

# Newest version of Escape Room stymies many

**BY TRACY GAMBILL**  
COURIER CORRESPONDENT

WINCHENDON — Hidden clues, coded messages, and a secret society all make for a mystery worthy of Sherlock Holmes at the Murdock-Whitney house. The Winchendon History and Cultural Center has been hosting an Escape Room challenge in the parlor room of its mansion home for the past two months. Amateur sleuths use the power of deduction to discover what they need to know to join “The Moonlight Club”.

Escape Rooms are popular and involve teamwork to discover clues and solve a mystery in the allotted time. The WHCC recommends their 90-minute challenge for anyone over the age of 12. It is \$25 per person or \$100 to reserve the room for up to six people. Online reviews are positive and encourage others to try it.

Detectives who run out of time can have their photographs taken with various signs lamenting their ill attempt. Successful teams proudly wear fezzes and mustaches to show they have joined the elite “Club.”

Though new to the Escape Room concept, this writer’s team of six completed the adventure with a respectable 20 minutes to spare. We felt lost at first – where do we begin? We spread out to search the room for clues and try to understand what they meant in relation to one another. There was a bit of confusion with hints that seemed disconnected and unhelpful – was this even a clue? The rush of

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Tracy Gambill photo

The escapees get rewarded once they figure out just how to get out of the room.

## Haddad, School Committee talk override

**BY GREG VINE**  
COURIER CORRESPONDENT

WINCHENDON —The School Committee hasn’t yet officially endorsed a fiscal year 2018 school district budget — that will come sometime after a public hearing on April 20 — but it certainly sounds like Toy Town voters will be faced with deciding the fate of a \$400,000 Proposition 2-1/2 override.

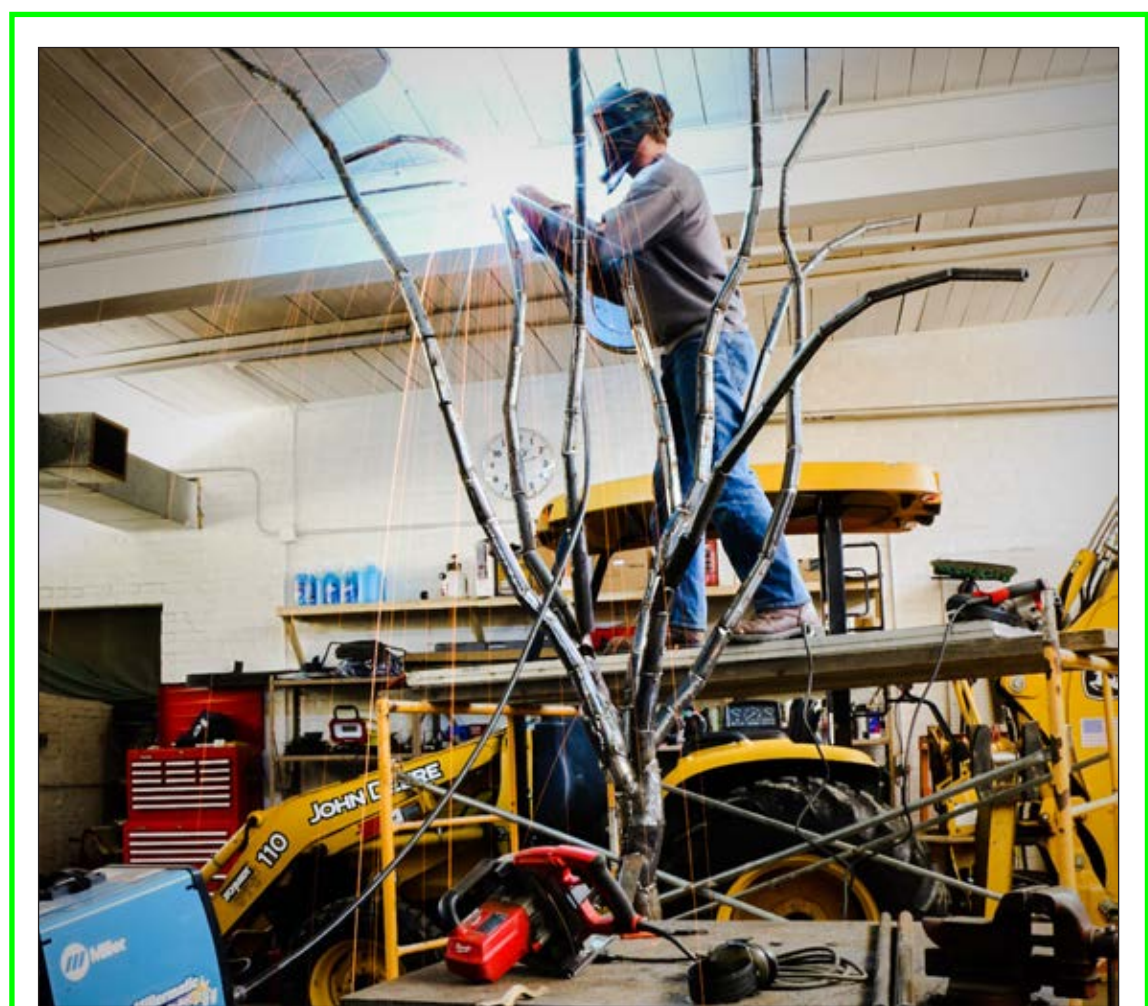
At a joint meeting of the School Committee, Board of Selectmen, and Finance Committee Tuesday night, Superintendent Steven Haddad said the override is necessary to provide the kind of support needed to lift Winchendon schools from a Level 3 to a Level 2 district within the next three years.

In defense of the proposed override, which would provide the district with an FY18 budget of nearly \$15.6 million, Haddad said, “In business, if you’re losing customers, you’re going to have to cut the marketing budget.”

“We’re losing students, but we can’t continue making cuts,” he continued. “We have to provide more services to make our schools more attractive so students stay in the district. We have to offer things like advanced placement courses, music, technology, programs stressing social and emotional needs.”

We need to make our district more attractive so parents

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Morgan St. Pierre photo

Ken Laraba works on his latest piece of art.

## Some art requires more than a brush or potter’s wheel

**BY JERRY CARTON**  
COURIER CORRESPONDENT

WINCHENDON — Ken Laraba likes scrap metal or, more precisely, he likes taking scrap metal and then figuring out creative ways to use it. For example, a couple of years ago, he surprised his girlfriend with a 3-D Valentine’s Day heart made entirely from scrap metal. That’s the kind of thing he likes to do — give Laraba some seemingly useless scrap metal and he’ll find a use for it.

We’ll get back to that because Laraba, whose actual day job is working for Dorian Construction of Ashburnham (“a great guy to work for”) whose local facility is on Lincoln Avenue Extension, has a knack for building smokers, and he’s become sort of the guy to go-to if you want one. He’ll happily build it.

“People come to me. I don’t really advertise. I’m on Facebook but when they hear

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The surface of the tree, worked to resemble real bark

## Hunt spreads the message with GOP candidates



Courtesy photo

During the presidential election just past, Jesse Hunt threw his fortunes behind Jeb Bush, pictured here.

**BY JERRY CARTON**  
COURIER CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON DC — Winchendon native Jesse Hunt is working his way up the political food chain, having secured a job as national press secretary for the National Republican Congressional Committee after spending last fall as communications director in the successful re-election campaign of North Carolina Sen. Richard Burr. Prior to that, Hunt had worked in former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush’s presidential campaign.

“Basically, our job is to help craft the message for

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Greg Vine photo

The Bunny and a good friend watch other children scrambling for prizes at the egg hunt at Beals Memorial Library last weekend. The town egg hunt is Saturday, April 15 at 9 a.m. beginning at the Old Centre common, before marching down to the Militia Field to hunt for treasures. This hunt was postponed due to the blizzardy snow a few weeks ago. More photos of Bunny antics page 9.



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WEEKLY QUOTE

Quality is not an act,  
it is a habit.

Aristotle



# Rossi takes over at Morin Real Estate

BY GREG VINE  
COURIER CORRESPONDENT

"I'm just really excited and honored to be at this post. I don't take it lightly. I'm excited about Winchendon's future and the part that we can play in that."

That's the sentiment of Darlene Rossi, who recently became the new owner of Morin Real Estate, located at 70 Front St., Winchendon. The company had been in the hands of the previous owner and founder of the company, Rick Morin, for approximately 34 years.

In addition to Morin, who will continue working as an agent, the office is also occupied by real estate agents Terry Lupien and Penny C. Lee.

Rossi, who has been with Morin Real Estate for about four years, previously worked in the Leominster office of the Keller Williams real estate agency. She said she decided to enter the real estate field when her husband's business experienced a bit of a slow down during the last recession. Prior to that, she had been at home,

raising and home schooling her children, the youngest of which is now 19.

"I thought it might be a good way to develop a new income stream for us at that time," she said, "and still give me some flexibility with the children."

Rossi said, when it comes to the real estate market in Winchendon and its environs, "I'm very positive and hopeful about this area."

The new business owner says she's always maintained a positive image of the Toy Town.

"We first came out here the year we were married, in 1985, and bought our bedroom set at Winchendon Furniture Company," she related. "We really loved the town at that point. It really reminded me of Prince Edward Island, where my dad's from. Even though it's not ocean water, everywhere you look around here there's water. It's beautiful."

At the time, Darlene and her husband, Christian, were living in the Boston suburb of Arlington. With the advent of the internet, the couple decided much of her husband's business could be managed via the

web and decided to look for a new community to call home.

"We were looking for a lifestyle change," she said. "We had looked at different places around, came here a few different times, and ended up eventually buying here through Rick's office."

Rossi said she first got to know Rick Morin through the National Speech and Debate Association.

"I did a lot, admin-wise, with the league," she said. "I became an event planner through that. Through that, someone else in the community had gotten Rick to come and judge at some of the tournaments. So, I got to see him a lot that way. I think he saw some of what I was capable of."

Rossi has long been active in town affairs, having served on both the Winchendon Planning Board and the Finance Committee.

"Community is huge to me," said Rossi, "The fact that I'd be able to come here and work in my community and with (Rick) was also huge."

In addition to serving the Winchendon area, Rossi point-



Courtesy photo

**From left Rep. Jonathan Zlotnik, Rick Morin, Penny Lee, Darlene Rossi, Terry Lupien, Town Manager Keith Hickey and BOS Chairman Barbara Anderson at the ribbon cutting.**

ed out that she and Rick Morin are both also licensed in New Hampshire. The company also handles commercial real estate, in addition to serving residential customers.

Rossi noted that more and more people are moving fur-

ther outside the Route 128 corridor and commuting, either by rail or personal vehicle, into the Boston area.

"I think we are uniquely situated to absorb some of the," she said.

## Stadtfeld does practice run for project

BY JERRY CARTON  
COURIER CORRESPONDENT

WINCHENDON — With the formal meeting of the Youth Venture funding panel less than three weeks away, freshman Cassidy Stadtfeld (with Lily LeBlanc on speakerphone) delivered a practice power point presentation to a mock committee on Monday, sharpening skills for the real thing on April 24.

Stadtfeld explained 'The Bench' project's goals, both short and long-term and offered a pitch as to why the effort should be approved by a group of representatives from various regional organizations later this month.

"The 'Bench' literally, and there are going to be three of them in the high school, at least

that's our plan, is a place where people can feel welcome and safe," she explained.

"If you've been bullied or you're in the LGBT community or whatever your reason might be, the Bench will be a gathering place. It's symbolic and practical," she added, noting the benches will be designed and built by students with the help of Martin Johnson.

The concept was developed by Stadtfeld, LeBlanc and Alec Hart as a way to become involved in the growing anti-bullying campaign at Murdock. The trio hopes to expand the project to lower grades next year.

Stadtfeld acknowledged there are both logistical and financial obstacles to hurdle before the benches become reality.

"We do need donations.

Every bit helps," she said. MHS Youth Venture champion Kris Provost said several businesses have indicated a willingness to chip in, but added the students still have to devise ways to raise money to complete the project. One of those ways might be selling items off the morning food cart as it makes its rounds.

"They have some homework to do on the budget," said Provost.

Stadtfeld and LeBlanc told the panel, which consisted of superintendent Steve Haddad, school counselor Jane Greenleaf and the writer, they want to recruit more than a half dozen students and have them trained by the state to help peers deal with bullying and suicide awareness issues as well as other mental health conditions.

"That's a goal," said LeBlanc.

The benches, said Stadtfeld, will be placed in high-traffic areas on each floor of the high school, near the engineering department on the third floor, the art hallway on the second and the lobby near the 'Voices of Murdock' on the first.

"We're hoping kids from every group will come together. The jocks. The music kids. The geniuses. We're all fighting battles," said Stadtfeld.

Stadtfeld wasn't overjoyed with the mock presentation.

"It was a little choppy," she said, but Mount Wachusett Community College Youth Venture liaison Evan Berry was unfazed.

"That's why we have them do these. Also, we like it when they're 'human', for lack of a



Saraya Underwood photo

**Cassidy Stadtfeld at the front of the room presenting her project.**

better word. We don't want them to sound coached so it's okay if they laugh and even stumble a little bit. They're teenagers, not robots," he reminded.

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Kickoff Breakfast

The Crystal Clubhouse hosted its annual spring kickoff breakfast last Saturday and while dozens of guests showed up to partake of the pancakes and sausages, two of the people helping out have a history of, yes, helping out.

Saturday represented Jessica McKay's final day of internship through Mount Wachusett Community College. The Army veteran will graduate from MWCC next month and head off to Anna Maria College to study social work.

Julia Pitre is a nursing student at the Mount, having made a career change, and she's volunteering at Crystal. Both women agree that service is part of their respective DNAs.

"It's important to me to be here trying to make a difference, even a small one," reflected McKay, who wants to focus on helping returning veterans deal with an array of mental health issues.

"I know what they're going through," she said of the Clubhouse's clients, many of whom struggle with those mental health issues.

"I served in Iraq in '06 and '07 in Mosul and Al-Asad. Coming home isn't easy for a lot of veterans and when I've been working with the clients here, I see how much they appreciate some individual attention. You can look in their eyes and see that, and the same is true with a lot of veterans."

"The VA is overwhelmed and I want to work with those people coming back. Being here

has helped me understand a lot of different diagnoses and helped me work with them. This has been a great experience for me, one that will help me down the road," she said, adding her experience also includes working on the surgical team at Leominster hospital.

