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Looking back at 2023

'Umbrellas'

Girl Scouts paint interactive mural on Main Street

By Dalton Zbierski
Editor
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WILBRAHAM (Aug. 31, 2023) – Three longtime Girl Scouts from Troop 64587 completed a mural at the the Main Street Mart in the center of town.

Its name is "Umbrellas". The project was completed by Wilbraham residents Kiki Brook, a sophomore at Wilbraham & Monson Academy, Allison Demetri, a sophomore at Minnechaug Regional High School, and Charlotte Powell, a sophomore at the Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter School. Each participant is 15 and has been in Troop 64587 for eight years.

"As Girl Scouts, we needed something to do over the summer and we also wanted to help the community out, and what better way to do that than with a bit of

public art, so we decided that we should paint a mural," Powell said.

The three Girl Scouts had completed murals before, but this was perhaps the most challenging. After hours of scraping and power washing the wall, it took 14 gallons of paint to complete the mural, which should be visible on Main Street for at least 15 years.

Powell explained the interactive component of the artwork. A variety of umbrellas are featured so those who walk up to the mural can pretend to grab one and take a picture.

Next to the mural will be a plaque that reads, "Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass. It's about learning how to dance in the rain," said Vivian Greene.

Powell explained what the quote means to her.

"It's a quote that will help people realize that storms will pass, and even though it's bad right now, you can figure out how to make a good situation out of a bad one," she said.

August



From left, Allison Demetri, Kiki Brook, Charlotte Powell painted a mural on the side of the Main Street Mart. Photo submitted by Jennifer Powell.

July Trailer Trash rocks out at Summer Concert Series

The concert took place at Fountain Park

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
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WILBRAHAM (July 6, 2023) - Massive crowds came to Fountain Park on June 29 to watch Trailer Trash rock out at this year's Summer Concert Series.

Bob Stanek heads Trailer Trash, plays guitar and oversees the business side, explaining the five-member band has been around for 11 years and plays various genres, including modern country. Stanek enjoys watching people have fun at the shows and is grateful to perform again post-pandemic.

"It's awesome. People come out more now than ever. I think the pandemic actually gave us an appreciation for what we have. Less people are taking it for granted and (more are) taking advantage of something like this," Stanek said. "We're very lucky. We don't take it for granted."

Ethan LaFreniere, a board member for Fountain Park, said one of his favorite things about the concert series is bringing the community together not just from Wilbraham and Hampden, but, also, the surrounding communities to introduce Fountain Park to



Ben Mailman shows off his honorary guitar from Trailer Trash during the Summer Concert Series. Mailman also got to perform with the band on stage and later joined numerous other children for another performance. Turley photo by Kristin Rivers.

them. "We have such a wonderful nature preserve for all to enjoy year-round that many do not know about, and hosting these concerts brings in more than just our small community. Seeing friends reconnecting, enjoying local artists, and eating local foods is such a great thing for the community and seems to be found less and less," LaFreniere said.

February



Minnechaug Regional High School had been able to turn off approximately 7,000 lights since 2001. Staff photo by Dalton Zbierski.

Turn off the lights

Minnechaug fixes lights during February break

By Dalton Zbierski
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WILBRAHAM (Feb. 23, 2023) – Minnechaug Regional High School's inability to turn off approximately 7,000 lights has given the building national notoriety.

Before February vacation, lights at the school hadn't been turned off since Aug. 24, 2021, when a computer server that operates the lighting system was corrupted by malware.

The situation earned Minnechaug airtime on NBC's "Saturday Night

Live" on Jan. 20. Colin Jost, co-anchor of SNL's Weekend Update, said "the students are doing fine, but the classroom hamster has gone insane."

Superintendent John Provost said the system was repaired during February vacation, a process that was expedited by the national attention the issue received.

Aaron Osborne, assistant superintendent of Finance, Operations and Human Resources, said supply chain issues have delayed repairs for more than a year, but the SNL broadcast made a quick impact.

"There's no longer a delay in getting any information back. I think we'll leave it at that. It's certainly raised the level of importance with all the vendors involved... We're very visible on their radar screens now at the highest levels," Osborne said.

January

Hampden library donates to Community Survival Center



The Hampden Public Library led a donation drive that provided the Community Survival Center with food and clothing items. (Photo courtesy of Hampden Public Library)

By Dalton Zbierski
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HAMPDEN (Jan. 5, 2023) – The public library kept a holiday season tradition alive by making a substantial donation to the Community Survival Center in Indian Orchard.

“We do it every year, and we have a mitten tree, which is a Christmas tree that we get donations from our patrons for hats, mittens, scarves and gloves. That usually fills up pretty quick. We have a lot of local knitters in the community, so we like newly knit hats, mittens and scarves,” Library Director Ellen Moriarty said.

Established 37 years ago, the Community Survival Center is a nonprofit agency that provides families with food, clothing and household items. Its emergency food pantries serve Ludlow, Wilbraham and Hampden, as well as the 16 Acres, Pine Point and Indian Orchard neighborhoods in Springfield.

Moriarty said the library community also made a sizeable food donation, as part of its annual food drive. The library combined its efforts with Snap Fitness, a fitness studio with 24/7 access that operates on Allen Road in Hampden.

As part of the drive, Moriarty said the library donated 72 new pairs of pajamas to the survival center.



More than 1,000 students read the same book this past summer. Here, elementary school students are pictured in January holding their copies of “Frindle”.



A collaboration between Home Depot, the fire department, the veterans services department and the Council on Aging saw buckets of sand and salt delivered to local seniors and vets. Staff photo by Dalton Zbierski.

Home Depot, fire department give salt to seniors, veterans

By Dalton Zbierski
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WILBRAHAM (Jan. 19, 2023) – The afternoon of Jan. 13 was a busy one at the senior center, as Home Depot employees mixed dozens of buckets of salt and sand that the fire department delivered to local seniors and veterans.

“We’re trying to help the community with what I’m sure will be the upcoming bad winter weather, providing a mix of salt and sand for our senior community and veterans as well,” John Szafir, assistant store manager and community captain at the Home Depot on Boston Road, said.

Director of Veterans Services Jered

Sasen coordinated the effort, partnering with Home Depot for a third consecutive year. He credited Home Depot with being a major asset and ally for Wilbraham’s veteran and senior populations.

“I’m telling you right now if we didn’t have Home Depot in town, there’d be a lot of issues that I wouldn’t have easy help with,” Sasen said. “It’s essential in times like this to have community come together with a business like Home Depot, whose level of community care in Wilbraham is beyond measure.”

Szafir said the Home Depot team filled approximately 50 buckets of salt and sand at the senior center. It was one of multiple community outreach initiatives that the business commits to each year.



