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East Brookfield, West Brookfield, North Brookfield, Brookfield, Leicester and Spencer

SEND YOUR NEWS AND PICS TO News@StoneBridgePress.news Friday, August 7, 2026

Leicester celebrates longtime police officer's retirement

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

LEICESTER — The Leicester Board of Selectmen celebrated the retirement of a longtime member of the town's police department, Officer Michael Lombardozzi, in late July.

After 18 years Officer Lombardozzi, also known to many as "Lombo," officially retired from the force earlier this year and was recognized by town and state leaders last month for his years of service. A Coast Guard veteran turned police officer, Officer Lombardozzi has made an impact in his community becoming a leader and mentor to both his fellow officers and local youth alike.

Chief Kenneth Antanavica commended Lobardozzi for his unending commitment to his duties and his community during the Board of Selectmen's July 21 meeting.

"Mike started as a part-time officer in 2008 and when the department went exclusively full-time in 2014, he went to the academy - during Mike's tenure at the LPD he was a mentor to many juveniles that needed a little guidance through life and worked with them in Project New Hope along with many other tasks like cleaning up roadsides and many other community services," said the Chief. "Mike has always proudly worn his LPD uniform and always looked sharp and ready to take on any challenge."

In addition to recognition by the Select Board, State Sen. Peter Durant also made an appearance to present a citation from the State Senate. Speaking about the ceremony on social media, Durant said he was proud to help recognize a clearly popular figure in the local police department.

"For 18 years, Leicester Police Officer Michael Lombardozzi has been an integral part of the community - It was an honor to present him with a citation from the State Senate to recognize his commitment to the town and to our country as he also served in the US Coast Guard," Durant wrote. "It is clear from the responses to his retirement that he is greatly loved in Leicester."

During his tenure with the Leicester Police Department, Lombardozzi supported the Officer Tarantino cause by running and riding in charity events and recently took part in the Police Unity Tour, a 320-mile trek from New

Turn To LOMBARDOZZI page A10

Spencer PD promotes new Lieutenant and Sergeant

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

SPENCER — The Spencer Police Department announced and confirmed two promotions last month, holding a ceremonial pinning of both officers during the Board of Selectmen's July 27 meeting.

Chief Michael Befford presented newly promoted Lt. Patrick Waugh and Sgt. Todd LaPorte who officially took their titles on July 5. The pair were joined by friends and family for a short celebration where loved ones pinned their badges and the chief recognized their individual contributions to the department.

"Patrick has been with us since September of 2017. He was promoted to sergeant in July of 2021 and now he's going to serve as our lieutenant," said the Chief. "Todd joined us in 2002 and worked a variety of shifts and then became our School Resources Officer around 2016 and has done an excellent job up there."

The department also posted a tribute to both officers on social media as part of the celebration of their

promotions. Following the retirement of Lt. Norman Hodgerney, then-Sgt. Patrick Waugh was deemed the best fit for the job for his "leadership, and dedication to law enforcement." He serves as a firearms instructor and a leader in other training areas including active shooter preparation and is widely seen as a mentor for officers even beyond his own department.

The department's newest Sgt. Todd LaPorte is considered "the professor" according to the department's post. Respected among his fellow officers and the community at large, LaPorte was recognized for his "patience, and ability to teach and mentor others." As the Chief noted during the Board of Selectmen's meeting, LaPorte also served as the town's School Resource Officer, allowing him to have a positive impact on the lives of local youth.

"We are proud to have these two exceptional leaders serving the Town of Spencer and look forward to all they will continue to accomplish," the department's statement concluded.



Russell Buzzell named Town House Artist of the Month



Russ Buzzell

NORTH BROOKFIELD — Russell ("Russ") Buzzell has been named Artist of the Month for August by the Friends of the North Brookfield Town House.

Buzzell is a painter and illustrator from North Brookfield whose work is closely tied to the rural landscape, wildlife, and the history of central Massachusetts. He has had a professional career spanning many years, moving from illustration to fine art and historical painting.

Buzzell grew up on his family's farm in North Brookfield. He milked the cows, drove the tractor, and participated in all the other jobs required of a farm family. But art was his first love.

A close family friend and artist known to young Buzzell as "Uncle Louie" nurtured his interest in art and helped him develop his skills. Russ graduated from North Brookfield High School in 1960 and the Art Institute of Boston in 1966.

He spent several years illustrating the publications of the Massachusetts Audubon Society. His impressive work there led to his being called upon to illustrate books and magazines, including "Animals Nobody Loves" by Ronald Rood, "The Farm Book" by the Massachusetts Audubon Society, and "The Wilderness Home of Giant Panda" by William G. Sheldon. He also illustrated

for Gray's Sporting Journal and Wisconsin Sportsman magazines and freelanced for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife.

Buzzell's most notable artwork includes "Sunday Afternoon on the Buzzell Farm" and the historical rendition of "Wheeler's Surprise," the ambush by Nipmuc Natives during the King Phillips War in West Brookfield on Aug. 2, 1675.

Buzzell works out of his Buck Hill Studio in North Brookfield where the majority of his time is spent on privately commissioned paintings and drawings of New England farms, landscapes, and wildlife. He works with oils, scratchboard, watercolor, and pen and ink.

People attending the 2026 Backroads Studio Tour Oct. 3 & 4 will be able to visit Russell Buzzell's Buck Hill studio to appreciate his work in person. While there, they can purchase original art, limited edition numbered prints, and greeting cards.

For more information on Russell Buzzell visit nbtownhouse.com and click on featured artists.

The Friends of the North Brookfield Town House is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization focused on restoring, preserving, and sustaining the historic Town House in the center of North Brookfield. Every month this organization recognizes a featured artist in their community.

AA Transportation invites incoming Kindergarteners to First Ride for Safety

EAST BROOKFIELD — AA Transportation Co., Inc. is inviting incoming kindergarten students and their families to its annual First Ride for Safety program on Wednesday, Aug. 19, from 10 a.m. to noon at the company's facility, 174 West Main St. (Route 9), East Brookfield.

Designed to help children prepare for their first school bus experience, the award-winning program gives future riders the opportunity to learn school bus safety in a fun, hands-on environment before the school year begins. The program previously received a Certificate from the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles recognizing its outstanding efforts in promoting school bus safety.

The event will be conducted in an open house format, allowing families to arrive at any time during the two-hour session and stay as long as they wish. School bus rides will depart approximately every 15 minutes, giving children a chance to become familiar with riding a bus before their first day of school.

Participants will learn about several important safety topics, including:

- Taking a ride on a school bus.
- Understanding the school bus "danger zone."
- Learning the meaning of school bus warning lights.
- Practicing how to safely cross in front of a stopped school bus.
- Reviewing other essential school bus safety rules.

Parents are encouraged to bring cameras to capture their child's first school bus ride.

Drivers and school personnel serving North Brookfield, East Brookfield, Leicester and Spencer will also be on hand throughout the event to answer questions and provide information about school transportation and student safety.

AA Transportation officials say the goal is to help children feel comfortable and confident before the start of the school year while reinforcing safe habits that can help protect students throughout the year.

For more information, contact AA Transportation Co., Inc. at 508-867-4500.

Spencer American Legion Charity Golf Tournament set for Sept. 26

SPENCER — The Gaudette Kirk Post 138 American Legion Spencer invites golfers, sponsors, and community members to participate in its Annual Charity Golf Tournament on Saturday, Sept. 26, at Heritage Country Club. This annual event combines a day of golf, fellowship, and giving back, with all proceeds supporting

veterans in need.

The mission of the Gaudette Kirk Post 138 Charity Golf Tournament is to help veterans by preventing hunger, homelessness, and the lack of life's basic necessities. Funds raised through the tournament provide direct assistance to local veterans and their families, ensuring those who have served our country receive sup-

port during difficult times.

Golfers of all skill levels are welcome to participate in the 18-hole scramble. The tournament fee is \$115 per golfer, which includes 18 holes of golf with a cart, a light lunch at Heritage Country Club, and dinner at the Gaudette Kirk Post 138 American Legion following the tournament. The day will also feature on-course contests, raffles, prizes, and awards.