For Pitre, "I did my psych rotation and I guess that opened my eyes. Then coming here to the Clubhouse, I was able to use some of what I've learned. It's rewarding to have the opportunity to volunteer here and I'm hoping to do that even after this semester is over. You feel like you're making a contribution."

"I'll eventually get my RN and BSN and I'm excited about doing that. For now, though, I enjoy working with this population. A lot of people judge them when they're walking down the street and that's not okay. I like sitting down with them and talking with them and making them feel like they matter," she said.

McKay was helping staff member Kaitlyn Murphy cook up the pancakes while Pitre was circulating throughout the room, which was becoming increasingly crowded.

"They've both been great assets for us," said Executive Director Tammy Deveikis of the duo, who began working with the Clubhouse in January. "They're very dedicated. They're coming from very different backgrounds but they share a commitment to want to have an impact on people's lives and they're certainly doing that here. We've really enjoyed having both of them."

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Greg Vine photo

**The town of Winchendon received a check from the state Department of Energy and Resources Monday night in the amount of \$176,245.00 for being certified a Green Community. The money will be used for, among other things, making town-owned buildings more energy efficient. Pictured (l-r): Selectmen Mike Barbara and Austin Cyganiewicz, DER representative Kelly Brown, Selectman Amy Salter, Board Chairman Barbara Anderson, Selectman Audrey LaBrie, state Rep. Jon Zlotnik, and state Sen. Ann Gobi.**



# Selectmen OK New, Increased Permit Fees

BY GREG VINE

Selectmen Monday night approved an increase in the price of some electrical, plumbing, and gas permit fees, while also new fees to the list. Town Manager Keith Hickey and Building Inspector Geoff Newton presented the list to the board following a survey of fees charged by surrounding town. Existing fees had last been approved in 2011.

“I talked with Ashburnham, Westminster, and Gardner and I did solicit their prices for these changes,” said Newton. “The electrical (permit fees) were kind of out-dated with all the activity that’s going on, and I do considered the increases on all three – the gas, the plumbing, and the electrical – as kind of soft, but I don’t these to have too hard of an impact on the consumer.”

Newton argued for acceptance of the proposed fees, in part, to provide additional compensation to the town’s electrical and plumbing inspectors. He said the current and planned construction of several solar arrays in Winchendon would, for example, require multiple visits by the electrical inspector to the construction

site.

“I think we need to raise their pay up to help compensate for the many inspections they do that are not paid for (through fees) now,” said Newton. “With the solar array that’s being built now on River Street, that’s 86-hundred panels that have to be checked for electrical connections. The inspector can only do so much. I really think these guys are doing stuff for nothing – I really do.”

“I’m looking at these fees, and if we’re going to start charging a fee for these steps, I think we have to justify it,” said board member Amy Salter. “I need to know what our cost is. We can’t just pick a fee because that’s what Westminster charges; I just don’t think that’s right.”

“The other concern I have,” she continued, “is if they’re spending more time on inspecting solar panels, those companies should have to pay for it, not the residential people. You should be able to charge them for it costs to do that.”

Hickey explained that the plan is to make sure companies constructing solar arrays pay a more equitable fee for electrical inspections than it was prior to Monday’s meeting. He noted that the fee

for inspecting the solar field currently under construction at the landfill would have been a flat \$50 fee. The new fee proposed by Newton, \$5 per kilowatt of direct current (kwdc), instead means Onyx Renewables the – the site’s developer – will pay the town a fee of \$10,000.

Newton said the two inspectors currently earn a stipend of \$8,100 per year for a total of four hours per pay period, or two hours a week.

“So, they’re pretty much volunteering,” said board member Mike Barbaro, drawing agreement from Newton.

“And they’re on call 24 hours?” asked Barbaro.

“They are,” Newton replied. “I think if they got paid per inspection, and they turned in an inspection report every week, it would provide a better record of where they were, how long it took them to do that job. But that’s not the way it stands right now, and it’s something that has to be talked over and negotiated. I’d have better control, to know exactly what’s happening. I don’t get that right now.”

“One of the questions I keep getting from people around town,” said board

Chairman Barbara Anderson, “is if we keep raising fees, what are they paying taxes for? They thought they were paying their taxes for services.”

“When the building code was established in 1975,” said Newton, “it was stated that the permit fees that were collected were to help pay for the inspector. But over the years, you find that the pay is higher than what the fees pay for.”

The board did ask that Hickey and Newton provide information on the number of inspections done yearly and the cost related to each inspection, but did ultimately vote to approve the proposed fee schedule. The vote in favor was 4-1, with Salter casting the sole dissenting vote. The new fees were to go into effect immediately.

## ACCURACY WATCH

The *Winchendon Courier* is committed to accuracy in all its news reports. Although numerous safeguards are in place to ensure accurate reporting, mistakes can occur. Confirmed fact errors will be corrected at the top right hand corner of page three in a timely manner. If you find a mistake, call (978) 297-0050 during normal business hours. During non-business hours, leave a message in the editor’s voice mailbox. The editor will return your phone call. Or contact the editor at the following email: [ruth@stonebridgepress.news](mailto:ruth@stonebridgepress.news).

# Restaurant re-opening for dinners

BY JERRY CARTON  
COURIER CORRESPONDENT

WINCHENDON — The arrival of spring has meant the return of dinners at the Rivers Edge and owner Seth Silver says he’s “ecstatic” to be offering the evening meal again.

When Rivers Edge opened about a year and a half ago, only breakfast and lunch were available but last fall the restaurant began serving dinners on Friday and Saturday nights and the response was strong though when winter really set in, Silver decided to stop dinners until last week.

“People tend to go out less when the weather gets bad, so we thought it made sense to wait to start dinners when the weather got better again,” said Silver.

“It was fun” to resume the dinner experience, said floor manager Amber White. “It was steady, not overwhelmingly crazy. We didn’t advertise except on Facebook for this first weekend back,” said Silver, who pointed out there’s a completely difference in the ambiance at night.

“People tend to linger more over dinners,” noted Silver, adding, “they come in for breakfast or lunch and you know they have somewhere to be right after so they kind of hurry. Dinner’s different.”

White agreed. “At dinner, when I bring out salads and appetizers and

bread, you can see customers are more relaxed. It’s a whole different atmosphere.”

The biggest seller last weekend? That would be the prime rib, which comes in three different sized portions. “We’ve also been here long enough to anticipate what some of our regulars want,” said Silver.

He did downsize the menu to some extent after last fall’s trial run.

“I’m in the kitchen cooking by myself. I want everyone in the dining room to have exactly what they ordered exactly the way they order it,” stressed Silver, who did say he’s going to be offering a breakfast special for dinner.

“That’s what people want,” he noted.

Speaking of giving people what they want, Rivers Edge is now accepting credit cards.

“It’s for the convenience of the customer,” remarked Silver. “It worked having an ATM machine in the lobby but I talked to other owners in the business and they all agreed that society likes credit cards. It’s just easier for people so we’re going with that flow.”

Not only is Rivers Edge settled in the community as a dining destination, Silver and his team are settling in as catering activists as well.

“We did an Easter Sunday organized by the Cub Scouts at the Legion last Sunday. We did a wedding rehearsal

the other night. We’re doing Teacher Appreciation Day. It’s important for us to be good neighbors,” he said.

In the end, though, it’s a restaurant and that means food. Do Seth and Amber have their own favorites when it comes to dinner?

“I like the fresh ground Romano beef burger,” said Silver.

As for White? “I like eating dinner,” she deadpanned, adding in a more serious vein, “I like the “It’s a Wrap”, consisting of grilled chicken, bacon, lettuce, tomato with a choice of sauces.

Rivers Edge is open Wednesday through Monday from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. and hosts dinner hours Fridays and Saturdays from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The phone number is (978) 297-7234 and the restaurant can also be found on Facebook.

# Beals to keep kids occupied during April Vacation

BY TARA VOCINO  
COURIER CORRESPONDENT

WINCHENDON — The Beals Memorial Library will host a string of educational programs to keep children occupied for April Vacation next week from April 18 to April 21.

Library Technician Alexis Chanthachack said all programs are starting to take off, especially since building renovation and addition is happening within the week. There are two new weekly programs: the Lego Club, which Chanthachack leads, meets Mondays from 3:30-4:30 p.m. for older children ages 6 to 12.

The Tiny Tots Playground meets Tuesdays, 10-11 a.m., for toddlers ages 0 to 4. There, they will be songs, rhymes and sharing.

“Tiny tots will teach the children about sharing and how to get along with each other and how to be part of a group,” Senior Library Technician Melissa Thayer said on Tuesday. “To get ready for preschool.”

The library invites elder children ages 6 to 12 to a Gardening Workshop, where they have the opportunity to plant a flower or vegetable and learn about planting on Tuesday, April 18, 3:30-4:30 p.m., at the library.

“Participants will be able to take their flower or vegetable home to watch it grow into a mature plant,” Library Director Manuel King said in a statement.

The following day, Curious Creatures will host Animal Adventures on Wednesday, April 19, 2-3 p.m., at town hall on Wednesday, April 19. Children will meet the animals as well as hear interesting stories and information about them. According to event organizers, the program is slated to be a fun and unique learning experience that everyone will enjoy.

King said a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency that funds the Winchendon

Cultural Council partially funds Animal Adventures.

Pioneer Days, which Thayer leads, will come to the library on Thursday, April 20, 4-5 p.m., for children of all ages. Children will go back into the pioneer days and learn about how historical people lived, dressed, cooked, and played.

“Participants will take home a craft they made with their own pioneering hands,” King wrote in an email.

And also for children of all ages, Mad Science: Science Experiments, also lead by Thayer, will come to the library, Friday, April 21, 2-3 p.m. Children will learn about science through fun, hands-on experiments, according to organizers.

Beals Memorial Library is open Monday to Thursday, 1-8 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; and closed Sunday. Parking is available across from town hall.

For information, call 978-297-0300, visit in person at 50 Pleasant St., find them on Facebook at WinchendonLibrary, or log onto [townofwinchendon.com/beals-memorial=library](http://townofwinchendon.com/beals-memorial=library).



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VIEWS

Opinion and commentary from Winchendon and beyond

EDITORIAL

Accidents and our own actions

Wednesday morning found Winchendon police on Rte. 140 again, this time near the new Jeep dealership and just before the intersection with Rte. 12.

We waited until our deadline of 2 p.m. for more information, but were unable to get conclusive info in time.

So the Dread 140 struck again. It is one thing to label it and decry it, but it isn't, in the long run, the road itself. It's the drivers.

Always. And re-educating an entire population that uses a particular road on a regular basis isn't happening overnight.

We have become such an impatient society, following someone else down a road irritates us.

We cannot find it within ourselves to take a deep breath and just say, OK, it's time to go a bit slower then, and maybe look around instead of focusing so intently on the road itself.

We are adopting this as a cause. Let's not only get behind some improvements to the road, and we will repeat that widening the entire thing to four lanes would be better than some other solutions we've heard, but let's remind drivers of their responsibilities when driving too.

Accidents don't happen because the road suddenly does something extraordinary. Not because a car or truck changes its mind about how to behave; it's the drivers.

Always. Changing gears, we want to remind people of another cause we support and that would be Earth Day. We think a single day a year isn't nearly enough, but it's what we have at present; and as usual Board of Health slash Conservation Commission slash activist Lee Cloutier has been beating the bushes to make it happen.

A dumpster will be on Pleasant Street next Saturday morning, April 22. Gloves and garbage bags are provided to anyone who stops to get them. Drinks, food, donuts and other donated goodies will be available to volunteers. All thanks to local businesses like Gourmet Donuts, McDonalds and BelleTetes.

Now we need people. Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, church youth groups, high school service groups, any one and everyone...grab a trash bag and get out there.

There are places every where that need attention.

And we need you.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Draleau: appreciates the help

To the lady who stopped to help me when I fell, thank you very much. It shows there are still really nice people in the world.

DON DRALEAU

OWC: Valentine mailing went well

To the Editor:  
On February 4th, Operation Winchendon Cares had a drive to "Send a Little Love" to our military troops from Winchendon. Unfortunately, my husband and I were unable to attend, so Joni Gorecki and Ann Marie Slomcheck took on the task. We owe them a debt of gratitude. Everything ran like clock-work.

Thanks to the American Legion Post 193 for allowing us the use of the hall and for their generous donation towards the postage; Will Brown for our website; Sweet Treat Bakery for shrink wrapping the cookies and giving us a discounted price and Robinson-Broadhurst for their grant to help with expenses.

The problem with writing this type of a letter is that you don't want to leave anyone out. If we missed you, please know that it was not intentional. Just let us know and we will include you next time around.

Thank you to everyone who donated their time or dropped off donations — goods or monetary — we truly appreciate it.

Betty Allaire; American Legion Ladies Auxiliary; Elissa Berry; The Bohan Family; Todd Civin; Robert Drapeau; Liz Findley; Lindsey Gemme; Alicyn Gormley; Steve & Jennifer

Haddad; Damon Jess; Tony LaPointe; Chloe Lawrence; John & Penny Maliska; Kayla, Danny & Mikey Maine; Mary Ellen Mansfield & Broadview Residents; Alexander Marshall; Zoey Monahan; Murdock Student Council; Lynn Murray and her class; Monique Nasiatka; Emily Kiberd Pervier; Saint Anthony School - Danielle Less' Kindergarten, BethanyTerho's 1st Grade; Alicia Bartholomew's Fifth Grade; Emily Smith; Lindsey Smith; Victoria Swanson and Tracey Tenney.

Please, if you know of anyone who has a loved one in the military, have them contact us. You can't believe how many people didn't know that we were doing this or just never bothered to give us the name of their loved one. They must have a tie to Winchendon, and must be active duty but can be stationed anywhere — US or overseas. If they are National Guard or Reserve, they must be deployed overseas!

Our next date is set for Saturday, May 20 at the American Legion Post 193 on School Street. Check out our Facebook page (Operation Winchendon Cares) and/or our website [www.winchendon-cares.com](http://www.winchendon-cares.com) for more info.

Larry & Linda Sordoni  
Winchendon

Bulger: how the money is used

To the Editor:  
I read the Courier last week about the water flushing, or lack thereof, and it's been bugging me. You see, we received quite the property tax hike, which frankly, has put a strain on our budget. And apparently, we can pay off the loan to the state earlier than expected. How nice. I mean that, it is great to clear up a debt as soon as possible.