*A Time to Celebrate,
A Time to Come Together,
A Time to Reflect and Remember,
A Time to Share Our Appreciation
and Best Wishes With Folks Like You!*

As we wind down the year and look ahead to a new one, we can’t help but be moved by the trust and support we’re so fortunate to have from all of you here in the community. We thank you sincerely for believing in us and choosing us as your local, hometown newspaper. We hope you know how much we’ve enjoyed spending time with all of you in 2023. From our family to yours, best wishes for health, happiness and prosperity in 2024. We hope your New Year celebrations are just the beginning of more good times, good health, good people and good fortune to come.

Happy New Year!
The Wilbraham-Hampden
TIMES



The Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District

We will be taking applications for our early childhood programs for district residents for the 2024-2025 year. Programs are for 3 and 4 year olds. If your child will be three by September 1, 2024 you may obtain an application at hwrzd.org website under "Departments," "Student Services." "Early Childhood Program" or call Corinne Roberts, Student Services at 279-3863.

Applications will be available starting January 1, 2024. Priority screening and placement will be given to applications received prior to January 31, 2024, but we offer a rolling admission.



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February

From Jan. 23-27, students at Soule Road School in Wilbraham made Valentine's Day cards for Kelsi, a member of the Wilbraham community who was set to undergo open heart surgery. The school community wished Kelsi a speedy recovery. Photos courtesy of Cheryl Erskine.



Ground broken on new Wilbraham senior center

By Dalton Zbierski
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WILBRAHAM (Feb. 19, 2023) – Twelve years of preparation, three committees and countless hours of effort preceded the Feb. 10 groundbreaking ceremony for the new senior center off Springfield Street.

The emotion was palpable, and residents rejoiced, witnessing the beginning of a process that will provide Wilbraham with its finest, most state-of-the-art building.

“This is a fantastic moment. We’ve waited 12 long years for this day to come. The seniors in our town represent 38% of the adult population, and they need a place to go. This new senior center is 15,000-plus square feet; it’s going to offer a lot of opportunities to seniors,” Matt Villamaino, president of the Friends of Wilbraham Seniors, said.

The Council on Aging currently shares an undersized space at Post Office Park with the Scantic Valley YMCA.

After many years of lobbying, Wilbraham residents approved funding for the approximately \$11.4 million construction project in October 2021 during a Special Town Meeting.

Director of Elder Affairs Paula Dubord has been a leading voice in the decade-long struggle to see a new senior center built. She thanked the Board of Selectmen, the Friends and residents for their contributions.

“This is a dream come true to get to this point. It’s been a lot of hard work by many, many people, lots of committees, and to be here on this day is just great,” she said. “The seniors of Wilbraham deserve a top notch, stand-alone senior center they can be proud of. They have supported this town and project in so many other ways, and now it’s finally their turn, and we cannot wait to have the ribbon cutting.”



Ground was broken on the new Wilbraham senior center on Feb. 10.

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March



Girl Scouts from Troop 65269 sold cookies at the WHO Fest. Staff photo by Dalton Zbierski.

W.H.O. Fest held at TWB School

Wilbraham and Hampden organizations collaborate

By Dalton Zbierski
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HAMPDEN (March 9, 2023) – The first ever Wilbraham Hampden Organizations Fest drew dozens of people to Thornton W. Burgess School on the afternoon of March 5.

Approximately 30 local organizations presented in the school's gymnasium. Aurora Pierangelo Frias from the Wilbraham Welcome Project organized the W.H.O Fest and was thrilled by both the large turnout and the platform it gave organizations to connect.

"I'm blown away by the amount of people who are here," she said. "I think it's also beneficial for the groups to get together and collaborate as well... It's just as important for them to all meet in a space as it is for the public to come in and learn about what's going on in their towns."

Hampden Selectmen John Flynn and Donald Davenport arrived to represent the Selectboard. Davenport described the collaboration as impressive, and Flynn explained why it was important to participate.

"I think it's a great representation of the community spirit we have. It's Hampden and Wilbraham working together. Volunteer organizations using a town facility. It's just fantastic and shows that we are really bonded together," Flynn said.

Math matters at Stony Hill School

14 professionals present on how math relates to their careers

By Dalton Zbierski
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WILBRAHAM (March 16, 2023) – Stony Hill School held its annual Math Matters in Every Career event on March 10, and students listened to 14 professionals present on how math impacts their jobs.

The presenters rotated from classroom to classroom, spending several minutes telling each group about their work and how math is integral to completing it.

"I think it's really important for kids to have purpose to their learning. Us telling them they need to know math is not as powerful as a firefighter or an engineer coming in and saying, 'This is how you use math in every single job,'" Principal Monique Dangleis said.

Dangleis said it was a day for students to receive answers to the age-old question, "Why do I need to know this?"

The School Improvement Council, consisting of two teachers, two parents and Dangleis, spent approximately three months preparing for the event, reaching out to a variety of professionals from different lines of



March 10 was Math Matters in Every Career Day at Stony Hill School. Staff photo by Dalton Zbierski.

work. About half of the presenters have a child or relative in the school.

Each presenter touched on a common theme, relating to students that math will play a role in whichever career they choose to pursue. Dangleis said each presenter addressed second and third-grade problem-solving skills.

"We're not talking trigonometry to them. We're talking addition, subtraction, multiplication, fractions, time and budgeting so (we're) hitting the skills the kids are used to," she said.

Minnechaug's Above the Influence Club receives AdMIRation Award

By Kristin Rivers
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WILBRAHAM (March 23, 2023) - Minnechaug Regional High School students who are part of the Above the Influence Club received a special award on March 20 to honor their work.

Kimberly Lee, chief of creative strategy & development at MiraVista Behavioral Health Center, presented the AdMIRation award for the club's recent donation of truckloads of new, gently-used clothing to MiraVista.

Minnechaug student Ellah Godrow appreciates how the club connects her to the community.

"The Above the Influence Club has connected me to the community and gives me opportunities to connect with other students. The commitment we share raises awareness for substance abuse and healthy lifestyles," she said.

For Cody Erskine, he is thankful for the opportunity to give back to the community.

"I am very grateful to have joined the Above the Influence Club so that I can give back to my community," he said. "It has given me the opportunity to see other people's situations and make them smile."



Members of the Above the Influence Club at Minnechaug Regional High School with Jason Dalessio, special education teacher and head of the Above the Influence Club, with the AdMIRation Award plaque. Turley photo by Kristin Rivers.

Reflecting on his work in the club, Tyler Jaslanek highlighted the ability to spread awareness to others.

"To me, the Above the Influence Club means that I am able to spread awareness for those who are struggling and fighting battles, mentally, physically or

economically," he said. "It means that I can make a difference and help those less fortunate than me."