Businesses and organizations are encouraged to become sponsors, while individuals and families are invited to register early and help make a difference in the

lives of local veterans.

For registration, sponsorship opportunities, or additional information, please contact Carol by phone at 774-454-0366 or e-mail post138spencerma@gmail.com.

About Gaudette Kirk Post 138 American Legion

Gaudette Kirk Post 138 American Legion is committed to serving veterans, supporting military families, promoting patriotism, and strengthening the local community. Through its annual charity golf tournament and other fundraising efforts,

the Post provides direct assistance to veterans by helping prevent hunger, homelessness, and the lack of basic necessities, honoring the service and sacrifice of those who have served our nation.

Spencer Town Moderator launches new community television show, “The Brewster Call”

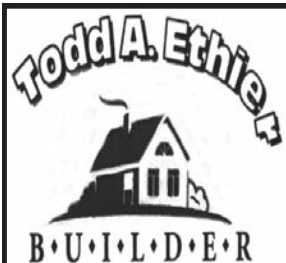
SPENCER — Jason Brewster, the newly elected Town Moderator of Spencer, is announcing the launch of “The Brewster Call,” a new community television show on Spencer Cable Access, Channel 192.

The show airs Fridays from 6 to 6:30 p.m. and focuses on informed civic participation and respectful dialogue.

Special thanks to Spencer Cable Access for making this program possible and for its continued commitment to local programming and community engagement.

“The Brewster Call” is produced by Jason Brewster in his capacity as a private citizen. The views expressed are his own and should not be construed as official statements or positions of the Spencer Town Moderator or the Town of Spencer.

For questions or episode suggestions, email thebrewstercall@gmail.com.



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CLUES ACROSS

1. Midway between south and southeast

4. Fathers

9. Wine grape

14. Al Bundy's wife

15. Derived from ammonia

16. Venezuelan state

17. Interest rate

18. Experts

20. Vascular tissues

22. Smooth and glossy

23. Administrative region in S. Korea

24. One from Damascus

28. Special interest group

29. It cools your home

30. Oh, God!

31. Intestinal pouches

33. Men

37. Twelfth star in a constellation

38. Former CIA

39. Arrange in grades of size

41. A baglike structure in a plant or animal

42. "The Great Lakes State"

43. Having earlike appendages

44. Momentarily stop

46. Ancient kingdom

49. Of I

50. White clerical vestment

51. Songs to one's beloved

55. Charges

58. Computer application originator

59. A place to dock a boat

60. One guided by reason

64. Slang for cigarette

65. Sailboats

66. "Jerry Maguire" actor Zellweger

67. Screen type

68. Country legend Haggard

69. Puts together in time

70. When you anticipate arriving

CLUES DOWN

1. Involuntary muscular contraction

2. Eastern US transit agency

3. Leaves a place

4. Cease to participate

5. Current units

6. Cease to exist

7. General's assistant (abbr.)

8. Earth vibration

9. Very strong winds

10. For each one

11. A bog

12. The creation of beautiful or significant things

13. Affirmative

19. Pie __ mode

21. Nonclerical

24. Indonesian island

25. Educational environment

26. Namibian peoples

27. Bring out or develop

31. Moves into a place of thought

32. Out of the way

34. Loads a ship

35. Beloved Hollywood alien

36. Distinguishes

40. The ancient Egyptian sun god

41. Secondary or explanatory title

45. Relating to a wing

47. One who gives a speech

48. In the middle

52. Loop with a running knot

53. Airborne (abbr.)

54. Sweet persons

56. Put into play

57. Small cattle breed

59. Millisecond

60. Revolutions per minute

61. They __

62. Moon crater

63. A place to stay the night

PUZZLE SOLUTION

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WEEKLY POLICE BLOTTER

Spencer
The Spencer Police Department reported the following arrests during the week of July 22-28.
Layne Richard Pollinger, age 22, of Boylston was arrested on July 22 for Operating Under the Influence (Liquor), Negligent Operation of a Motor Vehicle, and operating a motor vehicle with No Inspection Sticker.

Leicester
The Leicester Police Department reported the following arrests during the week of July 23-30.
Philip S. Hollyer, age 56, of Leicester was arrested on July 23 for Disorderly Conduct, Disturbing the Peace, and Failure to Register as a Sex Offender.

Isado Dolores Ramirez Roa, age 50, of Worcester was arrested on July 24 for Operating a Motor Vehicle after suspension of registration, operating an Uninsured and Unregistered Motor Vehicle, and operating a motor vehicle after suspension of license for OUI/CDL/MVH.

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication received a summons in lieu of arrest on July 25 for Unlicensed Operation of a Motor Vehicle, a Number Plate Violation to Conceal ID, and operating an Unregistered Motor Vehicle.

William R. Denson, age 65, of Spencer was arrested on July 26 for Shoplifting By Asportation and Furnishing Law Enforcement with a False ID.

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication received a summons in lieu of arrest on July 27 for Assault & Battery.

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication received a summons in lieu of arrest on July 28 for Operating a motor vehicle after suspension of license and a Number Plate Violation.

Kimberly Anne Kane, age 59, of Leicester was arrested on July 28 for Operating a Motor Vehicle after suspension of registration.

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication received a summons in lieu of arrest on July 28 for Larceny, Shoplifting By Recording a False Value, and Malicious Destruction of Property.



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SPENCER NEW LEADER
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PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER
FRANK G. CHILINSKI
frank@salmonpress.news

BUSINESS MANAGER
RYAN CORNEAU
860-928-1818 EXT. 102
ryan@salmonpress.news

OPERATIONS DIRECTOR
JIM DiNICOLA
508-764-6102
jim@stonebridgepress.news

EDITOR
BRENDAN BERUBE
508-909-4101
news@stonebridgepress.news

PRODUCTION MANAGER
JULIE CLARKE
508-909-4105
julie@villagernewspapers.com

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\$749,000, 771 Podunk Rd, Strauss, Jean A-S, and Strauss, Jon C, to Hohne, Gillian.
\$550,000, 284 Howe St, Wall, James F, to Lajoie Jr, Richard, and Lajoie, Alexandra.

LEICESTER

\$5,400,000, 1671 Main St, Srec Leicester LLC, to Granite Ridge Realty LLC.
\$99,250, Chapel St, Mulberry St Realty LLC, to Conte, Karin M.

NORTH BROOKFIELD

\$399,000, 11 Cider Mill Rd, Cyr, Kendra L, and Cyr, Kendra, to Pacek 4th, Benjamin J.

SPENCER

\$800,000, 12 Stiles Ave, Bryan Ft, and Mulroy, Ellen, to Cote, William, and Cote, Jeanette.
\$770,000, 37 Wilson Ave, Coleman, Deborah A, to Heeran, Maria, and Raso, Stephen.
\$400,000, 54 Ash St, Jolicoeur Ave Inc, to Piligian, Tracy, and Piligian, Nicholas.
\$330,000, 97 Pleasant St, Woodward David Bruce Est, and Woodward, Dana A, to Parsons, Thomas.
\$70,000, 2 Terkanian Dr, Cycz, Joyce Marie, to Cycz, Scott.

WARREN

\$415,000, 308 Brimfield Rd, Caldwell, Lea R, to Carpio, Vivianna, and Albinson, Justin Pierce.
\$285,000, 44 Manning Rd, Bowley, Erik, and Ciccotelli, Mark, to Heibel, Gabriel, and Jagielski, Alissa.

WEST BROOKFIELD

\$410,000, 48 Clearview Dr, Araujo, Jill A, to Ward, Dean Joseph, and Gaumond, John Peter.
\$26,500, Coy Hill Rd, Shuttleworth Barbara Est, and Kraus, Christina S, to Como, Matthew, and Como, Stephanie.

Leicester Public Schools offers meals at no cost for students

LEICESTER — Leicester Public Schools participates in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. As part of this program, all schools offer healthy meals every school day at NO COST to the students due to the implementation of the Community Eligibility Provision for school year 2026-2027. Students receive breakfast and lunch at school without having to pay a fee or submit a household application.

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Gold Dust Refugee next up in Spencer's Summer Concert Series

SPENCER — The Spencer Parks & Recreation Commission 2026 Summer Concert Series continues from 2 to 5 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 9 at Powder Mill Park, corner Smithville and Meadow Roads, Spencer with the Gold Dust Refugee.