However I ask, at what cost? If we really can afford to pay the state in advance, why don't we have the funds to finally flush ALL the pipes as a top priority?! This is a health issue. Why am I paying for rusty water? Where is our health department in this?

On the same issue: our roads are

looking more like Swiss cheese every day! Again, why did we not plan some of that money for our roadways? Is this not a safety issue? I could write composition on what it means to me to drive West and Brown streets, and to walk my dog on said roads, but I know that the townspeople know full well what it's like.

Please forgive my ignorance if I don't understand how it works that we cannot take care of our water system or roads, but we can increase our payments to the state. I am really bugged about it!

MARY W. BULGER  
WINCHENDON

Trying to make sense of all those numbers



FROM THE  
SUPERINTENDENT'S  
OFFICE  
.....  
STEVE HADDAD

I'm going to give this to you straight. Our school system is in a dire economic situation and we badly, desperately, need your understanding and support. There's going to be a public hearing on school financing next Thursday, April 20 and there's going to be the spring town meeting May 15. We absolutely need you there. I am sure we all share the same commitment to our students

so let me tell you what's going on. First, I know there are those of you who are convinced we're crying wolf, that in end, some magical formula will be concocted to save every job and every program. Let me make this comparison — in business, if you are losing customers, you shouldn't cut your marketing budget, rather you need to increase it in ways that work. In education, if you're losing students, you need to provide services which will make families and students want to be here. I'm talking advanced placement classes, music and technology offerings and programs which address the social

Turn To **NUMBERS** page **A7**

Keeping priorities straight

I read a story the other day where researchers from Boston University's School of Public Health suggested that diabetes is far deadlier than has been assumed, which is really saying something. I read it because I'm the parent of a Type 1 juvenile diabetic. Courtney will be 24 this summer but she was three when she was originally diagnosed on Nov. 17, 1996 so naturally a front page story is going to grab my attention.

Essentially the researchers said diabetes is more accurately the cause of death for 12-percent of American deaths even though officially the disease has been listed as being responsible for just over three-percent. But Andrew Stokes, who headed the BU study, argued the higher rate is more realistic because diagnoses often don't happen early enough and deaths from, say, coronary heart disease are really due to complications from diabetes.

He added, "we hope a fuller understanding of the burden of the disease will



JOURNEY  
OF THE  
HEART  
.....  
JERRY  
CARTON

The collective we, or at least a lot of us, don't want "government" to tell us what we can eat or drink, nor how much of it we can consume. Personal freedom and all that, even though if we ate and drank healthier, we just might lower a lot of those medical costs.

A few years ago, then New York mayor Mike Bloomberg wanted to do something about the sugar intake in his city and got shouted down. Other mayors have tried as well and they too, were shouted down in the cause of personal freedom with which supposedly comes personal responsibility as well, but a whole lot of folks don't get that second part of the equation.

Because mayors aren't dictators and

influence public authorities in their messaging, funding and policy decisions, such as taxation of sugar-sweetened beverages and use of subsidies to make healthy foods more accessible."

Well, yes. It would be nice if this could happen. It would also be smart. But here's the problem.

most don't have the compliant city councils my boss enjoyed 30-40 years ago, it's going to be really hard to establish policies to in fact restrict what can be sold or how items with higher sugar levels can be taxed at higher levels even though both are necessary and shame on legislative bodies who cower before sugar-industry donors and righteous whines about freedom. Where's their integrity and commitment to doing the right thing? See, the problem is people don't think much about the long term consequences of behavior and hence it would behoove government to help them do so. A lot of people will jump up and down and be stupid if their local government did impose limits or higher taxes but that would be the best thing for the greater good.

We know what causes Type 1 — the inability of the pancreas to produce insulin, but we don't know what causes a lot of other diseases or if we do, we often don't know how to fix them. That's why proposed cuts in funding for NIH and the CDC are insane. Granted, proposals aren't executive fiat but let's be honest here, any philosophy which thinks we should cut funding for medical research is loony beyond words. Can you explain

to me the rationale for slashing it? Oh wait. I know: so we can give more tax breaks to the very wealthy. Right?

I don't understand, I'll never, ever understand why so many people, politicians and non-pols alike, think and believe the ways they do. Cut funding for research? Cut funding for the NEA? Try to sneak through block grants to states to determine how to distribute them to people who would be impacted by an actual repeal of the ACA? Drop 75-percent of funds for school lunch programs? What kind of mindset thinks these things are good policy? Yes, that's rhetorical to a degree but only to a degree. Cut, cut, cut. Sam Brownback did that in Kansas and now that state's bond rating is in the toilet and even Republican legislators in a rare but appreciated show of common sense are scrambling to restore education funding.

That's at least a start. Now if we could only get some brave local legislatures to make it hurt economically to eat and drink unhealthily. That would be a sight to see and a good one but I'm not quite holding my breath, you know? See you next week.

Be not proud



NOTES OF  
CONCERN  
.....  
JACK  
BLAIR

A lot of people did not want Hillary Clinton to be our president.

A lot of people did not want Donald Trump to be our president.

But that was the choice the primary voters presented to us.

In my lifetime, I have not seen the degree of hatred and disgust that Americans have showed these two candidates.

Once the election was decided, instead of uniting in the hope of a better America, the hatred has continued. There is absolutely no positive outcome in hoping a presidency fails. Historically, after an election, we have united and hoped that the person elected would make our country better.

In this most recent election,

that has not happened. The haters continue. They try to undue the results of the election. They place stumbling blocks in the way of the administration, refuse to confirm appointees, and look for a fight at every turn. In fairness, as I observe our politics these days, I think the same thing would have happened had Mrs. Clinton been the victor.

The election results are not going to change.

Lack of cooperation and team work can only hurt our nation.

Both political parties have chosen not to put the nation first. It

is embarrassing and disgusting.

If this hatred continues, our nation will be less than it was, incompetent in presenting an example to the world, and probably drowning in internal terror attacks.

Those who hope the president will fail seem not to understand that if he does fail, so does America. There are actually people out there who think Clinton will become president if Trump is impeached. Sorry folks, Vice President Pence becomes president.

I am disappointed in many

of the things Trump has done. That said, he is the president, my president, your president, and it would do us all a lot of good to hope he does not fail.

And for those of you who redouble your efforts to bring President Trump down, you might want a dose of reality: Vice President Pence holds the same views as he.

Two years from now we will have a chance to grade the efforts of the current administration. In the meantime, acting like adult patriots would be a good path to follow.ß



# What are our schools worth?

Budget season is upon us and, as always happens this time of year, there is a contentious feeling in the air. The school department is finalizing their budget, trying to figure out how they can cover the cost of the things necessary to provide a quality, well-rounded education to the children of Winchendon. Did I hear laughter? We're all well aware of the reputation that the schools in Winchendon have – but how much do you really know about what has happened in our schools over the years, and what goes on there on a day-to-day basis? Let me introduce you to myself, and to some facts about the Winchendon Public Schools.

My name is Chris Ricard, and I have been teaching for 31 years, 30 of them here in Winchendon, so you might say I've had some experience with how the schools in Winchendon

work. I've been here through renovations, new construction, rising and falling enrollments, 'Ed Reform', the end of 'permanent certification', the establish of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, (as well as several revisions), "No Child Left Behind", and the Common Core. I've seen the number of teachers employed in the district as high as 172 about ten years ago – and as low as 114 in the current school year. I've seen superintendents, principals, colleagues, and students come and go. I've had several children of former students in my classes. But there are other things that I've mostly seen go – and these are losses that harm our students, damage our reputation, and have led us to the very edge

of a precipice which could result in the fall of public schools in Winchendon in a very short time. (No, I'm not exaggerating.)

Twenty or fewer years ago, the following were alive and well in our district. They're not any more.

Full-time Art and Music teachers at both Memorial and Toy Town

Foreign language, Art, Family and Consumer Science (formerly known as 'Home-Ec' or 'Life Skills'), and Industrial Arts (a.k.a 'Shop') classes in the middle school

Industrial Arts, after school programs, and department coordinators at Murdock

Money to finance field trips, AP summer training for teachers, and AP special study sessions for students

A principal and assistant principal for each building in the district. (Now the only building with an assistant principal is the high school.)

A director in charge of curriculum and instruction, and another director in charge of assessment and grant writing at the district level

Is it any wonder that students and parents look at the dwindling offerings and think they might be better off in a different district? Well, here's the problem with that. Every time a family decides to 'school choice' their child out to another district, a minimum of \$5,000 in funding for the district goes with them. Depending on any special services that student may receive, this amount can go as high as \$100,000. This leads to more budget cuts and lost programs, which leads to more students leaving, creating a vicious cycle of draining

finances, cuts, and an exodus of students from our schools. Lather, rinse, repeat.

In each of the last several years, up to 40 students have chosen to go to Monty Tech instead of continuing on to high school at Murdock. That doesn't count the students who opt out to Oakmont, Gardner, or elsewhere. The loss of only nine students is equivalent to the salary of one beginner teacher, and each teacher works with far more than nine students!

If that's not bad enough, the items below, which are normally part of a school's regular budget, are paid for out of special grants, trusts, and funds which were created with the intention of providing enrichment for the students of Winchendon:

Some salaries and stipend positions

Turn To **SCHOOLS** page **A11**

## Hoop coach driven away



ANYTHING  
NEAR &  
FAR  
.....  
KEITH  
KENT

Many of us have seen it before. The occasional parent or parents who seem to have trouble keeping their voices under control and thoughts to themselves during their children's games. No matter what the sport or how great the quality and value of the lifelong lessons being learned are, there are sometimes a few people who think they know how to coach better than the coach.

Enter the city of Braintree, and its now former high school girls' basketball Coach Kristen McDonnell. In just eight seasons at the helm of the program, McDonnell accomplished something many coaches could only dream of, with her teams reaching the girls Division 1 state championship three times, winning two state championships, five sectionals, and leading one of the most successful programs in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Now, due to just a handful of parents who continuously harassed the vaunted coach over their children's playing time, McDonnell has resigned and is gone.

McDonnell lead by example. In this year's past 2016-17 season, she made all five seniors team captains. Not three, not four, but all five. But that

wasn't good enough for a few parents who verbally attacked McDonnell over several years. One complained that by making all five seniors a captain, that it diminished her daughter's accomplishment of being a captain as there should have only been three.

Another parent attacked McDonnell on social media saying, "A parent was drawing out better plays in the bleachers because their coach clearly didn't know how to coach."

Really? McDonnell didn't know how to coach girls' hoops but you do from the bleachers? For the record in McDonnell's eight years, "25 percent of her seasons were Division 1 state championships."

Sadly, one of the sets of parents who were an example of parenting and youth sports gone badly includes a second grade teacher in the neighboring school district of Quincy. Yes, a "teacher," who was not happy with her daughter's playing time, along with her husband, was one of a handful of parents who went on a tear including in social media and wouldn't let off the gas.

While the vast majority of teachers are dedicated to children in ways many of us could never even understand unless walking in their shoes, this teacher and parent clearly crossed unacceptable boundaries, all over her child's playing time.

In addition to the complaints, several parents of junior class members on the team were strongly complaining about their children's playing time

on the court vs the senior's playing time, making it even worse.

Finally, Coach McDonnell seemed to have had enough. Not only did she resign after coaching her team to two state championships in just eight years, but she released some of the letters she received as part of the reason why with just one of them saying, "One parent has said nothing but hateful things about you even before their child was on the team. McDonnell makes a mockery of this team. Another parent during a playoff game was writing out plays for you because they said you didn't know what you were doing. There is another couple who rips your name apart every time your name is mentioned!"

By the way, those were in the letter from the above mentioned second grade teacher, a name I have left out because it simply doesn't deserve to be mentioned.

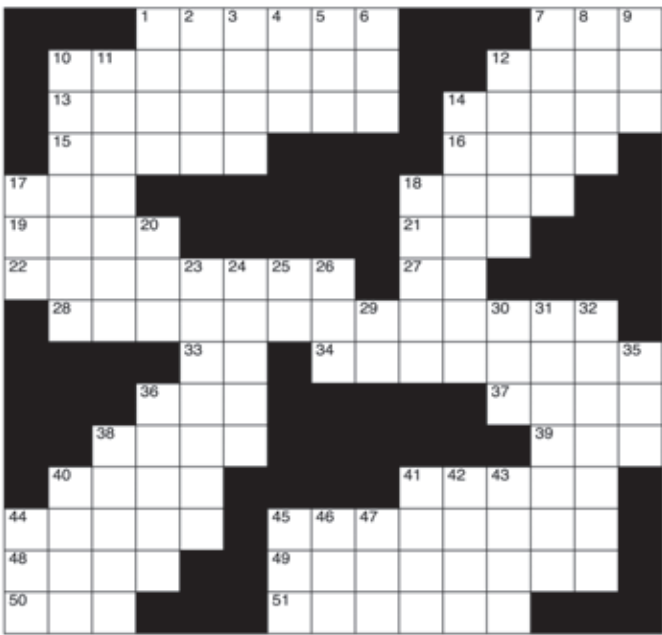
In the end, the athletic director had the coach's back, but apparently the principal did not, allowing the harassment of the vaunted coach to continue. Finally, McDonnell sadly just resigned as she seemed to have had her fill.

High School programs from all over Eastern Mass and coaches a like upon the news of the resignation took to social media saying it was a great loss for both student athletes and the game itself in a strong show of support for coach McDonnell. However providing one final kick to the pants of the great coach on her way

out the door, one of the parents who wrote shameful material to McDonnell, attacked her for letting some of the letters go public to show just why she was leaving having the nerve to call McDonnell "Unprofessional."

Coaches dedicate far more of their time, personal lives, and even a level of stress which many could not possibly fath-

om. I would encourage every parent of a child or student athlete to either shake the hand of their child's coach, or even give them a big well deserved hug and thank them for their great dedication and efforts. Never mistake a lack of playing time, for a coach not being fully invested in your child.