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VIEWPOINTS

HAMILTON ON FOREIGN POLICY

Kissinger left complex foreign policy legacy

By Lee H. Hamilton

Possibly no one had more influence on American foreign policy in the late 20th century than Henry Kissinger, who died last month at age 100. In his long and active career, he advised presidents, carried out policies and initiatives, and was a highly visible figure around the world.

While it's early to pronounce judgment on his legacy, it's clear that his impact is deeply mixed. His accomplishments were both positive and negative. He was respected and he was reviled.

Kissinger is the only person to have served as national security adviser and secretary of state at the same time, positions he held in the Nixon and Ford administrations. He was brilliant and secretive, and he wasn't much focused on the human cost of his policies.

He was interested in strategy, not values.

He showed little interest in democratic governance or transparency. A creature of the executive branch, he seemed to almost scorn the idea of three separate and coequal branches of government.

You sometimes got the impression he had contempt for Congress.

I was not close to Kissinger, but our paths did cross on foreign policy matters. I served in Congress, and we approached policy from different perspectives. Coincidentally, we were both connected to the commission that investigated the 9/11 attacks.

Kissinger was the original pick to chair the group, and former Sen. George Mitchell was to be vice chair. Both stepped down because of perceived conflicts of interest.

Former New Jersey Gov. Tom Kean chaired the 9/11 Commission, and I was vice chair.

Kissinger's view of the world, which he characterized as sober realism, may have been influ-



Courtesy of the Wells Library Lee Hamilton Photo Collection
Rep. Lee H. Hamilton is shown shaking hands with Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in this circa 1969 photo; with Rep. William Broomfield in the background.

enced by his background as a Jew who spent his childhood in Nazi Germany, before his family fled and settled in New York. He was a very talented man and, wherever he went, in academic, policy circles and government, he rose to power very quickly.

In the 1970s, Kissinger was widely praised for his diplomatic work. When he was named secretary of state in 1973, a Gallup Poll found him to be the most respected man in the world.

He engineered President Richard Nixon's historic visit to China in 1972, opening the door to improved U.S.-Chinese relations and ultimately reshaping the geopolitical map. He promoted détente with the Soviet Union, helping to reduce Cold War tensions.

In the Middle East, his tireless shuttle diplomacy improved relations between Israel and its neighbors. These were real accomplishments.

Kissinger shared the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize for negotiating the agreement that ended the Vietnam War. His critics found that highly ironic.

During the war, Kissinger orchestrated the U.S. bombing and invasion of Cambodia, which expanded the conflict and fueled a civil war that eventually brought the Khmer Rouge to power, resulting in up to three million deaths. The Cambodia disaster was Exhibit No. 1 for critics who accused Kissinger of war crimes, but he was also tied to a brutal military coup in Chile, Indonesia's bloody invasion of East Timor, a violent civil war in East Pakistan and other foreign policy disasters.

Kissinger later had a lucrative career in consulting. He clearly enjoyed being a celebrity, rubbing elbows with rich and powerful people and being photographed with glamorous women.

He became a great figure on the social circuit in Washington. Getting Kissinger to attend your dinner was a big achievement.

Henry Kissinger left quite a stamp on American foreign policy. He was a master of developing strategy and exercising power.

But American greatness isn't just about using force and gaining advantage. It also relies on our faith in democratic governance and our belief in human rights and the dignity of all people.

There's a place for sober realism, but American foreign policy should be grounded in our values.

Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar at the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice at the IU O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.



Dear Rusty

Both my wife and I have worked our entire lives.

When we retire, will we both be entitled to full benefit amount each or will there always be a spousal factor in there? Also, how are those benefits calculated – based on your highest salaries throughout your career, or your ending salaries when you retire?

Signed: Looking Ahead

Dear Looking

Prior to retiring from work is a smart time to investigate how Social Security will fit into your golden years. To answer your second question first, each person's personal SS retirement benefit is based on the highest earning 35 years over their entire lifetime, with earlier years adjusted for inflation.

The person's Average Indexed Monthly Earnings, essentially the person's lifetime average inflation-adjusted monthly earnings amount, is first determined.

Using AIME, the person's Primary Insurance Amount is calculated using a special benefit formula which will yield a PIA of about 40% or less of the person's AIME. The PIA is the amount received if benefits start in the month full retirement age or "FRA" is attained, as you can see, Social Security likes acronyms.

Since you and your wife were both born after 1959, FRA for both of you is 67. The age when you claim benefits, relative to your FRA, determines how much you'll get. Claim before FRA and your benefit is reduced; claim after your FRA and your SS retirement benefit will be more (up to age 70 when maximum is reached); claim at your FRA and your benefit will equal your PIA – the full (100%) amount you've earned from a lifetime of working.

Spouse benefits only come into play if the PIA for one of you is less than 50% of the other's PIA. In that case, the spouse with the lower PIA gets a "spousal boost" to their own SS retirement benefit when claimed.

Are spousal benefits always a factor?

The amount of the "spousal boost" will be the difference between the lower PIA and half of the higher PIA, but the amount of the "spousal boost" (as well as the person's own SS retirement amount) will be reduced if benefits are claimed before full retirement age. Any time SS benefits are claimed before full retirement age, those benefits are permanently reduced.

If one spouse is entitled to a "spousal boost" from the other, the spousal amount will reach maximum at the recipient's full retirement age. Thus, if the lower earning partner's highest benefit will be as a spouse, then that spouse should not wait beyond their FRA to claim. If, instead, the lower earning partner's own SS benefit at age 70 is more than their spousal amount, waiting longer than FRA to claim could be prudent, depending on life expectancy.

So, as you can see, deciding when to claim Social Security benefits should consider many things, including financial need, work status if

claiming before FRA, marital status and life expectancy. But it is your lifetime earnings which determines your SS retirement benefit amount, and it is how your FRA entitlements compare to each other that determines whether spousal benefits will be paid.

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RAINY DECEMBER...



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April



The Minnechaug Drama Club excelled in its performance of "Puffs". Photo courtesy of Kyle Garron.

Minnechaug's Drama Club presents 'Puffs'

By Dalton Zbierski
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WILBRAHAM (April 6, 2023) – On March 31, the Minnechaug Regional High School Drama Club presented "Puffs", a dramatic comedy by Matt Cox, portraying the story of the Hufflepuffs House from Harry Potter lore.

Blending the themes of friendship, magic and bravery, the play provided the audience with a perfect mix of comedic relief and great adventures.

Sophomore cast member Noelle Hisgen explained the purpose of the performance, showcasing the Hufflepuff House, which often takes a backseat to the Gryffindor, Ravenclaw and Slytherin Houses.