Gold Dust Refugee is a premier New England tribute band comprised of six seasoned musicians playing guitars, drums, bass, and featuring dual-vocal harmonies that replicates the music of Fleetwood Mac and Tom Petty. The six-piece group

performs combined live shows blending classic rock hits from two legendary catalogs.

Following Gold Dust Refugee, the series continues on Aug. 16 with the Silverbacks.

The concert series is proudly sponsored by Cornerstone Bank. Serving Worcester County, Massachusetts, Cornerstone Bank's local presence and community-based banking model enables a unique

ability to deliver outstanding service, with a personal touch. Cornerstone provides the highest level of service and expertise for individuals, businesses, and community organizations with branch locations throughout Central Massachusetts.

Leicester Democratic Town Committee plans second annual potluck barbecue

LEICESTER — The Leicester Democratic Town Committee is inviting Democrats from across Central Massachusetts to gather for an afternoon of food, conversation, and community at its second annual Potluck BBQ.

The event is designed to bring together local residents and party members to reconnect with friends, meet new people, exchange ideas, and strengthen relationships ahead of the upcoming election season.

Organizers encourage attendees to bring a favorite dish to share while enjoying an informal afternoon focused on fellowship and civic engagement.

"Come together with Democratic friends from across Central Massachusetts for an afternoon of great food, laughter, and meaningful conversation," organizers said in the event announcement. "It's a chance to reconnect with old friends, make new ones, share ideas, and

strengthen the relationships that will help us work together during the upcoming election season."

Participants are asked to bring a potluck item and are encouraged to RSVP by Sunday, Aug. 16. Registration is required, as the event location will only be provided to those who register in advance.

Organizers said they hope attendees will leave with new connections, fresh ideas, and renewed enthusiasm for the months ahead.

For more information or to register, visit the Leicester Democratic Town Committee's Web site, ldtcmass.org.

Alex Cordy Memorial Golf Tournament set for Sept. 12

OAKHAM — St. Carlo Acutis Parish, Brookfield/West Brookfield/Warren, is having their Ninth Annual Alex Cordy Memorial Charity Golf Tournament at Quail Hollow Golf and Country Club, 1822 Old Turnpike Road, Oakham, Massachusetts on Saturday, Sept. 12. Registration begins at 7:15 a.m., with a Shotgun Start at 8 a.m.

As many of you are aware, Alex Cordy was an integral part of our West Brookfield Community for many years. In memory of his outstanding service to his community, his parish, and being a founding member of our Knights of Columbus Council 11080, this tournament will once again benefit our Youth Activities Fund to support the youth in our local community, a cause that was very important to Alex. We were able to award two \$1,000.00 scholarships this past year from the proceeds of this event to two local high school seniors, as well as fund many other youth activities. We ask that you please consider supporting our event by sponsoring or participating in the tournament individually or with a foursome. Tournament Raffle Items and General Donations to this event are always welcomed and appreciated!

Registration and sponsorships are now available for this tournament. To register, and for more information, please call (413) 813-8100 or email wallyconnor122@gmail.com.



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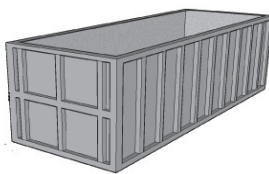


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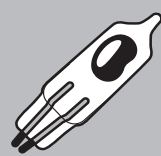
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BRENDAN BERUBE
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EDITORIAL

Honor measured by service

Communities often celebrate milestones with ribbon cuttings, anniversaries, and groundbreaking ceremonies. Those events deserve recognition, but there is another kind of milestone that carries a quieter significance: the retirement of someone who has spent years serving neighbors without seeking the spotlight.

The recent recognition of Leicester Police Officer Michael “Lombo” Lombardozzi reminds us that the true measure of public service is not found in headlines or accolades. It is found in thousands of ordinary days spent answering calls, helping people through crises, mentoring young people, and showing up whenever the community needs you.

Law enforcement is often viewed through the lens of emergency response, but the strongest police departments understand that their greatest work frequently happens long before an emergency occurs. Building relationships with young people, participating in community projects, supporting charitable causes, and simply becoming a familiar, trusted face all help create safer neighborhoods. Those efforts rarely generate dramatic stories, yet they leave lasting impressions that shape a community for years.

Chief Kenneth Antanavica’s remarks about Officer Lombardozzi highlighted exactly that kind of service. Beyond wearing the uniform, he invested in mentoring juveniles who needed guidance, participated in community improvement projects, and willingly stepped into whatever role was needed. Those responsibilities may not have appeared in a job description, but they reflected an understanding that policing is ultimately about people. The ceremony honoring his retirement underscored those contributions.

His involvement extended beyond Leicester as well. Whether participating in the Police Unity Tour to honor fallen officers, supporting the Officer Tarantino cause, volunteering with Stuff-a-Cruiser events, or serving with the department’s color guard, he demonstrated that service does not end when a shift is over. Communities benefit when public servants choose to invest their personal time in causes larger than themselves.

It is also fitting that Officer Lombardozzi’s background includes military service in the U.S. Coast Guard. Many veterans continue serving their communities after leaving the armed forces, bringing with them discipline, leadership, and a commitment to duty. Leicester has benefited from that tradition.

Perhaps the most meaningful moment of the retirement ceremony came not from the presentations or citations, but from Officer Lombardozzi’s own remarks. After 18 years with the department, he simply said that Leicester would always be his home and that he hoped he had represented the town well.

Those words reflect genuine humility. After nearly two decades of service, he was less concerned with listing accomplishments than with whether he had honored the community he loves.

That attitude may explain why so many people gathered to recognize him. Respect is earned over time, through countless interactions that may seem small in the moment but become significant when viewed across an entire career.

Every community depends on individuals like Officer Lombardozzi. Teachers who stay after school to help struggling students. Firefighters who volunteer for extra duties. Librarians who know every child by name. Public works employees who head out during storms before most residents are awake. Police officers who understand that listening can sometimes accomplish more than enforcing.

Their careers rarely receive widespread attention until retirement arrives. By then, however, their influence has become woven into the community itself.

Leicester’s farewell to Officer Michael Lombardozzi was more than recognition of one individual’s career. It was a reminder that communities grow stronger because of people who quietly dedicate themselves to serving others, year after year, without expecting recognition.

Retirement marks the end of wearing the badge, but it does not erase a lifetime of service. As Officer Lombardozzi said himself, Leicester will always be his home. Judging by the appreciation shown during his retirement ceremony, it is equally clear that Leicester will always be proud to call him one of its own.

VIEWPOINT

OPINION AND COMMENTARY FROM SPENCER, LEICESTER AND THE BROOKFIELDS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fantasia

To the Editor:

I already used my other title options for describing this administration. From the promise of no war, to one with no end in sight, Ukraine starting to support our war effort, when we abandoned them. Their drones destroying arms from Iran destined for Russia, and cutting Russia’s ability to forward targeting of US troops to Iran.

This millionaire president, increasing his wealth to more than the last 18 presidents, while in office. The money has to come from somewhere. It is a surgical split between Medicare cut rewards, sold pardons, insider trading on replacing weapons from your sons to replace munitions depleted, the absolute clown show this cabinet puts on daily.

His speeches all are rally style and disgusting and he is a complete embarrassment to our nation. It will take at least a generation to erase his legacy and our stupidity for electing a lying, grifting, felon and pedophile.

KEN KIMBALL
BROOKFIELD

Believing in tomorrow – volunteering for Jeromie Whalen

To the Editor:

I first heard of Jeromie Whalen at the first No Kings rally in June 2025. At that time, he was a school teacher whose friend had been taken by ICE. I knew nothing else other than he was a compelling speaker and part of an event that spoke to every fiber of my being.

The Trump Administration’s strategy was working, I was losing hope. It hadn’t affected me yet, but I was painfully aware that my government was taking people from their homes, communities, and livelihoods. I was also aware that it could only be a matter of time, that eventually it would be one of my friends or colleagues. This is a targeted strategy, designed to make the people that are engaged feel hopeless, like there’s nothing they can do.