### CLUES ACROSS

1. Winter melon

7. Solar energy particles (abbr.)

10. Requiring fewer resources

12. Nest

13. Name

14. Actress Vergara

15. Very near in space or time

16. Authorized program analysis report

17. Spoken in Vietnam

18. Brews

19. Drops

21. Last or greatest in an indefinitely large series

22. Congo capital

27. Soldier
28. Bronx Bomber

33. Argon

34. Open

36. Popular sandwich

37. Protect from danger

38. Goddess of spring

39. Large hole

40. Vegetarians won't touch it

41. Actress Neal

44. Finger millet

45. Small waterfalls

48. Israeli city

49. Most gummy

50. NFL owner Snyder

51. Spindles

### CLUES DOWN

1. Italian Lake

2. Cuckoos

3. Sound unit

4. Doctors' group

5. The cutting part of a drill

6. A team's best hurler

7. Couches

8. Muslim ruler

9. Round globular seed

10. A way to confine

11. Men wear it

12. Chinese province

14. Soup cracker

17. Expression of disappointment

18. West Chadic languages

20. Midway between south and southwest

23. An opal

24. Main artery
25. Junior's father

26. Sierra Leone dialect

29. Cyrillic letter

30. Native American tribe

31. Passes

32. Most unnatural

35. Insecticide

36. Blatted

38. Actress Fox

40. Actresses Kate and Rooney

41. Outside

42. The habitat of wild animals

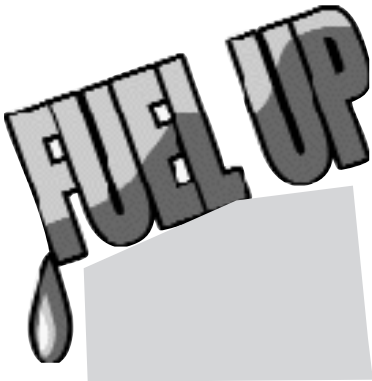
43. Days falling in the middle of the month

44. Radioactivity unit

45. Certified public accountant

46. Swiss river

47. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)



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POLICE LOG

Editor's Note: The information contained in this police log was obtained through public documents kept by the police department, and is considered to be the account of the police. All subjects are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

TUESDAY, APRIL 4  
12:26 a.m.: mv stop (Spring St.), Peter Yates, 35, 404 No. Mt. Shasta Blvd., Mt. Shasta, CA, unregistered mv, number plate violation to conceal ID; 2:30 a.m.: investigation (Spring St.), secure; 2:37-3:20 a.m.: buildings checks, secure; 6:48 a.m.: accident (Maid Rd.), referred; 7:15 a.m.: accident (Central St.), info taken; 7:44 a.m.: mv stop (Front St.), verbal warning; 7:51 a.m.: ambulance (Elmwood Rd.), removed; 7:52 a.m.: mv stop (Central St.), verbal warning; 8:05 a.m.: mv stop (Spring St), verbal warning; 8:19 a.m.: mv stop (Front St.), verbal warning; 8:30 a.m.: mv stop (Spring St.), verbal warning; 8:31 a.m.: info/general (School St.), spoken to; 8:44 a.m.: mv stop (Spring St.), verbal warning; 9:00 a.m.: info/general (Ingleside Dr.), services rendered; 9:28 a.m.: mv stop (Front St.), verbal warning; 9:33 a.m.: mv stop (Front St.), citation issued; 9:37 a.m.: investigation (Otter River Rd.), spoken to; 9:41 a.m.: mv stop (Front St.), verbal warning; 9:59 a.m.: mv stop (Front St.), verbal warning; 10:03 a.m.: mv stop (Front St.), verbal warning; 10:13 a.m.: mv stop (Front St.), verbal warning; 10:17 a.m.: mv stop (Front St.), verbal warning; 10:23 a.m.: mv stop (Front St.), verbal warning; 10:33 a.m.: mv stop (Front St.), verbal warning; 10:38 a.m.: mv stop (Front St.), verbal warning; 11:34 a.m.: erratic operation (Spring St.), unable to locate; 12:39 p.m.: investigation (Hyde Park Dr.), unable to locate; 12:59 p.m.: accident (Gardner Rd.), report taken; 1:26 p.m.: DPW call (Central St.), referred; 1:29 p.m.: officer wanted (Otter River Rd.), assisted; 2:08 p.m.: ambulance (Memorial Dr.), transport; 3:04 p.m.: info/general (Converse Dr.), info taken; 3:08 p.m.: abandoned 911 call (Memorial Dr.), services rendered; 3:36 p.m.: mv stop (Spring St.), spoken to; 3:50 a.m.: alarm (Bayberry Cir.), secured; 4:04 p.m.: 911 non-emergency (Alger St.), spoken to; 4:36 p.m.: assist citizen (Maple St.), gone on arrival; 4:40 p.m.: mv stop (Maple St.), citation issued; 5:29 p.m.: accident (E. Mononomac Rd.), report taken; 6:14 p.m.: mv stop (School St.), verbal warning; 6:42 p.m.: erratic operation (Rte. 140), services rendered; 6:43 p.m.: extra patrols (Benjamin St.); secure; 7:09 p.m.: fire (Maple St.), services rendered; 8:31 p.m.: mv stop (Mechanic St.), written warning; 9:00 p.m.: mv stop (Central St.), written warning; 9:15 p.m.: mv stop (Elm St.), written warning.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5  
2:15-2:26 a.m.: building checks, secure; 2:26 a.m.: mv stop (Central St.), Neil Ketola, Jr., 27, 452 Maple St., Winchendon, operating with suspended license, transport; 2:27 a.m.: building check, secure; 2:45 a.m.: suspicious person (Ash St.), spoken to; 2:54 a.m.: noise complaint (Pleasant St.), spoken to; 3:06-3:08 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 5:44 a.m.: extra patrols (Central St.), secure; 7:33 a.m.: accident (Foristall Rd.), report taken; 7:53 a.m.: mv stop (West St.), verbal warning; 7:56 a.m.: mv stop (Front St.), arrest; 8:17 a.m.: mv stop (Front & Spring streets), verbal warning; 8:24 a.m.: mv stop (Spring St.), citation issued; 8:34 a.m.: mv stop (Spring St.), verbal warning; 8:41 a.m.: mv stop (Central St.), verbal warning; 8:47 a.m.: mv stop (Central St.), verbal warning; 8:52 a.m.: mv stop (Central St.), verbal warning; 8:58 a.m.: mv stop (Ash St.), verbal warning; 10:41 a.m.: ambulance (Liberty Dr.), removed; 12:24 p.m.: warrant check (Front St.), Mark Joseph LeBlanc, 31, 75 Converse Dr., Winchendon, arrested; 12:55 p.m.: fraud (East Hill Rd.), spoken to; 1:07 p.m.:

investigation (Spruce St.), spoken to; 1:25 p.m.: animal complaint (Water St.), referred to ACO; 2:16 p.m.: investigation (Spruce St.), spoken to; 2:58 p.m.: suspicious person (North St.), spoken to; 3:41 p.m.: mv stop (Central St.), Michael A. Roberts, 36, 206 Central St., #2A, Winchendon, operating with suspended license, citation issued; 4:51 p.m.: officer wanted (Spruce St.), spoken to; 4:58 p.m.: property damage (Beech St.), 209A issued; 6:42 p.m.: investigation (West St.), spoken to; 7:01 p.m.: investigation (Ash St.), spoken to; 8:11 p.m.: burglary (Maple St.), secure; 8:42 p.m.: ambulance (Peal Dr.), removed; 8:56 p.m.: ambulance (Hyde Park Dr.), services rendered; 10:40 p.m.: larceny (School St.), spoken to.  
THURSDAY, APRIL 6  
12:10 a.m.: assist citizen (Central St.); 12:48-12:56 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 1:00 a.m.: welfare check (Main St.), secure; 1:05-2:53 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 5:28 a.m.: mv stop (Gardner Rd.), citation issued; 5:48 a.m.: mv stop (Spring & Glenallan streets), citation issued; 6:09 a.m.: mv stop (Glenallan & Spring streets), citation issued; 7:58 a.m.: mv stop (Spring & Central streets), written warning; 8:16 a.m.: mv stop (Spring & Front streets), written warning; 8:33 a.m.: mv stop (Spring & Beech streets), written warning; 8:41 a.m.: mv stop (Memorial Dr.), verbal warning; 8:55 a.m.: mv stop (Beachview Dr.), verbal warning; 10:38 a.m.: ambulance (Second St.), removed; 10:44 a.m.: keep the peace (Main St.), assisted; 10:54 a.m.: burglar alarm (Royalston Rd. No.), false alarm; 11:53 a.m.: burglar alarm (Eagle Rd.), secured; 12:11 p.m.: harassment (Ready Dr.), Tara Mahan, 33, 57 Hayes Ave., Lowell, MA, criminal harassment, spoken to; 12:23 p.m.: investigation (Central St.), report taken; 1:03 p.m.: ambulance (Teel Rd.), removed; 1:24 p.m.: ambulance (Central St.), removed; 2:31 p.m.: info/general (Highland St.), spoken to; 2:53 p.m.: harassment (Cedar St.), report taken; 3:02 p.m.: larceny (Spruce St.), report taken; 3:46 p.m.: fraud (Cedar St.), report taken; 4:28 p.m.: erratic operation (Gardner Rd.), referred; 4:33 p.m.: investigation (Spruce St.), spoken to; 5:06 p.m.: carbon monoxide incident (Robbins Rd.), services rendered; 5:45 p.m.: officer wanted (Ash St.), spoken to; 6:36 p.m.: extra patrols (Benjamin St.), secure; 6:43 p.m.: welfare check (Elmwood Rd.), removed; 6:45 p.m.: extra patrols (Lake Dennison), secure; 7:12 p.m.: larceny (E. Monomonac Rd.), report taken; 7:45 p.m.: accident (School St.), removed; 9:13 p.m.: ambulance (Hyde Park Dr.), services rendered; 10:29 p.m.: trespass (Memorial Dr.), info taken; 10:32 p.m.: trespass (Maple St.), info taken.  
FRIDAY, APRIL 7  
1:12 a.m.-3:11 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 3:16 a.m.: mv stop (River St.), verbal warning; 3:24 building checked, secure; 4:12 a.m.: welfare check (Spring St.), unable to locate; 4:54 a.m.: mv stop (Gardner Rd.), citation issued; 5:03 a.m.: mv stop (Gardner Rd.), citation issued; 5:24 a.m.: mv stop (Gardner Rd.), citation issued; 5:39 a.m.: mv stop (Gardner Rd.), citation issued; mv stop (Spring & Glenallan), written warning; 6:13 a.m.: mv stop (Gardner Rd.), citation issued; 6:21 a.m.: mv stop (Gardner Rd.), citation issued; 8:50 a.m.: welfare check (Central St.), spoken to; 10:26 a.m.: assist other agency (Beaman Ct.), message delivered; 10:38 a.m.: warrant of apprehension (Spruce St.), arrested; 10:48 a.m.: welfare check/child (Gardner Rd), citation issued; 11:21 a.m.: summons service (Converse Dr.), served; 11:22 a.m.: info/general (School St.), spoken to; 11:33 a.m.: info/general (Island Rd.), info taken; 12:21 p.m.: investigation (Spring St.), spoken to; 12:23 p.m.: summons service (Mill St.), served; 1:26 p.m.: mv stop (Front St), written warning; 3:24 p.m.: assist citizen (Western Ave.), property returned; 3:38 p.m.: assist other agency (Brown St.), unable to serve; 4:18 p.m.: mv stop (Lincoln Ave.), written warn-

ing; 4:33 p.m.: mv stop (School St.), citation issued; 5:31 p.m.: mv stop (Front St.), written warning; 5:58 p.m.: summons service (Central St.), unable to serve; 6:29 p.m.: mv stop (Railroad St.), Christian Smith, 44, 19 Western Ave., Winchendon, operating with suspended license, report taken; 6:46 p.m.: suspicious (other) (Central St.), no cause; 6:49 p.m.: animal complaint (Hitchcock Rd.), assisted; 7:33 p.m.: disabled auto (River St.), assisted; 7:54 p.m.: mv stop (Baldwinville Rd.), verbal warning; 9:17 p.m.: open door/window (Glenallan St.), secured; 9:34 p.m.: annoying phone calls (Central St.), report taken; 10:11 p.m.: mv stop (Lake St.), verbal warning;  
SATURDAY, APRIL 8  
12:44 a.m.: building check, secure; 1:04 a.m.: property found (Pleasant St.), returned; 1:35-1:41 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 1:48 a.m.: warrant check (Pleasant St.), info given; 2:49 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 3:25 a.m.: accident (Spring St.), Dustin Grey, 19, 15 Fairbanks St., Winchendon, negligent operation, report taken; 4:46 a.m.: animal complaint (Eagle Rd.) services rendered; 5:53 a.m.: info/general (River St.), info taken; 6:32 a.m.: animal complaint (Eagle Rd.), spoken to; 8:07 a.m.: threats (Benjamin St.), report taken; 10:48 a.m.: accident (Front & River), report taken; 11:12 a.m.: officer wanted (School St.), report taken; 11:15 a.m.: wires down (Town Farm Rd.), referred; 11:18 a.m.: erratic operation (Main St.), advised officer; 11:33 a.m.: road rage (Central St.), spoken to; 12:44 p.m.: assist citizen (Mill Glen Rd.), report taken; 12:47 p.m.: property damage (Spring St.), report taken; 12:48 p.m.: 911 non-emergency (Pleasant St.), no service; 3:20 p.m.: brush fire (Otter River Rd.), extinguished; 3:39 p.m.: investigation (Town Farm Rd.), info taken; 4:17 p.m.: mv stop (Maple St.), written warning; 4:17 p.m.: disabled auto (Baldwinville State Rd.), gone; 4:31 p.m.: investigation (E. Monomonac Rd.), info taken; 4:44 p.m.: 911 hang up (Central St.), child w/phone; 4:51 p.m.: atv complaint (Glenallan St.), services rendered' 8:17 p.m.: mv stop (Gardner Rd.), citation issued; 8:21 a.m.: mv stop (Maple St.), verbal warning; 8:47 p.m.: mv stop (Goodrich St.), verbal warning; 8:55 p.m.: mv stop (Ingleside & Maple), verbal warning; 9:11 p.m.: mv stop (Benjamin St.), dispersed gathering; 10:31 p.m.: vandalism (Walnut St.), report taken; 10:59 p.m.: burglar alarm (Bayberry Cir.), secured building; 11:25 p.m.: ambulance (Converse Dr.), transport.  
SUNDAY, APRIL 9  
12:02 a.m.: intoxicated person (Central St.), services rendered; 12:10 a.m.: mv stop (Gardner Rd.), citation issued; 12:28 a.m.: welfare check (Oak St.), report taken; 1:08 a.m.: harassment (Maple St.), report taken; 3:51-3:52 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 3:53 a.m.: assist citizen (Mercer Ave.), referred; 4:01 a.m.: building checked, secure; 8:54 a.m.: investigation (Pearl Dr.), spoken to; 10:36 a.m.: harassment (Center Ln.), referred to court; 11:02 a.m.: threats (Spring St.), report taken; 11:52 a.m.: ambulance (Hyde Park Dr.), false alarm; 1:14 p.m.: illegal burn (Otter River Rd.), services rendered; 1:54 p.m.: investigation (Central St.), spoken to; 2:00 p.m.: investigation (School St.), spoken to; 3:44 p.m.: mv stop (Spring St.), spoken to; 3:50 p.m.: mv stop (Gardner Rd.), citation issued; 6:09 p.m.: burglary/b&e (Juniper St.), report taken; 6:17 p.m.: fire alarm (Spring St.), services rendered; 6:48 p.m.: investigation (Goodrich St.), spoken to; 7:25 p.m.: assist citizen (Spruce St.), referred; 7:30 p.m.: fire (Alger St.), services rendered; 7:45 p.m.: 911 hang up (Polly's Dr.), spoken to.  
MONDAY, APRIL 10  
12:14 a.m.: investigation (Spring St.), secure; 12:17 a.m.: (Spring St.), written warning; 12:51-1:38 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 1:43 a.m.: extra patrols (Riverside Cemetery), secure; 1:48 a.m.: building checked, secure; 1:48 a.m.:



INTRODUCING NEW APPOINTMENTS

Winchendon Police Chief David Walsh (seated) introduced newly-appointed Lt. Kevin Wolski, Detective Alan Ross, and Officer Joseph Champney to selectmen at their meeting Monday night. Walsh expressed satisfaction with the fact his department is now fully staffed.