"Everyone knows the story about Harry Potter, but we don't really get to know about the other houses. This show showcases the Hufflepuffs, also known as the Puffs," Hisgen said. "The Puffs show that with teamwork and perseverance you can do anything you want in life. The Puffs

don't always get the good end of the stick, especially with those other houses, but they always have a good time, and that's what I think the most important part of life is."

Beyond the play itself, the most notable development for the Drama Club this year may be the influx of new cast members.

In last spring's performance of "She Kills Monsters", there were less than 15 cast members. This year, 32 students participated, bringing to life 48 characters.

Senior cast member Jeremiah Griffin is proud of how much the Drama Club has grown during his time at Minnechaug. He pointed out last year's performance as a major reason for the club's development.

"Last year, we had a smaller cast, and I think that cast did such a good job, it showed what Minnechaug's Drama Club was all about," Griffin said. "The performance was amazing... afterwards everyone talked about the play and how much they loved it. They came back this year and wanted to be part of it."



Minnechaug Tech Robotics Team won Skill Award at The New England FIRST STEM Exposition at The Big E on April 8: Back, from left: Geoffrey Kyei Ohemeng, stormtrooper, Kelvin Kyei Ohemeng, Darth Vader, stormtrooper, Kalhan Kar, Obi-Wan Kenobi and William Powell. Front, from left: Michelle Kyei Ohemeng, Willis Lam, R2-KT, Arthur Lam and Riya Kar. Photo courtesy of Robotics Coach Sam Lam.

Theatre Guild of Hampden presents 'Crimes of the Heart'

By Dalton Zbierski
Editor
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WILBRAHAM (April 27, 2023) – A talented six-person cast brought renewed energy into the Red Barn at Fountain Park for six performances of "Crimes of the Heart" in late April and early May.

Artistic Director and guild co-founder Mark Giza handpicked his cast to portray the story of the MaGrath sisters, who reunite in their hometown of Hazlehurst, MS in the mid-20th century after more than a decade apart.

"Crimes of the Heart" was written by American playwright Beth Henley. It won the 1981 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, the 1981 New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best American Play and was nominated for the Tony Award.

"I love the play. It has a lot of highs and lows in it. I really wanted something that would showcase these six actors," Giza said.

Giza has worked with the entire cast before and said he's impressed with how quickly everything came together.

"It's really been a labor of love; the whole thing has been a very good experience," Giza said.

In the Red Barn, the audience surrounds the cast. Chris Rojas, who plays Barnette Lloyd, is no stranger to the setting; he has enjoyed his past performances in the barn.

"I've performed in theatres of all sizes, and the barn is really great because it's such an intimate space. I feel like I can reach out and easily tell the story or just invite the audience to live in the story with me," he said.

2023 Falcon Trail Race held at McDonald Nature Preserve



Dozens of people participated in the 2023 Falcon Trail Race on April 16. Turley photo by Dalton Zbierski.

By Dalton Zbierski
Editor
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WILBRAHAM (April 20, 2023) – Runners of all ages participated in the 2023 Falcon Trail Race on April 16 at the McDonald Nature Preserve.

Dozens of participants, coming from multiple communities, made their way down Washington Road, where the 5K race began at 10 a.m. The annual event was organized by the Wilbraham Friends of Recreation.

"It's one of the few things in the world that can bring everybody to-

gether; running. People of all ages and backgrounds (participate). It's great. Everyone has a positive attitude," said Hunter Murphy, representing 4RUN3.

Representatives of 4RUN3, an East Longmeadow-based running store, assisted in the registration process and were on-hand to time the race and set up equipment.

Wilbraham resident Jack Tassinari, 17, crossed the finish line first, completing the approximately three-mile course in an impressive 19 minutes, 34 seconds.

He was grateful to the event's or-

ganizers for coordinating the 5K.

"I'm very thankful that our community has something like this, where we can get together and do a community 5K like this one," Tassinari said.

Zach Zastawny, 17, came from out of town to secure a second-place finish on April 16. He was impressed by the nature preserve and considers it ideal for running.

"This is a nice course. It's perfect for trail racing," he said. "This (event) is wonderful. I'm from Southwick and we don't really have any races there so it's cool that this town does."

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MAY



As spring arrived, members of the Hampden Fire Department took their training outdoors. Photo courtesy of Hampden Fire Department.

Plowing the Wilbraham Community Garden

By Dalton Zbierski
Editor
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WILBRAHAM (May 11, 2023) – Outdoor enthusiasts from multiple states gathered on May 6 to plow and prepare the Wilbraham Community Garden on Monson Road.

The 13th annual event kicked off the gardening season and featured guests from the Eastern Connecticut Draft Horse Association, several other Draft Horse owners and local vendors including Heart & Hustle, Stony Hill Farm, Little Oak Farm, King & Queen Spiritual Elements and others.

“The horses came and plowed the garden. We had local vendors and a food truck. We had a drone to take video. We had a good crowd that came and went. It was a really good day,” said Community Garden Land Management Coordinator Melissa Graves, who organized the event.

More than 100 gardeners have plots in the community garden. The plots are 25 feet by 50 feet; in the coming weeks, a team of volunteers will pound in over 100



Horses came from Connecticut to help plow the community garden last Saturday. Photo courtesy of Melissa Graves.

fence posts to help everyone get situated.

A range of farmers use the community garden each year; some have been gardening there since 1975, Graves said. She noted that the gardeners come from beyond Wilbraham.

“It’s awesome. There’s no borders. I have people from Monson and Hampden and Springfield and Ludlow. We have everybody. Everybody is welcome,” Graves said.

Wilbraham became the automotive capital of New England for one day in May, as a car show was held in the parking lot of Minnechaug Regional High School, while the historic Wilbraham Hill Climb returned to Monson Road. Shuttles were available to transport attendees from the high school to the base of Monson Road on Main Street. Hundreds, if not thousands, of people made their way to Wilbraham to participate in and enjoy the day’s festivities. The car show at the high school featured more than 400 cars, both new and old. The hill climb included vintage million dollar vehicles from seven New England auto museums. Those on hand May 13 came from all across the country to experience what Wilbraham has to offer. Staff photo by Dalton Zbierski.



JUNE



Melissa Carreira, of Wilbraham, and her son Maddox cross the finish line of Rice's 5K Road Race on Saturday, June 3. Photo courtesy of proud uncle Peter Camyre.

Hampden commemorates Memorial Day with parade and observance ceremony

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
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HAMPDEN (June 1, 2023) - Residents marked Memorial Day on May 29 with a parade on Main Street and an observance ceremony at the Veterans Memorial at Town Center.

The parade kicked off at 10 a.m. at St. Mary's Parish with members of the fire and police departments, V.F.W. Post 9397, veterans, the Minnechaug Regional High School Community Club and Band, Girl Scout Troops 40160 and 65374, Next Stop Dance Studio and many more waving to spectators and tossed candy and beads.