I had also been applying to jobs in the statehouse, but I don’t know anyone, I don’t have connections. I never got calls back. I wanted to volunteer too, but the districts that I live in are safe for the incumbents at the state and federal levels, and nobody seemed willing to try. Even if there was someone willing, it felt like a pointless endeavor to undertake. I was sick of every election being a choice between the lesser of who cares.

So, I buckled down, decided to work harder at my nine-to-five and finish school. I was also in a band, putting out an album, the works. The point is that I was tired and my faith that I had the power to make meaningful change was running on empty. At this point, I’d seen that Jeromie was running, but my dejection was so deep that I didn’t even bother to reach out. I just threw a sign-up on his volunteering portal and figured that, maybe someday, I’ll get off my butt and knock some doors or something.

Jeromie Whalen found me. He texted me and invited me to his house for volunteer appreciation, of which I had never done and certainly did not feel deserving of any kind of appreciation. But he didn’t care, he said come anyway. So I did. What I found was a way forward, a community of loving, caring individuals, cultivated by a can-

The swamp has never needed draining more than now, How many of you know we bought two more matching planes and a multimillion-dollar hanger to support our free plane, now undergoing millions more in upgrades?

How many of you know that Trump drove a motorcade over the uncured reflecting pond surface?

How many of you think promoting Todd Blanche to AG will do anything but end any additional Epstein information?

How many of you who supported ending US Aids, are OK with eliminating both pandemic and food safety?

How many of you think his remedy for non-existing voter fraud, does anything but create some.

How will you feel when ICE illegally shows up at polling places?

You either support the constitution, or you don’t. We are seeing how Hitler took over.

Build confidence in your 401(k) decisions



FINANCIAL
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NIELSEN

In its simplest form, saving can mean putting money into a jar, adding to it and letting it grow slowly. A 401(k), or other workplace retirement plan, is a step beyond that. It’s more like a garden than a jar. Once you understand the basics of your 401(k), it becomes easier to feel confident in your decisions.

In a jar, your money only grows when you add more. In a garden, what you plant can begin to grow on its own. Your investments can earn returns, and those returns may in turn earn additional returns. That’s called compounding, and it can have a meaningful impact over time. Like a garden, however, growth is not guaranteed. Markets can rise and fall, and investments can lose value.

Most workplace retirement plan contributions are made with pre-tax dollars, which lowers today’s taxable income; you’ll pay taxes when you withdraw it in retirement. Some plans also offer a Roth option: you contribute after-tax dollars and withdrawals in retirement can be tax free. Your plan administrator can provide more information.

Many 401(k) plans include an employer match, either up to a set dollar amount, perhaps \$500, or a percentage of your salary, typically 3–5 percent. Contributions you make, as well as those from your employer, can grow over time. Try to contribute at least enough to capture the full match; anything less means you’re leaving money on the table.

Now the question is how to invest your contributions inside your 401(k). The menu of investment options may seem complicated, but most fall into a few common categories.

Stock or equity funds focus on stocks, which represent ownership in companies. Because they’re tied to company performance, they have the potential for higher growth over time, but their value can go up and down in the short term. When you’re decades from retirement, that short-term volatility matters less; you have time to ride out the swings.

Bond funds invest in loans made to governments or corporations. These tend to be more stable than stock funds but typically grow more slowly. They can help balance the ups and downs.

Balanced or blended funds hold a mix of stocks and bonds in a single investment. Target-date funds combine different types of investments in one fund. As you move toward a specified retirement year, the fund gradually adjusts to focus more on stability and less on growth.

The earlier you start planting, the more time your money must grow. Even small contributions early in your career can end up as large amounts later, simply because they had more time to compound.

If you change jobs, keep in mind that your employer’s contributions may not be fully yours immediately. It depends on your plan’s vesting schedule, so it’s worth checking before you go.

The most important steps in a retirement plan are getting started, contributing consistently and taking advantage of what your plan offers. With a little knowledge, you can feel more confident moving forward. The garden is yours. Start planting.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Please contact Trevor Nielsen, your local Edward Jones Advisor in Sturbridge at 508-347-1420 or trevor.nielsen@edwardjones.com. Edward Jones, Member SIPC.

Letter submission policy

Letters to the Editor must include the author's name, address, and a day-time phone number for purposes of verification in order to be considered for publication. Only the author's name and the town in which they reside will be published. Letters submitted without all of the required information will not be accepted.

It is the sole prerogative of the Editor to determine whether a submission satisfies our requirements and decency standards, and any submission may be rejected at any time for any reason he or she might deem appropriate.

LOGAN PETERSON
NORTH BROOKFIELD

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East Brookfield Summer Concert series underway

EAST BROOKFIELD — The East Brookfield Bandstand Committee is once again bringing live music to Connie Mack Field this summer with six free Thursday evening concerts celebrating local talent, classic rock, and community traditions. Organized entirely by volunteers, the committee relies on sponsorships, food sales, and donations to make the annual series possible.

This year’s lineup features a variety of musical styles, beginning with The Otters on July 16, followed by hometown favorites Big Gunz (July 23), classic rock tribute band Brookfield Rhythm (July 30), Beatles tribute 4Ever Fab (Aug. 6), the rotating ensemble ‘Dentity Crisis (August 13), and the Brookfield-based rock trio Moonlight Saints closing the season on Aug. 20. Highlights include ‘Dentity Crisis’s special performance celebrating the 45th anniversary of The Rolling Stones’ rehearsals at Long View Farm in neighboring North Brookfield, as well as the farm’s connections to The J. Geils Band and Aerosmith.

The East Brookfield Summer Concert Series continues to provide an opportunity for neighbors and visitors alike to gather, enjoy live music, and celebrate the community. We would love to see you there!

The empty parking space

LANTERNS
ALONG
MAIN
STREET
By CHARLES

I pulled into a crowded parking lot last week and did what most of us do. I started looking for the closest available space. There wasn’t one. So I circled once. Still nothing.

By the second lap, I noticed something interesting. Every driver seemed to be doing exactly what I was doing. We were all hunting for the perfect spot while

dozens of perfectly good spaces sat empty just a little farther away. I finally gave up, parked near the edge of the lot, and walked. It took all of about 45 seconds.

By the time I reached the front door, several of the cars that had passed me were still circling. It made me wonder why we’re so determined to save a few extra steps.

When we were kids, walking wasn’t something we tried to avoid. We’d think nothing of hiking across a field to visit a friend or riding a bicycle halfway across town because someone said there might be a pickup baseball game.

Now many of us will spend five minutes searching for a parking place that saves us 30 seconds of walking. I’m as guilty as anyone.

There’s something strangely satisfying about finding that front-row space. It feels like winning a prize, even though the prize is usually a walk that’s shorter than the average television commercial. The funny part is what happens when you park farther away. You notice things.

You see flowers planted along the sidewalk that you would have driven right past. You hear conversations instead of engines. You notice the small independent businesses tucked between larger stores. Sometimes you even run into someone you haven’t seen in years because you’re both walking instead of rushing from one door to another.

Those extra few steps become part of the outing instead of something to be avoided. I suppose that’s true of a lot of life.

We’re always looking for shortcuts. Faster internet. Faster checkout lines. Faster shipping. Faster routes around traffic. We measure success by how quickly we can get from one thing to the next.

But not everything improves by speeding it up. Some conversations are worth lingering over. Some roads are worth taking because they’re scenic instead of efficient. Some Saturday mornings deserve to unfold without constantly checking the clock.

Living in New England reminds us of that every season. Nobody hurries through the first blaze of autumn color. People stop to watch a fresh snowfall. We pull over for covered bridges and scenic overlooks even when we’re already running a little late.

Those moments aren’t productive by any measurable standard. They’re simply enjoyable. Maybe that’s why I didn’t mind the longer walk after all.

The parking lot gave me a few extra minutes outside on a pleasant afternoon. I watched a family loading pumpkins into the back of a pickup. An older couple strolled toward the garden center without seeming to be in any hurry. A little boy proudly carried a loaf of bread that was almost as long as his arm.