Greg Vine photo

investigation (Pleasant St.), spoken to; 1:52 a.m.: mv stop (Gardner Rd.), citation issued; 2:05 a.m.: investigation (Ash St.), spoken to; 2:06 a.m.: investigation (Central St.), spoken to; 2:20 a.m.: building check, secure; 2:27 a.m.: extra patrols (Pearl Dr.), secure; 3:31 a.m.: ambulance (School St.), removed; 5:09 a.m.: extra patrols (Central St.), secure; 7:56 a.m.: mv stop (Central St.), verbal warning; 8:05 a.m.: mv stop (Central St.), verbal warning; 8:09 a.m.: investigation (Pearl Dr.), spoken to; 8:17 a.m.: mv stop (Front St.), verbal warning; 8:20 a.m.: mv stop (Central St), verbal warning; 8:46 a.m.: mv stop (Center Ln.), verbal warning; 9:24 a.m.: animal complaint (Beech St.), referred; 11:20 a.m.: ambulance (Colonial Ln.), removed; 11:31 a.m.: animal complaint (Beachview Dr.), referred to ACO; 11:32 a.m.: traffic hazard (Spring & Glenallan), removed; 12:01 p.m.: neighbor dispute (Cross St.), report taken; 12:46 p.m.: unwanted party (Front St.), assisted; 12:59 p.m.: investigation (Memorial Dr.), report taken; 1:02 p.m.: mv violations (Main St.), spoken to; 1:22 p.m.: traffic hazard (Beech St.), no cause; 2:20 p.m.: investigation (Juniper St.), services rendered; 2:32 p.m.: assist citizen (Kemp St.), services rendered; 2:49 p.m.: ambulance (Clark Rd.), transport; 3:12 p.m.: annoying phone calls (Spruce St.), spoken to; 3:22 p.m.: annoying phone calls (East St.), report taken; 3:43 p.m.: summons service (Cross St.), served; 4:00 p.m.: ambulance (Brown St.), transport; 4:20 p.m.: mv stop (River St.), citation issued; 4:43 p.m.: mv stop (Railroad St.), citation issued; 4:49 p.m.: assist citizen (Lincoln Ave.), no service necessary; 4:56 p.m.: animal complaint (Hale St.), spoken to; 5:08 p.m.: harassment (Central St.), report taken; 5:42 p.m.: unwanted party (Juniper St.), unable to locate; 5:45 p.m.: ambulance (Hyde Park Dr.), transport; 5:58 p.m.: investigation (Juniper St.), services rendered; 6:09 p.m.: animal complaint (Maynard St.), spoken to; 6:37 p.m.: ambulance (Clark Rd.), report taken; 8:22 p.m.: assist citizen (Emerald St.), spoken to; 8:26 p.m.: ambulance (Central St.), transport; 8:40 p.m.: suspicious (other) (Old Gardner Rd.), secured; 8:55 p.m.: registration check (Rte. 140) spoken to; 9:14 p.m.: ambulance (Pearl St.), transport; 9:54 p.m.: CO incident (Krantz Rd.), services rendered; 10:26 p.m.: mv stop (River St.), spoken to; 11:49 p.m.: investigation (Mechanic St.), services rendered.

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ESCAPE  
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adrenaline was exciting, and perhaps a bit nerve-wracking, as the timer counted down. Relief and a sense of accomplishment washed over us when we discovered the final answer. Some of us are already planning our next Escape Room. It was “a very fun time of brain teasers and mystery solving,” summed up Nicole Prescott. “I highly recommend it!” Her husband Ryan Prescott

agreed and was glad that he “didn’t have to be a trivia master to figure it out.” Everything needed to unravel the mystery was already in the room. “I’m glad my friends aren’t stupid,” smiled Cindy Malley, a nod to the importance of choosing teammates wisely. To reserve a time or get more information, please see winchendonescaperoom.com. If you wish to book a time beyond April, call Don at (978) 833-3025. As Mr. Holmes would say, “The game is afoot!”

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# OBITUARIES

## Florence H. (Mills) Brown, 93

WINCHENDON — Florence H. (Mills) Brown, age 93, formerly of 123 Lincoln Ave., died peacefully Wednesday, April 5, 2017 in Golden Living Center, Fitchburg, with her family at her side.



She was born in Pembroke, ME on Aug. 29, 1923 and lived in Connecticut for many years where she worked as a licensed practical nurse for many years at Fairfield Hospital. Florence was an avid Red Sox fan. She enjoyed spending time with her family and talking sports with her grandchildren.

She was the wife of the late Seymour Brown. She leaves two children, Gary W. Brown and his wife Susan of Winchendon and Carolyn Wright of Lubec, ME, seven grandchildren, several great grandchildren, nieces and nephews. A daughter, Cindy Brown, predeceased her.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, April 11, 2017 in Stone-Ladeau Funeral Home, 343 Central Street, Winchendon.

Burial will be in Lubec, ME at a later date.

Memorial donations may be made to Wendell P. Clark Memorial YMCA, 155 Central St., Winchendon, MA 01475.

## James B. Kaehlert, 43

ASHBURNHAM—James B. Kaehlert, age 43, of 39 School St., died peacefully at his home Wednesday morning, April 5, 2017 surrounded by his family, after a ten month valiant battle with colorectal cancer.



James was born in Biloxi, MI on Oct. 13, 1973, son of the late Ronald K. and Karen (Jackson) Kaehlert. He graduated from Pal Bay High School in Palm Bay, FL and Lenoir-Rhyne University in Hickory, NC. He later received his Masters degree from Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT in liberal studies with a concentration in biology.

James worked at Avon Old Farms School in Avon, CT as a science teacher and head athletic trainer and dorm parent. For the last nine years, James has worked at Cushing Academy. At Cushing, he worked in a variety of roles, always keeping his love of students front and center. He was science teacher, head coach for JV soccer, assisted with JV baseball, athletic training, soccer and baseball. He also worked as an

advisor to students and worked in the library.

James had a gift of relating to young people. He was former Cub Scout leader for Pack 12 in Ashburnham and was involved in its Pinewood Derby. He was a member of the National Athletic Trainers Association.

He leaves his wife of 17 years, Heather (Wilmot) Kaehlert; two children, Samuel James Hui-tae Kaehlert and Abigail Mae Mi-su Kaehlert and a niece Katie Kaehlert. A sister, Katherine Kaehlert, predeceased him.

Recently, James was a beneficiary of the Ashburnham-Westminster Community Benefit. Over the last year of his illness, James and his wife lived by the slogan “Live Your Life. Do What Makes You Happy. Make Memories.”

A memorial service was held Monday, April 10, 2017 in the Watkins Field House at Cushing Academy, Ashburnham.

Memorial donations may be made to the Kaehlert Children Education Fund. Checks can be made payable to Heather Kaehlert and sent to 39 School St., Ashburnham, MA 01430.

Stone-Ladeau Funeral Home, 343 Central Street, Winchendon is directing arrangements.

## Raymond A. Kennedy, 85

TEMPLETON — Raymond A. Kennedy, age 85, of 851 Patriots Road, died peacefully at his residence, Thursday, April 6, 2017 with his family at his side.



He was born in Winchendon on Dec. 21, 1931, son of the late Waino and Hilda (Johnson) Maijala and lived in Templeton for many years.

Ray was a member of the Teamsters Union and drove a truck many years for various trucking companies. He had also worked as a bus driver for New Englander Coach and had worked for the town of Templeton as a municipal worker. He retired from

Aubuchon Hardware.

Ray proudly served in the United States Army during the Korean War. An avid golfer, Ray was a member of Winchendon Golf Club and Ellinwood Country Club. He was also a member of Eugene M. Connor Post #193 American

Legion. For several years he and his late wife enjoyed spending winters in Florida.

His wife of 59 years, Frances L. (Fitzpatrick) Kennedy, died in 2014. He leaves two children, Raymond A. Kennedy Jr and his wife Rochelle of Baldwinville and Sharron L. Kennedy of Gardner; six grandchildren, Justin Bourque, Angela Morse, Samantha Lovell, Cory Kennedy, Cera Bassett and Michelle McCrillis; a son-in-law Raymond Parker; three step grandchildren, Jessica Langlais, Jennifer Langlais and Crystal Kafer; one great granddaughter Novalie Bourque, a step sister, Janice Hooten and many nieces and nephews. In addition to his wife, he was predeceased by a daughter, Karen M. Parker; two brothers, Richard Kennedy and Martin Kennedy and a step brother, Joseph Maijala.

Funeral services were held Sunday, April 9, 2017 in Stone-Ladeau Funeral Home, 343 Central Street, Winchendon.

Burial will be in Pine Grove Cemetery at a later date.

Memorial donations may be made to Simonds-Sinon Regional Cancer Center, 275 Nichols Road, Fitchburg, MA 01420.

## Paul D. ‘Buckwheat’ Maillet, 65

FITCHBURG — Paul D. “Buckwheat” Maillet, age 65, of 107 Stickney Road, died Friday morning, April 7, 2017 in Wachusett Manor Nursing Home, Gardner.

He was born in Fitchburg on March 19, 1952 and was a lifelong resident of Fitchburg. He was the son of Mary M. (Morin) Maillet of Fitchburg and the late Delcy J. Maillet.

Buckwheat proudly served his country as a member of the United States Army during the Vietnam War. He had worked in maintenance for B&M Railroad for several years and later worked for S and F Farms in Fitchburg. His greatest enjoyment was fishing at Quabbin Reservoir in the boat, which

he owned. Buckwheat also enjoyed hunting, 4 wheeling and his Triumph motorcycles.

He had a very special bond with his mother, whom he leaves, as well as a brother, James Maillet and his wife Andrea of Gardner. A brother, Michael “Mickey” Maillet, predeceased him.

Military funeral services will be held Friday, April 14, 2017 at 1 p.m. in Massachusetts Veterans’ Memorial Cemetery, 111 Glenallan St., Winchendon. There are no calling hours.

Stone-Ladeau Funeral Home, 343 Central Street, Winchendon is directing arrangements.

## Pauline M. Rouleau, 80

WINCHENDON — Pauline M. Rouleau, age 80, of 380 Maple St., died peacefully at her residence Thursday, April 6, 2017, surrounded by her loving family.



She was born in Rindge on Aug. 5, 1936, daughter of the late Clarence and Elvia (Devoid) Gordon and grew up in Rindge. Pauline was a resident of Winchendon for most of her life and was a graduate of

Mount Wachusett Community College at the age of 60.

Pauline retired from Heywood Hospital at the age of 67. She had worked in its sterilization department and she once taught a class in sterilization at Mount Wachusett Community College. At an early age, she worked at the former Winchendon Dress Shop and later worked at Bards in Fitzwilliam for many years and Open Arms Nursing Home for 20 years.

Pauline was an active member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. Her greatest enjoyment was spending time with her family, which meant everything to her. She also enjoyed bird watching, gardening, working with her flowers and also making occasional

trips to Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun.

She leaves her husband of 34 years, Joseph A. Rouleau; four children: Debra L. Cloutier and her husband Bruce of Winchendon, Linda M. Sawyer and her husband Chris of Phillipston, Brenda G. Keney and her husband Mark of Winchendon and Ernest Trombly III and his wife Lillian; three stepchildren, Donna Daniels of Rindge, Deborah Croft and her husband Brian of Burnham, ME and Sharon Rouleau of Rindge; 14 grandchildren, 20 great grandchildren and many nieces and nephews. Her first husband Ernest Trombly Jr., died in 1979. In addition to first husband, she was predeceased by her brothers and sisters, Joseph Gordon, Hazel Wolski, Leon Gordon, Gladys Saraco, Hattie Sawyer, Lillian White, Ruth Blair and Doris Goodwin.

A Mass of Christian Burial was be held Wednesday, April 12, 2017 in Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, 52 Spruce St.

Burial will be in Riverside Cemetery in the spring.

Memorial donations may be made to Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, 220 North Main St. Suite 104, Natick, MA 01760.

Stone-Ladeau Funeral Home, 343 Central Street, Winchendon was entrusted with arrangements.

FITCHBURG — Michael T. Shear, age 62, of Fitchburg, died Tuesday, April 4, 2017, at the Health Alliance Leominster Hospital surrounded by loved ones.



He was born in Oswego, NY on Aug. 22, 1954, a son of the late, Harold Shear and Rose (Schena) McNulty. Michael grew up in Maynard and has resided in Fitchburg since 1985.