At 11 a.m., residents gathered at Veterans Memorial at Town Center for the observance ceremony, led by Board of Selectmen Chair John Flynn and V.F.W. 9397 Quartermaster Jered Sasen.

“I’d like to thank everyone for coming out on a beautiful day. Thank you for the respect you show by honoring our veterans and people who have served,” Flynn said.

Sasen reflected on remembering, honoring and celebrating in his remarks,



The V.F.W. Post 9397 was one of many local organizations taking part in the Memorial Day Parade in Hampden on Memorial Day. Quartermaster Jered Sasen was the speaker for the Memorial Day observance ceremony. Turley photo by Kristin Rivers

saying the fallen “were lives not lost in vain or anguish for each life lost has contributed to the evolution of America as we know it today.”

“A free nation. A strong nation. A nation that stands tallest when we stand together, so we stand together today. We are reminded of the true cost of freedom and while we as a nation mourn the lives lost, we celebrate the lives lived and are forever grateful,” Sasen said.

He added, “It is our responsibility to teach our youth that nothing comes without cost.”

“Sacrifices are meaningless without remembrance,” Sasen said.

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Class of 2023 Graduates from Minnechaug at Symphony Hall



Left, Class President Patrick Cowles, Vice-President David Noel, Treasurer Norah Doyle, Secretary Cayleigh Wall and class speaker & Valedictorian Nikolas Supczak, pictured on stage at Symphony Hall.

By Dalton Zbierski
Editor
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SPRINGFIELD (June 8, 2023) – All three levels of the Wilbraham-Hampden Community School District at the Wilbraham Symphony Hall in downtown Springfield were held on June 2, as the Minnechaug Regional High School Class of 2023 graduated and 228 students received their diplomas.

"It's an honor to stand before you this evening and welcome you to Minnechaug Regional High School's 2023 graduation exercises," said Principal Joseph Hale, before watching his son Joseph receive his diploma.

Class Marshal, and 2024 Class President, Ed Owens directed the graduates to their seats. Class President Patrick Cowles, Vice President David Noel, Treasurer Norah Doyle, Secretary Cayleigh Wall, Valedictorian Molly Olsen and Salutatorian/Class Speaker Nikolas Supczak took their oaths on stage, alongside district staff and School Board members.

Cowles thanked the district's faculty and administrators for teaching him beyond the textbooks. "I will never forget the lessons and wisdom that have been instilled on me, all of which truly goes far beyond a classroom. Maybe most importantly, thank you to the student body for four years of wonderful memories and experiences that will remain a part of my identity forever," he said.

JULY



On June 20, PV Financial and LUSO Federal Credit Union joined together to create a fun and interactive initiative to promote safety with the Wilbraham Community and its children, hosting Wilbraham's first ever "Slide Into Summer Safety" event at Spec Pond. Children enjoyed water slides, splash pad, a dance floor, ice cream and more! Kids are encouraged to interact with Wilbraham and Hampden firefighters, police officers, EMTs and members of the Wilbraham DPW. Ice cream was generously donated by Rice Fruit Farm and featured vanilla, chocolate or cookie dough.

AUGUST

Select Board recognizes Officer Harris with Life Saving Award

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
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WILBRAHAM (Aug. 24, 2023) - The Select Board recognized Officer Mark Harris on Aug. 21 with the Life Saving Award for his response to a water rescue call.

Harris recounted the July 14 rescue, which involved an inflatable raft at a kayak launch area on Red Bridge Road.

"Someone called because they saw someone going on a raft and given the dangerous area, they called us. I responded, I was the first on the scene and I saw two people in an inflatable raft. As I got down there, I basically saw that they started drifting off into the strong current where the two currents come together," Harris said.

As Harris encouraged the man to come back in, he fell overboard, and his leg wrapped around a makeshift anchor with weights, and he was pulled underwater.

"I had to take all of my stuff on, jump in and help him get himself untangled. Me, him and his female companion, we swam the raft to the side out of the current where we awaited responding units and the fire department to kind of extricate out of there," Harris said.



From the left, Police Chief Ed Lennon, Select Board Chairman Theresa Goodrich, Officer Mark Harris, Vice Chairman Sue Bunnell and Clerk Michael Squindo take a group photo after Harris received the Life Saving Award at the Aug. 21 Board of Selectmen meeting. Turley photo by Kristin Rivers

After the Select Board presented the award to Harris, he was also presented with a plaque from Police Chief Ed Lennon.

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SEPTEMBER

Aspiring geologist travels to Montana for research

By Dalton Zbierski
Editor
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BRIDGEWATER (Sept. 14, 2023) – A Wilbraham native spent the most exciting 10 days of her summer in Montana, pursuing her dream of becoming a geologist.

Olivia Ranck, a junior geology major at Bridgewater State University and graduate of Minnechaug Regional High School, traveled to Southwestern Montana from July 8-18 to research volcanic basalt, an igneous rock.

“I’m very passionate about geology; I love it. Looking at rocks, I’m like a kid looking at a candy store,” Ranck said. “This has been an opportunity of a lifetime, and I’m filled with thankfulness and gratefulness just for getting to go on a trip like this.”

Ranck’s project consisted of connecting the lava flow to the Yellowstone hot spot range. She noted that the Timber Hill basalt is about 100 km away from the Heise volcanic field, which is located within the Snake River Plane of Yellowstone hot spot track in Idaho.

“So, we spent some time going to several different locations, where we collected samples of the basalt, and on a map it’s like a trail and eventually leads to Yellowstone,” Ranck said. “That’s why we were



Olivia Ranck, of Wilbraham, researched volcanic basalt in Montana this summer. Photo submitted by Olivia Ranck.

like, ‘Okay, maybe it came from there.’”

Compared to Wilbraham, the weather is much different in Montana, Ranck said. She described Massachusetts’ climate as “very hot, humid, muggy and damp.”

In Montana, “it was so much dryer, and the air was so much cleaner because there was so much open space. The smell of the sage brush, I wish I could have brought it home with me. It was also very sunny,” she said.

OCTOBER

Alpaca farmer with Wilbraham roots earns ribbons at Big E

By Dalton Zbierski
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WEST SPRINGFIELD (Oct. 12, 2023) – For the second consecutive year, Wilbraham native Emily Jakubasz Bonci delivered prime-cut alpaca fiber from her Rhode Island farm to the Eastern States Exposition and did not leave empty handed.

Bonci owns and operates Chaos Farm with her husband Tim, a Holyoke native, in Lincoln, RI, where she raises female alpacas and produces raw fleece.

Last year, Bonci submitted fleece from her alpacas Sassafra and Cecilia in the table fleece competitions at the Big E. To her astonishment, Sassafra won a blue ribbon for first place in her category, and Cecilia won a ribbon of her own for finishing second in her category.