None of those moments would have registered if I’d found that perfect parking space. I still like parking close to the door. Old habits don’t disappear overnight. But every now and then, the best spot in the lot isn’t the closest one. It’s the one that reminds us slowing down is sometimes the shortest path to enjoying the day.

Girl Scout Troop welcomes new members

SPENCER — Girls entering grades Kindergarten and 1 in the fall are invited to join Troop 65501. The troop meets in Spencer every other Sunday, 4:30-5:45 p.m. Girl membership registration fee is \$111, and is active until September 30, 2027. Financial Assistance is available.

Girl Scouts is the premier organization for girls to learn about leadership, financial literacy, life skills, the outdoors, community service, science and technology. Girl Scout programming is customizable for all types of learners! Previous Girl Scout experience is not necessary.

You can register for a spot in the troop at <https://go.gscwm.org/troop65501>. Questions? E-mail info@gscwm.org or call 508-365-0115.

About Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts
Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts serves nearly 6,000 girls in grades K through 12 with the strong support of over 2,500 adult volunteers in 186 towns and cities in central and western Massachusetts. The Girl Scout program allows girls to discover the fun, friendship, and power of girls together while building their personal leadership qualities. GSCWM supports girls by giving them extraordinary opportunities to explore, experience, and learn about their world and helps girls recognize that they are vital members of their communities.

Vendors wanted for flea market on W. Brookfield Common

WEST BROOKFIELD — The First Congregational Church 36 N. Main St., W. Brookfield, UCC has been hosting their Flea Market on the town Common for more than 50 years. This year the Flea Market will be held on Saturday, Sept. 12 from 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (vendor check-in 6:30 - 8:30 a.m.).

Sellers of all kinds are welcome - flea folk, antique dealers, crafters, product vendors, and those emptying out basements and attics! No food vendors, please. Spaces are available for \$40 for a 20-by-20-foot grassy spot. Vendors must bring their own tables and tents. The church will sponsor a food tent with grilled food, cold drinks and sweet treats. Email to fccofwbfleamarket@gmail.com for an application or call Karen at 508-801-7692.

Mark your calendars; the tradition continues!

Registration open for Brookfields Lions Club Golf Tournament

NORTH BROOKFIELD — Registration is now open for the 2026 Brookfields Lions Club golf tournament, according to event chair, Marc Kokansky.

The annual event is taking place on Saturday, Aug. 22 at the Quail Hollow Country Club, 1822 Old Turnpike Rd., Oakham. The four-person scramble tournament begins with registration at 12 p.m., followed by a 1 p.m. shotgun start.

The entry fee is \$100 per golfer, which includes 18 holes of golf, cart, skins competition, closest-to-the-pin contests, and a meal following the tournament at Quail Hollow Country Club.

Proceeds from the tournament will benefit the Brookfields Lions Club’s charitable programs and community service projects throughout the area. Through fundraising events such as this tournament, the club supports local organizations and individuals while carrying out the Lions’ mission of serving those in need.

To register a team or obtain additional information, contact Marc Kokansky at 508-847-9843. Registration is open now through August 15.

As the world’s largest, youngest and most active service organization, the mission of Lions Clubs International is to empower volunteers to serve their communities, meet humanitarian needs, encourage peace, and promote international understanding. Members of the Brookfields Lions Club are dedicated to service and support in the communities of Brookfield, East Brookfield, North Brookfield, West Brookfield, and New Braintree.

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The **Leicester** Housing Authority, the Awarding Authority, invites sealed bids from Contractors for the **Sunset Gardens, 667-02 Elderly Development** for the **Leicester** Housing Authority in **Leicester** Massachusetts, in accordance with the documents prepared by **Nault Architects**.

The Project consists of: **Capping the existing water pipes coming up from below the slab and running new pipes in new soffits down the hallway between units.**

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Bids are subject to M.G.L. c.149 §44A-J & to minimum wage rates as required by M.G.L. c.149 §§26 to 27H inclusive.
General Bids will be received until **Friday, 8/21 at 2:00 PM**, and publicly opened, forthwith. This project is being Electronically Bid (E-Bid). All bids shall be prepared and submitted online at Projectdog.com and received no later than the date & time specified above. Hard copy bids will not be accepted by the Awarding Authority. For assistance, contact Projectdog, Inc. at 978.499.9014.

General bids shall be accompanied by a bid deposit that is not less than five (5%) of the greatest possible bid amount (considering all alternates) and made payable to the **Leicester** Housing Authority.

Bid Forms and Contract Documents will be available in electronic form and without cost or charge at Projectdog.com, project code **261326**, beginning **Wednesday, 8/5 at 12:00 PM**. Persons desiring hard copies of the documents shall be solely responsible for all printing costs.

The job site and/or existing building will be available for inspection between **2:00 PM** and **2:30 PM** on **Wednesday, 8/12**.

For an appointment call **Leicester Housing Authority** at **(508) 892-4620**

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Ayala of North Brookfield named to Regis College Dean’s List

WESTON — Regis College today recognizes Serenity Ayala, Class of 2026, of North Brookfield, whose academic excellence and commitment to learning have earned them a place on the spring 2026 Dean’s List.

To qualify for the Dean’s List, students must earn a GPA of 3.5 or higher. First-year students qualify with a GPA of 3.25 or higher.

Founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph nearly a century ago, Regis College educates students to lead with integrity, purpose, and compassion. Through an inclusive and innovative learning community, Regis prepares graduates to build meaningful careers and make a positive impact in the world.

Emmanuel College announces Spring Dean’s List

BOSTON — In recognition of their outstanding academic achievement, Emmanuel College has named more than 850 students to the Dean’s List for the Spring 2026 semester, including Kathy Cai of Leicester and Megan Bokis of North Brookfield.

To earn a spot on the Dean’s List, Emmanuel students must achieve a grade point average of 3.5 or higher for a 16-credit semester.

With more than 80 majors and areas of study, Emmanuel College combines outstanding classroom instruction and real-world experience to prepare students for lives of professional achievement, lifelong learning, and purpose. Voted the #1 college location in America in 2026 by Niche.com, Emmanuel offers ready access to world class medical, cultural, and business organizations in the Heart of Boston, all with a tight-knit 17-acre campus and 13:1 student-to-faculty ratio. Learn more at Emmanuel.edu.

Magician Ed Popielarczyk bringing family show to East Brookfield library

EAST BROOKFIELD — Families are invited to experience an entertaining morning of magic, balloon art, and comedy when magician Ed Popielarczyk visits the library on Thursday, Aug. 13, at 10:30 a.m.

The free program is open to all ages and will feature Popielarczyk’s interactive magic show, along with his colorful balloon creations and his unique flea circus performance.

Popielarczyk has been performing magic for nearly 35 years, delighting audiences throughout New England with a blend of humor, audience participation, and family-friendly entertainment.

Library officials encourage community members of all ages to attend and enjoy the performance. The event is designed to provide a fun and engaging experience for children and adults alike.

For Advertising Information Call 774-200-7308 email: mikaela@stonebridgepress.news

East Brookfield seeks public input for Open Space and Recreation Plan update

EAST BROOKFIELD — The Town of East Brookfield, with assistance from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), is updating its 2006 Open Space and Recreation Plan and is seeking input from residents.

Community members are encouraged to participate in a survey to share their thoughts on open space, recreational opportunities, and priorities for the future. Public feedback will help guide the development of the updated plan, which is required to maintain the Town’s eligibility for State grant funding for conservation and recreation projects.

Residents can complete the survey online at <https://tinyurl.com/yv7b23fy>. Hard copies are also available at Town Hall, the East Brookfield Public Library, and the Senior Center.

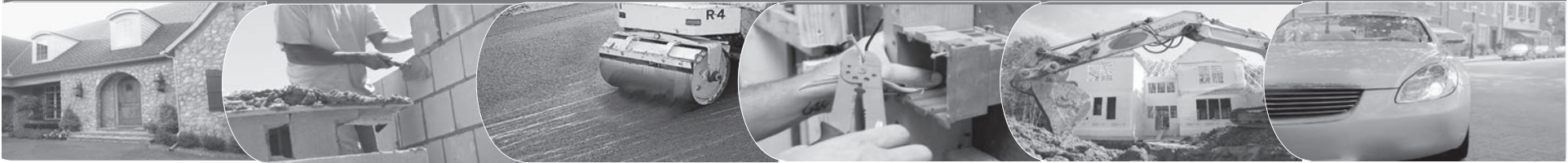
The Town encourages all residents to take part and help shape the future of East Brookfield’s parks, recreation resources, and open spaces.