Michael was a millwright for the Raytheon Corporation in Marlboro where he has worked for over 40 years.

He enjoyed spending time with his family and saying his one lined dad jokes. His hobbies were working around the house or anything with his hands. He also enjoyed the beach and camping with his family. Michael loved anything that involved his family and joking around.

He leaves his wife of 23 years, Marylee (Stebbins) Shear of Fitchburg; four daughters, Alisha Shear, Leona Shear and Nichol Cook all of Fitchburg and Sarah Wilson and her fiancé, Jon Duefield of Webster; two sons, Steven Wilson and his wife Rebecca of Hubbardston and Nathan Wilson and his wife Katrina of Winchendon; his twin sister, Marie Buchinski of Carbondale PA; his brother, Barry McNulty of Maynard; seven grandchildren and many nephews and nieces.

His funeral Mass was celebrated on Saturday, April 8 in St. Anthony of Padua Church, 14 Phoenix St., Shirley.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to the American Heart Association, 30 Speen St., Framingham, MA 01701.

Anderson Funeral Home (anderson-funeral.com), 25 Fitchburg Rd. (Rt. 2A), Ayer was entrusted with arrangements.

### NUMBERS

continued from page A4

and emotional needs of our students.

These, however, are the hard cold, irrefutable facts. There’s a formula the state uses to determine how to allocate education funding. This is known as Chapter 70. It’s designed to have an equalizing effect, making sure less wealthy districts receive more state aid than richer ones. The state constitution, logically, mandates total K-12 spending in each district not fall below the “amount needed to provide an adequate education to its students.”

Every district’s foundation budget is determined by multiplying the number of students at each grade level and demographic groups by a specific set of spending categories. The bottom line is this. When the governor’s budget showed we

lost 56 students district-wide that meant we lost almost \$357,000 in Foundation money and to make things worse, it meant our required district contribution dropped by more than \$123,000.

Additionally, we negotiated four contracts this year and you need to know in the last fiscal year, our unions all agreed to take no increase because of the town’s financial realities and we appreciate their willingness to do that.

That said, here’s another unavoidable stark truth. Even if we have level funding next year, that means cuts because inflation and costs tend not to ever go down. No doubt you can relate to this in your own budgets.

In the end, we’ve decided to offer three budgets. The first is a “balanced” one. It mandates the elimination of 12 positions across the district, including

two teachers at both the middle and high schools, including moving a middle school social studies teacher to the high school which cover a sabbatical and, unfortunately, eliminating a middle school math/science job, and a high school home economics job as well as a music teacher job.

The second we’ll call an “improved” budget and the third we’ll call “what we really need” budget that saves teaching and secretarial positions.

As you know, our goal is to move from Level 3 to Level 2 and on to Level 1, but in order to do that, we have to offer students reasons to stay here or come here. If we cut teachers as suggested in the “balanced” budget, that means class sizes go up and that’s the kind of thing which drives families away. We’ve been working hard to rebuild part of our music program and los-

ing a teacher right now would be devastating. We’d be losing a special educator position which we can ill afford to lose, and, as you may have heard, we’d be dropping a program which teaches life skills like cooking and provides a positive experience for our students. This “balanced” budget would represent a severe setback for our district.

Even with the so-called “improved” budget, we’d bring back our teachers but we won’t have the support staff we need on a day-to-day basis.

The “what we really need”

budget brings back teachers, support staff and even adds a curriculum coordinator and you can bet the state Department of Education watches for those things.

So here we are. I could give you a lot of statistics about student-teacher-administrator ratios and those numbers would make your head spin (they’re available with the complete budget proposal but space restrictions don’t allow them to be printed in this column) but suffice to say the ratios would be an impediment to reaching Level 2 and



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## SPORTS

*Finally! And... what others remember*

Sergio Garcia. Major champion. The great thing about sports is you never know. It took 74 tries and a couple decades of never-boring twists and turns but El Nino finally got his title. The funny thing about sports is how many of us were rooting for him down the Masters stretch. Who'd have ever expected that 10-15 years ago?

Sports can truly be amazing. I asked a bunch of people about their greatest sports memories and received a wide array of answers. Some were about themselves. Some were about favorite teams and special seasons. Some were about special athletes. All of them were, and I mean this sincerely, fun to hear about and now write about, so let's get to them, alphabetically, this week and next. Maybe even the week after that. There are, after all, so many of you who were happy to contribute and you've told some great stories.

"Sports has been such a big part of my life. I've been blessed. Holy Cross v. American (the latter being the writer's alma mater). Patriot League championship game. 2003 or 4," recalled Murdock's girls varsity basketball coach Jim Abare.

"Game was at 4:00 and the kids had packed the gym by 1. It was electric. The whole building shook. Holy Cross won and when they went to the tournament they were right with Kentucky with three minutes left. Great memory. Maybe that was a tie with Doug Flutie's last home game before he won the Heisman. Same thing. Stadium was packed hours before kickoff which was



## TALKING SPORTS

JERRY CARTON

noon and the student section was filled by 8 a. m. I saw my granddaughter hit a three to put us up by 20 against then number one Andover, and I even got to see Ernie Davis (the late Syracuse star running back who died of cancer before he could play in the NFL) run onto the field. As I say, I've been really blessed."

Regional sportswriter John Ballou and former Winchendon Little League president Tony LaPointe both cited the Red Sox 2004 World Series victory as something they'll forever remember.

"I think I wore the same clothes and sat in the same position and played nervously with a set of nail clippers for every game of the ALCS and World Series that year," Ballou reminisced, adding, "the only thing that could have made it better is if my dad could have been home to watch the clinching game with us. But he was working a 24-hour shift as a firefighter at Hanscom Air Force base. He did call from the station and we both exclaimed how we couldn't believe they'd finally done it," snapping an 86-year drought.

Sharon, MA lawyer Jay Bronstein did his undergrad work at Tulane University and pointed to the night in 1973 when the Green Wave shocked LSU in the old Sugar Bowl stadium. That hasn't happened very often on the football field. "80,000 crazies in the stands. First time Tulane beat LSU in 24 years," he said.

My dad reached way back to either 1940 or 1941 (he'd have been 13 or 14) "when the junior fireman of Engine 29 beat the guys from Engine 45 for the

championship of Baltimore's firemen/police league at old Oriole Park before a roaring crowd of 500, or maybe it was 50," he laughed.

"I've seen many important and exciting sports events, the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness, World Series games, NFL championships, our family horses winning, but playing second base at Old Oriole Park, wow, how can you top that?" he mused. For the record, the park burned to the ground on July 4, 1944.

My oldest son Andy, who was born the year after the Colts bolted Baltimore, picked a blown coverage by the Denver Broncos in the 2012 AFC divisional playoff game which enabled the Ravens to tie the game in the (very) waning moments on a beyond-frigid day in Colorado. The Ravens would use that as a springboard to the franchise's second Super Bowl title.

Then there was my cousin Robin. She was the goalie when Montgomery County MD's Winston Churchill High School beat Catocin for Maryland's 1979 high school field hockey championship. She tells me there are pictures. I'd like to see them.

High school sports were also on the mind of my AU classmate and former Miami Herald outdoor writer Sue Cocking, who as a teenager lived in Howard County, MD, the county between mine and Robin's.

"The game when Mt. Hebron beat Howard high for the Howard County championship in 1971," she recalled.

Bob and Tina Higgs recollections were far apart from each other's. Bob said the 1980 US Olympic hockey semi-final win over the then Soviet Union was a great highlight but added the toughest came

six years later when Maryland superstar Len Bias died the night of the NBA draft.

"It was the saddest and most unfulfilling moment," he recalled. His wife has a more upbeat memory.

"Slap Me Five," reminisced the veteran of many years working at Maryland racetracks. "He was over 100-1."

He was. I dismissed him pre-race. My bad. She was ecstatic. That was like the score of a lifetime for her. I was chagrined but happy for her. I guess you remember the big wins because she once came within hailing distance of an actual life-changing score. Once upon a time, Maryland had a gimmick bet known as the double-triple. If you correctly selected the 1-2-3 finishers in a specified race, you received a percentage of the payout and were eligible to participate in a second specified race and if you were right then, you'd collect whatever the winner's share of the pot was. On Dec. 2, 1988 at Laurel, the "pot" crossed the \$1 million threshold, reaching just under \$2 million. Tina, who's Courtney's godmother, and I would sometimes partner up on exotic bets on the occasional times I could convince her to bet. With that kind of money available, she was game to try that day. Sure enough, we nailed the first half, collected whatever we did, but despite having the winner in the second leg, failed to complete the triple, our other horses finishing third and fourth. Talk about the ones that got away.

So these are the stories from some folks. There's so many more to come. See you next week.

## Dancing to help others get fit

BY TARA VOCINO  
COURIER CORRESPONDENT

WINCHENDON — International boarding school students at the Winchendon School peeked their heads in to see what the noise was all about during Zumbathon, which raised \$1,000 for the Clark Memorial YMCA annual

fund Saturday night.

According to organizer Charlotte Richeault, of Gardner, seven Zumba instructors from Winchendon, southern New Hampshire, and Gardner taught five songs to 46 girls and one brave guy during a two-hour dance off.

Last year, the annual campaign made

a difference by providing \$33,829 in family and individual memberships; and \$16,171 in camp, childcare and youth programs. Building a stronger community is a cause that is important to the YMCA. Their thinking is that the community faces a greater need for the work of the Y. But where there are obstacles, they see opportunity to make a difference.

And dancers had fun doing it.

"It's one of the funnest nights of the year," Winchendon resident Amee Therrien said, full of energy after a half hour of dancing. "It's a nice way to connect with people in the community who doing what you love to do. I'd love to have more of them."

Therrien said the Latin songs are fun and sexy, such as "Hula Hoop" by Daddy Yankee. She was sporting glitter on her arms and wore glo-sticks around her wrists that dancer Jill Field donated.

"That's a fun treat," Therrien said, pointing to the accessories.

Therrien said the Zumbathon was a good way to bond with other people and to make friendships.

"I like to leave my workouts dripping wet with a smile on my face," Therrien said. "You don't even realize you're getting a workout, but you can burn about 500 calories in a high-intensity cardio workout."

Eighteen-year-old Naz Sahin, a boarding student from Turkey, was jumping around and dancing with her best friend, Delaney Foresman, age 18, a day student from Winchendon, to Daddy Yankee songs.

"The energy is important," Delaney said. "It's getting the crowd involved, and it's an opportunity for all of us to get out."

They should know. Naz plans to attend the University of Tampa in Florida on a volleyball scholarship, and Delaney plans to play lacrosse at Bryant University in Rhode Island. Their high

school is a Division 2 team.

But for Winchendon resident Amy Field, a first timer at Zumba, it did not come so easily.

"I feel like a fish out of water," Field said. "It's hard to keep up. But I feel like once I learn the routine, I will really like it. Everyone seems to know what he or she is doing. But it's a lot of fun and a good workout."

Field said she plans to join the YMCA because of her fun at the Zumbathon.

Winchendon residents Kathy Casavant and Melanie Murphy were in the back corner dancing the Cha Cha, Samba, and Salsa.

"It's fun how different instructors have their own personal spin," Murphy said.

Casavant said she wondered how she was going to dance for two hours, but it came naturally once she arrived.

"We're all women here," Casavant said. "And everyone's doing it."

Winchendon resident John Harrington was the brave soul to dance with almost 50 women beside him. However, he felt perfectly comfortable.

"It's like a date night with 46 other women," Harrington joked. "It doesn't bother me. The lighting is dimmer so we feel comfortable. It's not like we're dancing in a gym where everyone can see us."

The YMCA will host a wrestling event in the field house on May 20, and will sell cookbooks to raise money for Summer Solstice.



Forty-five girls and one brave man danced Zumba for two hours during a Clark Memorial YMCA fundraiser.



John Harrington and Tara Vocino photos

The Zumba girls pose for a photo at the end of their workout.

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# SPORTS



Mat Plamondon photos  
Emily Kibert-Pervier stretches to make a catch at first base during the first home game at Murdock.

## FIRST OUT OF THE GATE

Hair flying in rhythm with the throw, the Murdock pitcher winds up.



Mat Plamondon photos  
First Austin Barrows manages a great play at his position in the field...



Then he manages to avoid a tag sliding into home plate. It was a good day all around for Austin Barrows.

# Easter Bunny pays an early visit with candy

BY TARA VOCINO  
COURIER CORRESPONDENT

WINCHENDON — The Easter Bunny gave Easter M&Ms and Sour Patch Kids to children before he brings the Easter basket on Sunday, all while raising \$1,000 for the Cub Scouts in an early morning breakfast at United Parish.

“I told the Bunny I want a Barbie dream house,” Winchendon resident Lilly Watson-Fredette said, who was dressed in a pink dress, matching tights and headband. “The Bunny gave me a thumbs up.”

Her mother, Brittany, said since Lilly’s been a good girl, she’ll be getting the dream house on Easter Sunday.

Brittany Watson-Fredette said the breakfast is a great way to get the Cub Scouts involved with the public, many of them choosing to serve food and collect tickets at the door.

Cub Scout Daniel Fuller, who is the star rank, said the money goes toward the Friends of Scouting.

“I didn’t think we’d have this many people,” Daniel Fuller said.

And he was right. Cubmaster Kevin Fuller said it was a record turn-out.

“We appreciate and we are overwhelmed by the generosity of the community,” Kevin Fuller said. “It’s fantastic that so many people came out at this hour to support Troop 193.”

Winchendon resident Luke Letendre was decked out in a blue pinstripe suit with a bow tie, matching socks, suspenders, and a twill hat.

His mother, Kathryn Haney, said he

didn’t cry when the Bunny held him, but he did look confused.

“He was like, ‘What’s this white thing?’,” Haney said. “If the Bunny gave him candy, I would have been the one to eat it.”

She arrived mid-event and noted she didn’t have to wait in line at the sold-out event.

“It was perfect,” Haney said. “We got the last of the pancakes.”

The event featured unlimited pancakes.

Volunteer and town resident Sue Cochran said Rivers Edge, a local restaurant, donated 50 pounds of home-fries and several gallons of eggs.

“It’s the most people we ever had,” Cochran said.

Claire Hawkins, age 2, said cheese when the Bunny handed her blue, purple, green, pink and yellow M&Ms. Her brother, Charlie, age 5, received Sour Patch Kids. Their mother liked the opportunity to take pictures with the Bunny at an affordable price.