This September, Bonci raised the stakes.

“Really, this year, we said, ‘Go big or go home.’ We put five of our girls into the competition. Each one of them placed and each one of them got ribbons. This year, we knew how big of a deal it was. Last year was a bit of a surprise, but this year we really did a lot of people proud, including ourselves.”

For those looking to raise alpacas, Bonci encourages getting a mentor such as Tetreault. As for her next homecom-



Emily Jakubasz Bonci and her husband Tim Bonci hold ribbons with their daughter Hadleigh and son Lance. Photo courtesy of Emily Jakubasz Bonci

ing to the Big E, Bonci is excited about the prospect of participating again in 2023.

“The Big E is in our DNA coming from Western Mass. Now, we’re just a bigger part of the Big E. It’s really quite neat,” she said.



Wilbraham Middle School held its After School Social on Sept. 15. Photo courtesy of Courtney Derosia.



On Oct. 3 at 11:30 a.m., Wilbraham and Hampden Fire Departments were dispatched to a technical rescue at Sunrise Peak for a hiker whose dog had become stuck on a ledge approximately 35 feet up with no easy access. Firefighters hiked into the scene while rope rescue equipment was brought in via a UTV. The department drone was also deployed to quickly access the area and evaluate the scene. Firefighters set up ropes that allowed one to safely access the dog and ultimately bring the dog to safety and return it to the owner. Photos and caption courtesy of the Wilbraham Fire Department.

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Swim teams sweep Holyoke



Dawson Rice emerges after starting his event.



Alayna Lucas makes way across the pool.



Bianca Fachetti attempts a dive.



Turley photos by Sofia DiGrande
Nhi Nguyen competes in the fly stroke.



Liam Pouliot makes his way towards the end of the pool.

WILBRAHAM – Last Tuesday afternoon, it was a clean sweep in the pool at Minnechaug as the Falcons boys and girls swimming teams defeated Holyoke. The girls were winners 133-44. Gabby Harding won the 100 free and 100 breast stroke. Emma Grzebienowski took the 50 free and 100 backstroke. The Falcons won all the relay events as well. On the boys side, Minnechaug won 127-26. Brady Pjar took the 100 fly and 50 free while Dawson Rice was a winner in the 500 free and 100 backstroke.

Falcons, Lions lock up



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Tim Harrigan chases down a puck on defense.



Enzo Hrycay tries to clear the puck away ahead of the opposition.



Mike Roy chases down a puck on defense.



Derek Semanie eyes the opposition as he looks to clear the puck.

WEST SPRINGFIELD – In an important matchup for both teams, Ludlow and Minnechaug hockey met up on the ice prior to the Christmas holiday at Olympia Ice Center in West Springfield last Thursday night. Ludlow was searching for its first win of the season while Minnechaug was looking to improve to 3-1. The result of the matchup was not available as of press time.



Goalie Gage Vedovelli makes a save of his pads.

Central defense shuts down Falcons



Turley photos by Sofia DiGrande
Alani Botas makes her way up the court.



Ava Ofcarcik follows through on a jump shot.

SPRINGFIELD – After having some great offensive production early this season, Minnechaug girls basketball ran into a tough Central team on Tuesday night and was defeated 55-21. Elizabeth Woytowicz had eight points while Lylah Jeannotte had five points. The Falcons were 2-2 heading into the holiday break.



Lyric Nelson sprints down the court.



Jayla Comes eyes the hoops as she dribbles near the arc.



Cailin O'Brien tries to work around pressure.

T-Birds coach gets call to NHL, named interim coach of Blues

SPRINGFIELD – On Dec. 13, St. Louis Blues President of Hockey Operations and General Manager Doug Armstrong announced the team has relieved Craig Berube of his coaching duties and named Springfield Thunderbirds head coach Drew Bannister interim head coach. Bannister will travel to St. Louis on Wednesday and serve his first game behind the bench on Thursday when the Blues host the Ottawa Senators.

Bannister, 49, has spent the past three seasons with the Blues' AHL affiliate in Springfield, leading the team to a 93-58-19 regular-season record. The Belleville, Ontario, native has also guided the Thunderbirds to consecutive playoff appearances, including 2021-22, when they won the Eastern Conference and reached the Calder Cup Final.

Bannister began his coaching career in the Ontario Hockey League (OHL), where he spent three seasons as an assistant with Owen Sound and three as head coach with the Soo Greyhounds. He also served as head coach

of the AHL's San Antonio Rampage and as an associate coach with the Utica Comets. As a player, Bannister's career spanned over 20 years and included 164 NHL regular-season games between the Tampa Bay Lightning, Edmonton Oilers, Anaheim Mighty Ducks, and New York Rangers.

In addition, Thunderbirds general manager Kevin Maxwell has announced that Daniel Tkaczuk will take over the head coaching duties in Springfield on an interim basis.

Tkaczuk, 44, joined the St. Louis Blues organization in 2016 as an assistant coach with the club's AHL affiliate, the Chicago Wolves. After spending the 2017-18 season as a Skills Coach with the Blues, he rejoined the AHL affiliate as an assistant coach under Bannister in 2018, a role he has held ever since, including a promotion to Associate Head Coach in 2022.

The Toronto, Ontario native began his coaching career in the OHL as an assistant coach with the Owen Sound Attack from 2011-15 before spending the 2015-16 season with the Kitchener

Rangers. Tkaczuk and Bannister were co-assistant coaches with Owen Sound from 2012-15.

Tkaczuk was the sixth overall draft pick in the 1997 NHL Draft by the Calgary Flames and played 12 professional seasons in both North America and Europe. As a member of the Saint John Flames, Tkaczuk captured a Calder Cup championship in 2000-01. He was tied for second among Flames skaters with 10 goals in the Calder Cup Playoffs that season.

In 286 AHL games with Saint John, the Worcester IceCats, Bridgeport Sound Tigers, Charlotte, Syracuse, Rochester, and Hartford, Tkaczuk posted 59 goals and 109 assists for 168 points. He was a career point-per-game performer in the playoffs, scoring 14 goals and adding 17 assists in 29 career Calder Cup playoff contests. Tkaczuk also skated in 19 NHL games with Calgary, putting up 11 points (four goals, seven assists) in the 2000-01 season.



Courtesy of Sue Burk

Hey, Wilbraham Hiking Club: There's an App for That!