Leicester’s Xavier Morales graduates from UMass Amherst

AMHERST — Approximately 7,000 students received bachelor’s degrees in more than 100 majors at the University of Massachusetts Amherst’s Undergraduate Commencement on May 15 at the McGuirk Alumni Stadium.

Among this year’s graduates was Xavier Morales of Leicester, who was also named to the Dean’s List for the Spring Semester of 2026.

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bankHometown strengthens Retail Banking team with key leadership appointments

OXFORD — bankHometown is pleased to announce the addition of four experienced banking professionals across its retail network. These appointments reflect the bank's continued investment in customer service, employee development, and community-focused banking throughout Central Massachusetts and north-eastern Connecticut.

Jerusa DeBrito appointed AVP, Branch Officer in Leominster

Jerusa DeBrito has joined bankHometown as assistant vice president, branch officer of the bank's 9 Sack Blvd., Leominster office.

With nearly 30 years of retail banking experience, DeBrito most recently served as AVP, bilingual branch manager at M&T Bank. She is known for her relationship-focused approach and commitment to serving customers and the community.

DeBrito serves as a board member of Fresh Start Furniture Bank and She's Local and is a member of the American Heart Association's Go Red Awareness Committee. She earned a Certificate in the Fundamentals of Banking from the New England College of Finance and has participated in the Certified Financial Educators' Financial Wellness Program.

Alison Tozzi named AVP, Branch Officer in Putnam

Alison Tozzi has joined bankHometown as as-



Jerusa DeBrito



Alison Tozzi



Dhimitri Piluri



Maria Baker

stant vice president, branch officer of its 182 Main St., Putnam, Connecticut office.

Tozzi brings nearly 30 years of banking experience to the organization. Most recently, she served as branch manager at KeyBank and previously worked as a senior personal banker at Bank of America. Her extensive background in branch leadership and customer service will support the continued success of the Putnam team.

Dhimitri Piluri joins Worcester Office as Branch Officer

Dhimitri Piluri recently joined bankHometown as branch officer of the bank's 1001 Millbury St., Worcester office, bringing more than 10 years of banking experience to the role.

Most recently, Piluri served as branch manager at Savers Bank and previously held positions as a relationship banker at Main Street Bank and Santander Bank. He has developed expertise in customer service, relationship management, and

retail banking operations.

Piluri holds a Bachelor's degree in marketing from La Sapienza University in Italy and a master's degree in information technology from Southern New Hampshire University. A strong advocate for financial education, Piluri has volunteered with Junior Achievement, assisting with lessons on budgeting, saving, credit, and loans. He has also participated in financial workshops for immigrants and low-income families and served through the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

Maria Baker joins Sturbridge office as Assistant Branch Manager

Maria Baker recently joined bankHometown as assistant branch manager of its 331 Main St., Sturbridge office.

Baker has 25 years of banking experience and most recently served as market manager at Cornerstone Bank. Her extensive knowledge of retail banking and customer relationship management will be an asset to the Sturbridge team and its customers.

"At bankHometown, our success is driven by the talented individuals who serve our customers and communities every day," said Robert Morton, president & CEO of bankHometown. "We are excited to welcome these accomplished banking professionals to our team. Their experience, leadership, and commitment to relationship banking will strengthen our ability to deliver exceptional service, build meaningful customer connections, and support the communities we proudly serve."

About bankHometown
Founded in 1889, bankHometown is headquartered in Oxford, Massachusetts. We have \$1.6 billion in assets and offer a complete line of consumer and business deposit and lending products and services through 15 locations throughout Central Massachusetts and north-east Connecticut. We're proud to fulfill our community banking mission—providing individualized financial support, comprehensive products and services, and banking tools—to ensure our customers can unlock their potential and build a

successful future.

Through our charitable giving program, The Giving Tree, we support non-profit organizations and caus-

es throughout Worcester and Windham Counties. In 2025 alone, The Giving Tree donated more than \$550,000 and over the last decade donated more than

\$3.3 million. bankHometown was named a Corporate Citizenship Award winner by Boston Business Journal for the past six years, reaffirming our status as one of Massachusetts' most charitable companies. Additionally, we were named a 2025 Top Place to Work award winner by The Boston Globe, and both bankHometown and our parent company, Hometown Financial Group, were recognized as five-time USA Today Top Workplaces award recipients. For more information, visit bankHometown.com.

Bay Path Continuing Education's fall catalog available

CHARLTON — We are excited to announce that the Fall 2026 catalog is now available at www.baypath.net/bpce. There is something for everyone, featuring offerings in trades exam preparations, continuing education, professional development, health & wellness, art, food & entertaining, financial wellness, and much more.

Here are some of the new classes available:

Basket Weaving
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Registration Opens on July 20 – Make sure to sign up early for the classes that catch your interest so you don't miss this opportunity! You can reach us at www.baypath.net/bpce or call 508-248-5971, ext. 1715. Bay Path has been providing engaging adult continuing education classes for the past 30 years, conveniently located at 57 Old Muggett Hill Rd., Charlton.

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Bay Path celebrates 59 CTI graduates, expands workforce training programs

CHARLTON — Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School proudly celebrated the graduation of 59 students from its Career Technical Initiative (CTI) program last evening, marking a

significant milestone in the program’s continued growth and impact.

The CTI program, launched in 2024, provides adult learners with access to high-quality, hands-on technical training designed to meet regional workforce demands. Last night’s graduates represent a diverse group of individuals who demonstrated dedication, perseverance, and a strong commitment to building new career pathways. Many balanced work, family, and personal responsibilities while completing rigorous 200-hour training programs that prepare them for immediate employment in high-demand industries.

“This graduating class represents the heart of what the CTI program is all about—opportunity, access, and workforce readiness,” said Marci Komssi, Program Coordinator. “We are incredibly proud of these 59 graduates and the determination they demon-

strated throughout the program.”

The success of the CTI program is made possible through continued state investment and workforce development partnerships. As part of the Commonwealth’s commitment to economic recovery and growth, \$24.2 million was awarded to 23 organizations throughout Massachusetts to train 2,490 individuals. These strategic investments, led by the Massachusetts Workforce Skills Cabinet, are designed to expand access to career pathway programs and better position residents to fill critical workforce needs across the state.

Building on this momen-

tum, Bay Path is expanding its program offerings to reach even more adult learners. For the first time, the school will offer a 200-hour Building Maintenance program in a five-week hybrid summer format, running from June 29 through July 31. This program is offered in partnership with MassHire, with applications opening this week.

Looking ahead to Fall 2026, Bay Path will offer nine CTI programs, further increasing access to career training opportunities. These programs include:

- Building Maintenance
- HVAC
- Culinary
- Manufacturing
- Auto Collision

Auto Technology
Diesel Mechanic
Welding
Electrical

Since its inception, the CTI program has continued to expand in both enrollment and program diversity, attracting students from local communities as well as across the region. The program remains a critical component of Bay Path’s efforts to support workforce development and provide meaningful career pathways for adult learners.

For more information about the CTI program or to apply for upcoming opportunities, please contact Marci Komssi at mkomssi@baypath.net.

Ryan Rushford joins Weichert, Realtors® - Hope & Associates

WORCESTER — Weichert, Realtors® - Hope & Associates is proud to announce Ryan Rushford has joined their Worcester office. Rushford joins a dedicated team of knowledgeable agents at Weichert, Realtors® - Hope & Associates, who bring many years of combined real estate expertise to their clients.

Weichert, Realtors® - Hope & Associates, located at 470 Park Ave., is an independently owned and operated affiliate of Weichert Real Estate Affiliates, Inc. For more information, please contact Julia Acquaah-Harrison at (508) 795-3885 or jharrison@hope-homes.com.

About Weichert Real Estate Affiliates, Inc.