“Unless you want to go to the mall and pay a lot of money,” Hawkins said. “This setting is much more casual for a family.”

Winchendon resident Kaiya Jeff, age 8, was wearing white rabbit ears when she had her picture taken with the Bunny.

She and her family were enjoying chocolate and blueberry pancakes with eggs, orange juice, coffee, and tea.

“They ran out of pancakes but are cooking more,” her mother Elora



The Watson-Fredette siblings, of Winchendon, embrace the Easter Bunny: from left to right, Charlie, age 11, Richard, age 7, Lily, age 3, Andrew, 6 during the breakfast with the Bunny at United Parish on Sunday.

Mayer said. Her son, Damon, a Tiger in the Cub Scouts was serving food.

The St. Pierre family won the 50-50 raffle for Project Playground, a long-term elementary playground building project, and opted to donate their \$103



Courtesy photos provided by Megan Hawkins, Brittany Watson-Fredette and Kathryn Haney

Winchendon residents Claire, age 2, their mother Megan, Cameron, 6 months, and Charlie Hawkins, age 5, receive M & M’s and Sour Patch kids from the Easter Bunny.

winnings back.

“We gave back, because we helped start the playground many years ago and love that they are keeping it up for the kids,” they said in a statement.

## THE BUNNY VISITS TOY TOWN



Greg Vine photos

...and they’re off!

Busy with breakfasts and other egg hunts, still the Easter Bunny took time out last weekend to spend Saturday morning at Beals Memorial Library, hiding eggs in the Memorial Park next door.

Children were thrilled to find the brightly colored plastic eggs filled with

treats, and the library, which had not held the event for several years, was thrilled to welcome them. The library was open too, allowing families to visit and gather some reading materials or movies to take home as well as treats.

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# Exploring a holistic, hypnotic world

BY TARA VOCINO  
COURIER CORRESPONDENT

WINCHENDON — Everyone searches for guidance in life, and about 80 people came to the Spring into Health and Happiness Holistic Fair at the Winchendon History and Cultural Center some searching for that same purpose.

Fifteen vendors, including tarot readers, psychics, and massage therapists, offered their services and products at a discount. An outdoor psychic and holistic fair will be held at the mansion on June 10 with other fairs in the works for this fall.

Jen Knight, an animal spirit-totem, spirit journey, and mediumship introduced Mark Smallwood, of Gardner, to a 20-minute psychic reading during the event. He explained to her some things that he would like help with in his life.

“My love interests,” Smallwood said. “I’m stuck in a job. I feel lost right now.”

Understanding, Knight said Smallwood seems to know what he wants while not knowing how to get there. She advised him that this time of his life is uncertain but exciting.

“Because you don’t know what lies ahead, there are limitless possibilities,” Knight said

to Smallwood. “What are some avenues you want to explore? Bring your creativity to light in a new way. Anything is possible – it’s like walking around with \$100 in your pocket, but not knowing how to spend it.”

Smallwood told Knight there are two girls he is interested in – one from the past and a new girl he has been talking to for a while.

“A level of trust has to be built with the ex,” Knight said to him. “The new girl isn’t ready to receive the energy being projected. I would invest less energy in the situation and allow her space if she pulls back. Check in with her, but if she doesn’t respond, let it go.”

Smallwood could not believe Knight’s response.

“She’s spot on,” he said after the reading. “I never met her before in my life, and she told me some of the same things the girls were telling me earlier.”

Smallwood said the new girl told him she has cold feet, and with the ex, trust was lost when the relationship ended badly. He plans to schedule a future session with Knight and plans to tell the girls the advice Knight gave.

Across the room, Mona Kutcha, a psychic and medium intuitive, was engaging in a 20-minute oracle card read-

ing with Leominster resident Teresa Sanderson. Kutcha asked Sanderson to shuffle the cards, which represented different qualities, such as wisdom.

“You don’t seem like you’re old,” Kutcha said. “But you have a good amount of wisdom, yet you don’t know how to express it the right way.”

Sanderson said that Kutcha was accurate, and it hit home.

In the grand living room nearby, Fitchburg resident Donna Foley was checking out a peacock pendant and other creations made by Laconia, NH resident Wanda Van Norden, a designer at Wire Wrapping Gemstones.

“The jewelry is beautiful,” Foley said. “It’s very creative and different.”

Foley said she appreciates the expanding use of the mansion to bring people in the community to learn about history. She attended a Christmas tea event there in December. A blue sun catcher with dragonflies, turquoise beads, feathers, and a moon in the background caught her eye out of all the items on the vendor’s table.

Van Norden said her crystals are used for spiritual healing to help people focus on alignment along the way. She said they are good to wear, but too

many people in the room will cause a vibration and negative energy. Van Norden went on to say that organizer Lucky Belcamino, who is house psychic at the Lizzie Borden bed and breakfast, bought a red one from her but didn’t wear it due to the high number of people at the event. Holistic Mystic, which is open by appointment only by calling (978) 297-1301, hosted the event.

Belcamino said she hosted the event at the beginning of spring purposely. She originally scheduled the fair for a December date, but she postponed the date due to a blizzard.

“It’s a day of releasing dark energy from the doldrums of winter,” Belcamino said.

Warwick resident Tracy Styles, of Lynrose Farm and Wellness Center, was selling organic and homemade body products, scrubs, lotions, bath balms, diffuser necklace, and paw wax at her vendor table.

Styles said she got into making her own body products by using doTerra therapeutic essential oils, which are beneficial toward different uses. For instance, lavender tends to have a soothing effect while her defense blend acts as a hand sanitizer without the alcohol smell.

“It’s a blend of different oils that together serve a purpose,” Styles said.

Westminster resident Beth Gray was at the table sampling lotions, as she is beginning to make dry skin scented lotion for personal use.

“It’s so easy,” Gray said. “I made a small batch in a food processor in about 10 minutes, or a bigger batch in about an hour. I refrigerate and then heat it.”

Gray makes earthy, citrus, lavender, and vanilla scented creams.

Gardner resident Sarah Murphy was checking out a crazy quilt bracelet by Constance Oehlert of Keene, NH.

“I like all the different colors,” Murphy said. “It’s colorful and bright.”

Oehlert said she began to make jewelry by hand with her mom, Woodi, at age 10. It started with rosary beads, a Catholic prayer tradition, and advanced to mala beads, meditation prayer beads for Tibetan Buddhism.

“It’s an ancient practice that speaks to people,” Oehlert said. “It reaches down and personally evokes mindfulness and a good feeling.”

## DARKNESS

continued from page A1

teams up with Ryan Hood to begin the fund-raising action.

“We want to erase the stigma attached to mental illness,” said BRD drummer Dave LaPointe, who’s also the father of Brittany LaPointe, the founder of the Silver Linings team which will be joined once again by Mariah Ackert’s Peace of Mind group to continue to raise awareness and money.

“We’ve growing. We’ve gotten more people involved and we want to keep growing. The movement is growing,” said Dave LaPointe, who added in his profession as an attorney, “I see every day how mental health issues affect people.”

When the walk gets underway at

10 a.m. next Saturday, April 22 at the MWCC track with registration is at 9 a.m., Silver Linings will be carrying a banner, an honor gained for raising some \$3,100 last year.

Two years ago, Brittany LaPointe, whose personal struggles with depression were chronicled in the Courier at the time, participated in the Gardner walk as a prelude to an overnight trek in Boston (she reprised that last spring in New York and will be headed to Washington in June to take part in that one). Last year she teamed up with Ackert, who explained then her reason for involvement.

“Chances are we all have been affected by suicide in some way. Sadly, I know several people who passed on from suicide and I saw the devastation it left on their families.

“A few years back,” she continued, “someone I love very deeply made a

suicide attempt. I couldn’t imagine the grief and pain of losing this person. There would have been a tremendous void in my heart that could never have been filled. Thankfully, she sought treatment and today she is well. That really opened my eyes to the effects of depression and the need for strong mental health. I felt like I needed to do something and after a lot of thought, I became an advocate for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.”

“I formed Peace of Mind back in 2013 to help raise awareness and shine a light,” she said.

Suicide claims some 400,000 lives every year in the US, one every 13.5 minutes, trailing just cancer and heart disease as the most prolific killer in America.

“It’s a very serious subject,” noted Dave LaPointe, “but we’re going to try and have some fun for this vitally

important cause. All of us know someone who’s been impacted by depression or other mental health issues and contemplated suicide so we’re trying to continue to educate.”

One of the most eagerly anticipated prizes available will be the “Band and a Barbeque.” The winner of that \$25 chance gets four hours with BRD and a BBQ for up to 40 people. Just 100 tickets are available and 50 have already been sold.

“We actually did five hours,” laughed LaPointe, who added the winner will be drawn Friday night with no requirement for attendance.

Proceeds will go to Team Silver Linings.

More information about both events is available at LaPointe’s law office at 518 Central St. or by calling (978) 297-2390.

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## LEGALS

### LEGAL NOTICE MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

By virtue of and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Michael L. Maghakian to New Century Mortgage Corporation, dated December 23, 2004 and recorded in Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 35410, Page 188 of which mortgage Deutsche Bank National Trust Company, as Indenture Trustee, for New Century Home Equity Loan Trust 2005-1 is the present holder by assignment from New Century Mortgage Corporation to Deutsche Bank National Trust Company, as Indenture Trustee, for New Century Home Equity Loan Trust 2005-1 dated May 31, 2011 recorded at Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 47468, Page 295 and corrective assignment from New Century Liquidating Trust successor-in-interest to New Century Mortgage Corporation to Deutsche Bank National Trust Company, as Indenture Trustee, for New Century Home Equity Loan Trust 2005-1 dated February 9, 2016 recorded at Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 54972, Page 283, for breach of conditions of said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same, the mortgaged premises located at 4 Munroe Street, Winchendon, MA 01475 will be sold at a Public Auction at 12:00PM on May

8, 2017, at the mortgaged premises, more particularly described below, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit:

A certain parcel of land, with buildings and other improvements thereon, situated on the southerly side of Munroe Street, in Winchendon, Worcester County, Massachusetts, and bounded and described as follows:

COMMENCING: at an iron pin in the southerly line of Munroe Street at land now or formerly of Merida O. Tardiff; THENCE: southerly on said Tardiff land, 129.5 feet to land or formerly of E. Murdock Company; THENCE: easterly on line of said E. Murdock Company land, about 83 feet to an iron pin at land now or formerly of one Beals; THENCE: northeasterly on line of said Beals land and land now or formerly of one Spellman, 145 feet to an iron pin in the southerly line of Munroe Street; THENCE: westerly on said southerly line of Monroe Street, 123.25 feet to the place of beginning.

For mortgagor’s title see deed recorded with the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 23330, Page 72.

The premises will be sold subject to any and all unpaid taxes and other municipal assessments and liens, and subject to prior liens or other enforceable encumbrances of record entitled to precedence over this mortgage, and subject to and with the benefit of all easements, restrictions, reservations

and conditions of record and subject to all tenancies and/or rights of parties in possession.

Terms of the Sale: Cash, cashier’s or certified check in the sum of \$5,000.00 as a deposit must be shown at the time and place of the sale in order to qualify as a bidder (the mortgage holder and its designee(s) are exempt from this requirement); high bidder to sign written Memorandum of Sale upon acceptance of bid; balance of purchase price payable in cash or by certified check in thirty (30) days from the date of the sale at the offices of mortgagee’s attorney, Korde & Associates, P.C., 900 Chelmsford Street, Suite 3102, Lowell, MA 01851 or such other time as may be designated by mortgagee. The description for the premises contained in said mortgage shall control in the event of a typographical error in this publication.

Other terms to be announced at the sale.

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Maghakian, Michael, 15-023812, April 14, 2017, April 21, 2017, April 28, 2017

April 14, 2017

April 21, 2017

April 28, 2017

### Town of Winchendon Zoning Board of Appeals PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a PUBLIC HEARING on Wednesday May 3, 2017 at 7:05 PM in the Town Hall Auditorium, 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl., 109 Front St., Winchendon, MA 01475, on the request to modify Special Permit #16-13 issued to Bryan Day of 35 Island Rd, Winchendon, MA 01475 for an addition more than 50% of footprint as afforded by Article 6 Sec 2.3A for property located at 35 Island Rd, Winchendon, MA 01475 identified as Winchendon Assessors Map M2 Parcel 10 and to hear an application for a Variance from the side and front setback dimensional requirements as outlined in Article 7.2 of the Winchendon Zoning Bylaw for the construction a garage. Said property is located in the R40 Suburban Residential – Neighborhood District. A copy of the application is available at the Dept. of P&D, Winchendon Town Hall. All interested persons should plan to attend.

BY:

Cynthia Carville, Chair  
Winchendon Zoning Board of Appeals  
April 14, 2017  
April 21, 2017





# CLYDE’S CORNER

Saturday, April 15

POSTPONED FROM LAST WEEK: ANNUAL BIKE GIVEAWAY: Kiwanis will be at the basement of the Old Murdock Senior Center, 9-11 a.m. to give away the furbished bikes available. This may be the last time this event takes place, so if you need a bike, be sure to take time to come. All bikes are free to anyone who needs one.

EASTER EGG HUNT POSTPONED FROM EARLIER: meet at the Old Centre common at 9:30 a.m. to march down to the Militia Field with the Easter Bunny for the annual Easter Egg Hunt sponsored by the Winchendon Parks & Rec Commission.

SPRING FEVER DANCE: with music by Whiskey Johnson at the American Legion Post 193, 295 School St. beginning at 8 p.m. Raffles and more. Tickets \$15 at the door. Sponsored by the Sons of the American Legion.

Tuesday, April 18

KIDS GARDENING WOKSHOP: at Beals Memorial Library 3:30-4:30 p.m. for kids aged 6-12; come plant a flower or vegetable and learn about planting. Free vacation week program.

LEARN: Computer classes for adults are offered on Tuesday afternoons from 3:30-4:30 p.m. at Beals Memorial Library and are open to adults ages 18 and older.

CRAFT FOR ADULTS: On Tuesday nights at 6:30 Beals Memorial Library has an adult craft hour providing a place to meet and do crafts. People bring in things they are working on, and can get help on knitting, crocheting, quilting and discuss different ideas.