Sue Burk

In 2023, the Wilbraham Hiking Club had a hike nearly every week. Our adventures have ranged from the Quabbin to the north, Brimfield to the east, East Windsor to the south, Holyoke to the west, lots of hiking spots in-between, and of course, many great hikes right here in Wilbraham. Participation has ranged from two to 14 hikers per hike, and the age range of hikers has been from seven to 81! Most of our hikes have been easy to moderate, at a relaxed pace, but we've had a few glorious, moderate hikes at a quicker pace, too, thanks to leaders with the ability to lead those kinds of hikes. We've had great hikes on sunny days, but neither rain nor snow (nor ice) has stopped us from heading to the trails and having a great time together. We recently had to change our route because of flooded trail sections on the Scantic River in Connecticut, but that just added to the adventure! And we've managed to fit in some delicious after-hike lunches on a few of our hikes.

Starting with our January hikes, and going forward, the Wilbraham Hiking Club will be using the TeamReach App to register for hikes. The January Hikes are already posted on TeamReach! By downloading the TeamReach App and joining the hiking club there, hikers can use it to get notifications and reminders about upcoming hikes.

RSVP yes/maybe/no to hikes.

See who else is going.

Change an RSVP, post photos, etc.

TeamReach is easy to use! It is available at the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store. To join the Wilbraham Hiking Club there, use the Group Code WHC01095. After joining, hikers should set their notification to allow push notifications and email notifications so that the hiking club can send notes and reminders about upcoming hikes.

Hikers who do not have a smartphone or tablet and want to be part of the Wilbraham Hiking Club can send an email to wilbrahamhiking@gmail.com and their email address will be added so they will be notified of upcoming hikes. Hikers who do not have the app, will also have to RSVP to wilbrahamhiking@gmail.com, and will not see who else is going, etc.

The Wilbraham Hiking Club welcomes new and returning hikers and hike leaders for all hiking levels! Hike Leaders can choose a location and difficulty level and mileage/duration that works for them and lead one hike a year or one every day, or anything in between. Please contact wilbrahamhiking@gmail.com if you'd like to lead hikes for the WHC!

Now that "there's an app for that", it's easy to join the fun! Great scenery, great flora and fauna, great exercise and great company await you when you put one foot in front of the other as part of the Wilbraham Hiking Club!



NOVEMBER

Hampden Fiber optic article falls short at the goal line

Vote needed 66.7% of votes, receives 64.8%

By Dalton Zbierski
Editor
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HAMPDEN (Nov. 2, 2023) – Only standing room was available in the Thornton Burgess School auditorium for the Oct. 30 Special Town Meeting, as several hundred attendees determined the future of high-speed fiber optic internet in Hampden.

Article 2 requested approval for Hampden to borrow \$8.57 million for the installation of 71 miles of fiber optic cable. Ultimately, the item failed by mere percentage points.

To pass, the article required a two-thirds majority vote; however, only 64.8% of residents on-hand voted in favor, failing just shy of the 66.7% needed. A total of 133 residents gave their approval while 72 opposed the article.

The Fiber Optic Committee reported that the goal of building out high-speed fiber optic internet infrastructure is to offer Hampden residents and businesses a reliable and competitive alternative to their current internet provider.

It was said that fiber optic internet is the pathway to rapid, dependable connectivity. Its installation over a three-to-five-year window would give residents the ability to choose television programming



Thad Clavette speaks against fiber optic internet during the Oct. 30 Special Town Meeting. Turley photo by Dalton Zbierski

of their choice without having to bundle unwanted services.

Most of the residents who spoke on the item were in favor of installing the fiber optic cable.

Several residents came to the podium to express disinterest in the article. The first was Thad Clavette.

“I’m the guy who writes all the comments on the internet that says, ‘Vote no.’ For me, it’s a personal reason, primarily because I have a TiVo unit in my house, and the fiber optic will not work,” he said.

When the final vote was cast, and the approval was missed by less than four votes, a contingent of angry residents watching the meeting on Zoom complained that they couldn’t vote virtually in favor of the item.

DECEMBER



A group photo of Santa Claus with members of the Rotary Club of Wilbraham-Hampden during this year’s Christmas Tree Lighting at Gazebo Park. Turley photo by Kristin Rivers

Community comes together for annual Christmas Tree Lighting

The event was sponsored by the Rotary Club of Wilbraham-Hampden

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM (Dec. 7, 2023) - Evening rain showers did not stop residents from coming to Gazebo Park on Dec. 3 for the town’s Christmas Tree Lighting.

The annual event, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Wilbraham-Hampden, which will be celebrating 50 years in 2024, had attendees enjoying hot chocolate and treats served by LUSO Federal Credit Union, also an event sponsor, watching this year’s tree light up with Christmas lights and a visit with Santa Claus, who arrived at Gazebo Park via

fire truck with the fire department.

Additionally, attendees dropped off hygiene products including shampoo, liquid soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, combs and more for the Rotary Club to donate to local area organizations to support the homeless population.

Rotary Club Secretary Brad Sperry and Jim Robinson, a longtime member of the organization, were excited to hold the tree lighting, explaining the event has gone on for many years.

Robinson and Sperry shared the community support to help bring the event to life every year means a lot to the club.

“We were overwhelmed, really, by the reaction,” Sperry said.

“It’s our livelihood to support the community. We try to help. It’s a two-way street helping the less fortunate,” Robinson said.

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



Veterans Day ceremony at Crane Veteran Memorial Park

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM (Nov. 16, 2023) - A large gathering of residents, community members, veterans and their families came together on Veterans Day for a ceremony at Crane Veteran Memorial Park.

The Nov. 11 ceremony, presided over by Director of Veterans Services Jered Sasen, included Boy Scout Troop 359 member Elliot Sylvester leading the Pledge of Allegiance, the Minnechaug Regional High School Choir performing the National Anthem and the high school’s band performing the “Veterans Salute.”

Additionally, local veterans were recognized, including U.S. Army Veteran David Manning, Marine Corps Veteran John Cortese, U.S. Navy Veteran retired Navy Chief, Boatswain’s Mate Ronald Hale, Air Force Veteran Jeff Hurley and U.S. Coast Guard Veteran Jerry Ladue, who placed an American flag for each U.S. military branch.

U.S. Army Sgt. Robert Kelliher, Jr., a

Vietnam War Veteran, was recognized as the 2023 Veteran of the Year. He received a plaque from Sasen on behalf of the town and Department of Veterans Services and certificates of recognition from State Rep. Angelo Puppolo, Jr. (D-Springfield) and Jennifer Pickering, MSM, district director, on behalf of State Sen. Jacob Oliveira (D-Ludlow).

Sasen said this year’s ceremony honored Bob Page, an Army Veteran who served in the Korean War. Page, who passed away on Oct. 13, 2023, was heavily involved in the community, including the building of the Wilbraham Senior Center.

“He was just a really great friend and an ally of the Veterans Service Department here in Wilbraham,” Sasen said. “I didn’t really know many of the town veterans as well as he did, so he made sure that he would rally the troops, so to speak, to come to my events and he was just such a great guy and a true friend.”