Weichert Real Estate Affiliates, Inc. is a top real estate franchisor established in 2001 by Jim Weichert, president, chairman and CEO of Weichert Companies, which has been in operation since 1969. The company provides a clearly defined business model for operating, managing, and marketing a real estate brokerage, along with industry-leading technology, marketing tools, and support. Its first affiliate opened in 2002, and the franchise network has since grown to over 330 offices, serving markets in over 40 states. The company has appeared on the Entrepreneur Franchise 500 list as a top residential real estate franchise and been identified by Franchise Business Review as a top franchise for owner satisfaction 11 years in a row. For more information about Weichert, visit Weichert.com. For more information about franchise opportunities, visit WeichertFranchise.com.

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Webster First Federal Credit Union promotes Colleen Carney to Chief Risk Officer



Colleen Carney

WORCESTER — Webster First Federal Credit Union has announced the promotion of Colleen Carney to Chief Risk Officer. The appointment reflects the growing importance of risk management within the credit union and recognizes Carney’s leadership in supporting Webster First’s continued success.

“Colleen brings a strong and well-rounded background in banking, operations, finance, revenue management, and risk management,” said President and CEO John Thomasian, “As Webster First continues to demonstrate strong performance and sustained growth, the importance of a comprehensive and proactive risk management function has never been greater. I am confident that Colleen will excel in this important leadership role.”

Before joining Webster

First, she spent 10 years at Flagship Bank in Worcester. She earned a B.S. in Business Administration, magna cum laude, from Worcester State University.

Carney joined Webster First in October 2007 as Spencer Branch Manager. During her tenure, she earned an M.S. in Management from Worcester State University and later transitioned to the Accounting Department as Assistant Vice President of Risk Management in July 2018. She was promoted to Vice President of Revenue in October 2020, and in January 2024 assumed responsibility for risk management as Vice President of Risk and Revenue. In this role, she expanded and strengthened the credit union’s risk management function, enhanced the work of the Risk Committee, and helped ensure that risks across the organization are appropriately assessed, evaluated, mitigated, and managed. She is currently pursuing an M.S. in Enterprise Risk Management at Boston University.

Carney said “I am hon-

ored to step into the newly created role of Chief Risk Officer and grateful for the opportunity to help shape this important function for the credit union. Establishing this position reflects our continued commitment to strong governance, thoughtful risk management, and long-term organizational strength. I look forward to working collaboratively across the organization to protect and support our members, employees, and community while helping guide sound decision-making and responsible growth.”

About Webster First Federal Credit Union Webster First Federal Credit Union ranks among the largest credit unions operating in Massachusetts. Since its founding in 1928, Webster First has grown its operations, services, and membership to serve four counties across the state, Worcester, Essex, Middlesex, and Suffolk with branches throughout. For more information, visit websterfirst.com.

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 831-2200
Docket No. WO26P2385EA
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION
Estate Of:
John Flannery
Date of Death: 11/05/2017

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Late and Limited Formal Testacy and/or Appointment** has been filed by **Mark J. Flannery of Bellingham MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.
The Petitioner requests that: .
Mark J. Flannery of Bellingham MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the estate in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 08/25/2026.**
This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written ap-

pearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.
UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.
WITNESS, Hon. Kathryn M. Bailey, First Justice of this Court.
Date: July 23, 2026
Stephanie Fattman,
Register of Probate
August 7, 2026

Notice of Public Hearing– Planning Board
The Spencer Planning Board will be holding a Public Hearing on Tuesday, August 18, 2026, in McCourt Social Hall of Memorial Town Hall, 157 Main Street, Spencer, MA, and the hearing will be conducted in person and remotely on the following items starting at 6:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as can be heard:

Public Hearing Scenic Road Permit– Applicant: Harold Leaming-Code Consultants.; Owner: Samuel Shaw-Phoenix Properties LLC: 23 William Casey Road, Spencer, MA, Assessor’s Map R01-15-2. The applicant is seeking a Scenic Road Permit under M.G.L. Chapter 40, Section 15C, to remove 24’ of stone wall for driveway access for a single family dwelling. The property is located within the Rural Residential (RR) zoning district.
July 31, 2026
August 7, 2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court Worcester
Probate and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
Docket No. WO24P2982PM
CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR EXPAND THE POWERS OF A CONSERVATOR

In the interests of:
Elaine R Allen of Sandwich , MA
RESPONDENT Incapacitated Person/ Protected Person
To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by Paul Allen of N Brookfield, MA of in the above captioned matter requestig that the court: Expand the powers of a Conservator .The petition asks the court to make a determination that the powers of the Guardian and/ or Conservator should be expanded,

modified. or limited since the time of the appointment. The original petition is on file with the court.
You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of **08/18/2026.** This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without fur-ther notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your at-torney must file a written affidavit stat-ing the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person’s right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.
WITNESS, Hon. Kathryn M. Bailey, First Justice of this Court.
Date: July 24, 2026
August 7, 2025

BHS Class of 1986 seeks community's help locating classmates for 40th reunion

REGION — As the Bartlett High School Class of 1986 prepares to celebrate its 40th reunion on Sept. 26, organizers are asking the community for assistance in locating classmates who have not yet been reached through social media or via text.

To make the process simple, the reunion committee has created a short contact-information form and is encouraging residents, friends, and former classmates to help spread the word. If you know someone on the "missing classmates" list, organizers ask that you text them the link to the form so they can update their information.

Contact Info Form: <https://tinyurl.com/BHS1986-40Years>

If it's easier, you may also complete the form on a classmate's

behalf—so long as you have their current contact details. Organizers emphasize that any help tracking them down is truly appreciated, as personal connections often succeed where digital outreach falls short.

A list of classmates the committee is hoping to locate appears below. With the community's support, they hope every member of the Class of '86 will have the opportunity to join this milestone celebration.

Peter Allain
Beth Antonopoulos
Marie Aperges
Andrew Baca
Austin Bailey
David Beardsley
Frank Belanger
Carolyn Bembek

Richard Bernier
Sheila Bialonick
Beth Bialy
Jason Borski
Doreen Bourget
Eric Brisbois
Kathleen Brown
Paul Browning
Paul Bugan
Cindy Bullens
Sandra Butt
Mont Canterbury
Stephen Carlson
Daniel Chapdelaine
Kelly Cobb
Ken Courmoyer
Timothy Decker
Tammy Deschenes
Aaron Dorcas
Daniel Doyle
Dorothy DusoSelina Fife
James Gardner
Jeffrey Gatto

Tina Giakoumis
Alicia Goudreau
Richard Guerin
Robert Hamm
Scott Horanzy
Jane Houle
Todd Hufault
Joseph Hughes
Melissa Jankowski
Thor Johnson
Nena Johnston
Lisa Kozlowski
Robert Krasnecky
Jill Krause
Michael Kryger
Rick Lawson
Deborah Leite
Linda Lifer
Patricia Majewski
Renee Marchand
Jennifer Marsh
Jennifer Mason
John Meagher

Fumiyo Mochizuki
Deborah Munsch
Brett Napierata
Wayne Parmentier
Brian Poplawski
Gary Poplawski
Edward Powers
William Radcliffe
James Remy
Debra Ross
Collin Salmon
Dale Schleis
Theresa Sergel
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Alan Standrowicz
Jeffrey Surozenski
Karen Toukonen
Joseph Veronick
Douglas Waldron
Robert Wheeler
Edward Zdrok

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QCC professor gives voice to formerly incarcerated in new documentary



Kristy Glover

WORCESTER — What is it like to get out of prison and start over? QCC Professor of Criminal Justice Kristy Glover spent her sabbatical researching this question and creating “Voices of Justice,” a documentary film that she produced, filmed and edited herself.

“Voice of Justice” features accounts from three men who have firsthand experience with the justice system. The documentary highlights how multiple

support systems are critical for re-entry, the period of time when individuals are transitioning out of incarceration. Support from family members, community organizations and probation officers, along with raising awareness to reduce stigma, were all mentioned as ways to reduce recidivism and influence personal and professional growth.

“There are so many things that we expect of individuals when they’re just getting released. They have to get a job, pay their monthly supervision fees and find a place to live,” Glover said.

