meet.goto.com/500519685 or call 877-309-2073 (Access Code: 500-519-685).

James Rooney, Chair 12/19, 12/26/2024

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

EARLY DEADLINE In observance of NEW YEAR'S PUBLIC NOTICES WILL HAVE AN EARLY AD DEADLINE Place your public notice no later than Fri., Dec. 27 Noon A TURLEY PUBLICATION 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069 • 413-283-8393 • www.turley.com

EARLY DEADLINE In observance of NEW YEAR'S There will be an EARLY CLASSIFIEDS & ADVERTISING DEADLINE for Dec. 30 - Jan. 3. Place your advertisement no later than Fri., Dec. 27 Noon A TURLEY PUBLICATION 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069 • 413-283-8393 • www.turley.com

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