Kelliher, humbled by his honor, had this simple message for the community.

“We’re a family. The world is a family, and we need to act like one,” Kelliher said.



Members of the Minnechaug Key Club joined Santa and Mrs. Claus in volunteering their time at the Hampden Public Library on Dec. 9. Photo courtesy of the Hampden Public Library.

Santa, Mrs. Claus spread holiday cheer in Hampden

Minnechaug Key Club students volunteer at the library

By Dalton Zbierski
Editor
dzbierski@turley.com

HAMPDEN (Dec. 14, 2023) – The line nearly went out the door at the Hampden Public Library on Dec. 9, as youngsters patiently waited to take photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

Afterwards, they enjoyed a variety of crafts, games and snacks in the Town Hall auditorium, where students from the Minnechaug Regional High School Key Club volunteered their time.

“We love it; I think it’s our favorite day of the year,” Library Director Ellen Moriarty said. “We really enjoy seeing all the kids with their families coming to see Santa and Mrs. Claus. Some kids have their lists all ready to go. Some kids make their lists while they’re waiting. It’s all very, very cute.”

The multi-faceted event was sponsored by the Friends of the Hampden Public Library. Youth Services Librarian Kate Rumpalik invited the teens from the Key Club to help run numerous crafts and games.

“It’s really a great day,” she said. “I absolutely couldn’t do it without them. I’d never be able to pull it off. They always show up on time and help me clean up at the end. They’re just great kids.”

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Gateway Regional is seeking a 6-hour custodian for the Littleville Elementary School/Main Complex. Hours will be 11 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Work days Monday-Friday. Looking for a highly motivated individual who is able to:

- Read and follow instructions
- Have knowledge of cleaning procedures
- Experience in cleaning and maintenance a plus
- Lift 50 lbs or more
- Be self-motivated
- Work alone or with a group
- Good communication skills with staff and the public
- Knowledge of operation of equipment such as a floor scrubber, snow blower, etc.
- Work in the extreme cold and heat
- Have a valid driver's license
- High school degree or GED

Send letter of interest and resume to: William Sullivan, Interim Principal; Gateway High/Middle School, 12 Littleville Road, Huntington, MA 01050
Deadline: January 5, 2024
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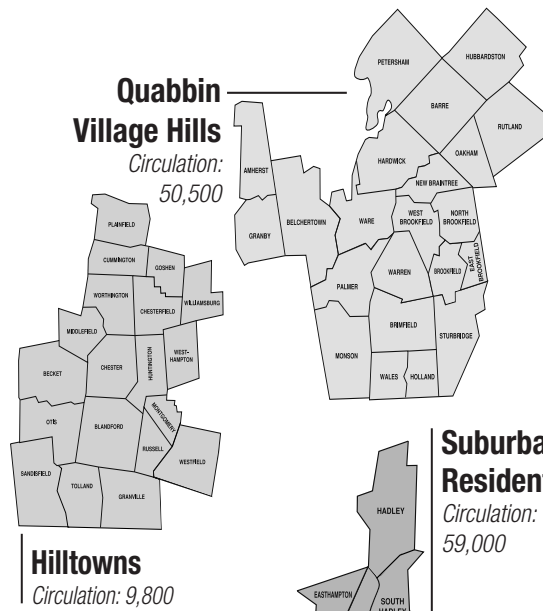


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PUBLIC NOTICES

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
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD23P2602EA
Estate of:
Leon N King, Jr.
Also known as:
Leon Napoleon King, Jr.
Date of Death: 12/02/2023
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 **Stuart King of Ellington, CT** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: **Stuart King of Ellington, CT** 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 01/17/2024.**

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 20, 2023
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
12/28/2023

Giving Tuesday: PV Financial donates \$20,000 to new Wilbraham Senior Center

WILBRAHAM – This year, Pioneer Valley Financial Group extended their giving to the vibrant seniors of Wilbraham with a donation of \$20,000 to the town's new senior center! After 12 years of planning and preparation, the new facility is on pace to open in March 2024, providing extra space and opportunities for Wilbraham's rapidly growing elderly community. With close to 40% of the town's adult population as seniors, PV Financial was proud to show their support for a new state-of-the-art building! Photo courtesy of PV Financial Group.



What a difference a year makes!



December 2022

We look forward to sharing even more with you in 2024!! Wishes to all for a happy, healthy holiday season.



December 2023

Happy New and Exciting Year!!
The Wilbraham Senior Center Building Committee
As always, feel free to send questions/ comments to seniorinfo2021@gmail.com or leave a

voicemail at 596-2800 ext 315.
Linda Tatko Cooper
RN for Wilbraham Senior Center Building Committee

Events & announcements schedule

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.

Spiritual Healing to return to Federated Community Church

HAMPDEN – The Federated Community Church of Hampden, located on Main Street, will be offering Spiritual Healing on the first Sunday of each month at 11:30 a.m., beginning in January.

Wilbraham Public Library welcomes community feedback

WILBRAHAM – The Wilbraham Public Library is beginning to work on its next strategic plan and

invites all community members to complete a survey to provide input on the library's collections and services.

The survey is available to complete online through the library website, www.wilbrahamlibrary.org, and printed copies are available to pick up that the library, town hall, and senior center. The deadline to complete the survey is Jan. 12. The Strategic Planning Committee will meet this winter and spring, and the goal is to complete the new plan before June. If you have any questions, please contact library director Karen Ball at kball@wilbraham-ma.gov or 596-6141 ext. 159.

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.

Teens Who Code to meet in Wilbraham Jan. 31

WILBRAHAM – Teens Who Code will have their first meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2024, from 3:30-5 p.m. at the Wilbraham Public Library. Facilitated by Mrs. Christine Goonan, this club is looking for new members. Grades 6-12 can explore project-based coding in a fun and friendly environment. Meetings are once a month in the Teen Loft at the library, and all attendees need a laptop to join in. Online registration is required at www.wilbrahamlibrary.org or call 413-596-6141. After registering, teens will receive more info by email. This is a free program hosted by the Wilbraham Public Library.

Margolis Orthodontics to hold January food drive

WILBRAHAM – Margolis Orthodontics, 3 Crane Park Drive, Suite 5, Wilbraham, is holding a food drive for the month of January. They are hoping to help the needy families in the area. Any non-perishable items would be appreciated. Anyone who makes a food donation will be entered into a gift card raffle.

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 LIVIO GRAVINI Friday, 1/26	 FRED MARION Friday, 1/5
 CHARLIE BONGIOVI Saturday, 1/27	 FRANK SERAFINO Friday, 1/19
 BRAD SHEPARD Friday, 12/29 Sunday, 12/31 Sunday, 1/6	