Glover witnessed the re-entry process during her time as a parole officer for the state of Georgia, but the connection is also personal. Her grandfather encountered challenges when he was released from prison, which left a lasting impression on the family, including Glover’s mother, who also joined law enforcement, eventually becoming

a police captain.

In the documentary, Glover interviews Mario Rivera, who spoke about his own re-entry experience. Rivera praised Worcester-area nonprofits such as Legendary Legacies and Open Sky Community Services for providing services such as counseling and assistance with obtaining a laptop and hygiene products. He also acknowledged his family as a large source of support.

“Without initial help in the first 60 days of me coming home, my progress wouldn’t have taken off the way it did,” Rivera said.

Rivera didn’t wait until he was released to start preparing. He completed QCC’s culinary re-entry program, a partnership with the Worcester County Jail and House of Correction that teaches skills needed to work in food service and includes multiple certifications upon successful completion. In “Voices of Justice,” Rivera shared that

during the program, he realized education was a vital part of his path to a new future. After his release, he enrolled at QCC and in the Liberal Arts for Returning Citizens (LARC) program at Clark University.

“The culinary program has had a significant impact on hundreds of incarcerated individuals,” said Worcester County Sheriff Lew Evangelidis. “We are proud to have helped Mario build a successful path forward after incarceration.”

Anthony Bryant, who also appeared in “Voices of Justice,” has seen multiple sides of the criminal justice system. Before he was incarcerated, he held roles as a corrections officer, a deputy sheriff and a highway patrolman.

“Law enforcement is not just a job; it’s your identity. And losing that role can produce deep internal shame,” Bryant shared.

Bryant, however, drew on his law enforcement training to stay calm and

focused during his incarceration, using that discipline as a foundation for working to improve his life. As his release date approached, he didn’t receive any re-entry preparation from the prison, so he got ready by reading self-help books and journaling.

After his sentence, Bryant relied on employment assistance programs, but he was often steered into manual labor positions that didn’t reflect his skills, making it difficult to rebuild his professional career.

In addition to family and community programs, both Bryant and Rivera said that a strong relationship with a probation or parole officer can make a positive difference. They noted that the stigma of having a criminal record can be detrimental to progress, but even one person who sees past their mistakes can be instrumental. They hope others can offer the same grace to those who are going through re-entry.

“People change when

their dignity is restored, responsibility is entrusted gradually and their story is allowed to mean something more than their worst decision,” Bryant remarked. “It’s a mindset shift that many people and legislators don’t understand.”

Rivera and Bryant have also taken it upon themselves to help others with similar experiences. Bryant has become an ethics trainer for law enforcement and other public service organizations. Rivera has stayed connected with Legendary Legacies to educate others and advocate for those in the re-entry process.

“I’m taking accountability in my own life for the things that I’ve done,” Rivera said. “Some people might not be receptive to my situation, but I take it as motivation to do better.”

“Voices of Justice” can be viewed at [youtube.com/watch?v=odTT0Stx3Tg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odTT0Stx3Tg).

41st Valley Friendship Tour raises nearly \$110,000 for Open Sky Community Services



Courtesy

Worcester-based nonprofit Open Sky Community Services brought together over 250 participants for its 41st annual Valley Friendship Tour fundraiser. The community event, for all ages and abilities, was held on June 6 in Whitinsville to support Open Sky’s programs throughout Central Massachusetts.

WORCESTER — The 41st annual Valley Friendship Tour drew more than 250 participants who walked, ran, and rolled through the Blackstone Valley on June 6 and raised nearly \$110,000 to benefit Open Sky Community Services, a nonprofit behavioral health and human services organization.

The Valley Friendship Tour, which starts and ends at Alternatives’ Whitin Mill, is Open Sky’s signature fundraising event for the agency’s nearly 150



Lorie Martiska (right), Open Sky Executive Vice President and Chief Advancement Officer, poses with Teresa Pitaro, the 2026 Valley Friendship Tour top fundraiser. Pitaro, of Norwood, has been the top fundraiser for five years in a row and she raised nearly \$7,000 for this year’s community event.

ily member served by Open Sky, was the top fundraiser for the fifth year in a row. She raised nearly \$7,000 for the 2026 Valley Friendship Tour.

The individual and team participants of all ages and abilities had the option of a 1-mile walk, 5K run or walk, or a 30-mile bike ride through the Blackstone Valley. The all-day event featured lunch, live music, raffles, and entertainment on the Dennis H. Rice Community Plaza at Alternatives’ Whitin Mill.

About Open Sky Community Services

Open Sky Community Services is a 501(c)3 nonprofit agency based in Worcester that has been helping individuals in our community achieve more than they imagined possible for over 50 years. The agency provides a wide range of services throughout Central Massachusetts for children, adults and families with mental health challenges, intellectual and developmental disabilities, substance use disorders, brain injury, homelessness, and other complex challenges. Open Sky Community

Services has over 1,300 dedicated employees and nearly 150 programs throughout the region, supporting more than 8,000 individuals annually. Open Sky is committed to equity and belonging, and promotes a trauma-informed, whole-person care culture. For more information, please visit www.openskyscs.org.

LOMBARDOZZI continued from page A1



Jersey to Washington DC to benefit families of fallen police officers. He’s also been involved in the department’s staff-a-cruiser and color guard.

Antanavica also commended Officer Lombardozzi for be the “go-to guy” for properly folding the American flag, one of which was presented to him as a memento during his retirement ceremony.

After receiving his retirement badge, Officer Lombardozzi concluded the ceremony with a soft-spoken note to the town that he may be retiring from the force, but he will remain a part of the community.

“I’ve been in town 56 years, this will always be my home no matter where I am. I just hope I represented the town as best I could,” he said.

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Saint Joseph School celebrates Kindergarten Class of 2026



Courtesy

The Saint Joseph School Kindergarten Class of 2026 proudly displays their graduation certificates following their ceremony on Wednesday, June 10, in the Richard A. Nowak Gymnasium.

WEBSTER — On Wednesday, June 10, Saint Joseph School Kindergarten students and their families gathered in the Richard A. Nowak Gymnasium to celebrate an exciting milestone as the students partic-

ipated in their Kindergarten Graduation Ceremony. Dressed proudly in traditional Saint Joseph School red and white caps and gowns, the students processed into the gymnasium as family members, faculty, and friends looked on with pride.

The ceremony began with welcome remarks from Kindergarten Instructor, Mrs. Alicia Maurer, followed by the students leading the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance, The Our Father, and The Hail Mary. The graduates then showcased their talents through musical performances of "One Small Voice," "Hosanna!," and "Kindergarten

Graduation," inspired by songs from the beloved musical Grease.

One of the highlights of the morning was the students sharing what they hope to become when they grow up. Their dreams reflected both creativity and ambition, with students sharing aspirations of becoming teachers, singers, a nurse, police officer, astronaut, soccer player, veterinarian, zoologist, artist, baker, banker, builder, construction worker, gymnastics coach, ballerina teacher, dog sitter, reading teacher, and even a Savannah Bananas baseball player. The wide variety of responses brought smiles to the audience and served as a reminder of the limitless potential within this special group of students.

The ceremony concluded with the presentation of graduation certificates by Principal Beth Boudreau, followed by a special slideshow celebrating memorable moments from the school year and the many accomplishments of the Kindergarten Class of 2026.

This year, 23 students proudly advanced to First Grade: Joel Anobah, Gloria Basha, Wesley Goulet, Maeve Haynes, Anna Berry, Zuzanna Bialik, Faustyna Kicilinski, Giovanni Laramie, Alex Chruslicki, Emy Corbin, Lillith Marchand, Elliette Nowicki, Sadie Dejordi, Milena Deptula, Eve Pytko, Sonny Saad, Marcus DiTullio-Cedeno, Sophia Dowd, Robert Thrun, Brody Walker, Charles Dziedzic, Aceson Wright, and Emilia Dziobak.

Saint Joseph School Kindergarten students are taught by Mrs. Alicia Maurer, with the support of Mrs. Sandra Gibson,

whose dedication, encouragement, and care helped prepare these young learners for a successful transition into First Grade.

Congratulations to the Saint Joseph School Kindergarten Class of 2026. We wish each of these students continued success as they begin the next chapter of their

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