Wednesday, April 19

ANIMAL ADVENTURES! At the Winchendon Town Hall auditorium beginning at 2 p.m., come meet the animals, hear interesting stories about

them and learn about their lives and behaviors. Free vacation week program.

BINGO! Hyde Park residents hold bingo in the community hall every Wednesday night beginning at 6 p.m. It's inexpensive, just two cards for 5¢, and the community is invited! Anyone over the age of 50 is welcome to join in. We'd love to have more players.

Thursday, April 20

PIONEER DAYS: go back in time and learn how to live, dress, cook and play during this interesting historical time, 4-5 p.m. at the Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St. Ideal for kids and families of all ages, free vacation week program.

Friday, April 21

MAD SCIENTIST: science experiments fun for kids of all ages, 2-3 p.m. at Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St.

Come learn about science with hands on experiments!! Free vacation week program.

OUT OF DARKNESS: We are ready to rock the second annual Out of the Darkness Campus Walk/Suicide Prevention Benefit with special guest, Ryan Hood, on keyboards. In addition to some classic rock from the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s that will be getting you on the dance floor, there are going to be some BIG raffles, a door prize and a 50/50. Donation is \$10 per person, or \$15 per couple at the Winchendon American Legion, 8 p.m.-midnight. We will also be doing our TBR Jukebox Karaoke... where you get to choose a song from our list for \$5, and for \$5 more, you and your friends can sing it with us! All proceeds from this event will go to Team Silver Linings, led by Brittany LaPointe, and Team Peace of Mind, led by Mariah Ackert. Let's make sure no one has to walk alone in the darkness...end the stigma!

## SCHOOLS

continued from page A5

All textbooks  
Copy paper and office supplies  
What?!?! We're paying for paper with money gifted to the district for enrichment? Are you kidding me? (No, I'm not.) I see nearly every teacher spending hundreds of dollars each year on supplies for their classrooms such as markers, easel pads, books for their classroom 'libraries', hand sanitizer, snacks to keep handy for their 'kids' when they're hungry, you name it. On top of all that, our hard-working building custodians have to do the job with only one third the number of people recommended by federal guidelines for the number of square feet of building space we maintain. How can any one person be expected to do the work of three?

What can we do about it? As much as I know you hate to hear me say this, we need more funding so we can bring back programs that have been lost and create new programs to help keep our students in the Winchendon Public Schools, and even to attract students from surrounding districts to 'choice in' to our schools. This year, to accommodate a level-funded budget, the school department has proposed the following cuts:

An entire team of teachers from the middle school, increasing class sizes

One of the two music teachers at the middle/high school level

The end of the Family and Consumer Science program at the high school, a highly popular program which has helped many students, past and present, learn the skills necessary to live successfully on their own

The loss of a certified librarian at both Memorial and Toy Town

At least one sports program, probably soccer at the middle school

Three secretaries throughout the district, whose responsibilities will have to be covered by those who remain.

The loss of a paraprofessional due to the elimination of a program targeted to students with special needs, which will need to be re-established in the near future or will result in high-cost out-of-district placements

A part time custodian, when our custodial services are already critically understaffed

The 'Middle of the Road' budget proposal, (which I refer to as the 'Bare Bones Package'.) at a cost of \$240,646 above level funding, brings back some of the items above, including 5 teaching positions, but not many of the others, such as the secretaries. The "What We Really Need" budget proposal, (which would be more honestly called the 'Barely Adequate Budget'.) at a cost of \$417,675 above level funding, brings back the secretaries and adds a curriculum leader position at the district level. I don't know more exact detail about

which lost programs would be restored at those levels.

"That's a lot of money," I hear you saying. But allow me break it down for you. If we take that amount and divide it up over the tax base of the town, dividing the residential portion by the number of households, and looking at the weekly cost, this is how it works out:

For the 'Middle of the Road' budget, it would cost \$0.98 per household per week. That's 23¢ less than a bagel at Dunkin' Donuts – without cream cheese!

For the "What We Really Need" budget, it would cost \$1.71 per household per week. That's 23¢ less than a small coffee at Dunkin' Donuts – a small coffee – per week!

Is it worth more than a small cup of coffee per week to ensure that we can keep our public schools alive here in town? I honestly don't see how anyone could argue that it isn't. But remember, these budgets aren't really 'What We Really Need.' What truly must happen is that we invest in our schools to bring back lost programs, and even add new programs that students want and need, that will keep them in the Winchendon public schools. Additional funds could be used to provide additional support for students who have learning gaps, to train staff in the use of proven best practices to improve instruction, and to help each student succeed and become their best self.

Additional funds to bring in programs will excite interest in the Winchendon Public Schools and reverse the vicious cycle of funding drain. One new program that has been on the back burner for a while due to lack of room in the budget is a greenhouse project that would be a cooperative effort between the science department and the Family and Consumer Science program. The science students would grow plants including fruits, vegetables, and herbs, studying plant biology. The edible plants would be used by the students in the Foods classes, and the scraps and waste would be composted by the science students to make fertilizer for the plants, creating a sustainable ecosystem, much like the addition of programs like these would stem the flow of students from our district and attract new ones would sustain our public schools in town.

I may be dreaming, but what I would truly love to see would be for someone to propose an amendment to the override request on the floor of the town meeting. Just in case anyone is interested, a \$1,000,000 override would work out to cost \$4.08 per week. That's 30¢ less than a classic bacon, egg, and cheese breakfast sandwich at Dunkin Donuts per week – without the coffee or hash browns!

(Chris Ricard is president of the Winchendon Teacher's Association)

## OVERRIDE

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want their children to stay in Winchendon public schools."

Haddad actually provided selectmen and FinCom members with three possible budgets. One, referred to as a balanced budget, would result in the loss of 12 staff members, according to the superintendent.

"Four of those positions are positions that we either are not going to fill due to retirement or cost-saving measures," he said. "There's also a need to eliminate a program because, of the 12 positions, eight of them are made up of teachers and support staff."

Haddad said most of the proposed cuts would be made at the middle and high schools.

Attendees also were presented with an "improved" budget, which allows the district to avoid teacher cuts.

"The last budget is what I refer to as a 'what we need' budget," said Haddad. "It brings back teaching positions, secretaries positions, and adds what I'm calling a curriculum coordinator. I'm not sure what the title will be in the end, but we need someone to help us with professional development and aligning the curriculum."

He then added, "I want to point out that to move from a Level 3 to a Level 2 to a Level 1, we have to support the students that really need the extra help. Any time we cut teachers, class sizes go up and we lose the ability to provide that increased support. If class sizes go up, parents often decide to

move their students to another school district. When we lose students, we lose funding. It's a vicious cycle that we need to find a way to stop."

Attendees were provided with data indicating Winchendon schools have lost nearly 200 students since 2012.

FinCom member James Robichaud said, "I can't predict the future, but an override could be a pretty tough sell. Personally, I wouldn't support an override. I think you guys need to reinvent yourself or find something different. The town can't afford another override. Two years ago, the town approved an override of \$300,000, so I think it's going to be a tough sell. If you do sell it, great, but it won't be easy."

"The concern here," said Finance Committee Chairman

Tom Kane, "is that the override will buy you a year. But it doesn't allow you to make much progress. You really have to take a look at the best way to identify what you need and develop a way of advocating for it. The reality is you're not going to see (increases) every year, which means you're going to have to shift priorities. What you're talking about in terms of improving the school district is growth, and growth doesn't always translate into more money."

Kane said Haddad and the School Committee would need to make sure townspeople understand what programs could be lost if an override fails.

"They need to know what they're buying," he said.

During the public com-

ment portion of the meeting, Murdock High School Principal Josh Romano, Middle School, Murdock Middle School Assistant Principal Jess Vezina, interim Toy Town Elementary School Principal Mary Aker, Murdock Academy for Success Director Kris Provost, and Winchendon Teachers Union President Christina Ricard all urged the FinCom and selectmen to support the override.

Several of those who spoke warned that failing to provide the support necessary to improve Toy Town schools could eventually lead to Winchendon having to seek membership in a regional school district.

"A community is ultimately judged on how it treats its children," said Romano.

## ART

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about me through word-of-mouth mostly, 'oh, he can build one for you, you should go to him' is what I hear, I tell them, 'yes, I can build that'. People want things. Barbeque smokers are popular and I like building them. Building them gives scrap metal a life of its own," he said.

There is apparently no end to how scrap metal can be used. At the Lincoln Avenue business, a steel tree is rising from the middle of the plant's floor and

no stone is being left unturned to make sure every inch of it is exactly where Laraba wants it to be.

"Yeah, I'm a perfectionist and that's stressful," he conceded, adding, "but if you're going to do things like this, you want to do them right. If I'm building something that's going to have my name on it, it needs to be done perfectly."

"After all, a lot of these projects, and yes, it's a hobby, are going to be sitting in people's houses, so you want to think about what it will look like when it gets there.

"I have ideas but I get ideas from

clients, from lots of people. I'm building things, whether the smoker or anything else, but it's really a team effort," he stressed.

It's a hobby?

"It's a hobby," Laraba reiterated. "People think scrap metal is junk. It's not. You can do so many things with it. I've been able to and when you get repeat customers, you know you're doing something good. Scrap metal isn't junk at all. It's really a tool for art. There's a lot of trial and error in what I do and I never planned on all this happening the way it has but here we are."

Laraba acknowledged there's likely

a limit on the market for his "hobby" in this region and so he said he might like to look at more urban areas at some point but there's no specific strategy for doing so.

For now, "I like taking scrap metal, twisting it this way or that way, creating who-knows-what beyond just building smokers for people. There are so many ways to use it. I'm having lots of fun," he assured.

Laraba can be found on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/steelartdesigns](http://www.facebook.com/steelartdesigns) or at [SteelArtDesigns@gmail.com](mailto:SteelArtDesigns@gmail.com) or at (978) 894-4684.

## HUNT

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Republican congressional candidates. We help shape the narrative of campaigns," explained Hunt, noting that while each individual congressional district has peculiarities of its own, national issues resonate everywhere. But specific issues aren't his focus. Rather, Hunt and his team are working towards building a workable electoral strategy every GOP

congressional candidate can carry into the 2018 midterms.

"We're focused on the electoral process," he remarked.

"I've always loved politics," Hunt reflected, "and living in Washington is very exciting, very cool. It's actually very humbling. I grew up reading about this city, and now I'm here and like I say, it really is humbling when you look out your window and see the Capitol and you pass the White House and all the monuments

and think about their significance. There's such a rich history here you can't help but be almost awed by it all."

Having friends in the city doesn't hurt the transition, either.

"I know some people here. In fact, that's how I got this job, from the people I knew from the Bush campaign who recommended me," he noted, adding he's even adjusted when need be to the sometimes unpredictable Metro subway

system.

"I think it's important to make a contribution," said Hunt. "Being involved in the next election cycle is my way of contributing."

The nature of the business tends to create itinerants out of political activists and though he's just in his 20s Hunt, whose father Steve founded and ran the popular Lickity Splitz ice cream spot on Rt. 202 headed towards Athol, has done a lot of traveling for a variety of cam-

paigns. As for what lies ahead, "2016 taught us not to look too far ahead. I can't predict where I'll be in a few years. I don't see myself right now ever running for office although I guess you should never say never."

"You know I love sports too, so who knows, I might wind up doing communications for a team somewhere. We'll see. For now, I'm just focusing on doing this job, crafting the message, getting our candidates elected," he stressed.





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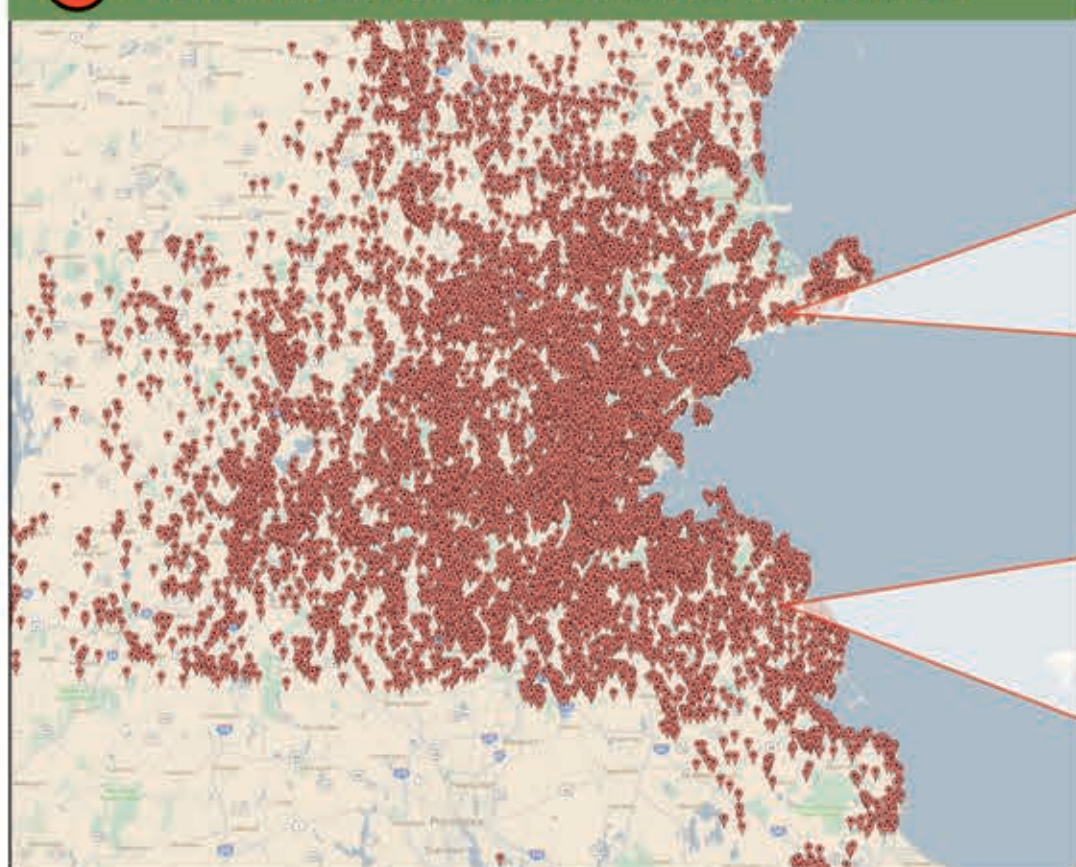
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